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# PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

## *Address Mid-Level Gaps to Strengthen Our Institutions*

By SUSAN R. JOHNSON

Over the past year or so we have heard more and more talk about mid-level Foreign Service staffing gaps in the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development. The problem has been amply documented in Government Accountability Office reports, discussed in congressional hearings, and addressed in the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.



These concerns are now reflected in language included in House and Senate authorization and appropriations bills, as well as in recommendations emerging from the QDDR process. At the same time, we have seen bipartisan attention, spearheaded by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, devoted to the pressing need to strengthen our long-neglected foreign affairs agencies, and a new recognition of the importance of diplomacy and development as key tools of American foreign policy.

How can we close the mid-level staffing gap in a way which promotes rather than undermines the long-term goal of building strong and effective civilian foreign affairs agencies? The Senate's Foreign Operations Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations bill, S. 3676, reported out of committee at the end of

---

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

July, includes language calling on the Secretary of State to implement a mid-career pilot program. Briefings on the QDDR process suggest that various options along those lines are already under consideration, including a lateral entry program, possibly supplemented by more contractors. But is this the best or even a desirable approach?

I would like to suggest a better course for the "pilot program" called for in the bill. It would give the Secretary of State the authority to: (1) bring back good retirees for three to five years; (2) use qualified Department of State civil servants more flexibly; and (3) make it easier for Foreign Service personnel to move from one foreign affairs agency to another without harming their career prospects.

This sort of pilot program could start us on the way to making the Department of State the institutional home of a "unified" United States Diplomatic Service. That said, this should be seen as a temporary expedient, one that should be leveraged to strengthen the institution and the professional career Foreign Service. Lateral entry would have the opposite impact. By undermining morale and motivation among career Foreign Service members, and failing to address the "experience gap," it would actually weaken the ability of the institution to deal with challenges

and attract talent at the entry level.

In the long term, the "agile and flexible" institution that the times demand, as Sec. Gates lays out in his May/June *Foreign Affairs* article, "Helping Others Defend Themselves: The Future of Security Assistance," requires offering incentives to recruit the right people with the right set of expectations, education, talent and temperament to handle the challenges of today's diplomacy.

It also entails well-conceived professional education and training, including exposure to environment, science, technology and health issues (generally known as ESTH), counterterrorism, economics and finance, conflict resolution and stabilization, multilateral diplomacy and negotiations, program management, budget, strategic planning and complex operations — in addition to traditional bilateral diplomacy.

We must change current practices that keep people professionally narrow and one-dimensional, through the use of incentives which develop 3D (strategic, tactical and operational) thinkers who understand the interagency process and can tap into expertise on a case-by-case basis. We should also take a fresh look at the cone system. In short, it means developing, managing, recognizing and promoting talent and professionalism.

I invite you to share your thoughts on this important issue at [President@afsa.org](mailto:President@afsa.org). ■

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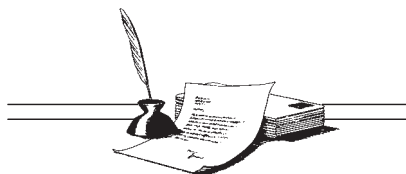
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# LETTERS

## Training for the Future

The *Journal* deserves high praise for its May issue, which presented a rich collection of articles on the future of our foreign affairs establishment. The article by Ambassador Edward Marks, “The Next-Generation Department of State Project,” broke new ground on imaginative and constructive ways to reorganize what has sadly become a sclerotic machine.

Like many of my contemporaries, I had nostalgically hoped for a salvaging of the traditional structures we loved so well. But it is now clear that these will not meet the challenges of the 21st century. As always, the great conundrum seems to be training; its lack forces us to rely on the spotty process of mentoring.

Since we have not generally sought to recruit new officers who managed to prepare themselves broadly before entering the Service, it would seem wise to consider creating a diplomatic school to provide all entry-level personnel with at least a year of graduate-style training before they undertake their first assignments.

*Robert F. Illing*  
*FSO, retired*  
*Porto, Portugal*

## Down with “Up or Out”

I greatly enjoy AFSA FAS VP Henry Schmick’s informative columns in *AFSA News* on the origin of the For-

ign Service’s “up or out” personnel system. His reporting and analysis confirm my belief that it is time for the foreign affairs agencies to get rid of this system.

The U.S. government’s application of military practices to civilian employment is based upon a fundamental misunderstanding. An “up or out” system makes sense for the military, because its job is to fight and win armed conflict. Anything else is secondary to that mission. The battlefield is an unforgiving workplace.

Military officers assume a great deal of responsibility upon commissioning; the most junior officers are personally responsible for dozens of men and women and hundreds of thousands of dollars of equipment. Young adults in their early 20s make life-or-death decisions in combat. Young commanders lead troops into battle, because after a certain age most adults acknowledge their mortality and become more cautious.

The military is generous with training for two reasons: a) you want your warriors to be as keen as possible when war breaks out, and b) you want to keep them busy when it hasn’t.

In contrast, Foreign Service officers do not assume equivalent responsibility until much later in their careers; rarely face the dangers of combat; seldom, if ever, make life-or-death decisions; and need less training because they are actually doing what they were

hired to do instead of getting ready to do it. This is not to say that training is not necessary — simply that FS training needs are fundamentally different.

The problem with the misguided retention of the Foreign Service’s up-or-out system, particularly the time-in-service requirement, is that it forces good, competent officers out just when they have the most to offer, including the wisdom that comes with experience.

Demographic changes over the last 60 years dictate a review and revision of an outdated system if we want to ensure the best Foreign Service for the 21st century.

*Steve Huete*  
*Agricultural Counselor*  
*Embassy The Hague*

## For the (Congressional) Record

It is with great fondness that I read Edward Alden’s article, “Remembering Mary Ryan,” in your June issue. I felt, however, that it did not do full justice to this incredible public servant. So I would like to offer an additional perspective on Ambassador Ryan’s response to the 9/11 attacks, as well as her role following the August 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.

Though Alden’s article makes a passing mention of the 1998 bombings, it does not show the true impact this dreadful moment had on our Foreign Service and our institutional family, in-



cluding Amb. Ryan.

In the immediate aftermath of the bombings, Amb. Ryan, then assistant secretary for consular affairs, flew to Nairobi, put on a hard hat and climbed through the rubble, asking for the name and background of each victim, American and Kenyan alike. She carried these moments with her to the day of her passing — whether working nonstop in the aftermath to improve the security of our embassies worldwide; demanding a more compassionate outreach to the department's most valuable assets, its employees; or testifying to Congress on the need for more information sharing within our own government.

I was the financial management center director for Embassy Nairobi at the time of the bombings, and I lost nine of my staff on that dreadful day. Mary Ryan did not know me before that ordeal, but she put her arm around me, literally and figuratively, to help me cope with this life-changing tragedy. She showed similar concern for my colleagues, including Foreign Service National employees. And she worked tirelessly to prevent another attack. So when 9/11 occurred, she was enraged.

When Mary Ryan passed away four years ago, I wanted to do what I could to ensure she was respected and remembered as the great public servant that she was, despite the cloud that seemed to be hanging over her head.

My chance came while I was on an American Political Science Association Congressional Fellowship with Senator Olympia Snowe, R-Maine. There I collaborated with an FSO colleague who was on an APSA fellowship with Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., to help draft a "Statements for the Record" (July 12, 2006, and Sept. 5, 2006) on

behalf of Sens. Snowe and Kennedy to honor Amb. Ryan.

Both for the Foreign Service historical record, as well as our nation's *Congressional Record*, I salute Amb. Mary Ryan — the matriarch of the Foreign Service.

*Michelle L. Stefanick*

*FSO*

*Foreign Policy Adviser,*

*Marine Forces Europe  
and Africa*

*Stuttgart, Germany*

### **Cheering the Chagos Protected Area**

This past April, the British government designated the Chagos Islands as the world's largest "no-take" marine reserve. It is regrettable that this visionary act was recently characterized as a threat in Gerald Loftus's Speaking Out column, "Diego Garcia: Freedom's Footprint, or Enduring Injustice?" (June).

The Chagossians' forced removal from the islands in the 1960s is separate from the need to conserve these waters, which harbor almost half the healthy coral reefs of the Indian Ocean. Should the Chagossians be allowed to return, the new 210,000-square mile marine reserve would benefit them by ensuring that the fish populations, and indeed the entire ecosystem, remain productive. That may be part of the reason the largest Chagossian organization in the United Kingdom supported the decision to create the marine reserve.

Healthy numbers of fish in the Chagos will also benefit the many countries along the rim of the western Indian Ocean. Abundant populations of fish produce large numbers of eggs and juvenile fish, which will spread throughout the region. In fact, other

than a few foreign fishing fleets that will no longer be allowed to fish off the Chagos Islands, it is hard to envision why anyone would oppose this marine reserve. It is notable that more than 90 percent of the 275,000 comments to the British government — from scientific societies, conservation groups and individuals — favored its creation.

Today, nearly half the world's coral reefs are diseased and dying, fisheries across the globe are in perilous condition, and only a tiny fraction of the planet's marine environment is protected from exploitation. The recent action by the U.S. government to designate and protect the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in Hawaii and other Pacific islands is one bright spot in a bleak seascape.

Another is the decision by the United Kingdom to establish the Chagos Protected Area — one of the largest single marine conservation actions by any government. That move should be applauded, not criticized.

*Jay Nelson*

*Director, Global Ocean*

*Legacy*

*Pew Environment Group*

*Juneau, Alaska*

### **An Unjust Action**

Thank you, Gerald Loftus, for your June Speaking Out column about the stark tragedy that befell the natives of Diego Garcia, who were uprooted and exiled to Mauritius in order to meet American security requirements.

For the handful of us who established Embassy Port Louis in 1967, that decision meant living with and supporting an action that was both unjust and unnecessary. ■

*Bill Hussey*

*FSO, retired*

*Laguna Woods, Calif.*



# CYBERNOTES

## BlackBerry Lands on Blacklists

On Aug. 1, the United Arab Emirates announced its intention to block the data communication services on BlackBerry smartphones beginning Oct. 11, unless device maker Research In Motion addresses regulators' concerns that the phone's encryption system poses a security threat because it can be used by criminals and terrorists. Yousef al Otaiba, the country's ambassador to the United States, said on Aug. 17 that he was optimistic an ac-

ceptable solution would be worked out, but confirmed that the October deadline remains in place ([www.the national.ae/](http://www.thenational.ae/)).

In keeping with its reputation for being one of the most open societies in the Middle East, neighboring Bahrain quickly disassociated itself from any plans to follow Dubai's lead. Bahraini Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed al-Khalifa acknowledged the legitimacy of security concerns, but quoted the country's crown prince, Sheik

Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, as denouncing any attempt to halt the service as "ignorant, short-sighted and unenforceable" ([www.thejakartaglobe.com/](http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/)).

Saudi Arabia's telecom regulator initially ordered mobile operators across the kingdom to halt BlackBerry services on Aug. 13, but later gave RIM and the kingdom's three wireless companies more time to implement a fix that will allow data monitoring ([www.guardian.co.uk/](http://www.guardian.co.uk/)).

Going even further, India — the world's second-largest market for smartphones — has threatened to block all corporate e-mail and messaging services unless Research In Motion and other companies agree to make data more easily available to New Delhi's intelligence and law enforcement agencies by Aug. 31.

Just before that deadline, the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs agreed to delay a BlackBerry ban for at least two more months after RIM promised to give officials "lawful access" to encrypted data. Meanwhile, sources report that the Indian government may next ask Google Inc. and Skype SA for greater access to encrypted information sent over their e-mail and phone services (<http://cachef.ft.com/>).

Elsewhere, Indonesia wants RIM to place a server in its country because it fears that e-mails could be inter-

## Site of the Month: [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

The old adage, "one man's trash is another man's treasure," gets a technological reboot on Freecycle.org. There you can search for groups near you and join for free. Members use Yahoo groups to post messages listing the items they want to give away. Though you won't earn money from the transactions, you'll help reduce waste and, in turn, receive messages about items you can get from others — all without paying a dime.

*Freecycle* began in Arizona in 2003, when Deron Beal announced the formation of the Freecycle Network to family, friends and local nonprofit organizations. The organization is "a grassroots, entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns." The mission is "to build a worldwide gifting movement that reduces waste, saves precious resources and eases the burden on our landfills while enabling our members to benefit from the strength of a larger community." And the numbers indicate that *Freecycle* has succeeded; since its founding, it has spread to 85 countries, encompassing almost 5,000 groups and six million members.

Yard-sale addicts and flea-market junkies will find *Freecycle* irresistible, but the site's environmentally friendly, community-building message should also appeal to a wider audience. The next time you take a look in your attic and debate taking your old dining room table or bicycle to the dump, visit *Freecycle* instead, and help the organization "keep good stuff out of landfills."

— Laura Caton, Editorial Intern





cepted as they pass through the company's overseas servers. It and Lebanon are both considering taking action against the company.

Writing for BBC News about the controversy, technology reporter Jane Wakefield asks the obvious question: What is the basis of the sudden concerns about RIM? Though it is the only telecommunications firm that automatically sends users' data to servers back in Canada (the company's home base), Wakefield suggests the real issue may be the fact that RIM routinely shares data with the U.S., Russia and China, among others — but not with smaller nations. RIM insists that it does not allow any third party — or even the company itself — to read information sent over its network ([www.bbc.co.uk/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/)).

Reporting for the Voice of America, Jerome Socolovsky notes that the issue represents the latest arena for conflict between governments and technology companies over the control of information in the Internet age. Earlier this year, Google had to remove its search engine from China, and Pakistan blocked access to the Internet social networking company Facebook over what authorities called blasphemy ([www.voanews.com/](http://www.voanews.com/)).

— Steven Alan Honley, *Editor*

## The Hezbollah Problem

A number of recent events have brought Lebanon back to the forefront of world attention. Rumors have swirled in recent weeks that the United Nations tribunal investigating the 2005 assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri is preparing to indict several members of Hezbollah, a powerful Shiite paramilitary group and major player in Lebanese politics. Over the summer, Leba-

## 50 Years Ago...

Clearance has its uses. For example, to avoid the appearance of precipitance. Did you receive a priority telegram from the field and write an answer within the hour? Surely you will not send it out; you would be branded as impetuous and your message as capricious. Clear it. A couple of days' delay will add to the message's stature, and yours.

Similarly, have you said all you have to say in four sentences, and find yourself embarrassed at your own brevity? Clear it thoroughly. You may be assured of at least two extra paragraphs, and the message will be impressive, if not monumental. ...

Importance. There is the key word when we talk about the uses of clearance. For adding an aura of importance to the most modest communication, clearance is second to none.

— Jack Perry, "Clear It with Sidney et Alibi," *FSJ*, October 1960.



non's intelligence forces reportedly broke up several Israeli spy networks. And earlier this month a border clash between Lebanese and Israeli armed forces resulted in casualties on both sides.

In early August, in a move that challenges the White House and State Department's support for the Lebanese Army, Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., and Rep. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., placed a hold on \$100 million in assistance designated for the Lebanese military, citing "Hezbollah influence on the Lebanese Armed Forces."

Through these holds, Berman and Lowey — House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman and House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman, respectively — effectively suspended future aid to Lebanon. Obama administration officials are working to have the holds reversed ([www.voanews.com/](http://www.voanews.com/)).

Military aid is one aspect of U.S. efforts to strengthen the Lebanese Army as a counterweight to Hezbollah, which draws strong support from the largest religious sect in Lebanon, the Shia. In recent elections the group's coalition party won 57 seats in Parliament, out of a total of 128. While offi-

cial U.S. policy identifies Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and refuses to engage with the group, there is a lively debate among experts about the wisdom of such an approach.

Yezid Sayigh, a professor of Middle East studies at King's College London, urges a different approach in a 2009 report published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Key recommendations include emphasizing reconciliation between Lebanon's factions to promote stability and not conditioning aid on the exclusion of opposition groups, including Hezbollah ([www.carnegieendowment.org/](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/)).

Steven Simon and Jonathan Stevenson, writing in the summer 2010 issue of *Democracy* ([www.democracyjournal.org/](http://www.democracyjournal.org/)) discuss what they term "The Hezbollah Problem" in detail. They assert that achieving U.S. goals — creating a stable and democratic Lebanon, ensuring Israeli security and reducing Iranian influence — requires the U.S. to "demilitarize Hezbollah, which means we'll have to talk to them."

In recognition of Hezbollah's participation in Lebanese politics, European Union representatives have taken cautious steps toward engaging the group, distinguishing between the



party's political and military wings. Britain has placed only the military wing on its list of terrorist groups, and E.U. officials have sought contact with Hezbollah's political representatives in Lebanon.

In contrast, U.S. officials appear to have little interest in meeting with Hezbollah, and some insist that this is entirely appropriate. A report on Hezbollah issued last month by Ash Jain, a visiting fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, questions the value of seeking closer ties with the group ([www.washingtoninstitute.org](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org)): "Engagement could merit consideration at some point in the future, when the group has been weakened and appears willing to accept a meaningful accommodation."

In the meantime, a potential disaster looms, as the unresolved conflict between Lebanon and Israel triggers armed clashes on the border that could lead to war. The International Crisis Group sounded the alarm in an August report: "The deterrence regime has helped keep the peace, but the process it perpetuates — mutually reinforcing military preparations; Hezbollah's growing and more sophisticated arsenal; escalating Israeli threats — pulls in the opposite direction and could trigger the very outcome it has averted so far" ([www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)).

— *Mohammad Alhinnawi,*  
*Editorial Intern*

### State Tops Survey of Best Employers

For the fifth year in a row, the Department of State has been ranked among the top 10 ideal employers in an annual poll of college undergraduates reported by *Business Week* ([www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com)).

This year's "Hottest Employer" sur-

Pakistan is facing a slow-motion tsunami. Its destructive power will accumulate and grow with time. ... Make no mistake: this is a global disaster, a global challenge. It is one of the greatest tests of global solidarity in our times.

— United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, addressing a special session of the U.N. General Assembly on the floods in Pakistan, Aug. 19, [www.un.org/](http://www.un.org/).

vey, conducted by Philadelphia-based Universum Communications, was based on the responses of 56,900 students attending 345 leading universities around the country between December 2009 and March 2010. The undergrads were asked to choose from among the top 100 companies and agencies most frequently mentioned by students in the previous annual survey. (Write-in responses were also permitted.)

While State came in sixth overall, behind (in order) Google, Walt Disney Co., the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Apple and Ernst & Young, undergraduates majoring in the humanities, arts or education ranked it second. (The department fared less well among business, engineering, information technology and natural sciences students.)

As for other federal agencies with a foreign affairs component, the Peace Corps came in eighth; the Central Intelligence Agency was 14th; and the U.S. Army ranked 55th. ■

— *Steven Alan Honley, Editor*



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# SPEAKING OUT

## *Defining the Ideal Diplomat*

BY MARC GROSSMAN

I recently read Harold Nicolson's classic 1939 study, *Diplomacy*, and President Barack Obama's May 2010 National Security Strategy back to back. Though the two publications were produced seven decades apart and are unlikely to be paired for anyone's monthly book club, they have more in common than one might expect.

Nicolson's volume reflects its era. He never mentions female or minority diplomats, and some of his characterizations of national traits would be considered politically incorrect today. Yet the work contains some lessons that today's diplomats would do well to apply.

In particular, consider Nicolson's plea that people should be clear about the definition of his chosen topic: "This word 'diplomacy' is carelessly taken to denote several quite different things ... as a synonym for foreign policy or for negotiations or for the processes and machinery by which negotiation is carried out."

Nicolson turns to the *Oxford English Dictionary* for the following definition: "the management of international relations by negotiation, focused on official ambassadors and envoys." Some pages later, he expands his view by recognizing that diplomacy is also about "the ordered conduct of relations between one group of human beings and another group alien to

*Once we craft a clear definition of what diplomacy encompasses, our profession will receive its due as a national security tool.*

themselves."

With that definition in mind, let us turn to the president's National Security Strategy document, which contains its own descriptions of the purposes of diplomacy and is based on four themes that will define the jobs of today's and tomorrow's U.S. diplomats.

First, the NSS recognizes the power of simultaneity. It highlights the fact that while the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century can each be observed and analyzed individually, none of them can be successfully addressed without reference to the others. As Hans Binnendijk and Richard Kugler, both of National Defense University, have put it, no single problem, danger or threat holds the key to the world's future. What matters is their interaction and the coordination of our responses.

Second, the NSS acknowledges that diplomacy is not the answer to every question. Maintaining the strongest

possible defense and being ready and willing to use force (preferably with others, but alone if necessary) are essential to protecting national security.

Third, just as diplomacy must be backed by the strongest possible defense, our capacity to influence events abroad requires a strong, resilient domestic foundation.

Fourth, the strategy conveys the message that American diplomacy will not succeed unless our allies and friends around the world support it. As *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman has written about European involvement in Afghanistan, "Don't just show us the love; show us the money. Show us the troops. Show us the diplomatic effort." *Washington Post* writer Anne Applebaum puts it this way: "Halfway through his presidency, George W. Bush found he had to drop unilateralism in favor of diplomacy. Now one wonders: at some point in his presidency, will Obama find he has to drop diplomacy in favor of unilateralism?"

### **Definitions Matter**

Reading *Diplomacy*, with its emphasis on being clear about definitions, and the NSS together, I was reminded that while President Obama took office last year promising to engage the world by offering an open hand to America's adversaries, his statements sometimes conveyed the idea that engagement





was the same thing as diplomacy. This left him open to criticism that such an approach was naive.

Indeed, Nicolson might say that a challenge for diplomatic professionals is the temptation to view diplomacy as somehow synonymous with engagement. In fact, leaders and practitioners alike need to be clear that engagement is only one element of diplomacy. While engagement is important, diplomacy is about more than talking to America's adversaries. In addition, though it does not produce results overnight, diplomacy lays the groundwork for success in the long run — at least when strategically conceived and properly executed.

In more recent statements the president has been clearer about this key distinction. For example, in a commencement speech at West Point in May, he declared that: "Engagement is not an end in itself."

U.S. relations with Russia and Iran are two examples of the need to think clearly about the distinction between engagement and diplomacy.

Some observers criticized President Obama's pledge to reach out to Tehran in the early months of his administration. They cited Iranian declarations that it would build even more nuclear enrichment plants, deny or delay access to IAEA inspectors, and enrich fuel to higher percentages as evidence of the policy's failure.

In fact, offers of American engagement at that time helped expose fissures inside the Tehran regime and between the regime and the Iranian people. Moreover, talks with Tehran last fall produced a modest nuclear deal that hardliners then rejected. Pres. Obama used this backsliding as part of a larger diplomatic strategy to rally the international community to

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***We must resist the temptation to view diplomacy as synonymous with engagement.***

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get tougher with Iran. In November 2009, Russia and China voted with the United States in favor of an International Atomic Energy Agency resolution demanding that Iran freeze operations at its once-secret nuclear enrichment plant. And in May 2010 they supported tough United Nations Security Council sanctions on Iran, despite a Turkish and Brazilian effort to head it off.

Engagement with Iran is now only a part (and perhaps likely to be a shrinking part) of a broader U.S. diplomatic strategy to end Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. The Obama administration can continue a policy of engagement to strengthen those in Tehran who want a diplomatic solution while simultaneously pursuing international support for even tighter sanctions. But in doing so, it should engage not only the regime, but the people of Iran, including the pro-democracy movement. Toward that end, senior U.S. officials should speak out in defense of those championing freedom and human rights.

Washington should also sound out Tehran's neighbors on creating multi-lateral structures to dissuade Iran from pursuing its nuclear ambitions. For ex-

ample, the U.S. could propose joint military exercises between NATO and the nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Relations with Russia have followed a similar course. Although the Obama administration has been heavily criticized for pressing the "reset button" in U.S.-Russian relations, the policy has already yielded tangible results. As he engaged the Kremlin, the president changed direction on missile defenses in Central Europe, abandoning missile and radar sites in Poland and the Czech Republic to which Moscow had objected. This shift helps explain Russia's IAEA and U.N. votes against Iran.

Although serious differences with Russia remain, engagement became part of a plan that has also led to the New START arms control treaty awaiting Senate ratification. To make further progress in this area, the administration can now leverage its strategic arms dialogue with Moscow to bring together Russia, China, India, Japan and the NATO allies in support of a joint missile defense effort to protect our peoples from the threat of state or non-state extremists armed with ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

### **The Modern Diplomat**

Nicholson says in his book that the type of people we choose to be diplomats is important. This will surely be proven true as the administration seeks to realize the goals in the National Security Strategy. In concluding a chapter on "The Ideal Diplomat," Nicholson describes the qualities such professionals possess as "truth, accuracy, calm, patience, good humor, modesty and loyalty." He continues: "But the reader may object, you have forgotten intelligence, knowledge, discernment,



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prudence, hospitality, charm, industry, courage and even tact. I have not forgotten them. I have taken them for granted.”

The State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development are benefiting from a welcome, long-overdue infusion of talent, thanks in large part to the efforts of Secretaries of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell. A key factor in meeting Nicolson’s high standards for diplomats will be the professional education these new employees receive. The curriculum should include respect for the history of American diplomacy, a focus on leadership and accountability, guidance on how to link policy and resources, skill at program direction, and readiness to use new media.

Their training must also combine the transfer of experience with a recognition, well highlighted in the NSS, that much about the future will be different. Otherwise, as former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban has cautioned, the influence of experience and analogy in the training of diplomats may blind them to the original, unpredictable, innovative factors in international conduct.

This insight is especially relevant to thinking about the point the NSS makes about the importance of developing and supporting a whole-of-government approach to meeting the challenges of this complicated century. Today’s diplomats must be able to work effectively with the interagency community, as well as overseas counterparts, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector.

Pres. Obama’s National Security Strategy gets a very great deal right. But we find ourselves, as Nicolson did so many years ago while writing *Diplo-*

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### ***U.S. relations with Russia and Iran are two examples of the need to think clearly about the distinction between engagement and diplomacy.***

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*macy*, needing to be careful about how we define our terms. If we can get that task right, diplomacy will receive its due as a national security tool. Equally important, the people we recruit and train to carry out our nation’s diplomatic business will be better prepared to manage the challenges of the 21st century. ■

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*Marc Grossman, a Foreign Service officer from 1976 to 2005, served as ambassador to Turkey (1994-1997), assistant secretary of State for European affairs (1997-2000), director general of the Foreign Service (2000-2001) and under secretary for political affairs (2001-2005), retiring with the rank of career ambassador. He is now vice chairman of The Cohen Group, a consulting firm. Ambassador Grossman wishes to thank the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the Harvard Kennedy School’s Program on the Future of Diplomacy for their support in thinking about these issues. The views expressed here are, of course, his own.*

# KEEPING AMERICA CONNECTED: CHALLENGES FOR THE BBG



John Craig

CHANGING TECHNOLOGY, TOUGH COMPETITION  
AND A SHRINKING BUDGET: HOW SHOULD THE NEW  
BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS PROCEED?

BY RICHARD G. LUGAR

A key component of any nation's public diplomacy effort is its ability to communicate with ordinary citizens in other countries. It may be through people-to-people and cultural exchanges, communications such as press briefings, or visits by our diplomatic personnel to schools, villages and universities.

Another important means is broadcasting. For the U.S., broadcasting began with the Voice of America during World War II, beamed around the world via shortwave radio to dissidents and underground operatives, as well as our allies.



The intervening years have resulted in a host of new ways to connect, not only with those living in authoritarian regimes but with the rest of the world, as well — from FM radio to the latest social media tools available on both the Internet and personal cell phones.

In addition to multiple commercial broadcasters and other foreign government entities competing with U.S. efforts, with different forms of media have also come different methods of repression. Some nations block American broadcasting efforts by jamming our radio broadcasts, satellite TV or Internet programming, while others imprison, torture or kill local and international journalists.

The organization tasked with ensuring the U.S. message gets through is the Broadcasting Board of Governors. The board oversees the operations of the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Network and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, which together broadcast in some 60 languages to an estimated audience of 170 million weekly through radio, TV and the Internet. The board consists of eight members nominated by the president (four Republicans and four Democrats) with the Secretary of State as the ninth member. One of the four nominated by the president's party is designated the chairman.

Congress originally established the board in the mid-1990s to keep our broadcasting operations free from political pressures from either end of Pennsylvania Avenue. After 15 years, however, it has become clear that, rather than serving as a political "firewall," the BBG has often become a political "football" as board nominations have become enmeshed in partisan politics. Until recently, the board had not been fully staffed since 2004, and the chairmanship had been vacant since June 2008. A consequence of this chronic uncertainty in leadership and direction, not surprisingly, is that the BBG has consistently ranked at the very bottom in surveys of federal employees' workplace satisfaction. Yet the need for robust

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*Senator Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind., is the ranking minority member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He was the 2005 recipient of AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award.*

***"It is our responsibility to serve as a firewall between the international broadcasters and the policymaking institutions in the foreign affairs community."***

— *Former BBG Chairman Marc Nathanson*

leadership has never been greater.

That is one of the main conclusions of a report that I commissioned Paul Foldi of my staff to prepare earlier this year. Following publication in June of that report — "U.S. International Broadcasting: Is Anybody Listening?" (<http://lugar.senate.gov/issues/foreign/diplomacy/report.pdf>) — I was pleased that a new chairman,

the noted author and former CNN and *Time* magazine chief Walter Isaacson, and seven other members of the board were at last confirmed by the Senate in July.

The new BBG has a full plate before them, as the report documents. Broadcasting issues related to Russia, Iran, China, Zimbabwe, North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela, whose regimes do everything they can to prevent our broadcasts from getting through, all demand immediate attention. It is also time for a critical look at our Middle East broadcasting operations, where we are struggling for market share in a media market that grows more crowded by the day.

Elsewhere, a headline in the Aug. 24 *Washington Post* highlights the communication challenge in Pakistan. Even after receiving billions of dollars of American non-military aid in recent years, and additional assistance in the aftermath of this summer's flooding, more than 80 percent of Pakistanis still have an unfavorable view of the U.S.

We must not only work harder at gaining broader audiences for our programs, but also face fierce competition to keep our listeners, viewers and readers engaged.

### **Changing with the Times**

American public diplomacy has always addressed two audiences. One audience views the United States positively, as a democracy based on the free flow of information, the freedom of expression, civic discourse and active citizen participation in government. This group will more often than not be supportive of U.S. actions and initiatives, or at least give us the benefit of the doubt.

Members of the second group believe that these strengths are, instead, weaknesses and are predisposed to assume the worst about America; as a result, they reject — or worse, attack — us. Successful public diplomacy keeps the first group engaged and increases its numbers

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while reducing the size and impact of the second. The influence on both groups comes not only from the actions, images and words of our own nation, but from competition by other nations whose interests may or may not agree with our own.

International broadcasting, a major tool for connecting with these audiences, was once thought of only in terms of shortwave broadcasts to dissidents huddled late at night over their radios. Recent technological advancements and rising standards of living have led to a virtual explosion of other communication outlets, from the greater use of FM radio to television, the Internet, social media and cell phones. All these advances have greatly expanded the potential audience, but are also straining our broadcasters' ability and budgets to reach them.


Our broadcasting mission has expanded significantly

*The U.S. government distributes programming via radio, TV, the Internet and other new media in 60 languages to an estimated 170 million people weekly.*

over the past two decades, as well. The Voice of America was initially part of the Office of War Information and was then moved to the State Department in 1945. In 1953, it was relocated to the U.S. Information Agency, where it remained for nearly half a century. In 1999, when USIA was absorbed by the State Department, VOA and the surrogate stations were left under the control of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, the overseer of

U.S. broadcasting within USIA since 1995. The board and all its units then became an independent entity.

The "surrogates" are tasked with providing listeners in countries whose press freedom is limited with the news from inside their own countries and regions. Governments of the nations receiving these transmissions are very often hostile to this information and spend millions



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of dollars trying to jam surrogate radio/TV and Internet broadcasts. The Voice of America, by contrast, was tasked by Congress in Public Law 94-350 to “represent America, not any single segment of American society. ... [VOA] will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions (and) will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively.”

VOA’s headquarters are in Washington, D.C., with transmission facilities around the world. RFE/RL, based in Prague, currently broadcasts to 21 countries in 28 languages. It now ranges far afield from its Iron Curtain roots, with broadcasts to Iraq and Iran (since 1998), Afghanistan (2002) and the Pakistan border area (2010).

Public Law 98-111, The Radio Broadcasting to Cuba Act, created “Radio Martí” in 1983 as a surrogate station, distinct from any VOA transmissions to Cuba. Radio Martí went on the air in 1985, and TV Martí began operations in 1990. Both services are currently located in Miami.

Radio Free Asia, located in Washington, D.C., was created in 1994 by P.L.103-236 and began broadcasting in 1997. It currently broadcasts to Burma, Cambodia, China, Laos, North Korea, Tibet and Vietnam. The Middle East Broadcast Networks, Inc., located in Springfield, Va., includes Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa. (Radio Sawa began broadcasting 24 hours a day on March 23, 2002 and Alhurra began transmission on Feb. 14, 2004.)

### **Firewall or Football?**

Congress established the Broadcasting Board of Governors in 1994, while USIA still existed, to oversee the operations of the Voice of America and the surrogate stations. The first board was sworn in on Aug. 11, 1995. The aim was to create an independent agency as a bipartisan buffer against potential political interference and to ensure its products were objective and balanced.

As then-BBG Chairman Marc Nathanson said in 2001: “It is our responsibility to serve as a firewall between the international broadcasters and the policymaking institutions in the foreign affairs community, both here in Washington and overseas. This is a responsibility we take very seriously. Because at the end of the day, it is precisely by providing accurate news and information — sought and trusted by people around the world — that we earn and

*Keeping the BBG at full strength and fully functional has proved difficult, at best.*

keep our credibility” (<http://ibb7-2.ibb.gov/bbg/board.html#nathanson>).

However, keeping the BBG at full strength and fully functional has proved difficult, at best. The board was fully staffed for only six of its 15 years of operation, and consistently had vacancies from 2004 until June 2010. Prior to this summer’s approval of a new panel, the board had only four members (two Republicans and two Democrats), each of whom had been serving since 2002. While this was well beyond the official three-year term of office, BBG members are, by law, able to serve until replaced.

For several years, partisan politics on both sides turned the political “firewall” into a “football.” The committee’s analysis showed that, as of May 2010, the average vacancy for a board position was over 460 days, with one position remaining vacant for more than four years.

The board had not had a chairman since June 2008, when James Glassman left to fill the post vacated by Karen Hughes as under secretary of State for public diplomacy. He was not replaced, and the Obama administration did not formally submit candidates for a new board until November 2009. Senate action took another seven months. The long gap between the presidential election and the swearing-in of the new members effectively left the board in limbo and kept it from taking any action on the myriad technical and geopolitical issues that confronted it. The holdovers were understandably reluctant to address such matters given the nominations waiting in the wings.

A similar lack of direction and uncertainty over leadership has greatly eroded the morale of BBG employees. A 2008 survey of federal workers in 37 agencies found the BBG ranked last in indexes for leadership and knowledge management, results-oriented performance culture and talent management, and second-to-last in job satisfaction. Perhaps even more telling, these results were exactly the same in the 2006 version of the survey.

With a full board finally in place, I am hopeful that Mr. Isaacson and his colleagues will be vigorous in pursuing the many matters that have accumulated on the BBG’s agenda. But continual dysfunction at the top is no way to run a multimedia network with global reach. Congress should remain vigilant, and if this pattern of multiple board vacancies and long-delayed confirmations resumes, we may well have to consider a new structure to oversee our



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international broadcasters so that this important tool of public diplomacy gets the consistent management and oversight it deserves.

### **Pressing Matters**

One of the issues confronting the new board is the limits on the ability of U.S. broadcasters to reach their desired audiences. Sometimes this is due to crowded media markets, such as in the Middle East, where our voice is one among many. Sometimes our voice is silenced or suppressed — as in China, Iran and Russia, which use intimidation to prevent local affiliates from carrying U.S. programming or employ sophisticated technologies to shut down satellites, jam radio transmissions or block Internet sites.

My staff's report on the BBG highlights a number of concerns:

- Alhurra, the 24-hour Arabic television news channel,

*A lack of direction and uncertainty over leadership has greatly eroded the morale of BBG employees.*

is expensive and little-watched in this vital region outside of Iraq. Its \$90 million budget surpasses the combined costs of Radio Free Asia (\$37 million), Radio/TV Martí (\$30 million) and VOA's Persian News Network Television (\$17 million). Given the crowded media environment of the Middle East, either

greater resources must be devoted to marketing and promotion, or the programming must be changed. Should these efforts fail to improve viewership levels, policymakers will have to decide if continuing Alhurra's operations is worth the high cost.

- The Chinese government has issued only two work visas for Voice of America Beijing-based correspondents since 2009 and, for over a year, has blocked VOA from opening a bureau in Shanghai. By contrast, since 2007, the U.S. government has issued some 2,900 press visas to Chinese journalists and media personnel. China's state-run



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media organization, Xinhua News, has some 75 correspondents based in the United States and, as of the time this article was written, is preparing to open a massive new office in New York's Times Square.

- Journalists in Russia are routinely abducted, tortured and murdered with virtual impunity. The number of Russian radio stations carrying Radio Free Europe's Russian service broadcasting has declined precipitously, from over 30 stations in 2001 to just five today. VOA dropped from 85 stations in 2003 to just one by 2009 as the Russian government successfully silenced most BBG broadcasts by simply refusing to renew local radio station licenses unless U.S. programming was dropped. The State Department should raise this issue at the highest levels and should monitor closely rising attempts to block BBG Internet sites.

- In Asia, according to the human rights nongovernmental organization Freedom House, the six countries served by Radio Free Asia are experiencing steadily dwindling levels of press freedom, with none currently ranked higher than 132 out of 195 nations. RFA, set up in 1994 with the hope that the post-Cold War tide of democracy and liberalization would soon sweep Asia, was originally authorized only on a temporary basis.

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation to permanently authorize Radio Free Asia in recognition of the unfortunate reality of press freedom in Asia. Following publication of the report, Congress passed the legislation and Pres. Obama signed it in July, putting RFA on a legislative par with Radio Free Europe and Cuba and Middle East broadcasting. This demonstrates to countries in the region and RFA listeners the high priority we place on maintaining free and open media.

- The BBC's Arabic-language Radio Sawa has an hourly format of 45 minutes of music with 15 minutes of news. Despite vocal skepticism by many when it appeared in 2002, Sawa quickly became popular with the burgeoning under-30 demographic deemed critical in that region, virtually none of whom had listened to VOA's Arabic radio programming.

Over time, though, as its format has been copied by local stations, Sawa's listenership has declined by 25 percent. Greater funding for marketing or a change in for-

*One of the issues  
confronting the new board is  
the limits on the ability of  
U.S. broadcasters to reach  
their desired audiences.*

mat may be needed.

- While Radio Free Asia is tasked with reaching a population of more than one billion, its annual marketing budget has never exceeded \$7,000. Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc., which oversees Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa, has seen its marketing budget fluctuate wildly from a few thousand dollars in 2005 and 2006 to \$100,000

in 2007, back to \$5,000 in 2008 and more than \$1 million in 2009. Such inconsistencies play havoc with any long-term attempts to capture market share and must be addressed.

- The government of Iran continues to attempt to jam both VOA's Persian News Network TV (which uses multiple satellite systems to prevent a total shutdown) and Radio Free Europe's Persian-language Radio Farda. In February the Iranian government arrested seven journalists for merely holding job interviews with Farda. Efforts to ensure that our programming gets through should remain a high priority. In that regard, it is noteworthy that PNN's new iPhone application, which enables videos to be downloaded directly to VOA, has made "citizen journalists" out of thousands of Iranians.

- Critics note that some BBG entities have allowed individuals opposed to U.S. policy to air their views without any rebuttal or balanced context. While allowing such vitriol to go uncontested is clearly poor journalism, such occurrences have been rare, not the norm. Nonetheless, in order for the BBG to be credible to its audience and not just draw in those who already agree with U.S. policy, its networks must be permitted to present both sides of an argument.

- The Voice of America is tasked with broadcasting news about the U.S., the world and the region in which a country lies. The surrogates, on the other hand, are to focus on news from within the countries to which they broadcast. These programmatic lines are beginning to blur as VOA and the surrogates stray into each other's core areas.

- Congress should revisit the Smith-Mundt Act, passed in 1948 and later amended, which bans U.S. government broadcasting within the U.S. (for fear that the government would unduly influence its own citizens). This review is particularly warranted given the fact that the governments of Russia and China, as well as other foreign entities, cur-

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rently broadcast in English in the United States. Even al-Qaida has reportedly launched an English-language online magazine that will be available in the United States.

Meanwhile, recent Arabic-speaking immigrants to the United States are able to watch Al-Jazeera, yet are prevented by Smith-Mundt from viewing Alhurra. These realities, coupled with the rise of the Internet, which enables computer users in the U.S. to receive video and audio streams of BBG broadcasts and readily access BBG Web sites, demonstrate that the legislation is both anachronistic and potentially harmful.

- As part of its FY 2011 budget submission, the BBG has proposed closing its last U.S.-based shortwave broadcasting facility, located in Greenville, N.C. The board projects a \$3.2 million savings as a result of this closure. While there is no question that the audience for shortwave is decreasing in some countries, policymakers need to decide if shuttering the only remaining facility on American soil makes strategic sense. Moreover, while the U.S. has been jettisoning its shortwave facilities, closing some 60 stations

in the last 10 years and leaving just 200, China has been doing the opposite, almost doubling its number to 284 in the same period.

### Time for Fresh Thinking

These and other concerns all stem, in one way or another, from the fact that U.S.-funded international broadcasting today operates in an environment where technology is changing rapidly, competitors are multiplying, the global political scene is fluid and the federal budget is under stress.

Despite the difficulties, getting this aspect of public diplomacy right is important to our foreign policy goals. The matters I have outlined and others that are sure to arise all demand attention from a fully engaged BBG.

I am confident that the new board will bring to these challenges seriousness of purpose, fresh thinking and a focus on results. And I am hopeful that in the future, Congress and the rest of the executive branch will also do their part to see that the BBG is treated with the priority it deserves. ■

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American government sponsorship of a television program in a developing country can be a time-consuming and potentially risky endeavor. Media outlets may be skittish, as association with the United States might undermine the outlet's legitimacy, and the resulting product may be labeled "propaganda." Besides the normal risks of failure present in any public diplomacy initiative, the high profile of television programs heightens the potential that the embassy's involvement might spill over to taint the image of the U.S. in that country. Given all these dangers, embassy front offices may be understandably skeptical about the wisdom of directly supporting programming.

Yet the ability to reach audiences in the millions, a sizable proportion of a country's population, makes television an extremely attractive medium for U.S. public diplomacy and development efforts. It is particularly popular with the young and the less educated, who tend not to read newspapers and other print media. These are precisely the demographics that the U.S. is often trying to reach.

Moreover, not only is TV a growth industry, but it often

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*Jeremiah Carew, a Foreign Service officer since 2004, was deputy director of USAID's Afghanistan infrastructure office until July 2010. He served previously in Peru and has just begun a new assignment in Uganda.*

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"ON THE ROAD," A USAID-SPONSORED TV PROGRAM, WAS ONE OF THE MOST WATCHED IN AFGHANISTAN DURING ITS FIRST SEASON.

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BY JEREMIAH CAREW

exerts a highly progressive, modernizing influence in conservative societies. (See for example, "The Networker: Afghanistan's First Media Mogul" by Ken Auletta in the July 5 *New Yorker*, which mentions USAID and State media support in Afghanistan, and "TV Will Save the World" by Charles Kenny in the March 22 issue of *Time*.)

With the United States and the international community in the spotlight in Afghanistan, the risks of American-sponsored television programming are as high there as anywhere in the world. Yet despite this, a U.S.-sponsored program called "On the Road" that is now concluding its first season has become one of the most-watched programs in all of Afghanistan.

A number of important lessons coming out of this experience are helpful for others considering American sponsorship of television programming in developing countries. This article will explore those lessons from a program manager's perspective, citing data from a recent independent viewership survey.

## USAID Goes "On the Road"

"On the Road" is a 26-episode television series in which a well-known, young Afghan host visits a different province each week. The style is that of a reality travel show. In each episode, the host speaks with residents of a province in unscripted, informal interviews, samples the local cui-



sine, sees local historical sites, and visits development projects to converse with beneficiaries about how the projects have affected their lives. USAID sponsors the show through a subcontract with a private Afghan television station, Tolo TV, that has its own production arm.

USAID has several objectives in sponsoring the program. First, it aims to educate Afghans about their country, history and culture to help build a sense of national unity and tolerance after decades of war and, often, isolation. The program helps “stitch together” the country, which has been rife with ethnic tensions among Hazara, Pashtun, Tajik and Uzbek groups for much of its recent history. The program is also aimed at informing Afghans about the positive role that the central government, partnered with the international community, is playing in improving average people’s lives, across the country, through development projects.

“On the Road” packages these educational objectives in an entertaining format that highlights unique — and often surprising — aspects of the provinces: motocross racing in Herat, skiing in Bamyān, “Mohammed tourism” in Badakhshan and poetry jams in Kandahar. Finally, the program is contributing to the development of an indigenous media industry, capable of producing high-quality series by, for and about Afghans.

The program began to receive positive “buzz” early in the broadcast schedule. Seeking greater insight into its effectiveness, USAID program managers for the series contracted an independent, third-party viewership survey to find out who was watching the program and what messages they were hearing. The results were surprisingly encouraging.

The probability sample survey estimated that 37 to 46 percent of Afghans watch the program — between 10.8 and 13.4 million of a total population of 29 million. This result confounded the conventional wisdom about the reach of television in Afghanistan, where only 15-20 percent of the population has access to the electrical grid. The survey found that many of those watching did so using communal televisions — in fact, about half of those without access to electricity reported that they watched television every day, or several times a week, at a neighbor’s or nearby business that had some form of electricity (generator, car battery, etc.).

## *The program began to receive positive “buzz” early in the broadcast schedule.*

The survey found “On the Road” to be the third-most-watched program on Afghan TV, just a few percentage points behind the most-watched. Survey results also showed that the program has built up a loyal following: of those who have seen it, fully 82 percent watch it regularly (either weekly or bi-

weekly) and 97 percent plan to continue to watch it.

Viewers also seem to have “gotten” the program. When asked to identify the main messages of the show, they gravitated to significant themes — advances in road infrastructure, better schooling and female empowerment in recent years. Focus groups revealed that viewers like the program because it provides an opportunity “to learn about traditions in other provinces in Afghanistan” and that it generates “a sentiment of national unity.” Interestingly, the main feedback on how to improve the program is to include more village settings in rural areas and to lengthen each episode.

## **Lessons Learned**

With hard data from the survey in hand and the first 26-episode season concluded, it is possible to extract a number of lessons learned. While country contexts certainly vary, basic principles regarding working in an embassy, establishing relationships with implementers, and managing risks are transferrable to sponsoring television programs in other developing countries.

**Know your objectives by heart.** It sounds simple, but can be difficult to do in practice. With such an inherently risky endeavor, it is essential that the program manager be able to convey, fluently and persuasively, to stakeholders and decision-makers why the project is worth doing. It is important for him or her to have an “elevator speech” (i.e., a short speech that can be recited in the time it takes to ride an elevator) memorized to articulate how the objectives of the program fit into the larger U.S. foreign policy objectives for the country. In the case of “On the Road,” those objectives center on promoting national unity and facilitating the central government’s development partnership with the international community and the Afghan public.

**Get front office and public affairs buy-in early.** Given the risks outlined above, it is necessary to get explicit support from, first, the public affairs section, and then the embassy front office. This can be done through

a memo, a briefing or both; but it needs to be taken care of before production starts.

In a busy embassy, it may be hard to get anyone to focus on an abstract concept. In Afghanistan, we obtained full engagement once a pilot episode was available to show people, who could then make insightful, specific suggestions on messages and protocols. We immediately integrated that feedback into production so that future episodes reflected it.

**Invest in high-quality monitoring and evaluation.**

We spent approximately 25 percent of our Season 1 budget on a viewership survey — a relatively high percentage. However, without that data we had no way to know, other than by means of anecdotes, whether the program was reaching anyone. The money was well spent because the survey revealed the exact value of the program in terms of how many Afghans were tuning in, as well as what they were seeing. The survey also informs a potential second season for the series — a major investment that will be much more effective because we spent money on this evaluation.

This point relates back to knowing the objectives: unless you know exactly what you aim to achieve, it is impossible to measure progress toward it. If you can afford it, conduct a high-quality evaluation before the show airs to establish a baseline regarding the attitudes you intend to influence.

**A popular host takes his audience with him or her.**

We made an extremely lucky choice early on: through auditions for the show's host, a young, well-known Afghan television personality was hired. The host was already popular with the Afghan public, and his credibility and name recognition transferred to "On the Road." We were lucky to be able to hire such a personality; this is a factor that will obviously vary a great deal depending on the country context.

**Contract versus grant.** "On the Road" is produced using a subcontract, a choice that has allowed us significant control over the final product, a great advantage given the number of risks for the program in Afghanistan. In fact, the embassy approved each and every episode before it aired and could request edits as needed, most often on politically sensitive topics or controversial figures.

*The program helps "stitch together" the country, which has been rife with ethnic tensions among Hazara, Pashtun, Tajik and Uzbek groups for much of its recent history.*

A grant, by contrast, permits more of an "arms length" relationship with the media organization, allowing both the embassy and media outlet to largely avoid the accusation that it is producing "propaganda" for the U.S. government.

The choice between these two approaches is an important one and will probably depend on the particular risks and capabilities in the

country in question, as well as the format of the program.

**Take credit.** We took a controversial decision early on: to display a visible USAID tag line at the end of each episode to credit the U.S. government with bringing the show to viewers. The media outlet we worked with was somewhat unsure about this addition, wondering if there might be a backlash against the entire channel. And we all wondered whether this would not automatically undermine the show's credibility with viewers.

However, we ultimately realized that the best way to promote our public diplomacy objectives is to be forthright about our role. As Americans, we expect sponsorship to be explicitly stated in the programs we view in the U.S. — why should it be different for Afghans?

The survey results underlined the success of this decision. Nearly half of the respondents knew that the program was funded by the United States. Yet when asked about what they liked about the program, viewers' top response was that it was "credible/trustworthy." It appears that the upfront approach actually enhanced the show's credibility with viewers.

**Partner with the local media outlet.** Especially if the show is produced under a subcontract, it is natural for differences to arise with the media outlet(s) involved, since they are used to having creative license to produce programs as they please. The best way through these issues is to come to general agreement on the basic concept for the program and then to defer to the media outlet on creative issues. Reserve the right to make changes for when it matters: i.e., for issues of politically sensitive material that must be edited out for the U.S. government to be able to sponsor.

Our relationship with our implementer remained strong as we focused on the big picture: a hit show that we all loved and believed in. We tried to emphasize the value

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of creative license within that framework, as long as we reserved the right to edit out controversial footage.

**Keep ethical issues in mind.** Because the format of “On the Road” depended upon unscripted, spontaneous interaction with people in the provinces, we wanted to make sure that beneficiaries were not coached. We explicitly communicated our expectations in that regard with all parties. It is important to set an atmosphere of honest and ethical behavior for the whole team.

**When in doubt, start conservatively and adjust as you go.** We were unsure of many things — for example, how U.S. sponsorship would be viewed and if the host should address certain gender issues (obviously, extremely sensitive in Afghanistan). So we proceeded cautiously, making adjustments based on feedback. We knew that we had reached safe ground regarding explicit U.S. sponsorship when private companies began to approach the TV station to sponsor the popular show. In addition, the survey results indicated that we probably could have been more aggressive in dealing with gender issues, with many respondents asking to see women’s issues addressed, in-

cluding the potential addition of a female co-host.

### **Plenty of Potential**

Our experience indicates that, if approached with care, U.S. government-sponsored television programs can make a significant contribution to meeting public diplomacy and development objectives.

In Afghanistan today, chances are that average, especially urban or peri-urban, Afghans know about “On the Road” (“Haimadan Taimadan” in Dari). If so, it is likely that they watch it regularly and enjoy it, and there is a fairly good chance that they know that it is U.S.-sponsored.

While Afghanistan appears to be a unique case because of its high profile and large budgets, programs like this one are likely replicable in many countries — costs were very reasonable and indigenous media outlets in many countries are likely to be interested in subsidizing quality productions.

With careful thinking about risks and heads-up program management, such programs can be successful in many developing countries. ■



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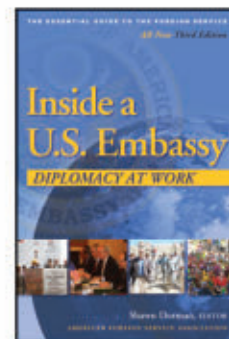
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# U.S.-FUNDED MEDIA AND THE “SOFT WAR” IN IRAN

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he main U.S.-funded broadcasters have long battled the misperception that they are anachronisms using an outmoded medium — radio — in a world that increasingly relies on more diverse forms of communication. In fact, organizations like the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty disseminate information through a wide array of new platforms. In few countries are new media efforts more ambitious, and more closely watched, than in Iran.

The two primary Persian-language broadcasters funded by Congress — VOA’s Persian News Network satellite TV station and RFE/RL’s Radio Farda — are 24-hour operations. In addition to their core TV and radio services, they stream extensive content onto their Web sites; transmit local, international and U.S.-focused programming via blogs, Twitter feeds and news alerts to mobile phones; upload videos to YouTube; and manage dynamic Facebook pages.

Together with the BBC and other foreign-based media, these stations play an important role as conduits of infor-

WITH ITS LARGE, TECH-SAVVY POPULATION OF PEOPLE UNDER 30, IRAN IS FERTILE GROUND FOR A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN BY U.S. BROADCASTERS.

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By ROBERT McMAHON

mation into and out of Iran. The regime denounces these media efforts as a “soft war” waged by outside forces and has responded by mounting one of the world’s most intense censorship efforts: jamming broadcasts, blocking Web sites and infiltrating Facebook accounts. A kind of cat-and-mouse game has ensued, with many Iranians keeping a step ahead of the censors, in part with the help of anti-filtering software from U.S. sources that is exempted from sanctions by the U.S. government.

These media struggles play out at a time of troubling developments in Iran. Chief among them is Tehran’s uranium enrichment program, which many fear is a cover for seeking nuclear weapons capability. The Obama administration’s engagement policy has made little progress, so the White House has lately focused on tightening sanctions aimed at stalling the nuclear program. With military action against the regime still seemingly a remote prospect, the soft power option of stepped-up broadcasts remains attractive. In the continuing absence of formal U.S. relations with Iran, social media are more important than ever for connecting with its people.

Experts say Iran, with its large, educated, tech-savvy population of people under 30 is fertile ground for this approach. “There’s a huge market [for information] because of the failings of the state, because private media stay away from controversial issues,” says Alex Vatanka, an Iran ex-

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*Robert McMahon is editor of CFR.org, the Web site of the Council on Foreign Relations. He worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty from 1992 to 2005 in a variety of senior editorial jobs, including terms as director of central news and United Nations correspondent.*



pert at the Middle East Institute. The vehemence of government jamming efforts against VOA and RFE/RL is one indication of the stations' popularity. Both organizations continue to receive a high flow of messages and other feedback from Iranians in exile and in the country. Yet despite such traffic, U.S. broadcasting officials say it is difficult to gauge how much of their news and programming is getting through the censors. An additional challenge is determining the validity of Iranian-based tips and "crowd-sourced" information.

The struggle for Iran's information space suggests that even more resources are needed, including more staff to handle surging social media traffic and counter the regime's efforts to both block and distort new media content. To date, Iran's government has proven skillful in its own use of social media to spread fear and uncertainty. "While dissidents love new media, authoritarian governments love new media, too," says Jeffrey Gedmin, president of RFE/RL, which broadcasts Radio Farda.

Larry Diamond, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, writes in the July edition of the *Journal of Democracy* of a growing competition worldwide between democrats and autocrats over mastery of what has been called "liberation technology." "Not just technology but political organization and strategy and deep-rooted normative, social, and economic forces will determine who 'wins' the race," he writes.

### **The Mission and the Media**

The Broadcasting Board of Governors, the agency responsible for overseeing all U.S.-funded civilian international broadcasting, regularly stresses its role in protecting the editorial independence of its broadcasters from any government meddling. But its media services are also acknowledged to be an important tool in U.S. soft power efforts, countering authoritarian governments' media blockades and projecting U.S. and Western values — and objectives such as democracy promotion — through a steady diet of news reporting and cultural and feature programming.

Following the 9/11 attacks, U.S. government broadcasters received a surge in funding aimed at reaching Muslim audiences. Broadcasts to Iran were part of this wave,

*Tehran has mounted one of the world's most intense censorship efforts: jamming broadcasts, blocking Web sites and infiltrating Facebook accounts.*

attracting special interest from the George W. Bush administration as the country's strategic importance soared in the wake of two military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan and new revelations emerged about its uranium enrichment program.

Congress approved new funding for VOA to start Persian-language television programming in 2003, and the Persian News Network was launched in 2007. During that pe-

riod, the newly created Radio Farda also received a boost for online efforts, in particular. VOA today receives about \$10 million to run PNN with 83 fulltime staff; Radio Farda's budget is around \$6.3 million with 63 fulltime staff.

U.S. officials have been careful to stress that the new efforts are aimed at informing an Iranian population seen as keen to embrace democratic changes. Executives at both organizations underscore their mission to provide news and information. Yet they have at times faced criticism about their programming. Most recently, PNN has had to confront allegations by Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., that it permits anti-American views to be broadcast on the network. It has also heard charges from other critics that it gives too much air time to Iranian monarchists in exile.

VOA Executive Editor Steve Redisch says the network has been scrupulous in providing equal time to competing voices. "There are people who believe we should be in the business of regime change; there are those who believe we should restore the monarchy," says Redisch, a former executive editor for CNN in Washington. "Our charter says we have to be a reliable and accurate source of news and information. We are supposed to report it straight."

RFE/RL's Gedmin also stresses that Radio Farda is not intended to be the broadcast arm of the Green opposition movement. But he says Farda's mission remains to reach Iranians excluded or persecuted by the regime. "At the end of the day, we're after a kind of sympathetic evenhandedness," he says. "The [reporting] itself should be accurate and reliable, but it does have a compass. Those parts of Iranian society that feel voiceless are natural allies and a basis for an audience."

The human rights issue receives regular attention from Radio Farda, a reflection of RFE/RL's longstanding focus on this topic. Radio Farda, for instance, was credited this past summer with helping to expose the case of Sakin-

eh Mohammadi Ashtiani, whose sentence to death by stoning for committing adultery has been commuted by authorities since her story gained global attention. (As this story went to press, she was still facing possible execution, however.)

Both Farda and PNN have also recently expanded into satirical programming. In May, Radio Farda launched “Pasfarda” (The Day After Tomorrow), a one-hour live program; and one month earlier, PNN expanded from 15 minutes to 30 minutes its popular year-old show “Parazit” (Static), whose hosts have been compared by some observers to U.S. mock newscaster Jon Stewart. Typical fodder for the show’s satirists included reports during the summer of conservatives issuing new guidelines for Iranian hairstyles.

Officials from Farda and PNN say both programs have proven popular, according to social media feedback. Vatanka of the Middle East Institute says programs like “Parazit” provide an accessible way for young Iranians, in particular, to take stock of what is happening in their country. “The whole thing is about making individuals on the other side ask the right questions,” Vatanka says. “It’s so different from the usual VOA [approach]. It’s innovative in the sense that it tries to raise provocative issues.”

### **A Receptive Audience**

Iran appears to be an especially fertile terrain for a social media campaign by U.S. broadcasters. Iranian government estimates place Internet users at 23 million, while more than 53 million cell phones are in use. Satellite TV dishes proliferate in urban areas. And media experts say Iran has one of the world’s most active blogospheres, estimated in the tens of thousands, with bloggers hashing out everything from politics to environmental issues to poetry.

Fatemeh Aman, a former Radio Farda broadcaster who now works as a U.S.-based analyst of Iranian politics and media, says e-mail remains a regular way of communicating among Iranians, who share information on how to overcome government filters by using proxy servers. YouTube and Facebook video clips are also frequently attached and distributed via e-mail, she says.

Analysts note a surge in government-run Web sites and

*A kind of cat-and-mouse game has ensued, with many Iranians keeping a step ahead of the censors with the help of anti-filtering software from U.S. sources.*

blogs spearheaded by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard’s Basij militia to counteract the activism of regime opponents. At the same time, the censorship of Web sites has been so intense that there have been reports of even hardline blogs being blocked. “The regime is spending billions on training people to monitor the Internet, on [hiring] people to create false blogs that propagate regime attack blogs

— agent provocateur blogs, so to speak,” says Abbas Milani, co-director of the Iran Democracy Project at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution.

“The regime has a genuine fear of the Internet potential in Iran,” adds Aman, noting that the political arm of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, Sobh-e Sadegh, was calling for “cyber jihad” months before the events of June 12, 2009, revealed the extent of new media penetration in the country.

VOA and RFE/RL, which have long streamed broadcasts and information on Web sites in scores of languages, have ramped up their options for Iranians in the past year, as well. Earlier this year, PNN launched a new application for Apple’s iPhone and the Android/Google phone that provides news updates and allows users to send links to VOA stories through Facebook, Twitter and e-mail. PNN, which runs live programs from 6 p.m. to midnight local time each day, has also launched Facebook pages for nearly all of its programs, Redisch says. Radio Farda last year launched its SMS system, and Facebook and Twitter profiles.

### **Filtering the Feedback**

U.S.-funded broadcasters to Iran do face challenges in determining the effectiveness of the media they use and the messages they broadcast, of course. Audience surveys show PNN’s satellite TV audience dropped from an estimated 30 percent of regular weekly viewers in 2009 to 20 percent earlier this year, which the station attributes in part to intensified Iranian jamming of international satellite TV signals and in part to the reluctance of respondents to admit that they view forbidden media. The percentage of weekly listeners to Radio Farda has been in single digits for several years, at least partly because the regime ratcheted up jamming of its AM trans-

missions.

At the same time, both outlets see signs that their programming is reaching Iranians through multiple platforms. Redisch says the number of visitors to the main PNN Web site dropped from 2.5 million in June 2009 to 1.8 million a year later. But he notes that PNN also receives hundreds of thousands of additional visits to its Persian Web site through Web-based proxies. It also has more than 68,000 fans on its Facebook page and logged more than 160,000 views on videos it uploaded to YouTube in June 2010.

Radio Farda says its Web site attracts 900,000 monthly visits with the help of anti-filtering measures. It has close to 40,000 Facebook fans and, since 2008, has been averaging more than 90,000 messages per year via voice mail, e-mail and short message service, despite the major risk of surveillance by the regime. As just one example of how this feedback works, Radio Farda published dozens of reports on its Facebook page related to the case of Shahrām Amiri, the nuclear scientist who defected back to Iran from the United States in early July. Those pieces attracted more than 600 comments from readers within the first 10 days after the incident. And a poll Farda conducted on the issue drew more than 4,000 people to vote, according to RFE/RL officials.

The June 2010 report (“Is Anybody Listening?”) on U.S. international broadcasting and public diplomacy commissioned by Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., lauds the two broadcasters’ use of social media. The study concludes that the stations have “empowered and elevated average Iranian citizens by enabling them to share with the world Tehran’s repression of their democratic efforts.” Adds the Hoover Institution’s Milani: “The Voice of America and Farda have basically conveyed to readers and listeners how isolated the regime is.”

Still, measuring audience levels across traditional and new media in Iran is not an exact science. The main company conducting audience surveys for international broadcasters, InterMedia, does an annual review for PNN and Radio Farda based on thousands of interviews with Iranians (speaking by phone with those in Iran and face-to-face with those traveling outside in places like Dubai). Due in part to this methodology, Gedmin says, gauging the reach of his broadcasters’ efforts is very dif-

*Efforts to bring news to  
Iranians are in some ways a  
throwback to the epic Cold  
War-era information battles.*

ficult. Redisch adds that counting Web traffic and visitors — and distinguishing between those inside and outside of Iran — is increasingly problematic because of the growing use of proxy servers.

Meanwhile, both organizations continue to refine their programming mix. While applaud-

ing recent innovative moves by PNN, the Middle East Institute’s Vatanka says it should step up both its creativity and professionalism, especially if it wishes to compete with BBC’s 24-hour Persian-language TV service, launched after the June 2009 riots.

Redisch, who acknowledges the quality of BBC’s Persian-language programming, says it remains a tough job to recruit Farsi speakers skilled in TV production and journalism and create original programming to fill six hours and 15 minutes daily “that will resonate with Iranians.”

PNN currently gets a 45-minute daily dose of programming, translated into Persian, from the U.S.-based History Channel (part of seven hours of new content per day). It also teamed up with Home Box Office on the anniversary of the June 2009 Iranian elections to show a documentary about Neda Agha-Soltan, whose death in post-election protests was filmed on cell phones and shared worldwide. “Greater leveraging of public-private cooperation would provide U.S. broadcasters with much-needed content,” notes the report by Sen. Lugar’s office.

Another challenge in developing content is on the news side, where broadcasters from both organizations field a steady stream of unsolicited reporting, photographs, videos and other material from people in Iran or in the Iranian exile community. The two organizations have developed social media guidelines aimed at handling the new streams of information and feedback. But officials from RFE/RL and VOA say a need remains for more staff to field information from those writing in via various platforms.

“One of the things all media need to do is to pay off our users for their participation in our programs,” says VOA’s Redisch. “We have to be able to feed it back to them. It takes human resources.”

**Priming the Information Battlefield**

The struggle to bring news and information to Iranians

## F O C U S

is in some ways a throwback to the epic Cold War—era information battles involving foreign-funded media and Soviet-bloc authorities. An array of new media have replaced the reliance on shortwave radio and smuggled samizdat, but the challenges for the U.S.-funded broadcasters have a familiar ring:

- Keep a close eye on internal developments in Iran and in the region, and vet reports to keep news stories accurate, not inflammatory. This will require proper journalistic training and, most likely, higher staffing levels, especially during dramatic events like the demonstrations that followed the 2009 elections.

- Sustain efforts to overcome jamming of core radio and TV services. Soviet-era jamming was relentless, but the multiple options for shortwave broadcasts in that era were credited with providing a lifeline to dissidents. Broadcasting officials have expanded the reach of PNN programs through six satellites with seven different distribution channels to help overcome some of the Iranian

jamming. Hoover's Milani says U.S. government officials should go further, and respond tit-for-tat to Iranian jamming by interfering with Iran's state-controlled media broadcasts.

- Pursue a vigorous effort to gather more and better data about how Iranians are accessing information. Interviewing them in venues like Dubai helps, but the effort should continuously be expanded to reach traveling Iranians elsewhere. Given the country's importance and the resources going into Persian-language broadcasting, audience surveys should also be expanded beyond one per year.

The extra funding needed to maintain high-level media services to Iran could be difficult to obtain in the current U.S. budget environment. But amid the rising call in Congress for economic and political isolation of Iran, U.S.-backed broadcasting initiatives to this key country deserve recognition, support and ongoing attention. ■

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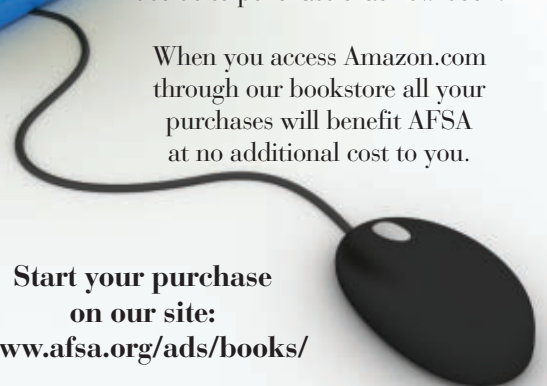
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# AMERICA CALLING: A 21ST-CENTURY MODEL

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THE BBG SHOULD MOVE TO CONSOLIDATE U.S. GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING INTO ONE MULTIMEDIA ORGANIZATION.

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BY KIM ANDREW ELLIOTT

Until about the 1990s, U.S. government-funded international broadcasting — which I will refer to as USIB in this article — was a relatively simple matter. The Voice of America and Radio Free Europe transmitted into a country, usually on shortwave, the best way to broadcast over long distances at that time. The target country's moribund, government-monopoly broadcasting system provided a biased or otherwise deficient news service, giving audiences the incentive to tune to foreign stations.

In communist and developing countries, there was a demand for news that was more comprehensive and reliable than that available from state-controlled domestic media. The United States found it advantageous to cater to that demand, as accurate news provided the antidote to communist and other anti-American propaganda.

Now USIB faces a much more complex media envi-

ronment. Satellite television and the Internet have largely displaced shortwave as the preferred means to send information across national boundaries. Domestic broadcasting in target countries has improved, at least technologically, with several choices of television and FM stations, and growing Internet availability. Emerging international broadcasters such as Al-Jazeera, in Arabic and in English, add to the competition.

USIB is still in the business of providing news to counter misinformation and disinformation from dictators, terrorists and other international miscreants. Ideally, the private sector would provide this service, both to avoid any perceptions that government funding affects its credibility and to save taxpayers money. Indeed, there is private, advertiser-funded U.S. international broadcasting in English (CNN International), Spanish (CNN en Español), and a few other languages.

On the other hand, in most languages where there is a need for reliable news from an external source (e.g., Bangla, Burmese, Hausa), international broadcasting has little commercial potential. The U.S. government must step in to provide the funding.

## The BBG Faces Challenges

The Broadcasting Board of Governors, a bipartisan agency that has existed since 1995, acts as a “firewall” be-

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*Kim Andrew Elliott, an audience research analyst for the United States International Broadcasting Bureau, has taught communications at the University of Massachusetts and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He reports on international broadcasting at [www.kimandrewelliott.com](http://www.kimandrewelliott.com). The views expressed here are his own and not necessarily those of the International Broadcasting Bureau or the U.S. government.*

tween the U.S. government and international broadcasting entities it funds: the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Alhurra, Radio Sawa, and Radio and TV Martí. It performs that function mainly by selecting the directors and presidents of these entities, but also provides general supervision, such as proposing the addition or elimination of language services, and adjusting the investment in various media technologies.

Confirmed by the Senate in early July, seven months after being nominated by President Barack Obama, the board's eight new members join Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton — the designated ex officio ninth member of the board — to bring the BBG up to its full complement for the first time since December 2004. (A list of current BBG members and their biographies is available at [www.bbg.gov/about](http://www.bbg.gov/about).)

As the board grapples with a host of challenges, it will find the BBC a useful benchmark. USIB is not exactly in competition with the BBC, because both provide news to countries where reliable news is not available domestically. The international services of the BBC do, however, provide a point of comparison in terms of audience size and budget.

In March 2010, BBC Global News claimed a record weekly audience of 241 million. To compare this meaningfully with USIB's performance, first we must subtract the 61 million people who tune into BBC World News, an English-language global news channel, and the international facing [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com) Web site. These are commercial operations that aspire to be self-funding, and USIB is not allowed to engage in commercial international broadcasting. (CNN International is the U.S. competitor to BBC World News. These two, along with Al-Jazeera English, form the "big three" of global English news channels.)

We can also subtract the BBC World Service audience of six million in the United States, which will never be a target country for USIB. This leaves the BBC World Service, the U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office-funded radio station broadcasting in 32 languages, plus television in Arabic and Persian, with a weekly audience of 174 million.

The global audience of USIB, 171 million listeners

*As the Broadcasting Board of Governors grapples with a host of challenges, it will find the BBC a useful benchmark.*

weekly, is about the same as that of BBC World Service. However, USIB achieves that audience on a budget of \$727 million, while the BBC World Service attracts the slightly larger audience with a budget of just \$420 million.

A common explanation for this discrepancy is that the World Service derives resources from its domestic parent, the BBC. In fact, the BBC is subject to a fair trading regime that does not allow for any cross-subsidy between its various funding streams. The World Service must therefore purchase or barter services and content it gets from the domestic BBC, so that the U.K. television license fee is not used to subsidize an international service.

#### **U.S. Broadcaster vs. U.S. Broadcaster**

The much more likely reason the BBC World Service achieves a larger audience for the money it spends is that it is a single organization, while U.S. international broadcasting is the collection of entities mentioned above. Of the 60 language services of USIB, 22 of the languages are transmitted by more than one station.

In the post-Cold War period, RFE/RL added Albanian, South Slavic (Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian), Arabic, Persian, Dari and Pashto, duplicating pre-existing VOA services in those languages. In January, implementing an earmark requested by Senator Sam Brownback, R-Kan., in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget, RFE/RL launched Radio Mashaal, broadcasting in Pashto in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region. Since 2006, VOA had been doing the same with its Deewa Radio.

Radio Free Asia, created in 1996, transmits in Cantonese, Burmese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Mandarin, Tibetan and Vietnamese — all languages that were already broadcast by VOA. Thus, in one of the most difficult regions to get news out of, and to get content back into, two U.S. stations compete for vital and scarce resources. For the most part, at least, they do not broadcast in the same language at the same time.

The Radio Free stations have expanded based on a theory that dismisses VOA as limited to the advocacy of U.S. policies, descriptions of life in the United States and English-language lessons. The "surrogate" stations, on the other hand, provide the news about the target country that would be available if the media in those coun-

tries were free. If this premise were true, the audience would have to tune to two stations to get a complete news service. This would be an unacceptable inconvenience to impose upon any audience, especially in an increasingly competitive global media environment.

In fact, the premise is not true. VOA has always put much effort into reporting about its target countries. It must do so to attract an audience. Most audiences for international broadcasting, while also interested in world news, are mainly looking for news about their own countries. As a result, there is considerable duplication in the news coverage of VOA and the surrogate stations.

Within the present structure of U.S. international broadcasting, there is also duplication in management and administrative structures. Moreover, resources for international broadcasting, scarce at the best of times, are split. These include talent, transmitters, transmitting sites and news leads. Even the audience is becoming scarcer due to fragmentation among many new media and information sources.

In many parts of the world, even in many developing countries, television is, or is becoming, more popular than radio. USIB must increase its presence in television, but this will be expensive. With two U.S. stations broadcasting to many target countries, it will be twice as expensive.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors should move to consolidate USIB into one multimedia organization. The new entity can adjust the mix of news (target country, world, U.S.) and media (shortwave, Internet, mobile, satellite) to suit each target country at any time during the country's political development. This will save money, contributing to deficit reduction, while actually improving competitiveness. A merger would also free up funds for television and for promotion, two necessary but expensive components of international broadcasting in the 21st century.

### **Competitive Credibility**

Most people do not seek news from foreign sources unless their domestic media are government-controlled or otherwise deficient. Credibility is therefore the most important commodity of international broadcasting. The

## *There is considerable duplication in the news coverage of VOA and the surrogate stations.*

BBC World Service appears to have a small but persistent lead in this area, which may be another factor underlying the BBC's audience-for-money advantage.

One frequent illustration of this problem is the fact that the elements of U.S. international broadcasting are often described in the

press as "government-funded" (or worse). The BBC World Service, even though it is funded by the British Foreign Office, is rarely described that way.

In the May 9 issue of *Die Welt*, Dr. Wahied Wahdat-Hagh cited a study by Iran's parliament (the Majlis): "(O)ne gleans that BBC Persian is thought to be more dangerous than the VOA. The reason is that the BBC has a more gentle approach and gives the impression of being more objective. Rather than trying to promote a single position, the BBC does so indirectly by using analysis to make certain points."

It takes decades to build a journalistic reputation, and the decades have been kinder to the BBC than to USIB. The BBC World Service has been part of another broadcasting organization, the BBC domestic service, which has always guarded its independence. VOA spent most of its existence as part of the U.S. Information Agency, a public diplomacy agency officially representing and advocating U.S. policies. USIA directors (or, sometimes, presidents) appointed VOA directors who ran the gamut from dedicated journalists to policy flacks. This pendulum took its toll on VOA.

RFE/RL, for its part, spent much of the 1950s as a hard-hitting anti-communist broadcaster, covertly funded by the Central Intelligence Agency until 1978. After controversy surrounding its role in the 1956 Hungarian uprising, RFE/RL began to settle down to its present news mission. Radio Free Asia was compelled by Congress to imitate RFE/RL's name (it initially wanted to call itself the Asia Pacific Network). Because of this name, rather than its content, RFA was not allowed to use relay facilities, including vital medium-wave transmitters, in the Philippines and Thailand.

Sentiment to give VOA more autonomy than it enjoyed under USIA culminated in the International Broadcasting Act of 1994. This legislation created the bipartisan Broadcasting Board of Governors, which names the presidents and directors of VOA, RFE/RL, RFA and

Radio/TV Martí, among many other functions. The Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 eliminated the last administrative ties between USIA and VOA by eliminating USIA and folding its public diplomacy functions into the State Department. The BBG was now a separate agency.

Vestiges of political influence over USIB remain. The International Broadcasting Act of 1994 places the BBG above the International Broadcasting Bureau. The IBB, in turn, is above its components: VOA and Radio/TV Martí. The appointment process, however, stipulates two instances of leapfrogging: the president (with Senate consent) appoints the IBB director, and the BBG appoints the VOA director. The IBB director can keep sufficiently busy with the IBB's engineering and administrative tasks — or, more problematically, this presidentially appointed official might intercede in content matters at VOA.

VOA itself is still a government agency, rather than a corporation like RFE/RL and RFA. One consequence of this is that, in July, VOA and IBB employees were informed that they should not use agency computers to “download, browse or e-mail” any of the documents about Afghanistan and Pakistan recently made available by WikiLeaks, because they contained classified materials. VOA reporters covering this story worked around the directive by accessing the documents at home. Other international broadcasters covered the story from their newsrooms.

VOA is still required to broadcast daily editorials “reflecting the views of the United States government.” In contrast, the BBC is not allowed to broadcast editorials.

### **The Importance of Maintaining Balance**

Some members of Congress and think-tanks want to abolish the Broadcasting Board of Governors and replace it with a “strategic communication” body to coordinate the output of State, Defense and USIB. News that is “coordinated” is not really news, however. The audiences for international broadcasting, seeking the antidote for the type of news they get domestically, would almost immediately recognize coordinated news for what it is, and tune out.

Other members of Congress scoff at the notion of bal-

*The present structure of USIB does not, at least in theory, allow for a full-service broadcasting effort.*

ance in USIB news coverage. They believe that USIB should itself be the balance, providing a pro-U.S., anti-terrorist counterpart to the anti-U.S., pro-terrorist media of adversarial regimes.

Modern international broadcasting operates on the assumption that audiences deserve all of the

news, including reporting that reflects negatively on the governments of the target countries — which is usually omitted by the domestic media of those countries. For that negative news to be believed, the international broadcaster should also report the good (while avoiding the syrupy phraseology the target-country media would use) and neutral news about the audience's own nation. Reporting good, neutral and bad news about the United States and the rest of the world would further bolster its credibility, smoothing out the content so that the U.S. broadcaster is not perceived as the bad-news-about-the-target-country station. But the present structure of USIB does not, at least in theory, allow for such a full-service broadcasting effort.

In June, Senator Richard Lugar, R-Ind., and his staff issued a detailed paper about USIB, “Is Anybody Listening?” Unlike some of his colleagues, Sen. Lugar acknowledges the need for balance: “[I]n order for the BBG to be credible to its audience and draw in not just those who already agree with U.S. policy, its networks must be permitted to present both sides of an argument.”

The Lugar paper also addresses the difficulties due to delays in presidential nominations and Senate confirmations, in keeping BBG membership up to its full complement: “In the medium term, Congress must decide whether it is time to consider another management structure if board staffing difficulties persist.” That sentence has chilling implications.

International broadcasting succeeds largely because of its credibility — which is not possible without independence. And independence is not possible without some sort of bipartisan or nonpartisan board to separate the government from the news function. This is how the highly regarded public broadcasting corporations in most Western democracies maintain their autonomy.

### **Alternatives to the BBG**

There may be other structures that would not require



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constant presidential and Senate attention. For example, the United States could franchise the international broadcasting effort for a fixed term, say five to 10 years, to a consortium of the major U.S. broadcast news organizations: ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX News and CNN. Each of these companies would appoint an executive to a five-person board, which would, in turn, appoint the chief executive officer of the consolidated international broadcasting corporation and approve the CEO's senior management selections. This self-regenerating board would also approve major decisions, such as adjustments in the use of media technologies. If the administration or Congress has objections or questions about the content of USIB, they would come to the board rather than directly to the USIB entity.

*A winnowing process is deciding which broadcasting organizations will be competitive, and which will merely be bureaucracies.*

Conservatives may complain that four of the five companies in this consortium are liberal, while liberals may oppose including FOX at all. For better or worse, these five companies represent American domestic commercial broadcast news. It is reasonable for this group, collectively, to provide general supervision to USIB.

For their part, the broadcast news companies may cringe at the thought of cooperating with the government. But their concerns should be assuaged by the fact that during the term of the contract, there will be no kibitzing by the government. It will also be an opportunity for them to give back to the country in which they have prospered.

The benefit of the consortium would extend beyond its role as a firewall. Its members would provide con-

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tent, mainly U.S. coverage, to USIB, which, in turn, would provide international coverage and regional expertise to the consortium companies. This would not be government funding of private U.S. news, but a fair trade. Under this scenario, U.S. broadcasters would enjoy the synergy now available to the BBC World Service and BBC domestic as they exchange coverage and resources.

### **International Broadcasting vs. Public Diplomacy**

USIB often is considered part of U.S. public diplomacy. To succeed, however, the two must be separate, generally complementary but occasionally adversarial, endeavors. A reporter for a U.S. government station, knowing what his/her audience is thinking, will occasionally have to ask a U.S. government spokesperson pointed questions and follow up. The spokesperson must, for his/her part, stay on message.

These complementary roles were explained in the preface to the 2002 BBG annual report:

“It is very important that government spokesmen take America’s message to the world — passionately and relentlessly. We should not be ashamed of public advocacy on behalf of freedom and democracy and the United States of America. ... International broadcasting, on the other hand, is called upon to reflect the highest standards of independent journalism as the best means of convincing international audiences that truth is on the side of democratic values.”

Similarly, the writer P.J. O’Rourke, after a recent visit to RFE/RL in Prague, wrote in the *World Affairs* blog: “[The term] ‘promotes democracy’ makes democracy sound like a commodity, a product, a brand of snack food that RFE/RL is supposed to be selling. And the State Department, the president and Congress can measure how much of this product has been sold. ... In fact, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s real mission is neither frighteningly complicated nor terribly simple. RFE/RL delivers information. Information is the essence of what might be called the ‘Attitude of Liberty’ — the feeling of being free. People must, of course, feel free of physical and economic oppression. But first they

*Maintaining and  
enhancing the present  
autonomy of USIB is  
essential for many  
reasons.*

must feel free of ignorance. ... Information is the source of citizenship. Without information no one can even attempt to build a civil society.”

Another difference between international broadcasting and public diplomacy is that the former has a finite shelf life. Some target countries have achieved press freedom and media diversity to the point that

few people in these countries seek news from foreign sources. This is why VOA and RFE have eliminated their broadcasts in Polish and Czech, among other languages. On the other hand, foreign journalists, researchers, government officials and other interested persons will always have a need for official statements of U.S. policy — i.e., the output of U.S. public diplomacy. An already established outlet for such content is the State Department’s public diplomacy Web site, [www.America.gov](http://www.America.gov).

For reasons discussed above, VOA and the Radio Free stations currently compete in 22 languages. It would make more sense for USIB to consolidate those operations to create a more complete news service, with [www.America.gov](http://www.America.gov) (now available in seven languages) complementing USIB’s offerings in as many languages as possible.

### **The Communication Process of International Broadcasting**

The concept of an international broadcasting service funded by the United States government, over which the government has no direct control, is difficult for some to accept. Nevertheless, maintaining and enhancing the present autonomy of USIB is essential for the following reasons:

- It will bring a larger audience, because it is a market-based approach, providing the type of news listeners are seeking.
- Well-informed audiences can resist the misinformation and disinformation of dictators, terrorists and other international miscreants, and make up their own minds on current affairs.
- In the long term, the United States can expect that well-informed audiences, even if they don’t come to agree with our policies, will at least understand why they

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were implemented.

- The audience observes independent journalism, a necessary ingredient in any democracy, in action.
- Providing this service to the world speaks well of the United States.

The consolidation of U.S. international broadcasting would be an opportunity for a rebranding exercise to signal unambiguously that the new entity is an independent and reliable provider of news. The organization should be a government-funded corporation rather than a government agency.

### Telling the Truth

With technologies changing quickly and new players coming on the scene, we are at a critical juncture in the world media environment. A winnowing process is deciding which broadcasting organizations will be competitive, and which will merely be bureaucracies. If the new mem-

bers of the Broadcasting Board of Governors can convince the administration and Congress that changes must take place, USIB can compete with the improving domestic and regional services throughout the world, even among a greater choice of media technologies.

The site of the VOA Bethany shortwave transmitting station near Cincinnati is an artifact of an older, simpler time in U.S. international broadcasting. The space is now home to the popular Voice of America county park, the Voice of America Learning Center of Miami University, and the shops and restaurants of the Voice of America Center. The art deco building that housed the shortwave transmitters is being developed into the National Voice of America Museum of Broadcasting.

A T-shirt sold to raise funds for the museum depicts the building with VOA's slogan under it: "Tell the truth, and let the world decide." That, succinctly, describes how successful international broadcasting works. ■

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# THE 9TH A-100 CLASS: A SNAPSHOT

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THEY CAME TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE FROM MANY DIFFERENT PLACES  
AND BACKGROUNDS. BUT ALL OF THEM WERE READY FOR ADVENTURE.

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BY LESLIE A. BASSETT

**I**n March 1982, 31 Foreign Service officers reported for our first day as the 9th A-100 class, an experience that almost 30 years later bonds us still. (The numbering of A-100 classes was reset to zero after the 1980 Foreign Service Act.)

We assembled in an airless, windowless conference room in a nondescript Rosslyn, Va., building, a setting that helped let the air out of our pretensions to be “the best and the brightest.” Six weeks of talking heads later, we took our commissioning oath and became Foreign Service officers. Over the course of the next 28 years, the goals, tools and players in the foreign policy arena would change more dramatically than at any time before. We changed, too, through moments of decision that affected not just us, but the course of history.

## Signing Up

As we looked at each other that first day, we represented one of the more diverse classes in terms of age and experience. Stephen Mull, Jack Zetkusic and I were fresh out of university. Lillian Harris, Constance Freeman and Laurel Shea were mid-level entrants who already had an impressive command of the acronyms the rest of us would come to learn. New Yorkers Stuart Seldowitz and Lucy Tamlyn had both been State Department interns, while Stephen del Rosso was a former Presidential Management Intern and

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*Leslie Bassett is a proud member of the 9th A-100 class who now serves as deputy chief of mission in Manila. While this article benefits from the contributions of many 9th A-100 class colleagues, ultimately she is solely responsible for its content.*

Gordon Gray had been a Peace Corps Volunteer.

We came from Alaska and California, from Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C., and many other locales. Some of us were married; some were single. All of us were ready for adventure.

We’d signed up for different reasons. “I never wanted to be anything but a diplomat,” Jack Zetkusic recalls. “I wanted to travel to places I’d never heard of and to serve my country.” Janet Bogue sought “the adventure of living in and learning about new places.” Robert Jackson had dreamed of joining ever since the eighth grade.

John Heffern took the exam because, as he put it, “My father joined the Foreign Service briefly after the war. His father pressured him to quit so he could join the family store. To some degree I am living his dream.” But family could also be a restraining factor. “To be honest,” Stuart Seldowitz notes, “most of my family was against my joining the State Department, feeling that it was an elitist institution that would not be welcoming to a Jewish guy from Brooklyn.”

When we were commissioned, the Cold War was still the reigning paradigm by which conflicts and allies were measured. We used Selectric typewriters to produce cables, airmails, memos and evaluation reports. Diplomacy was conducted without benefit of e-mail, texting, social media or even fax machines. There was no “CNN factor,” largely because there were very few cable television networks. Videotapes (Beta or VHS) were the cutting-edge way to stay in touch with American culture.

Then, as now, a number of us went first to visa positions in places like Mexico, China and Jamaica. Jean Aldridge would spell her time on the Hermosillo visa line by singing



in a band. Tom Tiernan would head to Mexico City, where he and his wife Nancy adopted twins. Jim Roberts and his wife lived just downstairs from the Tiernans, and began to have children of their own. Chris Beede, Deborah Graze, Jack Zetkolic and John Heffern headed to different posts in China and Taiwan after further bonding through months of language training.

Some of us stayed in touch — through actual handwritten letters, imagine! But as time went by, our trajectories took us in very different directions. Almost three decades later, it is remarkable to find so many common threads in our experiences, and so many common conclusions about the costs and benefits of a Foreign Service career as we begin to say goodbye to it.

Within 10 years a handful of our class had already left the Service. Back-to-back visa tours eliminated Christina Dewey, already 50-plus years old when she signed on in 1982. Now residing in California, Tina says that the Service was a short detour that didn't work for her.

Stephen del Rosso cites “the challenges of a two-career marriage” as one of the factors in his decision to transfer from State to nongovernmental organizations involved in global affairs. Lillian Harris, already a distinguished Civil Service expert, left after her first tour because she had married a British diplomat, and the two careers could not be managed. She is now a respected author on foreign policy issues, as well as director of the “Together for Sudan” charity. David Ostroff resigned en route to an assignment when his life partner could not be accommodated, and now works as a locally engaged staff member in our Paris mission to UNESCO.

### **Moments of Danger**

Like now, the Foreign Service could be a dangerous profession. In Nicaragua, I narrowly escaped a mob and my house was ransacked. In apartheid-era South Africa, my home was surveilled and many friends arrested. I was shot at and took part in an evacuation of embassy personnel from El Salvador, and served in Israel during the second intifada. And I witnessed yet more violence in Colombia and Mexico.

Still, my experiences were tame compared to what befell some of my colleagues. Jim Roberts recalls that his home in Panama was torched in the late 1980s after he had become the very public embassy point-person on money laundering and the drug trade. During his early tours, Stephen del Rosso

was held captive briefly by a group in Costa Rica and also had a hand grenade thrown at his office. Robert Jackson confronted “unimaginable” hatred and violence as coups tore through Cote d'Ivoire in the 1990s. And just a few years ago, Lucy Tamlyn evacuated most of her team from Chad as a coup ripped that country asunder. Still, she found that “I really thrived ‘living on the edge’ and was able to provide the right kind of leadership in these situations.”

Jack Zetkolic had the tires shot out from under his car in Georgia, and was the target of sniper fire in Bosnia. What I remember most about Jack was a 1995 Operations Center call I was on with Ambassador Robert Frasure, who joked how Jack was taking care of all of them in very rustic conditions — leaving mints on their sleeping bags — as the team camped in a sandbagged container through the long Bosnia negotiations. Shortly thereafter, Frasure would be killed in a vehicle accident, and Jack would be taking care of him in a different, much sadder, way.

Taking care of the Foreign Service family was a shared priority for 9th A-100 class members. Chris Beede takes “considerable pride in seeing former subordinates leaping to new positions of significant policy input and managerial responsibility,” and is “heartened by their encouragement and affirmation that they appreciated yesteryear’s guidance from me.” Robert Jackson regards serving as an A-100 coordinator as “my most satisfying assignment.” He completely revamped the curriculum to

make it more relevant to the challenges and duties one shoulders, mentoring more than 225 Foreign Service generalists and more than 25 specialists.

Three members of our A-100 class have won the State Department’s annual award recognizing outstanding deputy chiefs of mission; all three make mentoring other officers one of their highest priorities. John Heffern, currently DCM at USNATO in Brussels, cites “difficult, sensitive EEO cases, cases of spouse abuse, cases of family issues with teenage children.” For me, the hardest is to cope with the death of a colleague or mission family member — supporting the surviving family, appropriately commemorating the life of service now ended, managing the community’s reactions, and keeping control of my own emotions.

### **Moments of Dissent**

We were privileged to serve through some of the great diplomatic moments of the last century and this one. We were there through the rise and resolution of conflicts in Latin

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America; the opening of China, and its growing role in shaping international events; the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the ripple effects across the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; the genocides and crises in postcolonial Africa; the constant tension in the Middle East; the Gulf Wars, 9/11, Afghanistan and the rising threat of terrorism; the proliferation of transnational weapons, threats and issues; and, of course, the changing dynamic between the Department of State and a growing roster of interagency players.

The common denominator was the eternal balance between the national interest and national values, and stakeholder equities. Where these collided, dissent emerged. I am impressed with our class's record of challenging authority. My classmates repeatedly confronted arbitrary ambassadors, restrained supervisors who were second-guessing people in the field and defended colleagues under fire.

A critical nexus of classmates worked on the Bosnia crisis in the 1990s. They were shaken by the brutality of events on the ground and impatient with the bureaucracy's inability to respond in a timely fashion. Stuart Seldowitz remembers: "The wars in Bosnia and, to a lesser extent, Croatia were extremely brutal, with rape, ethnic cleansing and other gross human rights violations. ... For the final year of the George H.W. Bush administration and the first three years of the Clinton administration, the U.S. government response was weak, confused and, in many ways, immoral." Jack Zetkovic recalls the horror of "arriving at the scene of war crimes in Kosovo and Bosnia. Then, sometimes on the same day, having meetings with war criminals like [Slobodan] Milosevic and [Rodovan] Karadzic and trying to maintain professional distance."

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*"The dilemma many FSOs face is the choice between staying with the best job they can imagine while working for the worst employer."*

— Anonymous 9th A-100 class member

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DAS Janet Bogue opens the new U.S. consulate in Podgorica, Montenegro, July 4, 2002.



The 9th A-100 Class, March 1982.

Both Stuart and Jack were among many who challenged the U.S. government's response. At one point during the Balkan crisis, Stuart took issue with U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright's decision to argue for a change in policy, and told her so. When she persisted, he says, "I went back to my office and quickly wrote a four-page

memo identifying all the reasons I thought her idea was mistaken. A few hours later I received a phone call that the ambassador wanted to see me. To be honest, I thought she was about to tell me that I had no right to question her judgment for a second time. Instead, she told me that she had read the memo but still believed I was wrong. Nevertheless, she wanted me to know that she greatly appreciated my willingness to write a long memo advocating a position I knew would not be well-received."

Janet Bogue emerged stronger from her participation in a private dissent effort that hit the headlines. As she recalls: "Twelve Foreign Service officers (11 State and one Treasury, but detailed to State) made a private protest to Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Bosnia policy. While our dissent was meant to remain within the walls, it was leaked to the *New York Times* and created a fair kerfuffle. For me it was the best and worst of times. I was completely agonized over events in Bosnia and our policy, but I did not want the dissent to be public and was literally sick to my stomach that it had

been leaked. I was at my lowest point in the Foreign Service, contemplating quitting, but was hugely buoyed by the support I got from colleagues, known and unknown, around the world. While I was fired from the former Yugoslav desk, I was sought out

later by bosses who wanted someone who was willing to speak out. And it liberated me for the rest of my career — I had already been fired; I had already decided that I could leave the Service if I couldn't tolerate policies."

### What Comes Next

Members of the 9th A-100 class are gradually departing the Foreign Service, though not necessarily the field of

global affairs. We do so with a great appreciation for our colleagues, the challenge of the job and the privilege of serving. As Steve del Rosso says, “Although I rub shoulders every day with a lot of smart people in the academic and nongovernmental worlds, I have never met smarter, more dedicated professionals than I had the pleasure to serve with in the Foreign Service.”

My informal poll of classmates indicates that, on balance, most would do it all again, and gladly. Despite danger and dissent, we share a strong belief that we, collectively and separately, have made a positive difference.

We also, however, acknowledge frustrations that inform our various decisions to consider next steps. As one classmate comments: “The dilemma many FSOs face is the choice between staying with the best job they can imagine while working for the

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*The Foreign Service has become more diverse, more effective and more operational in recent years — but the world we work in has changed even more dramatically.*

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worst employer.”

Among frustrations are issues involving families and partners, issues that seem to grow more acute as the number of unaccompanied posts rises.

There is a perception among many that belonging to the Foreign Service takes a toll on relationships. As Harold Foster notes, “One of the psychic costs of serving abroad is extended absences from your family and the consequent difficulty that such potentially great distance imposes on helping family members cope.” Since she left the Foreign Service, Janet Bogue notes, “I have rebuilt neglected relationships with family members and pre-Foreign Service friends, as well as making new friends from a wide spectrum of the community.”

Some colleagues cite the inflexibility of State Department regulations as a source of frustration as they plan moves, search out schools and manage medical conditions. “I left [the FS] because my wife and son developed chronic health problems that precluded overseas assignments,” says one classmate.

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Another issue we debate among ourselves is the role of the Department of State. Jack Zetkovic is one of several who observe the military emerging as the key player. "In the past few years I've seen the decades-long process of the Defense Department's accretion of diplomatic and development responsibilities grow faster than ever before. It's sad, and not very smart."

Robert Jackson agrees: "Access to information from other sources has made embassy reporting less important in policymaking." Stephen del Rosso suggests that, "Given the proliferation of nongovernmental players in the foreign policy world, there has been a relative diminution in both the perceived and actual role of the Foreign Service." Others see the Department of State still playing the central role, especially in the field.


We members of the 9th A-100

*Some of us stayed  
in touch — through  
actual handwritten  
letters, imagine!*

class are generally proud of our contribution to a Foreign Service that advocates effectively for U.S. values, defends principles as well as policies, and develops the next generation of leaders. But in times of unprecedented challenge and rapid transformation, there remains plenty to do. As Janet Bogue notes: "The world is changing so fast that the department

risks irrelevance because it is so slow and stubborn about change. Many people tend to think the Foreign Service is whatever it was when they entered it. I wonder what I and my generation might have done to make it more diverse, nimble, technologically adept, and able to institutionalize change."

In fact, the Foreign Service *has* become more diverse, more effective and more operational in recent years — but the world we work in has changed even more dramatically. In our early years in the Foreign Service we were actors in history. Now we have the chance to influence outcomes more directly by helping to build the State Department's institutions, by developing new technologies and techniques, and by training new officers to anticipate and meet the evolving challenges of the coming years. ■



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# AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • October 2010

## Secretary Clinton Hails AFSA Essay Contest Winner

BY TOM SWITZER, AFSA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton presented the first-place award for AFSA's 2010 National High School Essay Contest to Evaline Bai on Aug. 11. The award comes with a check for \$2,500 and a \$500 check to the winner's school.

Bai, an 11th-grader at Upper Arlington High School in Columbus, Ohio, submitted her winning essay on the subject, "Challenges to the U.S. Foreign Service: Rebuilding Afghanistan." Bai's mother Jin Liu, her father Fred Bai and brother Jason Bai, also met Sec. Clinton, who commended Evaline for her work and encouraged her to pursue a career in the Foreign Service.



Sec. Clinton presents Evaline Bai with the first-place award for the 2010 high school essay contest on Aug. 11. Left to right: Jin Liu, Jason Bai, Evaline Bai, Sec. Clinton and Fred Bai.

Twenty-four 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. Bai emphasized that, "The greatest hope for Afghanistan is manifested in the form of the American Foreign Service, which, through a civilian-military effort, has pledged to help Afghans gain the resources and establish the institutions necessary for a stable and successful future."

The goal of AFSA's High School

Continued on page 46

## State Employee Wins National War College Writing Prize

BY ASGEIR SIGFUSSON, MARKETING AND OUTREACH MANAGER

State Vice President Daniel Hirsch presented the George Kennan Excellence in Writing Award to career State Department civil servant Andrew Weinschenk in an early morning ceremony on June 4 at the National War College campus at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, D.C.

Every year since 1992, AFSA has conferred the award for the best paper written by a State Department employee, with a \$250 prize that is specifically designated for the purchase of professional books. Hirsch represented AFSA at the ceremony, and presented Weinschenk with a certificate and check for his paper, titled "On the Cusp of Empire: The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy in the Venezuelan Boundary Crisis of 1895."

Weinschenk is currently beginning an assignment as senior adviser to the assistant secretary for economic, energy and business affairs.



AFSA State Vice President Daniel Hirsch (left) presents Andrew Weinschenk (center) with the George Kennan Excellence in Writing Award at the National War College. The commandant of the college, Major General Robert Steel, is at right.

Continued on page 47

# AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



## Inside a U.S. Embassy Now on Kindle

The 2005 edition of *Inside a U.S. Embassy* is now available in a Kindle version on Amazon for only \$8.99. AFSA's publishing division, FSBooks, is experimenting with digital publishing in anticipation of the hard copy and digital release of the all-new edition of *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work*, in December. Visit Amazon.com and search "Inside a U.S. Embassy" to take a look for yourself at the 2005 edition for Kindle. For the hard copy, which is still popular and selling well, just go to our Web site at [www.afsa.org/inside](http://www.afsa.org/inside).

## Support AFSA with a Combined Federal Campaign gift!

By designating #11759 and/or #10646 on your CFC pledge card, you can support AFSA! **Foreign Service Youth Scholarship Fund** (formerly known as the AFSA Scholarship Fund) is designated CFC # 11759. This fund confers high school senior merit awards and undergraduate, need-based scholarships on Foreign Service children to help pay for their college education. Keep your support in the Foreign Service community. Go to [www.afsa.org/scholar/CFC11759.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/scholar/CFC11759.cfm) for more information.

**Diplomacy Matters-AFSA** (also known as the Fund for American Diplomacy) is designated CFC #10646. This fund goes to public outreach, showing how the Foreign Service works for America, and how diplomacy is our nation's first line of defense. We target programs to high school and college students; business and community leaders; media; and our own FS employees. For more information, visit [www.afsa.org/CFCFAD.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/CFCFAD.cfm).

## Legislative Action Fund

You should have recently received a fundraising solicitation from AFSA by mail, asking you to consider supporting our Legislative Action Fund. All donations to the LAF are used for AFSA's congressional advocacy to secure overseas comparability pay, protect benefits for active-duty and retired Foreign Service employees, and seek additional resources for the foreign affairs agencies, among many other causes. This is important work, and we cannot do it without your support.

Please consider a donation to this worthy cause. You may use the reply cards that were included in the recent mailing, or you may donate online at [www.afsa.org/lafform.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/lafform.cfm).

## New AFSA Speaker Series in Southwest Florida

AFSA will initiate a new speaker series on American diplomacy with the University of South Florida in Tampa, Fla., on Oct. 7-8. Our first speaker will be career FSO and leading China expert Douglas Spelman, who will discuss political, economic, and security aspects of U.S.-China relations. Spelman is currently the deputy director of the Kissinger Institute on China at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

## AFSA and German Reunification

Mark your calendars for Oct. 28 at 10 a.m., when AFSA will offer a truly exciting program observing the 20th anniversary of German reunification. The occasion will include a panel discussion on how the events of 1990 changed the Foreign Service and the focus of its work around the world. At the time of this writing (late August), we have already confirmed General Brent Scowcroft, who served as national security adviser during those years, as a panelist, along with former Ambassador to East Germany Rozanne "Roz" Ridgway. Stay tuned for additional information on this event to be held at AFSA HQ at 2101 E Street NW.

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## Home Is Where the Heart Is

As Foreign Service members, our primary job is to present America to the world. It is only reasonable, then, that we should know our country well and keep up to date on the latest permutations of American politics, culture and thought. In addition to staying in touch with friends, families, neighbors and communities, we should also ensure that our children, during our overseas tours, do not lose touch with our homeland. These were among the considerations that guided Congress to include a benefit to the Foreign Service known as “home leave” in the Foreign Service Act of 1980. The department originally interpreted this law as requiring a period of leave of no less than 20 days.

As often happens, however, the realities of Foreign Service life hamper our ability to use this benefit, leading many to

**For employees with large families and/or smaller incomes, mandatory home leave can be extremely expensive.**

comment about it on AFSA’s surveys, or to seek our assistance to resolve the remarkable number of problems this benefit engenders.

The biggest complaint is that assignment schedules and the needs of the Service rarely allow employees

to take more than the bare minimum of home leave allowed, and even that is often granted only after considerable effort by employees to obtain agreement from all parties affected.

Close behind is the lament that the realities of these agreements often require employees to use part of their home leave time for work-related issues such as medical treatment (deferred to home leave to save the department money). It is not uncommon for FS members to go through their careers with large numbers of unused home leave days, with every earnings and leave statement reminding them how little of it they have been able to use. To make matters worse, unlike annual leave, the unused home leave contributes nothing to retirement. It is a use-or-lose benefit that many employees are unable to use, which in and of itself provokes resentment.

Ironically, the next most frequent complaint is that home leave is mandatory, and for employees with large families and/or smaller incomes, it can be extremely expensive. Few

employees of the Foreign Service have a residence to return to in the U.S. Most who do own homes have rented them out during their years overseas, meaning that, in most cases, the “family home” is occupied by a renter when the employee returns for a brief home leave. Many have relatives with whom they can stay, but over time that becomes impractical. So for many, home leave means paying high hotel bills, car rental fees and other expenses, detracting from what should be a pleasurable experience.

Timing is often an issue as well, particularly for employees with school-age children during the summer cycle. Mandatory home leave can force employees to arrive at post after school begins, complicating orientation into a new school or class. And because educational benefits do not begin until the employee arrives at post, employees often end up paying thousands of dollars out of pocket (to be reimbursed later) to hold places for their children in overseas schools. To deal with this, home leave can be deferred; but that is not only sometimes difficult to negotiate, but could also have a negative effect on rest and recreation and other leave benefits.

Underlying all of these issues is one thing: current regulations stipulate that home leave must be taken as one large chunk of time, not in increments. Since as early as 2001 (following a Department of Defense revision of its home leave regulations), AFSA has urged the department to change its procedures to allow home leave to be taken in smaller increments. Under such a scenario, based on the DoD model, employees would be allowed to use accrued home leave (in smaller chunks of perhaps a week or so) during any visit to the U.S. This would allow employees to use up home leave days and simultaneously stay in better contact with the country we represent. One result of AFSA’s initiative was the department’s agreement to allow up to 25 days of home leave upon return from overseas to assume a domestic assignment, and not merely between overseas postings. At AFSA’s urging, the department has agreed to further study the issue.

AFSA believes that for Foreign Service members to be representative of the American people, greater flexibility is needed to allow all FS members to maintain the closest possible ties to our communities and countrymen back home — within the realities of family requirements and budgets, and the department’s own operational requirements. □



## Train and Retain



**T**he most effective way to improve organizational performance is to improve first-level supervisors.”

That quote is from the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board’s recently released report, “A Call to Action: Improving First-Level Supervision of Federal Employees.” The report (available on the Web) carefully describes the longstanding problems that federal agencies have had in selecting supervisors, developing them, providing feedback for them and holding them accountable.

Most foreign affairs agencies take a “Who, me? Develop the newbies?” approach and hope new FSOs will learn through “on-the-job” training or by random work-life experiences.

Why haven’t those problem areas already been addressed, given the multitude of reports by the Government Accountability Office, Office of Management and Budget and Office of Personnel Management, not to mention the private studies of federal managerial problems?

The MSPB report notes that agencies face “uncontrollable” factors — inadequate funding and staff, change of administration every four to eight years, the exploding pace of technological change and complex personnel systems among them. However, the report also identifies many “internal” factors: a lack of awareness of how important supervisors are to an agency; human resource staffs that are ill-equipped to advise the agencies; and, finally, the entrenchment of traditional attitudes and approaches that make agencies highly resistant to change.

Hmm, sounds like the Foreign Service to me! Most foreign affairs agencies take a “Who, me? Develop the newbies?” approach and hope new FSOs will learn through “on-the-job” training or by random work-life experiences. The MSPB report notes that OPM has developed a Supervisory Qualification Guide outlining 14 competencies that new supervisors should have. Some of these — customer service, interpersonal skills, oral and written communication, human capital management, conflict management and problem solving — can be developed and refined during formal training or on-the-job experiences.

Other qualities — including accountability, decisiveness, flexibility, integrity and resilience — are not likely to be developed in this way, though. So agencies need to select people who already have those characteristics, carefully encourage them to develop the skills they may not have, support them through their careers, and provide feedback by holding them accountable for their decisions.

This last point is especially important as the supervisors become managers and executives. After we hire and train new FSOs, we have to retain them through a long career — a challenge I will discuss in my next column. □

Essay • Continued from page 43



MICHAEL LAMCONA

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signs a photograph for 2010 high school essay award-winner Evaline Bai on Aug. 11. Bai wrote an essay titled, “Challenges to the U.S. Foreign Service: Rebuilding Afghanistan.”

Essay Contest, now in its 11th year, is to stimulate awareness of the Foreign Service among American high school students across the country and abroad. AFSA promotes the contest widely through direct mailings to college counselors and social studies teachers, as well as through listings on various Web sites, including Facebook.

The 2010 contest generated more than 400 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’s 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](http://www.afsa.org/essaycontest).

This nationwide essay contest is funded by AFSA's Fund for American Diplomacy, which supports enhanced public education and outreach in order to

[The 2010 contest generated more than 400 submissions from high school students nationwide.](#)

explain the critical role of U.S. diplomacy in defending national interests. Please consider making a tax-free donation to FAD online by going to: [www.afsa.org/cfcfad.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/cfcfad.cfm). □

#### National War College • Continued from page 43

Previous assignments include other tours in EEB, a stint in the Office of the Vice President in 2000 and a year as a Brookings Institution Legislative Fellow for the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

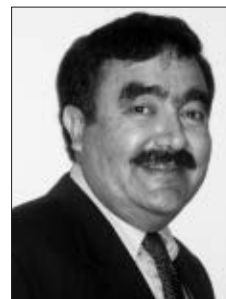
AFSA values its role in sponsoring and presenting the Kennan Award as part of the association's longtime encouragement of outstanding writing and research skills, and also for what the award does to enhance interagency awareness.

The award is part of the National War College's annual program recognizing excellence in writing. The NWC selects the winning essay written by a State Department employee without regard to the author's bureau, service or theme.

"I was struck by the spirit of camaraderie and collegiality with which the awardees were honored by all in attendance," Hirsch said.

"This was an interagency group, and it highlighted, as well, on a small, symbolic scale, the degree to which at least those participants understood the tight weave between diplomacy and military force, and the fact that we are all colleagues toward the same purpose." □

V.P. VOICE: USAID ■ BY FRANCISCO ZAMORA



## Consolidation vs. Equity

A State Department directive instructs USAID missions to consolidate, as much as possible, all administrative operations overseas with the embassy. This is in spite of the fact that USAID employees indicated in a recent survey that consolidation has so far had less than optimal results. And while congressional funding requests are now joint State-USAID documents, the irony is there is no comparable push to equalize benefits and salaries across the two agencies.

This inequity exists despite specific language in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 directing the Secretary of State to assure "maximum compatibility among the agencies authorized by law to utilize the Foreign Service personnel system." The law even directs heads of agencies to confer with the Secretary of State to make sure this happens. Regrettably, we have two very different Foreign Service personnel systems at State and USAID that pose continuing inequities.

The most immediate problem involves FSO entry-level salaries, which favor State employees. The reason for this is the different methodologies used. At State, a salary grade and step level is established based on education level ranging from no college degree (FS-6) to a doctorate (FS-4). One also gets credit for years of relevant experience. At USAID, the applicant is required to hold a master's degree just to start at the FS-6 level.

State offers a special adjustment to match salary for those who lose money by joining the Foreign Service. At USAID, previous salary history can take one to the top of the FS-6 level, but no further. If you lose money by joining USAID, there's no recourse. In practical terms, most State FSOs end up with salaries tens of thousands of dollars higher than those at USAID.

AFSA hears from new USAID FSOs who need to borrow money from family and banks just to make it through their first year in Washington, D.C. In some extreme cases, there are stories of officers sleeping in their cars or moving in with friends. Salaries for new officers are not a simple matter of "supply and demand." It is a question of fairness and good business practices.

A certain minimum income is required to live in the high-cost Washington area, especially for employees with families. State has it right. There is no justification for putting officers in such desperate situations.

There should be uniformity in FSO benefits and, especially, salaries across State and USAID. All employee benefits for State and USAID need to be reviewed, but entry-level salaries need immediate attention. We have approached the new leadership of USAID, and they seem concerned and cooperative. I hope to report success to you soon. □

[Regrettably, we have two very different Foreign Service personnel systems coexisting at State and USAID that pose continuing inequities.](#)

# AAFSW BookFair Turns 50

BY AMY MCKEEVER

**B**arbara Butcher was bored. She and her husband had just moved back to Washington, D.C., from their post in India. It was 1989, and they were still in temporary housing. She hadn't yet adjusted to living back in Washington, a city for which she didn't much care, and she didn't have all that much to do.

So Butcher phoned a friend, looking for a way to pass the time. "I'll pick you up tomorrow morning," the woman told Butcher.

And so the next 21 years of Butcher's life as a volunteer for the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide's BookFair were set in motion. In all those years, she has missed only one BookFair, even commuting in from Colorado where she and her husband retired. And she's not alone in her love for the

such as Haiti earthquake assistance efforts.

"Foreign Service officers are bookish types and so we thought it would be a good way to make money," says Mette Beecroft, who has chaired the BookFair for the past 12 years.

AAFSW's shelves are certainly unique. Obscure titles and ornate artifacts come in from posts around the world, meaning you might find a tome on international environmental law and policy, a Murakami novel, or a Chinese ceremonial silk robe. There is even a fair selection of rare and first-edition books.

The 1960 BookFair, which had about 7,500 books for sale, netted \$2,781, an unexpected windfall for the organizers, and more than enough for five scholarships. Now, AAFSW has more than 100,000 books to sell each year, Beecroft says, and makes around \$75,000.

Still, it's been touch-and-go for the BookFair in the last few years. It has watched its local competitors fold one-by-one over the last decade: the Vassar Book Sale at the Washington Convention Center closed after 51 years in 1999; the Goodwill sale ended three years later after a 31-year run.

"It's sort of a point of pride to keep going," says volunteer Judy Felt.

Technology like the Kindle is one of several threats on the horizon for book sales of this type. But the economy has also taken its toll, raising AAFSW's costs for publicity, equipment rental and security. The group also pays the State Department guards who work extra hours during the BookFair. But even these economic realities may not be the biggest threat to the 50-year-old BookFair.

"I think that corps of people who are very loyal to the organization and fair are getting old, and not that many young people are coming up behind," Butcher says.

This is her last year commuting in from 1,500 miles away to help set up the sale. It's also Beecroft's last year as organizer. The BookFair, which runs almost entirely on the shoulders of its volunteers, is nearly out of manpower.

"We are a graying organization," Beecroft laments in the crowded room where stacks of donations wait to be sorted.

"The younger generation will have to take over sooner or later," Felt adds.

And maybe they will. After all, the AAFSW BookFair has defied the odds for 50 years now to become the oldest surviving local event of its type.

"This is a big production," Felt says. "We always wonder if we can do it another year, and then we do it." □



AAFSW BookFair Chairwoman Mette Beecroft (left) chats with a customer over the gardening section at the 2008 fair.

book sale, one of the few of its kind remaining in the area. As many as 100 customers still line up hours before the fair opens, elbowing each other out of the way to get the best of the unique set of books and art on sale.

"Man, you just had to plaster yourself against a wall," Butcher recalls.

This year the BookFair celebrates its 50th anniversary as a Foreign Service institution despite all the obstacles modernity has thrown in its way over the years. From Oct. 8-17, AAFSW's volunteers will take over the State Department exhibit hall offering books, antiques, art, DVDs and more at bargain prices.

The spousal support and networking group started the BookFair in 1960 as a way to raise money for scholarships and eventually branched out to support local charities as well. In recent years, they've even dedicated earnings of the BookFair to emergency relief,



Oriental rugs from Istanbul's Grand Bazaar are among the many popular finds in the Art Corner of the AAFSW BookFair.

# A Call for Flexibility

BY MELANIE HARRIS HIGGINS

I miss the Muslim call to prayer. I know that's an odd statement for a Christian woman living in the world's largest Muslim country to make. At my last overseas post in Sarajevo, though, my house was across a valley from a mosque where the imam sang the call to prayer without the aid of any speakers. His lovely voice echoed through the valley and into my bedroom in the pre-dawn hours. I thought of it as a lyrical reminder of the things I loved about my new home.

Now I'm living in Jakarta, and there are mosques dotted all across the city. None are quite close enough, however, to hear the call to prayer from inside my home. Sometimes I pause to listen to it when I'm out walking. If I'm lucky, I hear a live voice. More often, I hear a tinny, almost screechy, sound coming through a loudspeaker that needs a tune-up, and cringe.

Longing for the sound of the call to prayer is something I would never have guessed would become part of my life. Then again, there is little we can predict about the lives that we lead in the Foreign Service.

At my current post, my husband and I hired a housekeeper. We've never had full-time help before, so I was startled when I came home on the housekeeper's first day to find my underwear (which I have dumped unceremoniously into a drawer my whole life) neatly folded and stacked. Not the most unusual part of Indonesia, surely, but it's one of the things that surprised me most on my fourth day in the country.

## Another Big Surprise

A fellow beagle owner here in Jakarta delivered another big surprise. Most



The Baturachman Mosque in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, is one of the first examples of a domed mosque in Southeast Asia.

of the world. Having lived in a country on the equator before, I knew that the yard can grow out of control pretty quickly. So my husband and I hired a part-time gardener.

But imagine our surprise to learn that he cuts our lawn using scissors. It's not that we don't have a lawn mower. But here in Indonesia using lawn scissors or hedge clippers is simply the preferred way to cut the grass. I am told that 30 gardeners line up in a row to cut the golf courses, marching across the grass using their lawn scissors to keep the perfectly manicured greens at the right height for optimal golfing.

Indonesians don't like dogs, as they are *haram*—forbidden for Muslims. The sidewalks can be narrow and uneven, and sometimes form an extension of the road for drivers. So crossing the street is like playing a real-life game of "Frogger," and walking a dog can be a real problem. My colleague shared her friend's solution: a beagle-exercise regimen consisting of time on a treadmill.

As I imagine it, this owner enticed the beagle onto the treadmill with a treat, and then turned the machine on. After the stunned beagle got over the initial shock of being dumped unceremoniously onto the floor, I expect she got the hang of it. And now that beagle enjoys a regular run on the treadmill, harnessed to the front to ensure she stays on track—ever seeking the elusive treat that rests just beyond the end of the apparatus. It's not what I would have expected, but it's a practical solution from a flexible Foreign Service colleague.

I've also learned something surprising about gardening, which I always thought was pretty much the same everywhere in

## What FS Life Teaches

And yet, for all the little differences that we find when we arrive at a new post—differences which might make us smile or cringe—it's amazing to see how the Foreign Service life teaches us to roll with the punches. Local customs can seem unusual at first. But who am I to argue about the state of my lingerie drawer? Maybe it did need a little more discipline. And why should I micromanage the way the gardener does his job?

It's only appropriate that we learn to be a little more flexible. If I miss hearing the call to prayer, maybe it's a sign I need to take more walks near the local mosque, the one that doesn't use a speaker system and whose voice brings me back to my fondest memories of Bosnia—where the prayer echoing across the valley used to lull me to sleep at night. □

Melanie Harris Higgins recently joined Embassy Jakarta as a political officer following a posting in Washington, D.C., as public affairs adviser in the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs.



## AFSANEWSBRIEFS

### TRANSITION CENTER SCHEDULE OF COURSES for October–December 2010

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Oct. 18-19	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Oct. 20	MQ500	Encouraging Resilience in the FS Child
Oct. 23	MQ116	Protocol
Nov. 1-2	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Nov. 3	MQ801	Maintaining Long-Distance Relationships
Nov. 9	MQ115	Explaining America
Nov. 15-16	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Nov. 19-20	MQ104	Regulations, Allowances and Finances
Nov. 20	MQ116	Protocol
Nov. 29-30	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Dec. 2	MQ803	Realities of Foreign Service Life
Dec. 4	MQ802	Communicating Across Cultures
Dec. 8-9	MQ107	English Teaching Seminar
Dec. 13-14	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Dec. 20-21	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar

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## Welcome New Governing Board Members

The AFSA Governing Board welcomed two new members at its Aug. 4 meeting. **Lynn Nelson** currently serves in the joint capacity of office management specialist and human resources assignment technician for HR/EX/ASU, where she generates travel orders for members of the Foreign Service. **Michael Haughey** is serving as a section chief in the Overseas Support Branch of Diplomatic Security/Security Technology. He is the recruitment coordinator for engineers and technicians, and he also manages the \$4.1 million Regional Security Technician program consisting of almost 90 locally engaged staff worldwide.

## AFSA Fills Committee Slots

Also at the Aug. 4 meeting, the Governing Board approved three new members for the Awards and Plaques Committee, and five new members for the Committee on Elections. **John Long**, **John Naland** and **Ernesto Pizarro** will join the awards committee, replacing Teresa Yata, Sue Saarnio and George Sibley who have had to leave for overseas postings. Meanwhile, **Quintin Gray** (FAS), **David Salazar** (State), **Denise Jobin Welch** (State), **Richard Thompson** (Retiree) and **Don Businger** (FCS) will join Ambassador George Jones on the elections committee.

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**THE 50TH-ANNIVERSARY ART & BOOKFAIR** of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) will open on Friday, Oct. 8, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. for employees, spouses and escorted guests. The sale continues Oct. 12-15 for this same group, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. In addition, during the weekends of Oct. 9-11 and Oct. 16-17, the sale will be open to the general public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The event takes place in the Exhibit Hall of the Harry S. Truman Building, with access via the C Street Entrance. VISA, MASTERCARD and personal checks accepted. Questions? Please call (202) 223-5796 or visit [www.AAFSW.org](http://www.AAFSW.org).

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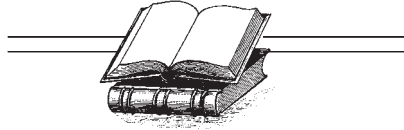
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# BOOKS

## Telling It Like It Was

### Cold War Saga

Kempton Jenkins, *Nimble Books*, 2010, \$20.94, paperback, 452 pages.

REVIEWED BY AURELIUS FERNANDEZ

Retired Foreign Service officer Kempton Jenkins makes a valuable contribution to Cold War studies with this informative and engaging memoir. Appropriately billed as a saga, it chronicles the decades of relentless competition and conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States, with the threat of nuclear war always looming in the background. Equally usefully, he gives readers a front-row seat on how containment and detente paved the way for the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Over the course of three decades of Foreign Service assignments, including policymaking positions in Berlin, Moscow and Washington, D.C., Jenkins honed an enviable expertise in Soviet affairs. Tours in Bangkok and Caracas enabled him to observe firsthand the global dimensions of Soviet objectives in Southeast Asia and Latin America. And a detail to Harvard University introduced him to renowned scholars, an association reflected in his well-annotated bibliography.

Jenkins was an exceptionally effec-

*Jenkins discreetly shares poignant personal details in his narrative of Foreign Service life.*



tive practitioner of public diplomacy throughout his career, even before that term came into vogue in the 1970s. Press and cultural relations were always at the heart of his activities, abroad and in Washington. (Disclosure: I had the good fortune of serving under Jenkins in the mid-1970s, when he was the U.S. Information Agency's assistant director for Soviet and Eastern European affairs.)

The author paints a panoramic canvas illustrating the whole arc of Cold War history, encompassing such topics as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, trade issues and the Jackson Vanik Amendment, among many others. He combines these broad strokes with finer ones illustrating how particular events cast long shadows, such as the 1961 Thompson-Gromyko Berlin talks in Moscow.

Jenkins served as notetaker for those talks, experiencing firsthand the Soviet foreign minister's legendary

truculence, as well as Ambassador Llywellyn Thompson's consummate diplomatic professionalism. In a personal touch illustrating the challenges and rewards of Foreign Service life, he recalls rushing back to the embassy on cold winter nights to draft cables reporting each day's talks. (For details, see Jenkins' Reflections column, "A Confrontation in Moscow," in the February 2009 *FSJ*.)

In the final chapter, the author demolishes various myths about the Cold War, such as the claim that Ronald Reagan singlehandedly won it for America. He rightly stresses that all presidents, from Harry Truman through George H.W. Bush, pursued policies that contributed to ultimate victory.

Throughout the book, Jenkins discreetly shares poignant personal details within his narrative of Foreign Service life. In 1970, he was widowed with three teenage sons, but remarried a supportive spouse four years later, who enabled him to continue his impressive career.

Following a detail as an assistant secretary at the Department of Commerce, he retired from the Foreign Service in 1980, joining the private sector to support a blended family that had grown to include five college-age children. But he has continued to support the mission of the Foreign Service ever since, not least through





this excellent memoir, the 41st publication in the ADST-DACOR series.

Let me close by quoting a blurb from Jack F. Matlock Jr., U.S. ambassador to the USSR from 1987 to 1991, which I believe many readers of this account will echo: “To us veterans of the Cold War’s diplomatic front lines, Kempton Jenkins tells it like it was. He names the key players, gives a keen insight into their character, and shows why some were heroes and some villains. *Cold War Saga* is an absorbing read. If you fought with Jenkins in the political trenches, it will stir fond memories. If you didn’t, it will take you there ... [to see] what was at stake.”

*Aurelius (Aury) Fernandez is a retired U.S. Information Agency Foreign Service officer.*

## A New Middle East “Power Triangle”?

### Reset: Iran, Turkey and America’s Future

Stephen Kinzer, 2010, Henry Holt, \$26.00, hardcover, 274 pages.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD MCKEE

Veteran foreign correspondent Stephen Kinzer challenges long-held premises of U.S. policy in his latest book by arguing that Washington should pursue peace and stability in the Middle East via a “power triangle” comprising the United States, Turkey and Iran. In his view, the people of these three nations share a strong commitment to democracy and their governments’ strategic interests are congruent, so such an entente could attain objectives that America’s tradi-

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***Recent developments  
complicate Kinzer’s  
thesis that Tehran,  
Ankara and Washington  
can forge closer  
relations.***

---

tional reliance on Israel and Saudi Arabia has failed to achieve.

To make his case, Kinzer first recalls remarkable personalities who have participated in Iranians’ and Turks’ sustained struggle for democracy and independence. He profiles two Americans still revered in Iran — Howard Baskerville, killed in 1906 while defending Tabriz against counter-revolutionary forces, and Morgan Shuster, who five years later was appointed to reform Iran’s finances. (British and Russian envoys soon had him fired.)

Kinzer also portrays former Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh as a democrat and nationalist whose overthrow by the CIA in 1953 ushered in Reza Shah’s abusive autocracy — which, in turn, led to the creation of the Islamic Republic. Thirty years after the Iranian Revolution, Iranians still hope to regain their lost democracy, as their protests against the fixed 2009 elections demonstrate.

Despite bitter memories and heated rhetoric on both sides, Kinzer adduces evidence that Washington and

Tehran have found common ground in the past. Soon after 9/11, the two governments agreed on ways Iran could assist U.S. troops in Afghanistan. And even though President George W. Bush included Iran in his “axis of evil,” in 2003 Tehran secretly offered to open its nuclear facilities for inspection and cut off aid to Hamas and Hezbollah. In return, it wanted sanctions lifted, access to peaceful nuclear technology and recognition of its “legitimate security interests.” Regrettably, the Bush administration never pursued such a deal.

As for Turkey, Kinzer recalls Kemal Atatürk as a military hero who, in 1923, rallied the Turks to drive out European troops, established a secular republic and, inter alia, ordered men to wear caps and women to drop their veils in public buildings. Although thrice set back by military coups, by 2007 democracy had become so entrenched in Turkey that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, described as a wily street fighter, could call the generals’ bluff and have a pious fellow Muslim, Abdullah Gül, elected president.

Kinzer correctly asserts that Turkish diplomatic initiatives can achieve objectives Washington is unable to pursue directly, though recent events underscore the odds against success. Ankara once encouraged Israeli-Syrian contacts, but that effort perished along with nine Turks on the flotilla headed for Gaza this summer.

About the same time, Ankara and Tehran agreed to store some Iranian nuclear materials in Turkey, but Washington immediately dismissed that possibility with disdain. Moreover, Turks still resent the great damage inflicted on their now-booming economy by U.S.-promoted sanctions on

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Iraq, while Iranians will seek to consolidate the major advantages they gained thanks to the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

These developments complicate Kinzer's thesis that a "power triangle" can be forged. All three governments are committed to preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq, defeating the Taliban and countering Sunni Muslim extremism. But beyond that, *Reset* does not make a compelling case that they share broad strategic interests.

Kinzer may be right that in a post-Cold War world, the U.S. need no longer depend on Israeli intelligence and Saudi money to mount covert operations, and should distance itself from both pillars of its Middle East policy. But his idea that Washington can impose a settlement on the Israelis and Palestinians is as unrealistic as his belief that the U.S., Iran and Turkey can work together successfully any time soon.

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*Richard K. McKee, a retired Foreign Service officer, served as political counselor in Ankara from 1994 to 1997.*

## Reaching Out to Islam

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**A Necessary Engagement:  
Reinventing America's Relations  
with the Muslim World (Princeton  
Studies in Muslim Politics)**

*Emile A. Nakhleh, Princeton University Press, 2009, \$27.95, hardback, 162 pages.*

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA H. KUSHLIS

Emile Nakhleh's *A Necessary Engagement* is authoritative, approachable and right-sized. Nakhleh was a

senior intelligence officer and the director of the Political Islam Strategic Analysis Program in the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence until his retirement in 2006. The research, analysis and remedies contained in his book — geared both to policymakers and the educated layperson — derive from extensive personal experience and reflection.

Nakhleh's knowledge of historical Islam and today's Muslim world are both deep. Using fluent Arabic, he interviewed hundreds of Muslims for this book who come from all walks of life in more than 30 countries: shopkeepers, religious clerics, journalists, university professors and even two Guantanamo prisoners. He has corroborated his findings with numerous surveys of Muslim attitudes taken during the past decade.

What makes the book stand out is his analysis of the developing political awareness of the world's 1.4 billion Muslims — many young, undereducated and unemployed — as well as the important and largely constructive role played by reformist thinkers and mainstream Islamist political parties. The refusal of Israel and the Bush administration to recognize Hamas' electoral victory in Gaza, even though it came through largely free and fair elections, was perceived as the height of hypocrisy among Muslims.

The author usefully emphasizes what a tiny percentage of militants aspire to turn the multiethnic, multidimensional Islamic world into a one-world caliphate governed by the most backward and repressive interpretations of religious law. He stresses the many fissures within Islam, as well as the struggles being waged against the corrupt, incompetent and repressive elites who took power in the post-




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***Nakhleh also urges  
Washington to intensify  
its dialogue with  
mainstream Islamic  
political parties and  
institutionalize its  
commitment to democracy.***

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colonial period and cling to power by invoking nationalism — and sometimes their links to Washington.

These battles are not, Nakhleh stresses, part of al-Qaida's struggle against the West. Rather, the organization's simple, clear and repetitive message mostly attracts socially and economically marginalized Muslims looking for scapegoats. In addition, he reminds us that "moderate activists who reject the radical message have been ... subjected to harassment and imprisonment by so-called moderate regimes." This leaves them "reticent to speak out against [Osama] bin Laden's message lest they be accused of being either pro-regime or pro-United States."

A particularly useful chapter, "Public Diplomacy: A Blueprint," lists 10 themes that resonate in the Islamic world, all of which emphasize commonalities, not differences among religions. The most significant — and one the Obama administration has endorsed from day one — is the declara-

tion that "the United States is not engaged in a conflict with Islam" and that "the international community is fighting terrorists who in the name of Islam bring untold suffering on Muslims and non-Muslims alike." However, Nakhleh warns that this rhetorical change must be coupled with an "American foreign policy committed to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ending the Iraq incursion and pushing for economic and political reforms in the region."

He also urges Washington to intensify its dialogue with mainstream Islamic political parties and institutionalize its commitment to democracy. And he stresses the need to expand academic and professional exchange programs and sister university ties, open more American cultural centers in the Muslim world, and encourage American universities to build campuses in Muslim countries.

Admittedly, some of Nakhleh's prescriptions are tall orders that would require major readjustments in how the U.S. conducts relations with the Muslim world. (He acknowledges that this will require a major reconfiguration of our foreign affairs bureaucracy, but offers no specifics.) But overall, he offers some of the most sensible suggestions I've come across in a long time. ■

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*Patricia H. Kushlis was an FSO with the U.S. Information Agency from 1970 to 1998. A longer version of this review appeared on WhirledView, the world politics, public diplomacy and national security blog she co-writes with former FSO Patricia Lee Sharpe (<http://whirledview.typepad.com/whirledview/2009/01/emile-nakhleh-s-a-necessary-engagement-book-review-essay.html>).*

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# IN MEMORY

**John V. Abidian**, 85, a retired Foreign Service security specialist, died on June 24 in Brussels of an acute lung infection.

Mr. Abidian was born on Feb. 6, 1925, in Chelsea, Mass. After military service in the Pacific (1943-1946), he studied at the University of Massachusetts, receiving his bachelor's degree in 1950. He earned a master's degree at Middlebury College in 1951. Later that year, while studying at the Sorbonne, Mr. Abidian was offered a position at the U.S. embassy in Paris, and thus began his career in the U.S. Foreign Service.

From 1955 to 1960, Mr. Abidian served as a special agent with the Technical Security Branch and then the Protective Security Division of the Department of State. In 1960, he was assigned to Moscow as security adviser. From 1962 to 1964 he served as regional security officer in Rio de Janeiro, returning to Washington, where he was chief of the Latin American Security Branch of the State Department from 1964 to 1966. In 1966, he was assigned to Paris as the RSO.

Mr. Abidian then served as special assistant to the deputy assistant secretary for security (1967-1968) and as chief of the Foreign Operations Security Division (1968-1969). He culminated his career with a nine-year secondment to the North Atlantic

Treaty Organization as its director of security and principal adviser on security and counterintelligence matters to the secretary general (1969-1978).

After retirement in 1978, Mr. Abidian and his wife, Madeleine (nee Gregory), divided their time between homes in Brussels and Venice, Fla., where they were engaged in professional, charitable and athletic activities. Mr. Abidian was an active member of the American Society for Industrial Security.

He is survived by his wife, Madeleine.



**James E. Akins**, 83, a retired FSO and former ambassador to Saudi Arabia, died on July 15 in Mitchellville, Md.

Mr. Akins was born in 1926, the oldest of three sons of an Akron, Ohio, rubber plant worker. He attended the University of Akron, where he earned a bachelor's degree in physics. Before graduating in 1947, he served for two years in the United States Navy.

In 1954, he entered the Foreign Service, beginning a diplomatic career that spanned two decades with service in Naples, Paris, Strasbourg, Damascus, Beirut, Kuwait, Baghdad and Washington, D.C.

In the fall of 1968, he was ap-

pointed as director of fuels and energy, the State Department's top energy post. In this position, he was one of the first analysts to see the approaching energy crisis. His incisive analysis, including a landmark article in the April 1973 *Foreign Affairs*, won widespread recognition, which resulted in his being invited to write President Richard Nixon's first energy report.

Mr. Akins' career in the Foreign Service reached its pinnacle in August 1973, when he was appointed U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, serving in that post until 1976.

After leaving the State Department, Ambassador Akins became one of the world's foremost Middle East experts and enjoyed being a consultant to multinational corporations on foreign policy and energy. A talented public speaker, he was invited to give the commencement addresses at many universities and schools across the country. He was also called to testify before various congressional committees. He was a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Archaeology Society, the Association of Political and Social Scientists and the American Foreign Service Association.

Over the course of his diplomatic career, Mr. and Mrs. Akins amassed a substantial collection of original and reconstructed Old World/Near East artifacts. The couple donated a large



## IN MEMORY



portion of the collection to the Department of Classical Studies, Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Akron. This donation allows students to explore the mysteries of the ancient Near East without leaving the campus, and provides the basis for numerous projects and research.

Throughout the years, Mr. Akins was an avid gardener and a patron of the Washington theater and arts community. He enjoyed the company of his three grandchildren and visiting the mountains of western Maryland. Family and friends recall his love of the Washington Opera, Shakespeare Theater and Arena Stage. They also remember his selfless generosity, great sense of humor, strong moral values and the love that he has shown to those he left behind.

Amb. Akins is survived by his wife of 56 years, Marjorie Abbott Akins, of Mitchellville, Md.; his son Thomas A. Akins of Falls Church, Va.; his daughter Mary Elizabeth Akins Colvill of McMurray, Pa.; grandchildren Margaret, Grace and Caroline Akins; and two brothers, Kenneth and Donavan of Port Clinton, Ohio, and Phoenix, Ariz., respectively.



**Aaron L. Benjamin**, 78, a retired FSO with USAID, died on June 13 at the Ashland Community Hospital in Ashland, Ore., of complications from pneumonia.

Mr. Benjamin was born on March 21, 1932, in New York City, the eldest son of Samuel — a professional trumpet player and veteran of World War I — and Minnie Eisgrau Benjamin. He graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1949. A year later, he enrolled in

Brooklyn College, receiving a B.A. in urbanism in 1954. He earned his master's degree in city planning from New York University's Graduate School of Housing and Planning in 1959. He paid his way by working as a waiter in the "Borscht Belt" resorts of the Catskills.

After completing his formal education, Mr. Benjamin spent 12 years as an urban planner and housing specialist in Zurich, Los Angeles and New York City, where he worked in a senior capacity for the city's Housing and Development Board. Previously, he had worked for the architectural firms of Victor Gruen and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. While living in New York, he was hired by the City of Elizabeth, N.J., to be its director of planning and development. He also taught courses at the Pratt Institute and the New School for Social Research on the effects of urban renewal on city life.

In 1967, Mr. Benjamin joined the Foreign Service as a housing and urban development officer with USAID. During a 22-year diplomatic career, he served in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Egypt. Frequently assigned to these countries following a devastating earthquake or hurricane, he was involved in programs to plan and implement their reconstruction, develop small businesses, promote exports, and design disaster preparedness and response programs.

In Bolivia, for example, he helped to develop a savings and loan system to funnel money into construction for low- and middle-income housing, for which Bolivia's Central Bank offered him a golden "Key to the City." In Nicaragua, following the earthquake that leveled Managua in 1973, he was instrumental in creating Las Americas,

a planned community to house the thousands left homeless that still survives to this day. He was nominated for a Rockefeller Service Award for his achievements there.

While living in Latin America, he developed a strong interest in Latin American art and antiquities, and several of the pieces he collected are now housed in the Museum of Man in Santo Domingo. He later served as a volunteer archivist for the Smithsonian Institution's Division of Anthropology.

Following his retirement from the State Department in 1989, Mr. Benjamin settled in Arlington, Va., and worked as a consultant in urban development in Latin America and for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

After a yearlong camping trip throughout the United States, he moved to Ashland, Ore., in 1998. Drawn by the city's beauty, civic concerns and cultural life, Mr. Benjamin settled in the house of his dreams, designed by architects from Frank Lloyd Wright's center, Taliesin West.

He was an enthusiastic participant in Southern Oregon University's educational program for seniors, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and audited history and social sciences courses at SOU. He was also a member of a local book group and the Amigo Club, fostering Ashland's sister city association with Guanajuato.

A longstanding film buff, photographer and news junkie, he regularly listened to public radio and public TV, recording thousands of programs on tapes that now line the walls of his garage. And having been a bass player in a small jazz group in his youth and later taking guitar lessons in classical Spanish music, he collected records, tapes and musical instruments, donat-

## IN MEMORY



ing several to the art museum at SOU.

Among Mr. Benjamin's proudest achievements in more than 40 years of public service was the establishment in Ashland of the city's Housing Trust Fund, which he had championed as a longtime member of the Ashland Housing Commission. During the last few years of his life, despite repeated bouts of pneumonia caused by the side effects of radiation he underwent as part of the cancer treatment he had received in 1975, Mr. Benjamin energetically continued his role as an informal adviser to local government officials.

At the June 15 City Council meeting, Ashland Mayor John Stromberg requested a moment of silence in his memory. Later, in a note to the family, he eulogized Mr. Benjamin as "the epitome of what a citizen should be. Ever vigilant, professional and thoughtful, he generously shared his knowledge and concerns for the betterment of Ashland."

Mr. Benjamin was a charter member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and a member of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, the American Foreign Service Association, DACOR, the National Geographic Society, the Smithsonian Institution and AARP.

He is survived by his wife, Judith, of Ashland, Ore.; his daughter, Cynthia, of Washington, D.C.; his son, Robert, of Ashland, Ore.; his brother, Harvey Benjamin of New York City; and a nephew, Matthew Elzweig of Queens, N.Y.

Contributions may be made in his memory to the City of Ashland Housing Trust Fund, CARE or Habitat for Humanity.

**Wat Tyler Cluverius IV**, 76, a retired FSO and former ambassador, died on Feb. 14 in Cleveland, Ohio, following a long battle with cancer.

Mr. Cluverius was born in Arlington, Mass., and raised in Chicago, Ill. He attended Northwestern University and Indiana University. Hailing from a long line of United States Navy officers, he served as a Navy officer from 1957 to 1962. He married Judith Dvorovy in 1959, but they divorced in 1989.

In 1967, Mr. Cluverius joined the Foreign Service, serving in Saudi Arabia, Tel Aviv and Washington, D.C., where he briefed President Gerald R. Ford, President Jimmy Carter and President Ronald Reagan. Highly regarded by his peers and superiors, Mr. Cluverius was appointed as ambassador to Bahrain in 1976, becoming at the age of 42 one of the youngest ambassadors in the Foreign Service.

During a 21-year diplomatic career, he was instrumental in brokering peace between Israel and neighboring Egypt and Jordan. Mr. Cluverius served as a senior adviser on Middle East Peace and later became consul general in Jerusalem. He also served as deputy assistant secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs. He dedicated his life to bridging historical divides between nations in the Middle East and furthering American interests in the region.

Mr. Cluverius retired from the Foreign Service in 1988 to head the Multinational Force and Observers peacekeeping force established by the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty. He served in Rome as director general of the 3,000-person organization, leading the force for more than a decade. During this time, Mr. Cluverius married the former Leah Konstabler, a French native

living in Israel.

He later became president and ambassador-in-residence of the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, a nonprofit organization founded in 1932 to enhance public dialogue and understanding of international economic, political and social affairs.

Mr. Cluverius loved sailing, which became his passion in life. His family and friends remember his appetite for life, fondness for good food and company, keen sense of humor and unique ability to make those around him feel loved.

He is survived by his wife, Leah Konstabler-Cluverius; a son, Wat Tyler Cluverius V (and wife, Lauren Mellon) of Seattle, Wash.; a daughter, Charlotte Cluverius-Klevan (and husband, David Klevan) of Washington, D.C.; two stepsons, David Harif (and life partner Oli Zeltserman) of Israel and Yonni Harif (and wife, Tal Barak Harif) of New York City; a granddaughter, Mayfield Elizabeth (Maizie), and a step granddaughter, Eden.

Contributions in his name may be made to the Senior Living Foundation of the American Foreign Service.



**H. Alberta (Bert) Colclaser**, 99, a retired FSO, died on July 7 in Wooster, Ohio, where she had resided for 35 years.

Ms. Colclaser was born on Feb. 19, 1911, in Turtle Creek, Pa., the daughter of Levi A. "Lee" Colclaser and Bertha Margaret Lear Colclaser, who died when her daughter was only 8 years old.

Following her graduation in 1933 from the College of Wooster, Ms. Colclaser worked briefly as an editor for a publishing company before enrolling

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at Case Western Reserve University Law School, where she was one of just three women in a class of 75 students. She earned her J.D. in 1936 and then headed east to Columbia University Law School to pursue her dream of studying both international and aviation law, a specialty she essentially created during the three years she spent there.

She received her LLM in 1939 and joined the State Department. During a 34-year diplomatic career, first in Washington, D.C., and then in overseas assignments as civil air attaché in Paris and Ottawa, Ms. Colclaser helped develop the post-World War II framework for aviation and international law and policy that is still in use today.

Following her retirement from government service, Ms. Colclaser settled in Wooster, where she served the College of Wooster for five years as executive assistant to the president and secretary of the college. Until 2005, she drove herself to Washington every year for the holiday season.

Ms. Colclaser was the recipient of the Department of State Superior Service Award in 1966 and the Distinguished Alumni Award of the College of Wooster in 1983. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Society of Benchers of Western Reserve University Law School, and the Wayne County (Ohio) Bar Association.

Survivors include a cousin, Margaret M. Gillan of Northville, Mich., as well as Mrs. Gillan's children and their

families, Deborah Gillan Straub and Robert Straub (Alexandra and Dayna) of Lowell, Mich., and John and Colleen Gillan (Nicole, Melanie, and Ian) of Marion, N.C.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Department of Political Science at the College of Wooster or the Law School at Case Western Reserve University.



**Peter Collins**, 72, a retired FSO, died on July 17 at his home in Albuquerque, N.M., of a sudden cardiac embolism.

Mr. Collins was born in South Bend, Ind., where his father had established the physics department at



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## IN MEMORY



Notre Dame University. He moved with his family to Long Island when his father began a long career at Brookhaven National Laboratory. Mr. Collins graduated from Bellport High School, Long Island Village, N.Y., in 1954. After receiving his B.A. from Swarthmore College in 1959, he pursued graduate studies at Columbia University from 1959 to 1961. He received an M.Ed. from George Washington University in 1993. His languages were French, Greek, Vietnamese and Portuguese.

Specializing in political and political-military affairs, Mr. Collins was appointed to the Foreign Service in 1964. His postings included Greece, Vietnam, Cambodia, Portugal, NATO/Brussels and Washington, D.C. His first assignment was Thessaloniki; he later returned to Greece to serve as special assistant to the ambassador for political-military affairs, twice acting as a negotiator on U.S.-Greek military base agreements. His expertise on Greece, Turkey and Cyprus was an asset while assigned to the U.S. Mission to NATO.

Mr. Collins was a delegate to the Vietnam Peace Talks in Paris from 1970 to 1972. There he met his wife of 39 years, Gloria Elizabeth Collins, a native of Washington, D.C., who was also a member of the Foreign Service. The couple served together during most of their careers.

During the Vietnam War, Mr. Collins served at Embassy Saigon and at the consulate in Can Tho, as well as in Phnom Penh when that diplomatic mission was evacuated in March 1975. In addition, he was a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University in 1983-1984. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1994.

Following retirement, Mr. Collins

moved to New Mexico and later joined Sandia National Laboratories as a consultant. He also worked at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., as a document reviewer from time to time. He was an avid runner, tennis player and baseball fan, as well as an avid reader and student of American, English and Irish classic literature and a lover of indie films, both foreign and American.

Mr. Collins is survived by his wife, Gloria Elizabeth Collins, of Washington, D.C.; and a sister, brother and stepmother.



**Francis P. (Frank) Coward**, 91, a retired FSO with the U.S. Information Agency, died on June 11 in Slingerlands, N.Y.

Born in Buffalo, N.Y., on Dec. 12, 1918, Mr. Coward graduated from Union College, where he majored in language and literature, and received an M.A. in education from the University of Buffalo. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II as an interpreter for French pilots and, later, as an interpreter for German war criminals in Europe.

Following the war, Mr. Coward taught in Lausanne, Switzerland, for two years, then returned to New York City where he taught at Williamsville High School for 12 years. The recipient of two Fulbright Scholarships, Mr. Coward spent one year in Oldenburg, Germany, and another year in Vienna.

In 1962, Mr. Coward joined the U.S. Information Agency. He first served in India, then in Thailand for nearly five years as an assistant cultural affairs officer, followed by five years in Burma as cultural affairs officer. At each post, he was successful in insti-

tuting new long-range public diplomacy programs in addition to directing normal cultural functions.

Mr. Coward retired to Rensselaerville, N.Y., in 1979, where he was active in community affairs and maintained a strong interest in international developments. He was an avid reader, whose personal library contained several thousand books.

Survivors include his wife, Gretchen, of Rensselaerville; son Nicholas and wife Vicki of Alexandria, Va.; daughter Helen and husband Ronald Gresch, of Baltimore, Md.; a sister, Marian Page; and five grandchildren.

Memorial donations may be directed to Trinity Church or the E.N. Huyck Preserve, both in Rensselaerville.



**Colette Dickey**, 83, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died on May 22 in Camden, Maine.

Ms. Dickey was born in Pawtucket, R.I., where she was educated in parochial schools and attended Bryant College before entering the Foreign Service in 1951. During her 32-year career as an office management specialist, she served in Belgrade, Tokyo, Damascus, Geneva, Paris, Poznan, Sofia, Lisbon, Rio, Guatemala City and Brussels, usually as secretary or executive assistant to chiefs of mission and deputy chiefs of mission. In those positions her office skills and linguistic abilities were highly regarded by a series of ambassadors and senior officers.

In 1982, Ms. Dickey retired to Camden, where she became an active member in a number of Maine mid-coast foreign policy forums and environmental organizations. She also volunteered as a teacher of basic read-



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ing and foreign languages in the Maine correctional system.

Ms. Dickey is survived by a sister, Jacqueline, a member of The Sisters of St. Chretienne in Cumberland, R.I.

Donations in her honor may be made to her church, Our Lady of Good Hope, 7 Union Street, Camden ME 04843 or to the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging, One Elmwood Avenue, Kansas City KS 66103.



**Susan Kay Donnelly**, 63, wife of retired FSO Shaun Donnelly, passed away suddenly but peacefully at home in Silver Spring, Md., on July 12.

Mrs. Donnelly was born on April

23, 1947, in Menasha, Wis., to Kenneth Kay, a manufacturing executive, and Joan Buesing, a homemaker. She had a loving, 1950s-style, Midwestern childhood in New Holstein and Sheboygan, Wis., where she was active in church, school, music and theater. After graduating from Sheboygan North High School in 1965, she attended Lawrence University, graduating with a B.A. in history in 1969. She remained active in theater, music and church activities all her life.

In 1970, she married Shaun Donnelly, a fellow alumnus (1968). Mrs. Donnelly worked as a social worker in Chicago while her husband earned an M.A. from Northwestern University. In 1972, the couple moved to Washington as Mr. Donnelly began a 36-

year Foreign Service career as an economic officer, serving as ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, as assistant U.S. trade representative for Europe and the Middle East and, for eight years, as a deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, five of them as principal deputy assistant secretary.

Mrs. Donnelly was in every respect a full partner in her husband's career and a dynamic and widely admired, if uncompensated, American representative throughout their six overseas assignments in Dakar, Addis Ababa, Cairo, Bamako, Tunis and Colombo.

At each post, she was a leader in the American and international communities, serving at various times as an embassy community liaison officer, USIA

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## IN MEMORY



English teacher, journalist, cross-cultural trainer and women's club officer, in addition to her informal roles as spouse of the ambassador or DCM. She was active in drama and music groups throughout her career.

In Colombo, Mrs. Donnelly entertained widely at educational and charitable events as "Coco the Clown," the only professional clown in Sri Lanka. Mr. Donnelly often noted that while being U.S. ambassador was rather prestigious, he was much better known as the husband of the ubiquitous Coco.

Friends and family members recall Mrs. Donnelly as "a force of nature" who contributed vitally to community activities at her overseas posts. As a first-tour officer's wife in Dakar, she was quickly elected vice president of the large, French-dominated International Women's Club. A few years later, when her husband was a mid-level economic officer on his first Washington tour, Mrs. Donnelly was elected president of AAFSW, hobnobbing with the spouses of ambassadors and under secretaries and testifying before Congress on behalf of Foreign Service families at hearings on the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

Mrs. Donnelly became a member of AAFSW in 1972, serving at various times as president, membership chairperson and BookFair chairperson. During Washington assignments, she was also a regular reader in her church, a devoted room mother and soccer mom, and an activist in her neighborhood association.

She performed with the New Dimension Singers for 30 years and also acted in local theater groups, including the Potomac Theatre Company and Silver Spring Stage. Over the last 15 years, she appeared regularly around the region as Coco the Clown.

Mrs. Donnelly is survived by her husband of 40 years, Shaun; her two sons, Alex and Eric, both of Silver Spring, Md.; and a brother and sister.

Memorial gifts in her memory may be directed to the First Church of Christ Scientist of Silver Spring, 9100 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring MD 20910; Lawrence University, Appleton WI 54911; The Barker Foundation, 7979 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda MD 20814; Sarvodaya USA, 122 State Street, Suite 510, Madison WI 53703; CARE USA, 151 Ellis Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30303; or to a charity of your own choosing.



**Thomas J. Dunnigan**, 89, a retired FSO, died on June 7 of natural causes at Mount Vernon Hospital in Alexandria, Va.

A native Ohioan and a graduate of John Carroll University, Mr. Dunnigan received a master's degree in international relations from George Washington University. He was also a graduate of the National War College. After serving in the Army in Europe during World War II, Mr. Dunnigan joined the Foreign Service in 1946, serving first in Berlin on the staff of Robert Murphy, political adviser to the U.S. Military Governor for Germany. He remained there during the Soviet blockade of the city and the Allied airlift of 1948-1949.

Subsequent assignments took him to London (where he was present for King George VI's death and Queen Elizabeth's coronation), Manila, Hong Kong and Bonn. He served in The Hague twice, once as deputy chief of mission. He was also DCM and spent many months as chargé d'affaires in Copenhagen and Tel Aviv. He served

for nine years in Washington, D.C., and accompanied Secretaries John Foster Dulles, Christian Herter and Dean Rusk on overseas trips. His last assignment was as deputy U.S. permanent representative to the Organization of American States.

After retiring from the Foreign Service in 1984, Mr. Dunnigan served for eight years with the Defense Management Systems Planning Agency, traveling to Europe, Asia, Africa and South America during that period.

He was a member of the American Foreign Service Association, DACOR, the Mount Vernon Country Club, and Good Shepherd Catholic Church.

Mr. Dunnigan married his first wife, Rae Marie Fox of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, in 1949. She died in 1990. In 1992, he married Margaret (Peg) D'Agostino of Alexandria, Va. She died in 2006.

Survivors include four children from his first marriage: John R. Dunnigan of Dallas; Ralph and Leo Dunnigan of Mason, Ohio; and Claudia A. Conway of Woodbridge, Va. Another son, Michael, died in 1997. He is also survived by three stepchildren: L. James D'Agostino of McLean, Va.; David D'Agostino of Falls Church, Va.; and Anne Shingler of Alexandria, Va.; four grandchildren, seven step grandchildren, one great-granddaughter and one step great-grandson.

Memorial donations can be made to the American Heart Association.



**Melissa "Lisa" Frandsen-Conlon**, 49, wife of FAS Foreign Service officer Michael Conlon, died on June 4 in Washington, D.C., after a two-year fight against breast cancer.

Ms. Frandsen-Conlon was born in

## IN MEMORY



Evanston, Ill., on Nov. 2, 1960, and grew up in Nebraska and Michigan. She graduated from Benton Harbor High School in Michigan in 1979, and received a B.A. in medical anthropology from Michigan State University in 1983. In 1988, she earned two master's degrees — in medical anthropology and public health — from the University of Connecticut.

She married Michael Conlon in 1985, and the couple had two children, Emma and Daniel. The family lived in Mexico City, London and, for the past four years, Tokyo, where Mr. Conlon served as the agricultural trade officer. In Tokyo, Ms. Frandsen-Conlon was the community liaison officer for three years. Family and friends recall her love of reading, animals, hiking and traveling. In July, the family returned to their home in Vienna, Va.

Ms. Frandsen-Conlon is survived by her husband of 25 years, Michael; her children, Emma, 18, and Daniel, 14; her father, the Rev. Charles Frandsen; two brothers, John and Philip; and 13 nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her sister, Christina, in 2003, and her mother, Ianthe, in 1995.

Memorial contributions may be made to the nonprofit organizations Life with Cancer ([Lifewithcancer.org](http://Lifewithcancer.org)) or Capital Hospice ([capitalhospice.org](http://capitalhospice.org)).



**Gerald (Jerry) Goldstein**, 88, a retired FSO, died on March 24 in Seattle, Wash., of esophageal cancer.

Born in New York City in 1921, Mr. Goldstein received his B.S. degree from Brooklyn College in 1944 and an M.A. degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 1948. He served

in the U.S. Army overseas from 1942 to 1946.

Mr. Goldstein entered the Foreign Service in 1950 and subsequently served in Munich, Vancouver, Port-of-Spain, Bonn, Brasilia and Washington, D.C. He also attended the National War College in 1965. He retired in 1976 with the rank of minister counselor.

During retirement, Mr. Goldstein enjoyed wood working and created a number of lovely pieces. He read extensively in economics and history, subjects that had interested him all his life and were at the core of his Foreign Service career.

Mr. Goldstein is survived by his wife, Sylvia, of Seattle; his children Susan of Oakland, Calif., Kay of Berkeley, Calif., and Steven of Seattle; and two granddaughters, Anna and Rachel.



**Dorothy Jean (Petrie) Irving**, 87, the wife of retired FSO and former ambassador Frederick Irving, died on Feb. 8 in Amherst, Mass., of a heart attack.

A leader in early childhood education and a community relations specialist, Mrs. Irving had earned a B.A. from Mount Holyoke College and an M.A. in education from Columbia University. In 1946, she married FSO Frederick Irving, accompanying him to postings in Austria, Iceland and Jamaica.

In Austria during the 1950s, and again from 1967 to 1968, Mrs. Irving chaired the 100-member Austrian-American Friendship Fund, a binational organization of volunteers and Austrian and American government officials working to help handicapped and homeless children.

In Iceland, where her husband served as ambassador, Mrs. Irving took up study of the difficult local language. Though the U.S. maintained a strategic naval base in the country, the embassy had no American member who knew Icelandic. Mrs. Irving often served as the translator of Icelandic newspapers at a significant time in U.S.-Icelandic relations, and was widely respected and admired in many strata of Icelandic society for her cultural interest and involvement.

Upon the couple's departure, the Icelandic government publicly cited Mrs. Irving for her contributions to successful retention of the naval station, which had been threatened with expulsion by the coalition government that included members of a heavily pro-Soviet political party.

In Jamaica, where her husband served as ambassador, Mrs. Irving worked with Peace Corps Volunteers and several social welfare organizations. Because of her wide community involvement, the U.S. business community publicly thanked her for "improving the climate in which we conduct our business."

The Jamaican prime minister and minister of education each honored Mrs. Irving with a luncheon when she and her husband departed. The Jamaica Teachers' Association stated: "Castro built schools along the highways, but it was Mrs. Irving who taught in them."

While in the United States, Mrs. Irving served as a member of the State Department Mental Health Advisory Committee and lectured at the Foreign Service Institute. During one U.S. assignment, she was honored by the mayor and school superintendent of Cambridge, Mass., for her work in a multiethnic school in that city, and by

## IN MEMORY



the New England Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews for her intercultural work.

At Mt. Holyoke's sesquicentennial celebration in 1987, Mrs. Irving was presented with an Outstanding Alumnae Achievement Award for her "professionalism, sustained commitment and creativity" in the fields of education and community relations overseas and in inner city communities in the U.S. The award was presented to 50 alumni selected by a distinguished independent panel from more than 25,000 living graduates of the college from around the world.

Mrs. Irving is the author of the book, *This Too Is Diplomacy — Stories of a Partnership* (AuthorHouse, 2007), which describes her volunteer activities, demonstrating the substantive contributions a spouse can make to advancing U.S. interests overseas.

In addition to her husband, Frederick of Amherst, Mrs. Irving leaves two daughters, Susan of Washington, D.C., and Barbara of Amherst, Mass.; one son, Richard of Winchester, Mass.; and eight grandchildren.



**James N. Leaken**, 85, a retired FSO, died on Aug. 4 in Santa Fe, N.M., of complications from acute bronchitis.

Mr. Leaken was born in Minneapolis, Minn., where he lived until age 14 when his family moved to Los Angeles. After attending Los Angeles High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1943, at age 18, serving as a signalman on LCI #409 (Landing Craft/ Infantry) during World War II. He participated in D-Day at Normandy, his small craft ferrying troops to Omaha Beach.

Mr. Leaken was selected to repre-

sent his ship in the U.S. Navy's V-12 Program at Princeton University. He attended Redlands University in California and graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, after which he pursued postgraduate studies at the American Institute for Foreign Trade (later Thunderbird University) in Phoenix.

In 1950, Mr. Leaken joined the Foreign Service. His first assignment was to the American embassies in Costa Rica and El Salvador. While posted to Madrid in 1952 he met his future wife, the former Mary Kathryn Roberts, also assigned there. They married in 1954 in Paris and were transferred a year-and-a-half later to Moscow for two years. Subsequent postings included South Africa, where his daughter was born, and Nigeria, where his son was born. He also served in Switzerland, Poland and Mexico, as well as two separate tours in Washington, D.C. His last posting was to the Philippines, where he retired in 1976 as counselor for administration.

Mr. Leaken then became a consultant to the State Department Security Enhancement Program and the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Forces and Observers in Israel. He also was detailed to embassies in Czechoslovakia, France and Saudi Arabia. He retired from this work to Columbus, Mo., his wife's place of birth, where the couple were affiliated with the family travel business and organized small groups on trips to exotic places. After his death, a tattered list of the "Wonders of the World" was found in his wallet.

In 2005, the Leakens made a happy move to Santa Fe to be near their children. Family and friends recall Mr. Leaken as a man of endearing charm,

whose presence filled a room and whose family was his greatest love and joy. A friend to many, he always had a twinkle in his eye for those he loved. He also loved dogs, good books, Grand Marnier soufflés, spiffy dressing, traveling the world — especially to Paris — and fresh trout for breakfast at his straw bale cabin in the mountains.

The last survivor of six children born to Richard M. and Lillian E. Leaken, Mr. Leaken was preceded in death by his parents, his older brother Dick, his twin brother Jack, and three sisters — Mary, Lucille and Betty.

Survivors include his wife of 56 years, Kathryn, daughter Kitty Leaken (Daniel Gibson) and son Richard Leaken (Samantha Silver), all of Santa Fe; nieces Nora Alkadis (Nick) of Venice, Calif., and Gina Erlichman (Robert) of Santa Fe; and brother-in-law Larry Dalen, also of Santa Fe. Survivors from his wife's side include a brother-in-law, William E. Roberts III (Kate), a niece Mary Margaret Roberts, and nephew Porter Roberts, all of Columbus, Miss.; nephew William E. (Rob) Roberts IV (Tina) of Fayette, Ala.; and nieces Candace Miller of Arlington, Va., and Helen Bertholf of Bethesda, Md.

Memorials can be made to the Senior Living Foundation of the American Foreign Service, 1716 N. St. NW, Washington DC 20036.



**Cornelia Rose Levin**, 78, the wife of retired FSO Herbert Levin, died on July 25 in Calais, Vt., of stomach cancer.

Born in New York City on Feb. 7, 1932, Mrs. Levin was the daughter of Sophie K. and Alfred Oscar Rose. A graduate of the Scarborough School,



## IN MEMORY



she received her A.B. degree, magna cum laude, in 1953 from Radcliffe College, where she was a Phi Beta Kappa member. She was a Ford Foundation Fellow in political theory and received her M.Ed. degree from Harvard University. She subsequently taught and tutored in Concord, Mass., Arlington, Va., Taichung, Taipei, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Dar es Salaam, Colombo and New Delhi. She also taught remedial math at the Math Center in Washington, D.C.

Upon her husband's retirement after 34 years in the Foreign Service, the couple settled in Washington, D.C. There Mrs. Levin drew on her Chinese-language and painting skills to become a devoted docent, supporter and participant in the museum family at the Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Asian Art. She divided her time among Washington, D.C., New York City and Calais, where she took particular pride in her showplace gardens.

Mrs. Levin was diagnosed with non-treatable stomach cancer on July 9. In accordance with her wishes, she died at home with truly caring hospice nursing, surrounded by her family. Her last days in Calais were supported by the loving efforts of longtime friends and neighbors who maintained her vegetable and flower gardens, which she viewed with joy and appreciation. The many messages and cards she received in July, sent by friends living everywhere from the Outer Hebrides to Australia and throughout the U.S., were all read to her and were of great comfort.

Mrs. Levin is survived by her husband of 56 years, Herbert Levin, of New York City; daughter Martha Levin, of Hong Kong; son Jonathan C. Levin, of South Burlington, Vt.; sister,

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## 2010 ANNUAL FS AUTHOR ROUNDUP



## IN MEMORY



Nancy Rose Wadhams of Goshen, Conn.; and loving nieces and nephews in Tyrone and Sharpsburg, Ga.; Minneapolis, Minn. and Bala Cynwyd, Pa.

Memorial donations may be made to the Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice, Inc., 600 Granger Rd., Barre VT 05641.



**Marilen Jison Maher**, 67, the wife of retired Foreign Service specialist James C. Maher, died on Aug. 15 at home in Royal Palm Beach, Fla., after a long battle with lung cancer.

Mrs. Maher was born in Silay City, Philippines, in 1942, the eldest of eight children. In her youth she participated in numerous social and religious projects. She graduated with a B.S. degree in business from Assumption College in Manila.

In 1976, she married James C. Maher, then on a long-term assignment with the Department of the Treasury at Embassy Manila. During the couple's stay there, Mrs. Maher worked part-time in the consular section. Also during this period, she gave birth to their sons, James and Jason. After moving back to the United States at the end of 1983, she was employed at the Washington Passport Office.

Following her husband's transfer to the Department of State in 1990, Mrs. Maher joined him for assignments in Mogadishu, Athens, Seoul, Washington, D.C., Lima, Ft. Lauderdale and Kuwait. She was employed at each of these posts as an office management specialist. In keeping with her personality, she became involved in the social life of each mission, working on various committees to improve morale and welcome newly assigned person-

nel. In Athens, she was deeply involved with Mother Theresa's projects, organizing food and clothing drives.

After her diagnosis of cancer, Mrs. Maher retired to Florida, where she celebrated the births of her grandchildren, Noah James and Chloe Angela.

Mrs. Maher is survived by her husband, James; her sons, James III and Jason; her daughter-in-law, Angela; and grandchildren Kayla, Noah and Chloe, all of Royal Palm Beach, Fla.



**James D. McHale**, 83, a retired FSO with the U.S. Information Agency, died on July 23 at the Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington County after a long battle with cancer.

Mr. McHale grew up in Nova Scotia and Boston. He served in the U.S. Army's Mountain Patrol in Germany from 1945 to 1947. He attended Boston College and continued his education at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, from which he received an M.A. in 1952.

In 1957, Mr. McHale joined the U.S. Information Agency, beginning what would be a challenging 30-year career as a cultural/press officer. After postings in Burma and South Africa, he went on to open Sam Neua, a communist hotspot in northern Laos, thereafter undertaking assignments to communist-threatened Jakarta and Surabaya, and then peaceful Singapore. Further postings took him to Belgium, Niger and Phnom Penh, from which he was evacuated. He was then posted to Hong Kong, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Congo.

Earlier, during assignments in Washington, D.C., he directed the

China Branch of the Voice of America just as China began opening to the West. He was detailed to the Armed Forces Staff College in 1965. A language scholar who spoke French, German, Indonesian and Mandarin, Mr. McHale studied Arabic and Japanese in retirement.

While posted in Niger, Mr. McHale spearheaded initial Western awareness of the plight of the Taureg tribes by bringing U.S. journalists to the area. This initial coverage turned into ongoing updates by the American press and helped bring needed aid and development to them.

In Phnom Penh, his work as the press officer brought early warning of the ensuing genocide by the Khmer Rouge. Colleagues recall his immense compassion for the Cambodian people and his work to ensure the U.S. government played a role in helping them. He personally assisted many to exit the country at the fall of the government in 1975.

A talented pianist and singer, Mr. McHale greatly enlivened home and social gatherings. A fine writer, his stories found popularity in the *Foreign Service Journal* and elsewhere.

Mr. McHale's first wife, Swedish-born Anita, died of Alzheimer's disease in McLean, Va., in 1988. In retirement, he devoted his time, talents and leadership to raising funds to assist Alzheimer's victims.

In 2003, he married Barbara Hopper. She was a great strength to him in his long battle with cancer and was by his side at the time of his death.

Other survivors include three daughters, Ann Hope McHale Hatcher of El Segundo, Calif., Christine McHale Kling of Felton, Calif., and Jennifer McHale Hall of Santa Cruz, Calif.; and eight grandchildren.

## IN MEMORY



**Stephen Joseph Ledogar**, 80, a retired FSO and former ambassador, died on May 3 in Edgewater, N.J., of bladder cancer.

Mr. Ledogar was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Sept. 14, 1929, one of four children of Edward and Margaret Ledogar. He entered Fordham University in 1949 under a Naval Reserve Officers Training program, but two years later went on active duty as a Navy pilot. He received his B.A. degree at Fordham in 1954 and completed a law degree there in 1958.

In 1959, Mr. Ledogar joined the Foreign Service. Following postings in Canada and Italy, in 1965 he was assigned to Vietnam, where he administered pacification programs. From 1969 to 1972, he was press spokesman for the American delegation at the Paris peace talks, which ultimately ended the Vietnam War.

During the rest of his 38-year diplomatic career, Mr. Ledogar played a critical role in the three major arms control negotiations of the Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations that sought to limit conventional, chemical and nuclear weapons. He was serving as the deputy chief of mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1987 when President Ronald Reagan promoted him to ambassador and appointed him chief representative to negotiations for the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which was ultimately signed in November 1990.

In 1993, Mr. Ledogar was the chief American negotiator when the Chemical Weapons Convention was signed. While working on the chemical weapons ban, he also served as head of the American delegation to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. In that capacity, he became one of the pri-

mary drafters of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in September 1996.

Mr. Ledogar retired from the Foreign Service in 1997. A tireless and passionate worker for his country, he appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1999, three years after helping draft the nuclear test ban treaty, to urge its ratification. He was an avid cyclist. Family and friends recall his great decency and memorable sense of humor.

Survivors include his wife, the former Marcia Hubert, of Washington, D.C.; his daughter, Lucy van Beever; his son, Charles; a sister, Anne Leyden; two brothers, Edward and Robert; and three grandchildren.



**Harold F. Schneidman**, 87, a retired FSO with the U.S. Information Agency, died on May 18 in Washington, D.C., after a long and debilitating illness.

Mr. Schneidman was born on June 23, 1922, in Hazelton, Pa. His parents were Eastern European immigrants who later lost their dry goods business in the Great Depression. They then moved to Philadelphia, where Harold's father was lucky to get a job delivering bread. Although poor, they were not impoverished; rather, their lives were enriched by the vibrant cultural life of the city.

"Both unorthodox and eclectic," is the way Mr. Schneidman described his education in a later interview. He attended such diverse institutions as the Fels Institute at the University of Pennsylvania for public administration in state and local government; the Charles Morris Price School of Journalism and Advertising; and what

was then the Delaware Valley College, in agriculture. In later years he did research in international affairs and attended both Harvard University and Cornell University for area studies and language training.

With the advent of World War II, Mr. Schneidman joined the Coast Guard as a combat correspondent. He also did public relations for the Coast Guard variety show, "Tars and Spars," featuring Victor Mature, Sid Caesar and Gower Champion. The show traveled to every state in the country, raising thousands of dollars for the Coast Guard Welfare Fund and helping with recruitment.

Returning to Philadelphia after the war, Mr. Schneidman became one of the early specialists in the field of citizen participation in community development. He was successively a consultant to a number of civic and local government organizations in the mid-Atlantic region, a staff director of the Greater Philadelphia Movement and chief of the Bureau of Public Information and Service of the City of Philadelphia. In the mid-1950s he was a consultant to the American Municipal Association, which became the National League of Cities.

Concurrently, in the fall of 1955, Mr. Schneidman opened one of the first espresso bars in Washington, D.C. Called The Gallery, it was at 3213 O St. NW in Georgetown, and combined continental fare and contemporary artwork.

In 1957, Mr. Schneidman joined the U.S. Information Agency. He served as information officer in the Philippines and Italy and as cultural affairs officer in Indonesia. In 1965, he represented USIA in an interagency review of foreign operations chaired by General Maxwell Taylor.

## IN MEMORY



He returned to Washington, D.C., in 1970 as deputy assistant director for East Asia and the Pacific, becoming assistant director in charge of Information Centers the following year. Mr. Schneidman also served on the Bicentennial Committee.

In 1975, he received the Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence in Public Diplomacy, presented with these words: "He has sought excellence and constructive change, honored the highest ideals of his profession and fostered innovation. He has shown an appreciation of the dynamics of and limitations of complex institutions, a special sensitivity to, and compassion for, the human element in public life, and a singular ability to bring people together while fostering individual creativity."

In June 1977, the Carter administration appointed Mr. Schneidman as USIA's deputy director for policy and plans. He retired in 1980 with the change of administration.

A principled, dynamic man, he found retirement to be one of the most difficult challenges of his life. Colleagues recall that he would often say: "The best advice I can give about retirement is: don't retire." Eventually he was able to take pleasure in his dogs, gardening and cooking — and, most of all, in his family and friends.

Mr. Schneidman is survived by his devoted wife, Roberta, of Washington, D.C.; his daughter, Sara, of Sperryville, Va.; and sons Seth of Scotland, Grant of Parker, Colo., and Jared of Katonah, N.Y.; and four grandchildren: Sara Behrens, Jessica, Justin and Eleanor.

If you would like to honor Mr. Schneidman with a charitable donation, the family suggests the Humane Society of the United States.

**Dr. Robert Fleming Slutz Jr.**, 88, a retired FSO, died on Dec. 29, 2009, in Manassas, Va.

Dr. Slutz was a graduate of DePauw University, where he was a member of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity. He subsequently earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago. A veteran of World War II, he served as a weather observer with the Army Air Forces in Alaska.

During more than 25 years of service as a commissioned Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of State, Dr. Slutz was posted in Italy, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Ethiopia (where he was the last consul general to serve in Asmara when it was still part of that country). A recipient of the Department of State's Meritorious Honor Award, Dr. Slutz retired in 1978, thereafter dividing his time between homes in Vero Beach, Fla., and Alexandria, Va.

In retirement, he devoted himself to researching the Slutz family genealogy, producing a work (in 18 volumes) of family-related research that is now widely and publicly cited. He also served as president of the Indian River (Florida) Genealogical Society, and received the Genealogy Outstanding Achievement Award from the Florida State Genealogical Society in 2003.

Dr. Slutz is survived by his wife of 66 years, Rose M. Vierling Slutz; two daughters, Ambassador Pamela J. Slutz and USAF Colonel Marjorie J.R. Davis; two sons, Robert Slutz III and Christopher Brighton Slutz; and their families, including five great-grandchildren.



**Emory C. Swank**, 88, a retired FSO, died on June 3 in Oberlin, Ohio. A native of Maryland, Mr. Swank

graduated magna cum laude from Franklin & Marshall College in 1942. He then earned an M.A. in English from Harvard University before serving in the Army in Europe during World War II, where he was awarded a Bronze Star for maintaining communication links in combat.

Mr. Swank entered the Foreign Service in 1944, after teaching English at Franklin & Marshall, and served overseas in Shanghai, Chingdao and Jakarta. In 1952, began Russian-language and area training, and served in Moscow during the chaotic period when Stalin's successors were struggling for power. He was then assigned to State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research to report on Soviet affairs. His next assignment was a deputy chief of mission in Bucharest.

In 1961, Mr. Swank was appointed special assistant to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and then spent an academic year at the National War College. He served as deputy chief of mission in Vientiane and as minister counselor in Moscow, where he was temporarily in charge of the embassy when Soviet forces invaded Czechoslovakia. In 1969, he was appointed deputy assistant secretary for Soviet and Eastern Europe affairs.

President Richard Nixon named Mr. Swank ambassador to Cambodia in 1970. His last assignment was as political adviser to the naval command headquartered in Norfolk, Va.

In retirement, Mr. Swank embarked on a second career in Cleveland as president of the Council on World Affairs. He continued to lecture on foreign policy issues after retiring from the council in 1987.

Mr. Swank's wife, Margaret, predeceased him in 1998. He is survived by several cousins.



## IN MEMORY



**Bert M. Tollefson Jr.**, 80, a former administrator and mission director for USAID and the husband of retired FSO Jeanne M. Kinney, died on Jan. 19 in Sioux Falls, S.D., of cardiac arrest.

Born on Sept. 3, 1929, in Brookings, S.C., Mr. Tollefson received his education in Watertown, S.D., graduating from high school in 1947. He attended St. Olaf College for one year before transferring to the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, where he received his bachelor's degree. He earned his master's degree from American University in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Tollefson's administrative career began in South Dakota, where he served as state director for the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, as the chief aide to Governor Sig Anderson and as CEO of the South Dakota Highway Commission. From there, he became the top aide to Representative E.Y. Berry, R-S.D., and subsequently served as an assistant to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson.

Mr. Tollefson later served as national manager for the Blue Cross, Blue Shield Federal Employee Health Benefits program and as president of the American Corn Millers Federation and Export Institute.

In 1969, President Richard Nixon appointed Mr. Tollefson as assistant administrator for legislative and public affairs in the U.S. Agency for International Development. He also served as mission director in Kenya from 1971 to 1972.

Following retirement from USAID, Mr. Tollefson was a realtor in Phoenix, Ariz. He was politically active and ran for several public offices for the Republican Party. Mr. Tollefson was also a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves.

In 1992, Mr. Tollefson married Jeanne M. Kinney in Davenport, Iowa. The couple lived in Arizona until moving to Sioux Falls in November 2007. He had been previously married to Barbara Rae Wyka in Watertown, S.D.

Survivors include his wife, Jeanne M. Kinney, of Phoenix; his children, Scott Tollefson, Reed Eric Tollefson, Nancy Franta and Stephanie Frye; seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.



**Leonard Unger**, 92, a retired FSO and former ambassador, died on June 3 at his home in Sebastopol, Calif.

Mr. Unger was born on Dec. 17, 1917, in San Diego, Calif., and grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. He attended Harvard University, majoring in geography, before moving to Washington, D.C., just prior to World War II.

At the close of the war, he took up assignments in London and Paris before being assigned to Trieste, where he lived with his wife and three oldest children, working on negotiations to determine that contested city's status. He then moved to Naples, serving as political adviser to U.S. Admiral Robert Bostwick Carney.

Mr. Unger and his family returned to their home in Rockville, Md., in 1953, and he joined the Foreign Service. In 1958, Mr. Unger was assigned as chargé d'affaires in Bangkok. His next post was just north of Vientiane, where he served as the first U.S. ambassador immediately following the signing of the 1962 Geneva Accords establishing a neutralist regime in Laos.

He served in Washington, D.C., from 1964 to 1967 as deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asia and the

Pacific before returning to Bangkok as U.S. ambassador. That posting lasted until 1973, when he was assigned as what turned out to be the last U.S. ambassador in Taipei, before the U.S. shifted its recognition of China to the People's Republic in early 1979.

Ambassador Unger retired from the Foreign Service at that time and, following a series of brief teaching positions in Washington, D.C., and Boston, he and his wife, Anne, settled for several years at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, where he taught and organized a series of conferences on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The couple then returned to their home in Rockville, Md., where they stayed until 2000, when they moved to Santa Rosa (later Sebastopol), Calif., to be closer to three of their five children and most of their grandchildren.

In addition to his wife, Anne, of Sebastopol, Mr. Unger is survived by five children, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. ■

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(signed) *Susan B. Maitra*, Senior Editor

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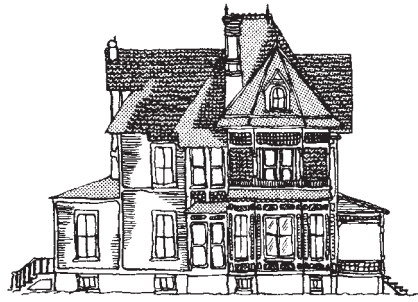
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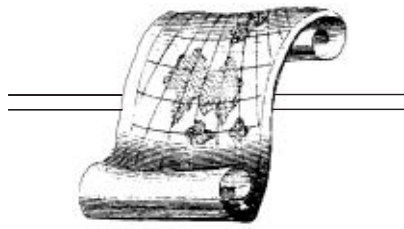
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# REFLECTIONS

## *Appeasing the Spirits: Across the Cultural Divide in Kenya*

BY ROBERT GRIBBIN

At the consulate in Mombasa in the early 1980s, part of our regular maintenance on housing involved pumping out the septic tanks. Paul Mwana, my general services expert, hired the city team composed of Digo tribesmen, the only ones who did this work, for the job.

Most houses had large tanks for sewage storage that were accessed through a slab in the parking area. The task went well until the team arrived at the house occupied by a U.S. Navy lieutenant commander. The workmen adamantly refused to proceed as soon as they recognized the house, Paul reported with some dismay. Both of us knew the cause of their refusal.

The house in question was just across the street from mine. It was a pleasant villa on spacious, beautifully planted grounds. A year or so earlier, when I was looking for houses to rent in a tight market, it had been readily available. As I learned, that turned out to have been on account of a tragedy.

The house had been owned and occupied by an older Asian couple. Apparently, two killers arrived at the house early one evening. Finding only the cook at home, they murdered him with machetes. They waited for madame to return from her bridge game, then killed her. They waited even longer until the man of the house returned, toward midnight, and killed him, too. The killers then stuffed at least the first two bodies into the septic tank.

Because the perpetrators of the

*The specter of the triple murder had kept the house empty.*

crimes were obviously not there just to rob the premises (they had ample opportunity to ransack the house after the first death), it was assumed that the murders were a contract hit.

Furthermore, police supposed that the motive had to do with the old man's alleged involvement in various commercial transactions, some of which were shady deals related to gemstones. (At the time rubies and tsavorite were mined and marketed illegally.) Perhaps some deal went awry, or a large sum of money was thought to be available.

One of the killers was later apprehended and confessed to the crime. But he never identified whoever ordered the hit, and the case remains unresolved.

The specter of the triple murder had kept the house empty before the Navy family arrived and was, of course, the reason the workmen refused to pump out the septic tank. I had contacted the Navy couple before I signed a lease to apprise them of the house's history, but they said to go ahead and rent it. I did, and they were quite happy there.

But the septic pumping quandary remained. Paul proposed a solution.

He suggested that we employ a Digo medicine man to perform a purification ceremony to placate the spirits of the dead. He assured me that once that was done, the workers would pump the tank. With my concurrence, he found the right practitioner and negotiated a fee for his service — plus a goat and a chicken for sacrifice.

It was an odd ceremony. The workers stood before the open septic tank in the sunlit parking area, flanked by blooming red, white and purple hibiscus and bougainvillea, as the doctor chanted, invoked his authority and called on the spirits to depart. He then sacrificed the goat and chicken (which were later eaten) and sprinkled blood. Once the site was purified and the spirits were appeased, the crew promptly cleaned the tank.

I decided that we could not detail the services performed, or the goat, on the invoice for reimbursement, for that would certainly raise eyebrows in the embassy's financial office. So we classified the transaction as "special cleaning services." ■

---

*Retired Ambassador Robert Gribbin spent many years in East and Central Africa, first as a Peace Corps Volunteer and then as a Foreign Service officer. He was principal officer in Mombasa (1981-1984), and later ambassador in Bangui (1992-1995) and ambassador in Kigali (1995-1999). He is the author of In the Aftermath of Genocide: The U.S. Role in Rwanda (2005).*



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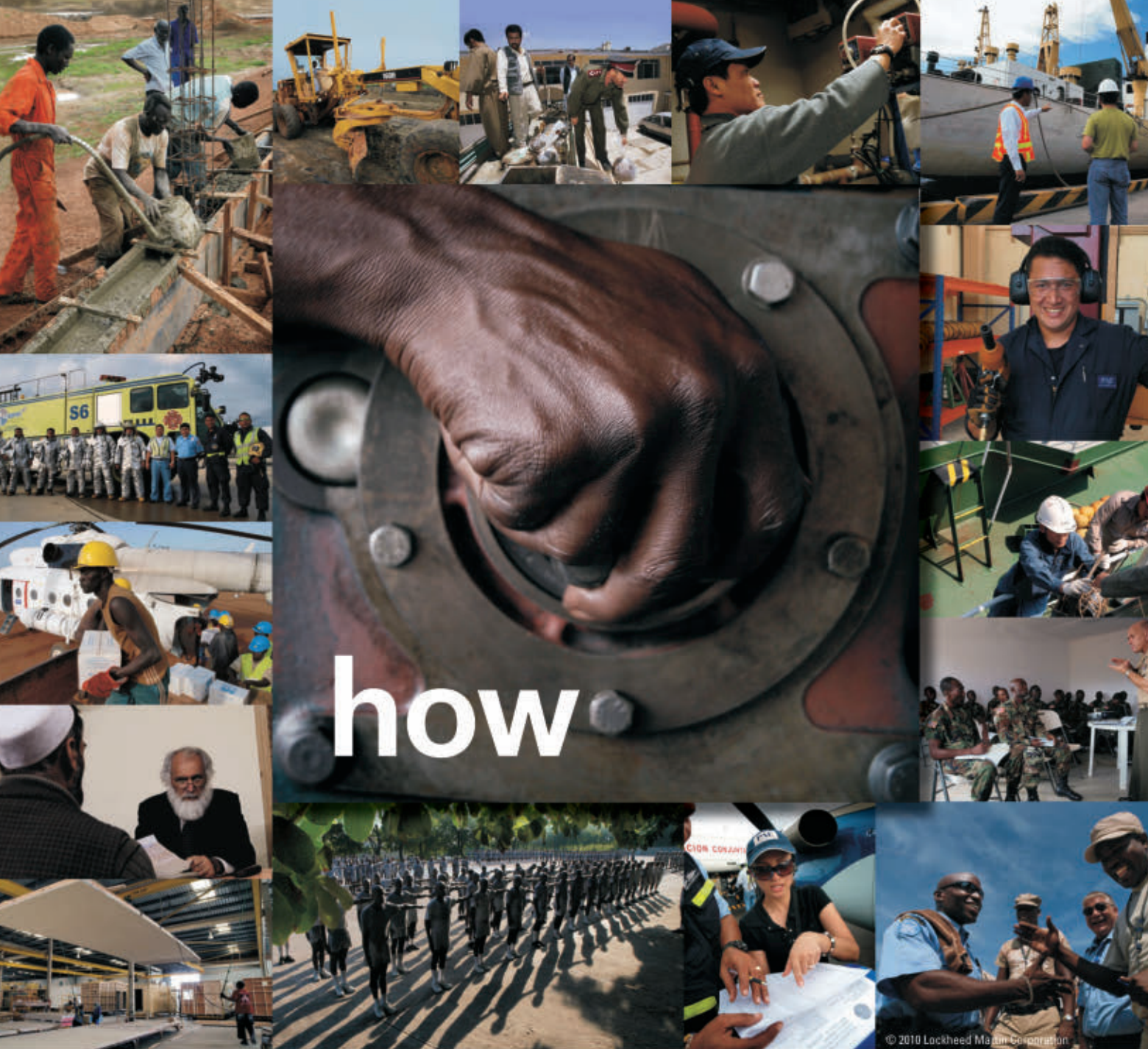


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