

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2017



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**On the Cover:** Images of diplomacy at work—Top, from left: U.S. Ambassador Mark C. Storella, Zambian Minister of Finance and National Planning Situmbeko Musokotwane and Minister of Health Kapembwa Simbao shake hands on signing the PEPFAR framework in November 2010; U.S. Chargé d’Affaires James P. DeHart with Norwegian Defense Ministry Director Mette Sorfonden signing a contract to purchase Boeing maritime patrol aircraft in March 2017 (Photo: Asgier Spange Brekke); U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Lynn Pascoe (left) and USAID Director Bill Frej load supplies for Aceh after the tsunami in December 2004. Second row, from left: General Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, and U.S. Ambassador John R. Bass attend a meeting with Turkey’s senior military leadership in Ankara in November 2016; U.S. Consul General Rena Bitter, of CG Ho Chi Minh City, and U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Ted Osius at a temple restoration project in April 2016; Yazidi refugees who escaped from the Islamic State group talk with FSO Refugee Coordinator Matthew Johnson in Mardin, Turkey, in December 2014. Cover design by Caryn Suko Smith.

# Time to Ask Why

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

I open this column as I closed my last one, with a reminder that we, the members of the career Foreign Service, have an obligation as stewards of our institution to be effective advocates for why diplomacy matters. That requires some skill in explaining how diplomacy works—the focus of this month's edition of *The Foreign Service Journal*.

While raising awareness of and appreciation for the Foreign Service is a long-standing goal, one AFSA has pursued with renewed vigor and impact over the past couple years, the need to make the case for the Foreign Service with fellow Americans and our elected representatives has taken on a new urgency. The cover of the *Time* magazine that arrived as I was writing this column jarred me with its graphic of wrecking balls and warning of “dismantling government as we know it.”

While I do my best, as principal advocate for our institution and as a seasoned American diplomat, to model responsible, civil discourse, there is simply no denying the warning signs that point to mounting threats to our institution—and to the global leadership that depends on us.

There is no denying that our leadership ranks are being depleted at a dizzying speed, due in part to the decision to slash promotion numbers by more than half. The Foreign

Service officer corps at State has lost 60 percent of its Career Ambassadors since January. Ranks of Career Ministers, our three-star equivalents, are down from 33 to 19. The ranks of our two-star Minister Counselors have fallen from 431 right after Labor Day to 359 today—and are still falling.

These numbers are hard to square with the stated agenda of making State and the Foreign Service stronger. Were the U.S. military to face such a decapitation of its leadership ranks, I would expect a public outcry.

Like the military, the Foreign Service recruits officers at entry level and grows them into seasoned leaders over decades. The talent being shown the door now is not only our top talent, but also talent that cannot be replicated overnight. The rapid loss of so many senior officers has a serious, immediate and tangible effect on the capacity of the United States to shape world events.

Meanwhile, the self-imposed hiring freeze is taking its toll at the entry level. Intake into the Foreign Service at State will drop from 366 in 2016 to around 100 new entry-level officers joining A-100 in 2018 (including 60 Pickering and Rangel Fellows).

Not surprisingly, given the blocked entry path, interest in joining the Foreign Service is plummeting. I wrote with pride in my March 2016 column that “more than 17,000 people applied to take the Foreign Service Officer Test last year,” citing interest in joining the Foreign Service

as a key indicator of the health of the institution. What does it tell us, then, that we are on track to have fewer than half as many people take the Foreign Service Officer Test this year?

As the shape and extent of the staffing cuts to the Foreign Service at State become clearer, I believe we must shine a light on these disturbing trends and ask “why?” and “to what end?”

Congress rejected drastic cuts to State and USAID funding. The Senate labeled the proposed cuts a “doctrine of retreat” and directed that appropriated funds “shall support” staffing State at not less than Sept. 30, 2016, levels, and further directed that “The Secretary of State shall continue A-100 entry-level classes for FSOs in a manner similar to prior years.”

Given this clear congressional intent, we have to ask: Why such a focus on slashing staffing at State? Why such a focus on decapitating leadership? How do these actions serve the stated agenda of making the State Department stronger?

Remember, nine in 10 Americans favor a strong global leadership role for our great country, and we know from personal experience that such leadership is unthinkable without a strong professional Foreign Service deployed around the world protecting and defending America's people, interests and values.

Where then, does the impetus come from to weaken the American Foreign Service? Where is the mandate to pull the Foreign Service team from the field and forfeit the game to our adversaries? ■



Ambassador Barbara Stephenson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

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*The Foreign Service Journal* (ISSN 0146-3543), 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 is published monthly, with combined January-February and July-August issues, by the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), a private, nonprofit organization. Material appearing herein represents the opinions of the writers and does not necessarily represent the views of the *Journal*, the Editorial Board or AFSA. Writer queries and submissions are invited, preferably by email. The *Journal* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photos or illustrations. Advertising inquiries are invited. All advertising is subject to the publisher's approval. AFSA reserves the right to reject advertising that is not in keeping with its standards and objectives. The appearance of advertisements herein does not imply endorsement of goods or services offered. Opinions expressed in advertisements are the views of the advertisers and do not necessarily represent AFSA views or policy. *Journal* subscription: AFSA member—\$20, included in annual dues; student—\$30; institution—\$40; others—\$50; Single issue—\$4.50. For foreign surface mail, add \$18 per year; foreign airmail, \$36 per year. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Indexed by the Public Affairs Information Services (PAIS).

**Email:** [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org)  
**Phone:** (202) 338-4045  
**Fax:** (202) 338-8244  
**Web:** [www.afsa.org/fsj](http://www.afsa.org/fsj)

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PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Postmaster: Send address changes to  
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2101 E Street NW  
Washington DC 20037-2990



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# Diplomacy Needs Diplomats

BY SHAWN DORMAN

International diplomacy needs professional diplomats. This is not a controversial statement. It is something so obvious no one would think to say it. And yet today, we must say it. We must defend diplomacy and reiterate the importance of our U.S. Foreign Service.

Each month I wait until the *Journal* is finished and all page proofs checked before writing my letter to frame the issue, briefly highlight its contents and put a bow on it. This time something extraordinary happened.

On Nov. 7 AFSA shared an advance copy of the December President's Views column—three weeks before the issue was released—in an AFSA net to the membership.

In “Time to Ask Why,” Ambassador Barbara Stephenson spells out concerns and questions regarding State Department Foreign Service staffing cuts, wondering aloud on behalf of an uneasy Foreign Service constituency that she represents—what is going on and why?

Within hours, the story began to be picked up by media outlets. Within a day, it was making headlines around the country, and the world. ABC News was first, followed by *Foreign Policy*, *The Hill*, *Vox*, *Time*, CNN, *Government Executive*, *The Guardian*, *Fox News*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* (Nov. 12 editorial),

*Newsweek* and many others.

Amb. Stephenson was interviewed about the column on the PBS NewsHour on Nov. 8.

The next day, Rachel Maddow devoted the first 20 minutes of her show to the column, reading most of it aloud on the air, with a flag-draped “Time to Ask Why” graphic on-screen throughout the segment.

The column points to concerns about the depletion of the leadership ranks at State and the severe slowdown on intake at entry level, and asks why. This is an important question, yet the State Department issued a statement Nov. 8 dismissing the column's claims about cuts, saying essentially: “nothing to see here.”

There are still more questions than there are answers. Why were promotion rates cut drastically this year? Why is the hiring freeze still in place at State and USAID? Why has this bidding season been, by many accounts, “the worst ever”? (One FS-1 officer described it this way: “It's like musical chairs with 100 people, but they've taken away 40 chairs.”)

Why were POLAD, war college and other detail jobs taken off bid lists? Even though POLADs were put back on, the continuing chaos means the right people may not get the right jobs.

Why are so many of the best career officers, who have served faithfully under both Republican and Democratic administrations, being shown the door?

Why are senior positions not being filled? State's Nov. 12 announcement that it will offer \$25,000 buyouts to employees (just days after denying drastic cuts) reinforces the idea that reducing staff at State is a primary goal of this administration.

Which brings us to the rest of the

**There are still more questions than there are answers.**

December *Journal*. I want to particularly draw your attention to the first installment of our new Diplomacy Works collection, “First Person Stories from the Field,” because it offers a ground-level look at why diplomacy matters.

Told by members of the Foreign Service out in the field working on behalf of the people of the United States, these stories illustrate the critical, everyday work of the Foreign Service around the world, from the smallest success no one outside of post would ever hear about, to big, headline-grabbing accomplishments.

They help to answer the question of why we need a strong U.S. Foreign Service. The response to our call for narratives was so great that we will be publishing Part II next month.

Every one of you has a story to tell, whether about yourself or a colleague, and we invite you to continue to submit your experiences that show how diplomacy works for the United States. Help AFSA tell the story of the Foreign Service.

It's a tough time for the Foreign Service, no doubt about it. If this all feels too heavy, then please go to page 60 for adorable FS pet photos.

Next month, we take a look at “What Does U.S. Global Leadership Look Like?” We wish all our readers and the entire Foreign Service community a peaceful holiday season. ■



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

## Dissent in a Time of Crisis

The *Journal* has long provided a platform for those advocating constructive dissent and, specifically, use of the Dissent Channel as a means of questioning policies and practices. Harry Kopp's thoughtful commentary, "The State of Dissent in the Foreign Service" (September), is the latest example of responsible discussion of Foreign Service dissent in your pages.

Kopp concludes by urging that "for the good of the Service as an institution, dissent must remain confidential." I believe, however, that this assessment of dissent in the Trump-era Foreign Service fails to appreciate the gravity of the threat posed to U.S. foreign policy and to the Foreign Service itself.

I joined the Service in January 1975, at a time when U.S. foreign policy had been buffeted by dissent and even rancor in the ranks for almost a decade. Much of this came to a head in the early months of 1975, when U.S. Embassy Saigon sought to deny the reality that the government of Nguyen Van Thieu was doomed.

In earlier years, Foreign Service officers had questioned and protested the manner in which our Indochina policy was formulated, the policy itself and the very purpose of the Vietnam War.

FSOs, frustrated by their inability to report honestly, sometimes turned to the press. In the spring of 1975, some acted without orders, for example, to ensure that trusted Vietnamese allies and their families were able to exit Vietnam before the maelstrom enveloped the country. These individuals were heroes and role models for many of the junior FSOs of that day.

I believe the Trump era presents the Foreign Service with a challenge as daunting as that which earlier led FSOs to courageous acts that went beyond "confidential" dissent.

This administration's assault on the Foreign Service is reflected in its refusal to provide leadership to the State

Department, which lacks senior officials or even nominees at home and abroad. Moreover, critical functions, including consular, may be taken away from the department and extraordinarily deep budget cuts have been proposed.

Internal, "confidential" dissent is simply

inadequate in the context

of this unprecedented crisis, as it was during the Vietnam War era and, some might add, the Iraq War era.

It is not sufficient for senior officers simply to retire, as many are doing. These officers owe the Service—and particularly the mid-level and junior colleagues they leave behind—more than their silence. They must speak out. They must explain to the American people, to their elected representatives and to the media why they are abandoning careers of service and sacrifice.

*Edmund McWilliams*

*Senior FSO, retired*

*White Oaks, New Mexico*

## The Blood Telegram

In his fine article in the September issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*, "The State of Dissent in the Foreign Service," Harry Kopp cites "The Blood Telegram" as the first message in the Dissent Channel.

As drafter of that telegram on behalf

of other officers of ConGen Dacca (now Dhaka) who were appalled by our government's lack of response to the carnage inflicted on then East Pakistan by Pakistan's military, I would like to clarify that the telegram, to which Arch Blood so courageously appended his own comments, was not the first Dissent Channel message.

At the time we sent it, the Dissent Channel had not been established, although there was talk about increased "openness" in the State Department and Foreign Service. Our message was intended for an internal audience, not to be leaked.

In our naiveté we classified it "confidential," assuming that would protect the information. When it reached the Operations Center, Watch Officer David Passage, an FS classmate of mine, realized it was sensitive and added a LIMDIS caption to restrict its distribution. But it leaked, nevertheless.

Perhaps there is a causal link between the Blood Telegram (subject of a lauded book by Professor Gary Bass of Princeton University) and the Dissent Channel. That would be a fitting tribute to Arch Blood, who honored his profession by honest reporting, despite the costs to his career.

*W. Scott Butcher*

*Senior FSO, retired*

*Potomac, Maryland*

## Integrity First

In June 2016, *The Foreign Service Journal* focused on the topic of combating corruption as a central task of U.S. foreign policy. As a retired FSO who now chairs an anticorruption organization called the Coalition for Integrity, I welcome this attention to an important issue.

We believe the United States needs



to enforce the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, encourage other major trading and investing nations to enforce

their similar commitments under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Anti-Bribery Convention, and urge countries like China and India to become signatories of that agreement.

Toward that end, the United States needs to organize its foreign assistance programs so that bribery and corruption do not despoil the very economic development they try to promote. We also need to curb the bribery and corruption that can undermine our military and political efforts to defeat terrorism in places like Afghanistan.

The challenge for our country and our foreign policy is even more fundamental, however. Corruption is essentially about the abuse of entrusted power. Americans entrust power to government officials, and we expect these officials to use that power to promote the public interest, consistent with the promises they have made and the oaths they have undertaken. Unfortunately, for some time now the majority of Americans across the political spectrum have believed that their government officials are untrustworthy.

The United States is the most powerful country in the world. Through our alliances and the international institutions we established, the United States has pledged to exercise our power in a manner consistent with the promises we have made. People count on us. When



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we keep our promises and show ourselves to be trustworthy, our reputation and our power grow. Putting integrity first is the best way to put America first.

On Nov. 29 the Coalition for Integrity extended its 2017 Integrity Award to Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), a most deserving recipient for many reasons. We have also launched a nonpartisan “integrity challenge” for candidates in the state of Virginia. We asked all candidates in Virginia’s 2017 elections to support basic principles regarding financial disclosure, restrictions on gifts and disclosure of campaign contributions.

Beginning in 2018, we would like to see candidates in elections across the United States accept this challenge and discuss how they will ensure that they and their administrations will be trustworthy.

U.S. diplomats, military and international professionals represent American interests and values with courage and integrity. I encourage readers still in government service to reflect on how they can do more to combat corruption and epitomize integrity as they carry out their duties. And I encourage those who have retired from government service to consider how you can continue to be a part of this fight, perhaps by working with organizations like ours.

*Alan Larson*

*Ambassador, retired*

*Washington, D.C.*

## Threats to Retiree Re-employment

I am writing about a subject I trust I am not the first to raise: protecting the future of re-employed annuitants (formerly known as WAE, When Actually Employed, personnel) at the State Department.

I know I am not alone among active AFSA retirees who have found working

part-time on projects where personal interests and various offices’ perceptions of our individual aptitudes overlap to be incredibly fulfilling work.

The threat, as I understand it, can ultimately be laid at the feet of some of our senior Civil Service colleagues in management. When the White House asked them for a list of potential cuts to save money and eliminate bodies (for a document going to the Office of Management and Budget), they essentially threw us under the bus rather than taking an honest look at truly wasteful employment practices like contracting.

Here are a few concrete reasons to keep this important program alive:

- *REA status is not an entitlement.*

The State Department carefully chooses who they want to re-employ under this status.

- *We are cheap.* We work for an hourly wage in the mid-level federal range, nothing more—no benefits, no pension contributions, nothing. Our salaries are probably just a quarter of what the department would have to pay inexperienced contractors to replace us.

- *We are competent and tend to know the work we are used for inside and out.* As a bonus, we bring a strong sense of a program or function’s history to our work.

- *REAs lead from below*, a perspective not often associated with the department. Although re-employed annuitants tend to have had long Foreign Service careers, we are hired for our experience and perspective, not our former rank.

Speaking personally, I was in the Senior Foreign Service for more than half of my career. People *had* to listen to me. Now I work as a GS-14 graybeard. I naturally put my ideas out there, often advising the front offices of the embassies where I fill in and my current managers in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

If an approach I put forward is adopted, it’s because it makes sense, not because I am senior in a hierarchical organization. If such an approach or idea evokes counter-arguments, laughter or derision, so be it. I love that “leading from below” angle.

In addition to AFSA defending a sensible version of the REA/WAE status, I urge all readers who care to write to their members of Congress. Elimination of the status will almost certainly be part of the debate over the FY 2018 budget and continuing resolution(s).

Be steadfast in these unsettled days.

*Peter Kovach*

*FSO, retired*

*Bethesda, Maryland*

## Soft Power and the Lessons of History

The recent PBS series on the Vietnam War offers a cautionary tale for the Trump administration as it attempts to slash the budgets of the State Department and other soft-power programs. Unfortunately, the president has little interest in history.

Many factors contributed to the Vietnam tragedy: failure to consider the advice of experienced foreign-area experts, hubris, over-reliance on military superiority in a world of asymmetrical warfare, domestic political fear of appearing “soft,” measurement of success by inappropriate metrics (e.g., “kill ratios”), denial of facts and lying to the public. Sound familiar?

In his landmark book about the Vietnam War, *The Best and the Brightest*, David Halberstam noted that President John F. Kennedy and his closest advisers “made the most critical of decisions with virtually no input from anyone who had any expertise on the recent history of that part of the world, and it in no

way factored in the entire experience of the French Indochina War.”

Thus, reliance was placed on U.S. military firepower without due consideration for Vietnamese hearts and minds, the history of Vietnam’s nationalistic resolve against foreign intervention, or the guerrilla tactics of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese.

Today the Trump administration is making many of the same crippling mistakes. The president’s principal foreign policy advisers are military men, while the State Department, with all of its expertise, experience and relationships abroad, has often been sidelined.

Recently, President Trump even publicly stated that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was “wasting his time” by attempting to negotiate with the North Koreans.

But even Secretary Tillerson has supported the proposed draconian budget cuts to his own State Department prior to the outcome of a reorganization study the Senate Appropriations Committee worries has been “predetermined.”

And Tillerson has walled himself off behind a small group of loyalists he’s brought in with him. Predictably, Tillerson’s and Trump’s long experience with private corporations, where profits measure success, offered little preparation for the policy and relational worlds of government, foreign affairs and diplomacy.

Meanwhile, Pres. Trump raises falsehood and the denial of fact to alarming levels as he panders to his domestic political base. While waving the flag of “America First” to project strength abroad, the president’s insults, threats, impulsivity and termination of international agreements have antagonized allies and adversaries alike.

A reduction in soft-power capabilities undermines U.S. efforts to further global justice, prosperity and peace through

promotion of relationships, cooperation, mutual understanding, democracy and assistance abroad.

Such power builds bridges, not walls. It combats and contains the root causes of militancy. As General James Mattis observed in 2013: “If you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately.”

The urgent need for soft power was stated eloquently last year by former Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar: “In this century, the ability of nations to communicate and work with each other across borders will determine the fate of billions of people. The effectiveness of our response to pandemics, nuclear proliferation, environmental disasters, energy and food insecurity, and threats of conflict will depend foremost on the investments we have made in knowledge, relationships and communication.”

*John A. Lindburg*

*Foreign Service Reserve, retired*

*Former General Counsel, Radio Free*

*Europe/Radio Liberty*

*Washington, D.C. ■*



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## AAD Opposes Nomination for Director General

**I**n an unprecedented move, the American Academy of Diplomacy sent a letter to the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Oct. 30 urging them to oppose the nomination of Stephen Akard as Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources at the State Department.

“We have concluded that Mr. Akard lacks the necessary professional background,” write AAD Chairman Ambassador (ret.) Thomas R. Pickering and AAD President Ambassador (ret.) Ronald E. Neumann. “His confirmation would be contrary to Congress’ longstanding intent and desire to create a professional American diplomatic service based on merit.”

The American Academy of Diplomacy is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that is dedicated to strengthening U.S. diplomacy. Its membership includes former senior ambassadors and leaders in foreign policy.

Akard was nominated for the top personnel management position at State by the Trump administration on Oct. 16. He has served as a senior adviser in the Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Growth since January.

Historically, the Director General position has gone to a senior Foreign Service officer who has served as an ambassador and has decades of diplomatic experience. The DG heads the Bureau of Human Resources, handles training and promotions, advises the Secretary of State on management and personnel, and manages internal issues with diplomats abroad.

In 1980, under the Foreign Service Act, Congress mandated the presidentially appointed position be given to a current

or retired Foreign Service officer to guard against politicization while elevating the position to require Senate confirmation.

Akard was an FSO for eight years, serving in Belgium and India and as a staff aide to Secretary of State Colin Powell. He left the Foreign Service in 2005 to work on economic development for the state of Indiana.

“While Akard is technically eligible for the position under the Foreign Service Act,” states the AAD, “to confirm someone who had less than a decade in the Foreign Service would be like making a former Army Captain the Chief of Staff of the Army, the equivalent of a four-star general.”

AAD argues: “He does not have the experience necessary to advise the Secretary on the Department’s most senior appointments or the management of the 75,000 Foreign Service, Civil Service, and Locally Employed staff employed by the State Department.”

“As good and decent a person as Mr. Akard may be,” the AAD adds, “his confirmation as the Director General would be another step to further weaken the State Department, whose Foreign Service and

Civil Service employees loyally serve the President, the Secretary of State and the United States of America.”

In 10 years as head of the organization, AAD President Neumann told *Foreign Policy*, he hasn’t sent such a letter, adding that he can’t recall if it’s *ever* been done in the organization’s 34-year history.

The letter includes a chart of previous Directors General that indicates, among other things, the ambassadorships and senior-level positions they held before being named DG, and also spells out the association’s criteria for the DG position.

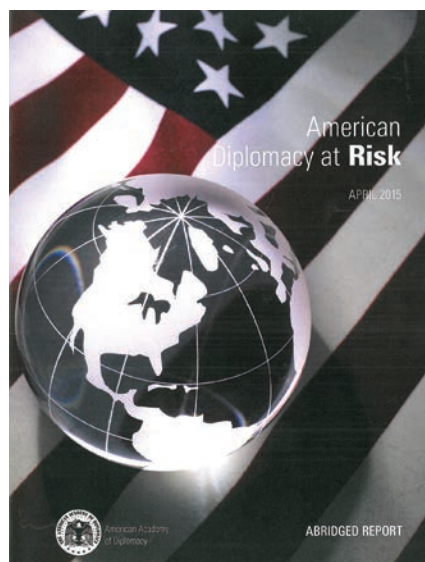
For a full discussion of AAD’s views on the challenges facing American diplomacy, see their *American Diplomacy at Risk* (2015).

## What’s Going on with Support for Families with Special Needs Children?

**C**oncerns about support for Foreign Service children with special needs that began to arise during 2015 were spotlighted in the *Journal*’s January 2016 focus on mental health care in the Foreign Service. We heard from parents frustrated by what they saw as increasing difficulty obtaining support and, in particular, obtaining access to the Special Needs Education Allowance.

In June 2016, the *Journal* ran a compilation of comments from FS family members regarding mental health and special needs support for FS children, along with a June 2016 Speaking Out column by Foreign Service authors Maureen Danzot and Mark Evans.

Danzot and Evans pointed to confusion surrounding the SNEA allowance and recommended that the department work to engage parents in policymaking, separate the medical clearance pro-



## SITE OF THE MONTH: MODERNDIPLOMACY.EU

**W**e know you all read *The Foreign Service Journal* religiously. And you probably also keep on top of *Foreign Policy* and other U.S. sites that follow the world of diplomacy. *Modern Diplomacy* is another site for foreign affairs professionals and students, based out of Athens, Greece.

*Modern Diplomacy* describes itself as “a leading European opinion-maker with far-reaching influence across the Middle East, Africa and Asia.” The site’s editors claim not to espouse any one agenda or school of thought, instead welcoming writers across a broad range of backgrounds.

Their board, which includes former ministers and secretaries-general from across Europe, as well as academics and other professionals from Central Asia, Indonesia, Brazil, Russia,

El Salvador, Malaysia, Japan, Australia and the United States, strives to be “politically, generationally and geographically diverse.”



Board members include former Secretary General of the Council of Europe Dr. Walter Schwimmer; former Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erzhhan Kazykhanov; Ernest Petric, a justice with the Constitutional Court of Slovenia; and Major Rejane Costa of Brazil’s Ministry of Defense.

Recent topics have included “Trump-Russia Collusion: The Story So Far,” a feature about the questions that are arising as Saudi women gain access to sports stadiums in that country and an article about how Africa’s rapid urbanization can lead to industrialization.

*Modern Diplomacy*’s Twitter handle is @presscode.

cess from the use of SNEA and “ensure transparency in the SNEA eligibility process.” AFSA also raised these concerns in meetings with officials in the Bureau of Medical Services.

On Oct. 29 these concerns broke into the national news when *Washington Post* reporter Jackie Spinner talked to parents of special needs children and interviewed AFSA State VP Ken Kero-Mentz for a story about the State Department’s restrictions on financial support for diplomat fami-

lies with special needs children.

Parents interviewed by Spinner said they fear that the limitations MED has put on their families will force them out of the Service. Multiple families told the *Washington Post* that services previously provided are now being denied without explanation, despite the fact that such services would be provided in public schools in the United States.

The situation has deteriorated to the point where, according to the *Post*,

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## Contemporary Quote

 Rex Tillerson came in and made an initial very positive impression. He appeared to reach out to the workforce of the Department of State, and so people were very optimistic. That optimism did not last long, however. ... We got word that senior people were being fired without any notice or any justification. ... When the decision came that our budget was going to be cut by one third or that a chokehold was going to be put on our recruitment programs, people started to ask questions. Why is this happening? Why are these things being done? And no answer was provided—or no coherent answer.

...My budget was cut. I was told that I could not hire anyone, even when I had vacant positions. I could not transfer people within my organization or from elsewhere inside the State Department. ...I was also told that I could make no reference to the policies of the prior administration. There was a political appointee sent out to the Foreign Service Institute who reviewed our training materials and objected when there was reference to American foreign policy under the Obama administration.

Our response was that we were not rewriting history. We would indeed continue to teach our diplomats what policy under all previous presidents had been, and that when the Trump administration developed a policy toward different parts of the world, we would teach that as well. ...

I decided to leave in June of this year. I went through a period of weeks and months of soul searching, of consulting with family and trusted friends, of talking with colleagues. ...None of us—myself and others who have left or are in the process of leaving—we didn't want to leave. We wanted to continue to serve our country, but we had to stay true to our values. 

—Ambassador (ret.) Nancy McEldowney, former director of the Foreign Service Institute and now director of the Master of Science in Foreign Service program at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service, speaking to Michael Barbaro on the Oct. 20 edition of *The Daily podcast* from The New York Times, “*The State of the State Dept. under Rex Tillerson.*”

“administrators of a Yahoo group used by diplomat parents to trade resources and advice kicked the medical team off.”

“It is, simply put, not in our national security interest to prevent these experienced, trained, talented officers from serving where the American people need them most, whenever possible,” AFSA State VP Kero-Mentz told the *Post*.

In addition to the June Speaking Out column, *The Foreign Service Journal* ran a story about SNEA by Dr. Kathy Gallardo, MED's deputy director for mental health programs, in the September 2016 issue.

Responses to questions the *Journal* posed to MED can be found on the State Department website's Office of Child and Family Programs page. The *Journal* plans to take a look at the SNEA story in greater detail in the March 2018 focus on FS families.

## On-Again-Off-Again Hiring at State and USAID

**E**very day, it seems, the hiring situation at State and USAID changes. From the eligible family member hiring freeze, covered in *The Foreign Service Journal* in both the July/August 2017 and September issues, to the cancellation and reinstatement of the Pickering and Rangel fellowship program, covered in the September *FSJ*, the situation is constantly in flux.

In late October, word came that the State Department was rejoining the Presidential Management Fellows program. In July the department had abruptly withdrawn from that prestigious program, which aims to recruit top college graduates into the federal government, causing confusion among program finalists who were in the

middle of their job applications and had not been told.

According to an Oct. 30 story in *Government Executive*, State has decided to rejoin the program, but it is uncertain how many fellows they plan to hire—one State Department official told *Government Executive* that “future PMF hiring decisions will be considered as part of the department's overall strategically managed hiring plan, in line with the department's redesign efforts.”

Tough times for applicants aren't just limited to the State Department. Over at USAID, 97 applicants who were in the pre-employment process recently received emails informing them that the positions for which they had applied no longer exist. According to an Oct. 31 *devex.com* report, these applicants will have to start over from the beginning of

the application process if they hope to find work at USAID.

According to another Devex story, when pressed about the decision at a Nov. 1 House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs hearing, USAID Administrator Mark Green told Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.): “We have not eliminated positions. We are still under a hiring freeze. ...Before I arrived at this position, we had asked for an exception for that class that was involved, and it was denied.”

Lowey stated that she is “extremely concerned” about the decision, saying “I have been working on these programs a long time. I have never experienced anything like this.”

## Former Secretaries of State School Haley

In October, when two former Secretaries of State took the stage with current U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, both took the opportunity to speak about the importance of diplomacy. The panel discussion on American leadership, which was sponsored by George W. Bush’s presidential center, was covered in the Oct. 20 edition of *The New York Times*.

Haley, a former governor who had no foreign policy experience when she was selected for the job of ambassador to the United Nations, listened as Condoleezza Rice and Madeleine Albright explained the importance of the State Department budget, with Rice pointing out that the budget goes to support global women’s

## 50 Years Ago

### A Poignant Reminder

The death of Gustav Hertz in Viet Cong captivity brings a poignant reminder that a total of 13 AID officers have lost their lives in Vietnam.

Statistically the number is small in relation to the sacrifices made by our military men and is not to be compared to the sufferings endured by the Vietnamese civilian population. Yet there is a particular pathos in the thought of unarmed non-combatants losing their lives thousands of miles from home. We think the families and friends of our fallen fighting men will understand our calling special attention in this *Journal* to the losses of our AID associates.

In doing so, we remember again that another officer serving with AID is still held prisoner by the Viet Cong, virtually incommunicado and enduring unknown hardships for endless months since being kidnapped in January 1966.

We honor them, the prisoners, the dead, and their colleagues who risk a similar fate every day in the pursuit of an epic national effort. We draw strength from the example they have set for us.

—Excerpted from an editorial of the same title in the December 1967 Foreign Service Journal.



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What is clear is the bipartisan support for continued investments in soft power, particularly at a time when diplomatic and development challenges have grown not only in number but complexity.

—Chairman Harold “Hal” Rogers (R-Ky.), at the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs, Nov. 1.

USAID is an essential component of our national security. And I am confident that you believe as do I that international development is critical to maintaining U.S. global leadership and protecting our national security.

—Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), at the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs, Nov. 1.

## Heard on the Hill



We have all chosen to be here because we do deeply understand that the ideals of USAID and America’s very generous commitment to try to solve humanitarian problems—because we benefit both economically and culturally, but also it creates international stability—is essential for our national security.

—Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.), at the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs, Nov. 1.

The reality is, the United States has to lead. A lot of people resent that, but it’s just the truth. If we don’t lead, who in the world will?

—Rep. Chris Stewart (R-Utah), at the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs, Nov. 1.

groups, fight HIV/AIDS and finance election monitoring—all of which advance U.S. interests.

The two former Secretaries also explained why nation-building, international trade and a free press are all critical to our success as a nation. “Nation-building is not a four-letter word,” Albright bluntly told the ambassador, while Rice took the opportunity to promote the importance of international cooperation.

The conference provided an increasingly rare opportunity for bipartisan discussion on the topic of defending democratic and free-market principles.

## Buyouts? What Buyouts?

Rumors about a buyout offer at the State Department have been swirling for months, even as the department has denied that a major staff reduction

is in the works. The amount was going to be \$40,000, then \$25,000.

In September, the Senate Appropriations Committee rejected the administration’s proposed 30 percent budget cut for State and USAID in September, and called for the department to maintain 2016 staffing levels.

Responding to AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson’s December column, “Time to Ask Why” (which was shared ahead of publication; see pages 7 and 9), the State Department told media outlets that suggestions of drastic cuts to the Foreign Service are not accurate.

The department’s statement pointed to the “employee-led” redesign effort: “The goal of the redesign has always been to find new ways to best leverage our team’s brains, ingenuity, and commitment to serving our nation’s inter-

ests. AFSA and other employee groups are important partners in the redesign effort. As has been said many times before, the freezes on hiring and promotions are only temporary while we study how to refine our organization.”

Then on Nov. 10, *The New York Times* reported that the State Department “will soon offer a \$25,000 buyout to diplomats and staff members who quit or take early retirements by April.” *Government Executive* reported on Nov. 13 that the State Department had confirmed the buyouts, citing a need to “reduce unnecessary supervisory levels and organizational layering.” ■

*This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Donna Gorman, Dmitry Filipoff, Shawn Dorman and Susan Maitra.*

# Religious Diversity Benefits the State Department

BY PHIL SKOTTE

**R**eligious diversity matters to the work of the State Department. In this brief essay I will provide some critical personal examples of that fact, but let me start with an introduction and some background information about why having a faith can matter.

I was raised in a family that had a strong Christian faith, and we attended our Swedish Baptist church twice on Sundays and on Wednesday nights, too. Missionaries came to our church and showed slides of faraway places, and sometimes we even hosted them in our home. Above my bed was a “monkey rug” (made from the skin of nine monkeys) brought from Ethiopia by my missionary uncle. My mom put her wedding ring in the offering plate after a particularly compelling presentation by a visitor from Africa (my Dad said it was OK).

Having completed university, I went to Princeton Theological Seminary with the intention of becoming a minister or a missionary myself. However, life took some unexpected turns, and instead I joined the Foreign Service—but not before serving as a volunteer aboard the Christian service vessel MV Logos as a

**Religion can be every bit as important as race, gender, sexual orientation and other aspects of our identity.**

ship’s carpenter. It was there that I met my wife. For many years, I taught Sunday school (although not as faithfully as Jimmy Carter), and my wife and I participated in Bible studies and tithed (gave away 10 percent of our income).

Many of my State Department friends and colleagues find my background a little unusual and, in fact, unintelligible. But when I joined the Foreign Service in 1993, I brought this identity and these commitments with me. Even though the State Department does not, at this writing, have any religion-based affinity groups, religion can be every bit as important as race, gender, sexual orientation and other aspects of our identity.

Now, after almost 25 years serving mostly as a consular officer, I can look

back and see how my identity as a Christian person has been of great value to the State Department and its mission. Here I offer a few examples as evidence that religious diversity matters to the work of the State Department. I am sure many others from various faiths could offer their own examples of the value that faith-based people bring to diplomacy.

## Education and Assistance

From the outset of my career, I sought out missionaries abroad for friendship and mutual encouragement. They educated me and showed me parts of foreign countries I would never have seen in my capacity as a diplomat. For example, a missionary in Manila took me on her nightly rounds working with glue-sniffing street children. Another introduced me



*FSO Phil Skotte has served in the Philippines, the Vatican, Hong Kong, Budapest and Moscow. Domestically, he has worked as a foreign policy adviser for special operations at the Pentagon and director of American Citizen Services worldwide; he currently serves as the Bureau of Consular Affairs’ liaison with the intelligence community. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he worked as a commercial fisherman in Alaska, a schoolteacher, an athletic director and a ship’s carpenter, and earned master’s degrees from the National Defense University and Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the author of Why Jesus Won’t Go Away—A Diplomat Reflects on Faith (WestBow Press, 2014). Phil and Maribeth have three daughters. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.*

## As anyone who has served in West Africa will tell you, a lot of health services in the region are delivered by faith-based providers.

to Muslim families in Quiapo and took me to the Golden Mosque.

In Rome, my various church contacts housed the legal permanent residents (LPRs) we had evacuated from Albania but could not assist with onward travel from Italy. When the management at the Holiday Inn complained about those LPRs bedding down in the hotel hallways at about 10 p.m., I called Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Mormons and Baptists. Every church took in some of the evacuees until all could be housed.

In Hungary, I began to identify local resources to assist U.S. citizens in ways that the consular section could not. Many of those resources were graciously given by persons and institutions of faith. On one occasion, I had responsibility for a number of American prisoners undergoing two full years of pretrial detention. It would be difficult to visit each of them monthly.

### Clergy Visits

With that in mind, I asked each prisoner if they wanted visits by clergy. Two said yes—one a Baptist and the other Jewish. The rabbi who agreed to visit the Jewish prisoner did such a fantastic job that the other Jewish prisoner among the group eventually also asked for clergy visits. These visits were so important to the well-being of these prisoners that I vowed to make the offering of clergy visits to prisoners

by consuls a universal practice, if I ever had the chance.

That opportunity came when I became director of American Citizen Services back in Washington, D.C. The Bureau of Consular Affairs agreed immediately to my proposal to add the offer of clergy visits to the prison visit checklist for consuls worldwide.

CA agreed, not for the purpose of propagating religion, which would be inappropriate, but to offer added and critical support to our imprisoned citizens. I estimate that about one third of prisoners, if asked, will opt for clergy visits. This additional support to imprisoned citizens abroad costs the U.S. government nothing.

On another occasion, an American citizen experienced a serious medical issue in Budapest at a moment when I was both consul general and the control officer for a U.S. presidential visit event on Castle Hill.

I asked the patient if he wanted a visit by clergy, and he said yes. The clergy member and his expatriate church stepped in and brought the American food and a television, and even picked up his family from the airport and housed them.

They took great care of this recovering citizen, and it cost the U.S. government—you guessed it—nothing! I was able to focus on the president's visit knowing that this citizen was in good hands.

### Identifying Service Providers

In the Philippines, Rome, Hungary, Russia and Hong Kong, we relied on local resources for our citizens in need (e.g., free food, shelter, counseling and more). I worked hard to build strong relationships with the providers of these essential services; to discover new service providers, and to close gaps where they existed. Not surprisingly, many of these providers were and are people of faith.

Many of our wardens, it turns out, are also people of faith. When the Marine Security Guard on duty in Moscow passed me a call from a distressed American at 2 a.m., I reached out to an ACS contact, a pastor, who met me with his car at the embassy 20 minutes later. We took the American to church-funded lodging, and I gave him McDonald's coupons. Three days later, he flew home.

As director of American Citizen Services, I worked to systematize our tracking of local resources worldwide and to strengthen the warden network. These initiatives were folded into Secretary of State John Kerry's MissionOne program, and served to strengthen our protections and services to our citizens at no cost to the government.

Some of the energy for these ideas came from my extensive interactions with resource providers, who often had a faith-driven service mentality. As a person of faith, I was always comfortable with these people, whether they were Christians, Muslims or Jews.

### Evacuating Ebola Victims

On a Sunday afternoon in 2014, when State's Bureau of Medical Services called to say that we needed to urgently evacuate an American missionary with

active Ebola from West Africa, it was no coincidence that I already knew the mission involved. I also knew the administrator of the mission compound where most of the Ebola treatment in West Africa would take place. As anyone who has served in West Africa will tell you, a lot of health services in the region are delivered by faith-based providers.

The State Department, especially MED and personnel at the embassies, did a great job evacuating American Ebola victims from West Africa. I am sure they would have done so without me and regardless of anyone's faith, but the connections already made on the basis of religious interest proved to be useful when the emergency came.

As I approach the end of my Foreign Service career, I can say with appreciation that the State Department, although appropriately secular in orientation, values the contributions of its religiously diverse workforce. I did not wear my faith on my sleeve in the workplace; never had a Bible on my desk or religious posters on the walls. But I brought a faith-based commitment to this career that has, in my opinion, benefited the department, its mission and our citizens.

Committed Muslims, Baha'is, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and other Christians will have their own stories to share, and should do so. Their stories will help ensure that the State Department continues to understand and welcome the contributions that faith-based people bring to this institution and to our mission abroad. ■




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# The Making of an Effective Diplomat

## *A Global View*

**How do diplomatic services around the world ensure their governments have a steady supply of the most effective professional envoys?**

BY ROBERT HUTCHINGS AND JEREMI SURI

**D**iplomatic services around the world face many similar challenges: nurturing officers who are globally aware and still deeply connected to their nation; managing the growing centralization of foreign policymaking in the offices of presidents, prime ministers and chancellors; engaging a growing array of non-state actors with whom they must do business; and widening their scope of expertise to include commerce, climate change, terrorism, energy and cybersecurity, among other issues.

With such challenges in mind, and thanks to funding and guidance from the American Foreign Service Association, the two of us led a project at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs during the 2016-2017 academic year aimed at examining the practices of diplomatic services in other major countries to see what lessons we might draw that would be helpful in improving the effectiveness of American diplomacy.

We worked with a team of 15 talented graduate student researchers on a comparative study of the development and operation of diplomatic services in eight countries: Brazil, China, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, India, Russia and Turkey. Our research focused on the recruitment, training, organi-

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*The graduate students who researched and wrote the report on which this article is based ("Developing Diplomats: Comparing Form and Culture Across Diplomatic Services," a report by the Policy Research Project on Reinventing Diplomacy at the University of Texas-Austin's Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs) are: Bryce Block, Evan Burt, Catherine Cousar, Adam Crawford, Michael Deegan, Daniel Jimenez, Joel Keralis, Joshua Orme, Zuli Nigeeryasen, Maria Pereyra-Vera, Zachary Reeves, Annika Rettstadt, Marne Suttin, Jessica Terry and Leena Warsi. The report is available at [bit.ly/DevelopingDiplomats](http://bit.ly/DevelopingDiplomats).*



Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on Smolenskaya Square in Moscow.

zation and promotion of diplomats in each country. It included a careful reading of published accounts of diplomatic training, interviews with diplomatic personnel in Washington, D.C., and discussions during a January meeting of the Austin Forum—an intensive three-day workshop for rising American, European and Latin American diplomats.

Assembled in country teams, the researchers asked a series of questions: What is your country's diplomatic culture and professional ethos? How does an individual get chosen for the diplomatic corps in your society? What is the content and duration of initial training? What is your country's budget for its diplomatic service in relation to other priorities? What are the expectations for early postings and career advancement? How are diplomats organized—by region or issue area? What are the opportunities and expectations for mid-career training? What is the trajectory for a typical diplomatic career? What role does your diplomatic service play in foreign policymaking, and how is this role changing?

The result was a series of case studies containing valuable insights about different diplomatic services. Of course the information was more accessible and detailed for those in democratic societies (e.g., the U.K., France and Germany). Information was harder to acquire for more closed countries (e.g., Russia and China).

The final report, completed in May, is available from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and online. Though dealing with non-American countries, it identifies some “best practices” in the field of diplomacy that may contribute to reforming and improving our own distinguished U.S. Foreign Service.

We discuss some of the potentially valuable findings below, including presenting highlights on specific countries, following a brief review of the history of U.S. diplomacy.

## Educating Russia's Future Diplomats

Russian diplomats are known for their strong professional training and deep linguistic and cultural knowledge of assigned regions.

The principal pipeline for new diplomats remains the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), which conducts rigorous training in diplomatic theory, area studies and foreign languages. Entry-level officers are expected to have mastery of at least two foreign languages, and they generally focus on one region of the world, moving from post to post while rising slowly through the ranks.

While the Service is still a prestigious and valued institution in Russia, it has faced challenges in recent years that have lowered its prestige, including competition from higher-paying private-sector jobs and complaints of limited autonomy and agency. Further, while in the past the vast majority of those attending MGIMO were specifically pursuing careers in the foreign ministry, this is no longer the case. A survey published in 2011 suggested that the ministry had failed to adapt to the needs of the post-Soviet generation.

—From “Developing Diplomats: Comparing Form and Culture Across Diplomatic Services,” *Country Report: Russia*, pp. 117-135.



Manfred Bruckels (own work) [CC BY-SA 2.0 de], via Wikimedia Commons

Entrance of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany in Berlin.

## German Diplomatic Culture

German diplomatic culture derives from the combined legacies of geography, history, tradition and philosophy. Although Germany did not achieve statehood and national unity until 1871, it has an extensive history and rich diplomatic tradition that long predates unification.

Its contemporary diplomatic style reflects the competing 19th-century traditions of Klemens von Metternich and Otto von Bismarck. The tradition of Austrian Foreign Minister Metternich was characterized by the maneuver and compromise needed to hold together the multiethnic Austro-Hungarian

Empire, whereas the tradition of Prussian Chancellor Bismarck was that of *machtpolitik* (power politics) employed to unite Germany's disparate principalities into a modern nation-state.

Trained as a diplomat himself, serving as ambassador to Russia and later to France, Bismarck created the modern diplomatic corps and left behind a tradition of urbane, well-prepared diplomats. The Auswärtiges Amt (foreign office) at Wilhelmstrasse 76 was a highly centralized and rigid operation, organized along military lines and tightly controlled by the chancellor, who once declared that "if an ambassador can obey, more is not required."

—From "Developing Diplomats: Comparing Form and Culture Across Diplomatic Services,"  
Country Report: Germany, pp. 78-96.

## The American Diplomatic Tradition

On Oct. 26, 1776, less than four months after signing the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin set sail from Philadelphia to France, where he became the first American diplomat. Franklin was a cosmopolitan inventor, businessman, politician and writer. He was also a skilled representative of his new nation, negotiating the first American alliance with France.

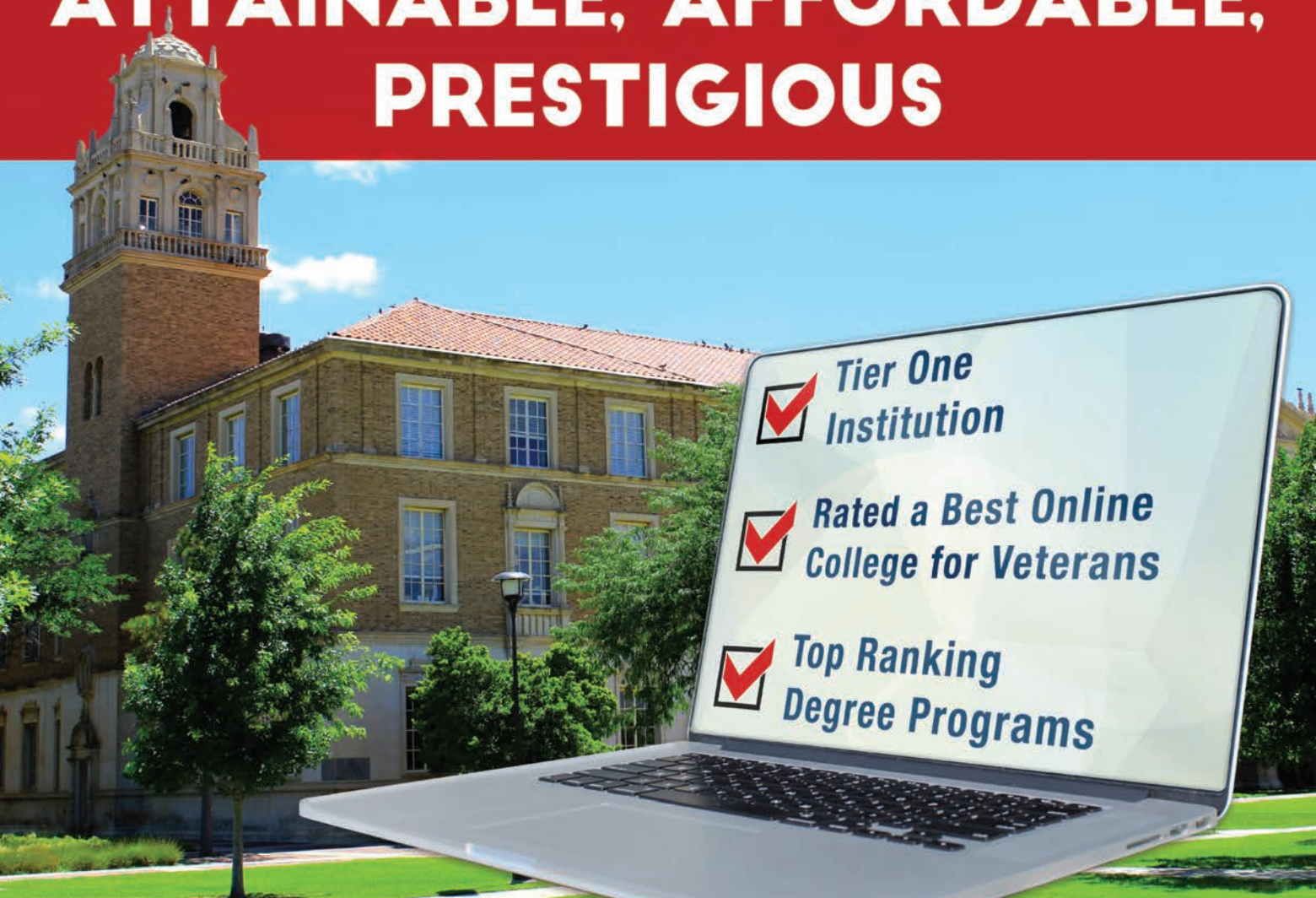
Franklin and his contemporaries understood that international diplomacy—the cultivation and management of relations with other states—was crucial for national survival and prosperity. He was part of a broader trans-Atlantic community of learned, wealthy gentlemen who used their personal skills to manage relations between rival governments in an era of aggressive empires. Diplomacy was not an alternative to war or peace, but instead an essential part of eliciting support from potential allies and, when necessary, balancing against potential foes in a complex international system.

For Franklin and his many successors foreign relations meant a mix of cooperation, competition and negotiations to maximize the emerging power of the United States and minimize its weaknesses. In a complex world with diverse actors, no country could

go it alone. Diplomacy facilitated survival through interdependence and the pursuit of the national interest through direct communication, intelligence gathering and, when necessary, manipulation. The founders and successive generations concentrated their foreign policy activities on the work of diplomats, not the military, and the most talented American statesmen served their country in this capacity, following Franklin's footsteps.

The 20th century was, in some ways, an era when this vision came to fruition. The United States and its counterparts on other continents expanded their diplomatic services, placing greater emphasis than ever before on sending some of their most talented and best-trained citizens abroad to negotiate treaties, manage daily relations and report on potential dangers. Embassies proliferated around the world, diplomatic conferences became more numerous and specialized, and organizations (especially the League of Nations and the United Nations) turned intensive diplomatic deliberations into a form of global governance. On the eve of World War II, the United States possessed a small, divided military (the Army and Navy were entirely separate) and would soon have a growing, highly educated and increasingly active Foreign Service. The diplomats largely deter-

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mined American foreign policy in the mid-20th century.

The unprecedented expansion of America's global presence, and its underlying internationalist goals (including democratization and free trade), required a more skilled, highly organized, professionalized diplomatic corps. Professionalization occurred across all areas of society during the 20th century (medicine, law, education, etc.), but it was especially pronounced in the field of diplomacy. The technically trained and carefully vetted representative of the state supplanted the aristocrat-turned-diplomat of old. Governments, including the United States, built large bureaucracies to train and organize the work of men (and eventually women) hired full-time to manage different elements of each nation's foreign activities in trade, travel, military affairs, education and other matters. The new professional Foreign Service officers were selected on merit (usually through competitive examinations); they were highly trained (often with advanced degrees); and they were specialized (by field or region).

The professionalized diplomacy of the 20th century dominated the Cold War, and it continues to shape the post-Cold War world, although the traditional power of the Department of State has been diminished as the military has taken up more and more space in the foreign policy arena. American diplomats (George Kennan, Averell Harriman, Dean Acheson, Henry Kissinger, and many others) were at the center of U.S. policymaking, as were their Western European, Soviet, Chinese, Japanese and postcolonial counterparts. Since at least 1945, every major country has strived to hire, train and employ the most skilled professional diplomats for a variety of tasks, including: economic cooperation, counterterrorism, cultural exchange and conflict management.

### Vive la Difference

One of the most striking things about the results of our survey of diplomatic services in eight key countries is how different

## Fostering Strategic Thinking in the French Foreign Ministry

The French see themselves as missionaries for their revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity.

French diplomats believe that they invented the modern art of diplomacy in the 16th century. They seek not only to secure the interests of the French state, but also to promote these ideals through public diplomacy and other forms of "soft power." They do so in a relationship between posts and capital that seems to be unique: French diplomats are empowered to take stances that are consistent with the government policy without having to return to base at every juncture.

This flexibility has allowed diplomats to command conversations rather than react to the positions of others. Thus, France has gained success in the international community by consistently leading conversations and directing dialogue.

—From *"Developing Diplomats: Comparing Form and Culture Across Diplomatic Services,"* Country Report: France, pp. 59-77.



The official entrance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, France.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Beijing.

## Recruitment and Training in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Immediately after selection, new hires complete a six-month training course designed to familiarize them with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chinese diplomatic system. They then normally spend their first three-year assignment at MFA headquarters in Beijing and are not considered full diplomats until their first international posting.

As they progress through their careers, junior officers participate in a number of training courses—ranging from a few days or weeks to as long as two years—to be eligible for promotion. A unique feature of their professional development is that approximately 140 officers are sent to major national and international universities annually to complete a full year of graduate-level academic study.

Selection for this additional academic training is a strong indicator for future promotion to leadership ranks. Advancement to key leadership positions can occur at a relatively young age, and many ascend to ambassadorial posts by age 40.

—From *“Developing Diplomats: Comparing Form and Culture Across Diplomatic Services,”*  
Country Report: China, pp. 40-58.

their histories and cultures are, despite the many structural and procedural similarities among them. From these diverse examples, is it possible to identify the ideal diplomat? Surely not: skilled diplomats come in various shapes and sizes. Some are master strategists, others are gifted linguists with deep regional expertise, and still others are experienced administrators and leaders. Diplomatic services need officers with these varied talents: the attributes one seeks for the head of the planning staff are not the same as those sought for the director of a regional bureau or a United Nations ambassador. *Vive la difference!*

There are, nonetheless, certain practices these services share that ensure they will nurture and develop skilled and effective professional diplomats. All of them recruit highly qualified officers, many drawn from elite institutions like the *École Nationale d'Administration* (ENA) in France and the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) in Russia, which are specifically geared for the preparation of public servants. And all

provide entry-level training designed to familiarize officers with the ministry as well as to acquire diplomatic skills.

The Brazilian, German and Indian services have the most extensive initial training of the eight countries studied, ranging from three semesters in Brazil to as long as three years in Germany. France, Russia and the United Kingdom do not provide the same level of initial training, relying instead on their rigorous selection process from elite institutions and the professional education entering officers received there before joining the service.

Several services offer focused training courses at various points throughout a career. Brazil and China link mandatory mid-career training courses to eligibility for promotion, while France requires mid-career management training after 15 years of service. The German and French services seem to be the most advanced in promoting a “work-life balance” through generous family leave policies, flextime work arrangements and job placement help for partners.

To regularize promotion procedures and make them more transparent, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office has established Assessment and Development Centers, which administer a mix of written and interactive exercises focused mainly on management and leadership. Similarly, Turkey requires meritocratic examinations between the sixth and ninth years of service.

In all eight countries ambassadorial posts are almost entirely reserved for career diplomats. Most ambassadors to key posts have prior experience as ambassadors, speak the local language fluently and have served in senior levels in their home ministries. The contrast between the professional standards of these countries and the U.S. practice of assigning political appointees to key posts is conspicuous.



The North Block of the Indian Secretariat Building, which houses the Ministry of External Affairs.

services we studied. New Indian diplomats are drawn from the highly selective Indian Civil Service examination process. Indian Foreign Service candidates are recruited alongside domestic counterparts such as the Indian Administrative Service, and their training begins with civil servants from across ministries and levels of government.

IFS officers subsequently undertake almost two additional years of training on top of the instruction they received as civil service recruits, including extensive rotations throughout the central government's ministries, as well as military attachments.

Their training also includes innovative features meant to ensure that Indian diplomats are well-connected to their country at the grass roots level: for example, a 10-day trek in the Himalayas followed by a 12-day visit to a remote village and the *Bharat Darshan* (view of India), a tour of major cultural, commercial and historical sites. Brazil has an analogous but less extensive practice whereby officers spend time in various states to experience something of the diversity of their country.

—From “Developing Diplomats: Comparing Form and Culture Across Diplomatic Services,”  
Country Report: India, 97-116.

## Lessons for the United States?

We did not include the U.S. Foreign Service in our multicountry survey deliberately, fearing that doing so might lead us to judge everything against the U.S. experience. We also hesitated to draw sweeping conclusions about which practices are most relevant or most deserving of emulation by the United States. A “best practice” in one country is not necessarily best for another.

There are many areas in which the U.S. Foreign Service excels. It recruits a highly talented group of entering officers, whose composition is more diverse than that of other services we studied. These rising diplomats acquire strong regional and language skills along the way, and they typically have a mix of postings that help them acquire a global perspective. Another strength of the U.S. system, often mentioned by foreign diplomats with admiration and envy, is the presence at the senior working level of many “irregulars” who come in from academia, think-tanks or law firms to take up staff positions at National Security Council, National Economic Council, policy planning staff and elsewhere. (Of course, this practice has the disadvantage of displacing FSOs who might have aspired to those same positions.)

Yet, compared to many of the services we studied, America's diplomatic corps is disadvantaged at the entry level and again at the senior level. At entry level, officers are given a mere five weeks of orientation in the A-100 course, involving no serious substantive training. Then it may take several years before they

## Entry-Level Training in the Indian Foreign Service

India's practice is unique among those diplomatic

have a chance to work in their career track, as all officers must do at least one year of consular work, and often more than that. As a result, many junior officers begin to lose some of the enthusiasm they had when they entered, especially since these early postings are followed by what can be a painfully slow rise through the ranks.

As U.S. diplomats progress through their careers, they often find that the Foreign Service does not offer sufficient time off to pursue advanced academic training or gain experience in another professional setting. Contrast this with their military counterparts, who routinely receive yearlong training at least twice in a career. The very few FSOs who are afforded mid-career academic opportunities most often receive their strategic training at the National War College, with the result that diplomats learn strategy from the military rather than the other way around.

The United States is an extreme outlier among foreign services in the number of political appointees who serve as ambas-

sadors and senior leaders in the State Department. No other country permits this level of amateurism, and the United States pays a heavy price for being so disadvantaged at the top level of critical missions abroad and within the department itself.

None of this is to denigrate the U.S. Foreign Service, whose officers are often among the most skilled and dedicated of any diplomatic service. Rather, it is to suggest that there are lessons to be learned from other services that could better empower the U.S. Foreign Service to field the strongest officers at entry level, prepare them to be both experts and strategic thinkers, and ensure that only the most qualified individuals represent the United States at the highest levels.

These are the lessons that our nation's leaders, in Congress and in the White House, must appreciate. And the American public must understand these insights, too. We need to nurture new Benjamin Franklins who will represent our country as skilled diplomats, and educate citizens about the importance of their work. ■

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# Diplomacy Works: First-Person Stories from the Field

**U.S. diplomacy is vital to American prosperity and national security and to maintaining a peaceful world. Here are some examples of the critical work diplomats do.**

*As part of AFSA's mission to tell the story of the Foreign Service, The Foreign Service Journal has begun building a collection of narrative "case studies." We reached out to the association's membership, asking for their stories of a time, an event or a day when diplomacy achieved an important objective. The response has been excellent, such that the compilation here is Part I of what promises to be a continuing series. We will publish Part II in January. Written by active-duty and retired members of the U.S. Foreign Service, these accounts offer vivid illustrations of the indispensable everyday work of career diplomats and development professionals around the world. If you have a story to add, please send it to [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org), with subject line "Diplomacy Works."*

—The Editors

## A Flag Is Better than a Thousand Words

*Soviet Union 1991 • By Raymond Smith*

On the morning of Aug. 19, 1991, hard-line Soviet leaders were attempting to solidify their coup against Soviet President and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. At the U.S. embassy, we were scrambling for information, advising Washington on the conditions that could lead the coup effort to collapse (large-scale public resistance and doubts that the military would follow orders to crush the resistance to it), and recommending that the U.S. government refuse all contact with the coup leadership.

I was about two weeks short of completing my three-year tour as head of Embassy Moscow's political section. We were between ambassadors, and Jim Collins, normally the deputy chief of mission, was in charge.

At about midday, Jim told me that he had gotten a request from Russian President Boris Yeltsin (the centerpiece of resistance to the coup) to call on him at Russian government headquarters, which overlooked the embassy compound from a couple hundred yards away. Crowds had converged on the headquarters, locally known as the White House, and were building barricades around it with whatever materials they could find. If the coup leaders tried to use force, this was where it would happen.

Jim asked for my views, and I told him that I thought we should go see Yeltsin. We had long supported Gorbachev's reform effort, although we had also advised Washington that the effort was in trouble and that even the continued existence of the Soviet Union was in doubt. Success of the coup would mean the end of reform and, probably, a reversion to hostility between our countries. There was no doubt the coup leaders would be well aware of our visit to Yeltsin and would understand how the United States felt about their effort to grab power.

Jim made a call to the State Department on the embassy's secure line and obtained agreement to accept Yeltsin's invitation. A few minutes later, we climbed into the ambassador's limousine and, American flag flying to show that the head of the embassy was aboard, made the short drive to the White House, moving carefully up the ramp as cheering crowds pulled down their makeshift barriers to allow us entry. It was as clear to them as it was to the temporary occupants of the Kremlin what this meant.

Two days later, the coup collapsed. Gorbachev was released from house arrest in the Crimea and returned to a capital that he no longer ruled. Yeltsin was now the dominant leader, and a few months later he led Russia out of the Soviet Union, consigning the 1917 communist revolution to the dustbin of history.

The coup collapsed for the reasons we said it might: the bravery of the Soviet citizens who risked their lives to resist it and the unwillingness of key members of the Soviet military to use force against their own people. We at the embassy had done what diplomats can. We provided our leaders with information and advice. We recognized and took advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate publicly where the United States stood at this critical juncture in the political life of the country to which we were accredited.

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*Raymond Smith worked in the State Department for more than 30 years, retiring from the Foreign Service with the rank of Minister Counselor. His areas of specialty were the Soviet Union, Russia and Africa. Smith is the author of two books, *Negotiating with the Soviets* (Indiana University Press, 1989) and *The Craft of Political Analysis for Diplomats* (Potomac Books, 2011), and numerous articles.*

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## Señora Luna's Cooking Pot

*Bolivia 2003 • By Alexis Ludwig*

One afternoon in late November 2003, Pete Harding, then human rights officer at U.S. Embassy La Paz, was returning to his office after a working lunch with one of his social sector contacts. As he entered the chancery lobby and made his way toward the

elevators, Harding noticed a middle-aged woman of indigenous ethnic origin stepping away from the embassy cashier's window. She was dressed nondescriptly, in jeans, a long-sleeved white T-shirt and blue vest. But something about her was off. She held a large black cooking pot in her arms, and tears were

streaming down her face. Harding felt the stirrings of sympathy and curiosity. He introduced himself, and guided the woman to a seat in the back corner of the lobby.

Harding discovered that the woman, Señora Gaby Luna Velasco, had recently lost her home to a fire. Señora Luna's two-story home in the Eloy Salmon commercial neighborhood near downtown La Paz doubled as a small business: the structure's ground floor was a shop from which she and her family sold



domestic appliances. Her home, that shop and all the merchandise in it were now gone. Everywhere she had gone to seek help, she had been turned away. Bolivian government ministries, the central bank and other local institutions had been unresponsive. The Bolivian bank branch in the embassy chancery had just told her “sorry” for a second time.

Harding peered inside the cooking pot and saw a pile of what looked like blackened ashes and smelled like burnt paper. It was several seconds before he realized what he was seeing and smelling: the remains of several clumps of U.S. one hundred dollar bills. The charred bills were all that was left of her family’s life savings, which included the money she had recently collected from neighbors to pay for merchandise. She claimed that \$45,000 in cash had been hidden beneath her mattress at the time of the fire, and she sought help to convert the ashes back to viable legal tender.

Señora Luna’s story rang a bell: Harding recalled having read about the devastating nighttime fire not long before in the local papers. And he knew it was plausible. The “informal” sector represented two-thirds of Bolivia’s economy—the country’s growing cholo commercial class owned the street stands and lunch stalls, small bric-a-brac shops, hardware stores and food markets, and ran the thriving commerce in mostly contraband electrical goods and computer electronics. They administered this substantial informal economy almost exclusively in cash—often in U.S. dollars rather than the local currency.

Whatever the case, Señora Luna needed help. She had no insurance. She had nothing left, owed money for all the merchandise destroyed in the fire and had intended to pay off her debt with the charred cash in the cooking pot. Harding asked her to wait in the lobby while he went inside to consult with embassy colleagues about whether there was any way he could help. He returned an hour later to tell her he would do what he could. From his professional point of view, helping a woman of Señora Luna’s background would have precisely the kind of political impact we were seeking. More importantly, however, it was the right thing to do. (He could not stop asking himself: What if it were my own mother in this situation?)

They transferred the contents of her cooking pot into several thick, industrial-style plastic bags. Back in his office, Hard-

He was the bridge, the interpreter,  
the sole point of intersection  
between those worlds—doing  
his best to bring them together  
to solve a problem.

—Alexis Ludwig



ing placed these bags into a cardboard box, secure-wrapped it and mailed it to the U.S. Treasury Department’s Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, D.C.

During the months that followed, Harding made multiple calls to Washington to seek updates and press for progress.

Señora Luna’s box had arrived just as the Bureau was responding to a surge stemming from forest fires in California, and the office’s expert currency examin-

ers were working at full throttle, unable to give their immediate attention to the case from distant Bolivia. When the distraught Señora Luna called him pleading for news, Harding assured her it was just a matter of time.

He explained the bureaucratic process; that complex currency examination cases were time-consuming; that accurate calculations were critical; and that the workload of currency examiners was heavy. In short, he performed the diplomat’s quintessential task, mediating between two otherwise separate worlds. He was the bridge, the interpreter, the sole point of intersection between those worlds—doing his best to bring them together to solve a problem.

The solution came in early June, more than six months after he had mailed the box of burnt bills to Washington. It was a U.S. Treasury check in the amount of \$17,100. When Harding called with the good news, Señora Luna was overcome with emotion. He was happy for her, pleased that their persistence had paid off and relieved he had not oversold his ability to come through on his implied promise, after all.

To commemorate the event, the embassy’s public affairs office organized a special ceremony in the chancery lobby. Harding and U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia David Greenlee formally presented the check to Señora Luna. Amb. Greenlee received a grateful kiss on the cheek from the tearful woman, a gesture that was broadcast on national TV that same night. It also appeared on the front pages of Bolivian papers the following day, above feature-length accounts of her travails and their successful resolution—with the help of U.S. Embassy La Paz.

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*Alexis Ludwig has been a Foreign Service officer since January 1994. He is currently a career development officer for senior-level officers. He has been political counselor in Brazil, Argentina and Peru, among other postings in Latin America and East Asia.*

## Navigating Hong Kong's Return to China

*Hong Kong 1992 • By Richard W. Mueller*

United States diplomacy and law were critical in continuing our deep and extensive relationships with Hong Kong and China after July 1, 1997—the date Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty and became a special administrative region of China. Without the multiyear effort of the Department of State, Congress and other federal agencies, we would have been unable to work with Hong Kong, China and the United Kingdom to maintain many of the important relationships allowed by China's unique “one country, two systems” formula for Hong Kong.

Without the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 and subsequent detailed negotiations, we would have had to impose the same restrictive relationships that we had with the PRC on Hong Kong—an open, free market territory with a solid tradition of liberties and law. This would have created a crisis not only in Hong Kong but in our relationships with China and other countries.

Some important background: In 1898, Great Britain forced on

a weakened Qing dynasty a treaty extending (via a 99-year lease) the boundaries of Hong Kong well beyond the island and the tip of the Kowloon Peninsula, which had been seized by Britain in 1842 and 1860, respectively. Claude MacDonald, Britain's negotiator, declared that 99 years was “as good as forever.”

But as China began to open up during the 1980s, the 1997 deadline loomed frighteningly close. The question of Hong Kong's future status was on everyone's minds, both before and after the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown in Beijing that drove people and capital to seek safe haven.

No option other than the return of sovereignty was acceptable to China. But a straight handover and the imposition of Chinese laws and governance would have caused untold chaos and decline in Hong Kong, an important international financial and trading center.

In the fall of 1983, as chief of the economic section at U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong, I witnessed a foretaste of what a failure to secure the future might mean. A severe crash in the Hong Kong dollar and the stock market, along with panic buying of essentials, gripped the city for days in the wake of a collapse in high-level United Kingdom-China negotiations.



View of Hong Kong.

PHOTO COURTESY RICHARD W. MUELLER

In recognition of the reality of the situation, a “pragmatic” Deng Xiaoping supported the subsequent negotiation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984, which was later entered into Chinese law as “one country, two systems.” Hong Kong’s status as a special administrative region of the PRC would continue until 2047. The socialist system of China would not be practiced in Hong Kong, and its capitalist system, common law, liberties and way of life would continue.

In creating this new framework, Deng Xiaoping was keenly focused on the longer-term political imperative of bringing home Macau, still under Portuguese sovereignty and, even more important, Taiwan. (Macau reverted to China in 1999; Taiwan has declined to negotiate on such a framework.)

What was the U.S. role? Importantly, we needed a legal basis to conduct our relationship with Hong Kong differently from its sovereign. Thus was born the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992.

As a career FSO and deputy assistant secretary for legislative affairs under Secretary of State James Baker, I was asked to be the point person for our negotiations with Congress, working closely with State’s Office of the Legal Adviser, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and others. There was intense interest in many quarters of Congress; Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) was a lead sponsor of the bill. Much of our initial work was educational: What was the history? Why did we need new authorities? What were U.S. objectives?

An early crisis arose when the Chinese embassy in Washington, D.C., harshly criticized our work, mistakenly believing we were copying the oft-denounced Taiwan Relations Act. We were able to explain the differences and remind them that China had requested that we and other countries build a future relationship based on “one country, two systems.”

Working closely with members of Congress and their staff, we spent many months drafting the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act’s findings, policies and specific authorizations allowing a broad variety of relationships to continue, such as economic and trade relations (most-favored nation status), law enforcement cooperation, differential export controls, support for

Without the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 and subsequent detailed negotiations, we would have had to impose the same restrictive relationships that we had with the PRC on Hong Kong.

—Richard Mueller



maintenance of consular and trade offices, support for Hong Kong’s continued participation in international organizations, educational and cultural exchange, human rights, Hong Kong’s common law and others.

The legislation garnered widespread support and passed both the Senate and

House unanimously in October 1992. Months later, I arrived in Hong Kong as the new American consul general. A top priority for my next three years—

and for my successors—was fleshing out these policies and authorities. In many cases we needed to negotiate with the Hong Kong, British and Chinese governments, as well as our U.S. government colleagues, to ensure they aligned their policies and practices. There was generally a positive view among all actors of how the continuing relationships would serve common and differing interests. There was also recognition that under U.S. law the president could suspend differential treatment if Hong Kong’s autonomy was not maintained.

Twenty-five years later, the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act continues to serve as a guidepost to U.S. interests and national security goals. It has helped us support the continuation of Hong Kong as an important venue for concluding trade and investment agreements, resolution of legal disputes, a free flow of information and U.S. Navy ship visits, among other things. While the last two decades have seen many changes in China and Hong Kong—some of them worrisome for long-term maintenance of Hong Kong’s unique status—our diplomatic and legal efforts have paid off handsomely in sustaining our rich and complex relationships across the Pacific.

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*Richard W. Mueller retired in 1998 with the rank of Minister Counselor after 32 years in the Foreign Service. He served as deputy executive secretary under Secretary of State George Shultz and as deputy assistant secretary for legislative affairs under Secretary James Baker. Specializing in Asian and Chinese affairs, he served as consul general in Hong Kong (1993-1996). He subsequently served as director of the Asia Society Hong Kong Center and then, for 15 years, was head of three schools: Northfield Mount Hermon School, Hong Kong International School and Shanghai American School.*

## Supporting the Casamance Peace Initiative

*Senegal 2012 • By James R. Bullington*

In 2012, one of the candidates in Senegal's presidential election, Macky Sall, campaigned on a promise to end a secessionist insurgency that had persisted in the southern part of the country, the Casamance, for 30 years. It had resulted in hundreds of deaths, thousands of refugees, a crippled economy and a politically unstable region increasingly vulnerable to Islamist extremism and international narcotics trafficking.

When Sall won and indicated he would welcome international assistance in implementing his campaign promise, Rebecca Wall, a member of a small team of election observers

sent by the newly created State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, saw an opportunity to promote our interests and those of one of our most important African allies.

Peace in the Casamance, she and her colleagues reasoned, would eliminate a source of political instability, encourage economic development and free up Senegalese military resources for participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations and countering Islamist extremism in West Africa. CSO sold this idea to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who visited Dakar in July 2012 and offered our help to President Sall. He accepted.

I had been in touch with Rebecca and CSO for several months in an effort to find a job that would alleviate my growing boredom in retirement. My qualifications—fluent French, ambassadorial rank and lots of experience in Africa and in conflict situations, including Vietnam, Chad and Burundi—fit

their needs for the Casamance project. I began work as a re-employed annuitant and, after several days of consultations in Washington, arrived in Dakar in mid-October.

My welcome by the Senegalese government and people was enthusiastic, not because of any personal merit, but because of what my appointment represented—the official engagement of the U.S. government to support the Casamance peace initiative. This illustrates an important point: American participation is vital to address many global issues, as other governments and people often look to Uncle Sam for leadership and backing.

Over the next two years, this U.S. engagement in support of Senegal's effort to end the Casamance conflict was instrumental in mobilizing international reconstruction and development aid for the region; facilitating negotiations between the government and the rebels; launching a disarmament, demobilization and re-insertion program for rebel fighters; and beginning the resettlement of refugees who had been displaced by the conflict.

The CSO Casamance project was highly cost-effective.

It consisted of me, a part-time deputy (retired FSO Sue Ford Patrick) whom I recruited in Dakar and one officer (Rebecca) to support us in Washington, D.C., plus \$1 million in Defense Department funds that were made available to State. This illustrates another important point: diplomacy is almost



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAMES R. BULLINGTON

At top, James Bullington (right) meets with leaders of the Mine Victims Association in Ziguinchor, capital of the Casamance region, in 2013. Opposite, Bullington (fourth from right) and U.S. Ambassador to The Gambia Ned Alford (third from right) meet with refugees from the Casamance in The Gambia.



always the most cost-effective tool in the national security toolkit.

Most insurgencies don't end with a signed peace agreement; they just fade away. This has been the case in the Casamance. A de facto ceasefire began a few months after my arrival, and it still holds while negotiations continue. A few hundred rebels have left the fight and started the disarmament and demobilization process. Several thousand refugees have returned to their homes. Reconstruction and development aid have surged.

With the Casamance burden lightened, Senegal's highly professional military forces were able to continue their participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. They joined other West African countries in restoring democratic governance to The Gambia after its president refused to abide by election results, and sent an Army battalion plus police forces to support the French-led operation in Mali that is blocking a threatened takeover of that country by jihadi extremist groups.

It is rare to hear praise for U.S. diplomacy from the lips of a French professor, especially when it involves Francophone Africa. Thus the remarks of Prof. Jean-Claude Marut, the world's leading academic expert on the conflict, at a 2015 seminar, "The Role of American Diplomacy in the Casamance Crisis," were especially gratifying: "American diplomacy achieved its objective ... thanks to their mediation offer together with the appointment of a Casamance representative. ... The American involvement inspired more confidence, due to the weight of American diplomacy ... it enabled the financing of the [rebel] delegations that traveled to the Rome negotiations ... [and it led to] a ceasefire that is still in place. ... The Americans supported demining. They facilitated the return of refugees, and they brought The Gambia [which had protected the rebels] back into the game."

We did not restore peace to the Casamance. President Sall, the Senegalese government and the people of the region deserve credit for that. But our support was vital to the success of Senegal's Casamance peace initiative.

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*James R. Bullington, an FSO for 27 years, served in Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Chad and Benin, as well as in Washington, D.C. He was dean of the State Department Senior Seminar and served as ambassador to Burundi from 1983 to 1986. More on this project can be found in the book by Jim and his wife, Tuy-Cam, Expeditionary Diplomacy in Action: Supporting the Casamance Peace Initiative (CreateSpace, 2015).*

## Assistance after a Severe Earthquake

*Mexico 2017 • By Alex Mahoney*

On Sept. 19, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck approximately 75 miles from Mexico City, killing more than 355 people, injuring at least 6,000 others and damaging about 44,000 buildings across the region. It was the same day that a deadly earthquake had struck the city 32 years before, and less than two weeks after a magnitude 8.1 earthquake shook the southern coast of Mexico.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance—which leads the U.S. government's response to international disasters—immediately stood up a response team in Washington, D.C., to coordinate activities in support of the government of Mexico. At first we didn't know if we *would* be responding, for one of the criteria for USAID to assist to with an international disaster is that the affected government must either request U.S. government assistance or be willing to accept it.

Since 2002, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance has worked with Mexican disaster authorities to strengthen their search-and-rescue capacity. USAID supported training exercises for first responders, as well as for instructors, who have now trained more than 1,300 firefighters and first responders on search-and-rescue techniques. Because the Mexican government has its own robust disaster response capabilities, it seldom asks for additional assistance from the United States. However, after the Sept. 19 earthquake, in addition to mobilizing its own national resources to respond to the disaster, the government of Mexico accepted the U.S. government's offer of assistance.



Members of USAID's elite disaster response team took part in a 24-hour effort to search a collapsed office building.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALEX MAHONEY



After the Sept. 19 earthquake in Mexico, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance deployed a response team.

USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team comprised of 15 disaster experts, as well as 67 members of the Los Angeles County Fire Department Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team and five canines. It was the 17th time since 1988 that USAID deployed a USAR team to help with international rescue efforts.

For more than a week, the team worked with others from across the globe in an around-the-clock effort to search for survivors. Working in tandem with Mexican teams, DART's USAR team searched eight buildings—including the 24-hour scouring of a collapsed office building. DART structural engineers also assisted the Mexican government in the assessment of more than 50 damaged buildings, helping to determine whether it was safe for people to return to their homes and for schools, clinics and offices to reopen.

The USAR members of DART were one of the last teams to depart Mexico City. At the request of the Mexican government, the team helped coordinate the demobilization process for the other international search teams and worked with Mexican counterparts to strengthen their capacity to implement this process in the future.

In addition, USAID is working with the Mexican Red Cross to render assistance to the elderly, the disabled and those who were injured in the earthquake. We also supported the transfer of some of the USAR team's search-and-rescue equipment and supplies to the Mexican Red Cross to help with continuing relief efforts. This



American canine teams meet up with Tijuana-based teams.

includes saws, hand tools, generators, fuel containers, tents, cots and portable sinks and showers.

A week and a half after their arrival, USAID's DART returned home. Though our USAR members did not find any survivors, we are incredibly proud of what our team accomplished. Helping people around the world after disasters strike represents the best of America, and we did everything possible to help our neighbors in Mexico during their time of need.

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*Alex Mahoney served as the response team manager for USAID's Mexico Earthquake Response Management Team. He formerly headed USAID's Middle East Crisis Humanitarian Response. For their work saving lives in Syria and Iraq, he and the team received the 2017 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal in the category of national security and international affairs.*

## Power Plant Projects Local Power

*Afghanistan 2016 • By Jeremiah Anthony Carew*

Kajaki Dam has figured large in our engagement in Afghanistan for more than half a century. The story of how the hydroelectric project there was finished illustrates how development actually works in the field.

In 2003 I was a junior consultant working on the U.S. Agency for International Development's Afghanistan desk. When a senior manager announced portentously that we were "going back into Kajaki," I remember quickly googling "Kajaki" to find out why this was such a big deal. As I learned, the U.S. irrigation and power generation project in Helmand province—started in the 1950s and further developed in the 1970s—had a lot of history before we re-engaged on it.

Over the decades, it moved slowly, beset by obstacle after obstacle, even though it remained a key piece of infrastructure for southern Afghanistan. In 2009, during my first overseas tour in USAID Afghanistan's infrastructure office, we were frustrated. A year earlier, a major British-led military operation had transported a third turbine for the dam by land through Taliban-held territory despite loss of life. But because of the security condi-

tions and contracting difficulties, we were unable to install it.

In 2015, I returned for a second tour in Afghanistan. Just days into the tour, I sat nervously in the mission director's office as the decision was made to evacuate the Kajaki site due to nearby indirect fire. Starting in September of that year, a colleague took the initiative and, working closely with the ambassador, managed to remobilize at Kajaki by early 2016. When he left in July, I took over to lead the team through the final stretch to project completion, anticipated in October.

A critical issue when I took over was the state of the transmission line connecting Kajaki to nearby towns and cities. It was conventional wisdom that, although Kajaki would be able to produce significantly more power when our project was completed, the transmission line was so badly deteriorated that it would not be able to transmit the additional power. Yet another years-long project would be needed to upgrade that line.

In August we invited the CEO of the Afghan power utility company, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, for dinner, and talked through the game plan for the critical final months of the project. In between bites of food, the CEO casually announced that DABS would be rehabilitating the transmission line while power was shut off from the dam, taking advantage of the outage to do long-needed work. We were dumbfounded. The CEO's announcement contradicted years of experience-based assump-



An Afghan linesman works to fix a flaw in the 200-km transmission line delivering electricity from the Kajaki power plant.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEREMIAH ANTHONY CAREW

tions on our part. If true, it was a game changer—we could not only finish Kajaki by October, but get that additional power out to homes and businesses at the same time.

I immediately called together the USAID and contractor engineering staffs to test the engineering behind what the CEO had told us. Our analysis indicated that his plan was possible but risky—if the security situation prevented DABS linesmen from accessing the entire line, any small flaw in its 200-kilometer length could mean failure. Like a lightbulb filament, the line would simply melt and pop when power was increased.

We told DABS they had our full support to implement this audacious plan and offered significant amounts of transmission cable we had in stock to assist. The DABS head of operations in the Kandahar region, a savvy engineer named Rasool, explained the plan to us: They would rent additional bucket trucks and deploy double shifts each day of the outage to repair the line.

September 2016 was a nerve-wracking month, but the days went more smoothly than expected as the team completed turbine installation on schedule and commissioned the new unit.

Meanwhile, Afghan linesmen from DABS heroically endured blazing desert heat, kidnappings and double shifts to untangle and repair damaged line bit by bit and, in the worst stretches, replace it with new line. By early October, DABS was nearly ready to begin testing the additional power on the transmission line.

We lost a couple of weeks when, in classic Afghan fashion, a village along the line would not grant DABS engineers access without a promise of more power from the dam. Having DABS out front negotiating with their own people was critical, and they successfully reached a compromise.

In the end, the project was completed. As the reporting cable stated: “Now that Unit 2 is online, the Kajaki Hydroelectric Power Plant has the capacity to generate 50 megawatts of electricity compared to a previous maximum of 32. Kandahar city presently receives an average of 16-17 megawatts, compared to a low-season average of 9 prior to the installation of Unit 2.”

Development works when the host country leads, and we support. Local knowledge holds the key to success, provided we listen closely and can pair it with our technical knowledge. We got the Kajaki project done together, with the Afghans in the lead.

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*Jeremiah Carew is a USAID Foreign Service officer currently posted to Hanoi. He joined the Foreign Service in 2004 and has served in Peru, Uganda and Afghanistan (twice), in addition to assignments in Washington, D.C. He is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Dominican Republic and Ecuador).*

## Which Way Will Bucharest Go?

*Romania 1991-1994 • By Anthony M. Kolankiewicz*

After the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, Washington was not sure which direction Bucharest would go. The first Romanian president after the fall of Nicolas Ceausescu had been educated in Moscow and was pro-Russia by temperament and experience. He pressed for a slow, incremental transition toward democratic institutions and a market economy. The weak, fragmented democratic opposition favored a quicker process, but struggled for relevance within a conservative society.

I served as a political officer at U.S. Embassy Bucharest from 1991 to 1994, my first overseas assignment as a tenured officer. My responsibilities centered on keeping in touch with the opposition political parties, including the trade union movement.

The main trade union in the country was the former communist workers' organization, known by the Romanian acronym CNSLR. I met with its leadership frequently, most of the time on my own but occasionally with the local representative of the Free Trade Unions Institute. The FTUI was the European arm of the AFL-CIO and reported directly to AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The CNSLR president, Victor Ciorbea, told me repeatedly during the first year of my assignment that his goal was to transform the former communist trade union into a credible democratic institution. I was skeptical, since many other former communist organizations in Romania at the time spoke about similarly positive plans but made little real effort to change.

Mr. Ciorbea began to implement some of his plans during my second year in Bucharest. I continued to meet with him and his leadership team regularly, but I remained doubtful about his sincerity and whether the CNSLR would or could succeed in transforming itself. Nonetheless, I cross-checked what was happening in the CNSLR with the country's other trade unions, most of which were loosely associated with the democratic political opposition. Democratic trade union leaders initially shared my skepticism about the CNSLR and its president but, by the end of the second year, they were willing to concede that genuine progress was underway.

The third year brought even more progress, and it became evident both from personal observation and through confirmation by neutral sources that the CNSLR and its president were following through on promises to transform the organization into a viable, democratically oriented trade union. I became a believer as well, as I recognized just how challenging it was to change the

mindset of the country's oldest and largest trade union (almost a million members).

I decided to nominate CNSLR President Ciorbea for a month-long International Visitor Program grant in the United States. The embassy IVP committee approved the nomination, and the ambassador and deputy chief of mission sufficiently trusted my judgment to sign off on the proposal, though both were initially reluctant. Washington also approved the nomination despite misgivings on the part of the AFL-CIO and the Free Trade Unions Institute. The AFL-CIO declined to meet Mr. Ciorbea at its Washington, D.C., headquarters, but many of its affiliated trade union officials did meet him in various parts of the United States and freely imparted their knowledge and advice. The CIA, however, made clear its opposition to the IVP grant, apparently believing that no communist tiger can ever change its stripes.

In the autumn of 1996, two years after I'd left post, Romania held presidential and parliamentary elections. It was the country's first post-revolutionary election, which international observers certified as free, fair and credible, and the democratic opposition won. When the new government was being formed, the victorious democratic political parties selected the CNSLR president to serve as its prime minister, an honor he accepted.

I met Mr. Ciorbea again just prior to the 1996 elections during a temporary assignment to Bucharest, where he was then serving as mayor. Among other things, he told me the IVP tour was one of the most influential experiences of his life, and solidified his belief that Romania's future lay with the democratic institutions and market-based economic systems of the West. Victor Ciorbea did not singlehandedly change the course of Romanian politics, but he was part of a small, growing cadre of Romanian officials and opinion leaders who shook off the national tendency to look toward Moscow and instead put the country firmly on course to rejoin the West.

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*Anthony Kolankiewicz is a retired State Department political officer. He is currently accompanying his wife on assignment to U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem.*

## U.S. Embassy Preserves Belgium-Zaire Relations

*Zaire 1967 • By Hank Cohen*

It was April 1967. I was chargé d'affaires at the U.S. embassy in Kinshasa, Republic of Zaire (now the Congo). We were between ambassadors, and the deputy chief of mission was traveling.

Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko, who had taken power two years earlier in a military coup, made a surprise announcement declaring that he was nationalizing the copper mines owned by the Belgian company Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK). These mines provided more than 75 percent of the government's

revenue. What made the announcement even more significant was the statement that Zaire would not pay compensation. This, of course, constituted a major violation of international law.

The Belgian government reacted immediately, cutting off all royalty payments from copper exports, leaving Zaire with virtually no flow of revenue. The Belgians also requested that the World Bank

and other international organizations stop all economic assistance programs to Zaire. They all complied, and Zaire was in real trouble. President Mobutu, of course, was unable to cave because

he would lose credibility with his own people. When he made the announcement, by the way, university students marched from the campus to downtown Kinshasa singing Mobutu's praises for striking a blow against imperialism.

In the embassy, I called a brainstorming session with the economic section and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Did anyone have any ideas? There was one idea staring us in the face. The mines were nationalized, but the Zairians had nobody qualified to manage them. There were some students at the Colorado School of Mines who would eventually become managers at the mines, but they were a long way away from being ready.

One of the USAID officers came up with the obvious solution: Hire a Belgian company to run the mines under a management

He told me the IVP tour was one of the most influential experiences of his life, and solidified his belief that Romania's future lay with the democratic institutions and market-based economic systems of the West.

—Anthony Kolankiewicz



contract, and include compensation for the nationalization in the management fee. Mobutu would be in compliance with international law by paying compensation, but he would not lose credibility with his own people.

We pitched this idea directly to Mobutu, and he agreed without hesitation. It was a solution worked out by the diplomats at our embassy—Washington was not involved. It's all in a day's work.

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*Ambassador (ret.) Herman J. Cohen is a veteran of 38 years in the Foreign Service. He served at five U.S. embassies in Africa, as well as in the Bureau of African Affairs at the State Department and as Africa director at the National Security Council under President Ronald Reagan. His last assignment before retiring in 1993 was as assistant Secretary of State for Africa under President George H.W. Bush.*

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## Saving Lives Defending a U.S. Business

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*Guatemala 2015*

*By Nicole DeSilvis and Aileen Nandi*

The past few years in Guatemala have seen a revolving door of senior government officials and rampant gang and narcotics violence, as well as the corruption that plagues this region. Guatemala is an enormously challenging market, but our embassy team works together to foster success. It's not very often that Commerce Department officials get involved in humanitarian issues the way other agencies at post do. But when a crisis concerning U.S. medical services provider Baxter Healthcare came across our desk, we knew we needed to pitch in.

In 2013 Baxter was the service provider for peritoneal dialysis treatment for some 500 patients in Guatemala. But in 2014 the Guatemalan Social Security Institute (IGSS) issued a tender for a new contract. The tender contained several irregularities and was clearly biased in terms of the qualification process and requirements. Baxter Healthcare sought guidance from and worked with the Foreign Commercial Service and economic section regarding a variety of allegedly corrupt tendering processes within IGSS.

In December 2014 Baxter was informed by the government of Guatemala that it had lost the tender for peritoneal dialysis for patients who had been under their care for the past six years—to a Mexican firm. This firm had no experience in peritoneal dialysis in Guatemala, lacked the required clinic infrastructure, mysteriously received the environmental study of their facility in two days and quoted the government of Guatemala a higher price than Baxter.

In 2015, 530 patients were transferred to the new provider. Soon after, patients began reporting infections, some of which unfortunately resulted in death (of 198 infected, 42 died). This placed the issue on the national agenda, reinforcing the importance of transparency during the tender processes and making the well-being of the patient a priority.

Under the direction of Ambassador Todd Robinson and with guidance from Deputy Chief of Mission Charisse Phillips, our embassy developed a strategy for engagement with relevant stakeholders to demand transparency in the tender process and to prioritize patients' interests. We met with private- and public-sector stakeholders who could help bring visibility to the anomalies in the process. Embassy involvement prompted a serious investigation, which resulted in the arrest of 17 representatives from IGSS, and the Mexican company was charged with corruption. IGSS reversed its decision, and the health ministry asked Baxter to resume treatment of dialysis patients, saving hundreds of lives.

On June 1, 2015, Baxter sent a letter to Ambassador Robinson: "Your team's active engagement and perseverance, advocating for transparency and for the safety of patients, made this possible. Specifically, Nicole DeSilvis, Antonio Prieto and Jennifer Nehez have worked closely with our team in Guatemala to raise concerns for the way these tender processes had been carried out and its potential impact on the health of Guatemalan renal patients. Thanks to the outstanding work of your team, Baxter and the Guatemalan patients are in a better and safer environment." Baxter said that the embassy team provided important support guiding them through this complex situation, analyzing current events, facilitating meetings and serving as observers at tender proposals to promote integrity and transparency.

This was a huge win. Not only did the reversal of IGSS tender practices save lives, but embassy engagement at the highest levels helped resolve Baxter's dispute with IGSS and leveled the playing field for other U.S. companies competing for Guatemalan government tenders. Baxter earned \$40 million for the equipment and services it delivered in Guatemala; the company's \$2 billion in total sales in Latin America support 861 employees.

The experience became a case study at Baxter's headquarters in Deerfield, Illinois, called "the power of compliance," and its best practices have been shared in several forums and workshops as an example of the importance of behaving ethically in complex situations and the rewards that compliance can bring.

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*Nicole DeSilvis is a senior commercial officer at the U.S. embassy in Guatemala. Aileen Nandi is currently the commercial counselor in New Delhi.*

## Growing Herbs on the West Bank

*Palestine 2015 • By Michael Martin*

In early 2005, USAID initiated a program to bring Israelis and Palestinians together in business partnerships. The program was designed to provide Palestinian producers with the capital, equipment and technical assistance needed to compete in high-value agricultural markets and to increase workers' wages for higher levels of specialization.

The program offered handsome returns to participants. By the same token, investors had to show their confidence in the enterprise by making an initial investment and subsequent stepwise investments as installation progressed. Should the venture falter, they stood to lose. We structured memoranda of understanding (MOUs) in that manner to ensure partners had incentives to manage for success.

The program supported 10 partnerships, among which the partnership to produce fresh herbs was the most attractive, both from an economic and programmatic perspective. Israeli partners had long adapted production technologies to the region and established seasonal connections to Eurasian markets.

Fresh herbs are high-value and low-weight, so they can be profitably flown to distant markets, but they have to be delivered quickly after harvest. That latter point was significant because the U.S. government was focused on facilitating the movement and access of goods and people safely and expeditiously throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Regularly packing and transporting goods properly through checkpoints and borders, and on to flights from Tel Aviv to Europe and Russia, would result in a model system that could be replicated.

Palestinian investors were quick to take advantage of the program. They valued the new technologies and were keen to explore markets beyond the Levant. An herb farm in the northern West Bank quickly became the largest partnership. Investors satisfied the initial requirements of the MOU: They spent several hundred thousand dollars installing irrigation networks and leveling hills in the Alfarah area of the West Bank so that USAID could follow through with its commitment to install greenhouses, bring in soil from the Golan Heights and obtain ancillary irrigation equipment, etc. The MOU was not a binding document, but was considered a reliable commitment because it was backed by the U.S. government.

However, when Hamas was elected in 2006, USAID was instructed to halt all interventions on behalf of Palestinians

except for humanitarian assistance. That meant USAID could not satisfy its commitment under the MOU. Shortly after the election, the investors in the herb farm invited us to a lunch with the members of their community. As we drove into the valley for the meeting, we could see the commitment of the Palestinian partners, who had dramatically transformed the landscape by leveling surrounding hills. It was an eyesore, but one the community anticipated would be replaced by income-generating and job-creating facilities.

We were keen to meet with the investors and the community to clarify any misconceptions and explore avenues for continuing our collaboration. We wanted them to know that we remained personally committed to finding mutually beneficial resolutions. They treated us to customary Palestinian hospitality and plenty of delicious food. The lunch generated absorbing discussions about their lives and interests and how our collaboration would enable them to provide for their families while working close to home.

Throughout the discussions, I was struck at how this meeting in a Palestinian rural community center reminded me of farmers' get-togethers in church basements in Iowa when I was growing up. Despite the obviously different religions, the concerns expressed by faces similarly weathered by farm-work seemed universal, and presented common ground to build on. They were appreciative of our visit and trusted our promise to try to obtain permission to move forward with USAID's commitment.

That permission could only come from the U.S. Secretary of State, and was complicated by the political optics of supporting a government led by Hamas. Our State Department colleagues in Consulate General Jerusalem recognized that the ban on assistance would be counterproductive if it harmed trusted, existing partners, especially after they had lived up to their part of the agreement.

Permission was ultimately granted, and the herb farm turned out to be a notable success and a model for future cooperation. The World Bank urged Tony Blair, the Middle East Quartet's special envoy to the Middle East, to visit the farm shortly after it was launched to observe its operations. Other Palestinian investors soon followed suit without donor support. The herb industry has grown substantially in the past decade, expanding its range of products and markets and providing specialized jobs for more than 1,300 Palestinians.

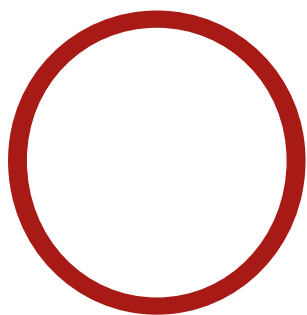
The herb farm can be seen in a YouTube video: [bit.ly/KhaizaranHerbFarm](https://bit.ly/KhaizaranHerbFarm) ■

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*Michael Martin joined USAID in 2002. He is currently posted in South Africa.*

# The Foreign Service Institute at 70: Recalling a Proud History

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY



In March 13, 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall issued a regulation formally establishing the Foreign Service Institute, pursuant to passage of the Foreign Service Act of 1946. But FSI actually had three precursors, starting with the Wilson Diplomatic School, State's first professional training facility, founded in 1909. Its curriculum was not exactly rigorous; apparently, according to *The New York Times*, "Young men who would be ambassadors [had] nothing to do but absorb the lectures and look happy..."

Fifteen years later, the Rogers Act, also known as the Foreign Service Act of 1924, not only created the modern Foreign Service, but a Foreign Service School. On June 7, 1924, President Calvin Coolidge duly issued Executive Order 4022, establishing that facility for the purpose of training newly hired probationary Foreign Service officers.



Steven Alan Honley was a Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997, and served as editor-in-chief of *The Foreign Service Journal* from 2001 to 2014. This article is adapted from the e-book he wrote for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, *FSI at 70: Future Forward—A History of the Foreign Service Institute* (Arlington Hall Press, 2017).

However, the Foreign Service School principally arranged for the detail of new Foreign Service officers to divisions of the department for five or more months before their assignments abroad. It did not conduct any professional training, likely on the assumption that entrants already spoke the requisite languages and could master the necessary skills on the job.



The Mayfair Building, in Washington, D.C.'s Foggy Bottom, was the FSI's original location.

U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

## FSI's Main Components Today

**The School of Language Studies.** Foreign language proficiency has historically been one of the strong points of the Foreign Service, and a distinguishing trademark of American diplomats around the world.

The School of Language Training, as this division of FSI was originally designated in 1947, went through a series of name changes during its first two decades. It was almost immediately renamed the Language Training Branch; then, in 1955, the School of Languages; and shortly after that, the School of Language and Area Studies. In 1966, Area Studies moved to the School of Professional Studies, and the School of Language Studies has stood on its own ever since.

In its first year, SLS taught 31 languages to 559 students, delivering 34,361 hours of instruction. The largest language programs were in French, German, Spanish, Russian and Arabic. The Arabic course lasted six months, making it the longest program. Teachers were known as Native Informants, while language training supervisors were called Scientific Linguists.

From the beginning, FSI has utilized state-of-the-art technology to facilitate learning. Under its first director, Henry Smith Jr., the School of Language Training incorporated intensive methods of language instruction that only the armed forces used at the time. Smith acquired \$10,000 worth of basic manuals and phonograph records from the U.S. Army, and invested \$30,000 more in record players, SoundScriber tape recording machines and other equipment.

The School of Language Studies is a co-creator of the speaking and reading language proficiency rating scales (0-5) used throughout the U.S. government, and a leader within the U.S. government's interagency community of language trainers and testers. It currently offers instruction in more than 70 languages, with course length and curricula targeted at a range of language proficiencies from basic to advanced. In 2015 the School of Language Studies delivered 1,659,190 hours of language training.

In addition to training in Arlington, Virginia, advanced language instruction is provided at field schools in Seoul, Taipei and Yokohama, and via regional programs in the

Middle East and North Africa, as well as in China and Mexico City.

**The School of Professional and Area Studies.** When FSI opened, a division known as the Specialized Training Branch administered all of what today we would call professional tradecraft courses. In 1955 its name changed to the School of International Studies; then, less than two years later, to the School of Foreign Affairs. In 1966 the title was changed yet again to the School of Professional Studies, after FSI management decided to center all functional and substantive curricula there. FSI eventually merged the Area Studies program into the School of Professional Studies, where it has remained ever since.

The School of Professional and Area Studies conducts job-specific orientation, tradecraft and area studies training to empower foreign affairs professionals to advance U.S. interests and tackle the evolving challenges of 21st-century diplomacy. Toward that end, SPAS offers tailored programs in consular, economic and commercial work; management and office management; and political and public diplomacy, as well as new-hire orientation programs and in-depth area studies courses.

SPAS currently encompasses 10 divisions: Area Studies, Office Management Training, Consular Training, Orientation, Curriculum and Staff Development, Political Training, Economic and Commercial Studies, Public Diplomacy, Management Tradecraft and the Center for the Study of the Conduct of Diplomacy.

**The School of Applied Information Technology.** FSI has long prided itself on being a catalyst for the evolution of U.S. diplomacy to meet new challenges and apply new tools. A vivid example of this approach is the School of Applied Information Technology, founded in 1996, which prepares Department of State employees for their foreign affairs mission by developing proficiency in the use of technology.

Specifically, SAIT enables end-users to efficiently and effectively weave technology into their daily routines; ensures that the department's information technology professionals have the up-to-date knowledge and skills required to operate and maintain the complex computer

and technology systems employed domestically and at all U.S. overseas missions; and prepares individuals to serve as IT consultants on behalf of their missions.

SAIT has three divisions: Enterprise Technology; Research, Learning and Development; and Business Applications. On average, SAIT provides training to more than 6,000 students annually, both overseas and domestically, through classroom and blended-learning opportunities in Arlington, Virginia; at FSI's Regional Training Centers in Fort Lauderdale, Frankfurt, Johannesburg, Manila and Bangkok (that serve all of FSI's divisions); and via 21 adjunct faculty instructors in 16 countries around the world.

**The School of Leadership and Management.** The State Department's emphasis on leadership and management training is closely associated with former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who frequently cited the importance of training for his own military career. However, FSI actually founded the Leadership and Management School in 1999, two years before Powell arrived in Foggy Bottom.

The School's core leadership training series consists of mandatory basic, intermediate and advanced courses, as well as the Senior Executive Threshold Seminar for people newly promoted to the Senior Civil Executive Service and Senior Foreign Service. About 6,000 employees a year take at least one of those courses.

These are complemented by some 10 electives that focus on specific leadership skills, traits and behaviors. In addition, coverage of leadership and management principles is

embedded in the various professional tradecraft courses.

LMS also offers a tailored crisis management training program for the United States' 270 diplomatic posts abroad, sending a team to more than half of them each year; individualized coaching services; and organizational development services to missions, bureaus and other units.

**The Transition Center.** The office that began operations more than 40 years ago as the Overseas Briefing Center is still going strong today as the nucleus of FSI's multifaceted Transition Center, which serves all U.S. government employees of foreign affairs agencies and their family members preparing for, or returning from, overseas assignments.

The Transition Center offers formal courses and programs, as well as non-tuition seminars, briefings and resource fairs—all designed to meet the diverse needs of the foreign affairs community as its members navigate a transitory lifestyle.

In addition, the Center conducts retirement planning workshops, and assists personnel returning from Iraq, Afghanistan and other high-threat assignments through its High-Stress Assignment Outbrief Program. Other TC programs include Security Training; a Career Transition Center; and the new Center of Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience, designed to help individuals, family members and teams perform at their best, even in high-stress, high-threat environments.

—Steven Alan Honley

In 1931, FSS was rebranded as the Foreign Service Officers' Training School, and its mission was expanded to give new personnel intensive training in consular and commercial work after they completed two-year probationary tours overseas. Later, FSOTS assigned small groups of economic and commercial officers to universities for graduate studies.

By 1941, *State Magazine* reported that some 55 officers had completed special training at FSOTS in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Turkish and other languages. Just months later, however, State suspended all Foreign Service training programs for the duration of World War II.

## The Foreign Service Act of 1946

Even before the end of the war, support grew rapidly within

the State Department for a reorganization of the Foreign Service to prepare it for a vastly expanded portfolio. Such proposals, which would help shape the Foreign Service Act of 1946, included calls for the establishment of a permanent school for the comprehensive training of State Department personnel.

The March 1946 issue of *The American Foreign Service Journal* (as the *FSJ* was then known) summarized its understanding of the likely provisions of the new Foreign Service Act regarding training as follows: "A Foreign Service Institute will be established to give initial training to officers and employees and to provide in-Service training throughout the whole career of every member of the Service. It is planned that the director of the Institute shall receive the salary of an assistant secretary. Every effort will be made to attract to the staff the very best scholars that the



U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

Staff and students participate in a crisis simulation in the EdTech Immersive Learning Environment at FSI.

universities of the country can furnish. In its higher echelon the school will be a staff college, or center of higher studies.

“Formal instruction will be given on the school premises itself, and the college will arrange for Foreign Service officers to work and consult at high levels, not only in the department but in any agency, business, research organization or university where possibilities exist for widening the background of the Foreign Service officer.”

President Harry Truman signed the Foreign Service Act on Aug. 13, 1946, and it entered into force three months later. On March 13, 1947, the Foreign Service Institute opened its doors.

## FSI's Early Years

In its first incarnation, FSI was housed in the Mayfair Building at 2115 C Street NW in Washington, D.C. That was near the old War Building, which was about to become the center of State Department operations. The facility consisted of four schools: Basic Officer Training, Advanced Officer Training, Management and Administrative Training, and Language Training. In *The U.S. Department of State: A Reference History* (Greenwood Press, 1999), Elmer Plischke comments: “By 1949, the Institute provided an extensive menu of instruction, consisting of nearly 60 subjects and projects, of which more than 40 concentrated on management and administration topics, evidencing the need for greater technical expertise in this field.”

Impressive as that curriculum was, it did not assuage Cold War concerns about the state of American diplomatic readiness. Such worries led Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to convene a “public committee on personnel” in January 1954. Chaired by Henry Wriston, president of Brown University, the committee moved quickly, obtaining Secretary Dulles’ approval of its sweeping recommendations less than six months later.

Wristonization, as the process of implementing the panel’s action plan became known, unfolded rapidly. Within three years the Foreign Service had more than doubled in size to 3,436 officers—an influx that placed a lot of pressure on FSI, both in terms of workload and facilities. In 1955 the Mayfair Building underwent a complete renovation, and the training program was revitalized as well, with new, shorter courses and longer specialized training. In addition, courses were opened to wives for the first time. The new program included three periods of concentrated, full-time training: for new officers, those in mid-career and senior officers.

There was consistent emphasis on improving language skills.

Debate continued, however, over training needs—the amount and timing of training, who should be trained and how best to do it all. Even as FSI grew, Plischke notes, “Thought was also devoted to creating a National Academy of Foreign Affairs for more advanced training, to supplement [the] Foreign Service Institute. In 1961 a special committee submitted a report to Secretary [of State Dean] Rusk, which recommended the establishment of such an Academy for additional training at the highest level, to include instruction, research and leadership of all governmental education programs and to deal with ‘the delicate dynamic of democratic strategy.’”

Legislation was introduced in 1963 to found such an academy, but it languished in Congress following hearings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and was never reintroduced.

## The 1960s Era

As the U.S. military presence in Vietnam continued to grow by leaps and bounds throughout the 1960s, so, too, did the Foreign Service presence there. By 1968, nearly every unmarried male junior FSO who had not performed active-duty military service was automatically sent to Vietnam for his first tour, whether or not he had requested the assignment.

That dramatic ramping-up of demand for Vietnamese language training seriously strained FSI’s capacity. In “The Foreign Service Institute after 20 Years” (*November 1966 Department of State News Letter*, No. 67), FSI Director George V. Allen acknowledged the scope of the task: “It must be remembered that classes in hard languages, for example, must be limited to six—or, in exceptional cases, eight—students each; and when we are teaching over 165 students in Vietnamese alone (at present), a lot of classrooms, a lot of language booths and a lot of teachers

## FSI works to forge a strategic view of the future direction of the world and equip its students to navigate through it.

are required. Fortunately, he noted, “We recently brought over 20 additional Vietnamese teachers from Saigon, who have been noted for their charms as well as ability.”

The Vietnam Training Center, a separate facility, supported those FSOs who needed intensive training for their assignments. But most officers from State and the U.S. Agency for International Development, particularly those in the “less-than-voluntary” category, took a more basic curriculum at FSI. This was essentially an abbreviated area studies program focused solely on Vietnam: its history, culture and present situation.

The VTC disbanded in the early 1970s, relieving some pressure on faculty and staff, but FSI’s leadership still faced logistical and fiscal challenges. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Institute shifted from one temporary location to another, eventually migrating from Washington, D.C., to two State Department annex buildings in Arlington, Virginia: SA-3 and SA-15.

### The Big Move

In 1986, professional training once again got a new look, with new classes and a new curriculum (including, most notably, ConGen Rosslyn for consular training) that moved away from the traditional lecture-based format. Students welcomed the fresh new approach to training, but as former FSI Director Brandon Grove would acknowledge in a 1993 *FSJ* interview, a more fundamental problem continued to fester: “The training conditions in [Rosslyn were] just awful. An environment does not determine what you can do, but it conditions the way you do it and how you feel about your work.”

Fortunately, plans were underway by the late 1980s to relocate FSI to its current home in Arlington—which, Grove correctly predicted, “will transform the Foreign Service.” One major attraction of the new site was that Arlington Hall was *designed* to be a campus. Originally the home of Arlington Hall Junior College, an all-female school founded in the 1920s, the 72-acre plot later served as a U.S. Army installation. In fact, four structures dating from the early history of the site as a junior college—the yellow-brick Old Main building, the girls’ gymnasium and two historic Sears Roebuck prefabricated cottages



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Public speaking training underway at FSI during the 1950s.

near Route 50—have been renovated and incorporated into the current training center.

The National Foreign Affairs Training Center, the official name of the campus that now houses FSI, opened on Oct. 13, 1993. And at a May 29, 2002, ceremony, NFATC was renamed the George P. Shultz Center, in honor of the Secretary of State from 1982 to 1989, who was instrumental in its establishment.

Though much has changed at FSI in its 70 years of operation, it has never lost sight of its core mission: to serve those who serve America around the world. But in its quest to make U.S. diplomats—and, by extension, our diplomacy—the very best they can be, there is really only one path to success. It requires continual experimentation and evolution, as well as the willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes, and to strive for improvement through innovation. Underpinning it all, FSI works to forge a strategic view of the future direction of the world and equip its students to navigate through it.

If FSI's first seven decades are any indication, it is up to the challenge. ■



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## AFSA and USAID Welcome Collaboration



USAID/SHAMIKA WILLIAMS

From left, USAID Counselor Thomas Staal, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, USAID Administrator Mark Green and AFSA USAID Vice President Ann Posner.

On Oct. 6, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and AFSA USAID Vice President Ann Posner met with recently appointed USAID Administrator Mark Green.

Among the topics under discussion were the drop in USAID hiring and the need for close and effective collaboration between USAID and the Department of State.

Amb. Stephenson and Administrator Green also talked about the recent deployment of USAID disaster relief teams to those countries hit by earthquakes and hurricanes.

Also in October, Amb. Stephenson met with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson regarding the risks members take to fulfill their missions, including in challenging environments such as Havana. ■

## Making the Case for the Foreign Service

On Oct. 17, AFSA hosted a discussion on "making the case for the Foreign Service." The session focused on how AFSA members can educate congressional and public audiences on the vital work of the U.S. Foreign Service and the necessity for support for diplomacy.

Led by AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, participants reviewed congressional testimony submitted by AFSA and then saw those materials in action as bipartisan congressional allies gave statements and asked questions at hearings on Capitol Hill.

Following the presentation, participants split into small groups to role-play the best ways to advocate for the Foreign Service and to share their experiences in

a way that helps audiences make a personal connection to the Foreign Service and the work that its members do around the world every day. ■



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson speaks to participants at the Oct. 17 event, "Making the Case for the Foreign Service."

## CALENDAR

December 13  
4:30-6:30 p.m.  
**AFSA Holiday Happy Hour**

December 20  
12-1:30 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

December 25  
**Christmas:  
AFSA Offices Closed**

January 1  
**New Year's Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed**

January 15  
**Martin Luther King Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed**

January 16  
**Deadline:  
Sinclair Language  
Award Nominations**

January 17  
12-1:30 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

January 25  
12-1:30 p.m.  
**AFSA Book Notes:  
Peacemakers by  
Ambassador James Pardew**

February 19  
**Presidents Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed**

February 21  
12-1:30 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

March 5  
**Deadline:  
AFSA Scholarship  
Applications**

May 4  
**Foreign Service Day/  
AFSA Memorial Ceremony**



## A Time for Kindness

On a recent Sunday, the minister at my church started his sermon by sharing that he and his son recently came upon a bit of graffiti in their neighborhood. "It is in your self-interest to find a way to be very tender," it said, quoting neo-conceptual artist Jenny Holzer. The sentiment was powerful, the pastor said, and raised questions about how we can respond to each other during difficult times.

This got me wondering about the Foreign Service, how we treat each other, and how—at times of increased uncertainty—it truly is in our self-interest to find a way to be kind to one another.

During this time of the year especially, as so many of us in the Foreign Service family are far from home, far from loved ones and far from old lives, the need for kindness from our colleagues can be greater than ever.

From my perch, I hear from a lot of members, and I love it. I am thankful to have the opportunity to talk to so many of our colleagues about their fears and concerns, their successes and hopes. Members tell me about minor points of contention that somehow develop into major disputes; but they also share positive outcomes to challenging situations.

While our work can be incredibly rewarding, it can

also be truly challenging. And when we're feeling isolated and far from home, those challenges can lead to short tempers, and short tempers can lead to additional difficulties.

The sad fact is that bullying still exists in the workplace. But what I've found is this: bullying never brings out the best in anyone. Foreign Service officers and specialists work best when they feel supported, when they feel that someone's got their back.

We all stumble from time to time, or at least most of us do. When that happens, a helping hand can right the situation and keep everyone on track. And when we're all working at our best, the unit—and the mission—thrives. And that, after all, is our goal.

When we talk about esprit de corps in the Foreign Service, it's not just lip service. At least, it shouldn't be. It's how we stay strong. It's how we have each other's backs. If someone in our section or at our mission needs help, we're there for them. We're not just helping out that person; we're also improving the cohesion amongst our colleagues, holding up those who need it and ensuring that the entire mission flourishes.

Fundamentally, human resources are our greatest resource. Playing to people's strengths and interests can

## Foreign Service officers and specialists work best when they feel supported, when they feel that someone's got their back.

help develop a team which achieves more together than the sum of its individual parts.

Following the Secretary of State's "listening tour," the report by Insigniam quoted respondents saying they feel like the system in which they operate treats them as tools or resources, not human beings. I don't believe that is true for most members of the Foreign Service, but I do agree that we can do better.

When interpersonal matters arise, ask yourself: has any good ever come to a mission when a bullying boss goes after a struggling subordinate, or an individual makes an unwelcome advance on a colleague, or an officer feels entitled to disrespect or even threaten a local? My guess is the answer is no.

By coming together, offering a helping hand and an open door, we can accomplish the incredibly important goals of the mission and develop our cadre of Foreign Service officers and specialists.

That's how AFSA staff responds to requests. We treat each member as an individual, each case as

unique, recognizing that it could have an impact on someone's career and life.

Sometimes our members just need someone to listen to them with compassion, to hear their story, talk things through. And that's us. The AFSA Labor Management team is the helping hand, and we're ready to support our members.

So during this time of year, especially, and during this challenging time for the Foreign Service, remember that it's in your interest, our interest, and the interest of the Foreign Service, to be kind and to watch out for one another.

We're not just stewards of the Foreign Service; we're stewards of each other. And together, we are stronger. ■



## Talking About Communication Gaps

What is behind the lack of communication at USAID? Are our offices overwhelmed or confused by the current political situation? Or could what may seem like obfuscation be a purposeful attempt to avoid clarity?

Many members of the USAID Foreign Service have made requests or asked questions to the agency that go unanswered for months. For example, AFSA contacted USAID Human Capital and Talent Management in September to request that the useful charts analyzing Foreign Service workforce numbers and backstop trends (as of 2015) on the My USAID/HCTM website be updated. As of this writing in late October, there still is no update, or even a response.

As USAID VP, I pose the following questions to management in the interest of keeping USAID FSOs informed of what to expect: Who in the HCTM office is responsible for the information updates? Who is responsible for analyses and promulgation of FSOs' promotion numbers and guidance for evaluations, workforce information and so on?

My best summary observation is that there is no broad strategy of communication-evasion at USAID. Many FSOs are exasperated, but no one person or office is to blame. Bureaucracies can be faceless like that, and things fall through the admin-

istrative cracks.

One underlying cause could be that HCTM has been suffering from turmoil for several years. Many fine Foreign Service and Civil Service employees have left, some in frustration.

Those who remain are trying to shoulder a bigger burden, alongside USAID's new Civil Service and institutional contract professionals who are striving toward competence during this tumultuous period.

The hiring freeze of 2017 has put further strain on remaining employees. There are far too many vacancies, and this causes overload. We have too many layers of "acting" leaders, who lack the necessary experience, authority and gravitas to command sufficient respect.

When considering the present issues, recall that in early 2013, HCTM changed from Foreign Service leadership to Civil Service leadership. Among the objectives of this change were increased consistency and more professionalism in the agency's human resource management.

Now, almost five years down that road: how are we doing?

There are some bright spots: HCTM's Foreign Service Assignments team has revived and updated an old favorite tool for FS bidders, "Myth Busters"—internal communications that address

**Too often we have been guided by a revolving door of consultants without allegiance to the agency or awareness of its core values.**

common misconceptions.

And there are perceptive, intelligent and hardworking FS and CS professional employees and consultants working in or with the Foreign Service Center who have identified needs and organized an excellent initiative to update the Foreign Service Assignments procedures and priorities.

Their proposals demonstrate great promise for a streamlined, bidder- and manager-friendly system. We look forward to seeing these ideas implemented.

However, it appears that too often we have been guided by a revolving door of consultants without allegiance to the agency or awareness of its core values. Some of the well-packaged ideas of this group are deemed useful and are implemented, but other ideas seem ill-fitted to any foreign affairs agency—with vicissitudes, complexities and surprises.

There often seems to be a shallowness of knowledge of how the Foreign Service functions and a lack of focus on the people working to carry out USAID's overseas mission, including FSOs, FSNs and contract staff living and working around the globe.

Headquarters-based staff go on temporary assignments (TDYs) to different countries but still do not really understand living and working conditions of FSOs and their families overseas.

The agency needs a strong and respectful bond with good communication between its Washington headquarters and overseas posts.

This partnership is necessary for interagency and congressional liaison, policy development and budget formulation—and for USAID's overseas staff, who formulate and carry out mission strategies while adjusting to changes on the ground.

Foreign Service employees understand this interchange and all the intricacies that create the global aspect of USAID.

It is time to review the impact of the change from Foreign Service leadership to Civil Service in HCTM. In doing so, we must ask this question: Is there a better way to focus on our worldwide mission and places where we actually do our work? ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP.  
Contact: kim.sawatzki@usda.gov | (202) 720-3650

## The Demographic Crisis

The Foreign Agricultural Service is facing a demographic crisis, with the number of FAS officers in the FO-1 and FO-2 classes approximately 30 percent below optimal levels.

Our demographic woes do not affect our ability to represent U.S. agricultural interests abroad, but they create a drag on morale. In addition, the large classes of new FAS Foreign Service officers are concerned that drastic efforts to remedy the mid-level officer shortfall could negatively affect their career paths.

In March 2017, the previous AFSA FAS vice president conducted a survey of FAS FSOs to explore which options would be acceptable

in addressing the lack of FO-1 and FO-2 level officers.

The results confirmed that FAS FSOs are very concerned about the issue, and nearly unanimously support AFSA's engagement with management to pursue possible solutions.

However, our constituency also made it very clear that they are strongly opposed to mid-level entry into the Foreign Service, as well as to an expansion of Civil Service limited appointments.

The survey results demonstrated a preference for exercising maximum flexibility in using existing Foreign Service officers to respond to the staffing shortages.

The survey participants

were in favor of adopting State Department time-in-service (TIS) and time-in-class (TIC) rules, giving credit for long-term language training, permitting limited career extensions (LCEs) to allow officers to complete tours and allowing for selected LCEs.

FAS FSOs also favored pursuing a re-employed annuitant (REA or When Actually Employed) program to allow recent retirees to fill gaps.

With large classes of highly capable and talented FO-3s and FO-4s, AFSA is looking to bridge the staffing gap in a manner that neither hinders their upward mobility nor encourages them to seek other employment.

High performers will rise quickly through the ranks, but it cannot happen overnight. We need interim solutions that do not harm our long-term interests, but also meet the mission needs.

We need to make sacrifices, accept challenging positions and step up for difficult stretch assignments.

However, we must also protect the integrity and sustainability of the Foreign Service, and ensure that our solutions do not create future problems.

AFSA will engage management deliberately but with caution to pursue suitable solutions to our mid-level officer shortfall. ■

## FCS and DEC Focus on U.S. Growth at Home and Abroad



On Sept. 28, AFSA FCS Vice President Daniel Crocker attended the District Export Council Annual Forum in Washington, D.C. The event brought together representatives from district export councils around the country.

The DEC is organizations of local business leaders working to encourage and support the export of goods and services to strengthen individual companies, stimulate U.S. economic growth and create jobs.

At the event, Mr. Crocker

took part in a panel discussion on best practices for outreach and advocacy, speaking about the efforts of the Foreign Commercial Service and the ways its members can help increase U.S. foreign trade.

In the photo, Mr. Crocker (right) stands with Wayne Cooper (center) and Owen George, both from the North Carolina District Export Council. Following the panel discussion, DEC representatives visited Capitol Hill to meet with members of Congress. ■



## Unpacking “Stewardship”

Being a “steward” of the Foreign Service sounds like a great honor and responsibility, but what does it really mean? In this column, I will unpack the notion of stewardship and suggest some ways AFSA can help our members think about and practice it.

The expectation that Foreign Service members will be stewards of the organization is baked into the Foreign Service Act of 1980. The Act describes the Foreign Service as a professional body, and it lays out duties and responsibilities similar to those of other professional bodies, such as the American Bar Association.

If performed with integrity, those foundational obligations (e.g., hiring new employees, mentoring and training, deciding on tenure and promotion—including across the senior threshold—and enforcing discipline) keep the Service healthy. Foreign Service members are expected to perform these duties, which are encouraged by all the promotion precepts and required at senior levels.

So how can you put stewardship front and center? Here are some ideas and practices to put in place now.

**Ask: Will it strengthen the Service?** In reacting to a policy or administrative proposal regarding the Foreign Service as an institution, ask yourself whether the action or policy will truly make the Service stronger—not just

solve the immediate problem presented, but ultimately lead to a Foreign Service better positioned to meet the challenges our country faces. If the answer is no, it might be better to seek alternatives.

### **Don’t assume stewardship is just for seniors.**

Although the current Foreign Service promotion precepts place an emphasis on institution-wide stewardship at the senior levels, it is possible and indeed necessary at all levels.

For example, one of the most important duties Foreign Service members perform is deciding whether or not to tenure another individual. Many of the raters making crucial tenure recommendations in employee evaluation reports are not of senior rank.

**Educate yourself and others.** Educate yourself about the Foreign Service and, if you can, educate others. Reading *The Foreign Service Journal* is a great place to start, as is exploring the AFSA website, which has lists of books about the Foreign Service, a Foreign Service statistics section and helpful Q&As.

Knowing the ins and outs of the Foreign Service can make a huge difference in assessing whether new proposals would strengthen or harm the institution.

**Take community service and institution building seriously.** When you volunteer for Foreign Service recommenda-

**Although the current Foreign Service promotion precepts place an emphasis on institution-wide stewardship at the senior levels, it is possible and indeed necessary at all levels.**

tion-making bodies—whether it’s service on a promotion panel, a post awards panel, or an EER review board, or just sharing Foreign Service tradecraft in your free time—you are strengthening the institution and modeling best practices for others.

**Tell the Foreign Service story.** As we pointed out in the call for contributions to *The Foreign Service Journal*’s “Diplomacy Works” collection, which you can read in this issue: “Often the best diplomatic work leaves no trace because it is achieved behind the scenes, through partnership and shared effort—and an insistence on giving all the credit to others.”

Diplomats most often reach win-win agreements. Occasionally, though, making a tough decision can create pain for the host government in the short run, and knowing how to acknowledge the pain while preserving the diplomatic relationship through to the payoff is a prized diplomatic skill.

It’s not easy to explain this aspect of diplomatic work—but it’s possible. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on how best to explain our work to the public and to our

elected representatives.

**Finally, push back.** Being educated about the structure and functioning of the Foreign Service as an institution can help you push back on inaccurate perceptions.

For example, there are still some people who believe that Foreign Service members did not step up to serve in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

That is untrue. All the positions in those posts have been filled by volunteers, even during the height of the fighting in both war zones, and continue to be filled at rates approaching 100 percent.

Similarly, greater hardship posts throughout the world have lower vacancy rates than posts with no hardship differentials. Knowing the facts can help you confidently push back on these and other damaging narratives about the Foreign Service.

AFSA will continue to assist our members in every way possible to be effective stewards of the Foreign Service. Your thoughts are most welcome—please email us at [policy@afsa.org](mailto:policy@afsa.org). ■

## Sharing the Story of the Foreign Service with Lifelong Learners



Ambassador (ret.) Charles Ray addresses a capacity crowd during the AFSA Smithsonian Associates course "Looking Toward Asia."

Following a successful four-week educational program this fall focused on the Foreign Service and foreign policy in Asia, AFSA and the Smithsonian Associates are working on plans for spring 2018.

The fall program, which began on Oct. 11 and continued into November, featured four Foreign Service Asia experts who addressed a full house of enthusiastic and appreciative participants.

Ambassador (ret.) J. Stapleton Roy kicked off the series with a discussion on China. He was followed by retired senior FSO James Pierce on Japan, Ambassador (ret.) Charles Ray on Vietnam and retired Senior FSO Mark Tokola on Korea. We appreciate their participation and willingness to enhance this excellent outreach partnership.

The AFSA-Smithsonian Associates collaboration will continue next spring with another four-week series.

### The AFSA-Smithsonian Associates collaboration will continue next spring.

#### American Diplomacy from the Inside

In a new initiative this year, AFSA collaborated with Encore Learning, a non-profit educational organization offering college-level courses to anyone over 50 years old, to design a semester-long course, "American Diplomacy from the Inside," at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia.

Beginning in October and running through December, the course features seven lectures from retired members of the Foreign Service. Each session has been designed to cover a fundamental area managed by diplomatic personnel at overseas missions: economic policy; public diplomacy; agriculture and

trade; arms control; conflict resolution; and development and foreign aid.

Members of the Foreign Service can and do share their professional skills and expertise—and spread understanding of the Foreign Service—by meeting with students individually and in groups, including undergraduates, graduate students and participants in community and lifelong learning programs.

We find that sharing first-hand experience not only enhances the academic presentation of foreign policy and diplomacy, but it plays an important role in expanding the audience's understanding of the complex role and critical function of members of the Foreign Service in promoting peace

and protecting and advancing U.S. interests around the world.

We hope you will consider participating in classroom outreach efforts—there are many opportunities out there! For more information, please email [speakers@afsa.org](mailto:speakers@afsa.org).

#### Going Home? Let Us Know!

An important part of Foreign Service life is going home to reconnect with friends and family. Such hometown visits—for example with a local high school class or Rotary group—are excellent opportunities to engage in outreach. AFSA welcomes the opportunity to set up events for any members of the Foreign Service who are heading home for a few days.

Contact our outreach team ([www.afsa.org/outreach](http://www.afsa.org/outreach)), and we can provide you with materials and information to ensure that you make an effective case for a strong, professional Foreign Service to remain deployed around the world protecting and serving America's people, interests and values. ■

## Meet the Committee: Awards & Plaques

At its August meeting the AFSA Governing Board appointed State Representative Josh Glazeroff as the new chair of the AFSA Awards & Plaques Committee. State Representatives Tricia Wingerter and Anne Coleman-Honn, FCS Alternate Representative Matthew Hilgendorf and USAID Representative Madeline Williams were appointed as committee members.

The work of the AFSA Awards & Plaques Committee is some of the most rewarding and most memorable of the association, and we thank the new committee members for volunteering their time and efforts.

AFSA's awards program centers on two commemorative events: one with a focus on remembrance, the other on recognition.

Foreign Service Day, in May, honors those members of the Foreign Service who have died overseas due to circumstances distinctive to their service. Passing through the C Street entrance and seeing all the names engraved on the wall, we remember the challenges of our work and all members' true commitment to serving the people of the United States.

The Awards & Plaques Committee is charged with reviewing the case of each member who has died while on duty and recommending names to be added.



The 2017-2019 Awards & Plaques Committee members, from left, Tricia Wingerter, Anne Colman-Honn, Josh Glazeroff and Matthew Hilgendorf at a recent meeting. Not pictured, Madeline Williams.

The AFSA Awards Ceremony, headlined by presentation of the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award, highlights the efforts members make each day and over their careers. At the annual ceremony, we recognize a lifetime contributor for their distinctive impact on our profession.

AFSA bestows a number of other awards. Honoring constructive dissent are the W. Averell Harriman, William R. Rivkin, Christian A. Herter and F. Allen "Tex" Harris Awards for entry-level, mid-level, senior level officers and Foreign Service specialists respectively.

There are six exemplary

performance awards: the M. Juanita Guess Award for a community liaison officer; the Avis Bohlen Award for an eligible family member; the Nelson B. Delavan Award for an office management specialist; AFSA post representative of the year; the Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy, which was established in 2015; and the AFSA Achievements and Contributions Award, which recognizes an AFSA member for outstanding contributions to the association.

The Awards & Plaques Committee assists with the Sinclair Language Awards given annually to up to 10 Foreign Service

members for skill in a hard or very hard language and its associated culture. It also coordinates the George F. Kennan Writing Award given for the best essay on strategy or policy by a State Department employee who graduates from the National War College.

Just as we honor the passing of those who die in service to our country, the positive contributions of our friends and colleagues merit the highest recognition.

Please join the Awards & Plaques Committee's efforts by submitting nominations for any and all of AFSA's awards, and please celebrate with us at our annual events. ■

## Keeping Your Eye on the Bottom Line

### Threats to Your Retirement Benefits

On Oct. 5, the House of Representatives passed a bill that would cut federal retirement benefits by \$32 billion over the next 10 years.

The bill does not specify what is to be cut, but suggests one or more of the following: require employees to contribute more into the trust fund from which their retirement pensions will be drawn; eliminate the Annuity Supplement paid to employees hired in the post-1983 “new” retirement systems who retire prior to age 62; reduce the government contribution to Federal Employees Health Benefits insurance premiums; and decrease the rate of return of the Thrift Savings Plan’s G Fund.

Not on the list is President Donald Trump’s proposal to eliminate Cost of Living Adjustments on federal pensions.

The Senate version of the bill does not call for cuts. Thus, the House-Senate Conference Committee expected to convene by early November may strip them out.

As a member of the Federal-Postal Coalition made up of 30 organizations including the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association and the large civil service unions, AFSA has co-signed several letters to Congress opposing cuts to retirement benefits.

If any benefit changes

do get approved, they will probably not become effective until 2018. A change in the Foreign Service Pension Fund Annuity Supplement, if adopted, will likely apply only to future retirees.

### Attention Foreign Commercial Service Retirees



The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training invites Foreign Commercial Service retirees to record the oral history of their career.

ADST’s mission is to offer both experts and the general public a record of how U.S. diplomats have advanced American interests abroad, reported in the voices of the practitioners themselves.

With the support of the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, ADST would like to record the insights and suggestions of FCS officers on how the Foreign Commercial Service can adapt its programs and training to the challenges of 21st-century commercial advocacy and diplomacy.

ADST hopes that FCS retir-

ees will agree that capturing and documenting the story of their work, and the FCS as an institution, is a vital part of their legacy of service.

To take part either with a full oral history, or in recording shorter pieces on key moments, contact Mark Tauber, Deputy Director, Foreign Affairs Oral History Program at [tauberms@adst.org](mailto:tauberms@adst.org) or (703) 302-6820.

### Choose the Best FEHB Health Care Plan for Your Needs

Open season for changing 2018 Federal Employees Health Benefit program health insurance plans runs from Nov. 13 to Dec. 11.

AFSA purchases “Consumer’s Checkbook to Federal Health Plans” as a service so members can shop around each open season for the most cost-effective FEHB plans to meet their changing health care needs. Whether FEHB is your primary health insurer or a secondary insurer to supplement your Medicare Part B,

Consumer’s Checkbook can help you save.

Members should have received an email from AFSA in mid-November with instructions on how to access Consumer’s Checkbook.

### Have You Joined a Retiree Association?

Did you know that there are multiple Foreign Service retiree associations around the country?

While unaffiliated with AFSA, these groups offer an ideal way to stay in touch with your profession, as well as friends and colleagues. You can find a full listing of these groups at [www.afsa.org/retiree-associations](http://www.afsa.org/retiree-associations).

If there is no group in your area, and you’d like to start one, contact AFSA Retiree Coordinator Christine Miele ([miele@afsa.org](mailto:miele@afsa.org)) for assistance. Some existing associations lack current leadership, including Eastern Washington-Idaho. If you’d like to throw your hat in the ring to head a group, let us know! ■

### Don’t Miss the 2018 Foreign Service Annual Annuitant Newsletter.

Retirees were mailed a postcard in October advising that the “2018 Foreign Service Annual Annuitant Newsletter” will be posted at <https://rnet.state.gov> under the “What’s New?” tab. It contains the forms retirees need to make elections on their benefits.

If you need a hard copy or have questions, email [HRSC@state.gov](mailto:HRSC@state.gov) or call 1 (866) 300-7419, or email AFSA at [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org) or call (202) 944-5509.



## AFSA Governing Board Meeting, October 18, 2017

**Awards Committee:** On behalf of the Awards & Plaques Committee, State Representative Josh Glazeroff moved to add a name to the AFSA memorial plaque. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Management Committee:** On behalf of the Management Committee, AFSA Treasurer Ambassador Tony Wayne moved to increase dues by 2.2 percent for all active-duty, retired and associate members, based on the recently released Consumer Price Index. The motion was approved unanimously.

**2018 AFSA Budget:** Executive Director Ian Houston gave a presentation to the board covering the proposed AFSA budget for 2018. The Governing Board will vote on the budget at a future meeting. ■

## AFSA Welcomes 146th Specialist Class



On Oct. 5, AFSA welcomed 62 members of the 146th Specialist Class to a luncheon at the association's headquarters building.

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson hosted the luncheon, while State VP Ken Kero-Mentz, State Representative Lawrence Casselle and other members of the AFSA Governing Board were on hand to speak with the new Foreign

Service members and answer their questions about AFSA and the many ways the association can assist, protect and advocate for them.

Above, Senior Staff Attorney Neera Parikh (left) speaks to the class about the functions of AFSA in its dual role as a professional association and labor union. More than 80 percent of the participants chose to join AFSA at the event. ■

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## AFSA Book Notes: *Global Adventures on Less-Traveled Roads*

On Oct. 11, AFSA held the 27th event in its popular Book Notes series, hosting a talk by Ambassador (ret.) James R. Bullington about his book, *Global Adventures on Less-Traveled Roads: A Foreign Service Memoir* (CreateSpace, 2017).

The memoir chronicles Amb. Bullington's unusual journey via "less-traveled roads" from his "redneck roots" in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to a successful career as a diplomat.

Along the way, he served as a "warrior diplomat" in Vietnam during the war, narrowly escaping capture by posing as a French priest when he was trapped behind enemy lines.

He also recounts six years

of service as Peace Corps director in Niger, as well as a post-retirement recall to diplomatic service in Senegal, where he worked to end a 30-year insurgency.

Amb. Bullington's wife, Tuy-Cam, sat in the front row as he told his AFSA audience the story of meeting her and falling in love during his first assignment in Hue, Vietnam.

He also talked about growing up in the segregated South, where he accepted segregation as the "normal order" until he encountered the Freedom Riders in 1961.

As editor of the student newspaper at Auburn University, Bullington wrote a scathing criticism of segregation, leading to harassment



Ambassador (ret.) James Bullington speaks about his experiences in Dakar, Senegal, as he worked to end a 30-year conflict.

and threats from the KKK, the school administration and even Alabama Governor John Patterson.

A lively Q&A session followed, covering topics from the importance of conflict resolution training to the deli-

cate balance between keeping Americans safe overseas and accomplishing the mission.

A video of the event is available on the AFSA website, [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video). See p. 63 for a review of the book. ■

## Russian Roundtable: FSOs Speak with AFSA about Their Sudden Exit

On Sept. 14, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, State Vice President Ken Kero-Mentz and Secretary Tom Boyatt hosted a roundtable discussion with members of the U.S. Foreign

Service who had recently been forced to return from postings in Russia.

In July, the United States Congress approved new sanctions on Russia to punish them for, among other

actions, interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. On July 30, Russian President Vladimir Putin retaliated by insisting that the United States must reduce the number of staff at U.S. diplomatic facilities in Russia to 455, to match the number of people employed by the Russian mission to the United States.

The huge reduction in employee numbers (755 overall), affected many members of the Foreign Service and their families, as well as locally employed (LE) staff in Russia.

The deadline for departure was Sept. 1, leaving Foreign Service families scrambling to pack their household goods, obtain lodging in the United States and organize schooling for their children. Some of those caught up in the draw-down had only been at post a few weeks, with household effects still in transit to Russia.

The discussion was an opportunity for participants to share their experiences and for AFSA to find out what assistance people need during their unanticipated transition. ■



## AFSA Essay Contest Highlights Importance of U.S. Global Leadership



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson (far left), Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan (left) and USIP President Nancy Lindborg (far right), present 2017 AFSA essay contest winner Nicholas DeParle (second from right) with his certificate and prize in the Treaty Room at the Department of State.

On Sept. 28, this year's winner of the AFSA National High School Essay Contest, Nicholas DeParle, a senior at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C., was honored for his achievement with a day of exciting activities.

The winning essay was chosen from among 1,000 entries from 46 states and 14 countries.

With his parents, Nancy-Ann and Jason, and younger brother Zachary, DeParle attended a reception in his honor at the United States Institute of Peace.

While presenting the \$2,500 prize, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson expressed her hope that the leaders of tomorrow think about what America's diplomats do and under-

stand why it matters.

In addition to the monetary prize, DeParle will also receive a fully-funded educational voyage from Semester at Sea on enrollment at an accredited university.

The party then proceeded to the Department of State to meet with Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan, who presented State Department challenge coins to DeParle and his brother.

Congratulations are due also to the 2017 runner-up, Manuel E. Feigl of Simpsonville, South Carolina, who received a \$1,250 prize and a full scholarship to participate in the International Diplomacy Program of the National Student Leadership Conference that is held annually in Washington, D.C. ■

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## Reigning Cats and Dogs in the Foreign Service



LAURA QUINN

This is Jack, a Jack Russell, enjoying a two-kilometer walk to the vegetable farm in Cambodia. Originally from Maryland, Jack has also lived in Colombia.



KIMBERLY M. MURPHY

All five of the dogs owned by tandem couple Kimberly and Michael Murphy are from the countries where they have been posted. Back row, from left: Tedi, rescued from the streets of Bosnia; Joey and Nikki, from a high-kill shelter in Botswana; and Cooper, from the streets of Kosovo. In front, little Bravo, who was named after the gate in front of U.S. Embassy Kosovo, where she hung out for several months before joining the Murphy family.



EMILY LINDLAND

Charlie the labradoodle is living in Albania with his owner Emily Lindland. He enjoys chasing after tennis balls, going on long hikes in the woods, running with the kids and taking long naps in the sun.



JULIA HARRISON

Snickers is a 12-year-old Yorkshire terrier, shown here in South Korea after a snow day. A well-traveled pup, he has also been to Cameroon, Madagascar and Pakistan with his owner, Julia Harrison.



GEORGE MESTHOS

This is Marley, enjoying a view of the Ponte Vecchio and Uffizzi Gallery in Florence, Italy. Marley was originally rescued, along with his littermates, in Bangladesh.



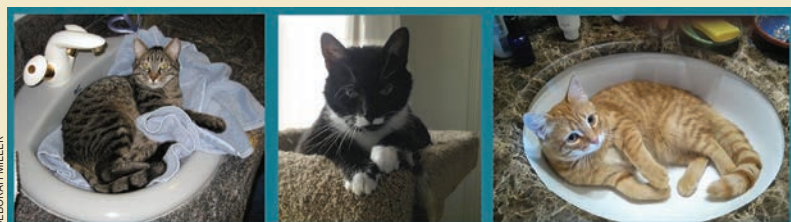
JESS MCVAY

Lady was adopted from GRREAT (Golden Retriever Rescue, Education and Training) in 2011 by Jess and Chris McVay. Her first assignment was to Sudan in 2012. Shortly thereafter, when Jess found herself on ordered departure, Lady remained at post with Chris.



J. MICHELLE SCHOHN

Meet Noostie, a rescue dog from a shelter in North Carolina. A diplotog from 2004 until she passed away in 2017, Noostie traveled to Jerusalem, Tallinn and Pristina with her owners, tandem couple J. Michelle Schohn and Mary Glantz.



DEBORAH MILLER

At left, Giorgi, a street cat adopted from Georgia, relaxes in a bathroom sink in India. At right, Sully, adopted from the streets of Kazakhstan, has learned the joys of sleeping in the sink there. In the center, Mailo, adopted from Latvia, who does not enjoy lounging in sinks!



FABIO CATTARINICH

Edison Siberius (aka Big Eddy), a Siberian Neva Masquerade, living the dream in Canada.

## A Vietnam Spoiler Alert

### Why Vietnam Matters: An Eyewitness Account of Lessons Not Learned

Rufus Phillips, Naval Institute Press, 2017, \$24.95/paperback, \$23.70/Kindle, 448 pages.

REVIEWED BY KEITH W. MINES

The timing couldn't be better for the paperback release of Rufus Phillips' firsthand account of the Vietnam War, which was published in hardcover in 2008. It coincides with the release of the Ken Burns/Lynn Novick PBS series on the war (in which Phillips appears), and with recent decisions about how long we should stay in Afghanistan and to what end.

Unique among observers of the Vietnam War, Rufus Phillips arrived there in 1954 and remained involved to the end, alternating between high-level meetings (including with President John F. Kennedy) and on-the-ground work in the Vietnamese and Laotian countryside. He is still active in policy debates today.

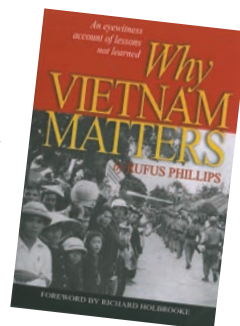
By 1956 Phillips had the spoiler alert for how the war would play out over the next two decades, and he watched helplessly as the American juggernaut came and ultimately left in defeat.

What Phillips realized early on—drawing from lessons his first boss, Edward Landsdale, had learned in the successful fight against the Huk insurgents in the Philippines—was that the conflict was political, not military, at its core, and that it centered on the ability of the South Vietnamese to marshal their forces for a cause that could stand up to the North Vietnamese nationalists. They never found it, and the U.S. strategy of simply fighting harder could not compensate for the void.

"The anti-communist fight in Vietnam is 75 percent political and 25 percent military. Yet everything America is doing

is directed to the 25 percent and nothing to the 75 percent," Phillips quotes one Vietnamese observer as saying. If the South Vietnamese were not up to the task, Phillips comments, "we would do it ourselves by bombing the North and killing enough Viet Cong in the South to force the communist side to quit; then we would turn the country back over to the South Vietnamese."

Phillips continues: "We underestimated the motivating power of Vietnamese nationalism, and we failed to comprehend the fanatical determination of an enemy willing to sacrifice its entire people until only the Politburo was left. ... We thought in conventional World War II battlefield terms, when this conflict was at



nam: Iraq, Afghanistan and the Future," Phillips laments the "Green Zone mindset" that undermined a successful transition to a "functioning Iraqi self-government."

After going to Afghanistan as an election observer, Phillips wrote a note to George Packer concluding that "the outcome of the Afghan struggle is ultimately going to be determined not by our unilateral actions or geopolitical moves, but by whom the Afghan people wind up supporting, even reluctantly."

The primacy of shepherding a political process for struggling states is not, to Phillips, a theoretical exercise. He recognized early in his career that the task of "political action," as he came to call it, was not assigned to anyone in our government. He

### The primacy of shepherding a political process for struggling states is not, to Phillips, a theoretical exercise.

its heart a political one, a war of ideas and of the spirit."

Phillips believed that the natural inclination of human beings for a true say in how they were governed was an unstoppable force. He lamented the lost opportunity to "put Ho Chi Minh on the defensive by proposing truly free elections" instead of adopting a constitution "primarily as a device to legalize and consolidate Diem's power."

So strong is his belief that the essence of "nation-building-cum-counterinsurgency" is political, not military, that Phillips ignores most of the fighting, focusing instead on the evolution of successive South Vietnamese regimes and the wildly gyrating American efforts to help them, which generally amounted to delivering ever-increasing levels of troops, resources and bombing.

In a closing chapter, "Beyond Viet-

has written extensively since the publication of the book on the need for the State Department to prepare to undertake political advisory efforts beyond traditional diplomacy as part of a competitive contest with our adversaries.

Nation-building is to Phillips a very human, personal and ultimately political struggle that, because of "our natural optimism, democratic ideals and lack of cynicism," Americans are better suited for than we often give ourselves credit for.

I am with Phillips on 95 percent of the book, having experienced similar challenges in Central America in the 1980s and in Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11. But I question whether he gives enough weight to the fact that while democracy is a far stronger force once it takes hold, in the consolidation phase it can often be swept aside by totalitarian forces that are simply more brutal and better organized.

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### **Help AFSA tell the story of the Foreign Service.**

AFSA's Fund for American Diplomacy (FAD) is a 501(c)(3) that supports outreach to tell the proud story of the Foreign Service to the American people. The FAD's aim is to educate and build a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service so that we have champions, ideally in all 50 states, prepared to stand up for the Foreign Service and defend our vitally important mission.

The FAD is registered in the **Combined Federal Campaign** as **"Diplomacy Matters-AFSA"** and its CFC number is **#10646**. We appreciate your support. All donations to the FAD are tax deductible.

From Lenin's defeat of the Kerensky government in Russia following World War I to the Hamas victory over the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza strip in 2007, there have been a host of examples where this has been the case. More attention to what it takes to consolidate power on behalf of truly democratic forces would make Phillips' premise stronger.

I keep thinking, as Phillips once did, that the lessons of Vietnam are getting stale. And then I look at Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan—or, closer to home, Venezuela and Colombia—and realize they are more important than ever.

These lessons may be difficult to heed at a time when hard power is the craze, but at least no one will be able to say: "You never told us how this was going to end."

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*Keith Mines is a Senior FSO currently serving as director of Andean affairs in the State Department. His forthcoming book, Boots on the Ground, Wingtips in the Palace: How a Blend of Hard and Soft Power Makes America Safer, will be published in the spring of 2018.*

## A Diplomat's Life

**Global Adventures on Less-Traveled Roads: A Foreign Service Memoir**  
*James R. Bullington,*  
*CreateSpace, 2017, \$19.95/*  
*paperback, 334 pages.*

REVIEWED BY DAVID PASSAGE

Anyone with Foreign Service ties will effortlessly identify with this book. Even without a Foreign Service connection, those who have spent time in faraway places with strange-sounding names (a tip of the hat to an earlier inveterate traveler and American jurist, the late Justice William O. Douglas) will also see

much of themselves in retired U.S. Ambassador Jim Bullington's wonderful memoir.

Immensely readable, well-crafted and engagingly written, *Global Adventures* immediately draws one in. Starting from the author's self-description as a "redneck

**What makes this memoir truly exceptional is the author's riveting account of developments in Vietnam as the war progressed.**

hillbilly" from the ochre soil of Alabama and the revelation that native curiosity led him, early on, to send away for an analysis of his ancestry whereby he learned that 2.8 percent of his DNA came from Neanderthals—this memoir is intriguing.

Jim Bullington lived a Huckleberry Finn childhood, but was determined to explore the wider world, becoming the first member of his family to go to college via a co-op program at Auburn University. While there, he had a chance encounter with a Foreign Service legend, Ambassador Clare Timberlake, that led him to the Foreign

Service—and against all odds (namely the dominance of the Ivy League-educated East and West Coast elites in the Service), he won a place in 1962.

His career track was fairly standard for an FSO of his time: an initial stint in the department as a desk officer for the Central Treaty Organization, followed by an assignment to Vietnam.

(During the war, one-quarter of the Foreign Service was assigned to Embassy Saigon, our consulates or to the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program there.)

Next came postings to Thailand, Burma, Chad, Benin and Burundi—the latter two as ambassador—and various jobs in the department, including as head of the Senior Seminar. Then followed post-

Foreign Service jobs as "Foreign Minister for Dallas, Texas"; a detour into academia at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia; Peace Corps director in Niger; and, finally, a recall to service to facilitate the successful resolution of a decades-old

internal conflict in Senegal.

What makes this memoir truly exceptional, however, is not so much the career that followed his initial assignment to Vietnam, but his riveting account of developments in that country as the war progressed (events there occupy nearly one-third of the book). This culminated in his near-capture by the North Vietnamese Army in Hue during the Tet offensive of 1968 and his escape, disguised as a Catholic priest in full clerical garb, aided by a resident French priest.

While working in Hue, he fell in love with a Foreign Service National employee (a receptionist and translator at U.S. Consulate Hue), Than-trong Tuy-Cam, who ultimately became his wife and inseparable companion. This memoir, then, is both a narrative of a Foreign Service life and an unforgettable and moving love story describing the devotion a couple can have for each other and the symbiotic relationship they create.

Ambassador Bullington's memoir is a very easy-to-read and fast-paced description of Foreign Service life—the work we do, the perils that attend it, the risks we run, the accomplishments we can achieve for our country and the personal satisfaction we derive. ■

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*David Passage, who retired after a 33-year Foreign Service career, served as U.S. ambassador to Botswana from 1990 to 1993.*





# Raising Multilingual Children in the Foreign Service

**Raising children in more than one language is seldom straightforward and can leave parents second-guessing their approach. Here is a look at the challenges and how to meet them.**

BY NICOLE SCHAEFER-MCDANIEL AND JENNIFER KIRK DINOIA

**H**alf a century ago, linguists believed that encouraging children to speak more than one language would result in confusion and subsequent language delay. However, recent research has consistently demonstrated that not only is there no harm in exposing children to multiple languages, but that children raised in a bilingual environment may develop better problem-solving and creative-thinking skills.

Some researchers even argue that growing up with multiple languages may delay the onset of neurocognitive disorders, such as dementia, in old age.

This news is important for Foreign Service families, for whom raising children in more than one language has become so common that the Foreign Service Institute's Transition Center has been offering a biannual course, "Raising Bilingual Children," since the mid-1990s.

The Family Liaison Office reports that in 2016 there were 11,391 school-age children living overseas as eligible family members (EFMs) of State Department employees. Many of these children attend school in countries where English is not the primary language, some for a majority of their childhood.

According to the Office of Overseas Schools (OS), approximately 7,000



*Nicole Schaefer-McDaniel holds a Ph.D. in environmental psychology. She and her husband, John McDaniel, who joined the Foreign Service in 2009, have served in Brazil and Austria. They are currently posted to Mongolia, where Nicole teaches in the study abroad program at the School for International Training in Ulaanbaatar. Nicole is a native German speaker raising bilingual children of her own.*



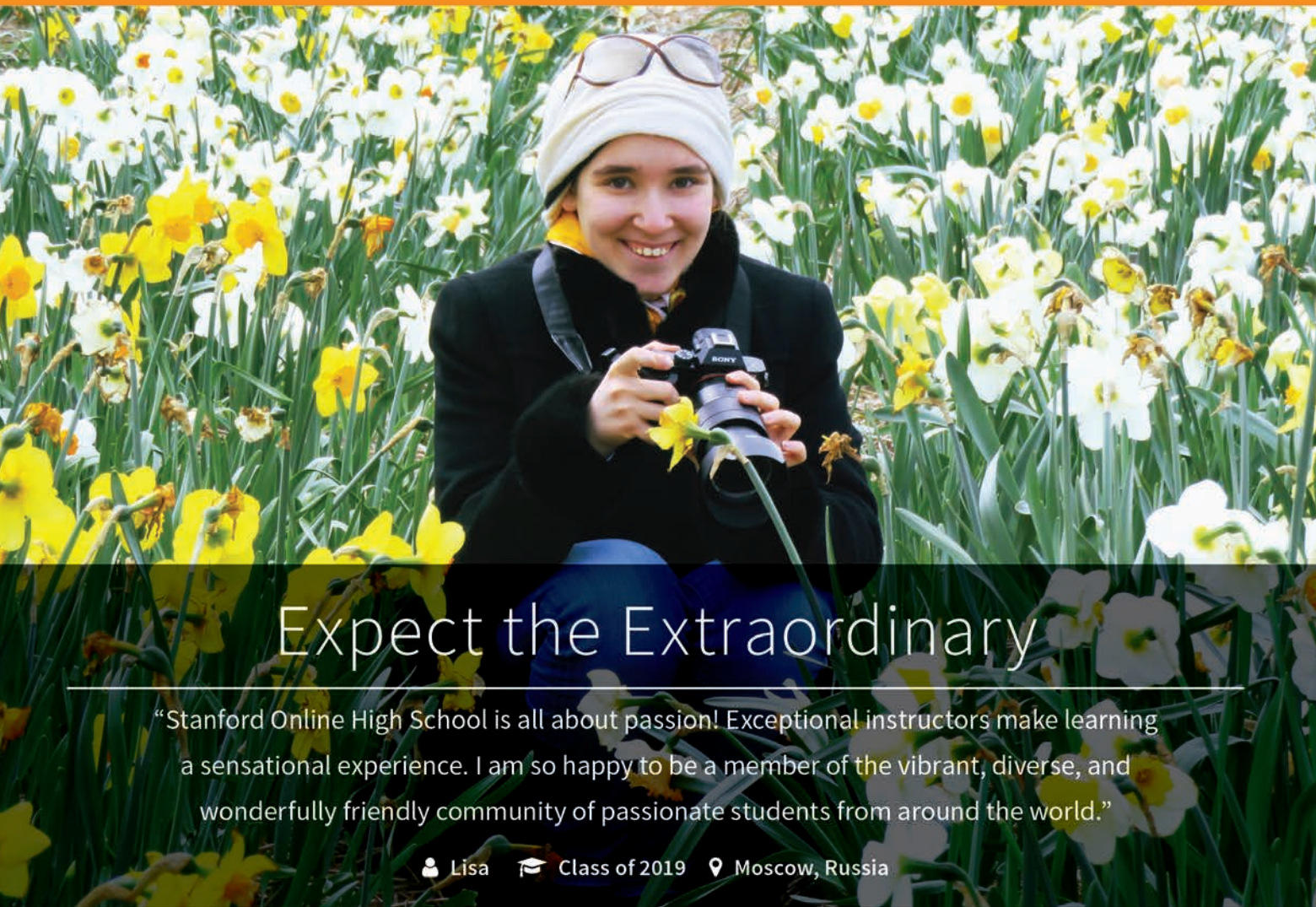
*Jennifer Dinoia is the spouse of Peter Dinoia, a special agent with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, whom she has accompanied to postings in Virginia, Venezuela, Iceland, California and Nicaragua. They are currently stationed in Turkey. In addition to having worked overseas for the U.S. embassy in Venezuela, the International School of Iceland and the U.S. embassy in Nicaragua, Jen is a longtime volunteer with Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide. She is trying to help her own children maintain and improve the second languages they acquired overseas.*

*The authors would like to thank the staff at the State Department's Family Liaison Office, the Office of Overseas Schools and the Foreign Service Institute for their input, as well as the Foreign Service parents they spoke to as they researched this article. Thanks also to Nancy Rhodes and Marjorie Myers, who provided expert advice and reviewed an early draft.*

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of these children were enrolled in a Department of State-assisted school. While English is the primary language of instruction at these schools, there are usually one or more additional languages offered as a part of the curriculum.

Foreign Service parents have unique opportunities to expose their children to multiple languages. Yet many struggle to find the best way to help their children acquire and maintain these languages as they move from post to post, each with differing levels of support and resources.

### Approaches: What's the Best Way?

Parents who choose to bring up their children with more than one language do so for various reasons. Some want their children to become global-minded citizens who can move between cultures. Some have a parent or other relative who is a native speaker of a language other than English, and want to pass on that language as a way of preserving their culture and heritage. Other parents see their children approaching fluency in the language spoken in the host country and want them to hold onto that skill.

There are three primary approaches recommended by linguists and parent experts:

**One Person, One Language:** Known as OPOL, this method involves assigning clear language roles to each person in the home. For example, one parent (or caretaker) may only speak Italian with a child, while another parent solely speaks English. Advocates attribute this method's success to the clear separation of languages and to ensuring enough exposure, although supplementary resources and speakers may be necessary.

## Foreign Service parents have unique opportunities to expose their children to multiple languages.

**Minority Language at Home:** In this approach, known as ML@H, the entire family speaks a minority language at home (i.e., a language that is not spoken by the dominant community outside of the home), even if neither parent nor caregiver is a native speaker.

For example, a family living in the United States speaks Spanish at home, while English is the majority language of the community and is spoken with everyone else. Sometimes referred to as "Foreign Home pattern," this approach has many advocates. However, some children raised this way take longer to acquire the community language than children who grow up speaking solely the dominant language outside of the home.

**Blended Approaches:** OPOL and ML@H can be modified based on family context, composition and preference. For instance, some families choose to vary the context in which languages are used by speaking English in the home, but then sending children to a local school or an immersion school where classes are taught in another language.

Others vary language by day of the week or when they travel. These types of blended approaches are frequently used by Foreign Service families, since access to resources and languages greatly depends on where the family is posted.

### Real Life Challenges & Frustrations

Despite the wide availability of online resources for parents wishing to raise

children in more than one language, it is not an easy process, and Foreign Service parents often run into the same problems across the globe.

**A big commitment.** It takes hard work and parental

dedication to stay focused on that second language when other languages are being used.

Johanna Vannett, the mother of two young girls, confesses that she often finds herself mixing three languages into one sentence: "During breakfast I will ask her 'encore oder all done?,' mixing German, English and French."

Mom Heike Terrell, the mother of a now-adult and bilingual son, recalls the difficulty: "Since I'm bilingual myself, I naturally respond in the language that is used to address me. Whether English or German, it's all the same to me. I found it difficult to switch back to German when my son responded in English."

The effort it takes to keep up the chatter in a second language can be "exhausting," says Ting Ting Wu, who wants to convey her native Chinese to her 3-year-old son.

"The community language is usually English for us expats. I find myself translating into Chinese what my husband says to [my son] in English, just so he can hear it, and pointing at things so I can talk about them in Chinese to him, when sometimes I would just like to sit."

Sometimes children refuse to speak the minority language. Portuguese speaker Carla Reinisch Trunk says it's a challenge to enforce the language with her 4-year-old daughter when everyone outside the house speaks English: "What's her incentive?" she asks. "One weekend with her American grandparents, and she has defaulted to English."

**Lack of support.** Some parents

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struggle when family and friends fail to understand or respect how they are raising their children.

Katherine Reilly, who is raising two bilingual children under age 10, says other parents warn her that her children “will have a speech delay,” and that I am causing them “unnecessary stress.”

**Parental lack of fluency.** Parents also struggle when they can’t fully communicate in the second language or when they have limited resources.

Laura Paulus Guinn wants her children to speak Spanish. But, she says, “my Spanish isn’t good enough to really continue the foundation for both my children.”

There are numerous approaches for children to learn multiple languages, and no single approach is best for everyone.

Still, she persists: “With the availability of cartoons in all languages on YouTube and multicultural friends, our children will always be exposed in some form.”

The father of two girls, Joseph Zadrozny also struggles with his lack of fluency. “As someone who grew up monolingual, I’ve tried to be as supportive as possible while recognizing that I have relatively little to contribute personally,” he says.

“The biggest burden falls to the minor-

ity language-speaking spouse. That person needs support and encouragement for it to be successful.”

**Potential speech delay.**

Although researchers claim multilingual children develop their language skills at a similar pace as mono-

lingual speakers, some parents say they’ve seen a delay in language acquisition.

“We definitely saw a big delay in speech with our second child,” says Catherine Pierce. “He was almost mute until age 3.” Despite the initial delay, Pierce says everything worked out in the end; her son eventually caught up and even graduated a year ahead of his class.

Yvette Hulsman had a similar issue:

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**– Kelsey Linnartz**



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she remembers feeling “sad and frustrated” when her daughter’s speech was delayed. Ting Ting Wu’s son was also a late speaker, but eventually “he exploded into conversation and now talks about his day in French, Chinese and English.”

**Keeping up speaking English.** Parents whose children spend significant time away from English-speaking schools and countries may worry about their child’s English proficiency when they visit family in the United States or when children move back “home” to continue their education.

“My oldest son’s English can be hard to understand,” says Daya Stockdale, the mother of two boys under age 6. “We

## Some parents struggle when family and friends fail to understand or respect how they are raising their children.

noticed that when we went back home and stayed with family. His Spanish, on the other hand, couldn’t be better; it’s full of colloquialisms and Mexican slang.”

**Navigating a foreign school system.** Parents who enroll their children in local school systems at post experience additional challenges as they attempt to navigate an unknown system in a foreign language.

“I only thought about school from the

language point of view, but that’s really a small piece,” says Lisa Simmons, who enrolled her children at Liceo Franco Mexicano in Mexico City. “I do not speak the language of the school, and that has meant inse-

curity and unease with simple tasks like shopping for school supplies, school pick-up/drop-off, teacher communication, participation in school life and relationships with other parents.”

Ting Ting Wu agrees: “I spent a lot of time on Google Translate, trying to figure out school instructions, snacks and what exactly they did in school that week.”

**Consistency across postings.** Some parents worry that their children won’t



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be motivated to keep up an acquired language once they move to a new country with a different language.

"The major challenge for us is knowing we're going to move every two or three years. Our youngest is currently in a German/Spanish nursery, but we only speak English at home," says Molly McHarg, raising three children between 3 and 10.

"We don't have the resources to maintain two additional languages forever, but we're hoping maybe she can continue with one at the next post. We figure the longer she has exposure to at least one, the better off she will be."

Joanna Parys, a Foreign Service parent

Parents whose children spend significant time away from English-speaking schools and countries may worry about their child's English proficiency.

with a background in language education, suggests that parents consider the availability and resources of a minority language or foreign school system to ensure consistency from post to post.

Leah Moorefield Evans, a Foreign Service mother of four, points out that the French school system can be a good option for FS families, because there

are French schools in 130 countries. "Transitions are relatively seamless," Evans says, because "each grade teaches the same concepts, teachers are trained in the same way and the schools send all the records—you just leave school A and show up in school B."

### What Do the Experts Say?

Raising children in more than one language is seldom straightforward and can leave parents second-guessing their approach.

We turned to Nancy Rhodes, a world language education consultant at the Center for Applied Linguistics, and Marjorie Myers, Ed.D., principal of the







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Key School, a bilingual public school in Arlington, Virginia, for practical tips and advice on raising multilingual children. Here are some of their insights.

**The earlier, the better.** Experts uniformly advise that the earlier the second language is introduced, the better—from birth on is optimal—and that the maximum results are achieved before puberty.

**There is no gold standard.** There are numerous approaches for children to learn multiple languages, and no single approach is best for everyone. The best method is the one that works best for your family.

Remember that children go through phases in life, and will thus have different phases and preferences in their language learning.

**Comprehension is key.** Many parents want their children to achieve “balanced” language proficiency—that is, they want their children to speak and comprehend each language fluently. This is a difficult goal and will not be feasible for many.

Remember that it is acceptable to aim for less than fluency. The most important aspect of language learning is comprehension, because this is the foundation for language acquisition and future learning.

**Be consistent.** Expose children to as much of the minority language(s) as you can; experts recommend about 30 percent of daily language exposure.

Have the same language spoken by the same person or in the same context. Consider creating a “family language

agreement” that outlines roles and responsibilities of each family member.

**Interaction is crucial.** Languages are best learned via natural social interaction, such as speaking and reading aloud. Constant narration—describing what is happening using both “I” and “you” sentences—is important for modeling correct language and grammar usage.

**It’s normal to mix languages.** Multilingual children will often “code-switch”—the term experts use for the tendency to mix languages, even in the same sentence. Don’t be alarmed when this happens. Some experts view this as a sign of language mastery.

**Avoid power struggles.** Never force children to speak a minority language.

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## Online Resources for Multilingual Families

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<http://bilingualmonkeys.com>

### Directory of Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Programs in the U.S.

[www.cal.org/twi/directory](http://www.cal.org/twi/directory)

### Fluent in 3 Months

[www.fluentin3months.com](http://www.fluentin3months.com)

### Linguistic Society of America— FAQ Raising Bilingual Children

[www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/faq-raising-bilingual-children](http://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/faq-raising-bilingual-children)

### Multilingual Children’s Association

[www.multilingualchildren.org](http://www.multilingualchildren.org)

### Multilingual Parenting

<http://multilingualparenting.com>

### TedTalk by Mia Nacamulli:

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If they answer in the “wrong” language, continue talking in the minority language to increase exposure and to model language usage.

**Get help.** Stock up on resources like books, games and movies in the target language, and increase your network of speakers via playgroups, *au pairs* and nannies. If you are overseas, consider immersion and local school options.

**Take the long view.** Raising children who can speak more than one language is not a short-term venture; don’t expect it to happen in one short year. In fact, it may become a lifetime undertaking.

### From Struggle to Success

With so many approaches to raising children in more than one language,

parents will inevitably struggle with their choices. This is particularly the case for Foreign Service parents, since our choice of career means our children will be constantly exposed to different languages.

While the experts we spoke to provided valuable practical suggestions and reassurance, there is still a need for specific research on raising multilingual children in the Foreign Service.

Finally, FS families might also benefit from additional support. Even though FSI currently provides a few resources, such as access to language experts and a seminar on the topic, parents could also use financial support to cover educational expenses incurred to maintain minority languages, as well as assistance in finding local and alternative school options abroad. ■

### To Learn More...

The State Department periodically offers “Raising Bilingual Children,” a tuition-free evening course designed specifically for Foreign Service parents. For information on the course, and to see an extensive list of available resources, go to [bit.ly/BilingualFSKids](http://bit.ly/BilingualFSKids).

Consider joining a Facebook group: Multilingual Foreign Service Kids is at [www.facebook.com/groups/MultilingualFSKids](http://www.facebook.com/groups/MultilingualFSKids)

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<b>■ ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR HIGH</b>													
Hampshire Country School	100	25	All boys	100	5	3-9	N/N	N	Y	65	N	N	58,500
<b>■ ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH</b>													
The Brook Hill School	91	670	50/50	30	15	PK-12	Y/N	Y	Y	90	Y	Y	43,320
The Hockaday School	76	1,093	All girls	7	3	PK-12 Day	Y/N	Y	Y	17	Y	N	55,742-57,155
Montverde Academy	85	1,324	64/36	40	45	PK-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Limited	25	Y	N	51,350
Saint Andrew's School	73	1,285	50/50	18	9	PK-12	Y/Y	Y	Y/Y	30	Y	N	55,700
Sandy Springs Friends School	84	609	49/51	17	12	PK-12	Y/N	N	Limited	35	Y	Y	59,500
<b>■ JUNIOR HIGH/SENIOR HIGH</b>													
Admiral Farragut Academy	98	300	60/40	50	30	8-12	Y/N	N	Limited	22	Y	N	50,000
Brandon Hall School	103	147	59/41	46	20	6-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	30	Y	N	59,100
Chaminade College Preparatory School	102	834	All boys	15	12	6-12	Y/N	Y	Y/Limited	9	Y	N	39,788
Grier School	72	300	All girls	85	40	7-12	Y/N	Y	Y	120	Y	N	54,500
Hargrave Military Academy	84	225	All boys	77	11	7-12, PG	Y/N	N	Limited	76	Y	N	34,800
Linden Hall School	99	220	All girls	60	40	6-12	Y	N	Y	75	Y	N	53,400
Southwestern Academy	93	175	60/40	75	75	6-12, PG	Y	Y	Limited	27	Y	Y	39,900
Stony Brook School	89	385	55/45	48	31	7-12	Y/N	N	Limited	50	Y	N	53,700
<b>■ SENIOR HIGH</b>													
American Hebrew Academy	75	150	50/50	95	50	9-12	Y/N	Y	Limited	6	Y	N	42,000 <sup>abe</sup>
Asheville School	101	288	50/50	80	19	9-12	Y/N	Y	N	42	Y	Y	54,900
CATS Academy Boston	71	391	46/54	88	92	9-12	Y/N	N	N	15	Y	Y	37,500
EF Academy New York	79	700	55/45	97	95	9-12	N/Y	N	Limited	38	Y	N	41,985-47,770 <sup>a</sup>
George School	NA	540	51/49	53	27	9-12	Y/Y	Y	N	40	Y	N	57,550
The Hill School	81	522	56/44	80	19	9-12, PG	Y/N	N	N	46	Y	N	56,755

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■ SENIOR HIGH (CONTINUED)													
Kent School	99	570	53/47	90	30	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Limited	90	Y	Limited	60,400
Kimball Union Academy	94	333	57/43	74	20	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	125	Y	Limited	62,624
Madeira School	90	321	All girls	52	16	9-PG	Y/N	Y	Limited	12	Y	N	59,990
Marian High School	98	230	50/50	g	25	9-12	Y/N	N	Y	24	Y	Y	22,800
Milton Academy	93	700	50/50	50	14	9-12	Y/N	N	Limited	8	Y	N	57,650
Phillips Academy	96	1,154	50/50	74	12	9-12, PG	Y/N	N	Limited	26	Y	N	53,900 <sup>f</sup>
South Kent School	77	170	All boys	86	35	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y/Y	80	Y	Y	57,000
St. Mark's School	92	362	54/46	75	21	9-12	N/N	Y	N	30	N	N	59,685
St. Thomas More School	88	110	All boys	100	24	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	45	Y	By appt.	53,900
■ CANADA													
Bishop's College School	100	270	60/40	75	40	7-12	Y/Y	Y	Y	108	Y	Y	47,033 <sup>c</sup>
Ridley College	89	700	52/48	54	35	K-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Y	41	Y	Y	44,680 <sup>ce</sup>
■ OVERSEAS													
American International School - Kuwait	99		57/43	NA	37	K-12	Y/N	NA	N	15	Y	N	8,250-14,964
Berlin Brandenburg International School	68	700	50/50	10	70	K-12	N/Y	N	Y	15	Y	N	48,890 <sup>c</sup>
CAISL: Carlucci American International School of Lisbon	91	675	50/50	N/A	60	PK-12	N/Y	N	Limited	22	Y	NA	9,344-21,790
EF Academy Oxford	79	160	50/50	100	100	11-12	N/Y	N	N	43	Y	N	46,425 <sup>ac</sup>
EF Academy Torbay	79	300	55/45	100	100	9-12	N/Y	N	N	26	Y	N	32,930-39,630 <sup>ac</sup>
Frankfurt International School	95	1,800	50/50	NA	80	K-12	N/Y	N	Limited	19	Y	N	22,120
John F. Kennedy School Berlin	95	1,617	50/50	NA	47	K-12	Y/N	N	Limited	15	Y	N	None
Leysin American School in Switzerland	81	340	50/50	100	80	7-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	75	Y	N	88,000 <sup>d</sup>
St. John's International School	67	650	50/50	4	83	PK-13	Y/Y	Y	Y	10	Y	Y	9,000-32,000

\*Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate \*\*Dec. 25-Jan 1. NA, not applicable <sup>a</sup>Sibling discount <sup>b</sup>Financial aid available  
<sup>c</sup>Dollar value subject to exchange rate <sup>d</sup>Aid for federal employees <sup>e</sup>Gap year <sup>f</sup>Need-blind admission; will meet full financial need <sup>g</sup>Host families



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## SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Go to our webpage at [www.afsa.org/education](http://www.afsa.org/education).

School	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent Int'l.	Levels Offered	AP/IB*	TABS common application	Accept ADD/LD	Miles to Int'l. Airport	International Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage**	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (US \$)
■ OVERSEAS (CONTINUED)													
St. Stephen's School	103	295	47/53	15	62	9-12, PG	Y/Y	N	N	12	Y	N	40,900 <sup>c</sup>
TASIS The American School in England	83	680	50/50	26	39	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	8	Y	N	55,450 <sup>bc</sup>
TASIS The American School in Switzerland	83	715	50/50	38	75	PK-12, PG	Y/Y	Limited	Limited	40	Y	N	83,000 <sup>d</sup>
■ SPECIAL NEEDS													
The Gow School	70	150	87/13	87	33	6-12, PG	NA	N	Y	20	Y	N	65,800
Landmark School	97	477	65/35	32	2	2-12	NA	N	Y	32	Y	N	55,900-73,400
■ DISTANCE LEARNING													
Stanford Online High School	65	Stanford Online High School (Stanford OHS) at Stanford University is an independent school for academically talented students in grades 7–12. Stanford OHS is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Students come together from all over the world in real-time, online classes with expert instructors passionate about teaching and learning. Tuition is covered by the State Department for Foreign Service families. For more information, go to <a href="http://ohs.stanford.edu">ohs.stanford.edu</a> .											
Texas Tech University K-12	69	Texas Tech University K-12 offers an online and print-based kindergarten-12th grade curriculum with the option of earning a Texas high school diploma accredited by TEA and NCAA.											
Texas Tech University Worldwide eLearning	25, 87	Texas Tech University Worldwide eLearning offers accredited online bachelor's through terminal graduate programs.											
■ OTHER													
AAFSW Associates of the American F.S. Worldwide	94	Publisher of <i>Raising Kids in the Foreign Service</i> . A volunteer organization that supports Foreign Service employees, spouses, partners and members of household. <a href="http://www.aafsw.org">www.aafsw.org</a>											
DACOR	74	DACOR Bacon House Foundation offers Dreyfus scholarships to children and grandchildren of FSOs attending Yale or Hotchkiss. <a href="http://www.dacorbacon.org">www.dacorbacon.org</a>											
FLO	17	Family Liaison Office: Information and resources for Foreign Service families. Contact <a href="mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov">FLOAskEducation@state.gov</a> , or go to <a href="http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm">www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm</a> .											
FSYF	102	Foreign Service Youth Foundation: A support network for U.S. Foreign Service youth worldwide. Go to <a href="http://www.fsyf.org">www.fsyf.org</a> .											

\*Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate \*\*Dec. 25-Jan 1. NA, not applicable <sup>a</sup>Sibling discount <sup>b</sup>Financial aid available  
<sup>c</sup>Dollar value subject to exchange rate <sup>d</sup>Aid for federal employees <sup>e</sup>Gap year <sup>f</sup>Need-blind admission; will meet full financial need <sup>g</sup>Host families



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# Educational Preparedness When an Evacuation Disrupts School

**Like it or not, evacuations have become a fact of Foreign Service life. Here are some tips to ensure your child's education is not compromised by a sudden departure from post.**

BY MARYBETH HUNTER, CECILE MINES AND COURTNEY COLBERT

It's the start of the school year. Kids are settled in, student goals established, school routines in place, when suddenly families are informed that they must evacuate post. Sound familiar? Considering the impact of recent political events and the potential for natural disasters to affect our Foreign Service families abroad, a sudden departure from post is far from unlikely.

Sometimes families leave post during the school year without knowing when (or if) they will ever return. While the average evacuation lasts about three months, time away from post can be much longer. Those families who prepare and plan for a longer period of time tend to experience fewer frustrations.

What is the best way families with school-aged children can be ready for the unexpected when confronted with an evacuation? By creating an education preparedness plan that suits specific family needs. Think "go bag" with your family's educational needs in mind. In

fact, by being as prepared as possible to tackle educational needs, families can maximize their sense of control at a time when they need it most.

Here are some simple steps to get started.

## Step One: Contact the School at Post

Before leaving post, time permitting, families will need to request transcripts and standardized test results, plus an official letter from the school indicating dates of attendance, class titles, materials covered and student grades earned to date. These documents could be emailed or faxed later, but it is optimal to have paper copies, originals or digital versions on hand as you depart.

Know the virtual capabilities of your student's school before an evacuation. Often students may be instructed to work their way through virtual or actual packets of educational material developed by teachers from the evacuated post. Families should know beforehand if their student's school will continue their stud-



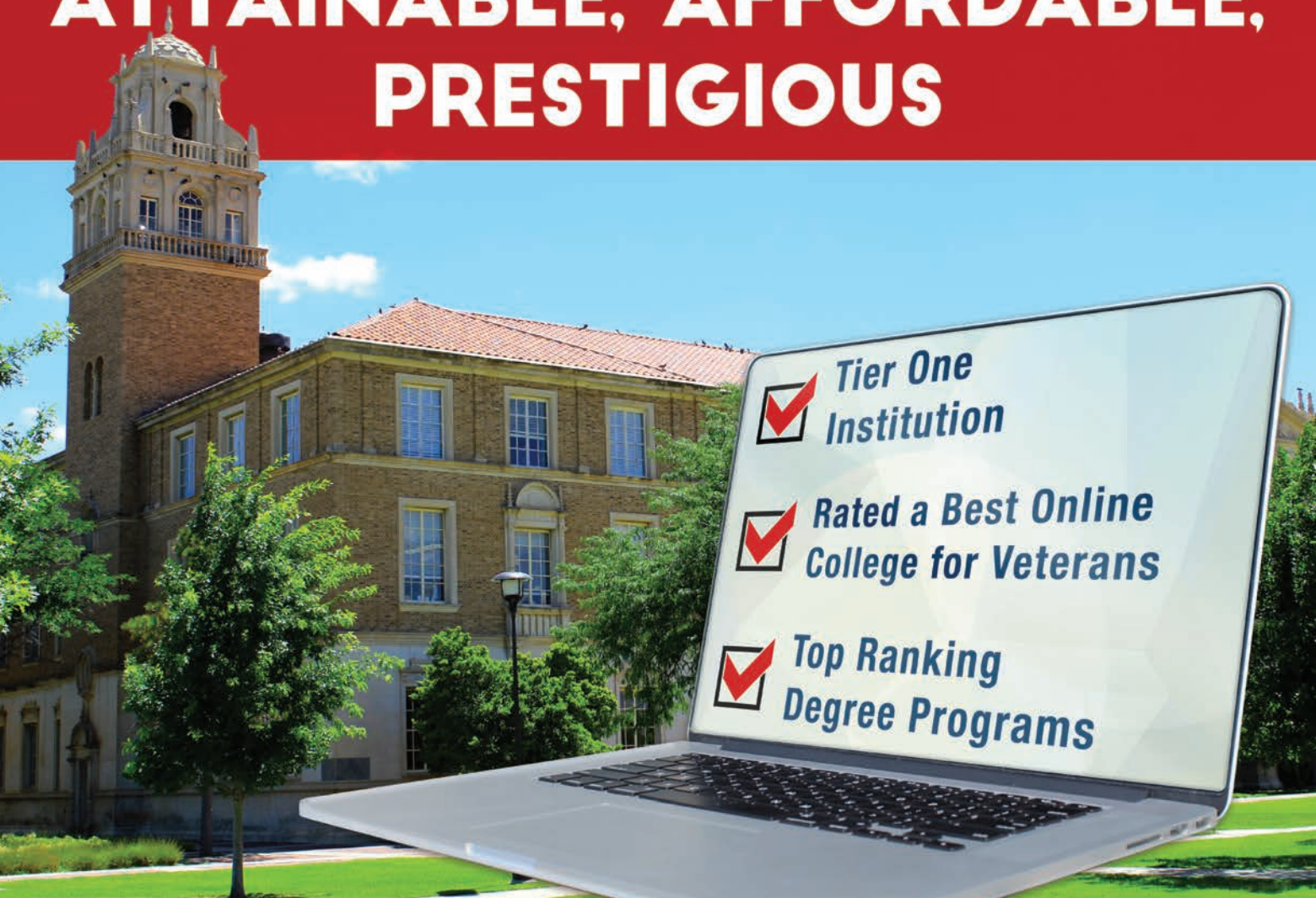
*Marybeth Hunter is the education and youth officer in the State Department's Family Liaison Office.*



*Cecile Mines, lower left, and Courtney Colbert are FLO's crisis management support team.*



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Providing an opportunity for the kids to get together to do a few structured activities was comforting for them. Setting up a “school” in a hotel is not a long-term solution, but I do believe it helped the children to adapt and deal with the sudden change. I think it was a relief for them to see familiar faces and know they were all going through this together.

—Brooke Fox, evacuated from  
 Kinshasa to Brazzaville in 2016

ies by accessing virtual schooling sites to complete teacher-developed modules or otherwise.

Created in 2002, in association with the Office of Overseas Schools and the staff and students of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Fairfax County, Virginia, the World Virtual School Project was initially used to support the March 2002 evacuation of the International School of Islamabad.

WVS assists participating schools and regions in terms of curriculum quality and continuity, opportunities for collaboration, progressive professional development and resiliency in the face of natural or manmade emergencies.

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## Step Two: Contact the School in the Safe Haven Location

Occasionally, families may travel to a country nearby to safe haven for a short period of time. In such cases, students may be invited to attend the brick and mortar school at the safe haven post, or may opt to work through assignments alone or virtually. The safe haven post may be able to assist with coordinating attendance at the brick and mortar school.

Evacuations are stressful times full of uncertainty. Although an evacuation cannot last longer than 180 days, there is no guarantee—from Day 1 to Day 180—of exactly when or if the family will return to post. This is why it is recommended that families enroll their children in school

## Making Choices for Your Family

**A**s parents, we need to take responsibility for our own children's education because everyone's situation is different and every child's needs are unique. Don't sit around waiting for something to be done *for* your family.

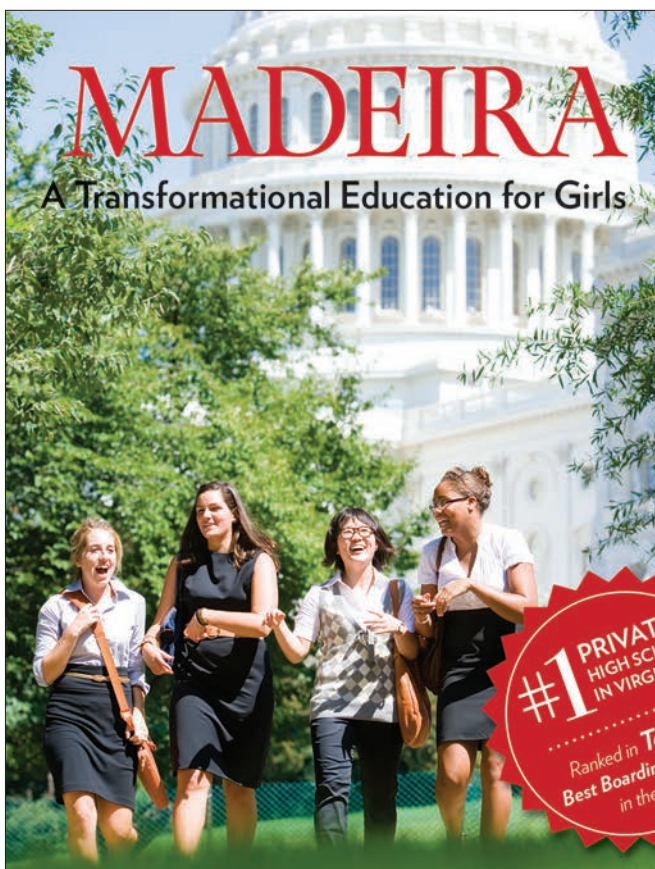
We made the decision to move back into our home in Indiana during our evacuation from Cairo. It was a stressful time for all of us, especially because my husband had to stay behind.

But the best and most important thing we did was to settle the kids into schools of our choosing as soon as possible—within two days.

We elected to spend our own money to enroll them in a private school—it was expensive, but it was the right choice for *our* family. Don't forget that you have choices!

The State Department did a great job of getting us out of Cairo safely ... and taking care of so many of our immediate needs, but it would have been ridiculous to expect them to cater to my individual, personal circumstances.

—Marci Kilpatrick, evacuated from Cairo in 2011



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## Planning for Continuity

**M**y son and I discussed the work he needed to complete each day. Assignments he was not able to complete between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m., he completed in the evening after dinner because I wanted him to be able to participate in extracurricular activities and have social time outside of the learning environment.

The Brazzaville school opened up the campus after school hours, allowing our children to come play basketball, football, etc., as well as hosting a movie night. My son returned to school feeling confident and not left behind as a result of the plans that had been implemented during the evacuation.

—Carmel Smalls, evacuated from Kinshasa to Brazzaville in 2016

where they safe haven. By doing so while on evacuation status, families are able to keep up with the valuable structure and routines they have already established at post.

It is a good idea to discuss with your family, before an evacuation happens, where you might want to safe haven. This type of planning will allow you to look at the schools in the area you might choose.

Try to identify what schools will be able to accommodate your child's particular course of study or individual needs.

It is crucial for parents of teens in high school who have been enrolled in an International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement program to continue in a similar program during the period of evacuation at the safe haven location.

In the Washington, D.C., metro area, the Family Liaison Office maintains a list of short-term housing facilities; each facility listing includes the name or names of the local high school(s), which are tagged IB, AP or both.

We encourage parents to visit the school's website to determine if the same IB or AP classes that your child has been studying are offered at these schools.



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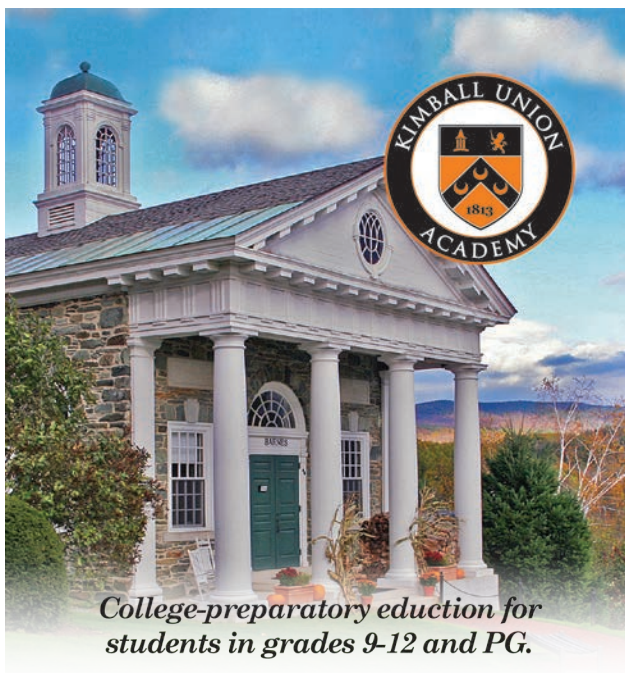
The following FLO webpages have been useful to Foreign Service families worldwide:

- FLO webpage on **Public Schools** in the Washington, D.C., area:  
[www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21970.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21970.htm)
- FLO webpage on **Private Schools** in the Washington, D.C., area:  
[www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21978.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21978.htm)
- FLO webpage on **Transition, Training and the Foreign Service Child**:  
[www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21967.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21967.htm)
- FLO webpage on **Childcare and Preschool**:  
[www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21989.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21989.htm)
- For more information, please contact FLO's Education and Youth Team at [FLOAskEducation@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov).
- For youth preparedness information and tools, check out [www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness](http://www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness).

Here are some useful websites to get you started:

- [www.ibo.org/diploma](http://www.ibo.org/diploma)
- [www.ibmidatlantic.org](http://www.ibmidatlantic.org)
- [international.collegeboard.org/programs/ap-recognition](http://international.collegeboard.org/programs/ap-recognition)

Note that schools in the Washington, D.C., area are familiar with Foreign Service students and work hard to provide the continuity needed while families are evacuated. If you plan to enroll your children in a specific public school in the D.C./Maryland/Virginia area, the Family Liaison Office recommends selecting a residence with school boundary details in mind. FLO can provide a temporary housing list that indicates what schools are possible for attendance at each location.



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### Step Three: Find and Pack School-Related Items to Hand Carry

Foreign Service families will be required to comply with standard registration requirements when enrolling children in school in the United States. So they should hand-carry the following documents when leaving post abruptly:

- Proof of residence in the school district (e.g., temporary quarters contract, lease, mortgage). In some cases, you may also need to show a current utility bill to prove physical presence.
- Original or certified copy of birth certificates (please check with your school district to see if a passport will be accepted in lieu of this).
  - Social Security number.
  - Photo ID.
  - Official transcripts.
  - Standardized test results.
  - Psycho-educational test results, if applicable.
- Current Individualized Education Plan (for children with special needs), if applicable.
- Physical exam forms, which can be downloaded from the school district website. Note: A physical exam that is less than 12 months old can be used.
- Immunization records form, also found on the school district website. Note: A copy of immunization records can be used.

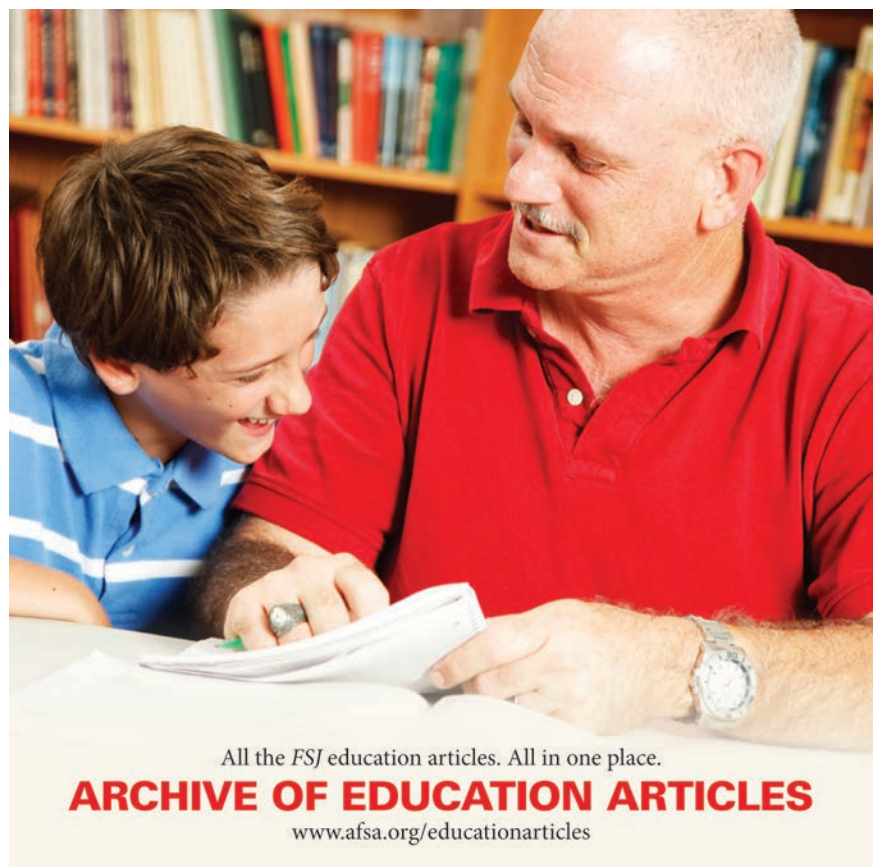


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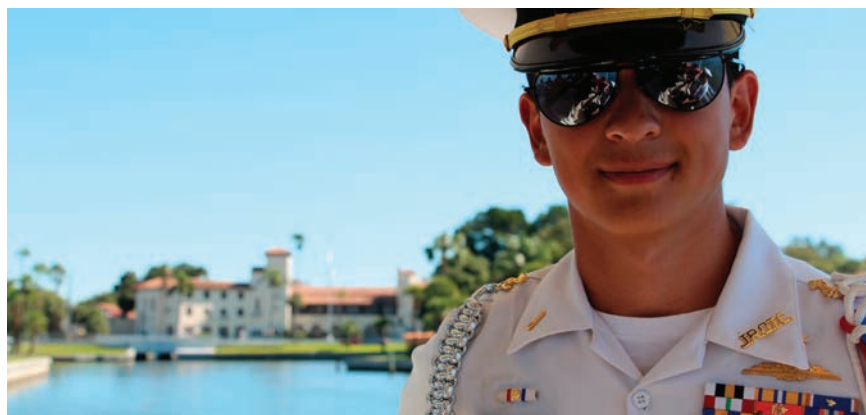
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- Proof of recent TB tests (within three months of enrollment), if you are coming from countries listed on the school district website.

- Letters of recommendation. Though not required, they can be helpful, especially for high school students in preparation for college admissions.

### Step Four: Contact the Family Liaison Office and the Office of Overseas Schools

The Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS) and FLO's Education and Youth Team are here to provide families with the information and tools needed to create the best education plan considering unique family needs. Regional education officers at A/OS will ensure that families have easy access to the documents they need from Department of State-supported schools overseas and will be available to guide parents on the mechanics of virtual schooling.

FLO meets regularly with school administrators in the United States and can assist Foreign Service families as they seek placement and sort out requirements for schools stateside. While we are aware that some states do offer universal or government-funded preschools, the majority do not. Families should expect to pay for preschools in the United States as they do when serving abroad.

Having an educational contingency plan in place in the event of an emergency can alleviate stress when a crisis at post occurs. Families in need of additional information should contact their Community Liaison Office coordinator at post or FLO ([FLOAskEducation@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov)) in Washington, D.C. ■



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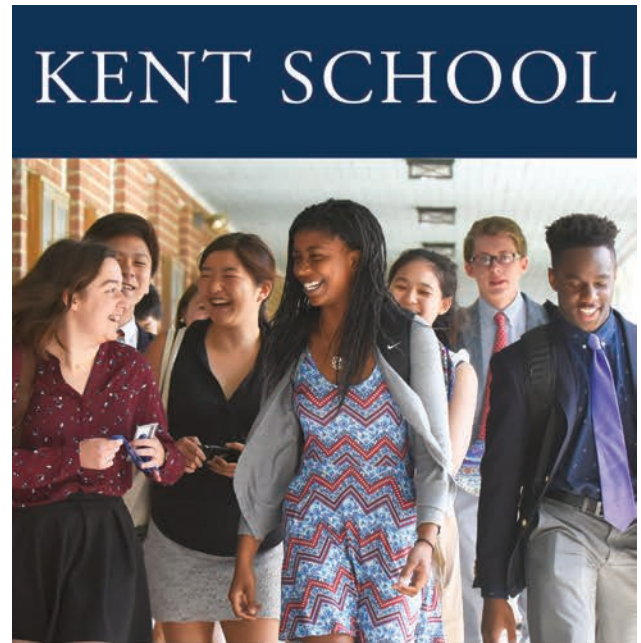
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FROM THE JUNE 2017 FSJ EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

## Facts and Updates: Making Sense of the Department of State Education Allowance

BY MARYBETH HUNTER

**M**any Foreign Service parents spend an enormous amount of time determining which posts have the best schools for their children. These are delicate decisions that have a large impact on family life.

Parents serving overseas may be eligible to receive an education allowance to help cover the cost of their children's education. The education allowance is designed to assist in defraying education costs at post that would normally be provided free of charge by public schools in the United States.

Think about what is normally provided in a public school in America, and this will give you a reasonably accurate idea of what you can expect to have reimbursed under the education allowance. Tuition and books, yes. Afterschool activities or band instruments, no.

To understand a bit more about education allowances, and find out about recent allowance updates, the family

Liaison Office spoke with the Department of State's Office of Allowances.

**FLO:** Which government employees are eligible for an education allowance? Do all agencies follow the Department of State education allowance regulations?

**DOS Office of Allowances:** Any U.S. direct-hire employee serving overseas with school-aged children may be eligible to receive an education allowance under the Department of State Standardized Regulations, Section 270. All federal government agencies follow these regulations, although each agency may have its own supplemental regulations that further clarify or restrict the allowance. ...

*Marybeth Hunter is the education and youth officer in the State Department's Family Liaison Office. Read her full interview with the State Department's Office of Allowances at [bit.ly/UpdateEducationAllowances](http://bit.ly/UpdateEducationAllowances).*



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FROM THE DECEMBER 2011 FSJ EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

### College Applications Checklist for 11th Graders

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

**W**hen it comes to college admissions, junior year of high school is crunch time. This is when you're expected to take the most challenging courses, get the best grades and start racking up those SAT or ACT scores. Junior year is the last full academic year that factors into acceptance decisions from colleges. It also provides an opportunity to bring up a mediocre grade point average and polish your resumé.

In addition, you can finish—yes, finish—a whole swath of the applications process in 11th grade so that you do not get hit with a ton of pressure the next fall.

This no-nonsense, month-by-month guide from December through August of your junior year will help you get a head start on the college application process and sail through your senior year.

Francesca Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse, is a writer, university counselor and college essay tutor. She writes frequently on education issues and is a former editor of AFSA News. The complete article excerpted here is available online at [www.afsa.org/educationarticles](http://www.afsa.org/educationarticles).

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FROM THE JUNE 2016 FSJ EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

## Applying to Boarding School: Lessons Learned

BY JOHN F. KROTZER

**T**he reasons parents choose the boarding school route are as varied as the students themselves: unsuitable schooling at post, special needs support, gifted student opportunities and the need for stability have all been regularly cited.

In my conversations with these parents, one thing that most have in common is that boarding school was not part of their child's long-term education plan. Something happened, and suddenly boarding school was an option they needed to evaluate quickly!

Such was the case with us, and I began to quickly learn as much as I could about the process.

Despite all of our research, we discovered a number of key things about the boarding school application process too late. I hope a few of these lessons will be helpful to those in the Foreign Service thinking about boarding school in the future.

*John F. Krotzer, a Foreign Service family member, is posted in Beijing. His complete article can be found at [bit.ly/BoardingSchoolApplication](http://bit.ly/BoardingSchoolApplication).*

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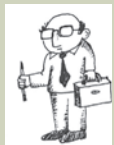


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1) Publication Title: The Foreign Service Journal 2) Publication No. 01463543 3) Filing Date: October 1, 2017 4) Issue Frequency: Monthly with January/February and July/August combined 5) Number of Issues Published Annually: 10 6) Annual Subscription Price: \$50.00 7) Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 8) Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters of General Business Office of Publisher: 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 9) Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor: Publisher: American Foreign Service Association, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990; Editor: Shawn Dorman, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990; Managing Editor: Susan B. Maitra, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 10) Owner: American Foreign Service Association, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 11) Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None 12) For Completion by Nonprofit Organizations Authorized to Mail at Special Rates: The Purpose, Function and Nonprofit Status of this Organization and the Exempt Status for Federal Income Tax Purposes: (1) Has not changed during preceding 12 months 13) Publication's Name: The Foreign Service Journal 14) Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: October 2017 16) Extent and Nature of Circulation: Average Number of Copies of Each Issue During Preceding 12 months: A. Total Number of Copies: 18,096 B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales: 0 (2) Mail Subscription: 16,818 C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 16,818 D. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary and Other Free): 850 E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail: 200 F. Total Free Distribution: 1,050 G. Total Distribution: 17,868 H. Copies Not Distributed (1) Office Use, Leftovers and Spoiled: 228 (2) Returns from News Agents: 0 I. Total: 18,096 J. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 93% Actual Number of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: A. Total Number of Copies: 18,116 B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales: 0 (2) Mail Subscription: 16,519 C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 16,519 D. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary and Other Free): 800 E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail: 440 F. Total Free Distribution: 1,240 G. Total Distribution: 17,759 H. Copies Not Distributed: (1) Office Use, Leftover, Spoiled: 357 (2) Returns from News Agents: 0 Total: 18,116 Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 91%.

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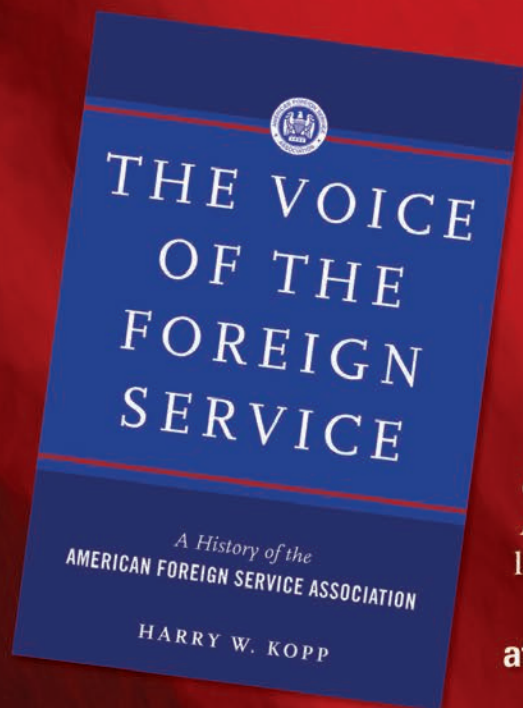
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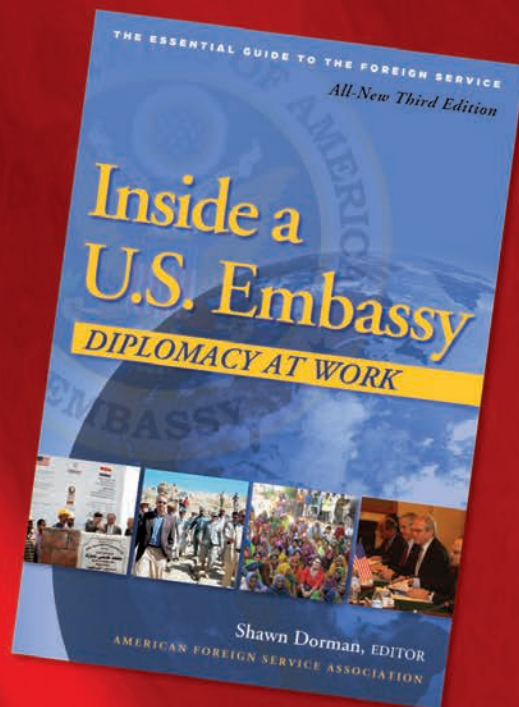


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