

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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MARCH 2018



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NATIONAL CONVERSATION

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On the Cover: Cover design and composition by Caryn Suko Smith, Driven By Design LLC; Background—iStockphoto.com/asafra. *Top left*—Foreign Service Specialist Matt Roy and daughter Malosi learn to make dumplings at Mahota Farm on Chongming Island, China. Photo by Kelly Roy. *Top right*—Wesley and Emmeline McIntyre, children of FS member Dominic McIntyre, celebrate their birthday in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, with family members back home in the States via Skype. Photo by Melinda McIntyre. *Bottom*—Regional Medical Officer Chad Faber says goodbye to his daughter Elena at the Taoyuan International Airport in Taipei, Taiwan, as she returns to college in the United States following the Christmas holidays. Photo by Kris Faber.

Does America Spend Too Much on Diplomacy?

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

I ended my last column, a holiday message written with special thoughts of our colleagues deployed far from home, with a wish for a strategy to guide our work on behalf of the American people. That has arrived by way of the new National Security Strategy. While the NSS may not define clearly America's role in the world, it nevertheless makes a powerful case for the indispensable role of American diplomacy and development.

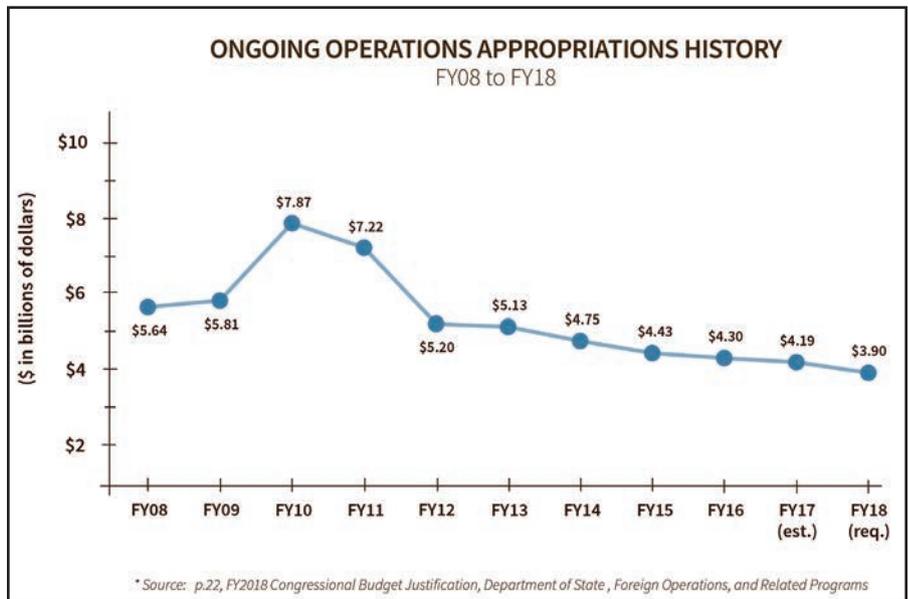
This column will explore the National Security Strategy and the related question of whether America spends too much on diplomacy. Even though budgets are complicated beasts, I ask that you stay with me so that you, stewards of this great institution, are able to speak authoritatively about this vitally important issue.

Here's the bottom line: The annual Congressional Budget Justifications for the State Department show clearly that *spending on core diplomatic capability actually declined over the last decade (see chart and sidebar).*

If we compare 2008, the last full year of the Bush 43 administration, to 2016, the last year for which actual spending figures are available, the decline in spending on core diplomatic capability is dramatic—from one dollar in 2008 to just 76 cents in 2016, in nominal, non-inflation adjusted terms.



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



The 2018 budget proposal would take spending on core diplomatic capability down further, to 69 cents of the 2008 dollar.

Even when we account for shifts in how the CBJ reports costs, spending on core diplomatic capability in 2016 was still below 2008 spending in nominal terms. If we then factor in inflation, 2016 spending on core diplomatic capability was only about 77 percent of 2008 spending.

So much for the narrative of runaway growth in spending on diplomacy. When we look at the numbers, the picture that emerges is one of a capability that has been starved of resources for years.

Yes, the overall budget has increased, with the growth in security costs a major factor. Spending on Worldwide Security Protection was 17 percent of the total "Diplomatic and Consular Programs" budget in 2008. As the 2018 CBJ shows, by 2016 WSP had grown to 41 percent of

Core Diplomatic Functions Defined

State Department Congressional Budget Justifications (CBJs) contain a consistent budget category named Ongoing Operations. This budget category represents what the department describes as its "core" diplomatic functions, defined as "in-depth knowledge and understanding of political and economic events in many nations [as a] basic requirement of diplomacy," through "reporting, analysis and personal contact work," as well as through public diplomacy activities "intended to understand, inform and influence foreign publics and broaden dialogue between American citizens institutions and [our] counterparts abroad" (FY2002 CBJ Submission for the Department of State, p. 16).

Spending on core diplomatic capability actually *declined* over the last decade.

the total D&CP budget, while the share for core diplomacy was squeezed to 59 percent.

The proposed budget for 2018 continues this trend, with WSP growing to 45 percent of total D&CP spending while core diplomacy declines further, to 55 percent.

Given that State provides the operating platform for all executive-branch personnel posted to embassies and consulates, this growth in Diplomatic Security is not surprising. But we should not mistake increased spending to support the executive-branch platform with spending on core diplomatic capability.

The fact is that spending on core diplomatic capability has declined. I've seen this reflected in what I have heard in structured conversations and in leadership classes. Political, economic and public diplomacy sections in embassies are generally so thinly staffed—many have not been restored after the “Iraq tax” a decade ago—that not only does mentoring suffer, but so does the high-impact diplomacy that underpins our global leadership role.

By the time required reports are written, required demarches delivered and visits handled, depleted sections have little capacity for the crucial diplomatic work of building up the bank account of relationships and trust.

As a career diplomat, I have long lamented this as a penny-wise, pound-foolish approach to maintaining America's global leadership. How reassuring, then, that the new National Security Strategy makes such a clear case for diplomacy.

The president's cover letter states: “The United States faces an extraordinarily dangerous world, filled with a wide range of threats that have intensified in recent years.” The NSS is unequivocal on the “indispensable” role of diplomacy:

“America's diplomats are our forward-deployed political capability, advancing and defending America's interests abroad.”

“Our diplomats must be able to build and sustain relationships. ... Relationships, developed over time, create trust and shared understanding that the United States calls upon when confronting security threats, responding to crises, and encouraging others to share the burden for tackling the world's challenges.”

“We must upgrade our diplomatic capabilities to compete in the current environment.”

The NSS makes clear that America faces many threats and needs upgraded diplomatic capabilities. Yet the proposed budget would cut diplomatic capacity even further, compounding the loss sustained over recent years of scarce resources.

The last time America reduced its diplomatic capacity sharply (though not as sharply as today) was in the mid-1990s. The Berlin Wall had come down, America had “won” the Cold War, and the logic was that we could afford to scale back on diplomacy. There was a national conversation, and Congress cut funding for State.

History has shown how short-sighted those 1990s cuts were. They ultimately produced the dire staffing shortages we faced a decade ago when we needed a deep bench of seasoned Foreign Service leaders to staff the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Where is the national conversation now? That is precisely what Senator Lindsey Graham, chairman of the State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, is calling for in his Message from the Hill in this issue of the *Journal* (see p. 18).

I remind you that the report from that subcommittee (approved by a 31-0 vote in the full Appropriations Committee) rejected the proposed cuts to State funding as a “doctrine of retreat” and instructed that appropriated funds “shall” be used to maintain State staffing at Sept. 30, 2016, levels and to resume entry-level hiring.

Yet even in the face of this clear expression of congressional intent, this explicit rejection of deep cuts to State's budget, the depletion of the Foreign Service continues.

The Foreign Service officer corps at State was down to 7,940 at the end of December, from 8,176 in March 2017, a drop of 236.

The loss is heavily concentrated at the top. With Career Ambassador Tom Shannon's departure, State's four-star ranks will be down to just one, from six at the end of 2016.

The number of Career Ministers (three-stars) has fallen from 33 in December 2016 to 18 today. And Minister Counselors (two-stars) are down from 470 to 373 during the same period.

The answer to the question of whether America spends too much on diplomacy is No. And so the question “Why make such cuts?” remains as pressing today as it was in November when I first asked.

We urgently need a national conversation about the dismantling underway of a vital instrument of national security. The American people deserve one. ■

Checking In with Foreign Service Families

BY SHAWN DORMAN

There are so many facets to the issues faced by Foreign Service families, so much that makes FS life exciting and rewarding.

And there are so many challenges FS families face, even in the best of times.

These are not the best of times.

In *Speaking Out*, Kathi Silva shares the serious concerns in the FS community today regarding diminishing support for families with special needs kids. Some fear that the new model at State is simply to keep families with special needs kids from serving overseas.

Against the backdrop of today's #MeToo and #MeTooNatSec movement, our cover story by Ambassador (ret.) Leslie Bassett takes on the problem of sexual harassment at State in "#StateToo: Ending Harassment at the State Department."

We asked former *FSJ* Associate Editor Debra Blome to update us on the State Department hiring freeze as it relates to family member employment. (Donna Gorman's look at this topic for the July-August issue, "Out in the Cold," was our most-read article of 2017, and painted a rather bleak picture of the job situation for family members overseas.)

The Secretary of State's Dec. 12 town hall offered hope: he said the hiring freeze on family member employment

would be lifted for 2018. Great news! But what has come through since then? Is there reason for optimism now?



Shawn Dorman is the editor of *The Foreign Service Journal*.

The *Journal* seeks to spotlight topics of concern to members of our community and to share their voices.

Blome offers some answers in "Still Waiting" (that's a hint), along with some suggestions for riding out the period of limited hiring. (Note to FS family members seeking work: We pay for articles published in the *FSJ*; we have revived the AFSA News Family Member Matters column; and we are building our list of FS photographers who can get paid for photos we use in the magazine. In fact, three FS family member photos are on this month's cover.)

Associate Editor Donna Gorman takes on the difficult topic of "Surviving Divorce in the Foreign Service," offering perceptions from those who have been through it along with guidance on where to find the right resources and support, while FS Specialist Mikkela Thompson shares a collection of perspectives on what it's like to be single overseas in "Singles Speak."

In FS Know-How, "Taking Care of Our Own," AFSA VP for Retirees John Naland explains how the Senior Living Foundation of the American Foreign Service can help retirees financially when facing difficult situations.

This was not the easiest edition of the *Journal* to put together. You will find many more anonymous comments than usual in the articles. There is a general chill in the air at State, as some fear

reprisal for speaking candidly.

The *Journal* seeks to spotlight topics of concern to members of our community and to share their voices. While we avoid publishing unattributed articles and letters, we are willing to publish comments without attribution as long as our authors know who the people they quote are and can vouch for them.

Some readers disagreed with our decision to publish the critique of U.S. assistance, "When Criticism Falls on Deaf Ears: The Case of U.S. Foreign Aid" (November *FSJ*). But the *Journal* is a vehicle for discussion and debate on foreign affairs issues and work.

Accordingly, Letters-Plus features two thoughtful responses to that article, from former USAID FSOs Terry Myers and Raymond Malley. May the dialogue continue.

On the cover, you'll see the provocative line, "Time for a National Conversation." This is the title and central tenet of the Message from the Hill from Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), who continues to be a strong advocate for U.S. diplomacy and development and for the Foreign Service.

In President's Views, Ambassador Barbara Stephenson echoes that theme, and lays out the budget case to show that America should be building up its core diplomatic capability rather than pulling the team off the field. ■

Fantastic December Issue

Thanks so much for the fantastic December *FSJ* highlighting diplomacy and how what we do matters. From the AFSA president's column ("Time to Ask Why") onward, it was comforting to read.

Michele Hopper
FS Family Member
Community Liaison
Office-Assistant
U.S. Consulate Frankfurt

Deploy FS Force Multipliers

With the Foreign Service under siege, Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and AFSA have been waging a spirited defense. A recent essay from RAND Corporation analyst Michael Mazarr (War on the Rocks, Oct. 30) is especially pertinent to this debate. It presents a compelling argument for the primacy of diplomacy in national security.

Unlike the Cold War, when America successfully faced off against a single lethal foe, today America, on its own, simply cannot afford the blood and treasure necessary to deter the multiple adversaries we face—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea and jihadist terrorists, not to mention coping with global risks from climate change, pandemics and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. If America defies this reality, it will collapse just as surely as the Soviet Union did.

Military power remains an essential pillar of national security, but not the only one. Indeed, overreliance on the application of military power has led to strategic blunders in the past, from Vietnam to Iraq.

Advancing national interests in the multipolar world of the 21st century will

require the United States to leverage its other indispensable assets—its democratic values, the rich diversity of its people, its open economy and the rules-based international order created from the rubble of World War II.

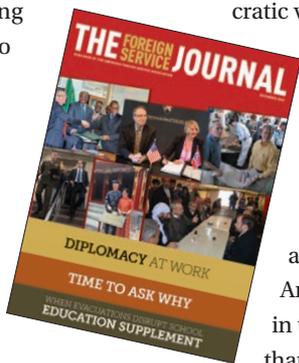
These are the very aspirations that define American exceptionalism in the history of nations and that rally support from people around the world. To bring these strengths fully into play, diplomacy must move to the forefront in protecting national security.

Rather than a tool of first resort, America's unmatched military capabilities are the critical enabler for skillful diplomacy that can solidify alliances, resolve disputes and promote international cooperation on issues of national interest. Significantly, civilian and military leaders of America's defense establishment have consistently grasped the role of military power in service of diplomacy. This raises the question of how to strengthen public consensus around that idea.

While diplomats must continue vigorously defending their profession, they lack the domestic constituency to gain traction among the wider public. Moreover, their arguments will too often be interpreted as self-serving, rather than rooted in the national interest.

The Foreign Service needs to mobilize its own "force multipliers"—a broad coalition of wise warriors and other like-minded citizens who can make the most persuasive case for renewing the country's commitment to the primacy of diplomacy in securing the peace.

Art Kobler
FSO Minister Counselor, retired
Hong Kong



Bemused and Unamused

In the December issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*, Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and *FSJ* Editor Shawn Dorman reprise the plaintive duet of "Why, oh why, is the State Department treated so badly?" Assuming the question is not rhetorical, but rather a request for help understanding the actions of a demanding supervisor and an unimpressed public, I'll take that question.

The first step is to reread both commentaries with fresh eyes and pick out the message inside the message, which is replete with unvarnished, if possibly unintended, elitism. Much like AFSA offerings in other forums, they both offer a cartoonish message of brave, well-trained experts under siege by a coterie of slack-jawed bumpkins who couldn't spell, let alone define "national interest." Which, speaking as one who has relocated far beyond the Potomac, is tripe.

Then we should examine "accomplishment." Amb. Stephenson uses a military analogy, which is unfortunate for her argument: the leaders of any army with the history of failure and retreat State has suffered in the past 15 years would have been cashiered long since, to public acclaim. Let's review four problems in which State Department "experts" have dabbled recently.

Libya, anyone? We violated an agreement to depose Muammar Gaddafi, with what result? How about failure to enforce the Budapest Memorandum when Vladimir Putin changed national boundaries in Europe by force? Perhaps the Syrian "Red Line" and subsequent abandonment of the once-successful opposition to the tender mercies of Putin, Assad and their Iranian enforcers?

That's not the only Iranian problem of course; but North Korea already has

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nukes and probably will have a viable re-entry vehicle soon. Thirty years and more of “expert” diplomacy diverted them not one whit.

Each of these threatens our national security. Each represents a failure of foreign policy. Where were the firings? The resignations? When normal Americans don't see consequences for poor performance, they grow resentful; impunity irritates them almost as much as unearned rewards.

Finally, we know the self-selected leaders of our foreign affairs community don't like being told nay, nor do they appreciate having their assumptions questioned; indeed, they are the products of a system designed to stifle this sort of behavior. They also smugly assume that the Great Unwashed Beyond the Potomac don't know they're viewed as rubes, and wouldn't care if they did.

But speaking as someone who lives out where people grow stuff and make things, they do, and do. That's one reason we have the president we have, and State has the Secretary it does: isolation, cozy self-congratulation and satisfaction with minimal accomplishment have brought a reckoning.

Deal with it like adults. Or don't let the door hit you on the way out.

Morgan Liddick

FSO, retired

Stuarts Draft, Virginia

Why Cut State?

In the December *FSJ* Ambassador Barbara Stephenson asks why State suddenly finds itself beset by funding cuts, the “decapitation” of its senior leadership and a declining Foreign Service intake of recruits.

The answer, I believe, is tied not only to demands for reduced deficit spending

but to popular conviction that the State Department deceived on the handling of Benghazi; caved on Iran by lifting sanctions and forking over billions of dollars; countenanced Clinton corruption and the mishandling of classified information; fell in with a policy of “leading from the rear”; carried out expensive but (relative to their returns) pointless foreign aid programs; and did not, along with the military, do all it could against ISIS in Iraq.

Moreover, the public believes the department played fast and loose with the issuance of visas (I read that almost half of illegal immigrants arrived in the United States with visas in their pockets). In other words, State is not broadly viewed as “putting America first.”

In 2016 such perceptions helped lead to the election of an administration whose goal was to “drain the swamp.” That appears to be the reality causing the ambassador's grievances. As she herself reminds: “Remember, nine in 10 Americans favor a strong global leadership role for our great country.”

Richard Hoover

FSO, retired

Front Royal, Virginia

Certain and Uncertain Dangers

I was surprised by the opinion expressed by Ambassador Barbara Stephenson in her President's Views column in the November issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*; namely, her opposition to the reduction in staff at Embassy Havana in connection with attacks affecting the health and well-being of our personnel.

Amb. Stephenson states that “AFSA is not advocating for the withdrawal of all American diplomats from Havana.” Yet I do not believe shutting our embassy is at



issue here. Elsewhere (in interviews with NPR and BuzzFeed), Amb. Stephenson made clear that, “speaking on behalf of my colleagues,”

she opposes the current reductions in staffing at Embassy Havana.

While praising the willingness of State Department employees to serve in hardship posts, she draws a questionable analogy between the uncertain dangers we face in Havana and threats to health in places where people serve knowing full well the nature of the problems and having the ability to mitigate them.

I am unaware of any polling that has been done to assess the views of the Foreign Service on this matter, but I would argue that, even if Amb. Stephenson’s views were representative of a majority of our colleagues, prudence would dictate that the department err on the side of caution until we better understand who or what is behind these attacks.

Does Amb. Stephenson oppose the sharp reductions in staff at our embassy in Kabul or the many other posts where the increased perception of a threat that we are unable to adequately address has led to a reduction in numbers?

And is it really the place of the president of AFSA to be questioning these types of decisions made by the department with the well-being of the employees in mind?

*Thomas Mittnacht
FSO, State Department
Foreign Policy Adviser
Joint Interagency Task Force South
Key West, Florida*

Bullish on Foreign Service Careers

While developments at the U.S. Department of State and within the Foreign Service are making headlines nearly every day, none caught my attention more than Georgetown University’s Dec. 8 edition of *The Hoya*, which proclaimed: “Students Lose Faith in Foreign Service Careers.”

The article asserts that dwindling opportunities at the State Department have prompted some students aspiring to the Foreign Service to look elsewhere. The author points to State Department records that show a 34 percent decline in the number of applicants taking the Foreign Service Officer Exam compared to two years ago.

This drop and the idea that students are now beginning to view entering the Foreign Service as a risk they do not want to take give me pause.

Let me make my bias clear. I believe strongly in the Foreign Service—not only as a place to embark on a fulfilling career, but also in the inherent value of a career in service to our nation. Prior to joining the Institute of International Education, I spent nearly 20 years as a professor and dean at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown. During my tenure there, it was the top producer of career Foreign Service officers.

Given its history and impact on the Foreign Service, the mood on the Georgetown campus is important. But it is equally essential to listen to what people say when they explore opportunities in the workforce.

IIE received applications from 17,000 job seekers last year, so we know that there are many who want to make international affairs the focus of their career. I meet with several IIE candidates a week, as well as others who are exploring different career paths. Invariably those I



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speakers who are interested in international service, and many come well-equipped with several foreign languages.

Most of them strike me as the kind of people who would thrive at a U.S. embassy abroad. I nearly always ask if they have considered taking the Foreign Service exam. Most say they had considered it, but never registered. So I encourage them to apply to take it.

We find ourselves in a period when the press isn't good, and the career seems less appealing. This is unfortunate, since the Foreign Service would appear to be ideally suited to the interests of the current generation. The newest college-educated, career-ready graduates are searching for real meaning in their life's work.

The Foreign Service is about just

that—service—and also offers graduates the opportunity to represent American values at a crucial time in world history, where their skills and their insight have a potential to make a real difference. So I am impressed with the students and recent graduates I meet who say, "You know, maybe I will take that exam."

The future leaders I meet are just the sort of people who would do well in a Foreign Service career. They give me hope for the future of the Foreign Service at a time when, more than ever, we need our best and brightest to pursue careers in public service.

Allan E. Goodman
President and CEO, Institute of International Education
Washington, D.C. ■

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“When Criticism Falls on Deaf Ears: The Case of U.S. Foreign Aid”—Responses

Good Points Nearly Lost Among Generalities

BY DESAIX “TERRY” MYERS

Tom Dichter’s article in the November 2017 *Foreign Service Journal* provides a usefully provocative summary of years of criticism of foreign aid. It saves newcomers to the subject from reading decades of critiques; and for those of us with a lifetime in development work, it offers an exercise in nostalgia—there is very little bad that anyone can say about foreign aid and its implementers which we haven’t thought ourselves at one point or another. The article suffers, however, from a number of shortcomings:

It begins with a false premise—that criticism of foreign assistance has fallen on deaf ears. In fact, development agencies like USAID and the World Bank have wrestled with relentless criticism since their founding. And because the criticism often has come from those with the power of the purse—the public and Congress—their programs have undergone constant reinvention.

Dichter recognizes this himself in faulting what he describes as “the rise and fall of the next new big idea, fad or buzzword.” He implies that shifts in foreign aid’s approaches or emphasis signal the inability of foreign aid workers to get development right. He is right that themes have indeed moved frequently—from national security to basic human needs, new directions to private sector



development, and from democracy and open markets to stabilization and income inequality.

But rather than failure, these changes more accurately reflect political reality—changes in public, presidential and congressional interests and understanding; evolving knowledge; and changing circumstances. They demonstrate the acute sensitivity of development practitioners to criticism and their remarkable flexibility in absorbing the whiplash of political winds in charting a long-term strategy.

Defining the Issue

The article’s overriding weakness is its failure to actually define what it’s talking about. What does the author really mean by “foreign assistance”? The term can encompass everything from foreign

military sales, grants for village water supply and loans for farmers to food aid, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, investment credit and infrastructure grants.

Or it can refer to the implementing agencies—the Peace Corps, USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the departments of State and Defense, the World Bank and United Nations agencies—or their partners, including non-governmental organizations like CARE and Save the Children or development consulting firms.

Without a definition of the types of assistance, the agencies and instruments for their delivery and, perhaps most importantly, without describing the objectives sought, statements about success or failure of foreign aid lack grounding.

Foreign aid has multiple objectives. It can be used for national security, as it was throughout the Cold War, or for political objectives, as it is today in countering violent extremism. It can promote economic growth, commerce, trade and investment; help refugees; support recovery after disasters; or encourage cooperation on cross-border issues, transnational crime, infectious disease and environmental protection.

Until you’ve laid out the wide range of objectives assigned foreign aid over the years by politicians, policymakers and the public, it doesn’t make sense to talk about its success or failure.

The article’s discussion of the nature of the business of foreign assistance also misses the mark. The growth of profes-

sional firms and NGOs capable of providing specialized expertise in areas from health to agriculture, tax policy, democratic elections and financial intermediation has been noteworthy in the last 50 years, and this is more to be praised than condemned.

Delivering foreign assistance—which is often just sharing knowledge through technical advice, training, exchanges and long-term education—is not to be compared with manufacturing cars, as the article would have us believe. Referring to “pulling names from consultant databases,” Dichter implies that there is something wrong with building teams of qualified individuals capable of sharing world-class information on Ebola, irrigation, new seed varieties, mobile banking or a modern judicial system.

Too Many Straw Men

The article sets up too many straw men—the hubris, the short-term thinking, the over-focus on “saving lives and extreme poverty”—for which it offers too little evidence. There’s plenty of hubris; but some would argue that the crises are so complex and development is so complicated that without hubris, we wouldn’t have the gall to attack the problems involved.

A.O. Hirschman described the phenomenon of the “hidden hand” years ago. If we knew how hard a project was going to be ahead of time, we wouldn’t have the courage to undertake it. But there’s plenty of humility, as well. No one experienced in wrestling with development’s challenges can escape it.

And those in the development business know well just how long it can take to get change. Development people are usually the ones arguing for more time and longer-term projects and programs in order to reach a point of sustainability,

while officials in the Department of State and Defense, not to mention Congress, are pressed for time and more interested in quick results.

Debate Needed

The article raises a number of good points—the rise of development firms and large NGOs, the need for accountability, the extent to which programs are built around indicators rather than need (a flip side of the accountability issue), the importance of a long-term commitment and local ownership.

But the good points are nearly lost among a welter of generalities and propositions put forward as if there were evidence to support them. The result is a set of jerry-rigged recommendations of little use in constructing a foreign assistance strategy for the future.

Far better would be a call for debate over the objectives of foreign aid, the tools at hand and agencies to reach those objectives: what we should be doing and how we might better do it. But that would be a different article.

Terry Myers, a retired Foreign Service officer, began his USAID career with an assignment to Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) in 1969. He went on to serve in Washington, D.C., Senegal, India and Burma, and as mission director in Indonesia (1998-2003) and Russia (2003-2007). He moved to the National Defense University in 2007, as USAID Chair at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and retired from USAID in 2010 to join the National War College, where he was professor of national security studies until 2016. He is the author of three books and numerous articles and chapters; the most recent, “USAID: More Operator than Policy Maker,” appeared in The National Security Enterprise (Georgetown University Press, 2017).

Foreign Assistance Realities

BY RAYMOND MALLEY

The broadside criticisms of foreign economic assistance in the article (“When Criticism Falls on Deaf Ears”) by Thomas Dichter in the November *Journal* beg for reactions. Here are some.

Foreign economic assistance in the broadest sense is a tool of diplomacy. It is soft power. It assists in the negotiation, containment and solution of problems.

Major examples of success are legion. The Marshall Plan helped rebuild Western Europe and ward off communism. Assistance to numerous countries supported the containment policy and victory in the Cold War. It is a key component of the Camp David accords, which have kept peace between Egypt and Israel. It helped former Soviet Bloc countries become market economies and democracies. China today uses economic assistance to advance its Silk Road complex. And the European Union uses it to ease refugee problems.

Such assistance also has commercial objectives. France uses it to spread culture and support trade and investment. The Danes have used it to spread their dairy expertise, the Finns to promote their forestry industry, and the Japanese to support heavy industry and construction projects abroad. We Americans export massive amounts of agricultural products as part of our assistance programs.

I know of no experienced person who claims that economic assistance alone can develop a country. But it can help countries that are determined to improve and

put domestic muscle behind the effort.

Not long ago I mentioned to old Korean colleagues that some Americans claim that economic assistance does not “work.” They were incredulous and amused. Massive help from us and others was key to their country quickly becoming the economic power and vibrant democracy that it is today.

Undeniable Benefits

Other countries that have benefited include Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Botswana, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, Cabo Verde, Chile, Panama, Costa Rica, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, those spawned from the former Yugoslavia and many former members of the Soviet Bloc.

Further, in assessing economic assistance one must consider results even in

countries that remain poor. For example, onchocerciasis (river blindness) has been substantially eliminated in several poor African countries through joint efforts with foreign donors.

Throughout the developing world diseases have been reduced and pandemics avoided, potable water systems built, children inoculated, women helped, literacy increased, infrastructure improved, small businesses stimulated, financial markets improved, electricity provided and climate warming addressed. Hundreds of millions of people have benefited.

Of course, there have been and continue to be economic assistance disappointments and failures, just as in other complex human undertakings. In my experience, most of these are due to faulty and failed foreign policies rather

than to ill-designed or ill-managed assistance projects and programs. My team created and carried out perfectly sound activities in Congo/Kinshasa, which were subsequently ruined during civil wars.

Due to failed policies our country wasted vast sums in Vietnam, and we are continuing to do the same today in Iraq and Afghanistan. Blame the failed policies, not the aid.

Raymond Malley is a retired Senior FSO who served with the State Department and USAID. A life member of AFSA, he is also a retired U.S. Air Force Reservist and a retired member of the Halla Business Group, Korea. He has published three books and teaches in the Dartmouth College Osher Extended Learning Department. He currently resides in Hanover, N.H., and McLean, Va. ■



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Time for a National Conversation

BY SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

The world's problems have only grown more numerous and complex over the past decades. Pick any region, and you stumble across conflicts and war (old and new), humanitarian crises and the increasingly rapid rise of regional powers—notably Russia and China—and non-state actors that erode the stability and predictability of the post-World War II international system shaped largely by the American victors.

In the span of almost 75 years, the global scene has gone from bipolar to unipolar (following the fall of the Soviet Union) to what can be best described today as an unstable, unpredictable multipolar world.

Through all of these dramatic changes, our diplomats and development specialists have been on the front lines, all too often in the crosshairs of the enemy. The knowledge and experience of these dedicated public servants are unparalleled.

They possess a skill set that cannot and should not be replicated or replaced by other United States government agencies, including the Department of Defense. It should not be lost on the American people that approximately 1.3 million active duty military

personnel are on the government payroll, compared to just over 15,000 Foreign Service members.

The Role of Diplomacy and Development

The message sent to the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development and Congress in the \$40.5 billion Fiscal

and partners, but also for the effect on America's standing in the world. As most any informed military officer will tell you, defense spending alone does not provide for America's security.

While the new National Security Strategy provides much-needed detail on our global priorities, it leaves unanswered the grand question of what America's role in the world today should

be. Are we the same post-World War II power that crafted an international system that provided security, stability and predictability for decades, or are we a mere supporting actor on the world stage, content to react to events and crises rather than shape or resolve them? Should we remain the



Year 2018 request for the international affairs budget regrettably raised more questions than answers on the role of diplomacy and development.

The response by Congress to the request (and proposed 30 percent cut from the previous fiscal year) was one of genuine concern, not only for its potential impact on operations, personnel and assistance for key allies

world's sole superpower?

This is worth a national conversation. If a diminished role is preferred, the American people must be forewarned that weakened U.S. influence and soft power will most certainly translate into heightened global and regional insecurity and uncertainty as America's standing is repeatedly challenged by international competitors.

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) is chairman of the State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The Point of Organizational Reform

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and USAID Administrator Mark Green deserve recognition and support for listening to the suggestions and concerns of those they lead in order to more effectively adapt and “redesign” their respective agencies to this changing global environment. They must work together on this much needed modernizing effort. The Senate Appropriations Committee welcomes an empowered and relevant Department of State and USAID that takes into consideration the views of its career staff.

However, the ultimate success of any effort to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness comes from buy-in for proposed reforms by both diplomats and the Congress. This is an ongoing process in its early stages; but in the meantime, these agency heads owe it to their employees to provide clear and coherent direction, adequate resources and appropriate decision-making authority to further America’s national interests abroad.

There are many lessons learned from past organizational reform efforts, including that the 1990s cuts and hiring freezes may have saved money in the short term, but led to increased personnel costs down the line. We paid this price with the diplomatic and development surges for Afghanistan and Iraq following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

As important as it is to retain those

If a diminished role is preferred, the American people must be forewarned ...

with deep experience at Foggy Bottom, ensuring a steady inflow of entry-level diplomats and aid workers is also important. Let’s not forget that today’s second lieutenants are tomorrow’s majors and colonels. Equally important is an unequivocal commitment by the president and Congress to the security and welfare of our personnel posted abroad and on the frontlines.

I have made clear to Secretary Tillerson that I support his efforts to reform and modernize the Department of State. However, reform for reform’s sake is not the point. The Secretary must clarify his vision of the State Department’s role and operations in our national security architecture once it is reformed. The unknown factor is how soft power and diplomacy fit into a stronger military and a more aggressive fight against radical Islam.

Prepared for Challenges and Opportunities

Without a clearly defined strategy of ending conflict through diplomacy and having a presence to prevent vacuums

from being filled, a strong military response will be insufficient. Then-Commander of the U.S. Central Command General James Mattis said it best: “If you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.”

Finally, now is not the time to retreat from anticipated returns on investment from successful foreign assistance programs such as the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. In many countries, we have made measurable and impressive progress with respective foreign governments in combating diseases through PEPFAR and furthering good governance and the rule of law through the MCC.

In addition, America has been the undisputed leader as a humanitarian and pandemic first responder, whether in the Middle East, West Africa or Asia. It should not be lost on the American people that no one other country has the capabilities—or values—to project power, influence and assistance like America can.

The United States must be prepared for future challenges and opportunities in terms of both leadership and resources. As readers of *The Foreign Service Journal* know best, if we are flat-footed, Moscow and Beijing will be ready and willing to fill the leadership vacuum. America needs our diplomats and development specialists on the front lines today more than ever. ■

The Trump Doctrine and the Mattis Manifesto

President Donald Trump released his first “National Security Strategy” on Dec. 18, 2017. Breaking with tradition, he unveiled the document himself with a national address, hailing it as the “America First” foreign policy he had promised to deliver.

In the letter prefacing the document, President Trump asserts that the United States “faces an extraordinarily dangerous world, filled with a wide range of threats that have intensified in recent years.” The document emphasizes the importance of economic strength, secure borders and a strong military in meeting these threats.

Significantly, the NSS also underlines the vital importance of a vigorous diplomatic capability. At the same time, the NSS dismisses climate change and demotes human rights and democracy promotion as national security concerns.

Produced by White House National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster and his team, the document drew a vigorous response ranging from praise to denunciation and dismissal.

In an interesting exercise, the Brookings Institution’s Tarun Chhabra mapped the reactions of U.S. analysts, plotting assessments of the NSS overall against appraisals of the president’s impact on U.S. foreign policy, and drawing some preliminary observations from the result.

Elsewhere, Brookings experts offered a line-by-line annotation, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace took a close look at what the NSS means for democracy promotion.

In an expert brief for the Council on Foreign Relations, Max Boot called the new NSS “an eloquent summation of the United States’ role in the world and a principled exposition of what should be done to defend it.”

But, he added, echoing many others, “much of it is at odds with what the president himself believes.”

When it comes to the administration’s foreign policy, Colin Dueck argued in a Jan. 9 review of the NSS in *The National Interest*, a focus on “the signal, not the noise” is advisable.

National security professional and former U.S. ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter described the NSS as “not operational.” It contains neither decisions about foreign policy nor the budgetary appropriations to implement them, he noted.

Similarly dismissing the document’s practical significance, the CFR’s Rebecca Lissner argued for a new approach to the NSS “so that it fulfills its intended purpose—instead of simply camouflaging a perennially ad hoc foreign policy.”

Speaking at Johns Hopkins University’s Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies a month after the NSS debuted, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis offered insight into the strategy.

Announcing the completion of a new National Defense Strategy and warning “those who would threaten America’s experiment in democracy,” Mattis stated: “Work with our diplomats. You don’t want to fight the Department of Defense.”

More Senior Officials Leave Their Posts

The most senior FSO in the State Department, Career Ambassador Thomas Shannon, serving as under secretary of State for political affairs, announced his retirement on Feb. 1 in a letter to colleagues. Amb. Shannon has been seen as a bridge between the career Foreign Service and the Secretary of State, so his announcement heightens current anxieties about the depletion of the leadership ranks.

Just a month prior, on Dec. 27, another distinguished high-level State official announced his resignation: John Feeley, then serving as U.S. ambassador to Panama. Amb. Feeley, a Latin America specialist, joined the Foreign Service in 1990 after serving in the Marine Corps as a helicopter pilot.

His resignation letter, widely quoted in the press, stated: “I signed an oath to serve faithfully the president and his administration in an apolitical fashion. ... My instructors made it clear that if I believed I could not do that, I would be honor bound to resign. That time has come.”

Of Amb. Feeley’s resignation, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Steve Goldstein said: “Everyone has a line that they will not cross. If the ambassador feels that he can no longer serve...then he has made the right decision for himself, and we respect that.”

Other high-level officials were in the news as well. On Jan. 9, *Reuters* reported that Lawrence Bartlett, who was the head of refugee admissions in the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, was reassigned to the office that handles requests under the Freedom of Information Act (the FOIA office).

As *The Hill* reported on Jan. 9, some fear that the reassignment is part of a broader effort to halt efforts to resettle refugees within the United States. Others believe it is part of an effort to “exile” or push out FS members who served under the Obama administration.

On Jan. 27, both *The Hill* and CNN reported on a letter sent to the State Department Office of the Inspector General by Representatives Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) and Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) stating that “our staffs have been made aware of credible allegations that the State Department has required high-level career

civil servants, with distinguished records, serving administrations of both parties, to move to performing tasks outside their area of substantive expertise.”

“At the very least,” the lawmakers added, “this is a waste of taxpayer dollars. At worst it may constitute impermissible abuse and retaliation.”

Questions remain concerning the surge in assignments to the FOIA office.

State Reorganization: The Senate Weighs In

On Dec. 6, 2017, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee sent a letter to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson raising numerous concerns about the department’s planned reorganization.

The letter—signed by senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Christopher Coons (D-Del.), Tom Udall (D-N.M.), Christopher Murphy (D-Conn.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Edward Markey (D-Mass.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.)—argues that there is a need for increased transparency, including “details and a timeline.”

The lawmakers request that the Secretary provide a “justification for personnel losses and the continued hiring freeze,” citing AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson’s column in the December *Foreign Service Journal*, in which she argues that “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.”

The senators also write of their concern that “reorganization and budget pressures on the department are depleting one of the core instruments of U.S. national security,” noting that “the price will be paid in American security and prosperity for decades to come.” They ask that Secretary Tillerson take “immediate measures to

Contemporary Quote

ee As the U.S. seeks to lead in the world, the president is making important investments on the military side, investments that I support. ... But unless you accompany these military investments with political diplomatic investments, that stability that the military creates cannot be sustained. You have to work with the local community; you have to work with local leaders; you have to work with the international community to convert those military gains into long-term stability, prosperity for people—and that’s the job of the State Department.

And so, we’ll never get our troops out of Raqqa, we’ll never get them out of Afghanistan, if you don’t pair diplomacy and the military. So, that’s the worry, that there’s just not enough diplomacy out there, and America is ceding the field to others with their own, less advantageous plans for those parts of the world.

—*Career Ambassador (ret.) Victoria Nuland, speaking with journalist Susan Glasser on the Global Politico, Feb. 5.*

mitigate and reverse the damage.”

The letter points to broad implications of the hiring freeze, not just on morale but on the ability of the department to perform its core functions.

It questions the continued hiring freeze, including the problems associated with not fully lifting the freeze on family member employment; and raises concerns about the freeze in hiring of Boren Scholars and Fellows.

The senators express puzzlement at the “arbitrary goals to reduce the department’s workforce,” noting the department’s lack of an explanation for their efforts at streamlining the workforce.

“Not only do we have deep concerns about how State is seeking to achieve attrition goals,” the letter states, “we think that attrition as a strategy for managing a workforce is problematic because it does not allow management to control for the skills, experience and workforces that it actually needs. When dealing with national security, the potential costs of such a mismatch can be fatal.”

The legislators express alarm at the number of senior vacancies in critical

posts and note the historically low promotion numbers across all levels.

Ambassador Tracker

The new year started slowly as far as ambassadorial nominations are concerned. As of early February, only five new nominations had come forward since the holidays, with 19 nominations in various stages of Senate confirmation.

A total of 41 vacancies were reported at the same time. Vacant, in this instance, means that no one has been nominated or confirmed for the position of ambassador and the previous incumbent has left post.

Nominees for various senior posts at State and USAID were awaiting confirmation, including two under secretaries, six assistant secretaries and the nominee for Director General of the Foreign Service.

At press time, the only nominee confirmed so far this year was former Senator and Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, now serving as ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom.

Embassies without an ambassador—South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, to

SITE OF THE MONTH: *FOREIGNASSISTANCE.GOV*



ForeignAssistance.gov describes itself as “the U.S. government’s main tool for improving transparency in U.S. foreign assistance spending.” And, indeed, it delivers. More than 20 different U.S. government agencies manage aid to more than 100 countries around the world; the site allows users to see exactly where and how that aid is distributed.

ForeignAssistance.gov was initiated by the Department of State and USAID. The site’s data analysis tool is managed by State’s Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources. The data was curated by an interagency working group with representation from State, Defense, Agriculture, Commerce, USAID, and Millennium Challenge Corporation. The experts

use these indicators, which have been vetted for quality, in their own work.

The site includes numbers reported quarterly by government agencies. The figures for assistance are broken down according to whether the aid is “planned,” “obligated” or “spent.”

Users can examine the data by agency or by type of assistance (e.g., health, environment, humanitarian) or special project. Users can explore assistance data by country, sector, agency or year on an interactive map. It is also possible to download a complete set of data by country or agency.

name a few—are still being ably led by career diplomats acting as chiefs of mission or chargé d’affaires, but foreign governments take note when the ambassador post in their capital remains vacant.

Former Ambassadors to Trump: Reassess Your Views on Africa

On Jan. 16 the White House received a letter signed by 78 former ambassadors (which later rose to 85 signatories) who have collectively represented the United States in 48 different African nations over the past decade. The ambassadors wrote to express “deep concern” regarding reports that on Jan. 11 the president referred to African and other countries as “s---holes.”

As signatory John Campbell, a former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria, wrote in a Jan.

18 blog post for the Council on Foreign Relations, the letter “affirms the importance of the multidimensional partnerships the United States has with most African states, which range from business to security to conservation” and “makes the point that a close partnership with Africa is a matter of U.S. national security.”

On Jan. 19, *The New York Times* wrote about the diplomats who have to defend these types of statements to overseas allies. “The president’s rhetoric is so disrespectful that we’re losing the respect and relationships that we have spent decades building,” former Ambassador to Qatar Dana Shell Smith told the *Times*.

State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert responded that “the president said that he did not make those comments.” But U/S Goldstein had a different response, instructing U.S. diplomats

not to deny the remarks but to listen to U.S. partners’ concerns.

Excerpts from the letter follow:

“We write to express our deep concern regarding reports of your recent remarks about African countries and to attest to the importance of our partnerships with most of the 54 African nations.

“As American ambassadors abroad we have seen Africa’s complex and rich cultures, awe-inspiring resilience, and breathtaking generosity and compassion. ...

“We know that respectful engagement with these countries is a vital part of protecting our own national interests. The United States of America is safer, healthier, more prosperous and better equipped to solve problems that confront all of humanity when we work with, listen to and learn from our African partners.

“We hope that you will reassess your views on Africa and its citizens, and recognize the important contributions Africans and African Americans have made and continue to make to our country, our history, and the enduring bonds that will always link Africa and the United States.”

Dutch and Cover

U.S. ambassadors typically keep a low profile and are scarcely recognizable to the broader public in their countries. But within a week of presenting his credentials to King Willem-Alexander, Peter Hoekstra was notorious in the Netherlands.

On paper, Hoekstra was a good fit for the appointment, which he campaigned hard to secure. A Dutch American, he was born in the northern city of Groningen before emigrating to the United States when he was 3, and he still understands the language.

But as a Jan. 18 *Washington Post* article put it, “The new ambassador to The Hague might be Dutch American, but he’s not like anyone the Dutch ever met.”

President Trump's assault on American diplomacy and development continues unabated. The [2019] international affairs budget that Congress received today would further hollow out the State Department and USAID. Fortunately, it is Congress—not the president—that has power of the purse, and I urge my colleagues to join me in ensuring that like last year, these draconian cuts are dead on arrival to Capitol Hill.

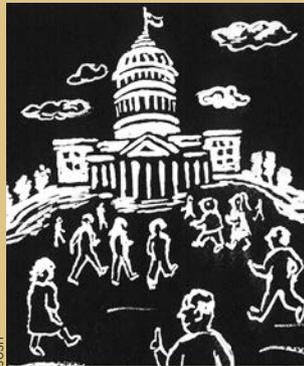
Retired generals and diplomats, Fortune 500 CEOs, and faith leaders came together last year to make clear the devastating impact that the Trump cuts would have on our global leadership. Just this morning, 151 retired three- and four-star generals and admirals came out in strong opposition to slashing the international affairs budget. The bottom line is that these cuts would make us less safe. They are a gift to countries like Russia and China who are already filling the void left by America's diminishing role in the world.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House of Representatives and Senate on a bipartisan basis to reject President Trump's cuts to the international affairs budget and put in place a budget that heeds the advice of civilian and military leaders alike by prioritizing diplomacy and development.

—Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), in a Feb. 12 press release on the proposed Fiscal Year 2019 international affairs budget.

Our military does have some very unique offensive and defensive capabilities in cyberspace and other agencies protect critical infrastructure, but it's our diplomats who

Heard on the Hill



work with our allies and partners to develop a common response to these threats while engaging our adversaries to make clear that cyber-attacks resulting in real world consequences will be viewed as a use of force. The importance of the State Department's work cannot be understated.

—Rep. Ed Royce (R-Calif.), at a Feb. 6 hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on “U.S. Cyber Diplomacy in an Era of Growing Threats.”

The only reason we have gone 17 years without another attack the size of 9/11 is because of the hard work of our intel agencies, FBI and diplomatic corps. ... We have to counter violent extremism with the help of all agencies, including the State Department.

—Rep. Will Hurd (R-Texas), at a Feb. 5 panel discussion on cyber and homeland security at George Washington University.

The women and men of the State Department have long been some of our strongest assets in representing the United States at the table to negotiate peace and to make it possible for Americans to sleep soundly at night. Under this administration, they have weakened our State Department and confused our allies. We should be concerned that, once a leader, the United States is rapidly becoming a pariah on the international stage and that does not make us safer.

—Rep. William Keating (D-Mass.), at a joint subcommittee hearing on North Korea's chemical, biological and conventional weapons, Jan. 17.

Hoekstra has long been opposed to gay rights and abortion, and is an outspoken skeptic about climate change—all views that put him well outside the Dutch mainstream.

The Dutch political establishment was also well aware that back in 2015 Hoekstra, a former Republican congressman from Michigan, told a conference on terrorism that immigrants from Muslim countries had brought

“chaos” to Europe and created “no-go” zones in the Netherlands, even “burning politicians.” He repeated those false claims during appearances on “Fox and Friends” and other media outlets.

Journalists called to Ambassador Hoekstra's first news conference on Jan. 10 expected him to clear the air. He did not.

The ambassador finally apologized in a Jan. 12 interview with *De Telegraaf*, asserting that he had “mixed up countries” when

he made his claims. As part of a miniature rehabilitation tour, two days later Hoekstra paid a visit to one of those purported zones of fear, the immigrant-rich Schilderswijk area of The Hague

Under heavy guard, he met with local police, walked through an outdoor market and sat with a local Moroccan Dutch business owner, Appie el Massaoudi, who gives jobs hauling trash and recycling to local youths at risk of radicalization.

“We welcomed him with open arms. We showed him that there’s nothing here like no-go zones,” said Massaoudi, who sat Hoekstra down in his spartan office warmed by a space heater. “He was a very open person, and you could have a good conversation with him.”

Time for Real Estate 101?

In a Jan. 11 tweet, President Donald Trump announced that he had canceled his trip to Britain, scheduled for February, ostensibly because he was unhappy with the new U.S. embassy in London. He accused the Obama administration of making a “bad deal” for an “off location.”

Many Brits dismissed that as an excuse, suggesting instead the president was worried his arrival in London would be greeted by mass protests. Other sources suggested Trump was miffed that Prime Minister Theresa May had reportedly downgraded the state visit to a working trip, which meant he probably would not have had a private audience with Queen Elizabeth II.

Regardless of the motivation, those involved in the relocation of the U.S. embassy in London say Trump, a former real estate mogul in New York City, has a poor understanding of the deal.

The old U.S. embassy in London was in the heart of the posh Mayfair neighborhood near other foreign embassies. But as Ambassador (ret.) Richard LeBaron, who served as deputy chief of mission in London from 2007 to 2010, explains in a September 2017 FSJ article, “A New Citizen of London Shines on the Other Side of the Thames,” the move was simply unavoidable. The U.S. government could no longer properly secure or economically renovate the building, which was vulnerable to attacks.

After a long search, LeBaron notes,

the Nine Elms neighborhood got the nod for the new embassy. The building is as close to 10 Downing Street and the Foreign Office as the Mayfair site was, and has a view of Parliament, as well. And although it is the first foreign embassy to be constructed on the south bank of the Thames, other governments are following suit.

The new London embassy, which opened its doors to the public on Jan. 16, is undeniably a showstopper in its own right—a 12-story glass cube without visible walls. Designer James Timberlake said he wanted the building to exude “transparency, openness, equality.”

Woody Johnson, current U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James’s, has also strongly defended his new workplace. “Purchased and built from the sale of our London properties, the new embassy did not cost the U.S. taxpayer a cent, yet it is one of the most advanced embassies we have ever built,” Johnson declared in a Jan. 12 article for the *London Evening Standard*.

Senators Ask State and USAID for Data on Sexual Harassment

In the wake of the #MeTooNatSec open letter by more than 200 female national security professionals on Nov. 28, 2017, U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), along with the other Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,



The new U.S. Embassy London is a showstopper.

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT/OBO

wrote to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and USAID Administrator Mark Green. They requested an analysis of all pertinent data on sexual harassment and assault at both agencies in order to better understand the scope of the problem.

Signed by the 10 Democrats on the SFRC, the Jan. 17 letter states that such incidents and the culture that excuses them have a negative effect on national security.

The legislators request Secretary Tillerson and Administrator Green to “provide the Foreign Relations Committee a review of your current methods for data collection, oversight, reporting structure, victim protections, analysis and anti-sexual harassment training” so that the committee can “better understand the scope of the problem we confront as we consider appropriate policy changes to address it.”

They note that U.S. diversity is “not reflected in the national security workforce.” At the State Department, they write, women and men enter the Service in roughly comparable numbers, but only one-third of Senior Foreign Service officers are women.

50 Years Ago

PPBS [Planning Programming Budgeting System] and Foreign Affairs

I respond with diffidence, as anyone must, to your invitation to comment on PPBS [Planning Programming Budgeting System] in relation to foreign affairs. Foreign affairs is a complicated and disorderly business, full of surprises, demanding hard choices that must often be based on judgment rather than analysis, involving relations with more than a hundred countries diverse in their traditions and political institutions—all taking place in a world that changes so rapidly that memory and experience are quickly out of date. Coordination, integration and rational management are surely desirable; but whether it is humanly possible to meet anything more than the barest minimum standards is a question to which an optimistic answer can be based only on faith. ...



The budget does not yet exist to which PPBS might be applied in the field of foreign affairs. When Secretary [of Defense Robert] McNamara assumed office he was at least 15 years ahead of where the Secretary of State is now in having a recognized budget. There is a "Defense Budget;" there is not a "Foreign Affairs Budget."

—Dr. Thomas C. Schelling, from testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations.

(Note: At the time, Dr. Schelling was a professor of economics at Harvard University and a consultant to the Department of State, the Department of Defense and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.)

On Sept. 30, 2017, the State Department's Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR) released data indicating that there have been six complaints of sexual harassment under the Equal Employment Opportunity law brought to them in Fiscal Year 2017—there were eight such charges in Fiscal Year 2015 and three in Fiscal Year 2016.

However, those statistics do not include the other more common avenue for addressing harassment: namely, the administrative inquiry. Under the FAM, any allegation of sexual or racial harassment must be reported to S/OCR, which then conducts an investigation and writes a report that is forwarded to the

relevant offices for possible disciplinary action by the department.

Through this process, employees can be—and are being—disciplined for the inappropriate comments, bad conduct and poor judgement that characterize sexual harassment.

On Feb. 12, speaking to U.S. embassy staff in Cairo (and in a Feb. 13 letter to employees), Secretary Tillerson urged employees to intervene if they witness sexual harassment. ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Donna Gorman, Steve Honley, Dmitry Filipoff, Asgeir Sigfussón and Susan Maitra.



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Families with Special Needs Kids Need Support

BY KATHI SILVA

Raising children in the Foreign Service is a lot like gardening—we provide a rich environment for our children with all the right conditions and hope they will bloom. But as gardeners know, there is a lot of adapting and adjusting to whatever conditions may arise, and our plants don't always grow in ways we expect.

Good gardeners do what they can to establish strong roots, provide a rich environment of support for their growing plants and create a plan and a system that responds to unpredictable factors out of their control. For families with special needs children, this system is even more important.

In recent years the number of children in the United States diagnosed with special needs is rising, and this trend is also seen within the State Department. Until a few years ago, thanks to a positive relationship with the Office of Medical Services (MED, now the Bureau of Medical Services) and the support and flexibility MED gave us to “grow our gardens,” the experience of raising a special needs child overseas was mostly a positive one.

As international schools become more

inclusive and tele-therapy gains in popularity, there are more options than ever before to address special needs overseas. Thus, the challenges for families with special needs children overseas should be increasingly manageable.

Yet for the past couple of years the experience of Foreign Service families with special needs children has been the opposite.

Why Reduce Support?

In the June 2016 *Foreign Service Journal*, Maureen Danzot and Mark Evans wrote an important Speaking Out column about the fact that parents were increasingly having a hard time accessing Special Needs Education Allowance (known as SNEA) funds and getting a say in the medical clearance options for their children. Since then, there have been numerous actions on behalf of, and by, disgruntled parents in an effort to resolve these concerns.

A parent advocacy group, the Foreign Service Families with Disabilities Alliance, was created in 2016 with the goal of providing a unified voice for families dealing with MED issues. When the alli-

ance's suggestions were not answered and the number and types of complaints were serious enough, AFSA got involved by writing memos and attending meetings with MED to mediate parents' complaints.

The State Department Office of Civil Rights is addressing a complaint from a Foreign Service employee who argues that some of MED's current practices are disadvantaging Foreign Service members whose dependents have special needs. This, he says, is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The case is likely to open the door to many similar complaints.

On Oct. 29, 2017, a *Washington Post* article by Jackie Spinner, “State Department support for diplomats with children with disabilities is contracting,” brought public attention to the issue. One month later, Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) sent a letter to the State Department questioning the “troubling” plans to cut support for Foreign Service families with special needs children. Congress has also requested briefings from the State Department, and MED in particular, on special needs issues.

The disenfranchisement of Foreign Service families by MED, and the seemingly haphazard way it is handling clearances and educational allowances for our special needs children, have gone public. More people are aware of the problem, but has anything changed? Not in the direction families were hoping.



Kathi Silva is married to a Foreign Service officer; they have served together in Montevideo, Belgrade, Caracas, Pretoria, Paris and Washington, D.C. She has worked as a freelance editor, a USAID contractor and a Community Liaison Office assistant at previous posts and is currently completing a master's degree online. Kathi and her husband have three children, two of whom have led her into a new world of children with disabilities and given her more than 15 years of experience raising happy, resilient, special needs diplokids.

Problems Grow

Families are feeling even more frustrated as the problems continue to build and MED remains silent. It's not only nearly impossible to work with MED to develop flexible solutions, parents say, it is also getting harder to get accurate information about how MED makes its decisions and what, if any, procedures it is following. There is also a problem with appealing decisions, as there is no good appeals procedure in place.

Parents are facing increasing pressure to keep their children in the United States, often having to choose between their career or keeping the family together. For instance, Class 5 medical clearances, which restrict the child to living in the United States, are becoming more commonplace. In many cases, dependents are given Class 5 in spite of their doctor's opinion that they would be fine overseas, and despite the fact that the parents have provided evidence that they can obtain the services they need at post.

Some parents say this is an "easy way out" for MED, since the family is no longer its responsibility once they have been forced to return stateside. One Foreign Service parent navigating the SNEA complexities offered a possible explanation: "My impression is that MED has a chronic staffing shortage, and their response is to lighten case workload by pressuring or forcing folks to return to D.C. for PCS [permanent change of station] assignments."

The disconnect between MED and the families they serve is greater than ever. Whereas each family used to be assigned a case worker to deal with directly, today any inquiries go to a MED distribution

group and are answered with an auto reply. One parent noted that this "hide-and-peek" makes it difficult to plan—whether it is for SNEA travel, PCS or authorization for a new therapy.

Parents who have worked with MED for many years and have had clear, longstanding and previously approved support must now wait for months to get answers, and they are often shocked to learn that MED has arbitrarily cut the services that had been supporting their children in years past, services that allowed them to live successfully overseas.

Other parents say MED leaves them feeling like bad parents, blaming them for irresponsibly taking their children abroad. Many parents feel that MED is no longer helpful or concerned about their child's welfare, and they are desperate for changes in how the system is currently running.

MED has not responded to several requests to explain its side of the story, claiming the bureau is too short-staffed to take the time to address these issues, which they feel have already been addressed. Leaving families with an information vacuum while the backlog grows and decisions about our children are made, seemingly arbitrarily and without our input, is not helping at all.

Besides causing unnecessary stress and strain on families, this situation has caused several families I've spoken with to rethink their careers in the Foreign Service. As one Foreign Service mother explained: "I have 16 years in the Foreign Service, but I am honestly considering quitting after this tour. I don't want to be held hostage to MED anymore." Potential new hires will think twice about joining if their families won't be supported.

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Parents are facing increasing pressure to keep their children in the United States, often having to choose between their career or keeping the family together.

To Fix the System, Build a Partnership

The current head of MED's Office of Child and Family Programs, Kathy Gallardo, wrote in the September 2016 *Foreign Service Journal*: "All CFP processes work best when there is a true partnership between parents, Foreign Service medical officers overseas and the various administrative components in

the department positioned domestically and abroad."

We parents wholeheartedly agree, but we also believe that Dr. Gallardo's words must be translated into action, as this is definitely a broken part of the system.

MED should partner with regional medical officers/psychiatrists (RMO/Ps), the Office of Overseas Schools and outside experts in their fields to create a

panel within MED to determine SNEA eligibility and clearances.

Parents should be allowed to share what they feel is best for their children, and this information should carry weight in the decision process. There needs to be a transparent and fair appeals process when parents disagree with MED's clearance decision, and that appeal needs to be outside of MED's authority.

Develop SOPs and Public Guidelines

MED's unwritten changes in policy and the consequent negative effects, as well as the current information vacuum, are causing harmful speculation and frustration. New and veteran Foreign Service members alike are confused and frustrated by the lack of information or the mixed information they receive. There are no standard operating procedures to help families navigate. There has been no formal change in the regulations to which parents can refer for guidance.

Parents should be able to access written guidelines on how, when and with whom to coordinate the needs of their children. Procedures should not change in the middle of bidding season or without sufficient time for parents to adjust to new guidelines. There should be proper procedures in place to appeal MED decisions, as well.

If staffing shortages are an issue, MED should seek out impartial consultation on how to streamline procedures or reduce workload without sacrificing quality of service.

How to Keep Families Overseas

MED should be more open-minded and look at the whole picture of the family's health and well-being. In many cases, for example, a small, international



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school in a country where kindness is valued over competition will be a better environment for a child with learning difficulties than a large public school in the United States. Moreover, modern technology has made it possible for children to receive tele-therapy from anywhere in the world, and this should be a viable option reimbursable with SNEA.

The affordability of housekeepers or other help at many overseas posts gives parents more time to dedicate to their special needs children, and this quality of life issue is an important part of the equation.

MED's unwritten changes in policy, and the consequent negative effects on Foreign Service families with special needs children, have been an ongoing issue for almost two years now, with no sign of improvement. State is at risk of losing valuable employees who are not willing to sacrifice their family's well-being or their rights as parents to have a say in what is best for their children.

To date there has been no explanation of the changes and no evidence that they are due to budgetary issues, abuses of the previous system or a need to streamline bureaucracy. We are left with too many unanswered questions, and the frustration is mounting.

Parents are not asking for the moon and the stars. We just want our voices to be heard and respected. We want to be able to serve our country as members of the Foreign Service, knowing that our families have the support they need. Give us back the customer service, empowerment and flexibility that we used to enjoy with MED. We need these tools to help our gardens flourish. ■

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ENDING HARASSMENT

#StateToo

AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT

The problem of sexual harassment is persistent and real at State. It's time for meaningful change.

BY LESLIE BASSETT

I joined the Foreign Service in 1982, just a decade after women officers were no longer required to resign upon marriage. During my first tour I rebuffed the advances of a married male superior and—I thought—friend, who showed up uninvited at my home on his birthday, unexpectedly stuck his tongue in my mouth and assumed we would have sex as his present. When I declined, I was excluded from meetings and professional opportunities as he very publicly shunned me at both official and private events. I told no one.

As I worked hard and rose up the ranks, supported by mentors both male and female, I thought the stereotyping receded—though never vanished—in the face of my performance. Until the night when, as deputy chief of mission, I took a late-night phone call from my boss, the ambassador. He was drunk and wanted to know what I was wearing.



Leslie Bassett retired recently from the Senior Foreign Service. A former U.S. ambassador to Paraguay, she has also served as deputy chief of mission in Seoul, Manila, Mexico City and Gaborone. She last wrote for the Journal in July/August 2017. Note: The quotes in the text

boxes were provided in confidence to the author by former colleagues she respects and knows well. The comments are from six current State Department employees describing recent experiences.

At this time, like no other before in our history, the State Department team needs to work as one to defend our institution and the value of diplomacy. The global #MeToo campaign, created by social activist Tarana Burke, highlights just how widespread sexual assault and harassment are in the workplace, and State is no exception.

Our institutional culture has tolerated deep-seated prejudices of many kinds, including against women. The problem of sexual harassment and even assault is persistent; it is real; and it needs to be addressed. We can't wait any longer to make meaningful change.

The "Normal" Work Environment

When I took my oath as an officer, the State Department was in the final throes of its decade-long battle to defeat Alison Palmer's sex discrimination suit through two different appellate courts, a battle the department finally lost in 1985. Mitigation began, including optional sexual harassment training, but the reception was mixed. (In 1986, Palmer filed a class-action lawsuit that wasn't settled until 2010.) Many thought that the rising numbers of women in the State Department would promote institutional change.

I thought so too. But as I progressed in my career, I found that sexual harassment and stereotyping was part of the "normal"

work environment. I hoped that competence, good performance and exemplary conduct would challenge the bias ingrained in State's culture. I corrected colleagues when I could, offered mentoring to others, and tried to be the change I wanted to see in the world. But even as bias and harassment continued, I made no formal complaints. I learned to shrug it off, make a joke and avoid the troublemakers. But I said nothing. In an institution where "corridor reputation" drives assignments and opportunity, the cost of being a troublemaker was high, and the professional consequences grave.

#StateToo



Three departing first-tour female officers asked to meet with three of us senior women at post.

They wanted to know if this first tour was typical of what to expect from a career in the Foreign Service. They asked us if it was appropriate for a married member of the country team to ask junior officers or technical staff out on dates—even if there were no apparent repercussions for saying no.

Was the debate at post over whether members of the country team could frequent a local strip joint that was deemed off-limits for military members of the embassy typical? Is it appropriate for a senior member of the country team to engage in a sexual relationship with an adult dependent of a direct subordinate?



#StateToo



I have a co-worker who almost every time we interact feels the need to remind me that he thinks we should date because I have "a nice ass"—despite the fact that I made it clear that I am not interested years ago.



I wasn't alone. In 1992 the State Department released results of a survey on sexual harassment in which 51 percent of the 4,000 American Foreign Service employees who responded described it as "a problem for both males and females." Thirty-four percent of respondents agreed they would be labeled a "troublemaker" if they reported inappropriate comments, gestures or touching, while 38 percent said they would not report it. Some 18 percent of female and 4 percent of male respondents claimed to have actually experienced harassment at the department.

Since then women have made progress both in promotions and influence, in many cases thanks to the support and mentoring of both female and male colleagues. Yet when I joined the more than 200 women who signed the November 2017 letter protesting sexual harassment in the national security sector—#metoonatsec—I wasn't looking backward at my career. I was looking directly at what is happening now in the Department of State. These leading foreign policy experts, academics and practitioners, including 112 former or current State Department colleagues, noted, "We, too, are survivors of sexual harassment, assault and abuse or know others who are."

A Complex Process

Part of the problem in dealing with sexual harassment is the fact that the State Department's disciplinary system is "complex and somewhat disjointed," as a November 2014 Office of the



I volunteered to escort congressional delegation members to the airport as

they were departing from an official visit to post. I arrived at their hotel on a Saturday morning about half an hour before our scheduled departure and was waiting in the lobby when I noticed the congressman at the bar. I went over and introduced myself, and let him know that we needed to leave in 30 minutes.

He put his arm around my shoulder and asked if I wanted a drink. “No, thank you,” I told him and tried to pull away. He pulled me closer, wrapped his arm a little tighter and said, more insistently, “C’mon, have a cocktail. He can put orange juice in it; it’s like breakfast.” I declined again and pulled away more firmly.

After several refusals, and his continued insistence, I finally said, “I can’t drink. I’m still nursing my youngest.” With his hand still on my arm, he turned to me, pulled me closer, looked pointedly down my shirt and said, “Oh yeah, wow, I can see that.”



Inspector General report, “Review of the Department of State Disciplinary Process,” put it. As OIG noted, the process “can involve a half dozen department offices and non-department agencies, department and non-department appeals entities and investigative entities, private attorneys, unions and professional associations, and the charged employee.”

The Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR) is the starting point for complaints of harassment or discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age or other identity factors. S/OCR handles formal complaints filed under the Equal Employment Opportunity law, in addition to overseeing the administrative inquiry process that is required when the office receives any allegation of sexual or racial harassment. Formal EEO complaints, which carry a much higher burden of proof, are fewer. But under the FAM any allegation of sexual (or racial) harassment can and must be reported to S/OCR, and that office is mandated to conduct an administrative inquiry into the allegations that could lead to disciplinary action.

On receiving a complaint of sexual or racial harassment, S/OCR conducts an investigation and, in turn, submits a “Report

of Investigation,” without a recommendation, for evaluation and action to four offices: (1) Human Resources/Employee Relations/Conduct, Suitability and Discipline (HR/ER/CSD); (2) Diplomatic Security; (3) the executive office of the relevant bureau; and (4) post management, depending on the complainant’s location and hiring category. Sexual assault complaints, which are matters of criminal law, are referred immediately to DS for investigation, and DS handles any other complaints that have security clearance implications.

During the last several years cases pursued and disciplinary action taken through the administrative inquiry process have increased significantly. In the last five years the Foreign Service Grievance Board (the last forum for appeal of department administrative sanctions by members of the Foreign Service) has denied appeals filed by employees facing discipline for inappropriate comments, inappropriate behavior and poor judgment. Such cases have involved, for instance, an officer who “made sexually inappropriate remarks and engaged in offensive touching behaviors”; an officer whose unwanted attentions drove a locally employed (LE) staff member to seek resignation; an engineer who harassed a contractor; and a management officer who harassed LE staff, local contract staff and household staff. Generally the grievants in these cases outranked their victim(s).

While the department is cracking down on inappropriate sexual comments, language and behavior, nothing has been done to shield the complainants or victims from gossip, professional repercussions and potentially more serious consequences. Further, the OIG report on State’s disciplinary process cited previously noted—though acknowledging efforts to address the issue—that as of November 2014 the lack of consistent, common tracking and reporting across the disciplinary system could result in a wide variation in times to resolution and consistent statements of decision.

The combination of complex processes, inadequate accountability at senior levels, a lack of training and other issues means that repeat offenders can continue to abuse.

In an institution where “corridor reputation” drives assignments and opportunity, the cost of being a troublemaker was high, and the professional consequences grave.



Principal deputy assistant secretary visiting post: married, white male, 50s. After a no-host dinner and drinks with embassy staff, he says to me, the control officer, “OK, it’s time to go to bed”—in front of everyone. His staffer (male, 30s, Civil Service) and I went in motor pool car to take him back to hotel. Men in back, me up front with driver. Halfway to hotel, PDAS claps me on shoulder and says, “Hey, where are the girls around here? Oh wait, you won’t know that.”



A Clear Mandate for Change

In June 2015, the Office of the Inspector General reported that while formal sexual harassment complaints had almost tripled from 88 in Fiscal Year 2011 to 248 in Fiscal Year 2014, there was a need for senior department officials to “emphasize the need for timely action” and “hold individuals accountable” in these cases. In its report, “Inspection of the Office of Civil Rights,” the OIG also pointed to the lack of mandatory harassment training for all employees.



Locally employed staff members are uniquely vulnerable to sexual harassment at overseas missions. After I became an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor I was dismayed to discover there are limited remedies under the current EEO system for LE staff to pursue. They are precluded from filing formal complaints and must instead engage in mediation sessions.

There is little incentive to come forward, and these women often feel they have everything to lose. While retaliation is prohibited, the onus is on victims to bring forward another complaint alleging retaliation. Furthermore, many LE staff are afraid that they will be subject to office gossip and loss of reputation.



The State Department should adopt and implement a “no tolerance” policy for sexual harassment, abuse and assault.

The November 2014 OIG report on State’s disciplinary process cited previously had also found that there was a lack of supervisor accountability for employee misconduct related to sexual harassment, that guides for supervisors in handling misconduct needed updating, that there was no policy requiring recusal of key offices involved in assault or harassment investigations when the accused was one of their own, and that the department at various levels delayed at least some investigations into sexual assault or misbehavior. The OIG recommended, among other things, that HR revise the Decision Criteria for Tenure and Promotion in the Foreign Service to include the responsibility to deal with misconduct. The OIG also made a number of recommendations to improve procedures, including full implementation of a common tracking and reporting system.

State has taken too long to address these challenges. It was not until December 2015 that DS security clearance questionnaires provided an exemption for survivors of sexual assault who had sought mental health counseling related to their attack. (They no longer need to disclose that they sought counseling.) And although regulations and internal standard operating procedures concerning sexual assaults involving chief-of-mission personnel and facilities outside the United States have been in place for some time, particularly on the DS side, as of June 2017 they were for the first time brought together as a comprehensive, standalone provision of the Foreign Affairs Manual (3 FAM 1710).

Now the global #MeToo campaign has intensified the spotlight on the problem. And in Jan. 12 remarks to State Department colleagues, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson specifically spoke out against sexual harassment, enjoined supervisors to ensure respectful workplaces and promised that worldwide sexual harassment training would be completed by June 1 of this year. On Jan. 17, Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee sent a letter to Secretary Tillerson and USAID Administrator Mark Green regarding sexual harassment and abuse in the agencies, noting: “These incidents and the pervasive culture that all too frequently excuses these behaviors and actions have had serious and detri-

mental consequences for the careers and lives of those affected and, by depriving the United States of the service of some of our best and brightest, a deep and negative effect on our national security.”

The mandate is clear.

What State Must Do

The State Department should adopt and implement a “no tolerance” policy for sexual harassment, abuse and assault. It should create a special committee, which includes representation from various hiring categories, ranks and bureaus, to investigate all forms of sexual harassment within the State Department and create actionable recommendations on institutional reform within a reasonable time-frame. To provide institutional remedies:

- Fully implement the policies on sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- Update employee handbooks.
- Require mandatory, ongoing sexual harassment training.
- Hold supervisors accountable for maintaining respectful workplaces.
- Ensure prompt processing of harassment/assault complaints by responsible offices.
- Establish a recusal policy for HR, DS, the Bureau of Medical Services and OIG when asked to investigate harassment or assault by their own employees.
- Improve resources and support for employees, family members, LE staff and contractors who face sexual harassment or assault.

The combination of complex processes, inadequate accountability at senior levels, a lack of training and other issues means that repeat offenders can continue to abuse.

- Create a separate, confidential and responsive channel for victims to report sexual assault and receive physical and mental support.
- Impose transparent penalties against perpetrators that factor in the severity and frequency of the harassment, including penalties such as suspension, criminal charges, revocation of security clearance and separation.
- Provide statistical information on complaints and outcomes.
- Conduct vigorous and timely investigations of sexual assault reports and provide accurate statistical reporting of cases/time-lines/outcomes.
- Reinvalidate the Federal Women’s Program at all State facilities.

What You Can Do

Each of us must do our part to make safe, respectful workplaces the norm in the State Department’s many outposts in the United States and around the world:

- Firmly protest and report discrimination, harassment, abuse and stereotyping—not only when it happens to you, but also when it happens to anyone else.
- Recognize that assault happens and take active measures to support and protect assault victims.
- Proactively contribute to a workplace environment that empowers everyone. Reject off-color jokes, discussion about physical attributes, stereotyping and labeling.
- Be alert to power dynamics that underlie harassment.
- Treat everyone with the respect you would like to receive from them.

It’s time for us to start talking to one another, supporting one another and building a workforce where everyone feels heard, respected and safe. It’s time to change the habits that are making us weaker at a time when American diplomacy needs our united strength and commitment. ■

#StateToo



While I was serving overseas, a male Civil Service colleague thought nothing of engaging a high-level foreign counterpart on what was then his recently acquired online Japanese girlfriend. This took place during an official meeting, and the central part of their conversation was how Asian women have small vaginas so the sex is better. This included the Egyptian counterpart making a small “o” hand signal to illustrate his perception about Asian women.

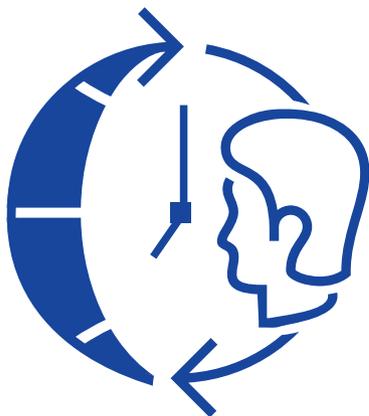


Still Waiting

Family Member Employment Today

FS family members and posts feel the impact of not being able to fill many essential positions.

BY DEBRA BLOME



With all that is going on today in the world of diplomacy and the Foreign Service, it may not seem like the right time to look at how the continued hiring freeze is affecting family member employ-

ment. Family members, after all, were never guaranteed jobs to begin with, as some of the less sympathetic comments on social media have pointed out.

But the reality is that there are many excellent reasons for the State Department to employ Foreign Service family members. As the *FSJ* pointed out in “Out in the Cold: How the Hiring Freeze Is Affecting Family Member Employment” (July-August 2017), hiring eligible family members (EFMs) is not just good for morale. It makes financial sense, as family members fill key jobs that keep embassies and consulates functioning at very low cost to the State Department.

The executive branch civilian hiring freeze (which included EFM jobs) announced in the Presidential Memorandum of Jan. 23, 2017, is still in place for EFM positions (and the State Department), even though it was lifted months ago for most other agencies. Hundreds of waivers have been granted, but the blanket freeze remains in place as of this writing.



Debra Blome is an EFM currently posted abroad with her FSO husband. To cope with the hiring freeze, she is expanding the number of hours she volunteers, working on a collection of short stories, writing freelance articles and hitting the gym more regularly.

Secretary Tillerson promised to end the hiring freeze for EFMs in 2018 and return the authority to bureaus and posts to make decisions on what they need.

At his Dec. 12 town hall meeting on the “redesign,” Secretary of State Rex Tillerson promised to “end the hiring freeze [for EFMs] in 2018 and return the authority to bureaus and posts to make decisions on what they need for eligible family members.” At the same town hall, Secretary Tillerson also said he would “expand the opportunities by expanding the use of the EPAP [Expanded Professional Associates Program],” saying that “this is a talent pool that we should be using.”

As of mid-February, the latest update to the Family Liaison Office hiring freeze information web page, on Dec. 29, 2017, notes only the town hall announcements of the end to the EFM hiring freeze and promises to share guidance as it is released.

Soon after the town hall meeting, we were told by several sources that bureaus were given the authority to manage EFM positions and were authorized to fill up to 50 percent of their bureau-wide EFM vacancies, with the bureaus deciding which posts would fill which EFM jobs. (For example, some bureaus may decide to fill all of the EFM slots at one post and none at another.) However, at this writing no announcement has been made about when, or if, the bureaus will be able to fill the remaining 50 percent of EFM jobs.

There has been recent movement on the Secretary’s town hall promise of expanding EPAP. As of Jan. 17 the FLO webpage on the program displays guidance on how to prepare for the 2018 spring/summer EPAP vacancy announcement, and includes a “checklist” for preparing documents, as well as a table outlining the new job qualification standards.

The checklist notes that, because of the new qualification standards, all previously qualified—and even working—professional associates will have to *requalify* for all future EPAP positions and go through the entire application process again. The new standards are more rigid and some are impractically high (a Ph.D. in business is required for an EPAP position in financial management with the rank of FP-3, for example). In the flurry of comments on social media after these guidelines were announced, many questioned the reason for these changes to a program that, though too small to make a big difference in the EFM employment pool, seemed to be working.

In the meantime, while Foreign Service family members wait

for at least half of the possible mission jobs to open up, how are they coping?

Freeze Exacerbates a Longstanding Problem

For the most part, spouses and partners of Foreign Service members are a resilient bunch. They follow their employee partners to far-flung posts where, for a variety of reasons (lack of bilateral work agreements, language or security barriers, and low local wages, to name a few), it’s not always possible to find employment on the local economy. For those who want to work, employment inside the mission is often the most appealing—and sometimes the only—option.

However, there have never been nearly enough jobs to go around. The most recently available report on family member employment, released by the State Department’s Family Liaison Office in April 2017, shows that while there were 12,064 adult family members stationed overseas, there were only 3,374 inside-the-mission positions open to EFMs. Granted, not all 12,000 EFMs are looking for work; still, there are far more EFMs than mission jobs available to them. The hiring freeze isn’t creating a new problem—it is exacerbating an existing one.

For this reason, perhaps, many of the resources created by FLO and available through the Transition Center at the Foreign Service Institute guide family members to consider “portable careers” and entrepreneurship. But becoming your own boss isn’t easy, and doing so while abroad in the Foreign Service, where you can’t use the mail for business purposes and sometimes your own home is even deemed off-limits, is even harder. Also, any employment or outside activity done while at post must be approved by the chief of mission, and the rules vary from post to post, depending upon who is interpreting them. It can be a cumbersome and time-consuming stumbling block, depending on the post and its management, and something a few EFM business owners queried for this article chafed at.

Turning to Social Media for Support

EFMs have taken to social media to share interests, explore ideas, network and lend support using the most valuable resource available to them—each other. Undoubtedly, they

Resources for the Out-of-Work EFM

There are many resources for family members seeking employment or education, but it can be hard to locate them. Here are some of the more useful sites.

- **FLO Family Member Employment webpage.** This page includes the latest updates on the status of the hiring freeze as well as links to FLO information on employment overseas and in the United States, including the **Foreign Service Reserve Corps**, the **Global Employment Initiative**, the **Expanded Professional Associates Program**, and the **Professional Development Fellowship program**. This should be the first stop for EFMs looking to work or start their own businesses.

- **FLO Training, Workshops & Distance Learning webpage.** FLO lists options for government-sponsored career and personal training available to certain family members. It includes the **Career Development Resource Center**, located in Washington, D.C., which offers seminars on employment and career strengthening. It also includes a link to the **Transition Center at the Foreign Service Institute** training course list, which includes three FSI-based courses available to family members and four webinars on portable careers. Check out the **Family Member Training Options** section, which includes a link to the Foreign Service Institute and a comprehensive Family Member Training Flowchart. This page also includes information on distance learning opportunities at FSI, language training at post, and functional training for EFMs.

- **Portable Careers Webinar Series: Employment Options (MQ707, MQ708, MQ709, MQ710) webpage.** In addition to describing each of the webinars on portable careers available to EFMs for free, this page includes links to 28 different internet resources covering topics from “12 Tips for Naming Your Startup” to “Six Tax Tips All Independent Contractors Must Know,” as well as job search platforms and telework sites. It is also a great place to find all the links to the regulations in the Foreign Affairs Manual that outline the rules and restrictions on employment and outside activities.

- **FLO Employment Publications and Resources webpage.** Many of the links on this page are also located

on other FLO pages, but this page efficiently collects all of the links to publications FLO has produced on overseas employment (both inside and outside the mission) and employment when returning to the United States. It also includes links to publications that cover employment options during an evacuation.

- **FLO Global Employment Initiative webpage.** This page fully explains the GEI program and what they can and cannot do. Currently, 16 Global Employment advisers (GEAs) cover more than 200 posts. Family members overseas should contact their post’s CLO for contact information for their region’s GEA. GEAs run their own Facebook groups and organize webinars and local career development workshops.

- **FLO Global Employment Initiative LinkedIn Group** (685 members).

- **Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) EFM Employment Resources.** This page lists job boards and social media groups that are useful to both U.S.-based and overseas EFMs.

- **FSHub.org.** AAFSW’s FSHub is billed as a “comprehensive gateway to all Foreign Service community support resources.” It contains links to resources on a gamut of topics, from FS-oriented social media and life at post to finances and legal resources. **The Employment for Spouses, Partners and Retirees** page includes links to career development resources, social media and networking groups, and volunteer opportunities.

- **Serving Talent.** This is an employment agency created by and designed for military and Foreign Service spouses. They bill themselves as “the first boutique recruiting agency for professional U.S. military and Foreign Service spouses.” Their website is also a great place to find further career development resources, including links to **“25 Sites for Finding the Best Remote Jobs”** and a link to a FLO-produced document (not found on the FLO website) for the GEI program that lists **resources for working remotely**. The website’s press section includes short videos and podcasts with career tips.

—D.B.

were doing this long before the hiring freeze came into effect, but now these connections are even more important.

The number of Facebook and LinkedIn groups devoted to EFMs is hard to pin down because some are closed or secret, and new ones can be created at any time. The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide recently created FSHub, a collection of information useful to the Foreign Service community. FS Hub lists 36 different Facebook and LinkedIn groups under its “Foreign Service Social Media” category—and that doesn’t include post-specific sites, of which there are many.

The online Foreign Service community can help family members cope with the feeling of isolation they sometimes experience. Employment inside the mission helps EFMs get to know others at the embassy and feel like contributing members at post. “I’ve never felt so disconnected from the embassy community,” said one EFM at a large post in Asia, whose job offer is in limbo because of the freeze. “And that’s saying a lot, considering we live on a compound surrounded by U.S. embassy personnel.”

Another spouse at a different post in Asia compares her experience to her previous posting, where she was the Community

Liaison Office coordinator (CLO). “I miss knowing everyone in my community and I have had a harder time feeling connected here,” said this spouse, who, like everyone else quoted in this article, requested anonymity due to sensitivity about the topic.

Social media can provide the sense of community that family members would otherwise have found at work in the mission. There are Facebook groups devoted to EFMs who are business owners, entrepreneurs, yoga instructors, freelance writers and editors, photographers and psychotherapists, to name a few. These groups offer support and a venue to share ideas that can help in the quest to find or create employment.

The EFM Business Owners group alone has more than 700 members. A recent message asking if anyone had started a separate business owners’ group at their post got a flurry of responses. One EFM started a group at post not long after the hiring freeze began, with a few objectives in mind: “cross-pollination,” support, and insight on how to start a business or find work online.

Another started a group that she called “EFMs Creating Careers.” Since the hiring freeze, she wrote, many EFMs have had to reassess their career trajectories and she felt a brainstorming group would be helpful. “We’re sharing resources we’ve found (like this Facebook group), helping each other set goals and stay motivated, and sharing contacts of people we each know in related fields.”

These family members are doing exactly what they should be doing, according to Michelle Yaeger, a Foreign Service spouse and cofounder (with a military spouse) of Serving Talent, an employment agency for Foreign Service and military family members. They are using—on social media or in person—their networks. She reports a particularly high increase in the number of resumes submitted by Foreign Service EFMs to their agency in the past few months.

Splitting Up the Family, Or Waiting It Out?

For some Foreign Service families, the need for full-time, stable employment at an acceptable salary is too great to wait out the freeze any longer. Conversations on the topic of Voluntary Separate Maintenance Allowance garnered far more comments than usual on the enormous Facebook group Trailing Houses, which boasts more than 12,000 members, all of whom are affiliated with the Foreign Service.

VSMA must be applied for and is not guaranteed, though “career” is named as one of the reasons it can be granted. It also does not fully cover the costs of maintaining two separate households (allowance amounts differ depending on family size).

For others, staying at post and making the best of it is the only

AFSA Labor Management on the Freeze

Since the State Department’s announcement that it would maintain the governmentwide hiring freeze that was lifted on April 12, 2017, AFSA has repeatedly pushed the department at the highest levels to exempt EFMs from the freeze on the grounds that EFM employment is not linked to FTE [full-time equivalent] employment; the EFMs perform vital embassy work and are less expensive to hire than contractors. While exemptions had been carved out incrementally during late 2017, AFSA consistently argued that these were not nearly enough.

We were pleased to hear the Secretary’s announcement at the Dec. 12 town hall that the hiring freeze would be lifted in 2018 for EFMs. We understand that the effective date of the “unfreezing” was Jan. 7. It is AFSA’s hope that hiring will resume quickly to allow our EFM employees to continue the work that is critical to our posts overseas functioning effectively.

answer. Most EFMs contacted for this piece are using the forced time off in ways that prove the resilience of the Foreign Service community. “In some ways, this limbo I’m in has been a good impetus to look toward the long term rather than rely on embassy work,” said an EFM at a post in Central America. “My husband plans to do this job until retirement, so I’ve been trying to think of more flexible work that I can take from post to post.”

Changing Careers: The Flexible Spouse

An EFM in Tokyo is teaching local business people conversational English and has begun giving private photography lessons while he searches for local employment or remote work opportunities. Another EFM, in Mexico, recently launched a travel and vacation planning service.

One EFM in Asia is using the time to gather her thoughts and “dream.” “Everyone wants to feel they are being productive,” she said. “I just want to do something I love or am passionate about. I would love to have a career, and that’s why I am trying to think outside the box. But it is hard.”

Many are using this time to study and retrain. A Virginia-based EFM is getting a degree in teaching English as a second language, while a family member in Jordan is earning an online master’s degree.

Foreign Service life requires spouses to be “incredibly flexible,” said one D.C.-based EFM who is currently retraining for a medical career. “I love moving every few years, but I definitely don’t like the stress of searching for work. So I’m doing something about it!”

There’s no way to predict how long the hiring freeze will be in effect, or how the redesign of the Foreign Service will affect the options for family member employment at overseas posts. EFMs are hoping the Secretary’s plan to lift the other 50 percent of the freeze happens sooner in 2018, rather than later. While they wait it out, Foreign Service family members are proving their resilience and coping as best they can.



Editor’s Note: On Feb. 13, as this issue went to press, a State Department spokesperson told Foreign Policy that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is expected to take “concrete steps” in the next few weeks to return hiring for EFMs to “normal” levels. The spokesperson said that the Secretary “has authorized an additional 2,449 EFM positions.” ■

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Surviving Divorce *in the* Foreign Service

Divorce is difficult enough when you're living a "normal" life in the States. What happens when you're posted overseas?

BY DONNA SCARAMASTRA GORMAN

They were only a year into their third overseas tour when he broke the news: he wanted a divorce.

The next day, while she was trying to process the news, he told her he'd found a mediator and was ready to start divorce proceedings via Skype. "My head was spinning," she says. "I was nowhere near where he was in the process."

According to the Family Liaison Office, nobody in the State Department tracks the numbers, so it is impossible to say for cer-



Donna Scaramastra Gorman is the Journal's associate editor. A writer whose work has appeared in Time Magazine, Newsweek, the Washington Post and the Christian Science Monitor, she is the spouse of a Diplomatic Security agent. She has lived in Amman, Moscow, Yerevan, Almaty and Beijing, and now resides with her family in Washington, D.C. To write this article, she spoke with spouses and employees, all of whom wished to remain anonymous.

tain how many Foreign Service spouses face divorce while posted overseas. But overnight, Jennifer [all names have been changed] had become one of this unknown number of spouses in crisis. And what she found—as did a half-dozen other EFMs interviewed for this article—was an embassy and an institution that were wholly unprepared to support her through the process.

Life Turned Upside Down

"It was so mismanaged. I felt like there was no one at the embassy on my side," she says. Although everyone at the small embassy knew what was going on, she says nobody contacted her in an official capacity: not the community liaison office coordinator, not the regional medical officer, not the deputy chief of mission.

Looking back now, she says, "I felt so estranged from everything normal. The divorce rate is higher in these kinds of jobs. And no one talks about it. I had nobody to connect with, nobody who understood what I was going through."

A friend at post tracked down a packet about divorce that was published by the Family Liaison Office, and she read it cover to cover. It was helpful, she says, but she still didn't know where to start. The questions seemed impossible to answer: How would she set up her new life, and where? Where would the children go

to school? How would she book a flight out of post? How would she rent an apartment or buy a car, without any income of her own? How would she find a job after all of her years with a patchy EFM resumé?

“You’re dealing with: My marriage is over. My life is upside down. But his life just goes on. He wakes up in the morning, and he still has his job. He has his house, he has his girlfriend [a local employee at the embassy]. But his family has nothing; we’re spinning out of control.” She was resentful, she says. “I gave everything to his career. You give up so much of your control. You just give that away. I felt like I should’ve done more to protect myself.

Why didn’t I think more about the what-ifs? I felt like a 1950s housewife.” She pauses, then sighs, “Way to be a Foreign Service cliché.”

Another EFM, Jean, says she started the divorce proceedings herself when her marriage began to disintegrate while they were posted in the Caribbean. Says Jean, “It was the worst

moment of my life. I was terrified of leaving my kids—no career prospects, and nowhere to live, plus their being settled meant they would stay with him.” Jean also read the FLO handbook, where she learned that she needed to sign a “Statement of Mutual Consent,” a form stating that she was leaving due to an agreement with her spouse, and that it didn’t constitute abandonment of her children.

She left post 48 hours later and flew back to the town where her mother lived, where she met regularly with a therapist and eventually enrolled in school. “I didn’t want to go somewhere where I had nothing,” she explains. “I had never gotten a degree, so my experience was all I had. I planned on going to D.C., but after looking at what I would make (not very much) compared to where I could afford to live, I decided that it wasn’t a feasible solution. Especially if I didn’t get a job.”

Legal Counsel Is Important

Two years have passed since Jean left post without her children. Looking back, she says that “the biggest mistake I made, that I would tell every EFM to avoid, is not getting a lawyer. My ex and I wanted to do it amicably. I did fight hard for the things I wanted,



Nobody in the State Department tracks the numbers, so it is impossible to say for certain how many Foreign Service spouses face divorce while posted overseas.

and I got most of them. But I was in a now-minded mentality. I didn’t think too hard about the future. ... I wish I’d done things differently for the custody agreement. I’m living now with my mistakes, trying hard to change things that I don’t have much power over. Divorce papers are very final.”

Jennifer agrees that good legal counsel is important, because there are many significant financial and custodial decisions to be made together. She also moved back to her hometown, hoping for support from old friends and family. Her ex-husband supported her financially while she made the transition. Without

financial support from the FS employee, she says, “I don’t know what you’d do. You’d have to lawyer up immediately.” She has spent more than \$15,000 on legal fees since she moved back to the United States from South America.

Each spouse needs to have separate attorneys, and both attorneys need to be licensed to practice in the state where

you plan to seek a divorce. Make sure your attorney has experience working in the Foreign Service community. (For a list of places that provide legal referrals and mediation services, see the sidebar on p.42.)

Can Embassies Step Up?

Divorce overseas is seldom discussed. The family leaves the country, the employee keeps working, and life at the embassy moves forward as if nothing ever happened. But it leaves behind an undercurrent of worry within the community. “It really shook up a lot of the wives, to see a whole family gone overnight,” says Jennifer, especially when the woman involved in her divorce kept her embassy job and was frequently seen staying overnight at Jennifer’s old house with her former husband.

And while she lauds the help FLO gave her throughout the transition, she believes that embassies need to take on a stronger supporting role. “People at post knew my situation, but it was all very hush-hush. No one even acknowledged that it was happening. It would be nice if there was someone at post—the RMO? the CLO?—designated to check in with the family, to see if there

Where to Go For Answers and Support

Family Liaison Office maintains a wealth of resources for family members going through a divorce. All of their documents and links can be accessed online at bit.ly/FLODivorceResources. Among these resources is “Divorce and the Foreign Service,” a detailed guide that will walk you through the necessary steps to take at the beginning of the process and explain what documents you will need.

FLO’s crisis management and support team can answer questions and refer you to legal, mental health, employment and other resources. Email them at FLO-AskSupportServices@state.gov or call them at (202) 647-1076.

Employee Consultation Services provides confidential, short-term counseling and referrals for both employees and family members. Email them at MEDECS@state.gov.

The Retirement Network of the U.S. Department of State (RNet) has information related to former spouse retirement benefits at <https://rnet.state.gov/index.cfm?pg=dfs>.

AfSA maintains a resource collection on divorce at www.afsa.org/divorce, as well as a list of attorneys who have worked with Foreign Service families. The

list, which includes family law specialists, can be found at www.afsa.org/attorney-list.

The October 2014 *Foreign Service Journal* published an article about managing the child custody issues that frequently crop up in Foreign Service divorces. Additionally, in December 2013 the *Journal* ran an FS Know-How article about divorce written by two Foreign Service officers who went through the process themselves.

Brilliant Exits provides coaching and counseling services. They also run the Second Saturday program on a monthly basis in Fairfax, Virginia.

Dads at a Distance supports fathers who are parenting long-distance, either due to divorce or because of their chosen careers.

Northern Virginia Mediation Service helps families mediate and manage conflict including divorce/separation and co-parenting.

The Truman Group specializes in psychological care for expats, including remote therapy sessions.

The Women’s Center provides mental health, legal and career counseling.

—Donna Gorman

is anything they can do to help them through a difficult time.” It would also help, Jennifer adds, if the RMO, CLO or someone else at post contacted FLO as soon as they learned of the situation at post, asking FLO’s crisis support team to reach out to the spouse directly. This would give the spouse a neutral person to turn to for initial support and expert advice, and maybe that way, she says, spouses wouldn’t “feel so all alone.”

While Jennifer felt isolated, Jean felt as though the entire community was watching her marriage disintegrate. “Getting divorced in the fishbowl that is the FS was horrible,” she says. “I never want to be in the FS again. I miss some benefits, like travel, household help, the challenge of living abroad.” But, she says, “I wouldn’t give up my life now. I love it. And I never again want to live in the fishbowl.”

What to Do When Facing Divorce

Contact FLO. According to Susan Frost, director of the Family Liaison Office, “FLO encourages employees and family members considering separation or divorce to reach out to our office, either in person or by phone or email. We will walk them through resources and options based on their specific scenario.” The Family Liaison Office has an extensive database of divorce-related documents online (bit.ly/FLODivorceResources).

FLO also maintains a detailed list of things you need to do before leaving post, such as requesting “Advance Return of Family Travel Orders” and notarizing a joint property statement so you will be able to access your belongings in storage. You will also need a “Statement of Mutual Consent,” signed by both partners, stating that neither of you is abandoning the other.

Good legal counsel is important, because there are many significant financial and custodial decisions to be made together.

Don't expect much embassy support. Embassy support is not guaranteed, say the women—mostly women—who have been through it. “We’re so used to relying on the embassy,” says Jennifer, “and all of a sudden it’s not my embassy, it’s *his* embassy. My support system fell out from under my feet.” Look instead to friends at post, who can help you figure out what needs to be done. Do contact your CLO. Like FLO, says Frost, they “adhere to a policy of confidentiality” and “can serve as a listening ear regarding the stress of family concerns.” One former CLO reports that her embassy worked with several couples to find separate housing at post so they could delay the spouse’s departure: This doesn’t always happen, but you can request housing assistance, and the embassy is supposed to work to accommodate the family where possible.

Pick a new home base. Figure out where your support is going to come from in the United States. You’ll show up there with no job, no car, no house and lots of baggage, both emotional and literal. If you can, plan to go to a place where you have supportive friends or family to help you through this first part.

Break down tasks. It was overwhelming, says Jennifer, but “I broke it down into individual tasks that needed to be done: Buy plane tickets. Find a school. Find an apartment.” Open your own bank account right away, advises Jean. Make a list of specific tasks that need to be completed so you can start to gain some control over your situation.

Get therapy. Jean’s mother found her a hometown therapist, whom she met with the day her plane landed. Jennifer worked with an online counselor through the Truman Group, which specializes in expat issues. Both women continue to see their therapists to this day, as they work through the lingering pain caused by their divorces. FLO has a crisis management officer who can “provide confidential guidance and referral,” according to FLO’s website. FLO also recommends that you contact Employee Consultation Services—email MEDECS@state.gov for a list of licensed clinical social workers.

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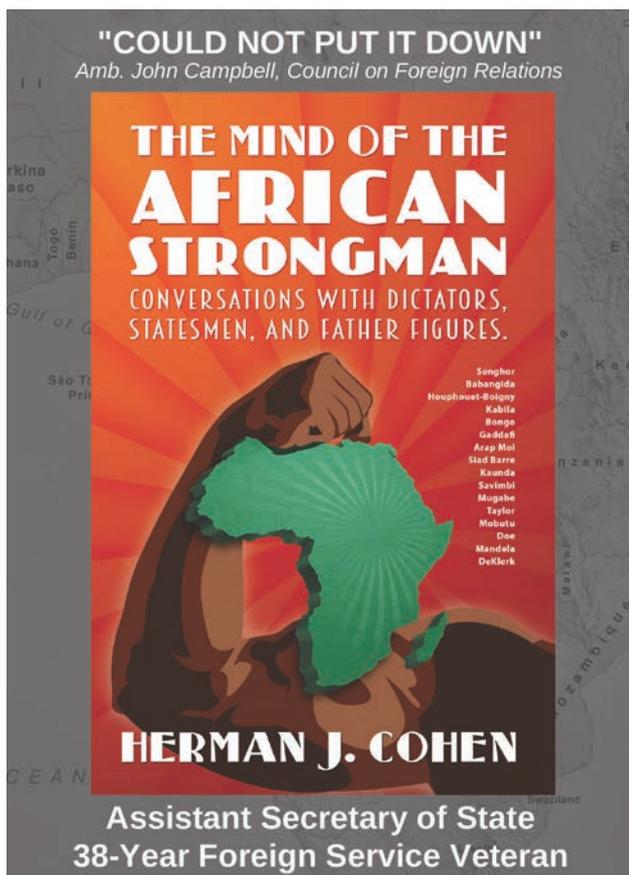
“We’re so used to relying on the embassy, and all of a sudden it’s not my embassy, it’s *his* embassy. My support system fell out from under my feet.”

Know your rights. Find a lawyer who is licensed to practice in the state to which you are moving, as every state has different custody, filing and residency requirements. Both FLO and AFSA maintain lists of D.C.-based lawyers; contact someone at the State Department’s WorkLife4You program for lawyers outside of Washington, D.C. Make sure you understand what you are entitled to before signing anything regarding the employee’s future retirement benefits and health insurance coverage.

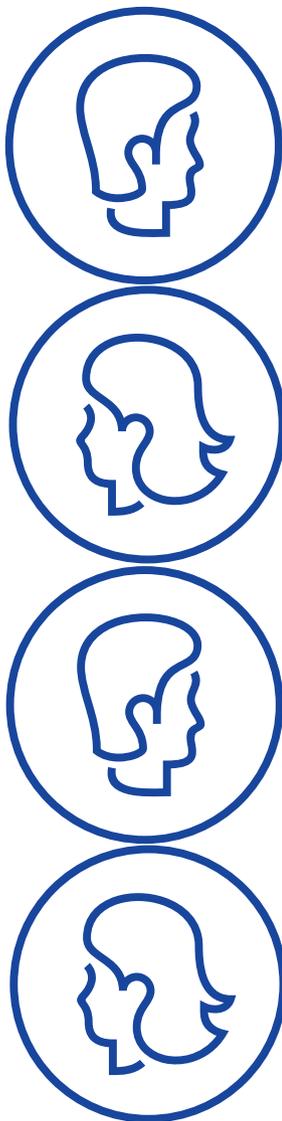
Remember your strengths. “I have a job now, with benefits,” says Jennifer. “A car. A house.” Looking back, she recalls weeks and months of pain and confusion; but, she says, “I was a Foreign Service badass like all spouses are, and it helped. EFMs are faced with so much change, adapting over and over. You learn from that; you get strong from that. Getting through this divorce, well, it’s just like we do when we move. We’re looking for the grocery stores, learning to talk, trying to find new friends. We learn how to solve problems in the Foreign Service.” That resilience helped her get through her worst days.

State’s Responsibility

EFMs give up so many things when they follow their spouses overseas, from steady employment to close relationships with life-long friends and family. And they do this even knowing that their sacrifices aren’t necessarily appreciated or even noticed by post management or the State Department as an institution. When things go badly, as they sometimes do when families move from post to post, the State Department has a responsibility to step up and help these spouses, who have sacrificed their careers, their financial independence and their emotional health in service of our country. ■



Singles Speak



Here is a medley of perspectives on what it is like to be single and serving at a U.S. mission overseas.

BY MIKKELA V. THOMPSON

What is it like to be single and serving overseas? According to the Family Liaison Office, about one-third—or 7,000 out of approximately 22,000—of direct-hire employees from all agencies serving under chief of mission authority overseas are single.



Mikkela V. Thompson is an office management specialist currently serving at Embassy Lima. Previously, she served in Dhaka, Bogotá and as an OMS rover out of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to Caracas, Nassau, Vancouver, Santo Domingo and Port of Spain. She has worked at the Family Liaison Office and the American Foreign Service Association, and she is the daughter of a retired FSO. Mikkela maintains a blog on food and adventures: madventures.me.

The views included in this article are those of the author and her interlocutors and do not reflect the views of the Department of State. By request of those asked for input, comments are not attributed, but each is known to the author.

There are many types of singles—the young, unmarried, gay entry-level officer; the specialist with a Member of Household retired parent; the middle-aged entry-level officer; the divorced or separated mid- or senior-level officer, with and without children; and other combinations and permutations. Each type and, indeed, each different personality tends to have a different view of their situation.

As one senior-level FSO sees it, it is more “difficult emotionally, socially, logistically—and also less safe—to be single in the Foreign Service. You have to be a braver, heartier soul.” That is a broad statement, but there is certainly some truth in it. Speaking for myself, as a single person in the Foreign Service I feel most acutely lonely when I’m left alone in my new home. The best way I deal with this is to have internet connectivity so that I can Skype, WhatsApp or email with my family and with my friends, who are like family.

To explore this issue I asked a few dozen colleagues from different agencies and bureaus and of various ages and marital status to share their thoughts. What follows is a compilation of some of the responses I received. Comments have been edited to protect privacy and for clarity. Meant to be neither comprehensive nor definitive, they offer a variety of perspectives on the unique challenges and joys of being single and serving at a U.S. mission abroad.



On Developing Relationships

I joined the Foreign Service single in 2002. My wife and I met in A-100, but didn’t start dating until she was in Bogotá and I was in Mexico City, about 10 months later. We dated long distance for two years, then went to Baghdad; the only reason we went there was that we wanted to be posted together, but didn’t want to get married after only dating a year (when we were bidding). After that, we got married and had kids. My wife has done an out-of-cone assignment and been on leave without pay for five years cumulatively out of the past 15 in order for us to be posted together.

–Mid-level management FSO

Most of my friends here, I think, would agree that PSPs (priority staffing posts) are not the hotbed of romance people often think they are. Due to the gender imbalance, this might be a little different for women.

It can be easy to meet people in the Foreign Service, as that is often part of our job. But due to how often we move, it’s often hard to find a partner, as you have to meet someone fairly quickly once arriving at post to have enough time together before you move on.

People who are in relationships but not actually married fall into a sort of gray area where they aren’t really single, but they also aren’t married in the department’s eyes. Being LGBT or a woman can add another layer of challenges due to the conservative nature and cultural norms of a lot of countries where we serve.

–Political officer



Singles Have Families, Too, Just Not at Post

Some posts put a lot of resources into keeping EFM and kids happy and entertained, and exclude singles from things like giving input to creating commissary wish lists (often, single people do not put their personal email on the ‘spouses’ list, so they do not get asked what they might want at the commissary). Or they conduct Community Liaison Office events like cooking classes or hospital visits when single working people can’t take off.

Preferences go to families to take vacation during the holidays (when, if the most important thing is to be “together,” it can be even more important for the singles to travel to be with their families, as those who have family at post have each other). Posts focus on families having good schools for their kids or families having housing that they “deserve.” For the State Department, single officers with no children are not as expensive. They do not have as many allowances.

–Mid-level USAID FSO

When I worked in the management section, I watched the morale of my post closely. Being single, I tried to make sure that other singles felt like part of the mission family, so I organized outings around the city, making sure to include the singles at post without excluding the non-singles. I was surprised to see that for Christmas, both years, the single entry-level officers were denied leave.

That said, some of the singles who were left at post over the holidays organized an “orphans’ Christmas” for the rest of us. The best part of being single in the Foreign Service is the freedom to go on this adventure alone.

–Mid-level FS specialist



Neither Fish nor Fowl: Single Parenting Trials

As a single parent in the FS, you are in a sort of abyss that is not exactly viewed as single by the singles and not as a family by married couples. That makes it an awkward category.

I find that the single FSOs will coordinate events with each other and will assume that since I have a child, I would not want to attend. The married families will coordinate events with other families and not invite a single parent (me) because they think I would not want to attend. So as a divorced, single parent I am an anomaly; however, I own it entirely.

I seek out and create bonds with like-minded souls who don't judge me, label or make presumptions without getting to know me. That is the internal dynamics of the FSO world. Conversely, outside the embassy no one cares, and that's where I find solace and freedom.

My life is not ordinary, and that's why I like it. I am never boxed in. I have an amazing life, and I can't complain. Life is what you make of it: single, married, divorced or complicated... just live, laugh and love.

-Mid-level USAID FSO



To Be Single, or Not to Be Single

Oh, living single while in the Foreign Service...what blissful torture for lots of people. I moved abroad single and was able to date while being abroad, both inside and outside the embassy. I see it this way: You can make the most of your time anywhere, or you can choose to be miserable. Is it a challenge to be single? Absolutely! But there are also benefits that I experienced. I didn't have to check in with anyone, I didn't have to combine my plans with anyone. I didn't have anyone tugging at my time and my energy.

I'm also a certified life coach, and what is disheartening to me is to see the people who get on these "marriage" tours when they feel they are done with being single, only to settle with someone who may not be equally yoked with them, but they serve the purpose of following them around, providing them with a family and keeping them company. I wonder how many people are actually truly happy with their spouses in the Foreign Service, because a lot of people definitely don't walk around as if they are.



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Resources from FLO

The Family Liaison Office supports “all members of the Foreign Service ‘family,’ including single employees overseas, most often in the areas of crisis management, evacuations, unaccompanied tours and, of course, through our worldwide CLO program.” You can reach FLO at—
Email: FLOaskSupportServices@state.gov
Webpages: Foreign Service Life; Crisis Management Services; Unaccompanied Tours Support.

I find that there is beauty both in being single and having a partner. In my book, whichever point you are at should be fully enjoyed, which is what I did—and I don’t regret a second of it. I would also say that having dated a local was a great experience. Had it not been for that person, there are places, things, food and people I would never have enjoyed. Open yourself up, give the county a chance; enjoy all the great things the people have to offer. That way the question will be less about whether you’re alone or not, and more about all the amazing things the Foreign Service life has afforded you.

—Entry-level Department of Defense employee

I’ve spent about half of my 15-year Foreign Service career single. My first two tours overseas, I was as happy as I could be—socializing after work five or six nights a week, traveling constantly, accepting every invitation I received. I really made some great friends, both among locals and within the embassy, and sucked the proverbial marrow out of my experiences. When I returned to Washington for several years, I reconnected with long-time friends from college who lived in the area and spent considerable time investing in those relationships. I started to dread the thought of picking up and rebuilding my social network, once again; the idea actually tired me out, when it had once invigorated me.

Honestly, if I hadn’t gotten married around that time, I’m not sure I would have stuck with this career. At the very least, I likely would have spent considerable portions of my career in Washington, a place that feels very much like home and where I have a well-established group of trusted friends. However, having a partner to navigate this topsy-turvy career has made subsequent transitions much smoother. In addition to having someone by your side to discover a new country, it’s now just plain easier to create a social network. For me, making transitions together with my husband alleviates some of the stress caused by the constant change.

—Mid-level economic officer



Love Yourself First

Right now I am back in the United States about to go to court to get divorced. I have observed that the Foreign Service can uncover problems in a marriage. When overseas, the non-working spouse has to find their own way. It is a difficult problem for many to have too much free time. Being posted in countries where there are few job opportunities, especially in the last year with the hiring freeze, can be very difficult for both partners.

My marriage was unhealthy prior to joining the State Department, so my divorce is not really completely related to serving in the Foreign Service; but serving overseas certainly hastened my decision to get out of it. There is much joy for the employed spouse living the life of a member of the Foreign Service. The job allows one to do many unique and interesting things. But when the non-working spouse has trouble making friends and fitting in, the excitement is one-sided.

I’m much happier now. When I was in my marriage, I daily thought how much better it would be to be living alone. Marriage is not the solution to everything. I believe that a person needs to love themselves first. You should not be dependent on another for your happiness.

—Senior-level FS specialist



An Empowering Exercise

I love the empowering exercise of mapping out a trajectory of next steps in my career that need no further internal “clearance” on the homefront beyond my own.

And although it is true that being single in the Foreign Service may mean no traveling support system, digital technology enables the virtual immediacy of friends and family, whatever my coordinates.

Linguistically, being single also offers an opportunity to progress in a foreign language as intensively as one’s curiosity dictates.

—Mid-level public diplomacy officer



An Uphill Battle: Single and Starting a Family

As a single woman in the Foreign Service, I've faced an uphill battle to start a family. Like an increasing number of American women, I decided to pursue motherhood on my own when I found myself still happily single in my mid-thirties. Having spent my pre-FS career helping abused and at-risk children, I set my sights on domestic adoption from foster care as a natural way to build my family.

While still in A-100 I began my search for an adoption agency and found one company—only one—that was willing to help me attempt a domestic adoption as an expatriate. Yet when I called the agency after Flag Day I was devastated to hear in no uncertain terms that they would not be sending American children to my new post in Africa. Unswayed by the stellar international school, affordable domestic help or large housing post had to offer, they were convinced it was irresponsible.

Disappointed, I waited for two years for my next assignment, this time a coveted post in Western Europe. I immediately restarted the adoption paperwork. Though I submitted my home study for dozens of waiting children, social workers balked at the constant mobility inherent in an FS career—they said it sounded unstable. In the end I wasn't matched to any.

I decided that the logical alternative was to get pregnant myself—only to discover that as a single person I was not legally allowed to pursue fertility treatments in my host country. There, single motherhood by choice is considered immoral.

Eventually, I received my next assignment. While in training I'll have a few months to try fertility treatments before I'm off again, this time to a country where the Zika virus is endemic, where any pregnancy would put my baby at risk of devastating birth defects. (Or risk my career if I curtail, accept a short-term Washington, D.C., assignment or take leave without pay during the pregnancy.)

My story doesn't yet have a happy ending, but I am still trying. I believe that despite its challenges this lifestyle is one of the greatest things I can offer a child. I want children who know the world even better than I do; and I think the world needs more citizens who embrace the diversity that exists not only within their own borders, but in every corner of the planet. In spite of the sacrifices I've had to make so far, that still seems like a goal worth fighting for.

—Mid-level consular FSO*

**This comment was submitted separately, directly to the Journal*

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Taking Care of Our Own

Here's how the Senior Living Foundation of the American Foreign Service assists our colleagues when life changes cause challenges.

BY JOHN K. NALAND

Founded in 1988, the Senior Living Foundation is the only organization dedicated to providing financial and informational support to retired Foreign Service personnel and their spouses (including surviving and divorced spouses) who have become physically or mentally unable to cope with issues that crop up during their later years. “Those in need,” explains SLF Chairman Marc Grossman, “are our colleagues who, along with their families, devoted their lives and their service to our country, but who now confront challenges they cannot meet alone during their retirement years.”

Despite a public perception that federal retirees live easy, “the monthly annuity of many Foreign Service widows and former spouses is below the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s low-income figure for their area,” says SLF Executive Director Paula S. Jakub. Most retirees face rising costs for medical care and housing that outpace the inflation adjustments to their pensions. Retirees in the pre-1986 Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System do not have income from Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan to supplement their pensions. Tomorrow’s retirees

face an unknown future due to the underfunded Social Security system and proposed changes to federal retirement benefits.

How SLF Can Help

To preserve the privacy of SLF clients, the following names are fictitious. The examples are composites of typical client situations.

- After 30 years as an office management specialist (OMS), Helen E. retired as an FP-4 (the top of her career ladder). While her Foreign Service pension was relatively modest, so too was her retirement lifestyle. Health insurance covered most medical expenses; but, never having had dental problems, she did not buy optional dental insurance. Thus, while her budget could handle occasional big expenses such as a replacement refrigerator or car repairs, she had no funds to pay \$12,000 when she faced medically necessary dental surgery. Fortunately, the Senior Living Foundation of the American Foreign Service stepped in to pay that bill.

- Sonia K. enjoyed many good years with her husband, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer. But when he died, the Treasury Department pulled back his most recent annuity deposit from the couple’s bank account. It took Sonia several weeks to gather documentation to send to the State Department in order to initiate her survivor annuity and life insurance settlement. It took several more weeks for the government to make those payments. In the meantime, there were funeral expenses to be paid and the monthly mortgage payment came due. SLF stepped in with an emergency grant.



John K. Naland retired from the Foreign Service in 2015. He is currently the AFSA retiree vice president and previously served as AFSA president (twice) and AFSA State vice president. He is also president of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation (www.fsyf.org).

- Mid-level Foreign Service Officer Mark S. was serving overseas when he became concerned about his elderly parents in the United States, who were having increasing difficulties living independently. The SLF's Resource Center explained the types of senior services available

in the parents' location and the way to access them. SLF also referred Mark to the crisis management officer in the Family Liaison Office, who told him about Emergency Visitation Travel and other programs designed to help employees dealing with long-distance eldercare issues.

- Eloise N. served as an OMS overseas her entire career. She diligently saved what she could toward retirement, and gathered a nest egg large enough to supplement her modest Foreign Service pension for as long as she needed. However, when she was around 90 years old, she started to worry that she would outlive her savings. She turned to the SLF, which began providing a small monthly grant that increased over the next 12 years as her needs grew for additional home health care, dental care, prescriptions, etc. SLF helped keep Eloise in her home until she died peacefully one night—at the age of 103.

Help in Times of Need

Based on documented financial need, SLF helps to defray the cost of prescription copays, hearing aids, home health care services, geriatric care assessments, basic living expenses, senior housing, long-term care, durable medical equipment and other services that contribute to the health and security of the retired Foreign Service family. Last year, SLF provided over \$220,000 in financial assistance. In a typical month, SLF helps more than two dozen colleagues, with grants generally ranging from \$200 to \$2,500. Grant recipients live across the United States, with two-thirds residing outside the Mid-Atlantic region. Four percent live overseas.

Beyond financial assistance, SLF's Resource Center connects both retirees and active-duty Foreign Service members with state, local and community resources to help them make life-changing decisions for themselves or aging loved ones. SLF's licensed social worker consultant handles each case individually, helping colleagues navigate through the bureaucratic maze to obtain the available help.

Tomorrow's retirees face an unknown future due to the underfunded Social Security system and proposed changes to federal retirement benefits.

Helping Others

"SLF is here to serve our Foreign Service family, but we need retirees and active-duty employees to be our eyes and ears to help us reach those in need," explains Executive Director Paula Jakub. Anyone who needs assistance, or

who knows a Foreign Service colleague or family member who does, can reach SLF at info@SLFoundation.org or (202) 887-8170. SLF considers each case individually and maintains total confidentiality.

SLF's work is made possible thanks to generous contributions by individuals, corporations and bequests. Administrative overhead expenses are low since SLF receives support from the American Foreign Service Protective Association (sponsor of Foreign Service Benefit Plan health insurance). SLF is a tax-deductible, 501(c)(3) charitable organization that participates in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC number 40530). To learn more, visit SLF's website at www.SLFoundation.org.

Helping Yourself

Active-duty employees and retirees can take steps to reduce their chances of someday needing to turn to SLF for assistance.

My article "Retirement Planning 101" in the May 2016 *Foreign Service Journal* discusses how employees can build up their retirement nest eggs. The article recommends getting more detailed guidance on the Office of Retirement website (<https://RNet.state.gov>) and taking one of the Foreign Service Institute's retirement planning seminars. Employees should also consider signing up for long-term care insurance and dental insurance, and should be sure to update their beneficiary designations in event of marriage, divorce or death of spouse.

Retirees can refer to guidance in AFSA's 2018 Directory of Retired Members, which suggests steps including making sure that your TSP account outpaces inflation, keeping your beneficiary designations up-to-date, and briefing your family on how to expeditiously file for survivor benefits. The directory also includes information on life insurance, long-term care insurance and Medicare. Official guidance can be found in the Office of Retirement's Foreign Service Annual Annuitant Newsletter (posted at <https://RNet.state.gov> under "What's New?"). ■

Zimbabwe after Mugabe: Dark before the Dawn?

A former U.S. ambassador to Zimbabwe reflects on the November 2017 coup in that country and wonders: How did he miss the signs that it was coming?

BY CHARLES RAY

Sometimes unexpected things happen, and your brain has a hard time accepting them. That was the case for me in November 2017, when I heard from friends in Zimbabwe that there were signs of a possible coup. I had predicted that the military would never remove President Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's ruler for 37 years. I thought they were misreading the signs; I was wrong.



During a 30-year career in the Foreign Service, following 20 years in the Army, Charles Ray served in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Guangzhou and Shenyang. He became the first U.S. consul general in Ho Chi Minh City in 1998, and served as U.S. ambassador to Cambodia (2002-2005) and later Zimbabwe (2009-2012). He retired from the Foreign Service in 2012, and now devotes himself full-time to freelance writing, photography and art. He also lectures, consults and does public speaking on a variety of subjects. On Jan. 19, Ambassador Ray was the guest on the American Diplomat podcast with Peter Romero and Laura Bennett, speaking about his interactions with and views on Robert Mugabe (www.amdipstories.org/podcast/charles-ray-zimbabwe-authoritarian).

My contacts with the military during my tenure as U.S. ambassador, though limited, had led me to believe that the military was too legalistic—even when engaged in illicit activity, the brass tried to portray what they were doing as legal. Because a coup is a pretty blatant power grab, it's difficult to make it look legal. In addition, since the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)—the party the military has sustained in power since independence in 1980—has effectively been in sole control of the government since the 2013 elections, it would be overthrowing itself. I had been saying that in lectures on Zimbabwe since retiring in 2012, whenever a question about the possibility of a coup came up.

So I was shocked on Nov. 15, when emails and Facebook posts from Zimbabwe and reports in the U.S. and international media showed soldiers and tanks on the streets of Harare, and a military spokesman on Zimbabwe's state-controlled media stated that the army had “guaranteed the safety of Mugabe and his wife”—though it would target criminals around the former ruler. How could I have been so far off the mark?

One of the biggest mistakes I'd made was defining “coup d'état” too narrowly. I'd pictured something akin to the military takeovers I'd seen in Sierra Leone in 1992, Thailand in 1990 and South Korea in 1979, or the series of coups in Vietnam in the 1960s, where cabals of military officers summarily deposed the existing leadership and took over key government departments, administering



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First Lady Grace Mugabe, seated to her husband's left, is seen for the first time at a politburo meeting on Sept. 19, 2015.

them directly, often for extended periods of time.

While the events in Zimbabwe from early November had some of the hallmarks of a traditional military takeover, there were also some uniquely Zimbabwean aspects. First among these was Defense Minister General Constantine Chiwenga's announcement on Nov. 13 that the military would intervene if the expulsion of senior ZANU-PF figures continued. Second was the role of Robert Mugabe's wife, Grace, whom many Zimbabweans have dubbed "Gucci Grace" because of her profligate shopping habits. Third was the persistent, powerful role of a generation gap in Zimbabwean politics.

Prelude to Disaster

The path to the Nov. 15 events actually began in December 2014, when President Mugabe fired then-state vice president and deputy leader of ZANU-PF, Joice Mujuru, a liberation war veteran who had been viewed as his most likely successor. Seven ministers considered loyal to her were also sacked. At the time, this action was widely viewed as clearing the way for Emmerson Mnangagwa, then the defense minister and considered the second-most-likely Mugabe successor, to move up. A former justice minister, the 74-year-old Mnangagwa had served as an intelligence officer

One of the biggest mistakes I'd made was defining "coup d'état" too narrowly.

during the liberation struggle and had the support of many senior military figures.

However, Mujuru's ouster also coincided with actions by Grace Mugabe to increase her own political profile. In the weeks lead-

ing up to the ouster, Grace had attacked Mujuru in public appearances and the press on several occasions. She had recently been appointed to the leadership of the ZANU-PF Women's League; she was awarded an honorary doctorate degree; and she began to be more involved in political affairs. Several commentators remarked at the time that Grace seemed to be positioning herself for a post-Mugabe political berth. But other than a few press reports in the opposition media speculating on this, not much was made of it. With Mujuru gone, and Mnangagwa moved into her party and government positions, it looked like Mugabe was finally doing something he had resisted for decades—making a decision on his successor.

Fast forward to 2017. Along with regular reports of Grace Mugabe's extravagant spending habits, and an incident in South Africa where she assaulted a model she'd found in a room with her sons (she escaped punishment for the assault when the South African government allowed her to claim diplomatic immunity), the local and regional media began to focus on Grace's increas-



U.S. Ambassador Charles Ray speaks to the local press at The Media Center in Harare, Jan. 26, 2012.

ing involvement in politics. Her public comments in October and early November 2017 about the possibility of succeeding her husband were highlighted.

Increasing tension between Grace and Senior Vice President Mnangagwa also surfaced. She, and finally Mugabe himself, accused Mnangagwa of corruption, plotting against Mugabe and other actions detrimental to the party. In October, he fell ill while attending a function outside Harare and had to be flown to South Africa for treatment, where it was determined that he'd suffered some kind of food poisoning. He maintained that he'd been poisoned by ice cream produced at one of Grace's many dairy farms, a charge that both she and her husband vehemently denied. But the feud escalated, culminating on Nov. 13, 2017, when Mugabe fired Mnangagwa from his party and government positions, and the latter fled the country, claiming that he and his family were in danger.

Mugabe's move was seen by many as part of a new plan for succession: his wife would replace Mnangagwa as one of the country's two vice presidents at the December 2017 party conference, which would then position her to replace him as party and country leader.

The Clash of Generations

But on Nov. 13, shortly after Mnangagwa's firing, Gen. Chiwenga made a public announcement, warning that the military would not stand by while senior party figures and liberation fighters were pushed aside.

There has long been a rift in ZANU-PF between the older generation who fought during the liberation war, and those party

Mugabe's move was seen by many as part of a new plan for succession: his wife would replace Mnangagwa as one of the country's two vice presidents.

members who were too young to fight. Many of the latter, now in their 40s and 50s, had formed a group around Grace Mugabe that came to be known as the G-40. Among them were Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and National Housing Saviour Kasukuwere and Minister of Information Jonathan Moyo. It is this group that was thought to be behind the expulsion of Mnangagwa and a few other older party members. The G-40 reacted immediately to Chiwenga's threat, accusing him of treasonous conduct.

Two days later, the military made its move. The headquarters of the Zimbabwe Broadcast Corporation, the state-controlled television system, were occupied; and tanks and troops were stationed at key points in Harare. Mugabe and his wife were placed under effective house arrest, and troops were sent out to round up other members of G-40, such as Kasukuwere and Moyo.

Though some of the military's motivation may be attributed to the desire of senior officers and party officials to protect their access to the public trough, to fund the lavish lifestyle that many of them lead, one cannot underestimate the long-standing schism

between those who participated in the liberation struggle and those who didn't. This generational clash has played a key role in Zimbabwe's politics, with the older generation clinging tenaciously to power and the younger chafing at being made to wait its turn. While Mugabe's firing of Joice Mujuru had raised eyebrows, giving Mnangagwa

and a few other senior party members the ax was seen as a deliberate effort to sideline liberation figures. The apparent effort to push Grace forward as a successor added insult to injury as far as senior military and political leaders were concerned.

November's events show that internal ZANU-PF fissures have as much potential to produce violence as does the presence of opposition political parties. Should these differences manifest themselves within the ranks of the military, there is potential for even greater violence.

The Coup That Wasn't

If not for the seriousness of the situation, the Nov. 15 "coup d'état" in Zimbabwe might have been treated as some kind of rehearsal for a colossal April Fool's joke. It certainly had many of the characteristics of the film "The Mouse That Roared," a satire about a small country that "invaded" the United States in order to be defeated and, thus, eligible for American assistance.

First, the head of the country's defense forces "announces" the possibility of a coup two days before the actual event. Most of the coups that I am aware of were planned in secret, their targets only becoming aware when the tanks show up at the gate. Very sporting, and quintessentially Zimbabwean, of Chiwenga and his collaborators to give fair warning. Further, in most of the military takeovers I've seen up close, the deposed head of state is either sent into exile or flees (Sierra Leone), is arrested (Thailand) or is killed (South Korea and Vietnam). Robert Mugabe and his wife are placed under the "protection" of the military.

But a coup by any other name is still a coup. To paraphrase Tendai Biti, the opposition politician and a former finance minister: "If it waddles like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck." Call it "under protection" if you will, but it sounds like "house arrest" to me. The same thing goes for the military's statement that their action was not a coup d'état. Tanks in the street when there's no parade mean basically one thing.

From that point, however, the military's actions didn't seem to come from the standard coup playbook. Coup leader Chiwenga met with Robert Mugabe in what looked like a cordial meeting based on news photos of the event. Along with Mugabe's Catholic priest, Father Fidelis Mukonori, the coup leaders negotiated with the 93-year-old potentate, who had ruled the country continuously for 37 years, to get him to resign. Mugabe was allowed to communicate by phone with South African President Jacob Zuma; he was given access to the media; and he was even allowed to call a Cabinet meeting.

The End of an Era

The military had given Mugabe a deadline for his resignation, stating that if he did not do so, the case would go to parliament for impeachment proceedings. ZANU-PF filed a motion for impeachment, which was supported by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai.

Mugabe dug in his heels, refusing to resign and insisting he was the legitimate president and should be allowed to serve until the July 2018 elections. But when he called for a Nov. 20 Cabinet meeting, and 17 of his Cabinet members chose instead to attend Parliament, where his impeachment was on the agenda, he finally relented, and his letter of resignation was delivered to the speaker of the Parliament.

For nearly four decades, Mugabe had manipulated those



Ambassador Charles Ray receives the Human Rights Defender award from the Zimbabwe Organization for Youth in Politics, Dec. 28, 2011.

around him, playing on the liberation hero ethos and, by not naming a successor, making it difficult for anyone to work against him. During my tenure as ambassador (2009-2012), the two main contenders were Mujuru and Mnangagwa, and whenever one seemed to be edging above the other in popularity, Mugabe would do something to restore equilibrium.

That equilibrium was destroyed when he fired Mujuru and elevated Mnangagwa in 2014, at about the same time Grace was beginning to make her own political moves. What role Mugabe played in her actions is a matter of speculation, but I believe it's safe to say that both Mugabe and his wife overestimated his popularity with the senior members of his party and the military.

The initial refusal to resign and the insistence that he be allowed to serve out his term were classic Mugabe. Only he can say whether he seriously thought he had a chance of succeeding, or if he was just bluffing to see how far he could push things. But his Nov. 20 cabinet meeting that saw 17 of his cabinet ministers ignoring his summons has to have told him that he'd lost the hand, and that it was time to fold.

The Crocodile Takes the Throne

On Nov. 24 Emmerson D. Mnangagwa, known throughout the country as "the Crocodile," was installed as the leader of ZANU-PF and interim president of Zimbabwe. A teenager during the liberation struggle, he served in intelligence, and after independence was justice minister and, later, defense minister. He has worked closely with Mugabe for decades and, while he lacks Mugabe's charisma and popularity, is considered a ruthless and calculating person. No one disputes his intelligence and capability.

Like his mentor, he knows how to say what key listeners want to hear. During his inauguration address, for example, Mnangagwa



Robert Mugabe, then president of Zimbabwe, at the 12th African Union Summit on Feb. 2, 2009, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

gagwa adroitly targeted a variety of audiences. To the private sector and foreign investors, particularly the Chinese, currently Zimbabwe's main trading partner, he promised a country that was efficient and safe for investors. To the political opposition, he spoke of drawing from all talent and from all groups to achieve his objectives. Next year's elections would be held, he said, vowing that they would be "free and fair."

He committed to keeping Zimbabwe's citizens "secure," without explaining what that meant. And not alienating his support in the party and military, many members of both having enriched themselves through rent-seeking activity, he spoke against corruption without calling out or identifying individuals.

His first public address as head of state had none of Mugabe's fire and belligerence. And while some in the opposition were disappointed that he didn't delve into more detail on certain issues, he didn't seem to upset anyone too severely. His announcement of Cabinet positions after his inauguration is also not surprising. While he did bring a couple of outsiders into government, his cabinet prominently features senior military men, senior supporters and even a few holdovers from Mugabe's Cabinet.

Interestingly, no opposition politicians are included, which signals that his priority is probably to consolidate control over ZANU-PF and ensure its continuing control of the reins of power.

What Next?

The coming months will be interesting for Southern Africa watchers on both sides of the Atlantic. Even though Mnangagwa promised that the July 2018 elections will take place as scheduled, the devil is, as always, in the details. Zimbabweans and a lot of the world will be watching what happens between now and July. Will the elections—assuming they are actually held—really be free and fair, and without the violence, intimidation and cheating that have

characterized past elections? Taking the helm of a party seriously weakened by infighting between generations, will Mnangagwa be able to maintain his support with senior military and party members? If not, will they abide by his promises to allow an election that could see them losing?

Will the United States, the European Union and the rest of the international community be willing to work with the interim government—beyond the official statements reminding Zimbabweans that they now have an opportunity to develop a government that responds to the will of the people and that there should be respect for the constitution and human rights? A useful component of most international statements is that it should be left to the courts to decide the legality of the military's actions in November. But beyond that the international community has to decide if it is willing to work with all parties to ensure a free and fair election.

U.S. policy toward the members of ZANU-PF has been less than cordial for the past decade, while the European Union has shown more flexibility over the past five or six years, even relaxing some sanctions. As Zimbabwe gears up for possible elections in July, it remains to be seen whether or not the United States will change its somewhat inflexible position.

What role will China play in Zimbabwe's political situation? While the Chinese government has stated that beyond "monitoring" it has no involvement in Zimbabwe's internal affairs, Gen. Chiwenga's visit to Beijing shortly before the military's move is highly suspicious. Few are convinced that the Chinese did not have forewarning of the coup, and that they probably tacitly agreed with it. Given their desire to see stability in the country—and the prospect of instability Mugabe's machinations on behalf of his extremely unpopular wife generated—it's hard to imagine the Chinese objecting to the military "making it possible" for a steadier hand to take over at the helm.

Events in Zimbabwe since November have sent shock waves throughout Africa, and other "leaders for life" have to be looking anxiously over their shoulders. What happens in Zimbabwe between now and July will also have a significant impact on views regarding democracy in Africa. If the stars align, and everyone involved acts in good faith, Zimbabwe could see its first-ever transition to a truly representative government, which could embolden others on the continent. If Mnangagwa can keep his ZANU-PF hardliners in check, and actually include representatives of opposition parties in the governing process and, at the same time, ensure a fair and peaceful process leading up to elections, I would say the future is, if not bright, at least not dim.

Mind you, however, I have learned my lesson. This time, I make no predictions. ■

AFSA Memorial Ceremony and Rolling Moment of Silence

The annual AFSA Memorial Ceremony will take place during Foreign Service Day, May 4, in the Department of State's C Street lobby at a time yet to be determined. AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson will preside over the ceremony.

This year, AFSA will add two names to the honor roll of those who gave their lives in service to the nation: Andy Jordan, who died in Juba,

South Sudan, in December 2016, and Selena Nelson-Salcedo, who passed away in Bratislava, Slovakia, in June 2017. An upcoming issue of AFSA News will include coverage of the ceremony, as well as biographical pieces on both honorees.

We invite the Foreign Service family, as well as Andy and Selena's families, friends and colleagues to join us as we honor them during this solemn occasion.

We also invite our colleagues currently serving overseas to join us in a worldwide rolling moment of silence, which is set to take place at noon local time at posts all across the globe on Foreign Service Day.

We ask posts around the world to pause for a moment in a gesture of respect and remembrance for our fallen colleagues. Watch for an upcoming AFSANet with details on this event. ■



AFSA is now seeking nominations for our Constructive Dissent and Exemplary Performance Awards.

See page 68 for details.

ANNOUNCEMENT

JOIN AFSA FOR FOREIGN SERVICE DAY

State Department retirees and Foreign Service retirees of other U.S. foreign affairs agencies are welcome to attend the State Department's annual homecoming event, Foreign Service Day, on Friday May 4.

In addition to remarks by senior State Department officials, Foreign Service Day also includes the AFSA Memorial Ceremony honoring FS personnel who have died while serving abroad under circumstances distinctive to the Foreign Service.

State will also host off-the-record seminars on foreign policy issues and a luncheon. Reservations for the luncheon will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Payment by personal check, made payable to "Foreign Affairs Day," must accompany the reservation. In recent years, the luncheon has sold out quickly, so mail in your RSVP card and payment as soon as possible.

Retirees who haven't attended Foreign Service Day recently may request an invitation by emailing the following information to foreignaffairsday@state.gov: first and last name, date of birth, retirement date, whether Civil Service or Foreign Service, U.S. foreign affairs agency from which they retired, mailing address, phone number and email address. ■

CALENDAR

- March 15
Deadline:
AFSA Scholarship Applications
- March 15
11:59 p.m.
Deadline: AFSA National High School Essay Contest
- March 21
12:1:30 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting
- March 29
4:30-6:30 p.m.
AFSA Networking Happy Hour
- April 1-5
AFSA Road Scholar Program Washington, D.C.
- April 17
Tax Day:
Your Tax Returns Are Due Today
- April 18
12:1:30 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting
- May 4
Foreign Service Day/AFSA Memorial Ceremony
- May 16
12:1:30 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting
- May 25
Deadline: AFSA Dissent and Performance Award Nominations
- June 3-8
AFSA Road Scholar Program Chautauque, N.Y.



Find Your Inner Advocate

My first job in the Foreign Service was as a consular officer in Rio de Janeiro. Lucky posting, I know. I arrived in October 2000. About four months into my tour, I got to work one day and opened my desk drawer to find a piece of paper with the words “Fag Notes” scribbled on it.

Having come from a job on Capitol Hill where I worked for a supportive member of Congress and with a close group of friends, this attack against my sexual orientation stung. I was already reeling from the dramatic shift my life had taken over the previous 12 months, compounding my feelings of anger and isolation.

Stunned, I shared the note with my supervisor, who was an extremely kind man, and also gay. He recommended talking with the consul general. Now, here's the thing that kicked me in the gut more than the note itself: When I showed the paper to the CG and shared my anguish, this generally sympathetic, middle-aged, single, female, African-American consul general looked at me and said, “This is the Foreign Service, Ken. What did you expect.” It wasn't a question.

I've spoken about this incident over the years, quite a bit. I shared it when I was giving my closing remarks at GLIFAA's 2013

Pride event, with Secretary of State John Kerry standing next to me and hundreds of people in the audience. It offers insight into the reason for my advocacy. After all, how could anyone, especially a member of a minority group, so cavalierly dismiss this attack of sorts against a new FSO, unless it was, as she implied, just something to expect?

Back then, I asked myself: Is the State Department welcoming? Is it a place I want to work, to spend my career, my life? I considered quitting and returning to Washington. Who needs this? But I decided to stay and work toward change because, importantly, I loved my job, loved the Foreign Service and loved working for the Department of State. Still do, in fact.

I'm proud of how far the department and, for the most part, American society have progressed or “evolved” regarding equality for LGBT individuals since then. And recently, my recollections of that day have shifted. As I came to know more senior officers, I realized that my CG in Rio, who joined the Foreign Service 17 years prior, likely dealt with a whole heap of abuse based on any number of factors that had nothing to do with her ability to do her job. It's not an excuse for her response, but it allowed me

Progress requires effort: it requires folks who are willing to put their necks on the line sometimes. AFSA can help with that.

to remember her apparent lack of empathy with more compassion.

And change has happened on a host of matters where groups of individuals banded together and—often working with AFSA—pushed for change. GLIFAA, Balancing Act, the Thursday Luncheon Group, Executive Women at State and other groups have helped change the culture at the State Department. Is it perfect? Heck no. Especially not these days. But have advocates for change—often new or mid-level employees—made a huge difference here? Absolutely.

For me, I served on the GLIFAA Board every time I was stateside. I was president in 2012-2013 when GLIFAA celebrated its 20th anniversary, and I had the honor of introducing Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. And I served as AFSA post representative overseas and on the AFSA Governing Board in D.C. from 2011 to 2015. I enjoy advocating to make the State Department more “user friendly” and a better place for all, so that those who come after me won't be

told: “It's the Foreign Service, what did you expect?”

Why am I sharing this painful experience with all of you? I want you to know that if you come across things that just don't seem right or don't seem fair, you should let us know. Speak to your post management, to your EEO counselor, to your AFSA post rep, or reach out to one of the many affinity groups and employee organizations that represent the various constituencies that make up the department. Find a way to make your voice heard.

Progress requires effort: it requires folks who are willing to put their necks on the line sometimes. AFSA can help with that. As your union, it's our job to be your voice, and to call out for change when change is needed. It's what we do.

For more on affinity groups and employee organizations, go to bit.ly/Emp_Aff_Grp and bit.ly/Emp_Org (intranet access only). ■



USAID Senior Leadership Must Support Its Workforce

In my December column I highlighted communication gaps at USAID. Our agency does well communicating about its work, such as our laudable disaster responses. Stories in the press describe USAID's health and education innovations, as well as food assistance in places stricken by famine caused by drought or war. Press reports about the agency foster pride in the people carrying out its work.

The USAID Foreign Service officers I know have a combination of idealism and intelligence that is fitting for this premier development agency. The Civil Service and other Washington staff are equally impressive, and I cannot overstate my pride in our local staff overseas.

However, with the exception of its Foreign Service assignments team, the agency does not do well in communicating internally with its workforce. Obfuscation and misleading statements about facts important to Foreign Service officers' careers are so persistent that, often, communications gaps and miscommunication seem deliberate. The continuing lack of candor between USAID senior leaders and its FS workforce is harmful to both.

This is not a new problem: My predecessor in the role of AFSA USAID vice president, Sharon Wayne, warned in her March 2016 column in *The Foreign Service Journal*

that "using non-standard hiring practices to bring in staff to encumber positions transitionally reserved for Foreign Service officers has had a severe impact on the career paths of our FSOs and dealt a striking blow to workforce morale." The 2017 hiring freeze worsened the situation.

A few incidents will highlight my growing concern:

During one large town-hall meeting in a functional bureau, FSOs were described by bureau leadership as unwilling or uninterested in serving in difficult posts and inflexible about serving in difficult-to-fill roles. This misinformation was used when proposing yet another new hiring category for the agency, focused on humanitarian and crisis work. After the FSOs protested the characterization, citing the difficult work they've been doing around the world for years, a grudging apology was made. However, damage was done by the leadership's disparaging public remarks, which revealed a deeply held bias.

In January, an anonymous message was pushed under the USAID AFSA office door. The unsigned two-page missive leveled numerous accusations against the agency, including "lack of transparency." When I get anonymous messages like that one, I wonder: "Are serious concerns like these gnawing away at other people?" It

How can senior leadership increase communications and improve its attitude toward FSOs?

isn't just that unsigned note: I've also gotten calls and messages from concerned, seasoned, senior, very credible FSOs overseas.

How can senior leadership increase communications and improve its attitude toward FSOs? They, after all, sign on for worldwide availability as needed, unlike Foreign Service Limited (FSL) and Personal Service Contract (PSC) employees, who can go position by position wherever they want.

The announcement of the new Chief Human Capital Office (CHCO) seemed a sound move, but many other recent management decisions regarding the USAID Direct Hire Foreign Service Officer workforce led to more questions:

Does the Hiring Reassignment and Review Board have some hidden objective? Why else would it approve recruitment of some much-needed FS skills while putting aside the well-supported requests for other FS skills with numerous vacancies?

Is USAID actually "planning" its staffing shortages? If staffing shortage emergencies can be predicted years in advance and funding is not a problem, are the agency's staffing shortages truly "emergencies"?

USAID has several programs in place to address overseas staffing "emergencies." There is the Civil Service to Foreign Service excursion program. There are PSCs and FSLs. Numerous hiring mechanisms are in place, and probably still more are on the drawing boards. However, I don't think that the agency can foster the resilience it needs without valuing experienced FSOs. And the agency cannot count on idealism and investment in its vision and loyalty if it relies on an ever-changing staff of non-career personnel.

Here's another illustration: USAID recently decided to consider CS to FS conversions for EXOs (USAID's management officers), because of an "emergency shortage" of FSOs with management skills. If the need was known in early 2016, when a group of highly qualified FSO applicants was interviewed and selected, why does the agency define this as an emergency in 2018? Were agency funds expended for recruitment of FSOs in 2016 just written off?

These are the types of questions being asked because of the agency's frequently hidden rationales and inexplicable decisions. USAID FSOs need answers to these questions. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP.
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Career Development: Training Should Not Be a One-Time Event

“We need an FAS version of the A-100 (‘Welcome to Your New Career’) class.”

In 2008, then-AFSA Vice President for FAS Henry Schmick wrote these words in his VP Voice column in *The Foreign Service Journal*. Within two years, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) implemented its inaugural version of “AG-100.” In 2013, when FAS began looking beyond its existing civil service to hire new Foreign Service officers, AG-100 was expanded and formalized as the training mechanism to prepare Foreign Service trainees (FSTs) for their first assignments.

AG-100 was born out of necessity, but it represents

the most positive commitment to structured training I have seen during my career at FAS.

Even before AG-100, FAS invested in ample training for employees heading to their first overseas assignments. However, training for existing officers has always been infrequent, sporadic and inconsistent. Getting non-mandatory training approved during or between tours can feel as impossible as winning the lottery. Budget (especially the timing of the budget), concerns about post coverage, as well as fluctuating prioritization of career development by management, are the primary obstacles. Sometimes it seems as

though your training request might be approved if all the planets are perfectly aligned.

FAS needs a cultural shift similar to the one Secretary Colin Powell brought to the State Department. When Secretary Powell learned how little training Department of State personnel received compared to those at the Department of Defense, he vastly expanded training opportunities and cemented groundbreaking change.

Secretary Powell’s implementation of leadership and management training as a prerequisite for promotions remains in place, and State Department colleagues have often remarked that it has made a noticeable and posi-

tive difference in improving department management.

Most FAS FSOs have not taken any management, supervision or leadership training aside from an introductory course before their first tour. Despite a mission-critical need for employees to remain up to date on technology and other issues affecting agricultural trade, mid-career training is lacking.

Ongoing professional training should not be viewed as a luxury. It is a necessity, and requires management’s commitment to both encourage and facilitate career development. AFSA is eager to collaborate to make this a reality. ■

NEWS BRIEF

THE “BIDDER’S MATRIX” FOR SAME-SEX SPOUSE ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

For employees considering an overseas assignment, the Bureau of Human Resources maintains a database of host government policies and practices with regard to same-sex spouse accreditation. Missions are tasked annually with providing the latest policy for their host country to support LGBT+ employees’ bidding strategies.

By using the resulting matrix, bidders can learn whether their same-sex spouse would be accredited and granted full diplomatic privileges and immunities by the host country and find information on local government restrictions affecting the LGBT+ community. For countries where the host government does not accredit same-sex spouses, the matrix describes any alternatives to full diplomatic accreditation.

GLIFAA, the employee affinity group representing the interests of the LGBT+ community in foreign affairs agencies, recommends bidders review the matrix as a first step before following up with specific questions to the Regional Bureau Executive Office (EX) or post in cases where the host country policy or practice is inconsistent or ambiguous.

Another excellent resource is Post Info to Go, where bidders can read personal observations of the local climate for LGBT+ people. Bidders can also contact the post’s GLIFAA representative with any questions.

GLIFAA encourages bidders to use the matrix and provide feedback for continual improvement. Happy bidding!

To gain access to the bidder’s matrix, please contact Bernadette Cole Byrd at ColeBS@state.gov or Thales Dus at DusT@state.gov.

To search Post Info to Go, visit: <http://tc.fsi.state.sbu/PITG/>.

To contact a GLIFAA post representative, please email postrepscoordinator@glifaa.org.

To provide feedback to the GLIFAA board or for general questions on LGBT+ issues, please contact board@glifaa.org. ■



Engaging AFSA Members

As a professional association, AFSA protects and promotes the Foreign Service as a high-performance, rigorous profession crucial to sustaining U.S. global leadership. The Foreign Service profession—and AFSA unequivocally believes it is a profession—has been threatened by proposed budget cuts, an exodus of Senior Foreign Service officers, slashed promotion numbers and strangled hiring.

While the Foreign Service has many champions on Capitol Hill, it also needs to nurture and develop its internal champions, who will be engaged in fighting the good fight for years to come. It is long-term, intergenerational work, and it is a vital ingredient for the continuity and success of the Foreign Service. What distinguishes this work from, say, working to promote the profession

for ourselves only, is that the stakes are *the interests of the nation as a whole*.

One of AFSA's principal goals is to do whatever it can to help these internal champions be even more effective in their stewardship of the Foreign Service. Today, following the framework built by the Foreign Service Act, active-duty FS members recruit, hire, train, mentor and promote their colleagues in addition to running the day-to-day operations of the Service. Foreign Service members are not just cogs in the wheels—they are the designers and operators of the wheels. Our designers need the best skills. Our operators need encouragement. They all need practical tools to be the sharpest they can be.

That is why the Professional Policy Issues team is placing a renewed emphasis

on engaging members in 2018. AFSA will create even more opportunities for active-duty and retired members to get involved—either with advocacy, information sharing or professional development. We will focus on making curated content about the Foreign Service available to you for use with CODELS, public audiences and your own colleagues.

We will ask more frequently for your input and feedback—continuing our structured conversations, for example, and trying out ways to bring our overseas members into them. We will use our convening power to give you opportunities to consult with, teach and learn from your professional colleagues.

In partnership with our AFSA Labor Management colleagues, we will monitor your feedback on how changes at State—particularly those connected with the redesign and ongoing changes like the

new Professional Development Program—are affecting you personally and professionally.

We know that you expect value for your membership, and we are committed to increasing value to our members in ways that strengthen your stewardship of the Foreign Service. AFSA has been deepening its capacity for developing and disseminating content that will help all members promote, defend and enrich the Foreign Service and your role in it. We will expand our efforts to do this—to get you what you need—because *you are the reason we are here*. You are the stewards, and you provide the wisdom, the guidance and the courage to shape a future that is good for the Foreign Service and good for America. We look forward to being your partners, and, as always, thank you for your service. ■

AFSA Welcomes COO Russ Capps

Russ Capps has joined AFSA in the newly created role of chief operating officer.

Russ is a career association executive. He has worked for the Society for Human Resource Management, the Association of Corporate Counsel, the American Dental Education Association and, most recently, in a turnaround management role with the Construction Specifications Institute.

Russ spent more than five years in the late 1990s and early 2000s working for the Centre for Development and Population Activities, a largely USAID-funded non-profit with international field offices. This experience showed him the importance of the Foreign Service abroad and at home, and allowed him to visit interesting places like Kathmandu, New Delhi and Cairo. Russ' mother retired

after more than 30 years in the budget office of the Foreign Agricultural Service; he likes that he has that connection.

"I am thrilled to join an organization with such a stellar reputation as AFSA," said Capps.

Russ served on the Finance and Business Operations Section Council of the American Society of Asso-



ciation Executives from 2009 to 2017, chairing the council from 2016 to 2017. He serves on the board of the Federal City Performing Arts Association and, until recently, the Finance and Administration Roundtable.

Russ likes to garden and spend time at his beach place with his husband Ken Yazge and their two Labrador retrievers—rescues number four and five, or Beau and Rusty, as they prefer being called. ■

AFSA: 2017 Treasurer's Report

The American Foreign Service Association continues to be in excellent financial health as we enter 2018. AFSA has a very strong financial reserve. The AFSA Governing Board, led by Ambassador Barbara Stephenson as president, worked rigorously to find efficiencies in operations during 2017. The board has approved a 2018 budget with prudent spending reductions. We will continue the effort to create more efficient operations in the year ahead, led by new Chief Operating Officer Russ Capps.

Budget Operations

With the strong support of our membership, we are able to sustain a professional staff of 31 and a planned \$4.8 million operating budget for calendar year 2018.

During 2017, AFSA shifted resources in order to strengthen our outreach efforts, building stronger capacities for communicating the priority issues of the Foreign Service to both the public and our key constituencies, for working more closely with Congress and like-minded organizations, and for working with our retiree members.

These work streams reflect the need for AFSA to speak out clearly and effectively on issues that endanger the Foreign Service and to build partnerships with those who understand

and support the vital role our diplomats play in support of America's interests around the globe.

Over the past year, we have also taken steps to increase support for members who are dealing with labor and management issues. In order to ensure the long-term viability of AFSA's venerable scholarship program, we reduced the draw and achieved significant efficiencies in administering the program. The efficiencies generated sufficient savings to significantly expand AFSA's merit scholarship program.

Throughout 2017, we worked hard to maintain and strengthen our membership base despite the reductions in numbers of entrants into the Foreign Service and increased numbers of departures. Led by President and CEO Barbara Stephenson, we reached out regularly to those joining the State Department and other foreign affairs agencies to officers around the globe, and to those retiring or otherwise leaving the department. We ended 2017 with 16,464 members. Active-duty membership numbers represent approximately 77 percent of our potential membership from the foreign affairs agencies.

In order to sustain the programs and services we offer to our members at this time of increased challenges

for the Foreign Service, the board approved a 2.2 percent increase in AFSA membership dues, based on the official estimated 2017 cost of living increase.

Fund Operations

Operating Reserve: We maintain a reserve fund of approximately \$3 million. This reserve is intended to protect AFSA from obligations assumed in our operating budget and regular activities, from any unanticipated capital maintenance expenditures, and from other unexpected risks. This reserve represents some 64 percent of our operating budget, which prepares us well for any turbulence or unanticipated needs ahead. As you can see in the accompanying chart, AFSA has grown and maintained a solid operating reserve over the past two decades, even while drawing on it occasionally to help meet important needs. AFSA is fortunate to have debt-free ownership of its headquarters, thanks to the prudent actions of the association's past leadership.

The Operating Reserve began 2017 with \$2,944,237 invested and ended the year with \$3,155,737.

Scholarship Fund: This 501(c)(3) entity supports the children of Foreign Service members by helping to pay for college. The fund cur-

rently holds around \$9.5 million. As the chart illustrates, these funds have continued to grow in recent years. The money is restricted and can only be used for scholarships. A certain percentage of the total is withdrawn each year to be distributed as scholarships to Foreign Service children.

In 2017, 98 students applied for financial assistance grants, and 67 received them. 105 students applied for merit scholarship awards in 2017; 24 were granted.

This year the board decided to reduce the annual withdrawal from the fund's reserve from 5 percent to 4.5 percent on a five-year average value, which is in line with industry best practices. At the same time, by adopting improved practices for managing the funds and programs, AFSA will save significant operational monies in the scholarship program and will be able to expand scholarship funding.

The 2018 operating budget includes \$220,500 for financial assistance scholarships. It will also increase the funding for merit awards to \$129,000. This increase will provide funding for an additional 17 merit awards and increase the amount of the awards granted by \$1,000 each.

The Scholarship Fund began 2017 with \$8,195,260 invested and ended the year with \$9,533,566.

Fund for American Diplo-

macy: AFSA encourages donations to our Fund for American Diplomacy to help educate the American public about the role of the Foreign Service and the importance of diplomacy as a tool of America's influence, prosperity and success in the world. The FAD is organized as a 501(c)(3).

You can donate to the FAD through the Combined Federal Campaign with number 10646. It is listed as "Diplomacy Matters-AFSA (Fund for American Diplomacy)."

The work supported by the FAD will remain especially important in the year ahead given the lack of priority being accorded by some key figures in Washington to the importance of U.S. diplomacy and given ongoing efforts to slash resources and personnel at our foreign affairs agencies.

Funding from the FAD allows AFSA to work with our retiree members around the country to organize outreach activities highlighting the importance of our diplomatic and development assistance corps. AFSA, for example, held a very successful fundraiser for the FAD in December 2017, hosted by former Ambassador Tim Carney in Washington, D.C.

The Fund for American Diplomacy has existed under various names and

in different configurations since the 1940s. In 2000, AFSA established the FAD as a 501(c)(3), allowing tax-deductible donations. In 2016, the AFSA Governing Board created a FAD Operating Reserve to provide more transparency and a solid financial foundation for the fund; we also began keeping monies for FAD-related activities in the Operating Budget. The FAD Operating Reserve was established with a donation of \$120,202 (\$20,202 from a member and an AFSA contribution of \$100,000 from its Operating Reserve). In 2017, AFSA moved an additional \$175,000 from the AFSA Operating Reserve to the FAD Operating Reserve.

The FAD Operating Reserve began 2017 with \$120,202 invested

and ended the year with \$295,381. The approved 2018 AFSA operating budget also incorporates funds dedicated to FAD activities totaling some \$206,000.

Sinclair Fund: AFSA also maintains the Matilda W. Sinclair Fund, which supports excellence in language achievement. AFSA draws on that fund yearly to pay for the language achievement awards.

The Sinclair Fund began 2017 with \$429,966 invested and ended the year with approximately \$475,014.

The AFSA operating budget figures for 2015, 2017 and 2018 in the accompanying chart include FAD operating reserve as part of the total.

The chart also contains

key data that reflects our growth since 2000, allowing us to appreciate AFSA's solid financial position and the good financial stewardship of our association's leadership in recent decades.

AFSA's excellent financial health and continued strong membership from the foreign affairs agencies will allow the association to focus on its mission to serve as the "Voice of the Foreign Service" at this time of serious challenges for our Service. We encourage your ongoing financial support to enhance our outreach and education efforts with the public and ask for your active participation in AFSA's work and mission over the year ahead. ■

—Tony Wayne,
AFSA Treasurer

AFSA DATA	2000	2005	2010	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2016	Dec. 2017*
Membership	10,755	13,303	15,438	16,446	16,571	16,464
Operating Budget**	\$2,757,589	\$3,471,200	\$4,000,187	\$4,756,755	\$4,916,951	\$4,808,991 (planned 2018)***
Operating Reserve	\$407,111	\$1,695,471	\$2,933,839	\$3,271,799	\$2,944,237	\$3,155,737
Scholarship Reserve	\$4,581,392	\$4,359,903	\$4,465,238	\$6,696,108	\$8,195,260	\$9,533,566
Sinclair Fund	\$496,360	\$354,935	\$348,565	\$422,911	\$429,966	\$475,014
FAD Operating Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$120,202	\$295,381
Professional Staff (Full-time equivalent)	22	25	24	34	32	31

*Reserve balances reflect the actual balances as of December 2017.

**AFSA & FAD budgets were combined in 2015, 2017 & 2018

***Operating budget reflects the budget approved by the AFSA Governing Board for calendar year 2018.

AFSA Outreach: 2017 in Review



In early 2017, the AFSA Governing Board made the strategic decision to allocate \$100,000 from AFSA's reserves toward increased outreach efforts. During the previous year's structured conversations with members, AFSA leadership consistently heard members express a strong desire for the association to do more in that space. To guide our work, AFSA stood up the 50-state outreach initiative, whose goal was to engage in outreach efforts in every state. Below is an overview of what AFSA achieved in this area, in great part thanks to increased resources.

Retiree Outreach

One of the first decisions was to do what our retirees were asking AFSA to do: Provide more support and resources to retirees who wanted to be effective advocates for

the Foreign Service in their home communities across the country. To that effect, AFSA created the position of retiree outreach coordinator and hired Foreign Service spouse Christine Miele to fill that role. (See Christine's

complete biography on p. 58 of the October 2017 issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*.)

Christine has worked tirelessly to connect with our retirees since coming on board. She has supported retiree associations, worked to start new ones, conducted an ongoing retiree membership recruitment drive for AFSA, and worked with colleagues to produce talking points for retirees to use when advocating for the Foreign Service. Christine also organized a first-of-its-kind webinar for retiree association chairs, during which they heard from AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and Retiree Vice President John Naland. This capacity has not existed at AFSA previously.

AFSA leadership also met

with Foreign Service retirees in Texas, Florida and the upper Midwest. AFSA organized retirees to engage in a "letter to the editor" campaign surrounding Foreign Service Day activities on May 5; as a result, readers of more than 50 newspapers around the country learned more about the service and sacrifice of America's diplomats.

Speakers Bureau

AFSA's Speakers Bureau remains vital to AFSA's outreach efforts, and the increased resources allowed it to grow in 2017. Membership in the bureau grew from 375 to 450, a 20 percent increase. Speakers Bureau events took place in 26 states, up 63 percent from the previous year, and the total number of events rose from 108 to 170, a 58 percent increase. In addition, new and updated talking points and briefing materials allowed speakers to provide up-to-date information on what diplomats do and why it matters. We estimate that through the Speakers Bureau alone, AFSA speakers connected with 6,500-7,000 Americans from coast to coast. By year's end, the bureau had members in 44 states.

Strategic and Outreach Partnerships

Thanks to an ongoing partnership with the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, AFSA has built strong partnerships with national organizations whose goals and programs align with ours. This list includes the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, Global Ties, the World Affairs Council, the U.S. Institute of Peace and 4-H. Through these partnerships—whether during conferences, speaking opportunities or coordinated campaigns—AFSA gained access to new audiences and was able to amplify its mes-



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and board retiree representative Phil Shull with Minnesota Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture Matt Wohlman at Farm Fest in Minnesota, August 2017.



AFSA/VALLAN SAUNDERS

AFSA Awards Coordinator Perri Green speaks with students at the National Model UN Conference in February 2017.



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

FSO Krystle Norman, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, and OMS Dawn Watzlavick with her children Owen and Sarah on the field during the second annual Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park in September 2017.

sage through these existing networks.

Essay Contest and Education Programs

Now in its 20th year, the essay contest received 1,001 submissions during its most recent round—the most ever received. USIP, Semester at Sea and the National Student Leadership Conference remained on board as supporting partners. This year's winner was Nicholas De Parle, a student at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. For the 22nd year, AFSA continued its collaboration with the Road Scholar lifelong



AFSA/VALLAN SAUNDERS

Ambassador (ret.) Charles Ray speaks to participants at an AFSA/Smithsonian Associates program in November 2017.

learning organization. In addition, AFSA enhanced its work with other educational entities, such as Smithsonian Associates (from one program day in 2016 to nine in 2017), Osher and Encore.

Additional Benefits of Outreach

AFSA had its busiest year ever in terms of media contacts, and the AFSA website had more visits than ever before—over one million. While not attributable to AFSA's outreach programs alone, AFSA's nationwide exposure has certainly been instrumental to getting others to pay unprecedented attention to the Foreign Service as an institution and to the contributions of the individuals who make up the most cost-effective part of the national security toolkit. And let's not forget about one of our most successful public events of the year, the

second annual Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park in September.

How Did We Do?

As we tallied up the outreach activities of the past year, we were pleased to discover that we had planned events in 47 states, tantalizingly close to the 50-state project goal. The three states not represented were Hawaii, Louisiana and Nevada. We hope enterprising AFSA members in those states will help us to set up programs there in 2018!

AFSA has plans for even further outreach this year. Thanks to a new partnership with the Cox Foundation, we plan to research and present information on the Foreign Service, create basic presentations on the Foreign Service and diplomacy, and provide the most in-depth and reliable data possible on the Foreign Service workforce, deployment and the cost of maintaining our diplomatic capacity to sustain America's global leadership. ■



Know Your Rights: Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

The courage of the women—and men—speaking out against sexual assault and sexual harassment over the past several months has finally brought the issue out into the open and empowered others to come forward. Employees should be aware of recent additions to the Foreign Affairs Manual regarding sexual assault and should also understand their rights and obligations under FAM regulations related to sexual harassment.

Assault vs. Harassment

The FAM defines sexual assault as “any type of sexual contact that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient” (3 FAM 1711.2 and 3 FAM 1752). Sexual harassment is defined by 3 FAM 1525.1 as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature in which the submission or rejection of the conduct affects an employment decision or the conduct interferes with the employee’s work performance.

The primary difference between the two is that sexual harassment relates to the victim’s employment and/or performance. Sexual harassment is governed by equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws, while sexual assault is a crime against another person, and therefore falls under criminal law. Sexual assault is a form of sexual harassment if it affects employment and/or the victim’s job performance, and

therefore can be both a criminal action and a violation of EEO law.

New FAM Provisions

In spring 2017, AFSA and the State Department negotiated and finalized two new FAM provisions governing sexual assault. 3 FAM 1710 is applicable to sexual assault involving chief of mission personnel or occurring at a department facility outside the United States, while 3 FAM 1750 pertains to sexual assault in the United States.

When conferring on these new guidelines, AFSA and the department were cognizant of the traumatic nature of such an incident for the victim and tried to balance sensitivity and victim empowerment with the responsibilities of the department to investigate and act.

Both FAM regulations discuss the department’s policy and procedures for handling allegations of sexual assault, points of contact for victims to report a sexual assault and the responsibilities of various offices (e.g. Diplomatic Security, the Bureau of Medical Services and the Office of Civil Rights) once a sexual assault is reported.

In addition to the offices listed as resources in the FAM, sexual assault victims can also contact the Victims’ Resource Advocacy Program, which provides assistance and support for victims. Contact information for this program is



Neera Parikh

contained in 3 FAM 1715.5.

Both FAM provisions also emphasize that employees cannot be retaliated or discriminated against for reporting

a sexual assault or participating in a sexual assault investigation. Any employee alleged to have committed a sexual assault may be subject to removal from the premises, revocation of building access, curtailment and/or suspension/revocation of one’s security clearance. In addition to criminal penalties, the alleged perpetrator may also face disciplinary action, including suspension without pay or separation.

State Policy

State’s sexual harassment policy is contained in 3 FAM 1520, which states that the department is committed to a workplace that is free from sexual harassment. There is a detailed definition of sexual harassment, including an extensive list of actions that are deemed sexual harassment and can lead to disciplinary action, in 3 FAM 1525.1.

These actions include sexual pranks, comments, touching and/or grabbing, standing too close to or brushing up against a person, making repeated requests to socialize after work hours despite the other person indicating they are not interested, sexually suggestive gestures, making

or posting sexually-related materials, and unwelcome off-duty conduct that is sexual in nature.

While overseas, employees are considered to be on the job “24/7.” Even off-duty conduct can be subject to discipline. In addition, while employees may believe that their comments (“Beautiful dress—shows off those leg muscles”) and actions (putting an arm around a colleague’s shoulder or back) are harmless and innocent, an individual on the receiving side of such comments and/or actions may feel offended, embarrassed or harassed.

Who Can Report?

Anyone can report harassment to the OCR, and the department is obligated under the FAM to investigate all such claims. Furthermore, the FAM mandates that anyone in a supervisory position must report any harassment that they have been informed of or witnessed.

The FAM provisions discussed here are applicable to all employees, and all genders should feel empowered and safe to report any behaviors, comments or actions that are unwelcome, inappropriate, harassing or made without explicit consent.

If you have questions, please contact the AFSA Labor Management team for advice or assistance. ■

—Neera Parikh,
AFSA Senior Staff Attorney

A Housing Victory in Rio

In September 2016, Foreign Service officers assigned to Rio de Janeiro began contacting AFSA regarding the denial of their Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance. Several officers were placed in temporary quarters between 2016 and 2017 until their permanent housing was made available.

That sounds normal, right? It is not uncommon for FSOs to spend time in temporary quarters until housing is ready; however, there is an expectation that certain amenities will be available, and in these cases, they were not. Based on the information we received, AFSA filed a cohort grievance on behalf of the affected members on April 4, 2017.

The Department of State Standard Regulations 122.1 defines the purpose of TQSA as “intended to assist in covering the average cost of adequate but not elaborate or unnecessarily expensive accommodations in a hotel,

pension or other transient-type quarters at the post of assignment, plus reasonable meal and laundry expenses for a period not in excess of 90 days after first arrival at a new post of assignment in a foreign area, immediately preceding final departure from the post following necessary vacating of residence quarters.” Rather than paying TQSA, the department may choose to “provide temporary quarters directly, to limit the number of days TQSA may be paid to fewer than the maximum number of days, and/or not to pay any TQSA if quarters with cooking facilities are provided.”

The temporary accommodations provided for these employees did not include a welcome kit, an oven, clean drinking water, free washing services (each load cost \$10) or a freezer. All of these items are included in permanent quarters offered by post. The hotel room did have two electric burners, minimal cutlery/

plates/pots, a shallow mini fridge, a sink (without hot water) and a microwave.

In other words, the temporary quarters did not meet the standards set forth in the DSSR for providing temporary quarters in lieu of TQSA. Employees of other government agencies who were housed in the same hotel were receiving TQSA due to the lack of proper amenities.

The management team in Brasilia, which originally gave guidance to deny TQSA, cited “sufficient kitchen facilities,” but we discovered that their decision had been made without adequately vetting the location and its services. This seemingly random decision led to thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket expenses for the FSOs.

Shortly after filing the initial complaint, AFSA received additional information from the AFSA post representative in Rio, Chris Breeding, outlining his support for TQSA. Mr. Breeding worked

with the cohort and met with management to seek an equitable solution. Thanks to some fresh eyes on the issue within the management section, and with support from the consul general, TQSA was retroactively approved. AFSA agreed to withdraw the cohort grievance once we had confirmation that all monies were paid.

We would like to extend our thanks to the FS members who brought this issue to AFSA’s attention. We rely heavily on our post representatives to be our eyes and ears on the ground, and this situation is an example of how AFSA effectively engages on issues in the field.

We encourage all of you to get to know your post representatives. The global list can be found at <http://www.afsa.org/postreps>. If the spot is vacant, consider volunteering to support your colleagues at post. ■

—Jason Snyder,
AFSA Grievance Counselor

Corrections to 2017 Tax Guide

The 2017 AFSA Tax Guide in the January-February *Journal* erroneously stated that the District of Columbia allows a pension or annuity exclusion of \$3,000 for taxpayers aged 62 years or older. This exclusion is no longer available since DC Code Section 47-1803.02(N)

limits the \$3,000 deduction for pension/annuities to years before Jan. 1, 2015. AFSA regrets the error.

Also, according to the N.Y. Tax Bureau Advisory opinion TSB-A-15(6) Income Tax of July 15, 2015, distributions that are attributable to contributions made by

an FSPS or FERS participant and the department to a TSP account while the participant was a federal employee, including the accumulated earnings from those contributions, will be exempt from New York state income tax if the amounts are included in the par-

ticipant’s federal adjusted gross income (FAGI). Only distributions from an IRA account or from a TSP established by an FSRDS or CSRS participant are subject to the exclusion cap of \$20,000. ■

Call for Nominations: 2018 Constructive Dissent Awards

Here at AFSA, we take great pride in our constructive dissent awards program, which will celebrate a milestone 50th anniversary in 2018. These awards are unique within the federal government, and the Foreign Service is similarly singular in valuing such dissent.

The Foreign Service deploys worldwide—to protect and serve, yes, but also to understand the local context and call it like we see it. Sometimes Washington wants us to deliver something we know is not achievable in that context. Sometimes we know that even trying would cause a backlash and impede achievement of other goals.

It is our obligation to point that out, to offer our best judgment and, when possible, alternatives. This is the basis for constructive dissent as we have traditionally defined it.

The same obligations to

speak up apply to matters related to the management of our own institution. We must all think of ourselves as stewards of the Foreign Service and act accordingly, working to establish and maintain well-functioning embassy platforms and healthy career paths for the next generation.

The Foreign Service adds tremendous value every time we advise with precision about what will work and what won't work—in the local context at our posts, as well as in our institution more broadly. Indeed, dissent is part of the precepts for tenure and promotion in the Foreign Service.

Whether it's a group of dedicated FSOs working to effect changes in a biased assignment restrictions system or a consular officer fighting corruption in a country's adoption system, these awards single out the best of



us for a deserved moment in the spotlight.

We all know colleagues who have stepped up and made us proud by offering alternatives or new thinking. These are the individuals we want to honor. Please take the time to nominate these deserving friends and colleagues.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2018 constructive dissent awards. The AFSA awards ceremony will take place in October this year; nominations will be accepted until May 25. If you are not sure about what qualifies as dissent, please read AFSA's guidance at

www.afsa.org/dissent.

We welcome nominations for our four constructive dissent awards:

- **The W. Averell Harriman Award for entry-level Foreign Service officers**
- **The William R. Rivkin Award for mid-level Foreign Service officers**
- **The Christian A. Herter Award for Senior Foreign Service officers**
- **The F. Allen 'Tex' Harris Award for Foreign Service specialists**

Neither nominators nor nominees need be members of AFSA. Any member of the Foreign Service at any foreign affairs agency (State, USAID, FCS, FAS, APHIS or BBG) is eligible. For additional information and nomination forms, please visit www.afsa.org/dissent or contact AFSA Awards Coordinator Perri Green at green@afsa.org or (202) 719-9700. ■

ANNOUNCEMENT

LAST CALL FOR AFSA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

March 15 is the deadline for applications for nearly \$350,000 in college funding for children of AFSA members.

Financial Aid: In 2018 AFSA will award \$220,500 in need-based financial aid to incoming or current college undergraduates. Last year, 98 students applied and 66 received grants. The typical recipient in 2017 had a total parent income of less than \$100,000. This year, AFSA expects to award grants ranging between \$3,000 and \$5,000 to 60 to 65 students. To apply, go to the application site: <https://aim.applyists.net>.

Merit Scholarships: In 2018 AFSA will award \$129,000 in merit scholarships to high school seniors. Last year, 108 students applied and 24 received grants. This year, AFSA has increased funding and expects to give grants to 40 to 42 students. Most will be for \$3,500 and distributed in four categories: academic merit, art merit, community service and best essay. To apply, go to the application site: <https://afsascholarships.communityforce.com>.

For full details, go to: www.afsa.org/scholar. If you have questions that are not answered on the AFSA website or on the scholarship application site, please contact AFSA at scholar2@afsa.org. ■

Call for Nominations: AFSA Awards for Exemplary Performance

AFSA is now accepting nominations for our annual awards for exemplary performance. The recipients of these awards will be invited to attend AFSA's annual award ceremony in October. Nominations for these awards are due on May 25.

• **The Nelson B. Delavan Award** recognizes a Foreign Service office management specialist (OMS) who has made a significant contribution to post or office effectiveness and morale beyond

the scope of his/her job responsibilities.

• **The M. Juanita Guess Award** recognizes a Community Liaison Office coordinator (CLO) who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, dedication, initiative or imagination in assisting the families of Americans serving at an overseas post.

• **The Avis Bohlen Award** honors a Foreign Service eligible family member (EFM) whose volunteer work with the American and

foreign communities at post has resulted in advancing the interests of the United States.

• **The Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy** is bestowed on a member of the Foreign Service from any of the foreign affairs agencies, especially those at the early- to mid-career level, serving domestically or overseas. The award recognizes the promotion of policies focused on advancing democracy, freedom and

good governance through bold, exemplary, imaginative and effective efforts during one or more assignments.

You can learn about last year's recipients in the September 2017 issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*. Neither nominators nor nominees need be members of AFSA. Any member of the Foreign Service at any agency (State, USAID, FCS, FAS, APHIS or BBG) is eligible. For additional information and nomination forms, please visit www.afsa.org/performance or contact AFSA Awards Coordinator Perri Green at green@afsa.org or (202) 719-9700. ■



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AFSA Labor Management Is Here to Help

ANSWERS TO ALL OF YOUR LM QUESTIONS

In 2017, some 2,000 members came to AFSA's Labor Management Office for assistance. Questions ranged from the simple and quick—we can handle those with a phone call or an email—to more complicated issues that can take months, or even years, to resolve.

Members frequently have questions about bidding and assignments, tenure, employee performance evaluations, medical and security clearance issues, as well as financial questions related to pay, benefits and allowances. We've put together guidance for some of the more common questions, which you can find at www.afsa.org/guidance.

But if you want to know more, read on.

Performance Evaluations

We are often contacted about problems with employee evaluation reports. Work with your rater early on to know what to expect. Address criticism in a constructive manner, and try to maintain an open dialogue with your rater and reviewer—this is key to a good final product.

Should you sign your EER? Yes! Your signature indicates receipt, not that you agree with the content. Also, read the instructions! This will save you a lot of grief later. Finally, make sure you check your official personnel folder each year before the promotion boards

meet. It's up to you to ensure that the relevant documents are actually there. Countless grievances have been filed due to missing awards and evaluations.

EER season is right around the corner: for those using Form DS-5055, find the instructions in DS-5055i, accessible through the intranet or a quick Google search. Or ask me to email a copy, along with other useful articles on how to fill out your EER. If you're having trouble with GEMS and the EER process, check out HR's ePerformance Training Tools on the intranet.

Good guidance from former promotion board members on how to write your EER includes Diplopedia's EER guidance from 2012, *State Magazine's* March 2017 issue and the 2017 cable State 112070. The boards look for patterns: If you had an area for improvement, did you do anything to improve on it or are they seeing the same issue raised time and again?

Investigations

We get many questions, not just from members who are subjects of an investigation, but also from witnesses and members who wish to open an investigation. Some of the more common are equal employment opportunity (EEO) investigations within the Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR), which examines dis-

crimination and harassment issues; Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which covers cases concerning fraud and waste; Diplomatic Security's Office of Special Investigations (DS/ICI/OSI), which investigates employee misconduct; and DS's Office of Personnel, Security and Suitability, which handles security clearance investigations.

We encourage AFSA members to contact us prior to agreeing to any interview, as each employee has the right to legal counsel and/or union representation.

If you are the subject of an OIG or DS/OSI investigation, you can find detailed guidance at www.afsa.org/IGDS. In most cases, we recommend a compelled interview over a voluntary interview; but again, contact us to discuss the specifics.

Financial Fiascos

Members often turn to us after they receive a letter saying, in effect, "Oops, we overpaid you. You owe Uncle Sam money. And it's due in 30 days." We can help you respond to these letters. Keeping track of the various allowances and differential payments can be confusing, but if you were indeed overpaid, the government will want the money back—waivers are rare.

The good news is that the folks behind the letters from Charleston Global Financial

Services are quite helpful. If the debt is accurate, they can work with you on how to pay it back and, for larger amounts, create a payment plan. If you believe the debt is not owed, you have the right to request an internal administrative review of the case.

Ask for a detailed report, and don't hesitate to share what you know, as well. Plan ahead to avoid these problems by ensuring, for example, that you turn off separate maintenance allowance and other allowances when you leave post and by keeping good records and all relevant cables explaining any unusual pay scenarios.

Teamwork?

Workplace conflicts are not unusual. For information on resources available if you find yourself in a bad situation, check out ALDAC 15 STATE 45178, known as the "Toxic Behaviors Cable." Resources listed there include the Ombudsman; Office of Civil Rights; HR's Conduct, Suitability and Discipline office; Employee Consultation Service; Human Resources/Grievance; DS investigative offices; FSI's Leadership and Management School Leadership Coaching; the Office of the Inspector General; and your union (AFSA).

We can be a first contact if you need help in figuring out the right place to go—or if you need assistance when you get there. ■

—Patrick Bradley, AFSA
Labor Management Adviser

Meet Your Retiree Counselor

BY TODD THURWACHTER

As AFSA's retiree counselor, I want all members to know about and get the most from the federal benefits that you have earned. A Foreign Service retiree myself, I know the challenge of transition: losing the network of colleagues with whom we worked for decades and suddenly facing a gamut of retirement decisions that few of us gave much thought to while on active duty.

Yet our decisions on these consequential issues—the best FEHB plan to meet changing healthcare needs, signing up for Medicare Part B, when to draw Social Security, withdrawals from TSP, minimizing taxes and maximizing estates, FEGLI coverage and beneficiaries, the impact of divorce on retirement benefits, securing survivor benefits and more—can save or cost each of us thousands of dollars over the years. That's why I am passionate about reaching all AFSA members with information that enables them to navigate retirement issues themselves, to make sound decisions and avoid common pitfalls.

For starters, AFSA sends members a bimonthly digital Retiree Newsletter with "news you can use" about your federal benefits. We also address key retiree topics in *The Foreign Service Journal's* AFSA News Retiree Corner and Retiree VP column. Our annual Directory of Retired

Members has an extensive "AFSA Resources" section, and we post overviews of retiree issues on AFSA's Retiree Services page (www.afsa.org/retiree).

For retirees in the D.C. area, we bring in experts to lead presentations on federal benefits like Medicare, TSP and Social Security. To share that information with AFSA members worldwide, we then post videos of those presentations on AFSA's website, adding quick 10-minute overviews to provide busy members information they need.

After becoming confused on websites and battling phone menus, members tell me they most appreciate reaching a real person who listens, cares and can cut through the confusion with straight answers. Since starting at AFSA in January 2014, I have handled some 1,400 cases assisting individual members who contacted us for help.

During 2017 alone, I dealt with more than 350 such cases (60 percent by email and 38 percent by phone). In 2017 top issues that members sought help with were: annuities (13 percent), FEHB (9 percent), survivor benefits (7 percent), taxes (7 percent), retiree membership (6 percent) and Medicare (5 percent).

While emails predominate generally, survivor issues are almost always handled

over the phone. It is a privilege to provide the peace of mind we promise retirees by personally helping their loved ones secure all their survivor benefits.

Often my most valuable role is determining why and where a bureaucratic process has stalled and getting it back on track. For example, after months of trying unsuccessfully, an ailing 95-year-old was not hopeful of getting survivor benefits confirmed for his third spouse; AFSA got a confirmation in days. An overseas retiree considered dropping AFSA membership after 41 years as "not much benefit," but recommitted when we quickly got the right people to solve his problem after he had tried unsuccessfully for more than a year.

In the last two years we have helped retirees locate needed forms after State ceased mailing out their Annual Retiree Newsletter, which contained those forms. When retirees found it virtually impossible to reach the Office of Personnel Management to confirm their FEGLI coverage and beneficiaries, AFSA worked with State's Office of Retirement to facilitate filing new SF2823s, an effective workaround. After State initially stated that "no data of State Department employees" was affected by the 2015 OPM data hack, we got the straight scoop for our members.



Todd Thurwachter

In 2016 the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program premium spike caused a tsunami of contacts from angry members. We quelled rumors and confusion with accurate information, enabling members to assess new FLTCIP options. We helped ensure that the almost 100 members who contacted us received good FLTCIP counseling, even setting up one-on-one consultations with FLTCIP reps at AFSA for 29 members. By the deadline, all but a couple had found a satisfactory option.

Here's where to start if you have a retirement question or concern: Check out AFSA's Retiree Services page (www.afsa.org/retiree) and the FAQs on State's RNet website (<https://rnet.state.gov>). Contact State's Human Resources Service Center at HRSC@state.gov or call (866) 300-7419 (you'll reach a real person quickly by phone).

If you still have questions or unresolved issues, don't hesitate to contact me. It often takes only minutes to confirm you are on the right track, point you in the right direction or, in some cases, protect you from making a costly mistake. I normally work Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (thurwachter@afsa.org; (202) 944-5509). ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, December 20, 2017

Awards and Plaques Committee: On behalf of the Awards and Plaques Committee, it was moved that the name of Selena Nelson-Salcedo be placed on the AFSA memorial plaque. The motion was adopted.

Management Committee: On behalf of the Management Committee, it was moved that AFSA continue to restrict grievance counseling and legal assistance to AFSA members. The motion was adopted.

It was moved that the Governing Board adopt the policy that “Effective July 1, 2018, only members who have been in good standing for at least six months are able to receive LM grievance counseling and legal assistance.” The motion was adopted.

It was moved that the Governing Board amend the policy on family members seeking LM services by adding “although they are encouraged to join AFSA (as a ‘Family Member’).” By unanimous consent, the board sent this issue back to the Management Committee to research whether AFSA bylaws are affected by changes to membership categories.

Political Action Committee: It was moved and seconded that the board appoint COO Russ Capps as the PAC assistant treasurer. The motion was adopted.

It was moved and seconded that the board appoint Amb. Mike Klosson and Retiree VP John Naland to the PAC. The motion was adopted.

New Business: By unanimous consent, the board appointed John Naland as chair of the Scholarship Committee, with Tricia Wingerter and Matthew Hilgendorf as committee members.

By unanimous consent, the board tasked the Scholarship Committee with handling the entire Merit Award selection process and reporting the results to the board for information purposes only. ■

AFSA Book Notes: *Peacemakers: American Leadership and the End of Genocide in the Balkans*

On Jan. 25, AFSA held the 28th event in its popular Book Notes series, hosting a talk by Ambassador (ret.) James W. Pardew about his book, *Peacemakers: American Leadership and the End of Genocide in the Balkans* (University Press of Kentucky, 2017).

The book is based on some 40 journals that Pardew kept chronicling his time in the Balkans from 1995 to 2008. As both a diplomat and a soldier—he spent 27 years as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army prior to his diplomatic service—Pardew brings an interesting perspective to the story of this sometimes

forgotten war. He was told by one of his military bosses before he left for Kosovo that the State Department would “drive him crazy” with its lack of precision, but says he grew to appreciate the ability of diplomats to work with nuance and ambiguity.

Pardew participated in Ambassador Richard Holbrooke’s negotiations on Bosnia in 1995, continuing to work in the region until Kosovo gained its independence in 1998. He was the primary U.S. negotiator of the Ohrid Agreement in Macedonia.

A Q&A session followed the



Ambassador (ret.) James W. Pardew speaks about his experiences in the Balkans.

presentation, covering topics that ranged from tribalism and corruption in the Balkans, to the burnout that sometimes affects people serving in the region. He called this the “Age of Diversity” and said that “any nations that cannot

accommodate diversity are doomed.” Pardew also discussed the future of the Foreign Service given today’s uncertain political climate, saying that “once this

storm passes, the nation will need the professionals of the Foreign Service more than ever.”

A recording of the event is available on the AFSA website, www.afsa.org/ video. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, January 17, 2018

Management Committee: In the matter that was referred back to the Management Committee: "The Management Committee is tasked with reviewing AFSA's membership categories and producing a recommendation on the terms and conditions of a 'Family Member' membership category." By unanimous consent the motion was withdrawn from consideration.

It was moved that the Governing Board approve the updated language in the external-facing Labor Management SOP. The motion was adopted.

New Business: It was moved and seconded that the Governing Board appoint a two-person Membership Committee to review associate membership applications and make recommendations to the Governing Board. The motion was adopted.

By unanimous consent, Kim Sawatzki and Martin McDowell were appointed to the newly formed Membership Committee. ■

ANNOUNCEMENT

ATTENTION FAMILY MEMBERS: DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

AFSA News is currently accepting submissions for our Family Member Matters column.

Articles should be approximately 700 words on any topic of interest to Foreign Service family members. We will consider both personal essays and researched articles, and we pay \$200 upon publication.

Please send your submissions to gorman@afsa.org. ■



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Dental AFSPA offers four dental plans to meet the needs of our worldwide membership - Cigna International, Cigna HMO, Cigna PPO, and Dominion National. Apply anytime - No Open Enrollment needed.



Tax Consulting offers AFSPA members a complimentary 20-minute consultation for all your tax questions and a 10% discount on standard hourly rates.



Members of Household Health coverage designed for family members - this includes domestic partners, parents, and dependent children who accompany the employee overseas, but who do not qualify for coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB).



Group Term Life Insurance AFSPA's policy offers simple term life insurance that provides you and your family protection up to \$600,000. It covers death from any cause, including acts of terrorism or war.



Group Disability Income Protection Insurance AFSPA offers two Disability Plans to assist you during a time period when you are not bringing in any or very little income due to a medical disability. These plans provide stateside and international coverage.



Financial / Long Term Care Planning AFSPA members receive retirement analysis and long term care guidance.

■ **Caroline Marie Baker**, 37, an active-duty Foreign Service officer, died on Oct. 28, 2017, after a decades-long battle with depression.

Born in Milwaukee, Wis., and raised in Maitland, Fla., Ms. Baker completed her undergraduate education in Russian studies at Princeton University and earned graduate degrees in Central Asian and Persian studies at the Universities of Wisconsin and Maryland.

A member of the March 2014 A-100 class, Ms. Baker had Foreign Service assignments in Washington, D.C., Bishkek and Ankara. Before joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Baker served in the Office of Naval Intelligence.

She received numerous awards and recognitions for her service.

Friends and family members recall her off-beat sense of humor and trenchant observations of the world, and say she used her talents to build relationships with the people of the many countries where she was posted or visited.

Ms. Baker is survived by her parents, David and Melissa Baker of Maitland; her sister Sarah Butterfield (and her husband, Frank); her brother, Kyle Baker; her nephew, Jack Butterfield, and niece, Caroline Butterfield, all of Central Florida; and many uncles, aunts and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (www.glsen.org) or a charity of your choice dedicated to public service and equal rights under law.

■ **John B. “Jack” Barton**, 81, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on Dec. 10, 2017, in San Antonio, Texas, due to complications from Parkinson’s disease.

Mr. Barton was born in Greenville, S.C., on June 18, 1936, to John and Ruth Chatham Barton. He graduated from Furman

University and the University of Georgia, where he earned a master’s degree, and served in the U.S. Army in Germany from 1956 to 1959.

He taught at East Carolina University before entering the U.S. Information Agency, serving as cultural attaché and press officer in Washington, D.C., Peru, Nicaragua, Spain, Grenada and Brazil.

Mr. Barton retired from the Foreign Service in 1993 and resided in Greenville before moving to San Antonio, Texas, in 2000.

In retirement, he was a founding member of the Furman University Learning in Retirement program and a member of the Northwestern South Carolina Torch Club, the Foreign Affairs Association and the USIA Alumni Association.

Mr. Barton was predeceased by his wife of 33 years, Nadeen Duggan Barton. He leaves a brother, Bruce, of Greenville; a son, Richard, and daughter-in-law, Linda; two grandchildren, Ben and Jenny; and four great-grandchildren, all of San Antonio.

■ **Raymond Ellis Benson**, 93, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Nov. 12, 2017, at Porter Medical Center in Middlebury, Vt.

Mr. Benson was born on Nov. 2, 1924, in the Bronx, N.Y., to Mikhail and Vera (Peskin) Benson. He served in the U.S. Army in Korea, between World War II and the Korean War, from 1946 to 1948.

After his service in the Army, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin, earning a bachelor’s degree in 1950 and a master’s degree in 1954. He then attended the Middlebury College Russian Language School and the Russian Institute at Columbia University.

Mr. Benson worked briefly as a magazine editor in the private sector before joining the U.S. Information Agency in 1956. His 30-year Foreign Service career

included assignments in Yugoslavia (Zagreb and Belgrade), West Germany, Turkey and eight years in Moscow, in addition to a variety of assignments in Washington, D.C.

Retiring in 1987 with the rank of Minister Counselor, Mr. Benson became the founding director of the Collegiate Consortium for Academic Exchange, affiliated with Middlebury College.

Mr. Benson is survived by his wife of 61 years, Shirley; their daughter, Carolyn; and their sons, Michael and Nicholas.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions to Elderly Services Inc., P.O. Box 581, Middlebury VT 05753.

■ **Arthur R. (Pete) Day**, 94, a retired Foreign Service officer, died at his home in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 9, 2017, of chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder.

Mr. Day served in the U.S. Navy as a seaplane pilot during World War II. Following the war, he enrolled in the University of Chicago’s Master’s in International Relations program. While there, he met and married Carol Skeen, who had also served in the Navy, as a control tower operator.

While at the university he saw a job announcement from the State Department: he was taking his orals for the Foreign Service when his first son, Frank (who would later also enter the Foreign Service), was born.

Mr. Day joined the Foreign Service in 1949 and was assigned to the Palestine desk. His first overseas posting, in 1950, was to Bremen, a city still largely in rubble. There, among other duties, he oversaw the local fishing fleet.

Next he was assigned to Santiago, where he and his young family, augmented at this point by sons Peter and Thomas, lived on a ranch in the foothills of the Andes just outside the city. Mr. Day kept a

horse on the ranch and was active in local steeplechases and in area rodeos.

After three years Mr. Day returned to Washington, D.C., initially to the Secretariat and then to the Berlin Task Force created to deal with constant crises with the USSR over Berlin. Although not yet a senior officer, he attended meetings with President John F. Kennedy to assess U.S. responses to the rapidly changing situation in Berlin.

In 1962 he was assigned to the U.S. Mission in West Berlin as chief of the political section and political adviser to the U.S. Commandant Berlin. He later became deputy chief of mission in Berlin.

This period saw the confrontation between U.S. and Soviet tanks at the Checkpoint Charlie sector crossing point, and near-constant issues with the Soviets over the status of West Berlin and Allied military convoy access to the city.

Mr. Day later recalled holding a phone out the office window while talking to the department so people back in Washington could hear the Soviet jets buzzing the U.S. headquarters compound.

He returned to Washington, D.C., in 1966 to attend the U.S. War College before becoming the director of U.N. political affairs in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. He was then assigned to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

In 1972 Mr. Day was named U.S. consul general in Jerusalem and served there until mid-1975. He returned to the department to become an office director in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and then principal deputy assistant secretary in NEA.

He worked closely with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in a newly created deputy assistant secretary position dedicated to the Arab-Israeli peace process until his retirement in late 1977.

He and his wife moved to New York

City, where Mr. Day accepted a vice president position at the United Nations Association of the United States, later becoming executive vice president. During this period he wrote a book on Jordan, *East Bank, West Bank* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1986).

Mr. Day then retired a second time to become a full-time artist; throughout his career, he had been a dedicated amateur painter. The couple moved back to Washington in 1992, settling in Georgetown, where he was active in the Foreign Affairs Oral History program. He rented an artist's studio and had numerous solo exhibitions in Washington and on Cape Cod, acquiring a circle of collectors of his work.

The Days frequently visited the Kennedy Center and museums about town, and spent summers in Eastham on Cape Cod.

Mr. Day is survived by his wife, Carol; by two of his three sons, Frank and Thomas; two grandchildren, Alex and Stephen; a daughter-in-law, Lynn Foley; and by his many friends and fellow artists at the Jackson Art Center.

■ **Myles Robert Rene Frechette**, 81, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador to Cameroon and Colombia, died of cancer on July 1, 2017, at Casey House Montgomery Hospice in Rockville, Md.

Mr. Frechette was born on April 25, 1936, in Santiago, Chile, where his American father, who worked as a mining engineer, married Estella Aida Reyes. As a boy, he was sent to an English-speaking boarding school in Santiago to become as proficient in English as he was in Spanish.

During World War II the family moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, where Mr. Frechette graduated from high school and earned a B.A. in English literature with a minor in French from

the University of British Columbia.

Mr. Frechette entered the Foreign Service in 1963, bringing with him a love of theater and movies in addition to language fluency. He first served on the Cuba Crisis Task Force and later became the coordinator of Cuban affairs during the highly controversial 1980 Mariel Boatlift.

In 1984 President Ronald Reagan appointed him U.S. ambassador to Cameroon. After a coup attempt was thwarted, Cameroonian President Paul Biya asked Ambassador Frechette for advice about a speech to restore peace.

Later, when invited to Washington for an official visit, President Biya asked President Reagan for, and was granted, "a fourth year of Frechette."

In 1988 Amb. Frechette was selected by the President's Executive Exchange Program to work at Manufacturers Hanover Trust Bank in Manhattan, helping develop equity trade swaps for third world countries.

Building on that experience, he went to São Paulo as consul general from 1989 to 1991. From 1989 to 1993, Amb. Frechette was assistant U.S. trade representative for Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

His last Foreign Service assignment was as President Clinton's ambassador to Colombia from 1994 to 1997, during the most dangerous years of the drug war.

Despite facing daily assassination threats from drug traffickers, Amb. Frechette actively engaged with the Colombian government and private sector in furtherance of U.S. and Colombian interests, developing an extensive network of colleagues and friends with whom he corresponded actively until his death.

Amb. Frechette retired from the Foreign Service in 1998 and worked as an international trade and business consultant at private firms such as Hills and Company and Patton Boggs, and as executive direc-

tor of the Peruvian Business Council.

He was president and CEO of The Americas Society/Council of the Americas; wrote articles and gave speeches; taught a seminar on Latin American business integration at the University of Central Florida; and became a senior associate of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

Amb. Frechette is survived by Barbara, his wife of 54 years; his daughter, Alicia, and son, Stephen; and five grandchildren: Christian, Elizabeth, Katherine, William and Emily.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Montgomery Hospice, 1355 Piccard Drive, Suite 100, Rockville MD 20850, or to a cancer research center of your choice.

■ **John “Jack” Garney**, 90, a retired member of the Foreign Service with USAID, died on Oct. 21, 2017, in Sun City, Ariz.

Born in Minneapolis, Minn., in 1927 to the late George and Mary Garney, née Boyce, Mr. Garney grew up and attended school in St. Paul, Minn. He earned a B.A. in political science from the College of St. Thomas.

He met his wife, Amelia “Joy” Wojack, a student at the College of St. Catherine’s in St. Paul, through their passion for politics and bridge. He volunteered for the early campaigns of Hubert Humphrey (1965-1969) and Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.).

Mr. Garney enlisted in the Navy under the V-5 program in July 1945, was discharged in 1946 and was commissioned as a Naval Reserve officer after graduation from college. In 1971 he received two medals for his civilian service in Vietnam.

Mr. Garney joined the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1956, starting as a personnel officer in Ethiopia. From

there he was promoted to executive officer and assigned to Tanzania, Kenya, Vietnam, Thailand, Washington, D.C., the Philippines, Guatemala and Honduras.

After retiring from the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Counselor, Mr. Garney returned to USAID as a contractor, working in Honduras, Tanzania, Somalia, Burundi, Czechoslovakia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Botswana and Swaziland.

Mr. Garney was a consummate traveler. His family recalls that he loved to drive and could drive any car in any country, no matter the conditions. One of his favorite adventures was summiting Mt. Kilimanjaro in 1963.

Known for his fierce bridge playing, Mr. Garney played at every post and far into his retirement. He loved tennis, golf and bowling with family and friends.

He volunteered for the St. Michael’s Parish SHARE Program in Annandale, Va., as well as for the AZ PRIDES (Proud Residents Independently Donating Essential Services) of Sun City. He was on the board of directors at the international schools in Tanzania and Thailand.

In 2006, he moved to Sun City, Ariz., where he spent his last 11 years at the Royal Oaks retirement community. There he was well taken care of by his loving companion, Dorothy Warner, a friend of the Garney family since the early Ethiopian years. His final years were spent in Royal Oak’s Friendship House (a skilled memory unit) and Care Center, where he received the utmost compassionate care from all staff members.

Mr. Garney was predeceased by his wife, Joy Garney; his sister, Elizabeth; and his brother, Thomas.

He is survived by his six children: Debbie Ciminski of Naples, Fla.; Lynn Garney of San Francisco, Calif.; Celia Wolter of Alexandria, Va.; Geoffrey Garney (and his wife, Virginia) of Alexandria, Va.; Tennes-

see Garney (and his wife, Kyung Mi) of Yorktown, Va.; Suzanne Garney (and her husband, Dan Kane) of Santa Fe, N.M.; and his grandchildren Jesse, Monica, Claire and Georgia.

Memorial donations can be made to the Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Association (www.alz.org) or any Alzheimer’s organization in your area.

■ **Robert “Rob” Dale Heater**, 67, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died on Oct. 28, 2017, in Las Vegas, Nev., after a two-year battle with colon cancer.

Mr. Heater began his Foreign Service career in 1992 as a communications electronics officer in Togo and Côte d’Ivoire.

He next served in Egypt as an information management specialist, and then as a general services officer (GSO) in Canada and Haiti.

In 2005 he was named vice consul to Douala, Cameroon; he subsequently served as GSO in South Korea and Sudan before retiring in 2012.

While overseas, Mr. Heater was actively involved with charitable causes, such as funding local schools and animal sanctuaries. During his tour of duty in Yaounde, he was made an honorary prince of one of the local villages, Nsongwa, in the northwest province of Cameroon, for his work with one of the local schools. At his request, Mr. Heater’s honorary robe will be donated to the National Museum of African Art.

In retirement, he continued serving the country through political activism and by volunteering for the local USO in Las Vegas, Nev., his home state.

During and following his career, Mr. Heater’s passion for travel inspired him to become a self-employed travel agent. He had visited 96 countries at the time of his death and was making plans to reach his goal of 100. He requested that his ashes be

scattered along the beaches of Bermuda, the island of his birth.

Mr. Heater is survived by his children, Robert Michael Heater and Maria Anneliese Heater; and by his former wife, Teresa Ledesma, also a retired Foreign Service officer.

■ **Robert Allan Kohn**, 77, a retired Foreign Service officer with both the State Department and the Foreign Commercial Service, died on Dec. 8, 2017, in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Kohn was born and raised in New York City. He attended Columbia College, receiving a bachelor's degree in 1962, and later obtained his master's degree from The George Washington University.

During a 42-year diplomatic career, Mr. Kohn served with the Department of Commerce, Department of State, White House Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the United Nations.

Mr. Kohn joined the Foreign Service in 1962, and his first overseas posting was to Australia that year. Other early postings as a political officer were to Peru and Brazil, in addition to assignments at the State Department as officer-in-charge of congressional affairs and of refugee and migration affairs.

Following postings in Mexico (1972-1976) and Peru (1976-1979), Mr. Kohn was named a U.S. delegate to the United Nations (1980-1981), where he successfully aided in blocking Cuba's candidacy for the Security Council.

Mr. Kohn took on increasingly senior trade positions abroad, serving as deputy assistant U.S. trade representative for the Western Hemisphere in the Executive Office of the President from 1981 to 1983. In this capacity he helped develop the Caribbean Basin Initiative, negotiated the U.S.-Mexican Trucking Agreement and worked on Mexico's accession to the Gen-

eral Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

After assignments in Portugal and Greece (1983-1987) and Spain (1987-1992), Mr. Kohn served as commercial counselor in The Netherlands (1992-1993) and as minister for commercial affairs in Germany (1993-1998). He also served on the U.S. delegation to the Organization of American States and lectured extensively on trade liberalization throughout Latin America.

In 1998, Mr. Kohn was a participant in the yearlong Senior Seminar for leadership training at the Department of State. He then served as diplomat-in-residence and Department of Commerce chairman at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, in Washington, D.C., and, concurrently, as an adjunct professor of international business at Georgetown University.

Mr. Kohn retired in 2004 after serving as minister for commercial affairs in Paris.

During his career, Mr. Kohn received many awards, including: the U.S. Department of the Army Commander's Award for Public Service; the U.S. Department of Commerce Gold Medal for creating the "Showcase Europe" initiative; various State Department awards for outstanding political reporting in Brazil and Peru; the Medal of the République Française; Spain's highest civilian award, the Orden de Merito; the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany's Excellence Award; and the Netherlands Foundation Outstanding Award (the only other recipients have been President George H.W. Bush, Secretary of State Alexander Haig and New York Mayor Ed Koch).

He also received the Athens Chamber of Commerce "Arista" Medal, Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Award, Industrial College of the Armed Forces Teacher of the Year and several Department of Commerce sustained superior performance awards.

After retiring, Mr. Kohn served as president for North America of the Greater Paris Investment Agency, lectured on history and politics on cruise ships and became quite a good Chinese food chef. Prior to his death he had begun intermediate Chinese lessons to add to more than a dozen languages he spoke fluently. But his biggest passion was spoiling his grandchildren.

Mr. Kohn leaves his wife of 50 years, Rose Kohn; sons Robert and Aaron; and four grandchildren: Natalie, David, Alexander and Aaron.

■ **Elizabeth "Betty" Mein**, 95, the widow of Ambassador John Gordon Mein, died on Oct. 4, 2017, in Washington, D.C.

Born Elizabeth Ann Clay on April 8, 1922, to Harold and Bessie, Mrs. Mein grew up in northeast Washington, D.C. She graduated cum laude from Pembroke College in 1944 and served in the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps.

In 1946, she married Foreign Service Officer John Gordon Mein, and together they served in Italy, Norway, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brazil and Guatemala. One highlight of these years was hosting General Douglas MacArthur and his wife when they returned to the Philippines in 1962.

Mr. Mein was assassinated in 1968 while serving as the ambassador to Guatemala, and Mrs. Mein returned to Maryland.

In 1974 she married George C. Taylor, who died in 1986.

Mrs. Mein was active in her church for 71 years, singing in the choir right up until the Sunday before her passing. She served as president of the Women's Missionary Society and started a group dedicated to working with patients from St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

In her later years she enjoyed traveling with Global Volunteers, Elderhostel (now Road Scholar) and Church World Service.

She undertook 27 different service trips throughout the world, the last in 2011 at the age of 89.

Water aerobics was a part of her daily routine, and she enjoyed growing Bonsai trees and collecting praying hands from all over the world.

Mrs. Mein is survived by her son, David, and daughter-in-law Judy; her daughter, Marilyn, and son-in-law Corwin Edwards Jr.; and her son, Eric, and daughter-in-law Catherine; eight grandchildren; and 11, soon to be 13, great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions can be made to the music or mission programs of her church, Calvary Baptist, 755 Eighth Street NW, Washington D.C. 20001.

■ **William Haven North**, 91, a retired member of the Foreign Service with USAID, died on Dec. 12, 2017, in Washington, D.C., of gastrointestinal bleeding.

Mr. North began his civilian government career in 1952 as a Foreign Service officer in the Technical Cooperation Agency—a USAID-predecessor organization—serving five years in Ethiopia and four years in Washington, D.C., supporting Marshall Plan programs in Europe and planning assistance to the newly independent African states.

In 1958 he was assigned to USAID's European Bureau, where he managed the remnants of the Economic Cooperation Administration programs and other new programs for Africa, and in 1961 was posted to Nigeria as assistant program director.

In 1965 Mr. North was detailed to the Harvard Center for International Affairs, the first USAID representative to participate in that yearlong program.

Back in Washington, D.C., in 1966, he became director for Central and West Africa affairs, a geographical subdivision in the African Bureau, where his work

focused mainly on Ghana and Nigeria.

In 1970 he was posted in Ghana as mission director. From there, in 1976, he returned to Washington, D.C., where he served as deputy assistant administrator, and for several periods acting assistant administrator, of the African Bureau until 1982.

After serving as co-leader of a mission to evaluate an integrated rural development project in Nepal and helping to organize the African Development Foundation, in 1983 Mr. North was put in charge of pulling together the evaluation and information functions of USAID. The result was establishment of the agency's Center for Development Information and Evaluation.

During this time he also served as chairman of the Expert Group on Evaluation of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Mr. North retired from USAID in 1989 with the rank of Career Minister after 38 years of U.S. government service, including two years in the U.S. Army.

In retirement, he worked as a consultant. He also joined with the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training to conduct nearly 100 oral history interviews of former USAID officers, thus contributing significantly to the public understanding of USAID operations overseas.

Mr. North and his wife, Jeanne, also a major intellectual contributor to USAID and development theory, were married for almost 65 years.

He is survived by his daughter, Jeanette Thannikary (and her husband, Cy); his sons, W. Ashby North and Charles North (and Charles' wife, Sharon); granddaughters Sarah North and Aarica North (and Aarica's husband, Liam Voth); and his sister, Louise Grey.

In lieu of flowers, the family recom-

mends donations to the Bethesda United Methodist Church (washmorefeet.org), Interfaith Works (iworksmc.org), the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (adst.org), or the USAID Alumni Association's USAID History Project (usaidalumni.org).

■ **Howard B. Schaffer**, 88, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador to Bangladesh, died in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 17, 2017, of complications from congestive heart failure.

A native of New York City, where his family ran a small business that manufactured lighting fixtures in Queens, Mr. Schaffer graduated from Harvard College in 1949. Drafted into the Army during the Korean War, he was based in Japan, where he first became interested in a career in foreign affairs.

He took the Foreign Service exam on his return to the United States, and worked in the advertising industry until 1955, when he received his invitation to join the Foreign Service.

Amb. Schaffer spent 36 years in the Foreign Service and was considered one of the department's leading experts on South Asia, where his postings included two tours in New Delhi and one in Islamabad, in addition to his 1984-1987 tenure leading the embassy in Dhaka. His earlier postings included Kuala Lumpur and Seoul.

With his wife, Teresita Schaffer, Howard Schaffer was also part of an early Foreign Service tandem couple. At the time, the phenomenon of two officers marrying and continuing their careers was unusual enough to merit a profile in *The New York Times* in 1975, while posted in Pakistan.

After Teresita Schaffer took a leave of absence during her husband's stint as ambassador in Bangladesh, he retired so that she could become an ambassador as well, serving in Sri Lanka.

In retirement, Amb. Schaffer taught for two decades at Georgetown University, where he pioneered the popular “Practicing Diplomacy Abroad” course.

He wrote several books about foreign policy, including biographies of Ambassadors Chester Bowles and Ellsworth Bunker, a volume on America and the Kashmir conflict, and—with his wife—two books on negotiating with Pakistan and with India. His book on Kashmir won the Douglas Dillon Award from the American Academy of Diplomacy in 2009.

Amb. Schaffer twice served as a member of the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board.

Amb. Schaffer leaves his wife, Ambassador Teresita Schaffer of Washington, D.C.; two sons, Michael Schaffer of Washington, D.C., and Christopher Schaffer of Miami, Fla.; and five grandchildren: Eleanor, Eva, Nicholas, Thomas and Anthony Schaffer.

■ **Meryl Steigman**, 85, spouse of retired Foreign Service Officer Andrew Steigman, died on Nov. 19, 2017, in Washington, D.C.

After working as a legislative assistant on Capitol Hill, Mrs. Steigman served with her Foreign Service husband at four posts in Africa and a tour of duty in Paris.

During a tour in Washington, D.C., in the 1960s, she was active with the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide and edited the organization’s newsletter.

On returning to Washington during the 1970s, Mrs. Steigman renewed her work with AAFSW. She was an advocate for improved spousal rights, spent several years organizing Foreign Service Day ceremonies for the State Department, and chaired the AAFSW BookFair for two years, helping raise substantial sums for scholarship assistance to Foreign Service children.

For the past 25 years, she served as

executive director of the Bulgarian-American Society, a nongovernmental organization working to improve the lives of the Bulgarian people.

Mrs. Steigman is survived by her husband, Andrew; her daughter, Daria; and her son, Jonathan.

■ **Richard H. Williams**, 82, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, died on Dec. 17, 2017, in Fort Belvoir, Va., of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

Mr. Williams was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, on April 25, 1935. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Utah and a law degree from the University of Utah College of Law.

He served for two years as a Mormon missionary to the Navajo and Apache people of the American Southwest.

He then spent three years in the U.S. Army, serving in Korea, New York and as commander of the induction station in New Haven, Ct., reaching the rank of captain.

In 1965 Mr. Williams entered the Foreign Service and served in Rio de Janeiro, Belém, Luanda, Palermo, Lisbon, Taipei, Athens and Hong Kong, in addition to a variety of assignments in Washington, D.C.

While serving in Luanda, Mr. Williams met Miss Viviane Guigon. They were later married in Paris and had two children.

In retirement, he held various jobs for the Department of State, including teaching at the Foreign Service Institute and as an adjudicator on the Foreign Service Grievance Board.

Family members and friends remember Mr. Williams for his witty, dry humor and as a beloved storyteller.

Mr. Williams is survived by his daughter, Annabelle Numaguchi of Queenstown, New Zealand; his son, Thibaut Williams, currently with USAID in Washington, D.C.; and four grandchildren.

■ **Mildred Dunn Wilson**, 95, spouse of the late Foreign Service Officer Orme Wilson Jr., died of heart failure on Nov. 30, 2017, in Charlottesville, Va., where she had traveled three days earlier to visit her daughter.

Known as “Midge,” Mrs. Wilson was born in Paris, France, on July 17, 1922, to Mildred Eddy Dunn and William McKee Dunn, a decorated U.S. Army officer and combat veteran who had been serving in occupied Germany following World War I. Her family later lived in Washington, D.C., and Hot Springs, Va., where she and her three sisters grew up.

A 1940 graduate of Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Va., Mrs. Wilson joined the American Red Cross during World War II and saw service in the United States and Europe. After crossing the Atlantic on the *Queen Elizabeth*, which was packed with thousands of American troops and hunted by German U-boats, she was stationed in England, Belgium and France.

Mrs. Wilson served alongside her husband during his three-decade career in the Foreign Service, which included tours in Greece, Germany and England; seven years in the former Yugoslavia; postings to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York and NATO in Belgium; as well as assignments in Washington, D.C., and at the Air War College in Montgomery, Ala.

Following the death of her husband in 1991, Mrs. Wilson lived alone on the family’s farm in White Post, Va., where she continued his thoroughbred breeding and racing business.

Family members recall that she loved all her animals, especially her dogs (many of them rescues), farm cats and racehorses. She reveled in her thoroughbreds’ successes and, after their productive careers had ended, made sure they could live out their lives in safety and contentment.

An avid reader, Mrs. Wilson followed

current events carefully and never failed to vote. She spoke French, German, Serbo-Croatian and a little Greek. A lifelong Episcopalian, she taught her children to pray, have faith and be kind to others.

She had recently celebrated her 95th birthday, surrounded by her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and other close relatives, and just one week before her death held a festive family Thanksgiving at her farm.

Family members remember her as a natural storyteller with a wonderful sense of humor and great common sense. All her life she imparted wisdom, advice and cautionary tales to those she loved—often delivered over excellent meals.

Mrs. Wilson was preceded in death

by her parents, husband and two sisters, Lanier Dunn Poland and Frances McKee Dunn Cox. She is survived by her daughter, Elsie Wilson Thompson (and her husband, William McIlwaine Thompson Jr.) of Charlottesville, Va.; her son, Orme Wilson III (and his wife, Mary Hilliard Wilson) of Louisville, Ky.; and her stepson, Marshall Wilson (and his wife, Meg Mathes Wilson) of Houston, Texas; five grandchildren: William McIlwaine Thompson III (and his wife, CeCe Barfield Thompson), Alice Haven Thompson Boothby (and her husband, Willard Boothby), Anne Claiborne Thompson and Orme Wilson Thompson, all of New York City, and Caroline Wilson McDonald (and her husband, Ryan McDonald) of Portland, Ore.; two

great-grandchildren; nine nieces and nephews and their families; as well as her sister, Hildreth Dunn Burnett of Cambridge, Mass.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Foundation of the State Arboretum of Virginia, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Boyce VA 22620, or to Bath County Christmas Mother, P.O. Box 292, Hot Springs VA 24445. ■

If you would like us to include an obituary in In Memory, please send text to journal@afsa.org. Include the date, place and cause of death, as well as details of the individual's Foreign Service career. Please place the name of the AFSA member to be memorialized in the subject line of your email.

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Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at his confirmation hearing on January 11, 2017

Grit and Perseverance in the Cause of Equality

Diplomat and Priest: One Woman's Challenge to State and Church

Alison Palmer, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015, \$16.98/paperback, \$6.99/e-book, 493 pages.

REVIEWED BY ANDREA STRANO

Confounded by male colleagues' disregard, discrimination and sexual harassment, Foreign Service Officer Alison Palmer spent a restless, 26-year diplomatic career bucking the State Department personnel systems in the quest for simple but absolute equality. She continued this battle after retiring in 1981 by seeing a class action lawsuit started in 1976 through to a successful conclusion more than 30 years later, in 2010.

Palmer joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1955 and, as she explains, faced gender discrimination "constantly" throughout her career. Courageously serving in conflict zones, she was impatient for equality.

In 1968 Palmer filed the first-ever equal employment opportunity complaint against the Foreign Service and was awarded a promotion to FS-3 after a finding of discrimination. In 1976, she filed the first class-action lawsuit against the State Department claiming systematic discrimination against female FSOs.

In *Diplomat and Priest*, Palmer tells the story of this battle. She describes how she, with other women and minorities, used data and documents to fight for equality at the State Department. State dug in its heels and fought against the legal action for decades, but the lawsuit achieved changes in many areas, including a new performance evaluation form, diversity training, institution of the Counsel for Equality in the Workplace (now

the Office of Civil Rights) and initial cone assignments, as well as changes relating to assignments, promotions and awards.

Change was slow, but women began to stand up for their rights, working both within and outside the system to achieve greater representation among officers. They began to challenge the implicit and explicit biases in the evaluation and promotion systems and the requirement that a female FSO had to retire on marriage, among other things.

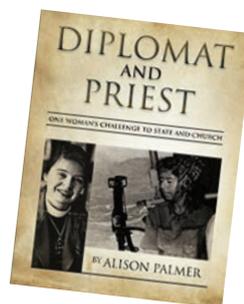
Palmer describes how, while serving in hardship and danger posts in Vietnam, Ghana, Congo, British Guiana and Ethiopia, she faced down sometimes daily violence in country—such as rescuing a U.S. Army warrant officer who had been stabbed by a mob following a car accident—only to return to her office to confront tireless sexism.

She also relates compelling stories from the Vietnam War that resulted in her nomination for a Superior Honor Award, and then details how the award was downgraded to a Meritorious Honor Award, a *de rigueur* practice when it came to awards to female Foreign Service officers.

Palmer describes a small-minded trio of ambassadors who were documented refusing Palmer's appointment at post because of her gender. The third ambassador finally relented but, on Palmer's arrival, informally changed her assignment from political officer to social secretary for his wife.

Spoiler alert: Though the three ambassadors were found guilty of discrimination by the U.S. district court in Washington, D.C., none was ever disciplined or otherwise held accountable by the State Department.

Although you can read about Palmer's story in *The New York Times*, *Washington*



Post and other publications, or go through her personal papers, valued for their historical significance, at Columbia, Harvard and Brown universities, in *Diplomat and Priest* Palmer tells the story in her own words. Here the no-nonsense

personality of the woman who ultimately banished some inequities in the personnel system, including disproportionate promotions, reclassification of awards and an unfair performance evaluation form, shines through.

Woven throughout the layers of struggle are stories of faith. Palmer generously shares the inspiration for and challenges of being among the first women ordained to the Episcopal priesthood, Bible study groups she led (at the request of the chaplain) for armed soldiers in Vietnam, and quiet, private moments of introspection to contrast the chaos of her assignments and the moral challenges she tackled.

Though she never reached the senior ranks of the Foreign Service, Palmer eventually came to be appreciated for her leadership as a change agent. But, as she repeatedly asserts, the equality she fought for continues to elude many State Department employees even today.

Looking forward, Palmer challenges both the State Department and the Episcopal Church to continued action, urging conscious focus on biases rather than resting on good-enough improvements. For the State Department, she presses for a diplomatic corps that mirrors the demographics of the U.S. population and a truly merit-based promotion process to attract and hold onto talent.

This very engaging book will appeal to stewards of the professional U.S. diplomatic corps for its resolute defense of

Foreign Service values. An examination of how easily a large bureaucracy can embolden unfairness with a dismissive shrug, this memoir also testifies to the considerable perseverance and grit the slog to equality requires.

Andrea Strano, the author of "Foreign Service Women Today: The Palmer Case and Beyond" (FSJ, March 2016), retired on disability after serving 10 years as a Foreign Service officer. She served in Manila, USNATO in Brussels and in the Bureaus of European and Eurasian Affairs and International Organization Affairs. Before joining the State Department, she worked at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Red Cross and the International Red Cross in Geneva, Switzerland. She lives with her jazz musician husband in Clifton, New Jersey, where she writes, works as a voiceover artist and volunteers. She can be reached at a_strano@msn.com.

When Friendship Takes Root Overseas

The Confusion of Languages

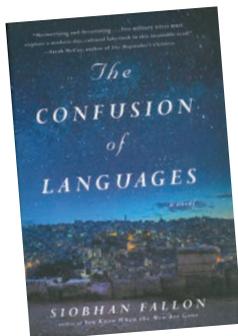
Siobhan Fallon, *G.P. Putnam's Sons*, 2017, \$15.91/hardcover, \$12.99/Kindle, 361 pages.

REVIEWED BY

DONNA SCARAMASTRA GORMAN

Every time we've moved to a new overseas post, I've acquired some odd friends. It's not that these new friends were odd people, not exactly. It's just that they were odd choices for me—they weren't the type of people I ever would've befriended back in the States.

So it is with the main characters in Siobhan Fallon's debut novel, *The Confusion of Languages*. Cassie and Margaret are both military spouses who moved



The story rings true—not just as a tale of life at an embassy overseas, but also as a story of the peculiar bonds of friendship that keep us afloat at times but threaten to pull us under waves of jealousy and betrayal at others.

to Amman, Jordan, when their husbands were separately assigned to the U.S. embassy there. The two women have nothing in common: Cassie has been struggling with infertility, and the rifts it has caused in her marriage, for almost a decade. Margaret, on the other hand, got married after her new boyfriend accidentally impregnated her—and neither particularly wanted to become a parent.

The women find themselves thrown together when Cassie's husband, a major in the Army, volunteers to serve as the social sponsor for the newly arriving Margaret and her husband Crick, himself a major. The two women grow to rely on one other and become almost-friends in the way of Foreign Service spouses who find themselves stuck together in the unlikeliest of places.

The book takes place in Amman, against the backdrop of the newly developing Arab Spring. Cassie is fearful, tentative, worried about making a cultural faux pas, while Margaret is none of these things—she revels in breaking the rules, at times seemingly just to irritate Cassie. The story opens with a car crash and then moves back in time, using a diary as a device to employ dual points of view, and to examine the friendship from the beginning.

Fallon is herself the spouse of a military officer who was posted to Embassy Amman (full disclosure: we served there together); her story exhibits an under-

standing of not just the rhythm of life in Jordan but also the unique bonds that formed among spouses in the insular embassy community in Amman.

Those who have been posted in Amman will recognize many details of the setting, from the embassy playground frequented by moms with young kids to the guard gates staffed by courteous but occasionally too-friendly guards and the parties that sometimes devolved into drunken bickering.

There were a few places where I wasn't able to suspend disbelief. Is a newly arrived spouse who doesn't know how to drive and doesn't speak Arabic really going to drive herself an hour north to visit someone in another city, and then find her way home again after dark?

But for the most part, the story rang true—not just in terms of life at an embassy overseas, but also as a tale of the peculiar bonds of friendship that keep us afloat at times but threaten to pull us under waves of jealousy and betrayal at others.

Fallon's first book, a collection of short stories titled *You Know When the Men Are Gone* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2012), won the PEN Center USA Literary Award in Fiction, the Indies Choice Honor Award and the Texas Institute of Letters Award for First Fiction, proving her skill with the written word. This new book will pull you in and make you think about the relationships you've developed throughout the course of your Foreign Service life.

If you've ever been posted to Amman,

you'll feel a homesick twinge as you read her descriptions of the sites you yourself once wandered. But even if you've never been posted there, you'll still recognize that strange landscape that is life lived overseas: the confusion, the shame, the sadness that sometimes envelop you as you try to navigate the strange shores of foreign cultures with strangers-turned-friends.

Donna Scaramastra Gorman is the Journal's associate editor. A writer whose work has appeared in Time Magazine, Newsweek, The Washington Post and The Christian Science Monitor, she is the spouse of a Diplomatic Security agent. She has lived in Amman, Moscow, Yerevan, Almaty and Beijing, and currently resides in Washington, D.C.

The Life and Work of a Moscow Pro

The Kremlinologist:

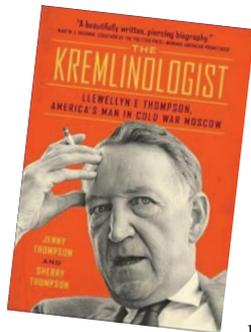
Llewellyn E. Thompson,

America's Man in Cold War Moscow

Jenny Thompson and Sherry Thompson, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, \$85/hardcover, \$39.95/paperback, 572 pages.

REVIEWED BY JONATHAN B. RICKERT

Winston Churchill famously called Russia "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." Those words could also apply, at least to some extent, to Llewellyn E. Thompson Jr., a career diplomat and arguably the pre-eminent American Kremlinologist of the mid-20th century. A two-time ambassador to Moscow, Thompson eschewed the spotlight and never wrote a memoir; nor is he the subject of any other book-



In addition to being a biography, the book serves as a description and explanation of the importance of professional diplomacy.

length biography. Far from an ego-driven self-promoter, he could be self-effacing to the point of near invisibility.

Thus, the task of bringing the details of his life and distinguished career to public attention has fallen to his daughters, Jenny and Sherry Thompson. Though neither is a professional historian, they spent more than 15 years scouring official archives and family papers and interviewing scores of people on both sides of the Atlantic who knew or worked with their father to produce a thorough, vivid and compelling picture of the man and his career. In the process, they help fill crucial gaps in our understanding of Cold War diplomacy. (See their article about their father in the November 2008 *FSJ*.)

Llewellyn "Tommy" Thompson (1904-1972) was born and raised in Las Animas, a flyspeck of a community in south-eastern Colorado. At loose ends after graduating with a degree in economics from the University of Colorado, he met by chance with a retired U.S. consular officer who encouraged him to consider a Foreign Service career. Thompson subsequently moved to Washington and joined the Foreign Service in 1929.

After postings to Sri Lanka and Geneva, he returned to Washington, D.C., before heading to Moscow in 1939, where he was to spend 10 years during his career and where Soviet affairs became the focus of his professional life. His experiences in wartime Moscow gave him a feel for the country and respect for ordinary Russians, as well as a deep

understanding of the inner workings of the regime.

The authors describe in detail the arc of their father's career, intertwining it with scenes from his personal life, including tales of family vacations that weren't, household effects that ended up at the bottom of New York Harbor, schooling and health issues, and much more. Among many professional high points for Thompson, three stand out.

The first was his role in achieving the 1954 Trieste Agreement, and the second was his participation in the 1955 Austrian State Treaty, both while he was serving as high commissioner/ambassador to Austria. Although the conclusion of a multilateral negotiation can never be attributed solely to one person, the successful completion of these two groundbreaking agreements undoubtedly was due largely to Thompson's negotiating skills. Among them were patience, discretion, honesty and a keen understanding of the other side's point of view and political needs—he never took a zero-sum approach to negotiating.

Trilateral negotiations took place among the United States, United Kingdom (as occupying powers) and Yugoslavia on the disputed city of Trieste and adjoining territory. In essence, the task was to convince both the Italians and Yugoslavs that their interests were being addressed fairly. That neither side was entirely happy with the outcome probably suggests that it met that Solomonic test. Of all his diplomatic achievements, Thompson recalled Trieste with the greatest satisfaction.

The Austrian State Treaty negotiations, with four participating powers, were even more daunting. At stake were the end of the Allied occupation and return of Austrian autonomy, in exchange for that country's neutrality. All concerned had come to the point of agreeing to the return of Austrian sovereignty, but as always the devil was in the details, with the Soviets holding out for various advantages.

Through a combination of creative proposals and some audacious bluffing, Thompson was able to nudge the negotiations toward a successful conclusion. As a result, the Soviets for the first time actually departed from foreign territory that they were occupying.

Thompson's most important diplomatic contribution, and perhaps the most difficult one to document, was his role as President John F. Kennedy's chief adviser on Premier Nikita Khrushchev and the Soviets during the Cuban missile crisis. Thompson had come to know the Soviet leader well during his first tour as ambassador in Moscow (1957-1962), and he deployed that knowledge effectively in urging Kennedy to answer the first (and ignore the second) of Khrushchev's famous letters.

He also undercut the arguments of those who were advising an all-out military response. Thompson believed that a cornered animal is the most dangerous, and that without compromising on principle, one should always leave an opponent a graceful way out. Secretary of State Dean Rusk summed up Thompson's role most succinctly when he called him "the unsung hero of the Cuban missile crisis."

The pall of Vietnam clouded Thompson's last years before retirement, rendering progress with the Soviets on nuclear disarmament and other issues



Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson arriving in Vienna with his family, 1952.

difficult to impossible. While Thompson did not actively oppose Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policies, they made him uneasy and were, he came to believe, doomed to failure.

In addition to being a biography, the book serves as a description and explanation of the importance of professional diplomacy, practiced by those who possess area expertise, cultural awareness, balance, empathy and the ability to present and defend their country's interests in a civilized manner. Thompson exemplified those qualities, communicating directly with leaders both at home and abroad, providing insights, analysis and policy recommendations that were usually on the mark.

The book is also an extended tribute to the authors' father and his career. Fluidly

written, the narrative is rich in family history and personal anecdotes. One wishes that the authors had been given access to Soviet security services archives and that the CIA had been responsive to their Freedom of Information Act requests, but the story stands up well even without that material. Ambassador Thompson would have been proud of the skill, thoroughness and evenhandedness with which his daughters compiled this biography. ■

Retired Senior Foreign Service Officer Jonathan B. Rickert spent the majority of his 35-year career in or dealing with Central and Eastern Europe. His final two overseas posts were as deputy chief mission in Sofia and then Bucharest. He served as Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson's staff aide at Embassy Moscow from 1967 to 1968.

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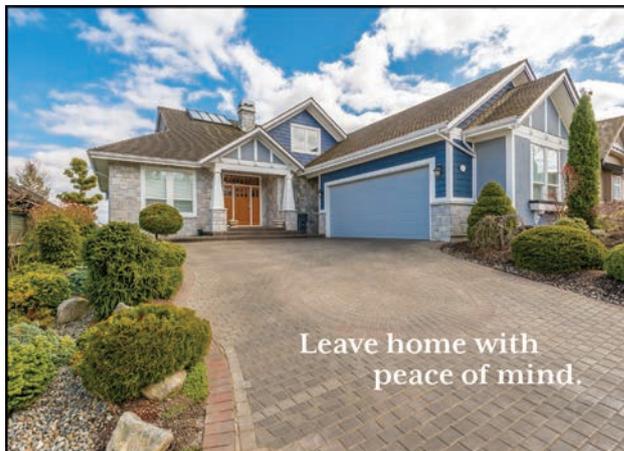
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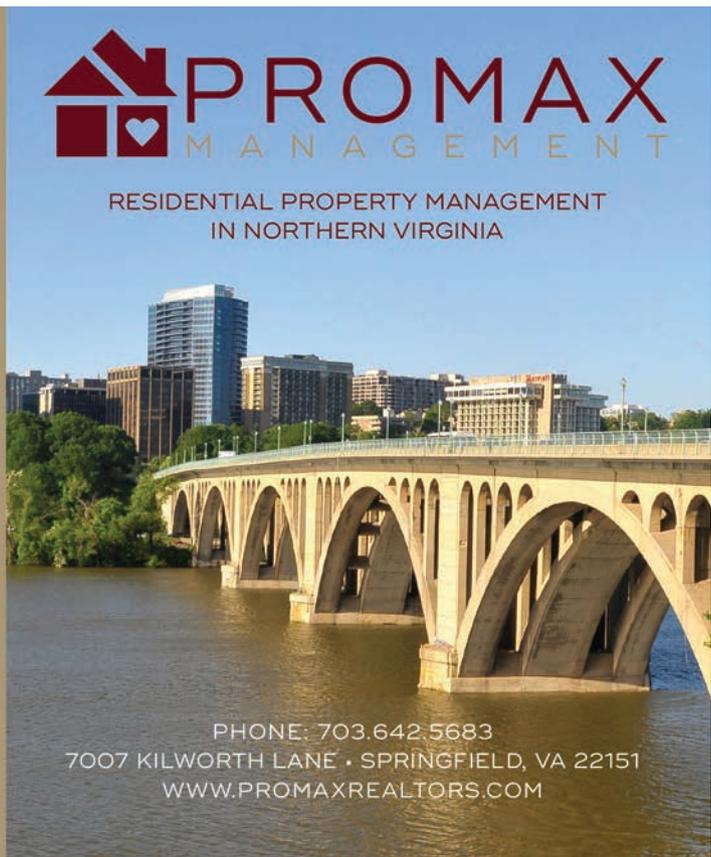
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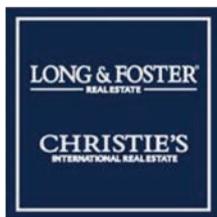
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Lucky That Time: Escapes from Animals

BY JOHN PIELEMEIER

Over the course of a Foreign Service lifetime, this author has had dangerous encounters with at least seven different species of animal—and survived them all. Here are a few of those stories.

Black Mamba in Johannesburg

Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, was a sleepy town with few commercial options when we lived there from 1978 to 1982. Every few months, we drove to Johannesburg, South Africa, to pick up supplies at a big box store. We stayed in a modest hotel and enjoyed a weekend of television, movies and restaurants. To carry back the purchases from these trips, we always brought a few empty duffel bags from home.

One weekend, we carried our suitcases and the duffel bags into our hotel room and headed out for lunch. We left our hotel key at the front desk—the practice in South African hotels. When we returned later and I asked for our key, the hotel concierge said that we had been moved to the fourth floor—a large snake, the poisonous black mamba, had been seen on the third floor, and all

A large snake, the poisonous black mamba had been seen on the third floor, and all of the guests had been moved.

guests had been moved to other floors.

We didn't think more about it. I spent the remainder of the afternoon watching a rugby match (a game I had never played and whose rules I could only guess at) being announced in Afrikaans (a language I didn't speak or understand). I was glued to the set nevertheless—it was *sports* on television, after all.

The next morning, we made our purchases and had started the four-hour trek back to Gaborone when it hit me. How would a desert snake end up in a suburban Johannesburg hotel? “Nancy,” I exclaimed, “that snake on the third floor—I think we brought it!”

It suddenly seemed clear: we had plenty of mambas and other large snakes in Gaborone. We were always on the lookout for snakes in our yard and on the dirt roads of our neighborhood. One must have slithered into our garage and into a partially unzipped duffel bag to keep cool. When I threw the duffel bags into the back of the station wagon

and then carried the bags into the hotel I would have neglected to zip up the bag.

In the cool air conditioning of the hotel room, the mamba crawled out and slithered into the hotel corridor. Nancy and I were likely responsible for smuggling a mamba across the well-guarded border between apartheid South Africa and neighboring Botswana.

We decided not to report our transgression to the hotel or the border authorities and, instead, let sleeping snakes lie. But we did learn to be more careful with our duffel bags.

The Mama Elephant

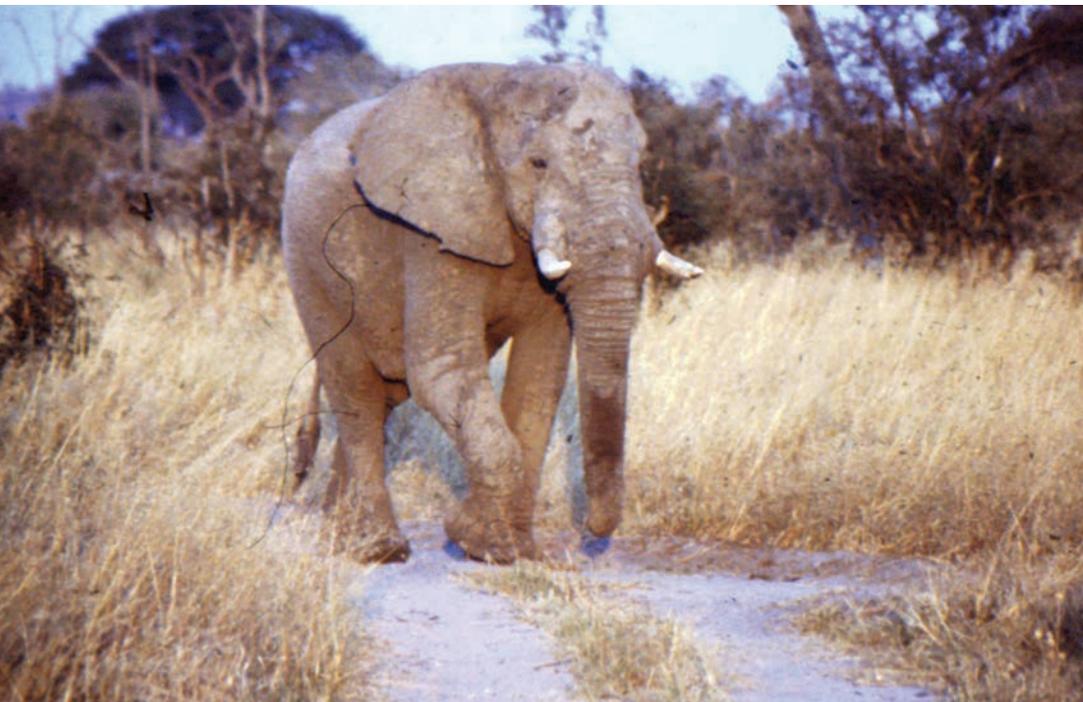
In 1976 I was leading USAID's first design team to Chad, researching the feasibility of a range management project to improve livestock production in the Sahel region of this impoverished country. We planned to conduct our research, talk to local experts, negotiate the content of our proposed project with representatives of the Chadian government and write a project paper to present to USAID/Washington—all in six weeks.

The weather was hot and dry, our hotel was modest and the roads of the capital, N'Djamena, were unpaved and dusty. We worked every day except Sunday. After two busy weeks, a team member suggested that we take a break to drive along the picturesque Logone River in our rented 4x4 Land Rover. A



John Pielemeier joined USAID as an FSO in 1971 after serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Côte d'Ivoire. He served in Brazil, Botswana and Liberia before becoming office director for South Asia in Washington, D.C., and then USAID mission director in Brazil. After retiring, he worked as a consultant, designing and evaluating environment, health, agriculture, education and multisectoral projects for USAID, the World Wildlife Fund, the Packard Foundation and others. He coaches incoming USAID FSOs (more than 140 over 10 years). He created and updates a bibliography of USAID authors (available at the USAID Alumni Association website), and is an interviewer for the USAID Oral History program. He lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife, Nancy, an international health specialist.

Mama was twice our size and could easily squash our tin can of a vehicle.



COURTESY OF JOHN FIELEMEIER

great idea! Five of us piled into the well-used vehicle along with our French-speaking Chadian driver.

The Logone is one of Chad's two major rivers, flowing northwest into Lake Chad from the wetter, more equatorial region near N'Djamena. As we drove southeast in the morning heat, the vegetation gradually became greener, with small trees dotting the landscape. After about three hours, the 4x4's engine overheated and the vehicle simply stopped. We pushed it to the side of the dirt road.

Our team livestock specialist, a 6'6" Texan, thin and gaunt, opened the hood and announced in his heavy drawl that the engine needed to cool off. He found a small path to the nearby river and filled his nearly 50-gallon Texas sombrero with water, which he doused onto

the engine. After the steam died away, he said, "Let's try her again." After two tries, the engine caught. We decided not to tempt our luck, choosing instead to return to N'Djamena.

About an hour into our return trip, we spied a small herd of elephants and drove off the road to get a closer look. Four young elephants were standing under a grove of trees. We approached slowly. Just as we noticed a much larger mama elephant about a hundred meters on the other side of our track, the driver turned off the engine.

Mama caught our scent and ran directly toward the 4x4, which was between her and her babies. Our Texan shouted in colorful language for the driver to start the engine. The driver didn't speak English, but it didn't take him long to spot the charging elephant,

now trumpeting with her trunk high in the air.

He toggled the key in the switch once, twice, then three times while pumping the gas pedal, but the engine didn't catch. The Texan shouted even louder; we all were shouting by this time. Mama was twice our size and could easily squash our tin can of a vehicle.

Finally, the engine sputtered and roared to life. We rumbled forward with Mama just behind us. She chased us as we careened over rough terrain that had never felt the wheels of a vehicle before.

Eventually, she tired and stopped running, but she continued to trumpet at us as we sped back toward the main road. From there we headed home, rolling into one of N'Djamena's few petrol stations

just before our gas tank hit empty.

Taking a Dip in an Okavango Pool

In 1982, after three years in Botswana, my wife and I finally organized a trip to the Okavango Delta. P.J., a game hunter we'd met in Gaborone, offered to take us on a two-week safari. P.J.'s claim to fame was that his father-in-law had been the region's most famous crocodile hunter until he died of a snakebite while croc hunting.

With game hunting now illegal, taking tourists around the Okavango was one of the few ways to make a living in the region. P.J. had adapted his Ford F-250 pickup with a game-viewing seat for three above the cab, a fiberglass canopy over the back and a square hole in the roof of the canopy where two

other viewers could stand at the same time, looking in any direction.

We quickly got used to the daily routine—up before dawn, a quick breakfast by the fire while his helper packed up our “Glad trash bag” tents, and a pre-dawn trek through the bush by car or on foot to spy on game and birds.

Then we’d travel on to our next destination, where we would trek before sundown to look for nocturnal species, often feeding on their kill at this hour. We had drinks and supper cooked on the fire, gazing up at the stars before crawling into tents to sleep, surrounded by the sounds of the wild and incredible stars overhead.

This was the last day of our trip, and we still hadn’t seen a lion, so we started especially early. Nancy and I were both

Maybe I looked like a tasty lunch?

hot and hungry when we finally stopped for lunch at P.J.’s semi-permanent tent camp, built near a small fresh-water stream. As we drove up to the camp, P.J. pointed out a pool of water where the stream had been blocked by a beaver dam. We had enough time for a quick dip before lunch.

I got to the pool first. I waded into the cool water, turned onto my back and started floating, relaxing as I gazed up at the almost cloudless sky.

A small noise drew my attention. I scanned the bank and saw Nancy urgently pointing to the far side of the pool. She mouthed “Hippo!” A huge

male hippo had apparently come out of the water just as I entered the pool to see what was disturbing his habitat. Hmm—maybe I looked like a tasty lunch to him?

I didn’t pause to look at the hippo. Instead, heart racing, I slowly paddled toward the bank. Only when I’d reached solid ground did I look back. The hippo was yawning, showing a two-foot jaw spread and clean white teeth before submerging in a swirl of water.

I have often pictured that scene—without Nancy—with me serenely floating into the open mouth of that hippo. ■



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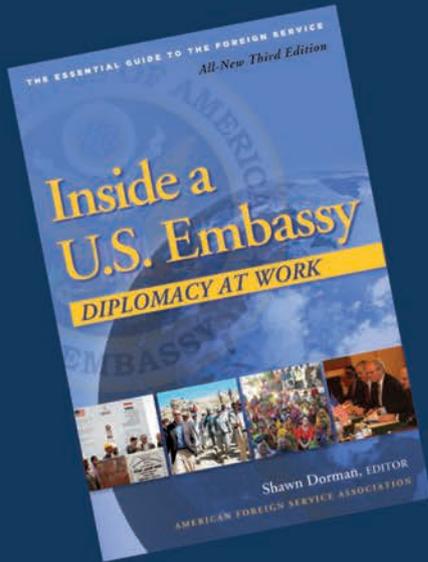


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I call this picture “things you see in Reykjavík when you’re taking your dog out to go to the bathroom.” I snapped this from my yard on a night when the Northern Lights weren’t supposed to be particularly strong. I didn’t use a tripod and just grabbed a simple point-and-shoot camera when I saw the lights were going. We often see the Northern Lights many times per week, but it is relatively rare to get the reds and purples combined with the full moon and the lights reflecting off the ocean. I find it absolutely amazing that things like this exist in nature. ■

FSO Janice Anderson is currently management officer at U.S. Embassy Reykjavík. She has also served in Rwanda, India, Denmark and Angola. Her husband is a cargo ship captain who carries everything from Christmas trees to farm animals from the mainland United States to Hawaii and Guam.

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