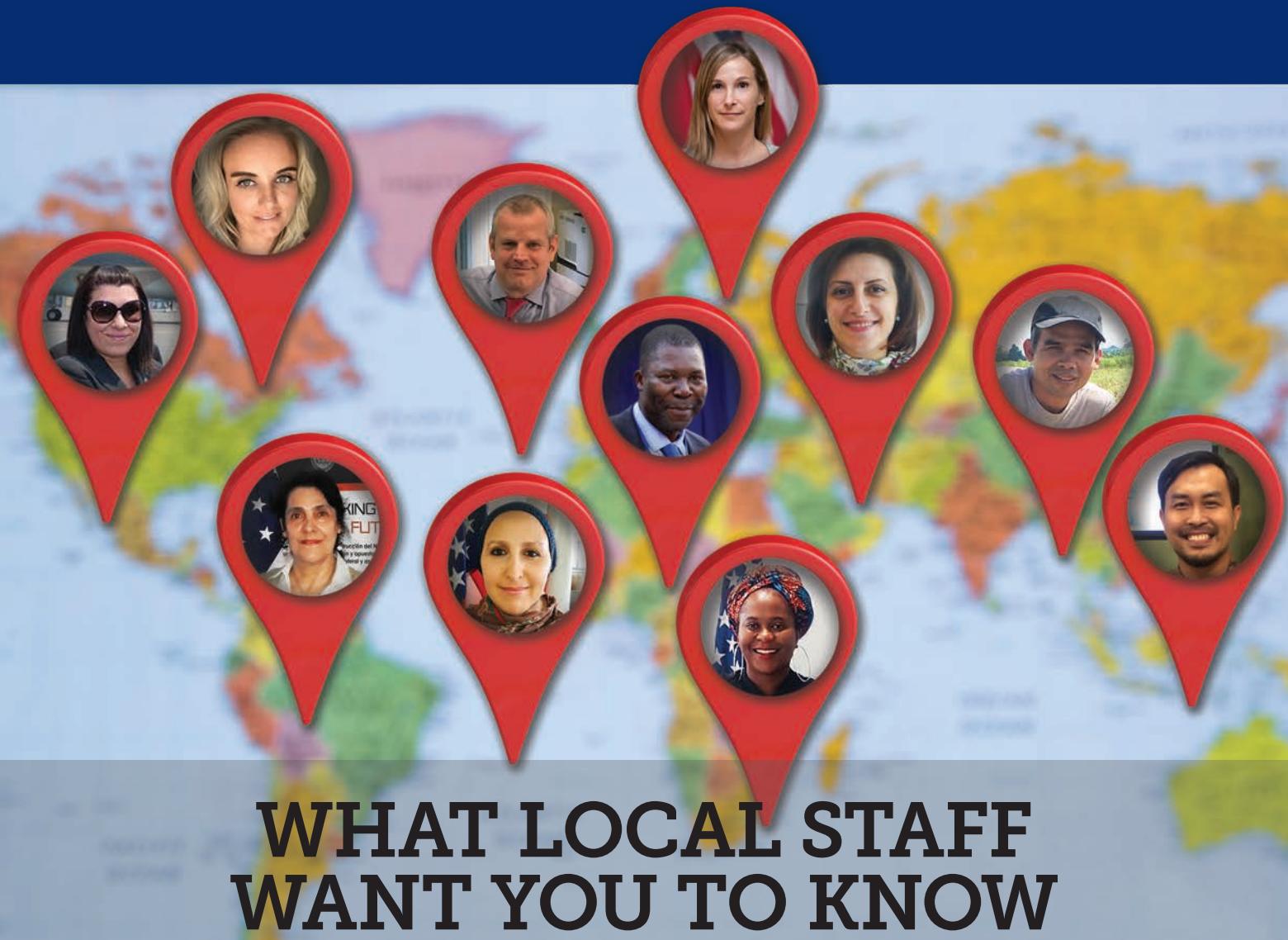


# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2018

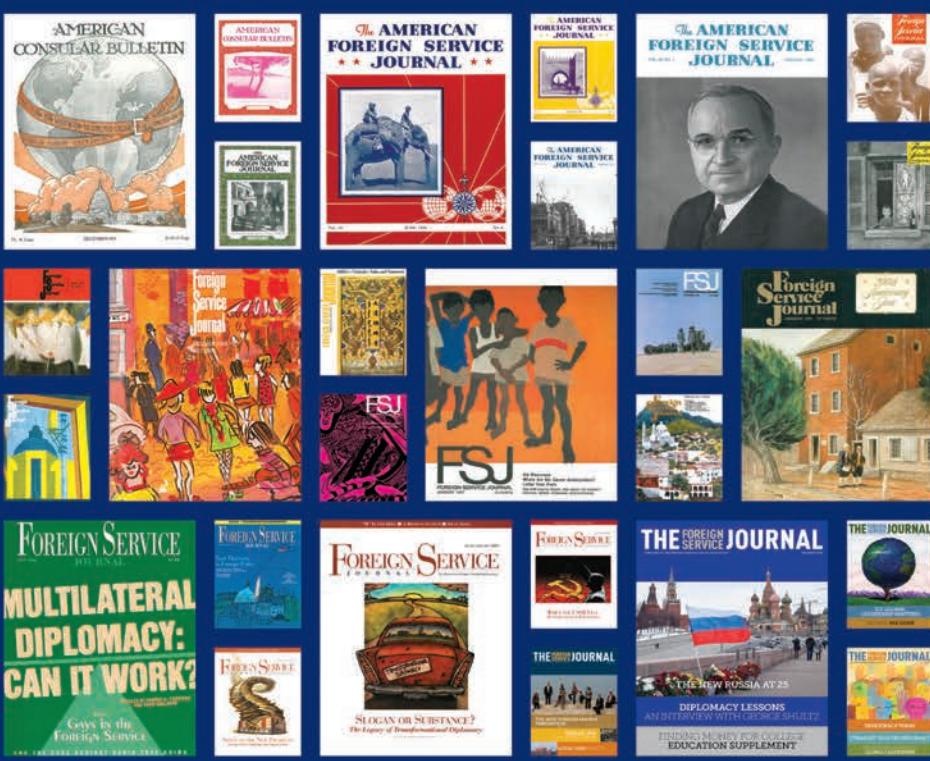
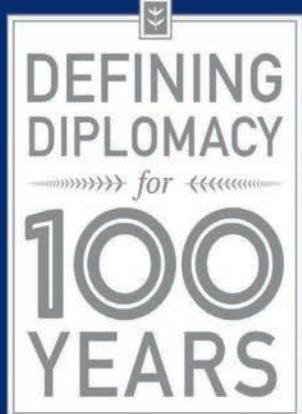


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**On the Cover**—Design by Caryn Sukko Smith, Driven By Design, LLC. Map: iStockphoto.com/Dmytro Yashchuk. Location Icon: iStockphoto.com/hkeita. Top: Some of the FSNs featured in this month's Focus on FSN Perspectives. Second Band: 2018 AFSA Award recipients.

# Regaining Lost Ground

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

**D**uring my first tour, as an economic then political officer in Panama, our office wall held a map showing the march of democracy across Latin America. Countries with democratically elected governments were shown in green; countries still under military dictatorships in brown. That map—with its imperative to support the transition to democratic governance—inspired my generation with its vivid portrayal of our mission.

Decades later, as deputy chief of mission in London, I heard with concern about a different kind of map. Great American companies with their EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) operations headquartered in London told me about maps on their office walls showing continents with countries grayed out, indicating that conditions in those countries did not permit the American company to compete for business there. Why? Typically, because rule of law was weak, making government procurement processes opaque and subject to bribes, and contract enforcement unreliable.

Regular readers of this column will know that I have, for several months, focused on putting more members of the U.S. Foreign Service in the field, arguing

that the Foreign Service offers a “shovel-ready,” highly cost-effective way to regain commercial, economic and political ground now being

claimed by competitors such as China.

After a dozen hearings in Congress about rising competition from China, it is increasingly clear that ceding one business deal after another to the competition affects not only prosperity here at home but also America’s leadership role around the globe. Taken cumulatively, commercial transactions have geostrategic ramifications.

The erosion of funding for America’s core diplomatic capability is proving to be a classic case of “penny-wise, pound foolish.” To squeeze out minor savings—deployed diplomats don’t cost much, but they deliver a major bang for the buck—we have left American embassies and consulates around the globe with too few diplomats to do the job, especially the crucial job of leveling the playing field for American businesses. As the competition rises, the cost of this approach—lost ground—becomes ever more evident.

American businesses have noticed, and they are rallying to urge Secretary Pompeo to send more Foreign Service officers to overseas posts. In a remarkable letter signed by 96 business associations, ranging from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers to local associations, the business associations hail the work of FSOs as “instrumental in advancing the interests of American companies around the world.” They state: “U.S. businesses need their help engaging with foreign governments to level the playing field so that American companies can compete and win in the global market place.”

Because this letter marks such an important step in AFSA’s ongoing work to grow a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service, the entire letter, with all 96 signatories, is carried in this edition of the *FSJ* on page 13.

The recently approved BUILD Act gives us a new tool in the fight to regain lost ground. (For more on this, see the message from Senator Coons on page 10). I know mid-level FSOs at State are eager to get to work in the field alongside Foreign Commercial Service colleagues to make a success of the BUILD Act and, more generally, to regain lost commercial ground.

Fortunately, Secretary Pompeo does not need much convincing. He spoke during a visit of the need to work together with Panama (which recently established diplomatic relations with China) to make sure “China cannot gain an unfair competitive advantage in our hemisphere.” In Mexico, he elaborated to Voice of America, speaking of China’s “right to go compete in the world.”

In what I take as a vote of confidence in us, the U.S. Foreign Service, the Secretary concluded: “I’m convinced that if we compete with them all over the world, we’ll do incredibly well.”

So am I. Put additional members of the Foreign Service in the field, and let us prove Secretary Pompeo right. I am certain that, with adequate numbers posted to embassies and consulates around the world, the Foreign Service will do incredibly well—improving transparency and legal frameworks so our companies can compete and win. ■



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

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# It's the People

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Welcome to an extraordinary edition of *The Foreign Service Journal*. We focus on two amazing groups of people this month—AFSA Award recipients and Locally Employed staff—which led us to what has turned out to be our biggest issue in 100 years, at 128 pages. In this case, more is better, because we are able to highlight the work and views of so many, including 15 award winners and 25 local staff.

Coming at the close of a challenging year for diplomacy and the U.S. Foreign Service, I hope this celebration of voices from the FS community gives inspiration for the future.

We start with a remarkable Message from the Hill, “Working Together for a Smart Foreign Policy,” by **Senator Chris Coons**, who expresses a commitment to supporting strong diplomacy, both in words and deeds.

We honor the 2018 recipient of AFSA’s award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy, **Ronald E. Neumann**. The interview spans decades, aiming to cover his life and work, along with his views on where U.S. diplomacy is headed and how he remains optimistic. We’d need a book to truly capture all he’s done for the profession. (Luckily, he’s written one.)

Profiles of the four recipients of the awards for constructive dissent—**Thomas A. Shannon Jr., Joseph S. Connors,**



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

**Roshni Mona Nirody, Elena C. Augustine**—can be found in AFSA News, along with profiles of the winners of outstanding performance awards—**Patricia A. Butenis, John Anderson Warner, Marisol Angela Garcia, David Bargueño, Kelly Anne Billingsley and Margaret Kennett.**

The focus on Locally Employed staff begins with a look “Through the Lens of an FSN.” Photographer and communications professional **Idika Onyukwu** served in public affairs at U.S. Embassy Abuja for two decades.

In Speaking Out, retired Embassy Brussels FSN **Eddy Olislaeger** calls for the recognition of an FSN association to represent the 55,000 Locally Employed State Department staff worldwide, and shares the story of previous efforts to establish a dialog with State.

When it comes to FSNs, USAID clearly leads the way. In the second focus piece, **Safia Al-Saad** of USAID Mission Jordan tells the history of the global USAID FSN Advocacy Council, which has been representing USAID FSNs since 2005. The council was established following then USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios’ declaration that 2005 would be the “Year of the FSN.”

On Nov. 1, as we were finishing up this issue, an all-USAID notice signed by current USAID Administrator Mark Green proclaimed that the second Wednesday in November (Nov. 14) would be the first annual FSN Recognition Day. Each mission will celebrate its FSNs in a manner appropriate for that host country.

“All USAID staff should use this day to remember and honor our FSN colleagues

who are no longer with us, and to celebrate those who advance USAID’s mission every day,” reads the notice sent worldwide. What a great initiative (hint, hint, State).

In “Get Ready for Merit Based Compensation,” Elizabeth LaMontagne offers a guide to what supervisors and LE staff need to know about the new State Department performance management system, already being adopted by many posts.

“In the Field with USAID FSNs” offers ground-level views from four USAID FSNs working for the U.S. government on meaningful projects: **Tonh Mok** in Cambodia; **Sheila Nyakwezi** in Uganda; **Antigona Mustafa** in Kosovo; and **Dorine Genga** in Kenya.

Then we come to the heart of the issue: “What Local Staff Want You to Know”—about them and their work alongside you around the world. There’s much to learn from the people who carry on the work of U.S. missions before our arrival and long after we move on to new assignments. If I had to sum up the advice from the voices in this compilation, it would be this: Listen, learn, understand, then act.

The Education Supplement includes an update of our ever-popular “Opportunities for Students,” as well as a guide for researching colleges for high school juniors from Francesca Kelly.

In Reflections Ambassador (ret.) Ed Peck offers some thought-provoking notes on maps, and a few great maps.

We wish all our readers wonderful holidays, however and wherever you celebrate. We look forward to 2019—may it be a great year for diplomacy. ■

# Working Together for a Smart Foreign Policy

BY SENATOR CHRIS COONS

All too often, discussions about American power around the world tend to focus on how much money we spend on things like aircraft carriers and fighter jets. While our military might is an undeniably important part of our strength, U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance are just as essential to American influence abroad. When used wisely, all three of those pillars—diplomacy, development and defense—keep Americans safe, advance our interests and make the world a far better place.

## What Diplomats Do

I suspect this won't surprise the readers of *The Foreign Service Journal*. Indeed, Foreign Service officers are one of the most important reasons why I have faith in this approach. During my visits overseas as a senator, I have been consistently impressed by the professionalism, dedication and creativity of our Foreign Service. Whether in Vienna negotiating nuclear accords or in Juba helping refugees, serving both Republican and Democratic administrations, our Foreign Service officers are promoting American values, ensuring our security and helping the world's neediest live their lives with dignity.

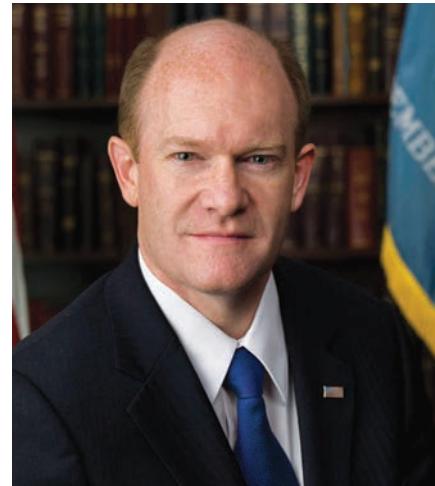
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*Senator Chris Coons (D-Del.) is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senate Committee on Appropriations, where he is a member of the subcommittee that appropriates funds for the State Department and USAID.*

To the members of the U.S. Foreign Service: I have seen your work up close many times. I remember walking the visa line at Embassy New Delhi and being struck by the huge workload of our consular officers. I recall visiting refugee camps in Jordan and Uganda and internally displaced persons settlements in northeastern Nigeria, overwhelmed by the needs of those fleeing violence. But I was also immensely proud that our diplomats from State and USAID were doing all they could to provide life-saving assistance.

During a visit to Ukraine, I was particularly impressed by the work of U.S. Embassy Kyiv's political section to revamp the police force and root out corruption. That kind of on-the-ground, knee-deep in the details work reminded me of my time serving in local government in my home county in Delaware.

I recognize your work is not always easy. I have been troubled by accounts of low morale at the State Department, a development that is concerning given how skilled and capable each of you are. We will not be successful in meeting our challenges on the world stage unless Foreign Service officers and Civil Service members at the State Department play the central leadership role in informing and crafting our country's foreign policy. The State Department should be the agency that drives the agenda and adds the most value to the formulation of American foreign policy.



## Needed Tools and Authorities

As a senator and member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senate Committee on Appropriations, it is my duty to ensure that the State Department and USAID have the budget, authorities and tools to do their jobs. That is why I have been working with a bipartisan group of senators to maintain adequate and necessary funding to foreign assistance and operations. That is why I supported the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, to give the State Department the authorities to push back on Russian meddling in the 2016 election and its aggressive actions overseas.

I also co-sponsored the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act of 2018, or BUILD Act, recently signed into law. I see this legislation as part of my job to continually make sure the executive branch has the right tools to keep up with our modern world and take advantage of all of America's assets.

If you are not yet familiar with it, the BUILD Act creates a new mechanism,

**We will not be successful in meeting our challenges on the world stage unless Foreign Service officers and Civil Service members at the State Department play the central leadership role in informing and crafting our country's foreign policy.**

the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, to modernize America's role in development finance. This will expand our ability to partner with international development finance institutions to achieve real, positive economic development in the countries that need it most.

I am eager to work with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, USAID Administrator Mark Green and Overseas Private Investment Corporation President Ray Washburne to ensure that the new agency supports a global strategy that advances American interests and values.

I am hopeful that the Congress will partner with the administration this coming year to pass the Global Fragility and Violence Reduction Act. This bill would require USAID and the departments of State and Defense to collaborate on making strategic, long-term investments to promote sustainable development in fragile states that are critical to our own security.

Finally, I have been working with Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) to co-

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Senator Chris Coons (D-Del.) at the Bidi Bidi refugee camp in Uganda in 2017, during a tour with Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to get a firsthand look at the global food crisis threatening 20 million people in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. The world's largest refugee camp, Bidi Bidi houses some 270,000 people who have fled from war-torn South Sudan. The senators sought to elevate attention to the humanitarian crisis and ensure that U.S. foreign assistance was effective and efficient.

sponsor the Foreign Service Civil Relief Act. This bill, which I plan to introduce in the next Congress, will allow Foreign Service officers with the State Department and USAID to terminate domestic residential leases without a fine when they are posted abroad. We already extend this benefit to active duty members of our military, and there is no reason why members of our Foreign Service should not have the same opportunities.

### **America's Promise**

One of the most transformative experiences of my life was the semester I spent studying in Kenya as a college junior. Away from the comforts of home, awash in new experiences, I learned a lot about myself and my country. That view from afar also gave me a

new perspective on America, one that included its faults and failures, but also its principles and promise. It is that last piece—the promise of America—that I am excited to work toward in partnership with each of you. That promise and our founding ideals are what drive all of us serving the American people, whether on the Hill, at Foggy Bottom or out in the field.

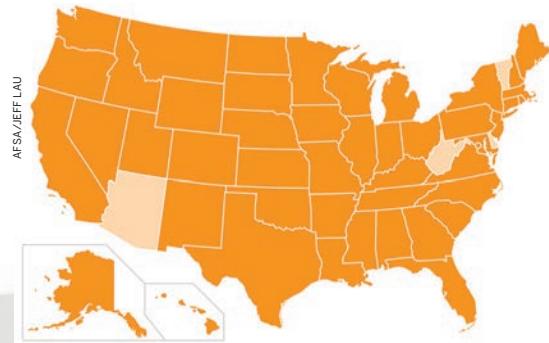
So please keep serving your country, stay true to your oath to the U.S. Constitution, and let me know what more those of us on Capitol Hill can do to ensure America remains, as former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, “the indispensable nation.” And when I travel abroad, please share your thoughts with me. I certainly promise to ask a lot of questions. ■

# TALKING POINTS

## Business Leaders Support Diplomacy

**A**n Oct. 10 letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo signed by 96 U.S. and global business associations highlights the “strong interest of the American business community in working closely with the U.S. Department of State to promote America’s economic interests around the globe.”

What follows is the text of the letter, along with the full list of signatories, because, well, wow.



**Dear Secretary Pompeo,**

We are writing to underscore the strong interest of the American business community in working closely with the U.S. Department of State to promote America's economic interests around the globe. Our organizations represent the interests of millions of businesses of all sizes, sectors and regions, ranging from small, family-owned businesses to leading industry associations and large corporations. We appreciate your leadership in promoting American enterprise overseas.

Foreign Service officers at U.S. embassies are instrumental in advancing the interests of American companies around the world in ways that foster economic growth and job creation in the U.S. American businesses need their help engaging with foreign governments to level the playing field so that American businesses can compete and win in the global marketplace. U.S. businesses also rely on these personnel to improve government procurement processes, break down non-tariff barriers that shut out U.S. goods and service, and ensure that overseas parties honor contracts.

We urge you to send more diplomats overseas with the mission to advance these important American economic and commercial interests, which ultimately support more American jobs. Foreign competitors are continually extending their economic reach into markets where America's diplomatic presence is limited. The American Foreign Service Association has advocated to shift Foreign Service officers now in Washington to overseas posts to help U.S. businesses seize more commercial opportunities. We strongly endorse this concept.

We thank you for taking crucial steps to restore America's diplomatic strength. We look forward to working with you to advance U.S. interests by extending the economic and commercial reach of American diplomats overseas.

Sincerely,

Advanced Energy Economy ~ Airlines for America ~ Alabama Trucking Association ~ Alaska Trucking Association ~ American Association of Exporters and Importers ~ American Trucking Associations ~ Arkansas Trucking Association ~ Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International ~ Association of Washington Business ~ Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire ~ Business Council of Alabama ~ Business Council of New York State ~ California Trucking Association ~ Cargo Airline Association ~ Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce ~ Coalition of Service Industries ~ Colorado Motor Carriers Association ~ Connecticut Business and Industry Association ~ Council of the Americas/Americas Society ~ Express Association of America ~ Florida Trucking Association ~ Georgia Chamber of Commerce ~ Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce ~ Georgia Motor Trucking Association ~ Hawaii Trucking Association ~ Idaho Trucking Association ~ Illinois Chamber of Commerce ~ Illinois International Business Council ~ Illinois Trucking Association ~ Indiana Chamber of Commerce ~ Indiana Motor Truck Association ~ International Franchise Association ~ International Warehouse and Logistics Association ~ Iowa Motor Carriers Association ~ Kansas Chamber of Commerce ~ Kansas Trucking Association ~ Kentucky Chamber of Commerce ~ Long Beach Chamber of Commerce ~ Louisiana Motor Transport Association ~ Maine Motor Transport Association ~ Maryland Chamber of Commerce ~ Maryland Motor Truck Association ~ Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce ~ Michigan Chamber of Commerce ~ Michigan Trucking Association ~ Minnesota Chamber of Commerce ~ Minnesota Trucking Association ~ Mississippi Economic Council ~ Mississippi Trucking Association ~ Missouri Chamber of Commerce ~ Missouri Trucking Association ~ Motor Carriers Association of Montana ~ Motor Truck Association of Connecticut ~ National Association of Manufacturers ~ National Foreign Trade Council ~ National Industrial Transportation League ~ Natural Gas Vehicles for America ~ Nebraska Chamber of Commerce ~ Nebraska Trucking Association ~ Nevada Trucking Association ~ New Jersey Business and Industry Association ~ North Carolina Trucking Association ~ North Dakota Motor Carriers ~ Ohio Chamber of Commerce ~ Ohio Manufacturers Association ~ Ohio Trucking Association ~ Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce ~ Oklahoma Trucking Association ~ Oregon Business and Industry Association ~ Oregon Trucking Association ~ Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals ~ Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry ~ Pennsylvania Motor Trucking Association ~ Rhode Island Trucking Association ~ Sandy Springs Chamber of Commerce ~ Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council ~ Small Business Exporters Association ~ South Carolina Chamber of Commerce ~ South Carolina Trucking Association ~ South Dakota Trucking Association ~ Tennessee Chamber of Commerce ~ Texas Trucking Association ~ The Lexington Institute ~ Trucking Association of Massachusetts ~ U.S. Chamber of Commerce ~ United States Council for International Business ~ Utah Trucking Association ~ Virginia Trucking Association ~ Washington Council on International Trade ~ Washington Trucking Associations ~ Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce ~ Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association ~ Wyoming Trucking Association

Business leaders from 46 states say they want to work closely with the State Department to promote U.S. economic interests around the world.

## Staffing Crisis at State has Consequences

The Oct. 30 Bloomberg Editorial Board column, "An Unmanned State Department Can't Solve Crises," weighed in on the Trump administration's failure to nominate ambassadors and other critical public servants to important overseas posts.

After the slaying of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey, the board noted, the U.S. ambassadors to Turkey and Saudi Arabia could have pressed their contacts in those countries for answers—but “almost two years after taking office, President Donald Trump has yet to nominate

ambassadors for Turkey and Saudi Arabia.”

The article points out that more than 40 ambassadorships—including to such critical partners as Australia, Jordan and Mexico—are currently empty. Just 18 of the 28 assistant secretary-level positions at State have been filled, “none with an active career professional.”

Of the 702 positions throughout the federal government that require Senate confirmation, only 380 have been filled, and 135 don’t even have a nominee waiting in the wings.

“Whether they’re working in foreign affairs or environmental protection,

nonpartisan career public servants help keep government effective, transparent and free of corruption,” the editorial concluded. “Not recognizing this, Trump is decimating the government’s managerial capacity, aggravating turnover, and making it harder to recruit the best and brightest to public service.”

Bloomberg did give credit to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for lifting the hiring freeze and pushing for more nominations, but said he would be more effective if he “tapped career ranks for more senior positions, punished those who are still conducting political witch hunts and invested in his workforce.”

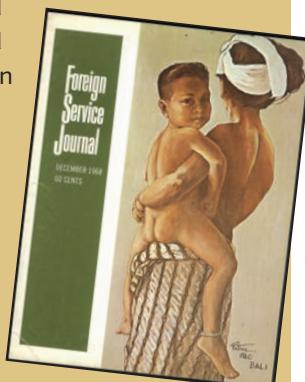
## 50 Years Ago

### The Future of an Ambassador in a Supersonic Age

The modern Ambassador shares with the military commander abroad and the American business representative the disadvantages of living and pursuing his calling in an era of almost instantaneous communication. Almost anywhere he may be stationed he is at the end of a telephone line which will not be markedly affected by distance even though it may have spanned an ocean to reach him. Nor will his colleagues in Washington be deterred from picking up that little black instrument by the thought that they are about to make a long-distance call of several thousand miles at a cost which would horrify them if it appeared on their own personal bills.

In addition, the Ambassador is the recipient of vast numbers of official telegrams every day, which in most cases can be gotten to him in ten or fifteen minutes if necessary. These often tell him in minutest detail how to conduct whatever negotiations are before him. Nearly always they will include a text of agreement from which the Ambassador must not deviate by so much as a comma without the explicit permission of the Department of State. How many agreements have failed because an Ambassador did not have authority to make immediate minor modifications on his own authority may never be known, but any number of frustrated envoys must have thought longingly of the days when Benjamin Franklin in Paris often had to wait three or four months for any instructions at all, and could use his own discretion in the meantime.

—John D. Jernegan, from his article of the same title  
in the December 1968 FSJ.



## This Year in Jerusalem

Even decades ago this year, the United States was the first government to recognize the state of Israel, acting just hours after its founding. However, President Harry Truman’s administration made clear that its recognition did not imply any endorsement of Israel’s claim on Jerusalem. That, Truman and nearly all his successors have asserted, is to be resolved by negotiation between the parties involved.

In 1995 an overwhelming majority in both houses of Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act, which recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, called for it to remain an undivided city and set aside funds to relocate the U.S. embassy there by May 1999. The legislation also allowed the president to invoke a six-month waiver of the application of the law, and reissue the waiver every six months, on “national security” grounds. The waiver was repeatedly renewed by Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama.

Then, on Dec. 6, 2017, President Donald Trump declared that “Jerusalem is indisputably the capital of Israel,” and announced his intention to move the U.S. embassy there.



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### Contemporary Quote

 With our collective interests in peace and unwavering respect for human rights in mind, the murder of Jamal Khashoggi in a diplomatic facility must concern us all greatly. Failure of any one nation to adhere to international norms and the rule of law undermines regional stability at a time when it is needed most. 

*—U.S. Secretary of Defense General James Mattis, speaking on Oct. 27 in Bahrain at the 14th Manama Dialogue, an international security conference organized by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.*

In announcing the decision, Trump added: "I also want to make one point very clear: This decision is not intended, in any way, to reflect a departure from our strong commitment to facilitate a lasting peace agreement. We want an agreement that is a great deal for the Israelis and a great deal for the Palestinians. We are not taking a position of any final status issues, including the specific boundaries of the Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem, or the resolution of contested borders. Those questions are up to the parties involved."

Speaking at the dedication ceremony on May 14, 2018 (the 70th anniversary of Israel's founding), Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan described the decision as "a recognition of reality—a reality many, many years in the making." He called it "a step toward advancing peace in this city, in the broader region and throughout the world."

The Trump administration was virtually alone in that view, however. All 14 of the other United Nations Security Council members voted in favor of a resolution condemning the U.S. decision as detrimental to the Middle East peace process, leaving Washington to veto it. And the Palestinians declared that America was no longer an honest broker and broke off all participation in peace talks with Israel.

In response, the State Department announced on Sept. 10 that it was closing the Palestine Liberation Organization

office in Washington, D.C., because the PLO "has not taken steps to advance the start of direct and meaningful negotiations with Israel."

On Oct. 18, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the U.S. consulate general in Jerusalem, which opened in 1844, will be merged into the new U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv. (He did not give a deadline for this process to be completed.)

Secretary Pompeo declared that the embassy "will continue to conduct a full range of reporting, outreach and programming in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as with Palestinians in Jerusalem through a new Palestinian Affairs Unit inside U.S. Embassy Jerusalem."

But the plan eliminates a key element that had served past administrations well. In a unique arrangement, the U.S. consul general in Jerusalem did not report back to Washington through the ambassador. Instead, he or she had a direct reporting line back to the State Department, and for all intents and purposes—though not in name—played the role of ambassador to the Palestinians.

State insisted that enhancing efficiency was the only motivation behind the move, but critics warned that the merger would do major harm to the United States' ability to act as a mediator in the conflict, and diminish the prospects of Israeli-Palestinian peace through a two-state solution.

## SITE OF THE MONTH: [www.antipodesmap.com](http://www.antipodesmap.com)

Sometimes, you get assigned to a post that is so far away, it feels like it's on the opposite side of the earth. But is it really?

The Antipodes Map site will allow you to find the antipode—the opposite side—of any place on the globe. Simply click on a spot on the left map on the site, and the antipode to that spot will be displayed on the right map. It also lists major cities that have antipodes: if you're reading this in Hong Kong, for example, La Quiaca, Argentina, is directly beneath your feet.

Antipodes isn't, technically speaking, the most useful site out there. But it's an entertaining way to think about world geography, for both adults and kids. And it can give you a fun perspective on your current post.

Oh, and speaking of kids: Remember when you were little, and someone told you that if you dug a hole straight through the



Earth, you'd wind up in China? Not true, according to Antipodes Map. In most areas of the United States, you'd land in the ocean if you could dig straight through. There are, however, a few places in Argentina and Chile that are directly opposite China. Happy digging!

## A Restructuring of Public Diplomacy?

On Oct. 19, *Foreign Policy* reported that the State Department is considering an overhaul of its public diplomacy function.

This summer Secretary of State Pompeo directed the Bureau of Public Affairs and the Bureau of International Information Programs to explore the possibility of merging under a new name, the "Bureau of Outreach." The new bureau, according to *FP*, would likely be headed by the current PA head, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Michelle Giuda.

The division between the two bureaus dates to the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which prevents federal agencies from directing government programming at domestic audiences, construed as a way to block government propaganda from reaching American voters. IIP has since

focused solely on overseas audiences, while PA handles press and other domestic issues. Often, however, the work of the two bureaus intersects.

The plan was developed in part as a reaction to Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, which exposed a need to improve State's social media outreach.

"The plan was not finalized, and there would be no reduction in staffing if the merger went forward," a department spokesperson told *FP*.

## The Language of Reproductive Rights

In the April edition of Talking Points, we reported the removal from the State Department's 2017 Country Reports on Human Rights of language regarding women's reproductive rights and discrimination. The instructions to

remove language just prior to the release of the 2017 document had reportedly come from the Secretary of State's office. At the time, dozens of human rights, health and development organizations protested the decision with a letter expressing "deep concern."

In October, lawmakers and civil society organizations spoke up in advance about the 2018 Human Rights Report. A group of 129 members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to Secretary Pompeo on Oct. 1 expressing their "strong opposition to the omission of reproductive rights" from the report.

The legislators explained: "Congress relies on the department's accurate and unbiased reporting when considering appropriations requests for foreign assistance, and when considering legislation that could shift or influence U.S. foreign policy."

The lawmakers requested that within 30 days the department provide a justification for the decision, and all correspondence and internal documents relating to it.

The next day, 97 civil society organizations sent their own letter to Secretary Pompeo, stating that "striking certain threats or abuses against some marginalized communities or people, including women and girls, from the report sends a message to abusive governments that the United States turns a blind eye to such action and may embolden regression on women's rights globally."

The 2018 reports are "being prepared right now with explicit instructions to continue this excision," *Foreign Policy* reported on Oct. 23. That will omit, says *FP*, "vital reporting on some of the most common deprivations of women's reproductive freedoms worldwide."

*This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Donna Gorman, Steve Honley and Shawn Dorman.*

# A Worldwide FSN Association at State—Advancing a Practical Dream

BY EDDY OLISLAEGER

Locally Employed staff of the U.S. Department of State—also known as Foreign Service Nationals, or FSNs—deserve to have a professional organization of their own, one that represents them within the department. This corps of local experts numbers more than 55,000; it is the largest employee group within the State Department. Yet, unlike the two other main groups of employees, LE staff have no organization to represent them, to safeguard their interests, and to promote excellence and professionalism among their ranks. (AFSA represents more than 16,000 members of the Foreign Service, active-duty and retired; while the American Federation of Government Employees represents the department's more than 12,000 Civil Service employees).

FSNs are not a homogenous group. Most of them are nationals of the host country, but many are U.S. citizens or third-country nationals. The term “Locally Employed staff,” which the department now uses, has never been popular with FSNs because it sets them

**This corps of local experts numbers more than 55,000; it is the largest employee group within the State Department.**

apart from the Foreign Service, whereas they consider themselves full members of that body. They are distinct from other State employees only in that they are hired locally, by individual embassies, and not by department headquarters in Washington.

Despite having officially changed their name, the Department of State itself considers FSNs employees of the department—not individual embassies—and oversees their management from Washington. Though hired in the local economy, the framework in which FSNs operate is one that is designed and controlled by headquarters following a top-down model. It is therefore essential for FSNs to have a voice at the departmental level. They should be heard when important management decisions are taken that affect the workings of the missions.

After all, because their tenure transcends the three- to four-year cycles of

members of the Foreign Service, they represent the collective memory of the missions and are often called the “backbone” of the embassies. They understand the local culture and sensibilities, and can provide essential feedback to Washington, as well as to the individual missions. In matters of security this unexploited resource can make a difference.

A worldwide FSN association could offer significant benefits to State’s mission by building a relationship of collaboration and strong, effective support for the promotion of U.S. policy goals around the world. The benefits of such an FSN organization to its members would be even greater; it would serve as a mechanism to promote professionalism and excellence within the community, resulting in higher job satisfaction and productivity. And it would be a channel for the State Department to communicate with the FSN community on all matters related to FSNs, such as human resources, training, collaboration projects and best practices.



*Eddy Olislaeger is a retired Foreign Service National employee. He founded the International Foreign Service Association in 2009 and became its first elected chairman in 2011. He worked for more than 40 years as a public affairs specialist at Embassy Brussels before retiring from the Department of State in 2012. He received the Secretary’s Career Achievement Award for his “contributions to the United States’ essential public diplomacy efforts around the world.” He is the author, with Wendy Lubetkin, of “Local Employees Seek a Dialogue with Washington” in the June 2012 FSJ. Currently he is vice chair of the Intersyndicale des Missions Diplomatiques in Brussels, Belgium.*

## A Sustained Initiative

FSNs have made attempts to be heard, as Wendy Lubetkin and I explained in a June 2012 article in the *Journal*, “Local Employees Seek a Dialogue with Washington.” FSNs cre-

ated the International Foreign Service Association in 2009 in response to a series of sudden changes in their terms of employment and with the recommendation of an Office of Inspector General report. That May 2007 OIG report, No. ISO-I-07-16, had noted that Locally Employed staff is the only category of staff in the foreign affairs community that does not have any representation at the Washington level and recommended creating an organization representing this worldwide community of, then, 54,000. Local personnel associations in more than 80 countries chose to affiliate with the association and elected a 13-member IFSA Board.

Empowered by its constituency IFSA tried to engage senior management at the State Department in a social dialogue. In a letter dated Nov. 25, 2009, to Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources Nancy J. Powell, IFSA requested Powell's "help to formalize a constructive working relationship between IFSA and the Department." Deputy Assistant Secretary J. Robert Manzanares responded to that letter thus: "While 3 FAM 7290 provides guidance on establishing associations at the post level, an international association, such as you are proposing, is new ground for us and will require coordination with our legal experts to ensure that proper guidance is offered."

IFSA sent three letters to the head of the Foreign Service, but each request for an opportunity to discuss the circumstances that would allow both parties to work together to form a trust-building collaboration was rebuffed. State charged IFSA with trying to become a labor union, and asserted it was not in a position to recognize a union of FSN employees. In response to IFSA's third letter, State argued: "IFSA's stated

## A worldwide FSN association could offer significant benefits to State's mission by building a relationship of collaboration and strong, effective support for the promotion of U.S. policy goals around the world.

core objective 'to protect the interests and the rights of the locally employed staff' reads as that of a union," and "in compliance with 3 FAM we encourage you and other colleagues to raise such issues through post management to the bureaus and offices which remain committed to addressing LE staff concerns back here in the department." We were shocked by this response and felt let down by our employer.

Unfortunately, no one at State saw the need to focus on IFSA's other core objectives, such as its goal "to improve staff morale, better working conditions and strengthen the relationship of the locally engaged staff within the foreign affairs community." IFSA could perhaps have changed some of the wording of its objectives, which in turn might have allowed the State Department to recognize an employee association. Regrettably, the department never communicated to us the conditions under which it would be willing to meet us halfway.

After several years of fruitless effort to engage State Department officials, IFSA saw only one option to break the deadlock: team up with a U.S.-based labor union and address the State Department unionization issue directly. IFSA called on the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers to begin the negotiations, because it felt this organization had much more experience than IFSA with representing similar categories of employees within other organizations.

## Meeting a Brick Wall

In August 2013 the State Department rejected a request from IFSA/IFPTE to discuss instituting a union or, failing that, an association to represent Locally Employed staff. The State Department's chief labor-management negotiator rejected both, writing on Aug. 9 to IFSA: "Unionization at diplomatic and consular missions is fundamentally incompatible with the basic functions and operations of such missions." He added that unionization "could, frankly, put our foreign relations and national security at risk." And he further stated: "The [State] Department has no interest in pursuing this discussion further."

That letter was only the final step in a long process during which IFSA had tried to engage the State Department in a dialog. But the reference to a national security threat was as painful as it was unnecessary. More than 12,000 FSNs work in security positions all over the world protecting U.S. diplomats, U.S. citizens and embassy facilities. And since 1998, many more FSNs have been killed in the line of duty than U.S. Foreign Service members.

Unionization has never been IFSA's priority; emancipating the Locally Employed staff is. IFSA's core objective is to protect the interests and the rights of the LE staff. IFSA is aware of the problem posed by 3 FAM 7295, which bars recognition of a union of FSN employees. But there are other core objectives of IFSA that need to be discussed and compromises reached.



Yet State seemed to have no intention of recognizing IFSA in any form. In a last-ditch effort to make a deal, IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer Paul Shearon managed to arrange another meeting at State, this time with Secretary of State John Kerry's Chief of Staff David Wade and Special Representative for International Labor Affairs Barbara Shailor. That meeting was cordial, but ineffective. Wade was not in a position to overturn the official rejection of IFSA; and Barbara Shailor, the newly named point person to address workers' concerns, retired the following month.

In the five years following these exchanges, nothing has happened to reconcile the opposing positions.

## The Issue Is Not Moot

The International Foreign Service Association has had no alternative since 2013 but to wait for the State Department to develop a more nuanced view on personnel relations and representation. Many FSNs have continued to meet with post management in staff associations at the local level, but the 2017 wage freeze and the inability of local management to negotiate without the consent of Washington have made progress impossible.

Today the mood within the FSN community swings between hope and despair. Some are hopeful that the State Department will eventually see the benefits of partnering with a worldwide FSN association, while others think that we are farther away than ever from finding common ground.

However, the issue is not moot. When it comes to conditions of labor, the U.S. Department of State is not the only foreign affairs agency that has tried to keep its local embassy workers within the strict limits of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961). While

defining a framework for diplomatic relations between independent countries, the Vienna Convention has left LE staff in a legal vacuum: their rights are not defined, and this lack of rights has led to abuse. But more than 50 years after ratification of the Vienna Convention, workplace conditions, as well as labor relations, have drastically changed. And a growing awareness that embassy employees are entitled to some legal protections has led to new insights and initiatives at diplomatic hubs all over the world.

Countries such as France, Portugal and Spain are stepping in to recognize the rights for citizens of their country employed by foreign or international organizations. These three countries allow individuals working for foreign entities to participate in employee-management relationships. In these countries local embassy staff can participate in employee representational elections just like the staff of any other government agency. On the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs website, France's diplomatic authorities stipulate that "locally engaged staff, whatever their nationality, are covered by French labor law, which must be implemented in its entirety."

Elsewhere, Italy has issued a set of labor laws specifically tailored toward locally engaged staff working in diplomatic missions: "Provisions governing employment with Embassies, Consulates, Legations, Cultural Institutes and International Organisations in Italy." And Belgium has created a mediation committee, the "Commission des Bons Offices," to resolve conflicts between local embassy employees and diplomatic missions.

Though it is difficult for foreign affairs ministries to overcome the perceived threat from organizations representing local employees, countries such as Brazil

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and Uruguay are accepting the idea that their local employees can be represented by a worldwide organization. Loosening the strict interpretation of the Vienna Convention with regard to locally recruited employees has changed the working conditions in many diplomatic missions, especially in the embassies of developing countries.

## What about State?

So far the State Department has failed to make progress in this area. State's refusal to recognize its largest segment of employees has left no winners, only losers. Within the U.S. foreign affairs community the issue remains unresolved. Local employees working

in U.S. embassies have not yet been given access to a transparent and clearly codified human resources process or a credible system of justice in Washington. They continue to be isolated, without any mechanism to reflect on, discuss and mediate work-related issues on regional and worldwide levels.

A worldwide professional organization to represent local employees would allow them to become full-fledged partners in the mission of the State Department. State would do well to give its full support to such an association and recognize FSNs as a major component of its workforce. FSNs would feel empowered, and the department would take a big step toward becoming a truly

inclusive employer.

But rather than building strength through unity, State has opted for the status quo and a compartmentalized organization, with FSNs as the only employee group without any way to interact with its employer. In so doing, State is missing an opportunity to create an integrated department and put into practice the ideals it so forcefully promotes via the labor program it advocates in foreign capitals.

Only mutual trust can break the deadlock, and building trust is a lengthy process. The question must be asked: Has State closed the door forever on this very practical dream? ■



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# WORKING TO STRENGTHEN U.S. DIPLOMACY

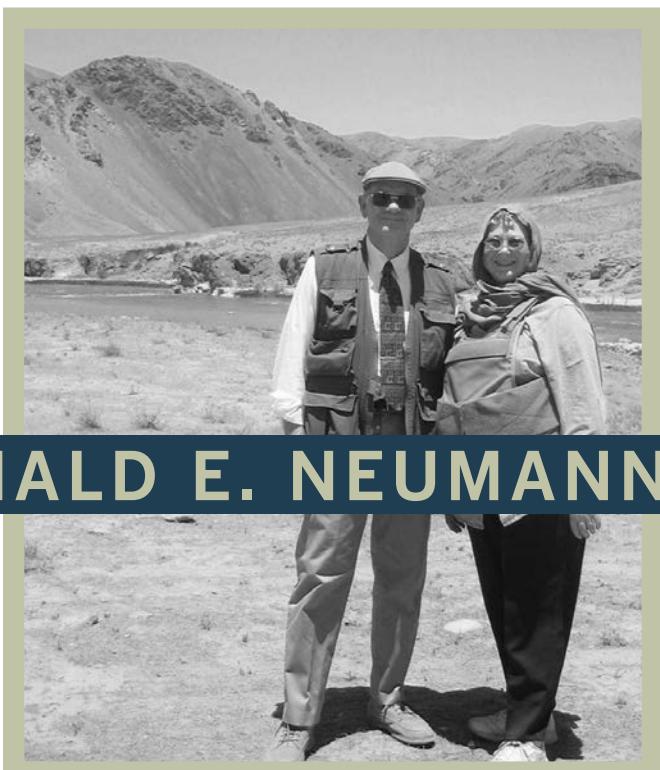
**The recipient of AFSA's 2018 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award talks with the FSJ about his career at the center of some of America's toughest foreign policy challenges.**

Ronald E. Neumann received the American Foreign Service Association's 2018 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award at an Oct. 10 ceremony in the U.S. Diplomacy Center at the State Department. (For coverage of the ceremony, see AFSA News, p. 69.) He is the 24th recipient of the award, given annually in recognition of a distinguished practitioner's public service career and enduring commitment to the professional Foreign Service and to diplomacy.

## AMBASSADOR RONALD E. NEUMANN

Born in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 30, 1944, Ron Neumann grew up in California and France. He earned a B.A. in history and an M.A. in political science, both from the University of California at Riverside. Prior to joining the Foreign Service in 1970, Mr. Neumann was an Army infantry officer in Vietnam, where he earned a Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal and Combat Infantry Badge.

His first Foreign Service assignment (1971-1973) was to Dakar as a rotational officer in the consular and commercial-economic



Ambassador Ron Neumann with his wife, Elaine, in Gor, Afghanistan, 2006.



Lt. Ron Neumann heading out on patrol in Vietnam, 1969.

sections—a posting that included a three-month stint as chargé d'affaires in Banjul. After that, Ambassador Neumann spent most of his Foreign Service career on regional issues related to the Middle East and South Asia.

After overseas assignments as principal officer in Tabriz (1976) and deputy chief of mission in Sana'a (1981-1983) and Abu Dhabi (1987-1990), Amb. Neumann served three times as chief of mission: in Algeria (1994-1997), Bahrain (2001-2004) and Afghanistan (2005-2007). He may well be the only three-time ambassador whose father was also a three-time chief of mission, though Robert Neumann's postings were all political appointments: to Afghanistan, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. (The only other father-son pair of ambassadors to serve in the same capital are John Adams and John Quincy Adams; both served as ministers to Britain.)

From 2004 to 2005, immediately before his posting to Kabul, Amb. Neumann also served in Baghdad with the Coalition Provisional Authority, and then as the embassy's political/military

liaison with the Multi-National Force-Iraq, where he was deeply involved in coordinating the political part of military actions.

In Washington, his assignments included: political officer in the Office of Southern European Affairs (1976-1977), staff assistant in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (1977-1979) and Jordan desk officer (1979-1981). Later in his career, he was director of NEA's Office of Northern Gulf Affairs, responsible for relations with Iran and Iraq (1991-1994), and an NEA deputy assistant secretary with responsibility for North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula (1997-2000).

Following his retirement from the Senior Foreign Service in 2007, Amb. Neumann became president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, a position he continues to hold today. In that capacity, he leads an ongoing effort to strengthen U.S. diplomacy, including both the Foreign Service and Civil Service, and enable their members to effectively develop and carry out U.S. foreign policy by upgrading their professional formation. Toward this end, AAD has issued a series of seminal reports, including "American Diplomacy at Risk" and "Support for American Jobs."

Amb. Neumann serves on the Advisory Committee of the School of Leadership, Afghanistan, a nonprofit school for girls, and on the Advisory Board of Spirit of America. He is also on the board of the Middle East Policy Council and on the Advisory Council of the World Affairs Councils of America.

The author of *The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan* (Potomac Press, 2009) and *Three Embassies, Four Wars: A Personal Memoir* (XLibris, 2017), Amb. Neumann has published numerous op-eds, monographs and articles on Afghanistan and other foreign policy topics. He speaks Arabic, Dari and French. He received State Department Superior Honor Awards in 1990 and 1993; and for his service in Baghdad, he was awarded the Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal. He is married to the former M. Elaine Grimm. They have two grown children.

Amb. Neumann has made a major contribution to strengthening the professional Foreign Service. He is a natural choice for this award.

FSJ Editor Shawn Dorman conducted the following interview with Amb. Neumann in October. Photos are courtesy of Amb. Neumann.

**FSJ:** I understand you decided to apply to the Foreign Service while you were still in high school. Did your father's experience as ambassador to Afghanistan shape that choice, or were other factors involved?

**Ronald E. Neumann:** My father was still a university professor when I decided on a Foreign Service career. However, he had

# American Diplomacy Award



Ron Neumann making notes in his journal in Nepal, 1987.

many foreign contacts who sometimes visited the house, as well as some Foreign Service officers. Somehow, these contacts lit my desire to become an FSO.

Later my father became an ambassador. He was a Republican who supported Lyndon Johnson against Barry Goldwater, whom he found too extreme. The result was that he ended up being nominated as ambassador to Afghanistan by Johnson, staying there under President Richard Nixon, going as ambassador to Morocco under President Gerald Ford and then, after being out during the Jimmy Carter years, being appointed ambassador to Saudi Arabia by President Ronald Reagan. He was thus fairly unique; a political appointee who served four presidents, three embassies and two parties.

**FSJ:** What was it like having a father who was a three-time ambassador?

**REN:** I entered the Foreign Service while he was still in Afghanistan. Our joke was that we entered the FS at much the same time; he at the top and I at the bottom. I first saw an embassy, as it were, through the ambassador's eyes, when my wife and I spent three months in Afghanistan after graduate school. That experience was a huge aid when I finally got into the Foreign Service. I had some understanding of what an

In Afghanistan I think we did some good work, and our predictions still stand up well; but we lost a lot of time for lack of resources.

ambassador wanted, how to work with a deputy chief of mission (DCM), and so on. The downside was that I didn't fully experience the emotions or strangeness of being an entry-level officer. Later, when I supervised entry-level officers, I had to get the experience vicariously, intellectually, to properly understand what they were going through.

**FSJ:** How did your time in the Army during the Vietnam War prepare you for a Foreign Service career?

**REN:** I served as an infantry rifle platoon commander with some 30 to 40 men under my charge (our strength varied depending on casualties, health and replacement rates), and later I was the company executive officer. I learned a lot about managing people and administration in general. Also, the Army has some very effective ideas about leadership that have served me well.

The ambassador, with the assistance of the country team, has a major role to advise on what will and won't work and how to shape policy execution.

One of the most important was that discipline depends on loyalty, and that loyalty only exists if it is two-way—from the top down as much as the other way. Those who try to demand loyalty without returning it deserve the disappointment they usually get.

**FSJ:** What year did you take the Foreign Service Exam? What was the process like then?

**REN:** I first took the written exam in 1965 (I think) and did not pass. I took it again the following year, more successfully. I don't remember much about it. The oral seems to have been a bit more "free form" than what I hear described nowadays.

**FSJ:** When did you join AFSA?

**REN:** About two years after I became an FSO, as nearly as I remember. Initially, I had the idea that the Foreign Service would be a sort of manly club, so why did one need a union? I learned that while it is an impressive service it is also a bureaucracy that sometimes doesn't treat people with fairness. It took me about two years to figure this out, and I then joined AFSA.

## Your Career

**FSJ:** Your first Foreign Service posting was to Senegal in 1971. Was that posting a good introduction to the Service for you? How?

**REN:** Dakar was a great tour. I had six months as the only consular officer, and then became the only economic officer at post. Shortly after the change, the chargé in Bathurst (now Banjul) in The Gambia died. His widow, in shock, couldn't make up her mind whether to bury him in The Gambia or send his remains back to the United States. It was summer in West Africa, Bathurst had no mortuary facilities, and a decision was needed. I ended up driving an undertaker and a coffin from Dakar and helping to seal up the coffin, and then was made chargé in Bathurst for three months until the department could find a properly senior officer to replace me.

The post consisted of me and one local clerk, plus a driver and house staff. I was the admin officer, the cashier and the one to seal pouches and meet the courier at the airport. I also lob-

bied the Gambian president for his United Nations vote, wrote the cable and encrypted it. There were no clearance issues at a one-person post! I spent a lot of time reading the Foreign Affairs Manual, and I learned a major amount about State Department regulations, administration and paperwork. In short, it was a superb introduction to all sorts of Foreign Service work.

**FSJ:** You spent the bulk of your career in the Middle East. What made you decide to concentrate on that part of the world?

**REN:** I had a 3 1/2-month break between graduate school and reporting for the army. My wife and I stayed with my parents in Afghanistan and traveled all over the country. That was where I developed a strong interest in the Muslim world and decided to specialize in that part of the world.

**FSJ:** What were some of the opportunities and challenges you encountered working in the Middle East? Are you optimistic about prospects for peace in that region?

**REN:** I found many wonderful people and friends in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Radical Islam is contesting to set many areas back, and corruption and poor governance have given the radicals an opening; but many within Islamic society oppose them. These fluctuations need to be worked out within the countries themselves; and I say countries because, while the Islamic State or al-Qaida are transnational movements, the pushback against them and the societal solutions are national.

I am not optimistic about Arab-Israeli peace, however. Neither side has the leadership necessary.

**FSJ:** If you could, please share your personal opinion on what the U.S. should be doing about the conflict in Yemen today, on the right U.S. approach to Iran and on the current U.S. approach to the Middle East.

**REN:** These are giant issues that need more than sound-bite answers. On Yemen, we do need to push for a negotiated solution, but Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are countries that are important to us. I think it would be easier to wreck our relations than to force them to solutions they don't want. So we'll have to work very carefully with diplomacy, with some pressure, and with a great deal of realism.

I disagreed with our withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. Now we have a situation where each side is so suspicious of the other that any new negotiation is going to be even tougher than the last one; and that took years. I think I'll stop there, because these issues really need discussion that is more nuanced than we have time for here.

# American Diplomacy Award

**FSJ:** You served in many different countries and capacities over the course of your 37-year FS career. Which of your postings stand out the most in your memory, and why?

**REN:** Iran was a wonderful tour. There were only two of us; we covered about 20 percent of the country, and there was a lot to report on. Algeria was my first ambassadorship. There was an insurgency and a blanket death threat against all foreigners, so we lived on the compound but developed a lot of ways to make contacts. It was very challenging, not least because of Washington pressure to cut the post more than I thought wise. But I was and remain very proud of the work we did. I had a great staff, including Robert Ford, a brilliant officer.

**FSJ:** Is it fair to say that your work in Iraq with the Coalition Provincial Authority was unique compared with all the rest of your Foreign Service assignments? How did you approach it?

**REN:** In Iraq the CPA was unique, because as the occupying power we were governing the country. That is almost a throw-back to being a colonial power, except that we wanted to leave and to do so quickly. Yet at the same time many in Washington and CPA wanted fundamentally to change the political structure, and even the political culture, of the country. I don't think we reflected much, if at all, on how contradictory these goals were.

We made a lot of mistakes, and a lot has been written about them.

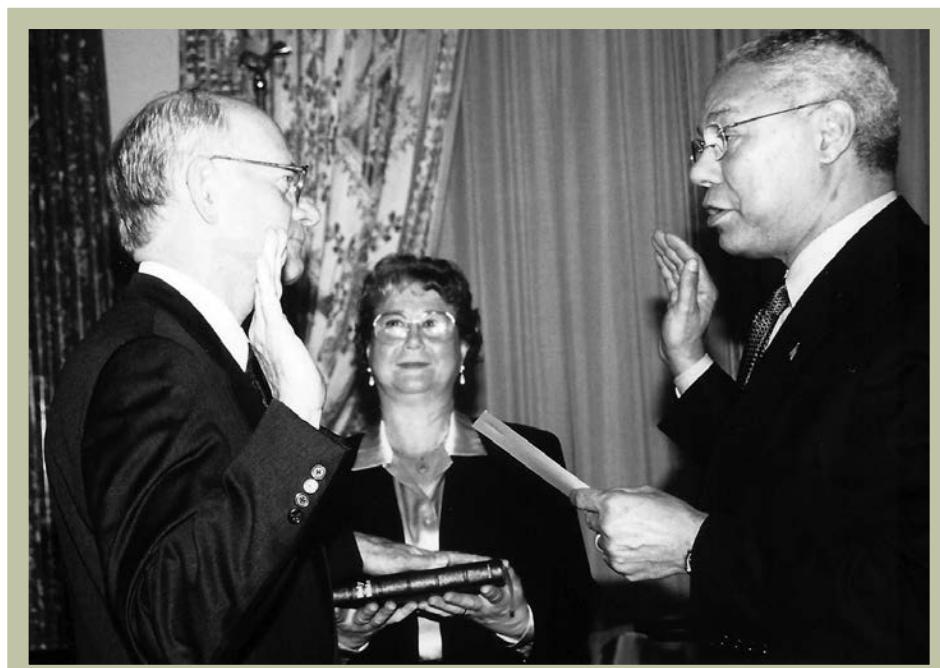
I was a sort of utility diplomat for Ambassador Paul Bremer. My post was director of the Foreign Ministry, and I was fortunate that I had a longtime association with Iraqi Acting Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zibari. However, I took on a variety of tasks. Early on I worked on negotiating a memorandum of understanding between State and the Defense Department for the management of police training (then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld subsequently overturned it). At one point I worked on making sure our people in Najaf were supported during the Shia uprising. I did a lot of work with the Kurds. I had known many of the Kurdish leaders when I served in Iran, and they came in as refugees after the collapse of the 1974 upris-

ing against Saddam. Then I worked with them again when I was director of the Iran-Iraq office at the State Department.

One very frustrating experience concerned trying to set up a foundation with \$100 million to get Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen in Kirkuk to work together. This was the brilliant idea of Emma Sky, who knew Kirkuk well. It might not have solved all the problems, but it would have given the different communities reason to cooperate. It's too long a story for all the details here, although I tell it in my autobiography, *Three Embassies, Four Wars: A Personal Memoir*. But the bottom line was we got everything done and had all the communities on board. But then, because nobody told Emma or me of the secret decision to transfer sovereignty to Iraq two days earlier than planned, the transfer of \$100 million was rejected by the Federal Finance Bank in the United States as being too late by four hours; we no longer controlled the money. The foundation never came into being.

I stayed on for another year after the CPA ended and worked with our military a lot. It was fascinating work despite some risk. We tried to accomplish a lot, but the instability set loose by the overthrow of Saddam Hussein will take years to settle down.

**FSJ:** You were chief of mission three times: to Algeria, Bahrain and Afghanistan. Could you tell us a little about each posting?



Ron Neumann, with Elaine Neumann holding the Bible, is sworn in by Secretary of State Colin Powell, as U.S. ambassador to Bahrain in 2001.



Ambassador Ron Neumann, second from right, dedicating U.S. Embassy Kabul in 2006 with, from left, Laura Bush, President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

**REN:** I mentioned a few things earlier about Algeria. In Afghanistan, about which I've written a book (*The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan*), we could see that the war was going to get worse. We were terribly under-resourced, but Iraq was sucking up most of the resources. I think we did some good work, and our predictions still stand up well; but we lost a lot of time for lack of resources.

Bahrain was just beginning some important political reforms. With the help of the National Democratic Institute and a lot of patient work, I think we helped move things in a positive way, at least at that time. We spent much of two years bringing about negotiations for a free trade agreement, which was signed after I left. Getting there was, perhaps, the most complicated bureaucratic maneuver I've ever designed (in partnership with Cathy Novelli, who was then at the Office of the United States Trade Representative).

**FSJ:** What do you see as the most important role of an ambassador, chief of mission?

**REN:** The U.S. government has a lot of different interests. Washington is too large to ever coordinate all the pieces in a bilateral relationship, so the ambassador has a very important role in coordinating all the aspects of policy. And an activist ambassador can play a very strong role in advocating policy;

it's not just about observing and reporting. With the assistance of the country team, the ambassador plays a major role by advising on what will and won't work and how to shape policy execution. Additionally, an ambassador is really like the mayor of a small town, with all sorts of responsibilities for morale and, above all, for the security of mission personnel and Americans in the country. There's lots more, but that's probably enough for now.

### Afghanistan

**FSJ:** You first lived in Kabul more than half a century ago, when your father was ambassador, and you've been back many times since. What do you find so fascinating about Afghanistan?

**REN:** Afghanistan was pretty exotic when we first traveled there in 1967. We drove back roads across the center of the country. I went with a hunting party by jeep, horse and yak into the high Pamirs of the Wakhan, the panhandle of northeastern Afghanistan. That was pretty heady stuff at age 22. And the Afghans are an attractive people, although that's true of many countries. Also, my father was ambassador there for 6 1/2 years and remained active in Track II diplomacy throughout the Soviet occupation period. He and I frequently discussed the situation. Whether all those bits actually explain my attraction I can't say. I guess it's become a family thing.

**FSJ:** How would you compare the war in Afghanistan with the one in Vietnam? Are you optimistic about prospects for some sort of modus vivendi with the Taliban?

**REN:** There are similarities and big differences between the two wars. Militarily the Taliban is not much like the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese Army that sent regular military units into full-scale battles with thousands of casualties. The VC and NVA were far more unified than the Taliban, their international backing much larger. Where I see a distressing similarity is in the corruption and power-seeking of the Afghan politicians. There are many reasons for this, but if an Afghan national leadership can't develop a real popular base, and particularly can't develop an efficiently commanded Afghan army and police, then they

# American Diplomacy Award

At AAD we are embarking on a new study of areas for managerial improvement in the department, including a fresh look at some problems for FS specialists and Civil Service personnel.

will not be able to stand up to the challenges that face them.

*FSJ: Something that came out of Afghanistan, but is perhaps better known for its application in Iraq, is the provincial reconstruction team (PRT) mechanism. Did your experience overseeing PRTs while serving with the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad influence your use of them during your subsequent tenure as chief of mission in Kabul? Should the U.S. government continue using PRTs in conflict or post-conflict zones?*

**REN:** PRTs were in Afghanistan when I arrived, but were not used in Iraq until after my time there. The situation in the two countries was different. In Iraq there were local government arrangements and personnel, and the task was to help them become more efficient. When PRTs began in Afghanistan, there was no provincial government. It had been completely destroyed by years of war. The PRTs were initially a stand-in for a nonexistent local government; flawed perhaps by being foreign, but also the only way to deliver any aid to a distressed population. As the Afghan government grew, the challenge changed to how to diminish the PRTs' role as a parallel government, to help the real one, and then for us to go away. Each of these phases had its own problems.

There may be occasions in the future where we will need this mechanism. If we do, I hope we will understand that we're not very good at standing in for other people's government. We don't have the detailed expertise; and while our money will be welcome, our authority won't. So I hope we'll keep our expectations in check.

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During 37 years in the Foreign Service I often went home at night with frustration about this or that decision. But never once did I go home and wonder if what I was working on mattered.

### Diplomatic Readiness Today

**FSJ:** Under your leadership, the American Academy of Diplomacy has consistently advocated for more resources to be devoted to professional training for the Foreign Service. How would you assess the state of diplomatic readiness and the profession today?

**REN:** The training has improved, but diplomatic readiness overall is weaker. On the training and education side, the resources have never been made available to do much of what multiple studies have called for. Nor has the State Department made professional education a requirement in anything like the way the military has. And over the last year, we have lost many experienced officers. So I'm looking at the combination of teaching and experience when I conclude that we are weaker.

**FSJ:** The "American Diplomacy at Risk" report raised many problems and offered suggested solutions to "save" the Foreign Service. Two years later, how do you see that report and its impact?

**REN:** A few pieces of it have been implemented. Many have not, although the report continues to be quoted and referenced in many other reports. It is useful to remember also that many of the issues we raised have been around for some time.

**FSJ:** What are you working on currently at AAD?

**REN:** We have two new podcast series going: "The General and the Ambassador" and "America's Diplomats." Both are designed to help Americans understand more about what diplomacy is and does. We are also partnering with the McCain Institute to produce scenarios to teach ambassadors and DCMs how to think through difficult and long-running security issues. This is a critical area that the State Department has never addressed in its training. We will turn the finished product over to the department at no charge. We hope they will make use of it.

Finally, we are embarking on a new study of areas for managerial improvement in the department, including a fresh look at some problems for FS specialists and Civil Service personnel.

**FSJ:** How do you see AAD's role in terms of advocacy?

**REN:** We reach out within our capacity to Americans to talk about the value of diplomacy and what it is all about. With the department, we advocate measures to strengthen and make diplomacy more effective; but we are not AFSA, and generally stay out of strictly Foreign Service issues. With Congress we advocate for proper funding for diplomacy. In one case we advocated against a nomination which, we felt, was contrary to professional diplomacy.



Ambassador Ron Neumann, standing middle, with U.S. Special Forces at Spin Boldak on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, 2006.

# American Diplomacy Award

**FSJ:** Does AAD ever take positions on policy issues?

**REN:** Not as an organization, although many individual members take positions on policy issues.

## The Foreign Service Career

**FSJ:** What are the essential ingredients for a successful diplomat?

**REN:** There are probably as many answers as there are diplomats. One essential is listening well, so that you know how to shape your own arguments for maximum success. Another is to master your home bureaucracy, so that you know how best to advocate for policies you believe in. Few things are more prone to ridicule and ineffectiveness than a diplomat who is tone deaf to his or her own nation's politics. This does not mean that one should not advocate for unpopular policies; but, rather, that one must know how to shape the argument. Clear and precise writing is essential. Those are a few things that I would pick out, but there are whole books written on this subject.

**FSJ:** Who were some of the people you especially admired or were inspired by during your Foreign Service career?

**REN:** I have had so many mentors and guides that it is difficult to pick out a few. Certainly my father was one. We were colleagues and friends, as well as father and son. Hal Saunders was another, as I mentioned in my remarks on receiving the award. I have learned from every ambassador for whom I have worked—from Ed Clark long ago in Dakar to John Negroponte in Iraq.

**FSJ:** How would you describe Civil Service-Foreign Service relations, and what changes have you seen over time?

**REN:** The Civil Service has become a much more crucial part of the conduct of diplomacy than it was when I entered the Foreign Service. The department has to manage three personnel systems: Foreign Service, Civil Service and Locally Employed staff. There are many structural rigidities in the systems that cause strains between the Civil and Foreign Service. These problems weaken our diplomacy overall. There are also



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American Academy of Diplomacy President Ambassador Ron Neumann, left, moderates a Q&A session with Ambassador Joyce Barr and Ambassador William Brownfield, 2018 inductees to the National Defense University's Hall of Fame.



longstanding problems that affect the specialists within the Foreign Service. AAD is beginning a new study to suggest some solutions in these areas. We hope the department will consider what we put forth.

**FSJ:** How successful has the Foreign Service been in increasing diversity? Should that be a priority? How can the foreign affairs agencies retain minority talent once those individuals are in the Foreign Service?

**REN:** The State Department has been trying hard to increase diversity, but still faces problems. Recently it has lost too many highly qualified officers at the senior level, including a disproportionate number of diversity officers. Recruitment of diverse candidates is starting to pick up again, but a number of problems remain at the senior level.

**FSJ:** How would you describe the state of the Foreign Service as an institution today?

**REN:** The Foreign Service is troubled as an institution. There is a sense—whether justified or not—that there is a suspicion of professionals, not only in the Foreign Service but across the government. The appointment of David Hale as under secretary for political affairs is a praiseworthy exception, but I am told that we are unlikely to see any more serving senior officers appointed to senior positions in the department. An institution which is visibly distrusted is bound to suffer doubts. Nevertheless, the Foreign Service is full of dedicated individuals, determined to serve the nation. I believe it will come through this difficult period as it has done in difficult periods in the past.

**FSJ:** How has the role of the Foreign Service changed?

**REN:** The explosion of Cabinet agencies working abroad has led to a diminution in State's lead role in the formulation of policy. Many factors have gone into this, including the fact that we now deal with many issues—from trade to climate—that have major

domestic implications. One cannot make foreign policy without taking into consideration domestic policy, although if one only looks at domestic issues the result may be bad foreign policy. Some of this can be improved, but it cannot happen by law or executive decree. State will have to earn back a leading role through the quality of its work. This is much too large a question to be answered in a paragraph, but adequate staffing, budgets and professional education are all part of the answer.

**FSJ:** What advice do you have for active-duty diplomats who may feel that diplomacy has been sidelined in recent years as military power and political expediencies take center stage?

**REN:** Diplomacy remains indispensable. That is the nature of the problems we face today. The limits of military solutions are clear—particularly to our own military, who are well aware of the need for partnership in policymaking and execution. I believe this reality and the general tiredness of Americans with long-lasting wars will bring diplomacy back to the fore. Diplomats should not lose hope. Their services will continue to be needed. Frustration is understandable. Despair is not.

**FSJ:** Are you discouraged or optimistic for the future of the Foreign Service and professional diplomacy?

**REN:** I am optimistic. That is a basic requirement of diplomacy, or the immensity of the challenges we confront would overwhelm us. America needs its best men and women in the diplomatic service, whether as Foreign Service officers and specialists or in the Civil Service. Whenever I am asked, I continue to urge people to join, to get into the game.



AFSA/JOAQUIN SOSA

Under Secretary for Political Affairs David Hale presents AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award to Ambassador Ron Neumann on Oct. 10.

No problem was ever solved by sitting on the sidelines and complaining.

**FSJ:** How do you see AFSA's role?

**REN:** AFSA is both a professional organization and a union. Both functions are essential, but there is always going to be tension between them. AFSA has done an outstanding job of pushing for and defending a better budget in the Congress. They, and particularly AFSA President Barbara Stephenson, deserve great credit for what they have accomplished.

**FSJ:** What would be your advice to college students and recent graduates seeking to enter the Foreign Service or government service more generally?

**REN:** Get in. Work hard. Make a difference. America needs you. Besides, the Foreign Service, about which I can speak the most, offers the chance to do important work with some of the most intellectually impressive and interesting people you'll ever work with. During 37 years in the Foreign Service I often went home at night with frustration about this or that decision. But never once did I go home and wonder if what I was working on mattered. There are not many careers that offer that. ■

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# Through the Lens of an FSN:

**A retired FSN reflects on his experience working for the United States in Nigeria.**

BY IDIKA ONYUKWU



IDIKA ONYUKWU

Ambassador Robin Sanders commissions the Goronyo water borehole, July 18, 2007.

When I joined the United States Information Service as a Foreign Service National in August 1994, I planned to stay with the agency for three years and then return to my first love, journalism. Instead, I ended up spending 20

eventful and thoroughly enriching years working for the Department of State. I left the service in May 2015.

Two notable factors contributed to my long stay at the embassy. Given the comparative strength of the U.S. dollar against the local currency, it made economic sense for me to stick with the U.S. mission. But more important was that I saw the obvious commitment of the U.S. mission to directly impacting the Nigerian people through the development of our communities. Through my work, I was playing a part in helping Nigerian communities realize their developmental aspirations.

In 1999 when the United States Information Agency was folded into the Bureau of Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, I became a Foreign Service National with the public affairs section of the embassy—not by choice, but by administrative fiat. I had my fears entering a new agency whose structure and operational modalities, especially decision-taking abilities, were quite different from what I had come to cherish at USIS.



*Idiaka Onyukwu was the publications specialist and editor of Crossroads, the flagship publication of the U.S. Mission in Nigeria, before leaving the State Department and emigrating to the United States. He served under nine different U.S. ambassadors and several counselors for public affairs and press attachés.*

# Foreign Service in Pictures



A U.S. government-sponsored water borehole project in Nigeria's Bauchi state brings clean drinking water to schoolchildren.

However, I discovered a well-structured State Department with particularly commendable objectives, especially as it relates to host-country development. Because my work frequently included photography at official events, I was able to commemorate some important moments at our embassy over the 20 years I served there.

For example, on multiple occasions across Nigeria, I saw firsthand the difference a U.S. government-sponsored clean water borehole project could make in the lives of vulnerable school pupils with no access to clean water.

Clean drinking water is truly life in most northern states in Nigeria. With support from USAID, water borehole projects provide clean drinking water to schoolchildren across the country. On Aug. 11, 2009, I photographed the opening of a U.S. government-sponsored water borehole project for schoolchildren in Bauchi State. I remember the schoolchildren that day were so happy to have clean drinking water within reach. Months later,

reports indicated that their health and social well-being had improved dramatically thanks to the installation, leading to laudatory media reports and accolades.

Another successful borehole was installed in 2007 in Gorno-yo, a vibrant agrarian community in Sokoto State with a population of about 186,000 inhabitants.

I was there on July 18, 2007, when U.S. Ambassador Robin Sanders commissioned the solar-powered borehole, the only source of clean drinking water for the community. Traditional praise singers sang and danced in celebration. Before the borehole, the only source was rainwater trapped in dug-out trenches that the locals used not only for drinking, but also for cooking and for their cattle.

I photographed still another borehole commissioning, this one in 2009. In the photo below, students of the Suleja Com-



Students of Suleja Community School drink clean water from a borehole provided by the U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Office.



IDKA ONYUKWU

Muppets Zobi and Kami pose with (left to right) Ahmed Tijani of Nigerian Television Authority, USAID Mission Director Dr. Ray Kirkland, Charlotte Cole of Sesame Workshop in New York City, U.S. Ambassador Terence McCulley and Nigerian singer Onyeka Onwenu.

## I was there when “Sesame Square,” Nigeria’s adaptation of the American children’s television series “Sesame Street,” was launched in the capital.



IDKA ONYUKWU

A U.S.-sponsored rap contest in Abuja to promote HIV/AIDS awareness in schools.

munity School in Niger state are drinking clean water from a borehole provided with the support of the U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Office. “By providing clean water inside the school compound, the children and teachers will be able to concentrate on education without having to worry about a source of water,” said Deputy Chief of Mission Lisa Piascik at the event. Afterwards, she said to me, “The smiles I see on the faces of these children speak volumes.”

But I didn’t just photograph boreholes.

I was there when “Sesame Square,” Nigeria’s adaptation of the American children’s television series “Sesame Street,” was launched in the capital, Abuja, on May 17, 2011. Muppets Kami and Zobi were created to improve literacy, math and health education among pupils in Nigerian schools. The project was funded by the United States government, through USAID; and I snapped a photo of U.S. Ambassador James P. McCulley at the launch event (see photo above). The famous Nigerian singer, Onyeka Onwenu, was also in attendance.

Since its inception in Nigeria in 2004, the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief has disbursed more than \$5.1 million to support Nigeria’s HIV/AIDS response. A rap contest organized by the U.S. mission to educate secondary students in Abuja about HIV/AIDS was one part of that awareness program, and I photographed students from the Government Secondary School Nyanya, in Abuja, when they performed at the contest on Nov. 28, 2012. The girl in the photo was the lead singer of the group that ultimately won the contest.



Mrs. Haydon plants a memorial tree on embassy grounds during the memorial service.

I covered other PEPFAR events during my years at the embassy, too. I took this picture, at right, of women and children at Mapa Health Clinic, a beneficiary of PEPFAR in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, in November 2013. The women were waiting to be seen by a doctor during the handover of a PEPFAR-funded health clinic to the Mapa community. A local nongovernmental organization, the Tabitha Cumi Foundation, partnered with PEPFAR to build the clinic; the name Tabitha Cumi literally means “Woman Arise.”

I captured tragic moments, as well.

Working for the State Department can be fun, but it presents peculiar challenges and risks, which sometimes put the lives of both Americans and local staff at great risk. From local travels on roads littered with potholes and lurking armed robbers, to air travel in jerky airliners, the risks are indeed legion.

I live with sad memories of the late Major Joseph Jolly Haydon Jr., head of the Office of Defense Cooperation, and eight of my FSN colleagues, all of whom perished in a domestic plane crash on Oct. 6, 2005. Major Haydon and eight local staff members were returning to Abuja from Lagos—the major had



Women and children line up at Mapa Health Clinic, a beneficiary of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

been at a meeting in Germany—when the plane they were traveling in nosedived at Lisa Village in Ogun State, killing all 117 passengers on board and reminding me of the risks that came with the job of working for the State Department.

I attended a memorial service held in honor of Major Haydon, taking pictures as his widow, Maria Haydon, planted a tree in remembrance of him. Representatives of the Chief of Army Staff of the Nigerian Armed Forces attended the memorial to offer condolences.

I was there during the February 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria when, to promote free, fair and credible elections, President Barack Obama's special envoy, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, held closed-door meetings with then-President Goodluck Jonathan—the candidate

of the People's Democratic Party—and Muhammadu Buhari, the opposition party leader and presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress. Ambassador James Entwistle also championed a crusade throughout the 36 states of Nigeria to commit politicians to a pledge of nonviolence before, during and after the elections.



The author greets then-U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in Lagos on Jan. 25, 2015.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/SEAN MCINTOSH

## Supervisors come and go, but FSNs remain the core structure of U.S. embassies worldwide.

Nigeria ultimately held an election that was internationally acclaimed as free and fair, with opposition party leader Mohammadu Buhari elected as president. That the incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan, conceded defeat even before the election results were announced was irrefutable evidence of the transparent nature of the exercise. The success of that election came from the commitment of friends of Nigeria, including the United States, to ensuring a peaceful, transparent and democratic electoral process.

There were so many other things I witnessed as an FSN without my camera in hand.

I witnessed efforts to support and uphold the principal pillars of democracy, the rule of law, youth empowerment, girl-child education, human rights protection and media engagement. I participated in programs to promote good governance, strengthen democratic institutions, support health care delivery and foster a robust partnership between the governments of Nigeria and the United States in the interest of peace and security.

These firsthand experiences were the reason I stayed with the State Department for so long.

Foreign Service officers are in constant motion, never staying more than three years at any post. For an FSN, this means learning, over and over again, the different leadership and management styles and traits of every new officer as they come from Washington, D.C. I went through this process many times with more than nine ambassadors, 12 different counselors for public affairs and 15 information officers. Supervisors come and go, but FSNs remain the core structure of U.S. embassies worldwide.

Working for the U.S. government can earn one all sorts of derogatory names. I have been called a spy, a turncoat and a mole by friends and colleagues in the media who interpreted my work for the U.S. government as betraying the trust of my country. Right from my days in USIS, these mischief-makers refused to differentiate between international collaboration for development and spying. That was not much of a bother, however, since I knew the genuineness in my engagement with the U.S. mission in Nigeria.

After 20 years of meritorious service to the State Department, in May 2015, my immediate family and I became legal residents of the United States through the Special Immigrant Visa program. My three sons, my daughter, my wife and I now live in Maryland. ■

# Advocating for Foreign Service Nationals

**The FSN Advocacy Council has been representing USAID's global FSN employees since 2005.**

BY SAFIA AL-SAAD

can still remember writing my campaign paragraph asking FSNs around the world to elect me to USAID's FSN Advocacy Council. I was excited and saw how my experience as a human resources specialist with USAID/Jordan, interacting with colleagues on all matters, could benefit the council. My work experience prepared me for articulating FSNs' wants and desires with respect to enhancing their future career paths and livelihoods. I felt honored to be elected co-chair by my colleagues and to have the opportunity to apply my experience and vision toward realizing the FSN Advocacy Council's goals.

The newly elected 2017-2018 FSN Advocacy Council gathered in Washington, D.C., in February 2017. We came from many different countries and cultures, but we were all focused on one goal that week—upholding the mission of the FSN Advocacy Council to increase transparency and communication between USAID/Washington and overseas missions. We wanted to build on the previous council's achievements and amplify the voice of the global FSN community.

The dozen of us who traveled to participate in the team-building and planning meeting represented the 4,900 FSNs who comprise half of USAID's global workforce. FSNs serve in a wide variety of positions, from senior technical experts advising host

governments to budget analysts securing funding and procurement agents negotiating the best value for money. We provide critical technical expertise, host-country knowledge and administrative support to our missions around the world. Our local knowledge and cultural awareness add to the agency's overall credibility when partnering with host-country counterparts.

The council is tasked with representing FSN views, ideas and concerns and promoting better understanding of, and engagement in, USAID operations and programmatic policy. It also addresses their concerns, advocates for FSN interests, builds trust and encourages active contribution to initiatives and programs affecting USAID equities. The council connects the field with information flowing in both directions, making sure FSN voices are heard.

## Charting a New Course

Dusty human resources files document a first worldwide FSN conference in September 2002, which was only for Department of State staff. A year later, a second conference included USAID. In 2004 USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios held an agencywide FSN conference and declared 2005 the "Year of the FSN." This gave birth to the first iteration of a USAID FSN Advisory Council, and several regional conferences were held. From then on, there was an active USAID FSN Advisory Council with Washington and field-based participants, but no face-to-face gatherings until 2012.



*Safia Al-Saad is a Foreign Service National working at USAID/Jordan as a human resources specialist in the Executive Office. She is active on the FSN Advocacy Council.*

All the while, FSNs continued to contribute local expertise to add to the agency's overall credibility when partnering with host countries. FSNs with technical, financial, procurement, management and human resources skills have helped set up missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan and other countries, and have helped to train and mentor new FSOs, as well. Mohammed Yassein, a former FSN from USAID/Jordan who participated in one of the 2005 regional conferences, believes USAID's response to the Arab Spring illustrates the value and expertise of FSNs who continue to work under dire circumstances, even after Americans are evacuated.

When Rajiv Shah was appointed USAID Administrator in 2010, he immediately asked about the composition of the agency's workforce. He said he was struck by how much of its mission was carried out by FSNs. In 2012 a global FSN conference involved brainstorming sessions on framing the relationship between management and the FSN workforce. One output was a global conference in November 2013, with every USAID mission represented, to explore the issues, concerns and creative ideas of the FSN workforce. As Abdul Sumara of USAID/Angola said, that was a groundbreaking "conference for FSNs by FSNs."

**The council is tasked with representing FSN views, ideas and concerns and promoting better understanding of, and engagement in, USAID operations and programmatic policy.**

I didn't attend the 2013 conference, but I understand it was a powerful gathering. The FSNs there asked for full recognition of their skills and competencies; they stressed the importance of having leadership roles in their missions and of having their leadership skills developed. FSNs also pinpointed the importance of the orientation between both American and FSN hires in the working environment and called for reconsideration of the Local Compen-



Pictured from left to right are Shehla Rizwan, the 2017 Professional FSN of the Year; USAID Administrator Mark Green; Yooku Ata-Bedu, one of six 2017 Distinguished FSN Award recipients; and Linda Quamar, the 2017 Administrative FSN of the Year.



## AS FSNS WE WANT MISSION DIRECTORS TO KNOW:

- FSNs are the memory and essential to the Mission's development efforts.
- FSN Empowerment and Talent Management is key to Mission and Agency success.
- Training and TDY opportunities are essential to professional development.
- Open door policy opens communication channels with all employees levels.
- A friendly environment and mutual respect (FSNs and FSOs, TCNs, USPSCs) are keys to collaboration and communication.
- Management by walking around allows time for listening to employees ideas and problems and sends an important signal that employee voices matter.
- Acknowledgment reinvigorates commitment and motivation.

## BEST PRACTICES SUGGESTED BY ADVOCACY COUNCIL:

- FSNs in full-time leadership positions (e.g. Deputy Office Directors and Senior Adviser to Front Office) optimize Mission management and maintain continuity.
- Create FSN Grade 13 where appropriate.
- Hold regular meetings with the FSN Committees to discuss agency priorities, changes, and challenges.
- Initiate a Cross Cultural sponsorship program for all hiring mechanisms.
- Invite FSN Advocacy Council and FSN committee members to join in regular Washington calls and attend regional and global Mission Directors conferences.
- Support the Fellowship program, TDY and talent exchange opportunities along with professional and leadership training for all staff levels.
- Create tuition reimbursement to sponsor employees educational advancement.
- Ensure support offices are invited to field trips and site visits.
- Actively engage FSNs and Interagency management to influence the local compensation plan process.

## IDEAS TO CONSIDER WHEN ARRIVING TO THE MISSION:

- Meet with the FSN Committee and discuss their priorities.
- Have informal meetings with staff from all levels, consider happy hour gatherings.
- Ask each Office Director about their office's talent and work dynamics.
- Explore the country's different circumstances, culture and working environment through the lens of your FSNs.
- Review that FSN performance management and professional development included in the work objectives of all supervisors.

A new initiative of the USAID FSN Advocacy Council, this flyer was designed for mission directors and staff at every level heading to post. It was shared with participants at the annual USAID Mission Directors Conference held in the Washington, D.C., area in November.

# USAID FSN Advocacy Council

The purpose of the FSN Advocacy Council is to work as one team, to champion and advance USAID and to model our core values for mission excellence, integrity, respect, empowerment, inclusion and commitment to learning. We intend to demonstrate these core values by promoting greater participation of FSNs through more active involvement in strategic direction and operations.

**The three main goals of the FSN Advocacy Council are:**

- Represent the prevailing views, ideas and concerns of FSNs to USAID leadership in both Washington and overseas;
- Gain the confidence of FSNs worldwide, and;
- Increase transparency and communication between USAID/Washington and the missions, and support a worldwide USAID community of practice.

The council agenda focuses on four main areas, each with its own action plan:

## 1. Local Compensation Plans

- Empower FSN committees to provide credible information on the Local Compensation Plan process to FSNs.
- Advocate for greater transparency and FSN engagement in the annual Local Compensation Questionnaires.

## 2. FSN Talent Management and Empowerment

- Advocate for expanded utilization of Senior FSN skills.
- Improve FSNs' professional development.

## 3. Communications

- Increase FSN awareness of the communications channels available to them, including the role of FSN committees and the FSN Advocacy Council.
- Increase the sharing of best practices by FSNs globally.
- Establish regional networks to strengthen the sense of connection among FSNs.
- Provide FSN constituents opportunities to offer feedback.
- Increase FSN visibility in USAID/Washington.

## 4. Cross Cultural and Inclusiveness

- Gather and centralize best practices across the agency.
- Create long-term mechanisms to maintain and strengthen cross-cultural relations.
- Establish a program to integrate new employees from all hiring categories into the workforce at post.

**USAID's FSN Advocacy Council has many notable accomplishments, such as the following:**

- Each mission has an active FSN Committee, with regular elections of leadership and close ties to its regional FSN Advocacy Council representatives. This revitalization has brought new life to dormant associations.
- FSNs now participate in the hiring process for selection of new Foreign Service officers, ensuring that our future leaders see the agency's commitment to diversity and inclusion from day one.
- Regional FSN gatherings have been held—many for the first time—allowing constituents to meet their representatives, share ideas and set action plans.
- FSNs are now part of regional and global mission directors' conferences, and are regularly invited to join regional mission director conference calls.
- Regional TDY Exchange Programs and Talent Banks have been established in West Africa, the Middle East and Europe and Eurasia, to facilitate career development and give the agency access to short-term expertise in a timely fashion.
- The council has helped increase Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey participation from 30 percent in 2015 to about 50 percent in 2017, ensuring more voices are captured in this important workforce survey that directly feeds into agency action steps.
- The council successfully advocated for removal of the waiting period for FSNs to move from a lower grade to a higher grade if qualified and selected for the position, consistent with the rules governing personal service contracts.
- For 10 years the FSN Fellowship Program has brought talented FSNs to Washington to expand their perspective on the agency and professional development, while providing offices with additional technical expertise and the perspective from the field.

*—Elizabeth Santucci, FSN Unit, USAID Human Capital and Talent Management*

# The FSN Advocacy Council continued to work on local compensation plan issues after the three-year wage freeze was lifted in 2014.

sation Plans that differed from one mission to another depending on the local laws and economic situation. In other words, we used our voices to let leadership know what mattered to us.

Participants in the 2013 conference completely reworked the existing council structure, writing a new charter and branding the council as an “advocacy” rather than an “advisory” body. A structure of regional representatives voted for directly by FSNs was created, and two-year terms were established. The new council was launched in February 2014 following global elections. The council’s journey advocating for the worldwide FSN community had begun.

## What Advocacy Looks Like

Work initiated at the 2013 conference was carried over to the next council, which works in a unique collaborative way to apply advocated actions globally. Soon after we returned from Washington, we developed an assessment survey of the FSN local committees’ status in each mission. After collecting the data, we implemented several initiatives. In one, the council advocated for USAID’s Staff Care program, which resulted in expanding the program and providing 24/7 access to counselors for all USAID staff and their family members, regardless of hiring category.

At the time, there was an ongoing wage freeze, and salaries were a large concern. Agency leadership recognized the issue and was open and transparent about the interagency process. They shared that they were not sure when the freeze would be lifted, but encouraged the FSN committees to work with their embassies to request waivers from Washington should the inflation rate become significant. The FSN Advocacy Council continued to work on local compensation plan issues after the three-year wage freeze was lifted in 2014. USAID leadership’s respect and willingness to work for a flexible solution was appreciated and continues to this day.

We also select best practices from different missions to be adopted globally. USAID/Senegal had a great experience creating cultural sponsors for new employees to promote understanding and a greater sense of team spirit. This best practice was shared with all missions, encouraging them to implement similar programs. The council followed up with mission FSN committees to hear if and how they are adapting a cultural sponsorship program

at their missions.

These gains are the direct result of our collective commitment to reaching out and checking in with the FSN community. We know the importance of making the connections and building these relationships, of having our ears to the ground. The networks that we form help us share best practices across missions.

## A Voice for the FSN Workforce, Now and in the Future

Every two years, the FSN Advocacy Council renews its membership to bring in fresh voices and new perspectives. Council members represent the regions in which USAID operates, with one or two representatives from each region, depending on its size. Elected co-chairs serve for one year. The council includes senior leadership in USAID/Washington who connect quarterly and are assigned tasks to advance each quarter.

What started as a conversation nearly 20 years ago has grown into a full-fledged initiative, making changes where they matter. For me, it has been a very fruitful experience to be one of the regional representatives and, at the same time, one of the co-chairs. I have the full support of my mission leadership in Jordan. That helps me focus on collaborating with the local committee in Jordan while also seeing the big picture regionally and globally.

Because of mission director and bureau support, the USAID Bureau for the Middle East held a meeting of all mission FSN Committee points of contact for us to meet each other, discuss our issues and share ideas. This gathering was a model for all regions to follow and is now a part of the FSN Advocacy Council’s plans for future years. Mission directors have also supported the establishment of a website that lists the skills of FSNs available for short-term assignments or as a general resource on a topic. We worked together across missions to establish this website, which will be finalized soon. It’s an amazing feeling of accomplishment, excitement and responsibility.

In five short years, and with the support of the agency’s senior leadership, we’ve built a sustainable advocacy initiative and have a stronger FSN community because of it. This will help USAID achieve its mission. ■

# Get Ready for Merit Based Compensation

**The new performance management program for Locally Employed staff offers many benefits for staff and supervisors alike.**

BY ELIZABETH LAMONTAGNE

H ave you ever managed an amazing Locally Employed staff member who is no longer eligible for salary increases because he or she is at the top step of their grade? Or have you had to incentivize a local staff member “retired in place” at the top step? An exciting development for both American and LE supervisors is the new performance management program for LE staff at U.S. missions called Merit Based Compensation.

By the end of 2019, nearly 50 percent of U.S. missions worldwide will have adopted the new tools of the MBC pay-for-performance system. Currently at 66 embassies worldwide, supervisors



*Elizabeth LaMontagne currently works in the State Department Bureau of Human Resources' Office of Overseas Employment on the Locally Employed Staff Policy team, focusing primarily on the performance management portfolio. She joined the State Department as a Foreign Service eligible family member in 1999 and served at several overseas missions, including Vietnam, Suriname, France and Benin. Prior to working at the State Department, she worked at IBM in the field of brand marketing and communications.*

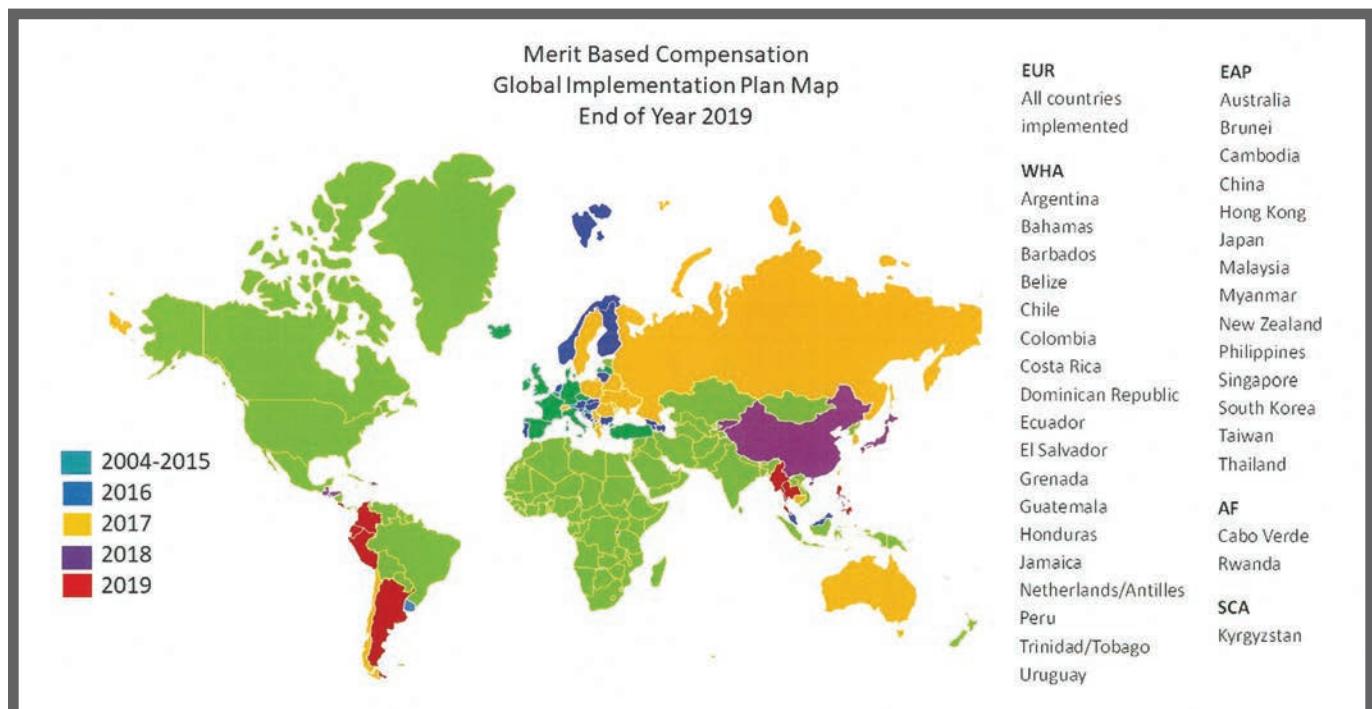
and local staff are recognizing the numerous advantages this performance management method has to offer. The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs fully adopted MBC at all posts in 2016, and other bureaus have begun implementing the program on a post-by-post basis.

This is a major initiative on which all American managers should be well-informed. Here's a quick tutorial on the history of MBC, its multiple benefits and what local and U.S. direct-hire supervisors overseas need to know about this inspiring program.

## What Is MBC?

Merit pay, incentive pay or pay-for-performance plans, as they are sometimes called, reward employees with raises, bonuses or other forms of financial compensation. Instead of tying performance rewards solely to time on the job, employers give rewards for superior performance in the form of an annual variable payment. In 1995 Embassy London spearheaded a performance management program titled “Performance Related Pay.” Jon Lloyd, Embassy London’s LE staff HR specialist, led the original effort to create the new performance-related pay program to transition the mission to a merit-based pay system to match prevailing practice at the time.

Embassy London specifically sought to craft a more contemporary methodology for the management, recognition and reward



Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment.

of LE staff contributions to the work of the U.S. government. The goal was ambitious, and the territory contentious; many of the stakeholders were highly skeptical, and the chances of success were deemed marginal. But as the saying goes, “Fortune favors the brave,” and the London HR staff pressed onward. More than 20 years later, London’s and many other LE staff worldwide sing the praises of the program that has come to be known as MBC.

MBC gives managers the ability to directly link employee performance to the objectives of the section and mission. Managers can create specific objectives and weight them based on importance rather than time spent. A numerical rating system (0-3) combined with more specific objectives allows managers to differentiate the performance of staff along a range, rather than having to give employees an overall summary rating. At the end of the cycle, eligible employees receive a monetary reward commensurate with their performance, based on their total score. High performers have the opportunity to receive a higher reward than they would have received under the current within-grade increase or step system. Likewise, they also have the ability to move through the salary range faster than they otherwise would under the step system.

Employees who are already at the top step of their grade are also eligible to receive a reward under MBC. They will not be able to increase their base salary, but they are eligible to receive a

lump-sum payment to reward them for their hard work. At many posts, a significant percentage of employees have already reached the top step, and MBC will allow these employees to receive a performance reward for the first time in many years. Many of these employees are top performers that the mission wants to retain. MBC can be one additional tool to help managers retain high performers.

In addition, MBC works on an annual cycle for all LE staff performance evaluations. Under MBC, supervisors need not track and complete Employee Performance Reports at random times throughout the year based on each employee’s hiring date. MBC runs on a uniform annual performance cycle, as it does for tenured American direct hires. The majority of posts adopt the rating cycle of Feb. 1 to Jan. 31, and all LE staff evaluations are due on the same date. Consequently, all LE staff evaluations are completed on time!

### The Supervisor’s Crucial Role

MBC creates the opportunity for increased communication between managers and employees. Because the criteria in the employee’s Annual Work Plan can include specific projects and elements like teamwork and supervision, managers and employees need to check in with each other more often to better gauge the employee’s progress. Because MBC results in a variable mon-

## Learn More about MBC

Class	Duration	Locations	Content
MBC Essentials	2-day workshop	FSI or Regional Service Center (in Frankfurt)	Designed for managers who want to learn more about the program
Merit Based Compensation (PA-339)	5-day course	Regional Service Center (for EUR in Frankfurt) Florida Regional Center (for WHA in Ft. Lauderdale) Regional Employee Development Center (for EAP in Bangkok)	Designed for HR staff who are responsible for program at post

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment.

etary reward, both the employee and the supervisor have a vested interest in getting it right.

Employees and supervisors take more ownership of the process, and regular feedback is essential to the program. Says John Lloyd: “Pride in shaping the future success of the mission has always been at the heart of our supervisory corps, and the MBC program is the perfect platform for supervisors to demonstrate the pivotal role they undertake in managing resources in the best interests of the U.S. government.”

MBC gives supervisors the opportunity to focus employees on mission goals and the most important aspects of their individual work. For example, embassy leadership could require all sections to focus on a specific goal or objective proposed by the ambassador during the rating period. Because MBC allows for customized criteria on the evaluation, a manager can also have more control in directing the employee to focus on a specific weighted objective.

In addition, managers can use MBC to help employees improve and develop in particular areas. The flexibility of the program further allows supervisors to recognize important work that is outside the employee’s normal duties, such as temporarily covering the duties of a departed colleague.

### But This Has Been Tried (and Failed) Before...

It’s true. The U.S. government has tried pay-for-performance for civil servants and eventually reverted to the step increase system. There are a few things that distinguish MBC from other programs that have been tried and failed. Under MBC employees are placed in a performance pool with other employees of similar function and grade (e.g., consular Grade 8 performance pool). MBC adds an additional level of review through the role of the pool supervisor, a senior U.S. direct hire who is responsible for reviewing and approving the scores for employees in his or her

section or agency. The pool supervisor is referred to as “the guardian of fairness and consistency” and helps maintain the credibility of the program by ensuring that supervisors justify their scores.

Another aspect of MBC that has been missing in other versions of pay-for-performance programs is the extensive amount of analysis and evaluation that is done at the end of each performance cycle. Missions can mine the data to help determine if additional training needs to be provided or if other tweaks are needed.

MBC represents a big change for employees, supervisors and HR staff. Therefore, when a post makes the determination to adopt MBC, the rollout is carefully organized with specialized post training. All HR assistants take a weeklong FSI course to ensure they are ready to implement the program and to get the tools they need to answer questions from their colleagues at post. Every mission also receives an extensive visit from a subject-matter expert who works with management and ensures that all staff at the mission are fully briefed on the new program.

Many have concerns that a program like MBC cannot work in certain regions or countries. In fact, pay-for-performance is very common (i.e., prevailing practice) around the world. A step-increase system is rare; it is usually only found in governmental organizations. Most of the organizations that U.S. missions compare themselves to in the area of pay and benefits to ensure they are a competitive employer have been using similar performance management systems for many years.

### Will My Next Post Have MBC?

In November 2017, the results of a survey sent out to all posts that had implemented merit based compensation for one year or longer were overwhelmingly positive in support of the program. Fully 70 percent of supervisor survey respondents agreed that MBC encourages additional meaningful communication between supervisors and employees and is an effective tool for identify-

ing goals. Also, 56 percent of all employees felt the rollout of the program at their post was well-managed.

The experience in San Salvador is indicative. There, the Human Resources staff overcame misinformation and skepticism to roll out MBC successfully. With full front office support, they organized a highly effective marketing plan that included town halls, presentations by U.S.-based experts and 34 information sessions attended by 544 people.

As Management Officer Holly Peirce explains, "The campaign included an easy-to-understand, fact-based message built around three compelling points: (1) MBC is not a cost-saving measure; (2) the new system will result in more pay over the course of an employee's career; and (3) all money budgeted for wage increases will go to employees (which had not been the case previously)." The campaign, Peirce reports, changed negative perceptions to cautious anticipation.

At this writing 66 posts around the world have implemented or are implementing the program, so American supervisors are very likely to encounter MBC at their next posting. All Bureau of

**MBC gives managers the ability to directly link employee performance to the objectives of the section and mission.**

European and Eurasian Affairs posts have converted to MBC and, regionally, the bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and East Asian and Pacific Affairs have embraced it. By the end of 2019, the bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs will have implemented MBC at two posts, and the Bureau of African Affairs has begun a trial, implementing the program at one post.

In all, nearly half of all overseas missions will have adopted MBC by the end of 2019. ■



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# In the Field with USAID FSNs



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Farmers in Cambodia are working as part of the Feed the Future program, which supports small farms through difficult times caused by flood or drought.

## After the Flood: Reducing Hunger and Improving Lives in Cambodia

■ BY TONH MOK

In 2011 heavy rains caused major flooding in Cambodia, destroying infrastructure, creating waterlogged rice fields and leaving crater-sized bodies of water over three-quarters of the country. The United Nations estimated that 1.2 million people were affected.

When the flood hit Cambodia, I was living in Siem Reap, one of Cambodia's poorest provinces and home to our greatest historical monument, Angkor Wat. Residents suffered severely from the flood's impact, and I learned firsthand how critical it is for communities to quickly recover from food insecurity and poverty. I knew then that I wanted to be part of a development project that would directly improve living conditions.

In early 2011, USAID started a new food security initiative called Feed the Future in Cambodia, and in September 2012 I was hired to work with the Food Security and Environment team to co-manage a number of its activities.

Feed the Future's goal was to reduce hunger and poverty, while looking at ways to maintain sustainable uses of natural resources. The project team worked closely with smallholder farmers, poor households, women, youth and communities to help them better



**Vegetable buyer Lach Nam collects eggplants from farmer Chun Sokhom to supply to the market in Phnom Penh.**

cope with difficulties such as flood and drought, by introducing new and improved production practices, post-harvest value addition, business skills and marketing.

As a monitoring and evaluation specialist, I meet people in the field, learning from them about how activities are going, and I get to see the change in people's lives. We reached almost 300,000 smallholder farmers in four provinces around the great Tonlé Sap Lake, providing knowledge, skills and better access to finance, markets and jobs.

The data I collected demonstrated that nearly 200,000 farmers had improved their agricultural practices and saw their yields increase by as much as 200 percent. With this assistance, farmers saw increased sales, adding up to \$40 million to the economy in those provinces. Our assistance contributed to a significant reduction in poverty and improved children's health in the four provinces. The number of people living below the national poverty line decreased from 40 percent in 2009 to 17.5 percent in 2015. Child stunting rates—a measure of malnutrition—also significantly dropped, from 44 percent in 2010 to 33.7 percent in 2014.

This is an incredible story that my numbers have helped to write. I had a firsthand view of the flooding and then of the recovery. Feed the Future changed the lives of many Cambodians for the better.



**Tonh Mok.**

*Tonh Mok is a development assistance specialist for USAID/Cambodia's Food Security and Environment Office. He joined USAID in September 2012. Apart from his core role as a monitoring and evaluation specialist, he has also managed or co-managed a number of Feed the Future programs that help Cambodian people improve food security and nutrition, and reduce poverty.*



## Nurturing Nutrition Leadership in Uganda

■ BY SHEILA NYAKWEZI

In Uganda, malnutrition is robbing the future from one in every three children, with devastating consequences at every level of society and on the country's economic development. I have observed the impact of undernutrition in households and health facilities in Uganda. As development partners and the government of Uganda respond to this complex problem, I have been privileged to provide my expertise. Addressing malnutrition requires multiple interventions, among which the need to bridge and strengthen the human resource gap that is critical in planning, leading and managing nutrition programs is the most important.

About 10 years ago, as a young nutrition professional straight out of university, my first exposure to leadership and program management was through a one-year internship at a local industrial and research institution. At the time (and even more so today), formal employment requires work experience and qualifications that are often not taught at the university. As a young professional at this institution, I was mentored and my professional capacity was built.

The impact this opportunity had in shaping my professional career has enabled me to play a role shaping the Ugandan nutritional agenda. I understand how other graduates given similar opportunities stand to benefit and contribute to Uganda's response to malnutrition. Each year more than 80 students graduate from Ugandan universities with degrees related to nutrition. But to create a contingent of future leaders in nutrition, there is a need to strengthen professional capacity.

With the memory of what this internship gave me, I was so pleased to be asked to work with a similar USAID project. For two years I managed the USAID-supported Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance project. I served on the project's advisory committee and provided guidance that shaped the program, which provided a combination of training, experience and professional development to recent university graduates. Through a competitive process, successful nutrition professionals were attached to various organizations, health facilities and government ministries.

For 12 months, the host organizations mentored and built these young professionals' skills. The hands-on experience would empower them and help them develop the skills necessary to implement quality programs in the future. Through these close supervision and mentorship provided by host organizations, the graduates gained job experience and built leadership, communication, technical and managerial skills. In addition, the graduates provided support to the ongoing work at host organizations. The program was beneficial to all participants, in both the short and long term. Most importantly, this is a program that can be scaled up and expanded. I am giving back what I was fortunate to have been given.

The impact of this activity in addressing the human resource gap for nutrition cannot be ignored. During the course of this program and in the engagement with stakeholders and implementing partners that hosted the young professionals, it was clear how the graduates used their skills in spreading good nutrition to more people.

Where are these young people today, and how did the 12-month experience contribute to their personnel and professional goals? To date, of the 19 that have completed the two

program cycles, all but three are employed and some have gone back to pursue further studies. At the institutions (e.g., universities, health facilities and organizations) where they are employed, the engagement for some will hopefully mirror mine and help continuously change the nutrition landscape in Uganda for the better.

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*Sheila Nyakwezi is the nutrition specialist at USAID/Uganda, where she has worked since 2012 covering nutrition activities across Global Health, PEPFAR and Feed the Future programs. She continues to serve in that role and is excited about being part of the team that will be implementing the country development cooperation strategy.*



## Improving the Quality of Education in Kosovo

■ BY ANTIGONA MUSTAFÄ

One of the greatest joys in life is seeing happy faces on children, and that is what I have experienced implementing the USAID Basic Education Program in Kosovo.

Like all parents, I want what is best for my children. I know they are smart, strong and will make good decisions. I do not know what opportunities they will have, especially the opportunities my daughter will have compared to my son. USAID's BEP is giving all kids, and especially girls, the skills they need to make the most of any opportunity and to create their own.



Participants in a "Girls and Technology" after-school club in Kosovo, where girls can learn coding, design and science experiments, pose for a photo.

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The BEP initiative targeted all public primary schools—grades one through nine—and took an institutional approach. Its overarching goal was to improve the government of Kosovo's ability to manage the education sector, ensuring there would be continual improvements in the quality of primary education even after project activities ended. BEP operated from October 2010 until July 2016, jointly funded by USAID and the government of Kosovo. The government provided 50 percent of the funding and became adept at budgeting and managing resources for education. I was involved in negotiating these terms with the government, and then carried out continual oversight of the project's implementation. We sat together as true partners to discuss and plan this project for the biggest impact for all children.

The project also focused on marketable skills, with a specific focus on getting girls involved in science and technology. I was especially pleased to be able to design these activities. Operating under the motto "Developing students' 21st-century skills with schools and communities," BEP sought to improve the capacity of Kosovo's schools to provide students with relevant skills. After-school programs included activities such as Green Clubs, Technician Clubs, Design Challenges, Robotics, Junior Oscar, and Girls and Technology.

The Girls and Technology activity, in particular, was very popular. Girls from grades seven to nine participated in a variety of challenges that had them programming, running small science experiments, working with electronics and doing design work. Their work was facilitated by teachers or older students in relevant fields, who served as role models.

In addition, successful women in technological fields were invited to these events and inspired the girls to consider occupations that are still mostly dominated by men. On one occasion, the first female president of the Republic of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga, visited and shared her observations: "During my visit to the working groups, I saw extraordinary potential in girls and their advanced level of technology use. I see in them scientists in the field of technology and future leaders of our government." It was an honor to have her visit and to have her support.

I cannot know the exact path my children will take, but I am hopeful for them. If a woman can be president, then what else? I am grateful for the United States' contribution to the improvement of Kosovo's education system for all children, and I am proud to be part of this improvement. ■

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*Antigona Mustafa is a project management specialist—education for USAID Mission Kosovo. Her responsibilities include managing activities in basic and higher education for USAID in Kosovo.*

## Strengthening Vulnerable Pastoralist Communities in Northern Kenya

■ BY DORINE GENGA

What does drought look like to you? For the pastoralist communities in northern Kenya that rely on livestock herds to sustain their families, a drought can mean the death of their cattle, which may be their sole source of income. In northern Kenya, traditional culture places enormous value on amassing large herds of cattle, camels and goats as a sign of wealth and status in the community. These herds represent the entirety of these people's assets, for they are generally averse to saving in formal banking systems.

In the north, the small percentage of the community that engages in farming is also threatened by droughts as crops wither and die. Severe droughts cause major challenges for farmers and pastoralists alike, not only in terms of their income, but also their ability to survive.

Drought-induced poverty often results in other challenges, such as malnutrition for children and expectant mothers, conflict, insecurity and increased vulnerability of women and children, because the men leave their homes and trek for longer distances in search of pasture and water for the already emaciated livestock. Sadly, I have seen this firsthand.

In 2011, an 18-month drought affected the Horn of Africa, leaving more than three million Kenyans in urgent need of food aid. In the wake of this devastation, USAID started the Resilience and Economic Growth in the Arid Lands project to spur livelihoods in a zone that was traditionally dependent on humanitarian assistance. Working with communities, the goal was to strengthen families so that they could weather the next shock—whether it be drought, a storm or cattle disease—without completely losing their livelihood.

I participated in a REGAL field visit in 2013, where I listened to pastoralist traders at the Merille livestock market describe the challenges they faced. One of the stories that touched me was



COURTESY OF USAID

Following the 2011 drought in Kenya, many families lost their entire herds, leaving them without any source of income. The vendors at the Merille livestock market faced many challenges, including being forced to travel long distances in search of pasture, water and veterinary care.



Dorine Genga.

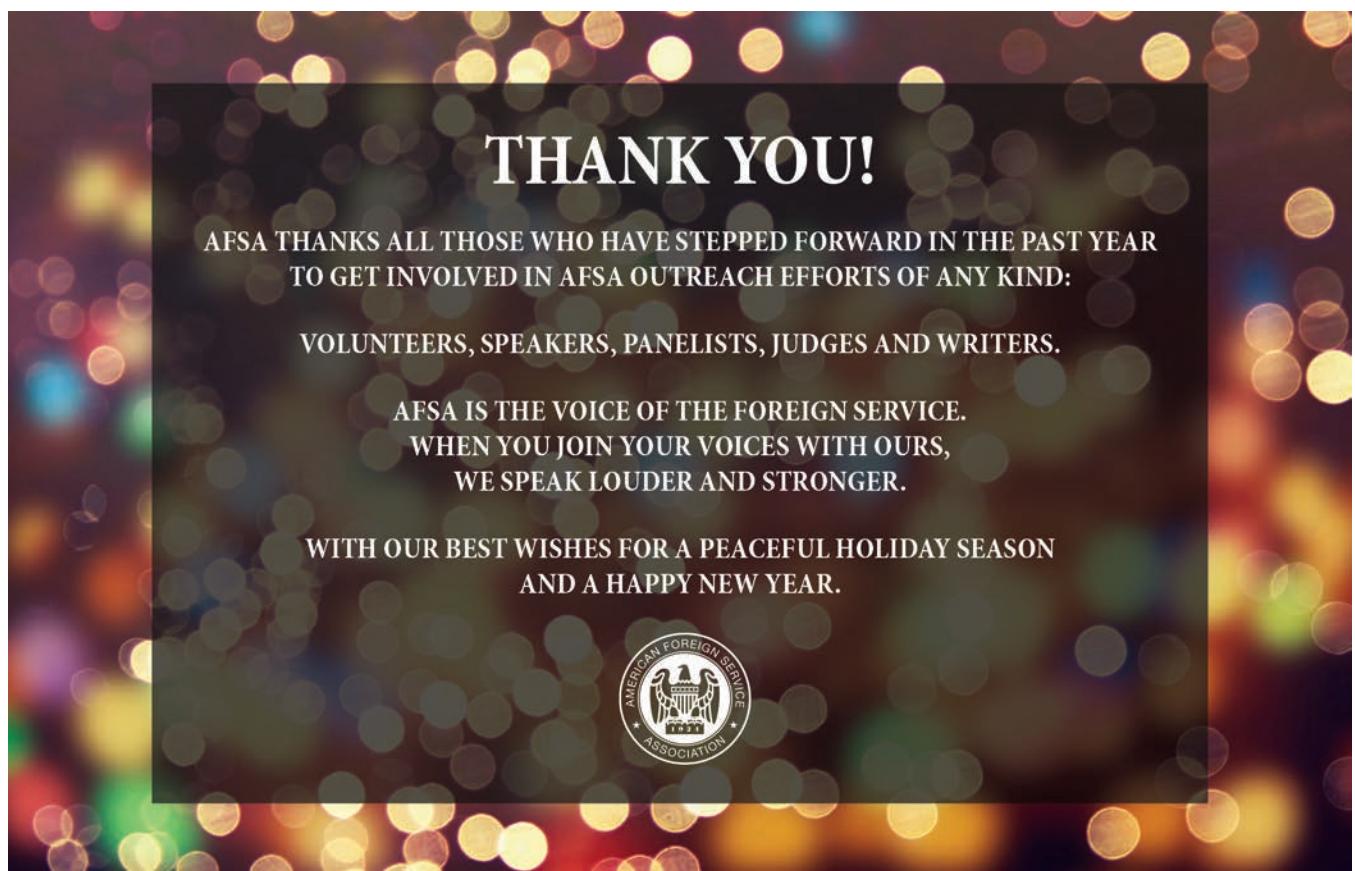
that of one man who was robbed on his way home after selling his camels for \$3,000. He was devastated. He asked for USAID's assistance to get mobile banking to the area so that these transactions didn't force them to carry large amounts of paper currency. A female trader also raised concerns about the long distance she had to travel to get veterinary services when her goats and sheep showed signs of infection. In one of the villages we visited, a lady stated she had only been eating one meal a day and would sometimes go two days without a meal. Her children looked really thin and miserable.

Following this field trip, I returned to the office with a deepened desire to make a difference in the communities we work

with, especially for women and children. At the time, a partnership to link various U.S.-funded activities in northern Kenya had just been formed called the Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth, or PREG. I took the lead to motivate and challenge our development partners and staff to improve the way we do business in northern Kenya so that we have a greater, more meaningful impact on the communities we serve.

I am often referred to as "Mama PREG" for my nurturing yet tough-love approach to keeping the partnership focused on continual progress. Small changes I make in the way I think and work have the potential to make a big impact. As W. Clement Stone said, "Big doors swing on small hinges." This is the mindset I promote and champion in my work, and within the partnership, I challenge all members to leave a legacy in the work we do every day.

The Merille livestock market is an example of PREG's success. There I was able to directly address the challenges I had heard about on that previous REGAL site visit. In 2015, the Merille livestock market was being rehabilitated. As part of my work,





As part of the Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth, USAID works to improve business models in northern Kenya. Since 2015, the Merille livestock market has added mobile banking and veterinary services, and opened up trade to include vegetables and other products from the surrounding areas.

I facilitate joint planning sessions among partners to identify the opportunities for collaboration, and include the needs of the community and the impact on the environment into the design.

With the new design, the community members have access to mobile banking to address security concerns, and commercial banks have even opened offices in the market. The county government started providing veterinary services in the market, making animal disease detection and treatment more accessible so that traders, such as the woman I met, don't need to travel as far to treat their herds.

Moreover, the market has opened up trade beyond the sale of livestock, with vendors selling hot food, vegetables and other products from surrounding counties. Now, going to the market in this remote area affords community members an opportunity not only to sell their livestock, but also to buy their family's provisions and seek health care services at the nearby Merille clinic. Partnership has played a major role in making the market functional, bringing transformation to the pastoralist community in Merille and northern Kenya as a whole.

A USAID survey in mid-2015 offered evidence of PREG's impact. After 2 1/2 years, there was a documented 12 percent reduction in the depth of poverty and a 28 percent increase in women's dietary diversity in northern Kenya. For me, this information validated USAID's new way of doing business,

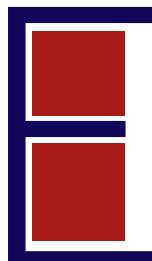
demonstrating that collective actions lead to collective impact. At a personal level, the data provided the impetus for me to work to overcome challenges of a maturing partnership and facilitate an environment that promotes continuous learning and improvement.

One of my proudest moments was when I co-designed and facilitated a transformational leadership training workshop for PREG's county-level leads. One participant stated that his take-away nugget from the workshop was this: "The essence of a partnership is working together to improve outcomes that improve a community's well-being." This workshop demonstrated how we have cultivated transformational leadership among our stakeholders as champions for change—a key component to Kenyans' ability to transform the arid lands and maximize the sustainable impact of U.S. government investments in Kenya. ■

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*Dorine Genga is the program management assistant for USAID/Kenya and East Africa. Ms. Genga's responsibilities include monitoring, evaluation and learning for the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program and Feed the Future livestock and resilience activities. This portfolio includes \$107 million in USAID investments in Kenya. Prior to joining USAID, Ms. Genga worked with an international nongovernmental organization on refugee resettlement. She holds a bachelor of education degree in business studies and geography.*

# What Local Staff Want You to Know



*Early in 2018, through AFSAnet messages and networking, we began asking Locally Employed staff/Foreign Service Nationals from around the world to submit stories and advice based on their experiences working with American staff, working for the United States. The purpose was to gain a sense of how local employees see their work and what we can learn from their perspectives—perspectives that may not always be solicited at post. We shared a set of questions widely, suggesting respondents use the questions as a guide but essentially, to tell us what we should know about them in relation to their work and experiences.*

*We asked the following questions:*

- *What advice would you give American employees at the embassy about working with local staff?*
- *How have you in your work contributed to relations between your country and the United States? Please share the story of a time you felt your work made a difference.*
- *What do you think the U.S. embassy/mission should focus on but isn't?*
- *The most interesting thing about my job is...*
- *The hardest thing about my job is...*

*We are sharing all 18 responses here, edited lightly for style and clarity. We are so grateful to all those who responded for their thoughtful and insightful comments. Thank you to these local staff members, and to all Locally Employed staff around the world, for your work on behalf of the United States to advance diplomacy, development, prosperity and security.*

—The Editors



**Helane Grossman.**

## Engage Your Local Staff Right Away

■ HELANE GROSSMAN, HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE,  
U.S. EMBASSY PARIS, FRANCE

“When I get to post I plan to innovate and be remembered for my innovation.” What U.S. direct hire hasn’t aspired to this at least once in their career? While making a positive difference naturally goes hand in hand with career advancement

# **Local staff represent the continuity of a mission and, as such, will be the ones who continue to carry the torch long after individual supervisors have moved on to other posts.**

*—Helane Grossman*

for inspired officers, to truly create an enduring success story, make it a team effort with the local employees.

Local employees are institution-builders too, carrying out the daily tasks that enable the managing officer to focus on program management. They represent the continuity of a mission and, as such, will be the ones who continue to carry the torch long after individual supervisors have moved on to other posts.

With this in mind, my advice to U.S. direct hires is to learn to have confidence in their Locally Employed staff by soliciting their input. This may be easier for seasoned career diplomats than for first- or second-tour officers, but it is never too early to try. For example, before laying out your plan for a policy change or a reconfiguration of operations, make inquiries about past efforts by your predecessors. Chances are, one of them had a similar idea! Your local staff is there to provide background, which is of immeasurable value. In fact, the local employees are the eyes and ears of post. Tap into their knowledge. Don't be blind or deaf to their contributions.

You might be asking yourself how you can put your trust in someone you just met. The easiest and most effective way is to take the time to meet with each of your local employees within the first couple weeks after arriving at post. How they welcome you and your new ideas is largely dependent on your desire to take an interest in them. Try to speak a couple of words in the local language—even if you are in a position that is not language-designated. This first contact will go a long way toward fostering mutual respect between managers and subordinates that will, in turn, pave the way to open communication and a fruitful professional relationship.

Once you have gained mutual confidence, lean on your local staff. Many of them have been at post longer than you have been in the Foreign Service. Showing that you rely on them can go a long way to reinforce the initial trust. Listen to them when they advise you on local labor laws. Empower them to make decisions. You have the final say; but allowing LE staff to take part in decision-making situations adds to their feeling that they are valued by the section and will add dimension to your results.

Finally, I would encourage American officers to be clear

from the start as to their expectations of the local staff. Just as the officers must acclimate themselves to the new environment, local staff must adapt to their new managers. It can be easy to assume that local employees don't need much, if any, guidance, because they are accustomed to management turnover every few years. I am here to tell you there is nothing further from the truth! Our workplace is ever-changing. Share and share alike with all your staff—whether they have three days or three decades of service behind them.

## **Understanding What the Real Needs Are**

■ SOPHEAP CHHEAV, EXBS PROGRAM COORDINATOR,  
U.S. EMBASSY PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA



**Sopheap Chheav.**

I was born and grew up in Phnom Penh. I started working at Embassy Phnom Penh in 2010 with the Office of Defense Cooperation. I worked for ODC for six years before moving to the Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program in 2015, and have been there since.

American employees need to understand the local culture because it will help them get along

well with local staff. Listen to the LE staff regarding coordination and cooperation between the host government and the United States because they understand their government well. They are also the ones who will stay and work in the embassy for a longer time.

Local staff are the key people who convey the messages between two governments, so the message must be balanced.

I have been working as a program coordinator for almost 10 years at the U.S. embassy. I normally listen to requests or suggestions from the Cambodian government, and if there is any training or assistance that I think the U.S. government will be able to provide or help with, I convey this request to the U.S. government. As a result of support from the United States, Cambodia has received humanitarian assistance, mine removal and military and border security assistance.

Recently I have been working with EXBS to build Cambodian officials' strategic trade control (STC) capacity. STC is relatively new for Cambodia. Even though we have been working with the government since 2007, we did not have a focus on it and did not have dedicated staff for the program. Since I was recruited for EXBS, the importance of strategic trade control has been recognized by the government of Cambodia and they have developed greater knowledge on what export control systems are. I am so proud of the hard work I put into this program for the past three years and the difference it makes for Cambodia to be part of this program in the region. The government now has a very strong commitment to build a strong regional STC system. I have also had a lot of support from the embassy for this program.

I think the United States should continue to provide more support to Cambodia on security, and especially border security, because the country still has a shortage of human resources and equipment at most of its borders.

To help LE staff be even more successful, management teams should listen to the people on the ground and ask for their input before they plan to do something for the country. By listening to them, you will learn and know what is happening, the real situation, and especially what the needs of the host government are.

## Handle Delicate Pluralistic Social Threads with Care

■ KAWTHAR JANATNI, BUDGET AND RESOURCES MANAGER,  
U.S. EMBASSY RABAT, MOROCCO

American employees who have never had the opportunity to visit Morocco prior to assignment tend to base their insights on reports or websites about my country. I advise them to have their own experience with local staff. Morocco is such a diverse environment that one can barely generalize about the country or its people.



Kawthar Janatni.

Working with local staff can be an interesting experience and provide a direct feel for the culture and local habits. LE staff, like Moroccans generally, are known for their hospitality and sense of sharing. That is one trait of the population that, in my opinion, helps facilitate the integration of foreigners, and Americans in particular, into their social circles.

Historically, Morocco has been considered an open country in the region and a strong strategic ally of the United States. Its openness to foreign cultures, languages, religions and ethnic groups has been developed over time. That is why it is such a rich environment, preserving its traditional traits and at the same time scaling up on modern lifestyles.

A second piece of advice is that Americans should handle the delicate pluralistic social threads in Morocco with care. Moroccan culture is so different from the individualistic American way of living. The personal space "American bubble" has no existence in the Moroccan social code. What can be perceived as trespassing by an American can be perceived as unfriendliness by a Moroccan.

One would hope that Americans use the pluralistic culture to build a successful professional network that makes everyday operations run smoothly. American staff should occasionally participate in local festivities and dress like a Moroccan for traditional holiday celebrations with local staff. Think about sharing your homemade dishes at potlucks or holding a cookie exchange on arrival, for example; sharing food will be very well received, and will help you integrate quickly into the community.

It is also important to note that in Morocco—unlike the way professional structures are managed in developed countries—personal recommendations overrule any other type of advanced referral mechanism. It is referred to as the "Arab phone" in Morocco, meaning that most information is conveyed verbally instead of by written media. Now, however, the practice is shifting toward social media as a modern way of communication.

The notion of time in Morocco is also different from that in the United States. The whole system observes its own timeline, with a more relaxed way of doing business. Expect nonconformity in schedules and unpredictable engagements, and allow

some flexibility in dealing with local procedures. From the perspective of LE staff, time is important in building good rapport and strong networks. This can be challenging to American personnel because they are on two- to three-year tours that do not allow a long-lasting experience, so it is up to the local staff to maintain continuity. To overcome this challenge, Americans might save time by getting involved in community events on arrival. For example, it would be interesting to organize icebreaker events for new families at post that include LE staff.

Overall, my advice about working with local staff is to get interested in the culture prior to arrival, but also get involved in your own experience at post for a more interesting and long-lasting relationship with the local population. Culture is the main bridge to link up two different worlds, and if it starts on a solid base it sets the way for a very secure and lasting interaction. The level of integration in local culture makes a big difference in corporate performance.

I am honored to be part of the Women Mentoring Program at Embassy Rabat. It is a group of female direct-hire Americans, paired with Moroccan LE staff. The program not only provides a forum to discuss women's issues in the workplace, but is also a cultural bridge—for American and Moroccan women to get to know each other better, and for everyone to get to know new people in different sections or agencies at the embassy and stand as one team. Empowerment is the key to success. I think U.S. culture is more advanced in this respect than the Moroccan way of doing business.

## FSNs Can Do Even More

■ MELANIE MCGOVERN, CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATOR, REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICE, U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL, MONTREAL, CANADA

Not all criminal fraud investigators (CFIs) and Foreign Service National investigators (FSNIs) are retired generals or police chiefs. Just as the Diplomatic Security Service hires special agents from a pool of people with diverse backgrounds and experience, its Locally Employed staff reflects the DSS emphasis on drawing from a wide range of skills and expertise. For example, in Canada, the greatest need of an FSNI or CFI isn't necessarily to make a midnight call to the chief of police, but to be able to thoughtfully and diplomatically articulate mission goals to our partners and stakeholders.

Through relationships cultivated with our Canadian part-



Melanie McGovern.

ners over 15 years, I worked with the DSS resident offices located along the U.S.-Canadian border (St. Albans and Buffalo Resident Offices) to found and develop Operation Northern Watch, an ongoing interagency visa fraud investigation into the misuse of U.S. nonimmigrant visas to cross the U.S. border into Canada for the purpose of claiming asylum.

As a CFI in Canada, I get exposure to a wide range of investigations because a travel document facilitates most international and organized crime. I never expected to develop

the type of expertise that I have in seeing the "bigger picture" in any criminal act. Most other agencies focus on the specific crime in front of them, whereas DSS looks at crime from a macro perspective. I get to work with people around the globe, and my competencies grow exponentially when opportunities arise to physically meet with my counterparts.

It would be helpful to train new CFIs like DS agents headed to their first field office tour by letting us tag along with new arrivals for a weeklong training session. That way we can learn the basics of opening a case, filing pre- and post-arrest documents, interviewing, surveillance, U.S. court procedures, etc. CFIs hired from outside of the consulate's consular section would also benefit from taking the basic consular course (ConGen).

CFIs can fulfill temporary duty (TDY) opportunities. For example, I helped open two offices in Montreal: the Regional Security Office in 2003 and the ARSO-I Office in 2012. I would love the opportunity to help open new DSS offices at other posts.

## Pay More Attention to Career Development

■ GANDJAR GUNADI, CHAUFFEUR AND ADMINISTRATIVE CLERK, U.S. EMBASSY JAKARTA, INDONESIA

As a chauffeur and administrative clerk, my duty is to assist the program coordinator and the Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) adviser with transportation and logistics. I develop flight itineraries for training participants, book hotels for visitors from other countries and work with Indonesian agencies' representatives to set up the

training venues. I have documented every event we've held photographically using the office camera. I also work with the authorized travel agency to get the best flight cost and schedules for EXBS personnel and training participants.

Indonesia has a unique traditional culture. High-ranking people and VIPs in local government are accustomed to being treated like kings. In my daily activities, I assist the program coordinator and EXBS adviser with meetings, seminars and trainings. That puts me in a position to deal with and help VIPs and institution chiefs face-to-face. Sometimes I have to assist them with interpreting, translating, giving directions if they are overseas, filling out forms and ordering in restaurants. I have to do it very politely and carefully, because if I don't, they won't be happy, and we don't want them to be unhappy.

Back in 2012 I had to interpret for a meeting between the EXBS adviser and a one-star general of the Indonesian national police. The general had an interpreter, a policewoman, but the adviser didn't understand her English. So the adviser asked the general's permission to use me as an interpreter. It was the first time I had sat down between U.S. and Indonesian representatives. The meeting room was fully air-conditioned, and it was very cold; but still, I got sweaty, because I didn't want to make any mistakes, and my heart beat very fast. As it happened, the meeting went well; both the general and my adviser were satisfied, and so was I.

On another occasion I escorted a delegation from the Indonesian government to the United States for training and visiting. In a restaurant during the lunch break, one official was confused by the menu, so I offered to help. In the end, I translated the entire menu, including the ingredients in every single dish. He was happy and able to find his favorites. When we got back to Indonesia, this gentleman allowed me to call his cell phone at any time to discuss anything related to his agency.

Generally, the U.S. embassy has a good work environment and atmosphere. The facilities have a good impact on local employees mentally and physically, as well. One suggestion is: Support from the State Department HQ for better career paths in the organization would help FSNs be even more successful in their work.

I see the American employee as a supervisor or beyond. What I would like to see is more attention on career development and more discussion about future plans for the local staff. If an employee deserves an increased grade, then it should be processed smoothly. If the local staff member does the job very well, then he or she deserves to be considered for a reward. It would stimulate them to do their jobs better.

## Treat LE Staff as the Professionals They Are

■ MABEL STAMPF, SHIPPING ASSISTANT,  
U.S. EMBASSY ASUNCION, PARAGUAY

Listen to the local employees. They have the knowledge and experience required for the job they're doing. They understand the culture and know how to handle the different situations.

Treat the local employees with respect and as professionals. They can be of great help to U.S. officers in reaching the section's goals and objectives. Encourage good and open communication, and share information. Listen to different opinions about a specific subject. Keep a good working environment. This will cause the employees to work happier, harder and more efficiently. Recognize their hard work. Motivation is very important.

Recognize that, as human beings, employees make mistakes. It is important to talk about it and guide them on how to proceed in the future. A supervisor's words of encouragement are always welcome and can cause a big change in an employee's morale.

Make LE staff feel that they are part of the team. They will always do their best when they feel they are part of the team.

The embassy should focus on recognizing the local employees' hard work and experience. Support them by sending



Mabel Stampf, at right, receives the 2014 State Department FSN of the Year Award from then-Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom.

## When Doing Your Job Lands You in Jail

Locally Employed staff members sometimes suffer for their careers in ways we can't quite fathom. Such is the case with Turkish citizen Hamza Uluçay, a 37-year employee of the U.S. consulate's political section in Adana, Turkey, who has spent almost two years in jail because of his work for the U.S. government.

In February 2017, Turkish authorities detained and questioned Uluçay because of his routine contacts with local Kurdish groups on behalf of the consulate. Uluçay was ultimately arrested and charged with being a member of a terrorist organization. Turkish press reports claim that the evidence against him includes 21 one-dollar bills that were found in his home, along with books about Kurdish politics and terrorism.

Seven months later, in September 2017, Turkish authorities struck again, this time in Istanbul, where they arrested Metin Topuz, a 20-year veteran of the consulate whose job was to support the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's work in Turkey. Topuz was also charged with membership in a terrorist organization, along with espionage and attempting to overthrow the government.

A third employee, Mete Canturk, who also works at the consulate in Istanbul, was placed under house arrest in January 2018 for alleged ties to the Gulen movement—an organization run by Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen, who lives in Pennsylvania as a permanent U.S. resident, and whom Turkish authorities want to have extradited to Turkey to face charges that he orchestrated a failed coup in Ankara in July 2016. Canturk's wife and child were also detained, but were later released.

The State Department has been advocating for the release of the three men. In November 2017, then-Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Jonathan Cohen told the U.S. Helsinki Commission: "It appears to us that Mr. Uluçay and Mr. Topuz were arrested for maintaining legiti-

mate contacts with Turkish government and local officials and others in the context of their official duties on behalf of the U.S. government."

The State Department suspended nonimmigrant visa services on Oct. 8, 2017. Full services were resumed on Dec. 28, after the Turkish government assured the embassy that no additional employees were under investigation and Turkey would give the United States advance warning of any future arrests.

All three men remain in legal jeopardy, either in prison or under house arrest, as U.S. officials fight to get them freed and the U.S.-Turkish relationship continues to suffer.

Pointing to the significant political capital expended by President Donald Trump to get Turkey to release American pastor Andrew Brunson, former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Eric Edelman and Professor Henri Barkey, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, co-authored a July 29 *Washington Post* article reminding the world that the three Locally Employed staff were still being held "on bogus charges."

On Aug. 3, Secretary Mike Pompeo met privately with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu to push for the release of Brunson and the three local employees.

Pastor Brunson was released on Oct. 12; Uluçay's request to be released was denied that same day. As of mid-October, Uluçay and Topuz remained in prison, and Canturk was under house arrest, unable to return to work.

Visiting Turkey on Oct. 12, Sec. Pompeo raised the profile of these cases by visiting with their families. In a tweet marking Brunson's release, the Secretary wrote: "We hope that the Turkish government will quickly release our other detained U.S. citizens and State Department Locally Employed staff."

—Donna Scaramastra Gorman, Associate Editor

employees to training, and after four or five years send them again to update their knowledge and skills.

During the years that the U.S. embassy was under the value-added tax (VAT) reimbursement program, our office had to deal not only with different offices at the ministry of finance but with different ways of interpreting the law to get the reimbursement. As you can imagine, it was not an easy task to go through the different offices talking to Paraguayan government employees about the reimbursement. The process to get the money back from the government of Paraguay was long and complex.

I started looking for a way to solve this problem to the benefit of both the U.S. embassy and the ministry of finance. I worked very closely with the Paraguayan embassy in Washington, D.C., and the Paraguayan government to find a way for the official Americans to avoid paying the VAT, and thus avoid the need for reimbursement. I worked hard with the ministry's legal advisor on possible solutions. I had the idea of not paying the VAT at the point of purchase to avoid the reimbursement process.

At the beginning, they considered my idea hard to put in place. After one year of working on it, we created a VAT exemption card and drafted the law and regulations to implement it. The minister of finance was very happy and presented it to the ministry of foreign affairs. The solution was accepted and put into effect. This card not only benefits the U.S. embassy and other embassies but also the government of Paraguay, because it doesn't need to reserve funds to cover the reimbursement.

The most interesting thing about my job is the opportunity to know and work with many different people, both inside and outside the embassy. The opportunity to grow professionally, to listen to U.S. employees' experience in other countries and to share my experiences with colleagues from other U.S. embassies so we can learn from each other is rewarding. And I appreciate the respect with which my colleagues from other embassies and government offices treat me.

The hardest thing about my job is the change of U.S. supervisors every three

years. It is not easy for local employees to deal with changes, just as it isn't for American employees. It takes time to adjust to each other; get to know each other; understand how to work together; and learn what the U.S. supervisor expects from the local employees, what things we should not say or do, the changes in the procedures and any changes in the preparation of the letters, diplomatic notes and memos.

There is also the continuous change of our contacts at the Paraguayan government ministries; we have to be continuously building good business relationships with the new ones to facilitate our clearance process.

## Facilitating Cooperation with Host-Country Officials

■ YARDEN BERKOVITZ, CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATOR, REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICE, U.S. EMBASSY BRANCH OFFICE, TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Disrupting organized crime is one of our primary goals at the U.S. Embassy Branch Office in Tel Aviv. To be able to do this successfully, criminal fraud investigators (CFIs) and assistant regional security officers for investigation (ARSO-I) need close contact with



Yarden Berkovitz.

the Israeli National Police. Joint investigations require the sharing of information between law enforcement entities.

For example, we had a case in which a visa vendor fraudulently collected \$113,000 in fees from 700 applicants applying for U.S. nonimmigrant visas. The financial damage to the embassy and several Israeli credit card companies was enormous. Thanks to close cooperation for several months between the branch office, the INP, Israeli credit card fraud teams and the Israeli state attorney's office, the vendor was convicted and required to pay the money back to the branch office.

This case is an example of excellent cooperation between the ARSO-I shop and the INP investigative team that brought the case for prosecution. We received recognition for our work from U.S. Ambassador David Friedman.

## Recognize Hard Work

■ YVETTE TER WOLBEEK, INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRAINING COORDINATOR, U.S. EMBASSY PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

As a military training coordinator for South Africa, Swaziland (now Eswatini) and Lesotho, my work definitely makes a difference in the daily lives of members of the military in the three countries. The excellent courses the United States offers help them to develop themselves and to contribute to their respective militaries after they return.

For example, one major who went to the U.S. Air Force Squadron Officer School was first in her class. On return, she was promoted to an Officer 05, and became the first woman in the South African Air Force to become commander of an operational aviation squadron. We also made it possible for the first African woman to attend the Air War College; she came back with a master's degree with A levels. These are only two examples, but in general I have received positive feedback from students.

To help LE staff be even more successful in their work, they should be offered more professional development opportunities—in my field it is limited. Also, it is important to be recognized for your hard work. Sometimes award ceremonies come and go without American officers thinking of their Locally Employed staff.

The most interesting thing about my job is to travel, meeting colleagues in other countries. Our Security Cooperation Education Training Working Group gives us this opportunity annually. It is the highlight of our year.



Nompumelelo Khanyile.

## We Try to Make a Difference, Just Like You Do

■ NOMPUMELELO KHANYILE, U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

Take your time learning the dynamics in each country; enforcing drastic changes within a few months of your arrival will not always work.

It is understood that in American culture, the louder you are, the more "intelligent" you seem or sound. This may not be the case at the country office. Do not assume that quiet people are slow, stupid or do not know anything. Local staff will withdraw even further if they feel overlooked or talked over. And no, they cannot be trained or taught to be "loud" either. Cultural context is very important.

Attempt to remember people's names. Chances are, local staff will never forget yours. Also, read how an email is signed and try to respond accurately—the highest form of disrespect is spelling a name wrong when responding to an email from that very person!

Please do not say: "Oh you change your hair so often, I didn't recognize you" to people of color. This is not a compliment. (Better to remember my actual face, which does not change.) Racism can be very subtle, but believe me, the local staff can always feel it. It can be offensive if you come to a country like South Africa, for example, and we hear that you are taking Spanish or Italian classes (in Africa!). While this is solely

# **There are two simple questions that Locally Employed staff love to hear when a new officer arrives at post. The first is: "What do you think has worked, and what hasn't?"**

*—Peter McKittrick*

within your rights, do try to learn at least one African language when in Africa. Learn a local language, wherever you go!

Lastly, please show confidence in and appreciation for the work being done by the local staff. Yes, we understand it is your taxes at work, and that is why we wake up each day to try and make a difference, just like you do.

## **Helping to Make Cambodia Safer**

■ SONGMENG CHEA, CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATOR,  
REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICE, U.S. EMBASSY PHNOM PENH,  
CAMBODIA

I have served as an interlocutor between the embassy's regional security office and Cambodia's top two law enforcement entities—the Cambodian National Police and the General Department of Immigration—which has led to unprecedented local arrests and prosecution of fraudulent visa applicants and scammers, as well as the deportation of numerous Americans wanted for crimes in the United States. During 12 years with the embassy,

I have earned the trust of the leadership of the host-country policing agencies, which helps to a large extent to remove red tape.

In my capacity as a CFI, I feel that I have had a big part in making Cambodia a safer place for Cambodian kids through assisting in the removal of U.S. sex offenders from the country.



Songmeng Chea.

## **Provide Space for Honest, Constructive Discourse**

■ PETER MCKITTRICK, PUBLIC AFFAIRS, U.S. CONSULATE  
GENERAL BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

Prior to an abrupt and unexpected career change, I worked for the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in Belfast. On a Monday I was on a bus full of American travel writers extolling the virtues of my wonderful little country. By the following Friday I had taken up a position with the State Department, where I was on a different bus taking congressional representatives around our sectarian interfaces, telling them how difficult things were! I suspect the truth is somewhere in between.

The most interesting thing about my job has been and remains the opportunity to view my own country from the outside in.

I believe Locally Employed staff have a huge obligation to be flexible and responsive to the changing needs and personalities of our diplomatic colleagues. Ultimately, it's not about us.

That said, there are two simple questions that Locally Employed staff love to hear when a new officer arrives at post. The first is: "What do you think has worked, and what hasn't?" We benefit more than most organizations in our potential to blend fresh perspectives with longstanding institutional knowledge. Sometimes, the instinctive (and perfectly understandable) desire of newly arrived FSOs to make a strong, immediate impact can lead to good things being sacrificed and the not-so-good being implemented.

I would add that appraisal systems can sometimes reinforce that tendency. Something "sustained" doesn't tend to read as well on a performance review as something "implemented." Creating the space for honest, constructive discourse can help us preserve the ideas and initiatives that work well, and it can also prompt necessary change on the things that don't.

We also love to hear, "How can I help you do your job better?" For my part, I've been fortunate to have grown professionally in this job, not least because senior colleagues have been prepared to empower me and help me fulfill my potential. The



Peter McKittrick.

overwhelming majority of local staff I know and work with are extremely loyal, motivated and capable. It's an incredibly powerful thing when we know that our senior colleagues have our back; and this, in turn, allows us to support them even more.

It would be naïve not to acknowledge the natural tension that can sometimes exist between American officers and LE staff. It can happen when we as locals lose sight of our primary obligation to provide unwavering support for our diplomatic colleagues. It can also happen when LE staff feel unheard, underutilized or underappreciated. But for the most part, I've seen amazing things happen when the dynamic works as it should.

Here's one example. A few months after 9/11, I was tasked to look after a New York firefighter who was visiting Belfast as part of a series of official visits to thank counterparts across the world who had run fundraising events for his organization. He expressed an interest in having a quiet lunch and Guinness in one of Belfast's traditional pubs. What followed was something that I will never forget. Within seconds of the uniformed firefighter entering into a busy urban bar, every single individual spontaneously took to their feet in a gesture of heartfelt applause. Mindful of his subsequent commitment on a live, televised chat show, my main job at that point was to politely decline dozens of offers to buy him a drink.

The story may sound melodramatic, but I found myself proud on two levels—first, that a true American hero was rightly acknowledged after the horrors of 9/11, but also that

my fellow citizens demonstrated their empathy and support in such a spontaneous and sincere way. It proved that I was now looking at things through an American prism as well as a Northern Irish one.

The consulate's recent diplomatic energies have focused on America's willingness to help move Northern Ireland away from a period of serious political unrest. Yet the United States' reputation as a helpful catalyst and honest broker was not something that developed automatically. Many of my American colleagues were involved in delicate, painstaking diplomacy—much of which went unnoticed. They encouraged, cajoled, listened and, at times, criticized, in an effort to bring about much-needed progress here.

Our consulate was a neutral, safe space where civil society and politicians could interact and address difficult subjects away from the public gaze. Today, the U.S.-Northern Ireland relationship reflects a more normal, mutually beneficial exchange of ideas, trade and tourism. Many here reflect on the U.S. government's pivotal role in getting Northern Ireland to the much-improved place (politically, economically and socially) it is in today.

"We wouldn't be where we are today had it not been for the Americans" is a comment we still frequently hear. To me, these sentiments are the out-workings of effective foreign policy, professional diplomacy and a small consulate that has punched well above its weight for many years.

## Culture: Share, but Don't Impose

■ STANLEY PERRIER, HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALIST,  
U.S. EMBASSY PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

I would advise [American employees] to be more knowledgeable about the culture of the host country. It's always good to share culture, but not to impose it.

When I started working for the U.S. embassy, I felt a discordance or a certain frustration among the Locally Employed staff. I arranged a one-on-one meeting with the local supervisors to motivate them toward their responsibility as leaders of the group they supervise. This was successful because we wound up organizing an election for an FSN committee that had been obsolete for more than two years before my arrival.

To me, this embassy is one of the best places to work in any country. The Americans are respectful. In my opinion, giving opportunities for employees to go on temporary assignment would help LE staff be even more successful in their roles.

## FSN Emergency Relief Fund: How You Can Help

### FSNs Have a Critical Liaison Function

■ CLAUDIA CORDERO, CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATOR,  
REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICE, U.S. EMBASSY MEXICO CITY,  
MEXICO

Criminal fraud investigators here deal with both U.S. and Mexican fugitives fleeing from justice on a daily basis. We prevent Mexican citizens wanted in Mexico from crossing the border or obtaining a valid visa to travel to the United States. Sometimes we help the U.S. law enforcement community by working with law enforcement contacts in the host nation to return U.S. fugitives to the United States.

ARSO investigators in Mexico City contribute to keeping the U.S.-Mexico border secure by working with Diplomatic Security Service field offices in the United States and other law enforcement agencies in the United States. Also, ARSO-Is in other countries provide reciprocal assistance with cases such as passport and visa impostaers, Amber Alerts for missing children, trafficking-in-persons cases and human smuggling cases.



Claudia Cordero.

We are here to be the liaison between the host-nation authorities and our American supervisors, so Locally Employed staff should routinely be building contacts. In most cases, it is the U.S. embassy that requests support and information from our host-nation contacts. Sometimes LE staff need American officers to attend a meeting with host-nation contacts to convey gratitude or offer assistance, especially in sensitive cases that involve security.

It can be hard to get Mexican authorities to support our cases because they face multiple competing priorities. It is often difficult to explain why our cases should be prioritized, but it is part of my job to explain the bigger picture and place our case or investigation within the context of their own work. For instance, our investigation may not only deal with fraudulent docu-

In 1983, after the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Lebanon, a group of Locally Employed staff at our embassy in Santiago, Chile, wanted to help LE staff in Beirut who were injured in the attack, so they passed a hat and collected funds for the families of their Lebanese counterparts. The funds they raised were augmented by AFSA, DACOR and others. In all, \$84,000 was distributed among family members of LE staff in Beirut, and the Foreign Service National Emergency Relief Fund was born.

Since that time, the fund has provided financial assistance to Locally Employed staff who have been affected by a crisis at post, such as a natural disaster, civil unrest, targeted attacks or an injury in the line of duty.

The fund is composed entirely of donations from Foreign Service members, groups such as AFSA, AAFSW and DACOR, and LE staff members themselves. Over the past 10 years, according to Chanel Wallace of the Office of Emergencies in the Diplomatic & Consular Service (M/EDCS), more than \$3 million in donations have been distributed to LE staff and their families worldwide.

Donations are tax-deductible and can be made by Civil Service employees, Foreign Service members, LE staff and private-sector individuals. Because there are no administrative costs, 100 percent of donations go to LE staff in need.

#### How to donate:

Secure online donations can be made directly from your bank account or by credit/debit card to [pay.gov](http://pay.gov).

Checks made payable to the U.S. Department of State, designated for the FSN Emergency Relief Fund, may be sent to: U.S. Department of State, Attn: K Fund and Gift Fund Coordinator, 2201 C Street NW, Room 3214, Washington DC 20520.

State, LE staff and overseas American employees of other federal agencies on the Department of State payroll can make contributions by payroll deduction. Cash contributions in U.S. dollars or local currency can be made through the embassy or consulate cashier.

For more information on the FSN Emergency Relief Fund, go to 3 FAM 7160 (<https://fam.state.gov/FAM/03FAM/03FAM7160.html>) or email MEDCS@state.gov.

ments, but also with documents related to vendors, organized crime, human smuggling, money laundering rings and possible trafficking-in-persons cases located in Mexico.

The most interesting thing about my job is that the investigations are always different. Documents can easily be purchased or altered in Mexico, and the training we provide to our Mexican contacts on fraudulent travel documents and imposters is an asset to our office. Often, contacts who take these training courses go on to generate successful cases that detect fraudulent documents. This training work helps us learn about other trends and improve our work.

## A Win-Win Equation

■ KHALIL DERBEL, POLITICAL SPECIALIST,  
U.S. EMBASSY TUNIS, TUNISIA

My journey and career with U.S. Embassy Tunis have been mostly successful and rewarding. Analyzing and explaining the grains of that success and feeling of accomplishment may seem an arduous task, but limiting the analysis to two areas makes it easier.

Part of working in a multicultural setting is bridging two cultures. FSNs not only fulfill their functional duties; more importantly, they are also negotiators, facilitators and no small part of the bilateral relationship. Their native knowledge and understanding of the reality on the ground, and the relationships they build and nurture with a broad range of contacts, are essential elements of informed analysis and pertinent reporting. All local staff can contribute, not just political and economic assistants. Yet American staff often overlook the valuable insights to be gained from a driver or shipping assistant.

A large audience of policymakers in Washington rely on information from post to make proper decisions. I have been in that position many times. Once when a prolonged security and political crisis hit Tunisia in 2013, I kept close watch for breaking events and arranged meetings for the political and economic counselor with various parties on almost a daily basis, so that we got a sense of what was at stake for each actor. This helped us convey well-informed messages to policymakers and facilitated timely support from the U.S. government to democratic forces. Following the election of a

new parliament and the formation of a new government in early 2015, my work as the lead embassy contact with parliamentarians contributed to easier embassy access to the number one institution in the country and helped the work of the economic section, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and USAID.

Like American employees, LE staff have career goals and aspirations. Therefore, career mobility at post is a reality and often a necessity. I have experienced it, and so have many colleagues. I spent 15 years teaching at the Foreign Service Institute Tunis Arabic Field School, so the decision to close the school was a life-changer for me. I made the right decision in the end to stay with the same employer and moved on to a new job as grants analyst at the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative's Tunis Regional Office. That assignment, which lasted for one year, turned out to be one of the most rewarding. It barely took a few weeks for me to find a way to positively contribute to the work of the section. I also learned that experience accumulated and skills acquired over the years always come in handy. All the skills we take for granted, such as organizational, drafting and interpersonal skills, are good and useful for most jobs.

When a higher position opened in the political/economic section, I jumped at the opportunity. This was yet another big career change, but an enjoyable chapter, too. I still recall my first days as a novice political specialist trying to find a place in one of the busiest hubs of Embassy Tunis in a country that was going through a major political transition. To my benefit, the margins of progress ahead of me were wide and the motivation to apply myself to the task was high. I also owe part of the success of my

own transition to the tremendous support I received from the section and the mission's leadership. I am grateful to Embassy Tunis for adopting preferential hiring for FSI teachers, and for sustaining a policy that encouraged personnel to move up whenever their background and skills matched a vacant position. I believe this is a win-win equation.

I have also come to enjoy the role of informal mentor for LE staff colleagues. I often discuss with them the highlights of my career and real experiences I have been through, and share some of the ingredients of success. Having made rewarding career moves prompts me to encourage younger colleagues to invest in their careers, and to think big for themselves and their future.



Khalil Derbel.

# If you can, please maintain a sense of humor, because Indonesians love jokes.

—Dihya Ihsan

## The Value of Politeness

■ DIHYA IHSAN, PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR EXPORT CONTROL AND RELATED BORDER SECURITY (EXBS) PROGRAM, U.S. EMBASSY JAKARTA, INDONESIA

Indonesians value politeness in every aspect of life, including in the work environment and ways of doing business. Indonesians are reluctant to say “no.” They prefer to use other ways to express a negative response in a more polite manner. Further, Indonesians are not straightforward in expressing opinions. Many Americans find this frustrating and irritating.

American colleagues often have difficulty understanding the outcome of any discussion with local staff or Indonesian government representatives, and will try to consolidate many vague opinions and interpret the precise meaning themselves. Consequently, achieving consensus will usually take a while.

There are cases where local staff and American employees end up with tension and conflict because of misunderstanding each other's perspective. The best way to cope with this situation is to maintain flexibility in your expectations. Do not lose your temper if the response does not meet your expectations. It just needs a little time to achieve consensus and get things clearer. Anger will worsen the situation and lead to team dysfunction. Be assertive without losing the element of politeness. Courtesy is essential. If things go wrong, try to form a statement rather than a question that will corner a person. If you can, please maintain a sense of humor, because Indonesians love jokes.

This might lead to lots of adjustment in the pace of your work. Milestones you set may slide, and your timeline may be unmanageable. But this will keep the working environment healthy.

In bilateral cooperation, buy-in from the host government is essential. I spearheaded a coordinated approach to engage our Indonesian government counterparts to support the EXBS program. I meet regularly with host-country officials of relevant ministries, Grand National Assembly parliamentarians and ASEAN or European Union delegates or representatives to identify deficiencies, avoid duplications and discuss ongoing projects. Our program receives significant support from the

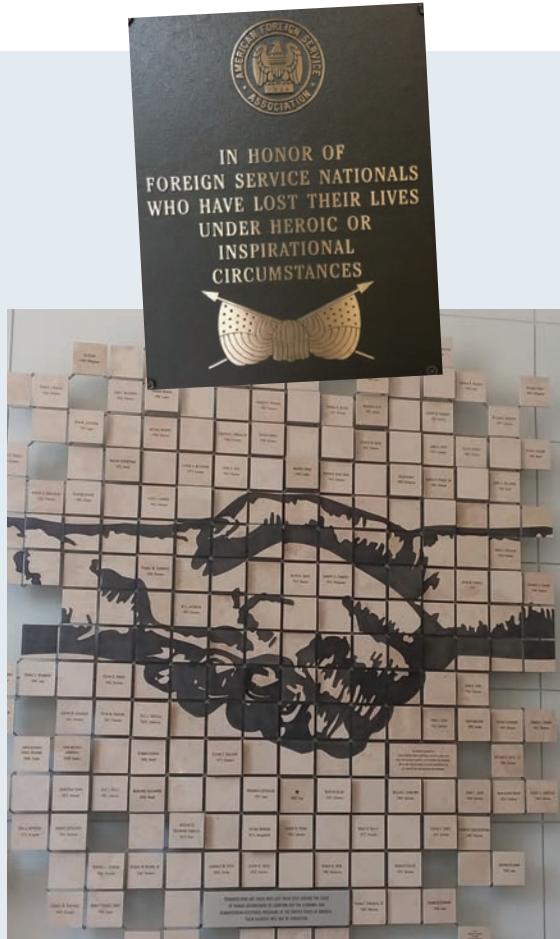


Dihya Ihsan.

government. This contributes to strengthening the relationship between Indonesia and the United States, particularly in the field of export control and border security.

The most interesting thing about my job is I have the privilege of traveling around the world. I have the opportunity to experience different cultures, foods and attractions in the course of working, namely organizing capacity-building training events, exchange visits and study tours for our government delegations, most of which take place overseas. I am responsible for escorting the delegation when attending the training. This is a perk of my job which other FSNs do not get.

American officers could help FSNs to be more successful by involving them in making strategic decisions and by realizing that FSNs are also capable of managing big projects. Give them the opportunity to shine by allowing them to make authorizations. This will optimize their potential and make LE staff more successful in their work.



## FSNs' Service, Sacrifice Honored

In serving the United States, Locally Employed staff/Foreign Service Nationals take particular risks to do their jobs. As we highlight the tremendous work and experience of local staff worldwide, we must pause to remember and pay tribute to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

All around Washington, D.C., you'll find monuments to our fallen heroes and historic figures, not just on the Mall but scattered among the traffic circles and parks that make up the District. And so it is only fitting that the U.S. government honor the sacrifices made by Locally Employed staff.

Visit the C Street Lobby of the U.S. State Department and you will find a plaque in honor of "the Foreign Service Nationals who have lost their lives under heroic or inspirational circumstances." At USAID's headquarters building, you can pay your respects at the Memorial Wall in the lobby, which is etched with the names of all USAID employees who have died in the line of duty.

Some of these deaths made national or even international news when they occurred. Others happened quietly, with little public notice or attention beyond the walls of the embassy in the country in which they occurred.

But each of the victims whose death is recorded through these memorials made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our country and their own as they worked to promote international peace and prosperity.

We remember their sacrifices, and we thank them for their service.

*-The Editors*

## LE Staff Participation Essential

■ PATRICK L. A. WISS, PROCUREMENT AGENT, MEMBER OF THE TRI-MISSION ROME LE STAFF BOARD, U.S. EMBASSY ROME, ITALY

On arriving at post, direct-hire Americans should learn to accept and appreciate cultural differences to establish a profitable working relationship.

I have worked to increase opportunities for Americans and local employees to get to know each other. I translated flyers about leisure activities available on and off the embassy compound into Italian to encourage LE staff to participate and not feel excluded a priori.

In 2006 I organized an after-the-summer-holidays "Welcome Back Bash" with the Community Liaison Office, a musical event with a live band. All U.S. embassy direct hire and Locally Employed staff were invited to come along with their families and local friends to spend a relaxed time together. It turned out to be so successful that it was repeated for several years, bringing people of different cultural backgrounds together in perfect harmony.

The embassy should focus on replacing LE staff in time when one retires to maintain the high-level standards required.

LE staff are primarily inclined to work for the U.S. government because of their admiration for the United States. This should be considered the basis for establishing a productive working relationship based on mutual respect and obtaining best results.

## Empowerment Works

■ NOVIANI BASAR, CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATOR, REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICE, U.S. EMBASSY JAKARTA, INDONESIA



Noviani Basar.

In my four years with the embassy, I have developed relationships with Indonesian immigration, police, airline and civil registry personnel by teaching them how to detect fraudulent passports and visas. I have also facilitated opportunities for them to receive training in the United States, so they could enhance their skills and further strengthen the U.S.-Indonesia strategic partnership in law enforcement.

# Like American employees, LE staff have career goals and aspirations.

*—Khalil Derbel*

My job is not just about investigating fraud cases or making connections with our counterparts. Using interpersonal skills, I am able to liaise with and maintain relationships with the Indonesian government. For example, when a U.S. military plane had to make an emergency landing in Banda Aceh, I was asked by my supervisor to assist our defense attaché's office to seek permission from immigration for the air crew to deplane at the airport and enter the city. It was a difficult negotiation because most of the crew did not have passports with them. My immigration contact told me that he was hesitant to speak to our deputy chief of mission about the situation.

Banda Aceh is a sensitive area in Indonesia where the unexpected landing of a U.S. military plane could be considered a potential threat to the country. The Indonesian government was afraid that the emergency landing was an intended action by the U.S. government to infiltrate the area. Although there was a day-long delay for the crew to be permitted to enter the city, immigration officials finally issued an emergency short visit pass to the crew, who departed the next day without incident.

The best thing about my job is having the ability to communicate directly with our counterparts to advance our relations. Under the direction of my supervisor, I am empowered to do this, and it has given me the opportunity to nurture ties, develop trust and build a mutually beneficial relationship that strengthens the U.S.-Indonesian partnership.

Working at the U.S. embassy has been a great opportunity for my personal and professional growth. It is a fun place to work and a great place to learn more about American culture, as well as U.S. government policies and programs and their positive impact on Indonesia.

The mission participates in many programs that contribute to the community. One suggestion I have is to include the children of Locally Employed staff in the summer-hire program. There is a summer-hire program for U.S. college and high school students, but not one for the children of LE staff. I feel such a program would be of great benefit to the embassy community.

## Building Bridges to Prosperity

■ ANGELA TURRIN, INTERNATIONAL TRADE SPECIALIST,  
U.S. EMBASSY MADRID, SPAIN

One sunny day in 1995, I was walking up a street in São Paulo, Brazil, to go visit my grandmother when I noticed a beautiful building on the corner of her new street. The sign read "U.S. Commercial Service," and the U.S. flag was flying outside.

Entering the building was easy back then, and I walked in and read all the information on a board displaying the several sectors and activities that amazing office covered.

As I was reading, a lady named Marina Konno approached me. She asked if she could help me. "I speak English, and am looking for a job," I answered. "What do you do here? Where can I leave my CV?" (You are probably wondering how I had a CV on me—yes, I was carrying a copy. Coincidence?

### Luck? Destiny!)

I gave my information to Marina and left the building, not knowing that this simple action would change my life forever. The next day I received a call from her, got an interview and the following day was offered a job to help coordinate a trade mission. That is how my love story with the U.S. Commercial Service began.

In 2001 I applied for a position in Madrid and transferred to fulfill a dream and live an adventure as I explored new work possibilities. It was a perfect fit with my personality. Twenty-three years have gone by since that first day, and I have worked in every single position this organization can offer, from back office to front office, and in different sectors and regional projects. My friends ask where I find the motivation. It's easy; in the passion to carry on the mission of building bridges to prosperity.

I am fluent in four languages and have lived in four different countries. Knowing how to address cultural change and adapt



Angela Turrin.

to it is an asset I learned in the crib, and it helps me every day—both in the trade work we do and in connecting with the many Americans who carry out the U.S. mission at embassies around the world and the many clients who are looking for opportunities overseas.

What has always impressed me about the work we do in the Commercial Service is that it never gets boring. We always have new projects and new challenges that make our work exciting. We are always exploring new possibilities for connecting U.S. organizations to help them broaden their reach. I am sure that without our offices the U.S. economy would be greatly affected, because we help to support and generate an activity that can only be achieved through exporting. I feel I am making a difference every day.

Our engagement with the American officers is based mainly on trust and knowledge. They can feel confident about consulting with the local staff and really hearing the advice and suggestions we provide to help them feel welcome and quickly engage with the local issues and business contacts. We are the

force that gives continuity to the mission.

Over the years I had many great American officers who served as mentors. Bravery is a distinct trait they all have in common, combined with the trust and empowerment that are needed for innovation to flourish. These are the best qualities in great leaders that I so admire.

Despite the very important role Locally Employed staff play, we often feel overlooked and forgotten during the many administration changes and priorities. The local team can always use more support and incentives from the incoming officers. Starting off on the right foot will facilitate a smooth transition. Addressing office politics and human resource issues can be a delicate matter, but very necessary to keep our organization healthy and growing.

We need real diversity of thought and experience, and an inclusive mindset to build good export programs. The power of inclusion can only happen when individuals bring their authentic self to work and know that they are heard, recognized and respected. ■

## APPLY FOR AN AFSA SCHOLARSHIP



*Past recipients of AFSA's Academic Merit and Community Service Awards*

Nearly \$350,000 in Merit and Financial Aid scholarships will be awarded, in total.

Applications will be accepted starting **December 1, 2018**.

Deadline to apply is **March 15, 2019**.

For more information, visit [www.afsa.org/scholar](http://www.afsa.org/scholar).

**ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | ART MERIT | COMMUNITY SERVICE | FINANCIAL AID**

## AFSA Awards Honor Foreign Service Excellence



AFSA/JOQUIN SOSA

AFSA award recipients Marisol Garcia, John Warner, Kelly Billingsley, David Bargueño, Margaret Kennett, Pat Butenis and Karen Fifield at the awards ceremony on Oct. 10. Not pictured: Ambassador Tom Shannon, Ambassador Ron Neumann, Roshni Nirody, Joseph Connors and Elena Augustine.

AFSA's 50th annual awards ceremony took place on Oct. 10 at the U.S. Diplomacy Center at the Department of State, where almost 200 guests gathered to recognize the winners of this year's awards for excellence in the Foreign Service.

Awards were given for lifetime contributions, constructive dissent across all levels of the Foreign Service and exemplary performance. Eleven recipients and four runners-up were recognized; please see additional coverage of each winner beginning on p. 75.

### Lifetime Contributions

AFSA's Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy, established in 1995, honors those who have made extraordinary contributions to diplomacy and the diplomatic profession over many years. Nominees all have at least a decade of service to diplomacy

and foreign policy development, and they are considered on the basis of their accomplishments while on active duty and in retirement.

Past winners include George H.W. Bush, Thomas Pickering, Ruth Davis, Nancy Powell, George Shultz, Richard Lugar, Sam Nunn and George Landau. (See Ambassador Landau's obituary in this month's "In Memory" on p. 91.)

This year's Lifetime Contributions Award winner was Ambassador (ret.) Ronald E. Neumann. See the Journal's

interview with Amb. Neumann on p. 21.

### Constructive Dissent Awards

AFSA's constructive dissent awards are unique within the U.S. government. Each year for close to a half-century, AFSA has given these awards to Foreign Service officers and specialists across all levels of the FS who have had the courage to dissent within the system.

This year the **Christian A. Herter Award** for a member of the Senior Foreign

**[This] distinction is made sweeter by AFSA's understanding that dissent, and the energetic debate that underlies it, is an essential component of our duty. It is as important a part of our duty as discipline and obedience. Dissent, as understood and practiced in the Foreign Service, is not just about personal integrity. It is also about professional integrity, and the integrity of our policy making process.**

**—Tom Shannon**

## CALENDAR

December 1  
AFSA Scholarship Applications Available

December 5  
12-1:30 p.m.  
Luncheon:  
196th A-100 Class

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

December 13  
12-1:30 p.m.  
Luncheon:  
150th Specialist Class

December 19  
12-1:30 p.m.  
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

December 25  
Christmas Day – AFSA Offices Closed

January 1  
New Year's Day – AFSA Offices Closed

January 15  
Time TBD  
Panel Discussion:  
"Economic Diplomacy Works"

January 16  
12-1:30 p.m.  
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

January 21  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day – AFSA Offices Closed

January 22  
12-1:30 p.m.  
"Retirement Planning 5 to 10 Years Out"

March 15  
Deadline for AFSA Scholarship Applications



AFSA/JAQUIN SOSA

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson with 2018 Lifetime Contributions winner Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann.

Service was presented to former Under Secretary for Political Affairs Ambassador Tom Shannon. In presenting the award, current Under Secretary for Political Affairs David Hale stated that Amb. Shannon "demonstrated how dissent can and should be expressed. His example to younger Foreign and Civil Service officers challenges them—in fact all of us—to think critically, consult openly and act decisively."

In accepting his award, Amb. Shannon reminded the audience: "When we took our oath, we swore to uphold and defend our Constitution. We committed ourselves to the values, rights and institutions that define our democracy, and to respect the will of our sovereign: the American people. We cannot meet

this commitment if we are unable to speak our mind. We must be able to provide our elected leaders our best understanding and assessment of a situation, and we must be clear about the consequences of decisions and actions."

The **William R. Rivkin Award** for a mid-level officer was given to **Roshni Nirody**

**The task of improving America's diplomacy, like diplomacy itself, has no end. It goes on. It is a worthy mission and I thank all those who have strengthened and helped me along the way in working on it. In that spirit, I accept this award on behalf of all who have been a part of the work you have been so kind as to honor.**

**—Ronald E. Neumann**

for her push to restructure the State Department's approach to high-level visits and congressional relations.

The **W. Averell Harriman Award** for an entry-level officer went to **Elena Augustine** for her dissent channel cable, which directly contributed to the successful conclusion of March negotiations to amend the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

The **F. Allen "Tex" Harris Award** for a Foreign Service specialist was presented to **Joseph Conners** in recognition of his role in reforming the protocol of medical shipments via pouch.

### Exemplary Performance

AFSA also offers five awards in recognition of exemplary performance and extraordinary contributions to effectiveness, professionalism and morale.

The **Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy** is open to all Foreign Service members from any of the foreign affairs agencies, especially early- to mid-career level, who promoted American policies focused on advancing democracy, freedom and governance through bold, exemplary, imaginative and effective efforts during one or more assignments.

This year there were two winners: **David Bargueño**, a Foreign Service officer who excelled in advancing women's rights in Pakistan; and **Kelly Billingsley**, a Foreign Service officer who was recognized for her work to strengthen Sri Lankan democracy and sovereignty.

In accepting his award, Bargueño recognized his colleagues, saying, "Nothing would have happened without



Past Lifetime Contributions Award winners (from left) Ambassador Nancy Powell, Ambassador Ronald Neumann, Ambassador Tom Boyatt, Ambassador William Harrop, Charles Stuart Kennedy and Ambassador Ruth Davis at the Oct. 10 awards ceremony.



Dr. Sushma Palmer, Kelly Billingsley, David Bargueño and AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson at the awards ceremony.

our team. I took risks in Karachi, and I needed motorpool, Diplomatic Security, local staff, colleagues and leadership to take those risks with me."

The **Nelson B. Delavan Award** recognizes the work of a Foreign Service office man-

agement specialist who has made a significant contribution to post or office effectiveness and morale beyond the framework of her or his job responsibilities.

This year's winner was **Margaret Kennett**, an OMS in the Regional Security Office in

Kampala who was recognized for her commitment to volunteerism within and beyond the mission. **Maria Delfina Valentine** was the runner-up.

The **M. Juanita Guess Award** is conferred on a community liaison office coordinator who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, dedication, initiative or imagination and assisting the families of Americans serving at an overseas post.

This year's award was given to **Marisol Garcia**, who worked to keep post morale up during a turbulent and violent time in Rio de Janeiro. Runners-up were **Lori Doutrich** and **Karen Fifield**.

The **Avis Bohlen Award** honors the accomplishments of a family member of a Foreign Service employee whose relations with the American

**His example to younger Foreign and Civil Service officers challenges them—in fact, all of us—to think critically, consult openly and act decisively.**

**—David Hale**

and foreign communities at post have done the most to advance the interests of the United States.

This year's award was given to John Warner, who took on full-time volunteer support for a nongovernmental organization in Swaziland. Judith Martin was the runner-up.

The **AFSA Achievement and Contributions to the Association Award** recognizes an active duty or retired AFSA member of any

of the foreign affairs agencies represented by AFSA who has made a significant (nonmonetary) contribution to the association in its role as a professional association or its role as a labor union representing Foreign Service members.

This year Ambassador (ret.) Patricia Butenis received the award for her work to bring AFSA's outreach efforts to a new level and for her tireless advocacy on behalf of the Foreign Service.

In accepting her award, Amb. Butenis asked the audience: "How many times do we complain that Americans—our friends, neighbors, even family—don't understand what we do, in the most difficult, dangerous places in the world, to promote American policies, interests and values? That outside the Beltway we remain unknown, unsung; that everyone knows what the U.S. military does. What about us? The solution is not to keep wondering and complaining, but to take action in our own communities by telling our fascinating stories."

Read more about each of these winners on the following pages. ■



Under Secretary for Political Affairs David Hale presents the Christian A. Herter Award to former Under Secretary for Political Affairs Tom Shannon.



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA State VP.  
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## Thanks to AFSA, Local Hires Win Big

When I joined the Foreign Service in January 2000, I'd been working on Capitol Hill and living in the District. My first tour was in Rio de Janeiro, which meant about six months of language training followed by ConGen (the perfect time to forget my Portuguese), so I didn't make it out to post until October—10 months later.

Most of my new colleagues in A-100 and in language training were hired from outside the 50-mile radius considered "local," and I quickly learned that they were all on per diem and received a housing allowance for the entire time they were in training. Since I was hired locally, I received neither. In addition, because the department considered employees in long-term training to be "assigned" to their onward post, I didn't get D.C. locality pay either.

I was shocked. We were all living in the same city, making the same meager salary of someone just entering the Service, but they could much more easily afford the groceries, rent and metro fare that went along with life inside the Beltway.

Fast forward to December 2012. A new local hire from D.C. who was completing a year of training had had enough. He approached AFSA with a reasonable complaint: the system was unfair. Our top-notch attorneys crafted a grievance with

arguments based on the law and applicable regulations.

After a year of back-and-forth between AFSA and the department, the Foreign Service Grievance Board issued a decision finding that the department's own regulations require that new local hires in training for 12 months or longer must be assigned to FSI and therefore receive locality pay.

Three years later, in 2016, a group of new hires approached AFSA with similar complaints. Our AFSA attorneys once again went to the mat, this time focusing on new local hires in training for six months or longer.

In a decision issued in 2017, the FSGB again found that the department's own regulations require that new local hires in training for six months or longer be assigned to FSI and receive locality pay.

These are, quite frankly, huge wins for all new local hires! Whether an officer or a specialist, moving forward, any new hire expected to be in Washington, D.C., for at least six months for training following orientation will be officially posted to FSI and will receive D.C. locality pay, currently 28.22 percent.

In addition, the AFSA members who came to us with the complaint were made whole—receiving back pay, including locality pay, for their time in training.

And now, AFSA is work-

ing on a proposal to have the department treat all local hires the same as those hired from outside the area—granting all locality pay from day one. Those hired from outside D.C. receive housing and per diem—they are, after all, essentially in the area on TDY. Those hired locally should be treated like any other government employee and receive the locality pay

for the place they're located.

While this effort will assist only those who join the Foreign Service in the future, it is just another example of the work we do at AFSA on behalf of our members. And while we cannot help everyone all the time, we're always ready to listen, and we're always ready to try. We'll keep you apprised of our efforts on this important matter. ■

## AFSA Hosts TSP Seminar



On Sept. 26, Thrift Savings Plan expert Randy Urban addressed a packed audience at AFSA headquarters, explaining post-retirement options for TSP savings and withdrawals. Mr. Urban was introduced by AFSA Retirement Benefits Counselor Dolores Brown. At left, Randy Urban and Dolores Brown.

To see a video of the event, go to [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video).



## Overhauling Our Washington Assignment Process

In my October column, “Mission (Almost) Impossible: Landing a Desirable Position in D.C.,” I ended with a cliff-hanger about ways to improve the assignment process for Foreign Service officers returning to Washington.

It’s an age-old debate, but the time is ripe for change. The FAS administrator recently announced an agency reorganization and transformation in human capital management, so the timing is ideal to make overdue improvements to our Washington assignment process.

One option would be to require all those in supervisory positions in the agency (including Civil Service employees) to rebid every four years, on a rotating timeline. Employees can reapply for the positions they occupy, but supervisors may choose to select another bidder. Previous agency attempts to mandate rotations failed due to a lack of enforcement by management, but this approach differs because it enables, but does not require, rotation if the incumbent and supervisors prefer the status quo.

This option would not only ensure that returning FSOs have ample positions to bid on; it would also encourage underperforming employees to work harder to keep their positions or compete for others.

This proposal would face

some opposition from the Civil Service. But there would be support as well, because it would address frequent complaints from our Civil Service colleagues about limited opportunities to move around within the agency. Unfortunately, this option does not address the need for meaningful positions for FSOs at lower levels, which would not be solved through mandatory rebidding of supervisory positions.

Another option would be to create Foreign Service–designated positions, which must be promotable and have the appropriate level of responsibilities for career growth. (Currently, there are only a handful of FS-designated positions in the agency, all concentrated in the Office of Foreign Service Operations.)

There are challenges with this option, particularly stemming from the shortfall of mid-level officers. For instance, if no FSOs bid on a position, how would it be filled? Could a Civil Service employee occupy it? And if so, for how long before it is rebid? Would there be a minimum tour length?

These questions need to be addressed. However, this option presents an excellent opportunity to create meaningful jobs at the lower levels for the many FSOs who are unlikely to receive an immediate onward assignment overseas.

Returning to Washington after one overseas tour can

**Ideally, FSOs could look ahead to see which positions are likely to be open, both overseas and in Washington, and bid accordingly.**

be disheartening, especially since FSOs are often returning to positions that are no higher in grade or responsibility than the one they were in years before they went overseas. With a shortfall of FSOs, we cannot afford to lose officers to the private sector or elsewhere because they feel underutilized, unchallenged or stuck at headquarters.

Perhaps the best approach is a mixture of the two options above, or maybe it is something entirely different. Regardless, the new system should be more predictable and transparent, as FSOs currently have little or no idea what options will be available until long after they have learned they are returning to Washington. Ideally, FSOs could look ahead to see which positions are likely to be open, both overseas and in Washington, and bid accordingly.

We should explore the State Department’s approach of simultaneous bidding for overseas positions and on specific Washington jobs for a predetermined tour length. That might be tough for a Foreign Service as small and understaffed as ours, but perhaps we can create a tailored solution that works for us.

We need to ensure that returning FSOs have access to career-enhancing, fulfilling positions available, or the agency risks damage from a further contraction in the size of our already dwindling Foreign Service cohort. With the upcoming agency reorganization and operational transformation, the time is right for changes to our problematic Washington assignment process.

I invite you to share your ideas on how we can improve our system. ■



## Another Kind of Stewardship

The upcoming January–February issue of *The Foreign Service Journal* will be filled with success stories of how the Foreign Service promotes U.S. prosperity through economic and commercial diplomacy.

The stories will focus on how the Foreign Service helps to boost U.S. jobs, ramp up U.S. exports and expand U.S. global business activity. They come from many different embassies and various agencies, and they all highlight a common mission: to promote American interests around the world, specifically U.S. economic and commercial interests, as well as broader interests like spreading the rule of law, nurturing economic growth and growing fair and transparent business environments.

To lay the groundwork for that double issue, several authors have contributed perspectives in recent issues of the *Journal*. One of these is Dan Crocker, AFSA's Foreign Commercial Service vice president. In his November column, Dan discussed the importance of economic and commercial sections pulling together for results. He also gave a great explanation of how they differ.

This is a crucial point. Economic and commercial officers have different approaches—commercial work is usually client-centered and case-specific, while economic work tends

to be longer-term and policy-focused. When these approaches are combined, he points out, the results can't be beat.

Solving a specific problem while improving the system changes the conditions that created the problem in the first place, ensuring that diplomats who come after will not have to solve the same problem again. That sounds like stewardship!

Taking this approach seems to be common sense, but is less common than one would think. Policy change—playing the long game—feels plodding and difficult. Sustaining commitment and focus for long-term change requires incredible perseverance. Luckily, quick wins give us the burst of energy we need to stay the course—to be stewards, leveling the playing field for those who will play long after we are gone.

Let's say an embassy gets a complaint from a company or group of companies about rampant piracy of intellectual property in the host country. The embassy decides to do an all-out blitz to solve the specific problem. They approach host-country companies that are also getting ripped off, companies that have the same concerns and want new laws and better enforcement. The American and local business leaders draft legislation that would help eliminate the problem and contribute suggestions

### Sustaining commitment and focus for long-term change requires incredible perseverance.

for tighter enforcement.

Embassy officials then go to the foreign ministry and to the prime minister's office, to get political party buy-in. They sell the legislative package to the leaders in the coalition government with the ministries' support. The legislation passes, and new enforcement techniques are created. The police put additional people on the beat to monitor pirating, closing illegal copying facilities and street vendors. Judges start to hand down heavy punishments for violations.

The foregoing is not fiction. It really happened, and it's one of the stories you'll read about in the upcoming "Economic Diplomacy Works" issue. By pulling the resources of the embassy together to meet a goal, by taking care of the short term by also looking at the long term, the Foreign Service left the business environment in this country more welcoming for others in the future.

When we demand fair competition, transparency and accountability in business environments, American brands can triumph. We should not be shy about demanding these conditions, and we should try to create them if they are not there.

The Foreign Corrupt

Practices Act, created in 1977, was barely enforced—even in the United States—until decades after it was passed into law. Once enforcement got serious, our companies were at a distinct disadvantage overseas. They had to conform to strict bribery prohibitions that foreign companies did not face. So what did we do? We exported the idea and campaigned in other countries for their adoption of similar legislation. The campaign worked.

There are now many versions of the FCPA in partner countries. These laws have made overseas environments more hospitable for U.S. companies, but they have also laid out the welcome mat for all who want to conduct business in an above-board manner. What we accomplished with the FCPA was stewardship on a global scale.

In these times when our public servants, including the Foreign Service, are facing skepticism regarding the value we provide to our fellow citizens, we can stand strong in the knowledge that practicing stewardship—taking care of the short term by also looking at the long term—creates lasting value for everyone. ■

Profiles of award recipients compiled by Donna Gorman.

## CHRISTIAN A. HERTER AWARD FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT BY A SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER THOMAS A. SHANNON JR.

### Dissent Is a Responsibility

Ambassador Thomas A. Shannon Jr. receives this year's Christian A. Herter Award for constructive dissent for his principled efforts to promote extension of temporary protective status (TPS) for citizens of Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti and El Salvador while serving as under secretary of State for political affairs (P).

U/S Shannon's efforts to persuade Secretary of State Rex Tillerson ultimately did not prevail, but his principled dissent showed him to be, according to the award nomination, "a role model of professionalism, integrity and leadership for the department." His efforts to preserve TPS "demonstrated his belief of the need to stand firm on one's own principles, rather than bowing to political pressure."

At the awards ceremony, Amb. Shannon said that receiving the award was "made sweeter by AFSA's understanding that dissent, and the energetic debate that underlies it, is an essential component of our duty. It is as important a part of our duty as discipline and obedience. Dissent, as understood and practiced in the Foreign Service, is not just about personal integrity. It is also about professional integrity, and the integrity of our policymaking process."

Citizens of Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador were granted TPS in 1999 after Hurricane Mitch devastated these countries; citizens of Haiti were granted TPS in 2010 after an earthquake left much of the island uninhabitable. Temporary immigration status is granted to eligible nationals of a country that is suffering from "extraordinary and temporary conditions." TPS allows beneficiaries to remain in the United States until the status is removed.

In September 2017, DHS requested that the department issue foreign policy guidance on whether to extend TPS for the four countries. Unlike previous administrations, the Trump administration indicated early on it was not inclined to renew TPS.

In their initial response, the bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Population, Refugees and Migration recommended another three-year extension. However, after the Policy Planning Staff (S/P) argued that revocation was in line with the president's decision on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, WHA and PRM changed their recommendation, instead suggesting revocation of TPS for all four countries.

Then-Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Tom Shannon argued that State's bureaus should not bend

under domestic political pressure but should provide the Secretary with the full range of foreign policy implications.

He encouraged the bureaus to reconsider and urged them to put forward a split memo to the Secretary. PRM reverted to its original position; WHA and the Policy Planning Staff (S/P) recommended revocation. Because of Amb. Shannon's initiative, the Secretary received more nuanced arguments on TPS, with pros and cons for each recommendation.

U/S Shannon also submitted a note to the Secretary outlining his personal views of TPS. He shared it widely with relevant bureaus. Drawing on his experience in Latin America, he argued in favor of maintaining TPS. In so doing, he demonstrated to the department how dissent can and should be carried out, showing a younger generation of Foreign Service and Civil Service members how to offer alternative views constructively inside the system.

U/S Shannon has a bachelor's degree in government and philosophy from the College of William and Mary



Ambassador Tom Shannon at a U.S. Paralympics team event in 1994.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

and master's and doctorate degrees in politics from the University of Oxford.

During a 34-year Foreign Service career, Shannon served in Guatemala, Brazil (twice), South Africa and Venezuela. In Washington, D.C., he served as director of inter-American affairs at the National Security Council and as special assistant to the president and NSC senior director for WHA. At the State Department, he served as desk officer for Cameroon, Gabon and São Tomé and later as assistant secretary for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (2005-2009), ambassador to Brazil (2010-2013), counselor (2013-2016) and under secretary for political affairs (2016-2018). He retired in mid-2018 as the highest-ranking career FSO, with the personal rank of Career Ambassador. In October, he was chosen as the U.S. co-chair of the board of the Inter-American Dialogue. ■

**F. ALLEN ‘TEX’ HARRIS AWARD FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT BY A FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALIST JOSEPH S. CONNERS****Clearing the Way for Legal Medical Shipments**

Joseph S. Conners receives this year's F. Allen "Tex" Harris Award for constructive dissent for his pivotal role in reforming the protocol of medical shipments that are vital to Foreign Service members and their families around the world. He brought violations by Consulate General Frankfurt to the attention of Washington offices and pushed successfully for changes in logistics. It would have been easy for Mr. Conners to overlook the issue, but instead he chose to challenge the status quo.

In 2017 Mr. Conners was the pouch control officer at ConGen Frankfurt, which has been a collection and distribution base for vital medical shipments to posts all over the world for almost 20 years.

Frankfurt is an optimal trans-shipping hub because it has easy access to medi-

cations through a medical supply program directed by one of the consulate's regional offices. These medical shipments include live-vaccine inoculations and Drug Enforcement Administration Schedule II drugs (e.g., OxyContin, Adderall and Ritalin).

In 2017 alone, Frankfurt shipped more than 6,700 pounds of essential, life-saving medications to posts from Beijing to Bogota. This program was instrumental in ensuring that diplomats and their children received necessary vaccines, and it gave staff access to medication in locations where it would otherwise not be attainable.

Mr. Conners learned that the consulate was using unclassified pouch bags and diplomatic tags to ship the medications, violating pouch regulations. This violation put Consulate General Frankfurt at risk of losing its pouch privileges, which would be catastrophic to the health of embassy employees worldwide.

Mr. Conners communicated his concerns to his chain of command through multiple briefings, emails and telephone calls. His thorough review and analysis of the shipment program confirmed his suspicion that medical supplies were

**It would have been easy for Mr. Conners to overlook the issue, but instead he chose to challenge the status quo.**

prohibited by regulation from being shipped via unclassified pouch. In addition, he discovered that customs regulations in other countries might prohibit the import of these medications.

Washington offices were unconcerned and uninterested in changing the medical shipment program. Mr. Conners was pegged as an "alarmist" who wanted to stop the shipment of medicine to children and diplomatic staff, but he knew that it was important to uphold the regulations.

Undeterred by the response in Washington, Mr. Conners convinced his chain of command that these violations needed to be addressed immediately. He pushed until he built a consensus in the mission that would force Washington to review the program and develop new procedures in line with the department's regulations.

Because of Mr. Conners' efforts, the department ultimately identified a legal way to ship medications with less risk of disruption to the global supply chain. He and his management team

made a significant change in logistics that will benefit Consulate General Frankfurt and employees worldwide.

Mr. Conners joined the Foreign Service in 2002. He has served as an information management specialist in Vienna, Santo Domingo, Moscow, London and New Delhi, and is currently the information programs officer in Frankfurt.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he served in the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division, deploying to Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. He and his wife, a special investigator for Diplomatic Security, have two children. ■

## THE WILLIAM R. RIVKIN AWARD FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT BY A MID-LEVEL OFFICER ROSHNI MONA NIRODY

### Making CODELs Work for State

Roshni Nirody receives this year's William R. Rivkin Award for arguing against the department's current policy approaches to engaging with Congress and managing high level visits, and for her work to re-envision institutional thinking in this area.

management of CODEL visits.  
With input from other experienced Foreign Service officers and military colleagues, Ms. Nirody developed a multipronged strategy of low-cost and no-cost recommendations to

**Ms. Nirody argued that tapping the full potential of high-level visits fit into the broader objectives of the department.**

advance her work to develop an understanding among legislative constituencies of the Foreign Service, their people and their work. She proved that the State Department can use engagements with visiting policymakers in the same strategic way that our military colleagues do.

Still involved with the issue, she welcomes further engagement with department officials to explore the opportunity to fully leverage a primary forum for advocacy that touches every bureau and almost every post in the Foreign Service.

Recognizing that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is a former legislator with unique insight into how building an understanding of public service work overseas and enlisting Congress more proactively in policy advancement efforts stand to benefit the State Department, Ms. Nirody argued that tapping the full potential of high-level visits fit into the broader objectives of the department.

Ms. Nirody's previous assignments were in Tokyo, Baghdad and New Delhi. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Nirody worked for Oracle, Sun Microsystems and other Silicon Valley firms as a demographer, and for the National Geographic Channel as a scientist. Her experiences living and working with nomadic tribes in Burma and nine other countries are the subject of one episode of National Geographic's documentary "The Next Wave."

Ms. Nirody has a master's degree in labor economics from Cornell University and an undergraduate degree from Washington and Lee University. She speaks Japanese, Hindi, Spanish and Portuguese. ■

COURTESY OF ROSHNI NIRODY



As the political section chief at Embassy Lisbon, Ms. Nirody believed that the department would reap significant benefits by institutionalizing its approach to managing congressional delegations, including improved advocacy for State Department priorities on Capitol Hill, improved relations with Congress and more efficient

re-envision high-level visits as a policy tool that would better advance the executive branch's foreign policy objectives and U.S. embassy objectives worldwide, while taking into account the resources and regulatory needs of the State Department.

Ms. Nirody targeted key department leadership to

**W. AVERELL HARRIMAN AWARD FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT BY AN ENTRY-LEVEL OFFICER ELENA C. AUGUSTINE**

## Shaping U.S. Policy on Trade with South Korea

COURTESY OF ELENA AUGUSTINE



This year's recipient of the W. Averell Harriman Award is Elena C. Augustine, for her constructive and well-argued Dissent Channel message that, together with her extensive front-channel reporting as the lead working-level trade officer in Seoul from 2016 to 2018, directly contributed to the successful conclusion of negotiations to amend the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (known as KORUS), reaffirming the U.S. commitment to the pact.

The Trump administration's threat to pull out of the deal strained U.S.-South Korean relations at a time of unprecedented tension with North Korea. This caused some South Koreans to doubt the U.S. commitment to the alliance.

The five-year-old agreement seemed to be on the verge of failure, and the State Department was relatively disengaged on the matter. Ms. Augustine took the initiative to write her opinion on the dangers of withdrawing from

KORUS and campaigned for the State Department—which unlike the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has “boots on the ground” in Korea—to explain U.S. trade policy to stakeholders and to seize the opportunity to more actively shape U.S. policy on KORUS.

In Ms. Augustine's dissent cable, “Shaping U.S. Policy on the KORUS FTA an Opportunity for the Department of State to Lead,” she recommended that the United States not withdraw from KORUS; that instead it work with interagency partners to clearly define success and formulate a path to achieve it, while ensuring that the regional strategic context was taken into account.

Ms. Augustine warned that proceeding with negotiations without a clear vision of how to achieve fair and balanced trade or withdrawing from the deal would risk increasing the U.S. trade deficit, alienating a critical ally and allowing the growth of a narrative—that the United States is no longer a reliable international partner—which global competitors could easily exploit.

The Policy Planning Staff

responded to Ms. Augustine's cable, acknowledging her concerns and affirming the department's role in making recommendations based on how trade actions could affect our overall foreign policy objectives.

They also stressed that the department must remain engaged on the issue and recognize KORUS' significance to the United States' broader geostrategic concerns on the Korean Peninsula. This led to affirmation of the State Department's role in economic policy, a better-negotiated FTA and strengthened interagency cooperation.

While serving in Seoul, Ms. Augustine drafted most of the embassy's reporting on KORUS and served as the primary officer explaining U.S. policy on trade to contacts in the Korean government, the U.S. and Korean private sector, think tanks and academia. This work gave her Dissent Channel message the authority and heft it needed to convincingly lay out the risks of the existing policy.

Ms. Augustine skillfully tailored her reporting to USTR and interagency policymakers and accurately predicted South Korean requests in advance of the amendment negotiations. She alerted Washington that most South Koreans saw trade and security issues as linked, and she

warned about the dangers of overreaching. By actively shaping the interagency discussion, Ms. Augustine directly contributed to the successful conclusion in March 2018 of negotiations to amend KORUS.

Her assignment as an economic officer in Embassy Seoul's Macroeconomic and Trade Policy Unit, with a portfolio focused on bilateral trade and the KORUS FTA, was only her second Foreign Service position. Her first assignment was to U.S. Embassy Moscow's consular section.

In July, she transitioned into the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau's Office of Regional and Security Policy. She speaks German, Russian and Korean.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Augustine earned a master's degree in international administration in conjunction with Peace Corps service in Kazakhstan as part of the Peace Corps Masters International program at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies.

She has an undergraduate degree from Bucknell University in political science, English and theater. She was raised in the Foreign Service—in Bulgaria, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Austria and the United States. ■

## AFSA AWARD FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION

### PATRICIA A. BUTENIS

## Telling the Foreign Service Story

Ambassador Patricia "Pat" Butenis is honored for her work to bring AFSA's outreach efforts to a new level, beginning with her leadership on this issue during her time on the AFSA Governing Board in 2015 and continuing into retirement in her home community in New Jersey. She is a tireless advocate for the importance of telling the Foreign Service story—and few do it better.

After a distinguished career that included serving as ambassador to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Amb. Butenis retired in 2015 with the rank of Career Minister and stepped forward to serve on the 2015-2017 AFSA Governing Board.

As a member of the board, she took an immediate and active interest in shaping the future of AFSA outreach to retirees. Working with fellow board members and members of AFSA's

professional staff, she pushed reforms to the association's Speakers Bureau, advocated for additional resources in retiree engagement and outreach, and led the way in the early development of talking points, briefing materials and other resources for those engaged in telling the Foreign Service story across the country.

She was instrumental in ensuring that outreach became a strategic pillar for the association, emphasizing the need to speak specifically to retiree members and equip them to become effective advocates on behalf of the U.S. Foreign Service and diplomacy.

Amb. Butenis herself has been tireless in her personal outreach efforts. A resident of southern New Jersey, she has met with countless schools and universities in Trenton, Philadelphia and other municipalities. She has demonstrated in action

what she envisions for her fellow AFSA retiree members, educating students, other retirees and her neighbors about what diplomats do and why it matters.

During a 34-year career, Amb. Butenis served as dean of the School of Professional and Area Studies in the Foreign Service



AFSA/JOQUIN SOSA

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson celebrates with Ambassador (ret.) Pat Butenis.

Institute. She was ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives from 2009 to 2012, deputy chief of mission in Baghdad (2007-2009) and ambassador to Bangladesh (2006-2007).

She also served in Islamabad, Karachi, San Salvador and New Delhi; worked on the El Salvador desk; attended the National War College; served as director of field operations in the Visa Office in the Bureau of Consular Affairs; and was consul general in Warsaw and Bogotá.

She received the Baker-Wilkins Award as the outstanding deputy chief of mission for her service in Iraq, the Presidential Rank Award and various State Department Honor Awards.

Raised in New Jersey, Amb. Butenis received a bachelor's degree in anthro-

pology from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in international relations from Columbia University. She is a member of the American Academy of Diplomacy and DACOR, and is an honorary member of the Delta Phi Epsilon professional foreign affairs sorority.

She currently serves as a trustee of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance and on the Environmental Commission of Waterford Township, Camden County, New Jersey. ■



COURTESY OF PATRICIA BUTENIS

**THE AVIS BOHLEN AWARD FOR A FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILY MEMBER**  
**JOHN ANDERSON WARNER**

## Advancing Gender Issues in Swaziland

Shortly after moving to Mbabane with his FSO spouse, John Warner transformed what started as a social contact into full-time volunteer support to the Swazi nongovernmental organization Kwakha Indvodza. His dedicated participation contributed to the overall success of KI and, by extension, the embassy's programs.

Kwakha Indvodza, whose name means "Building a Man," is focused on presenting positive male role models to young Swazi men, giving them the resources to think critically about patriarchal structures in Swaziland and exposing them to practices they can adopt to ensure more equal treatment for women. A small organization, it is entirely dependent on increasingly scarce donor resources.

KI is also one of the few organizations in Swaziland (the country officially changed its name to Eswatini on April 19) advancing women's empowerment by reaching men, a critical avenue for success.

As an unpaid volunteer, Mr. Warner took on the role of development and donor relations officer, writing pro-



John Warner (at left) attends Kwakha Indvodza's first ever "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" advocacy march against gender-based violence.

posals, coordinating resource mobilization efforts, organizing donor outreach, conducting research and mentoring staff.

Prior to Mr. Warner's arrival, KI had very limited staff capacity for writing proposals and monitoring grants. Seeing a need, he threw himself into learning these processes, weathering the high-stress process of completing proposal submissions on tight deadlines. He also helped KI develop a three-year strategic plan with a particular focus on how the organization can more effectively mobilize resources, both from individual and institutional donors. KI's director says

that Mr. Warner's arrival enabled the group to conduct research that they had long talked about but never had the means to undertake.

As part of his research, Mr. Warner interviewed a Swazi traditionalist, seeking to better understand local traditions and identify ways to use these traditions to prompt behavioral changes. He later received a scholarship to present a paper on behalf of KI at the 2018 International Social and Behavior Change Communication Summit in Bali, Indonesia. His research contributed to two articles that are on track for publication, which will further raise the profile of KI and contribute to the body of knowledge on behavioral change.

Mr. Warner demonstrated a level of commitment that goes beyond what

one would expect of an employee, much less a volunteer. He worked evenings and weekends, and even rearranged holiday planning based on the needs of KI. He also mentored younger KI staff members, helping them with everything from drafting reports to preparing for their annual performance reviews.

Mr. Warner is a Barbadian-born American citizen currently living and working in Mbabane, Eswatini. He holds a bachelor's degree in humanities and a master's degree in regional integration studies from the University of the West Indies in Barbados, where he first developed an interest in the intersection between issues of gender and small nation development. ■



Avis Bohlen Award winner John Warner celebrates with his father-in-law, Jesse Starks, FSO wife Joia Starks and baby Jonah after the ceremony.

**THE M. JUANITA GUESS AWARD FOR A COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE COORDINATOR**  
**MARISOL ANGELA GARCIA**

## Building Community at a Challenging Time

Marisol Garcia receives the 2018 M. Juanita Guess Award for her outstanding leadership, dedication and initiative in assisting embassy families while serving as CLO.

During Ms. Garcia's tenure as community liaison office coordinator (CLO) in Rio de Janeiro, the consulate community was rocked by violence fueled by a vicious drug war. Consulate members were robbed at gunpoint, carjacked, subjected to armed home invasions and even shot at by armed assailants. Their children were threatened by interne-cine drug gang violence that spilled into the American School compound from a nearby slum and temporarily shut the school down.

Throughout this challenging time, Ms. Garcia served as a comforting and reassuring anchor at the consulate, creating a feeling of community that helped counteract a prevailing sense of almost paralyzing fear in an otherwise inviting and captivating local environment.

Ms. Garcia took a leading role in organizing a consulatewide team-building event that brought together American and Brazilian staff and family members, lifting morale at a time of heightened stress before the Olympics. She worked to fix a broken social sponsor



COURTESY OF MARISOL GARCIA

program, creating a training program and rewriting the social sponsor checklist to better welcome new arrivals to Rio de Janeiro.

She also engaged the housing board and led a rewrite of the housing handbook to better inform arriving officers, improve the welcome kits and facilitate better communication between the general services office and the new arrivals. Her efforts raised morale after many years of housing problems that detracted from officers' ability to effectively do their work.

Ms. Garcia organized numerous cultural excursions, sporting events and charitable activities, such as a soccer game between consulate members and Street Kids International. For Women's History Month, she brought in a speaker

to discuss local initiatives to combat poverty and helped lead a drive to collect needed items for a women's domestic violence shelter.

She also led a group that served and fed local homeless at a soup kitchen near the consulate, benefiting the community while representing the best of American volunteerism to our Brazilian hosts.

Each of these undertakings demonstrated her initiative and imagination in taking her CLO role beyond what was required. Ms. Garcia's accomplishments have made a posting to Rio de Janeiro a much more fulfilling and

enjoyable assignment for hundreds of U.S. staff, local staff and family members.

A native of Los Angeles, Ms. Garcia holds bachelor's degrees in dance and English literature and a master's degree in English literature from Loyola Marymount University.

Before serving as CLO in Brazil, she was a Ph.D. candidate in English literature at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, taught collegiate English poetry and writing courses, performed in modern dance companies in California and Hawaii, and taught fitness classes. ■



M. Juanita Guess award winner Marisol Garcia and runner-up Karen Fifield.

AFSA/JAQUIN SOSA

**THE MARK PALMER AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEMOCRACY**  
**DAVID BARGUEÑO**

## Combating Gender-Based Violence in Karachi

For his outstanding work countering violence against women and girls, David Bargueño was selected as a winner of the 2018 Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy.

Inspired by the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements in the United States, David Bargueño leveraged his role as political officer in Karachi to counter violence against women and girls in Pakistan.

Leading a yearlong series of human rights roundtables, he dramatically expanded the mission's contact base among women and diverse religious communities, whose insights he incorporated into analytical pieces briefed to senior leadership in the State Department, cabinet-level officials and the U.S. president.

To increase public awareness of gender issues more broadly, he also created and spearheaded an innovative campaign called "Karachi Champions Combating Gender-Based Violence," which rallied members from across the consulate community.

For this particular initiative, local and American staff interviewed Pakistanis working to promote and defend women's rights in Karachi's schools, hospitals, police stations, nongovernmental organizations and in the Senate of Pakistan. Mr. Bargueño

and his colleagues filmed these interviews on their iPhones and, after professional editing by a local firm, they shared 16 videos on the "16 days of activism against gender-based violence" from Nov. 25 until Dec. 10.

As the videos went viral on social media, the campaign helped to publicize resources for victims of gender-based violence, raising awareness of GBV among the public and empowering Pakistani women to speak about their own experiences.

Building on the momentum of the campaign, activists in Karachi later organized a women's march, and men and women approached consulate staff to ask how they, too, could become "Karachi Champions."

Coordinating across section and agency lines, Mr. Bargueño designed follow-up exchange programs to the United States, for which he recruited and successfully nominated female candidates.

Marines led women's self-defense courses in the consulate, and Mr. Bargueño helped organize in-house art exhibits to engage with women artists and girls who had never before engaged with Americans, let alone visited the consulate.

Mr. Bargueño hopes the Karachi campaign, which

COURTESY OF DAVID BARGUEÑO



**Nothing would have happened without our team. I took risks in Karachi, and I needed motorpool, diplomatic security, local staff, colleagues and leadership to take those risks with me.**

**—David Bargueño, in his acceptance speech on Oct. 10.**

was written up in the March edition of *State Magazine*, empowers others to take a stand against gender-based violence, regardless of their gender, job description or where they are stationed in the world.

David Bargueño is an FSO currently serving in the political section of Embassy Pretoria. He previously served in Pakistan, Brazil and in the Secretary of State's Office

of Global Food Security in Washington. His short-term assignments include Mozambique, Vietnam and Peru.

Mr. Bargueño holds a bachelor's degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and a master's degree from Yale University. ■

## THE MARK PALMER AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEMOCRACY

### KELLY ANNE BILLINGSLEY

## Working in Sri Lanka to Increase U.S. National Security

Kelly Anne Billingsley receives the 2018 Mark Palmer Award for her work to push back on China's encroachment on Sri Lankan democracy and sovereignty, while also promoting U.S. political objectives with the post-war Sri Lankan government on national reconciliation, human rights, protection of democratic institutions and accountability for past human rights abuses.

As political counselor at Embassy Colombo, Ms. Billingsley understood the need to challenge China's plans in Sri Lanka. She sounded alarms through high-impact reporting to Washington and engaged the embassy's network to bolster concern domestically.

Ms. Billingsley authored a series of cables explaining how China sought to subvert democratic freedoms by backing the repressive former dictatorship, ensnaring Sri Lanka in debt bondage by financing poorly conceived infrastructure projects and, in the case of the country's strategic southern port, offering to buy out the project when Sri Lanka couldn't make the payments.

Nearly two years before the new U.S. National Security Strategy articulated this challenge, Ms. Billingsley argued that U.S. policy was

too passive; she outlined a series of steps to diminish Chinese influence and ensure U.S. strategic interests. Her reporting was read in missions around the world and in Washington, launching an interagency effort to identify levers of influence that could combat the threat of Chinese expansion in the Indian Ocean.

Ms. Billingsley also shepherded negotiations with the Sri Lankan government on a 2015 resolution at the U.N. Human Rights Council calling for transitional justice for human rights abuses that occurred during Sri Lanka's civil war and a 2017 renewal of that resolution.

Ms. Billingsley oversaw the design and implementation strategy for the first resolution. She advised the U.S. ambassador on language in the resolution's text, worked with contacts to ensure that they were moving forward strategically, and directed her section to produce thorough reporting on government and public reactions. The resolution passed, resulting in Sri Lankan government commitments to accountability and national reconciliation.

When the resolution was due to expire with many key commitments still unfinished, prospects for a new resolution were dim: Tamil activists called for a new,



COURTESY OF KELLY ANNE BILLINGSLEY

Kelly Anne Billingsley, third from right, serving as control officer for a congressional delegation led by Representative Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) in February 2017.

more punitive resolution, while Sinhalese nationalists wanted no resolution at all. Ms. Billingsley persuaded the new U.S. administration to sponsor a resolution reaffirming the 2015 commitments.

She worked to draft acceptable language and negotiated the 2017 resolution's text with senior Sri Lankan officials. She traveled to Geneva to gain the support of Tamil diaspora groups, human rights organizations and country delegations.

The resolution was co-sponsored by Sri Lanka, the United States and others, passed by consensus in the UNHRC, and was accepted by nearly all interest groups. It will help move Sri Lanka beyond its ethnic divisions into a just, peaceful and reconciled society—the predominant U.S. foreign policy goal in Sri Lanka.

Ms. Billingsley is a native of Birmingham, Alabama, and a graduate of the University of Florida and the London School of Economics, where she earned a master's degree in international relations.

She joined the Foreign Service in 2003 and has served in Frankfurt, Dakar, Moscow and Colombo. She has also served as Iraq desk officer, special assistant for Iraq transition, and as Sri Lanka and Maldives desk officer. Ms. Billingsley is currently a student at the National Defense University's Dwight D. Eisenhower School. She is married to Financial Management Officer Steven Bennett and has three children. ■

**NELSON B. DELAVAN AWARD FOR OFFICE MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS**  
**MARGARET KENNELL**

## Putting the Word “Service” in Foreign Service

Margaret “Megan” Kennett is recognized for her outstanding work as office management specialist in Embassy Kampala’s Regional Security Office and her exceptional commitment to helping others both inside and outside the mission. Her volunteer work to help both the embassy and local communities was done above and beyond her regular duties.

Ms. Kennett arrived in Kampala in September 2017. When the deputy chief of mission (DCM) discovered travel plans would leave her unable to host her usual Thanksgiving potluck for members of the community, Ms. Kennett quickly volunteered to stand in her place to host the event at the DCM’s residence.

She coordinated with the DCM’s staff, taught them how to cook turkey and organized all the logistics for this successful community event.

As the December holidays approached, Ms. Kennett helped the Marine security guards at post organize volunteers to wrap gifts for their annual Toys for Tots drive. She participated in the delivery of toys at an urban center for refugees. Ms. Kennett also helped organize a donation of second-hand clothing along

with the toys, and spent hours helping to sort clothes for the right age and sex of the children.

As she spent time with the Marines, she recognized that they have limited ability and funds to see Uganda. So Ms. Kennett and her husband provided transport for a group of them to visit game parks.

She is always on the lookout for anyone who needs to get out of the city. And just about every weekend, she invites someone from the mission to join her for an adventure to see the country.

When Ms. Kennett heard that a local children’s cancer hospice was in desperate need of first aid supplies, she purchased—out of her own pocket—large industrial

first aid kits, with enough bandages and antibiotic ointment to supply the hospice for a year. She later returned in a borrowed bunny outfit to distribute toys, candy, crayons and drawing paper—again, purchased from her own pocket—to bring joy to terminally ill children at the hospice.

Every year in March, the Peace Corps looks for volunteers for their “Drop Everything and Read Day.” Ms. Kennett was quick to volunteer. While reading to school children in two classes at a local primary school, she noticed that the classes had no age-appropriate books and began working to collect books from embassy colleagues. She went on to organize a much larger book



COURTESY OF MARGARET KENNELL

drive to supply the school with adequate books for its children.

Ms. Kennett hails from Port Huron, Michigan. Previous tours include Islamabad, Budapest, Baghdad, Suva, Pretoria, Warsaw and Vienna. Before entering the Foreign Service, Ms. Kennett spent four years in the U.S. Air Force. ■



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and Ambassador William Harrop with Delavan Award winner Margaret Kennett (center).

## AFSA Award Runners-Up

### M. JUANITA GUESS AWARD RUNNER-UP

#### LORI DOUTRICH

Lori Doutrich is one of this year's runners-up for the M. Juanita Guess Award for her resilience and leadership skills as community liaison office coordinator during an emergency evacuation of Embassy Nicaragua.



In early 2018, following violent protests and the deadliest civil conflict since the end of the Nicaraguan Revolution, all eligible family members and certain direct hires in Managua were evacuated. From the moment the evacuation was ordered, Ms. Doutrich worked to make sure American families had the resources they needed.

Ms. Doutrich helped families with such things as getting the subsistence expense allowance and daycare in their safe haven to pet care, working extended hours while simultaneously having to evacuate her own family from post.

She created a support network for all evacuees in Washington, D.C., organizing child playgroups and lunch meetings at Main State for direct hires, and ensuring everybody had the resources they needed during this tumultuous period.

### M. JUANITA GUESS AWARD RUNNER-UP

#### KAREN FIFIELD



Karen Fifield is also a runner-up for the M. Juanita Guess Award for her tremendous dedication to the families in the mission community at Embassy Santo Domingo.

As community liaison office coordinator at a post challenged by an embassywide move to a new housing complex and devastated by hurricanes, Ms. Fifield was relentless in scheduling events and instigating conversations to help people articulate these challenges, discover they were not facing them alone and strategize about addressing the difficulties as a community.

Ms. Fifield capably fulfilled the many roles a CLO can play in the community. When back-to-back hurricanes struck in the fall of 2017, she ensured that every community member had the information and resources they needed to safely proceed—whether sheltering in place, accepting voluntary departure or splitting families when employees traveled on temporary duty to help other affected missions.

She has been a source of empathy and ingenuity as family members navigated the eligible family member hiring freeze, often undergoing unexpected separations or loss of joint income as a result.

As the embassy community transitioned to a new housing compound that now holds half of the community, Ms. Fifield helped families deal with a constantly fluctuating move schedule.

Her intervention and coordination across management offices were particularly critical in ensuring that the simultaneous start of the school year was the driving factor in scheduling and prioritizing household moves, minimizing the extent to which a jarring change at home would spill into other parts of families' lives.

### NELSON B. DELAVAL AWARD RUNNER-UP

#### MARIA DELFINA VALENTINE

During a period of crisis at post in Bamako, Maria Delfina Valentine, already busy in her role as office management specialist, stepped in as community liaison office coordinator and made a real difference in post morale and welfare. Ms. Valentine was named the runner-up for the Nelson B. Delavan Award because of her community outreach and contributions to the morale and welfare of the U.S. mission in Mali.

By taking on the responsibilities of the CLO, she distinguished herself as a transformational leader. She personally organized and led more than 14 community events, including a visit to an ostrich farm, boating trips on the Niger River and encounters with Tuareg peoples, whom she invited to the embassy to teach traditional tea ceremonies and sell handicrafts.

An avid gardener and environmentalist, Ms. Valentine organized an Earth Day tree planting event at which mission staff joined local children to plant trees in school yards. The event was a success, attracting half the mission, as well as media attention from journalists across the country.



Maria Valentine at an ostrich farm near Bamako.

COURTESY OF MARIA VALENTE

*Continued on page 86*

AFSA Award Winners from page 85

**AVIS BOHLEN AWARD RUNNER-UP****JUDITH MARTIN**

The runner-up for the 2018 Avis Bohlen Award, Judith Martin, was honored for her work to improve the lives of female victims of human trafficking and sexual assault in Togo.

Ms. Martin worked with Queen Alaffia, a nonprofit cooperative that provides job training and employment to victims of sex trafficking and sexual assault who have been marginalized by their communities.

When Ms. Martin arrived at post the cooperative had been in existence for a year, training women to sew and sell products using African print and batik fabric. But sales were weak and the enterprise was floundering.

Ms. Martin guided the women to reorganize into small teams that kept every woman constantly engaged and built their leadership skills. She helped them reorganize their work process to make a wider variety of products more efficiently, and she implemented a cross-training program, soliciting volunteers to learn how to make batik and to serve as mentors.

Ms. Martin's work with Queen Alaffia made an important



Judith Martin, second from left, discussing design measurements at Queen Alaffia.

contribution to advancing U.S. policy goals in Africa, helping to raise awareness of the scourge of human trafficking and directly assisting victims to rebuild their lives. She helped give poor women new job skills that will raise incomes and improve nutrition, health care and education for their children. ■

## AFSA Welcomes Newest Foreign Service Members

On Oct. 4, AFSA welcomed 66 members of the 149th Specialist class to its headquarters building, and on Oct. 9, AFSA welcomed 80 members of the 195th A-100 class.

These newest classes include a number of U.S. military veterans and former employees of other government agencies. Many class members hold post-graduate degrees, and many have worked, studied or volunteered abroad. Between them they speak more than two dozen foreign languages.

Some fun facts about the A-100 class: One class

member worked as a helicopter maintenance test pilot; another was named "Working Mother of the Year" by *Working Mother* magazine for her work advocating for paternity leave. One served as a responder for the U.S. Navy's radiological emergency response center in Yokosuka, Japan, after the Fukushima meltdowns in 2013; and one earned a black belt in Taekwondo in Taiwan. Yet another won a national essay contest at age 10 to name the Smithsonian Institution's Triceratops specimen.

Welcome to the Foreign Service! ■

**Top right:** AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson greets class members at AFSA HQ.

**Bottom right:** AFSA State Vice president Ken Kero-Mentz talks to luncheon participants about the functions of AFSA in its dual role as a professional association and labor union.



AFSA/DONNA GORMAN



AFSA/DONNA GORMAN

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS COMING SOON****Join the 2019-2021 AFSA Governing Board**

Do you want to represent your colleagues, contribute to a stronger Foreign Service and ensure its voice is heard on the Hill and around the country? Does participating in the management and modernization of a multimillion-dollar organization with a large staff and real impact in Washington interest you?

If so, consider joining the next AFSA leadership team by running for a position on the 2019-2021 AFSA Governing Board.

AFSA has been the voice of the Foreign Service since 1924, but our enduring strength comes from the voices and votes of our members. When you step up to take on a leadership role at AFSA, you can make a difference for your colleagues and your nation.

As current FSC Vice President Dan Crocker says, "Serving on the Governing Board puts you in a position to articulate the importance of a strong Foreign Service, not only at State also at USAID, Commerce, Agriculture and elsewhere."

Please consider putting your name forward or nominating a colleague. Watch for details in the Call for Nominations that will run in the January/February issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*. ■

## Thank You to Our Awards Intern

AFSA would like to thank our awards intern, Mathilde Warren, who was instrumental in planning our awards ceremony and the event coverage in this month's AFSA News.

Ms. Warren is a senior at McGill University, where she is majoring in international development and minoring in international relations. She has assisted in national grant research and is part of the varsity synchronized swimming team at McGill. She was born in Chicago, Illi-



Mathilde Warren

nois, but grew up in Albany, New York. She speaks English, French and conversational Spanish. ■



**Serving on AFSA's Governing Board and advocating for the career professionals of the U.S. Foreign Service to the American public and Congress during one of the most challenging periods for our chosen profession was both humbling and rewarding.**

*—Lawrence Casselle, State/DS, AFSA Governing Board member 2015-2018.*

## AFSA Thanks Board Member



AFSA/DONNA GORMAN

At the AFSA Governing Board meeting on Oct. 17, Foreign Agricultural Service Vice President Kim Sawatzki was recognized by the board and by AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson for her efforts to bring new members into AFSA. Thank you!

## Outreach—Both Virtual and in Person

The business of telling the story of the U.S. Foreign Service continues, and over the last few weeks AFSA has been engaged in various forms of public outreach.

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson participated in a webinar for retiree members on Oct. 25. Dozens of members logged in from all around the country, listening in as Amb. Stephenson discussed advocacy efforts, trends on hiring and senior appointments, and AFSA's new program highlighting the importance of economic diplomacy and why it works for America. She then spent more than 30 minutes taking ques-

tions from participants and encouraging them to participate in AFSA outreach and educational efforts, which are so important in local communities around the nation.

We very much appreciate those who took the time to join the webinar and ask thoughtful questions. These webinars are excellent venues for engaging with AFSA members outside the D.C. area. The next one is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 27. Stay tuned!

The Speakers Bureau continues to arrange events around the country, and many of our retirees have been out and about in the

last weeks and months talking about what diplomats do and why it matters.

If you are looking for a New Year's resolution, how about this one: Join the Speakers Bureau and get out there! It's easier than going to the gym or starting that diet you've been thinking about, and AFSA has plenty of resources for speakers, including free copies of *Inside a U.S. Embassy* to use as a door prize or donate to a local school library.

If you have been meeting with groups of students, retirees, educational groups or any other community group in your area, let us

know! We love hearing from those of you who are busily shoring up a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service. Are there specific stories, experiences or anecdotes that are received more positively than others? Please do let us know so that we can share best practices with others; simply email us at [speakers@afsa.org](mailto:speakers@afsa.org). ■

## Success in the Foreign Service: A Panel Discussion



AFSA/ASHLEY DUNN

On Oct. 11, a panel of Pickering/Rangel Fellowship alumni participated in a panel discussion on how they achieved success in the Foreign Service.

The panel included Ambassador Dereck Hogan, former deputy executive secretary of the department and recently-confirmed U.S. ambassador to Moldova; Julie Chung, currently the director of the Office of Japanese Affairs; and Jeffery Salaiz, the foreign policy advisor to the director of strategic plans and policy at the Pentagon.

Pictured above are AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, Amb. Hogan and Julie Chung.

## AFSA Talks Economics on the Hill



AFSA/KIM GREENPLATE

On Oct. 12, a panel of retired Foreign Service officers participated in a discussion on "Economic Diplomacy Works: The Role of the U.S. Foreign Service in Meeting Challenges to America's Global Leadership" at the Russell Senate Office Building.

Above, Virginia Bennett, former acting assistant secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, addresses the gathering of about 30 congressional staffers. Joining her are Elizabeth Shelton, a former Foreign Service officer and executive director of American Friends of Turkey; and Molly Williamson, former deputy assistant secretary of Defense (1993-1995), State (1996-1999) and Commerce (1999-2004).

## AFSA Governing Board Meeting, October 17, 2018

**Management Committee:** By unanimous consent, the Governing Board approved an individual request to join AFSA as an associate member.

**New Business:** It was moved and seconded that the board approve an extension of the Governance Committee's mandate to November. The motion was adopted.

The mandate refers to the following motion adopted at the May 2018 meeting:

"On behalf of the Management Committee, it was moved that the board appoint a Governance Committee to research and propose a best practice governance structure for AFSA. The committee will provide monthly updates to the Governing Board and report its final recommendation to the board by Oct. 17, 2018. The chairman will be Secretary Tom Boyatt, and the members will be Vice Presidents Ken Kero-Mentz and Dan Crocker, Chief Operating Officer Russ Capps, Retiree Representative Director Alphonse La Porta and Roy Perrin. ■"

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■ **Warren Clark**, 81, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died of cancer in Washington, D.C., on July 24.

Mr. Clark was born in Bronxville, N.Y., the son of Warren and Mary Clark. He graduated from Williams College and later earned graduate degrees from Johns Hopkins University, Georgetown and Harvard.

After serving for four years as a naval air intelligence officer based in Morocco, Mr. Clark joined the State Department in 1963. His first Foreign Service assignment was to the U.S. consulate in Aleppo, Syria. Other overseas assignments included Beirut, Luxembourg and Ottawa, where he served as U.S. Treasury representative.

He was the acting ambassador in Lagos, Nigeria, before becoming the U.S. ambassador to both Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe from 1987 to 1989.

Ambassador Clark went on to serve as deputy assistant secretary for Africa and was the deputy U.S. representative on the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, as a specialist in communications and information technology, he ran a program helping governments in Central and Eastern Europe move toward a market economy.

After retiring from the State Department in 1996, he worked as a consultant on privatization and liberalization of telecommunications in Eastern Europe. Subsequently, he entered Virginia Theological Seminary, graduating with a Master of Theological Studies degree in 2005.

He then worked at the Center for Global Justice and Reconciliation at the Washington National Cathedral and as chair of the Peace Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

For eight years he was executive director of Churches for Middle East Peace, a

coalition of national church groups that conducts political advocacy in support of a two-state solution for the conflict between Israel and Palestine. He advocated with congressional, State Department and White House officials, leading an annual delegation of church representatives to the Middle East, and spoke to church groups across the country.

Amb. Clark was an active member of Saint Albans Church in Washington, D.C. He was a member of the Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C., and was active in neighborhood organizations in Cleveland Park, including the Cleveland Park Play Group and the Cleveland Park Citizens Association, where he pursued his love of nature by helping to plant and maintain trees in the community. He was an active member of the Women's National Democratic Club, chairing their public policy task force on the economy.

Amb. Clark is survived by three children from his first marriage to Alice Ritchie: Sarah Stuart Clark, Warren Clark (and spouse, Jody) and Hope Clark. He has two stepsons, Peter Spiro and Alexander Spiro (and spouse, Vanessa), and eight grandchildren.

He is also survived by his wife of 25 years, Elizabeth Petersen Spiro Clark. Together they shared their great joy in music, Shakespeare, travel and adventure, including walking Hadrian's Wall and sailing the coast of Turkey, visiting Hellenistic ruins, sailing the fjords of Norway, and riding a zip line to keep close to a granddaughter seeing the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve of Costa Rica.

For those who wish to make a contribution in Amb. Clark's memory, the family suggests donating to Churches for Middle East Peace.

■ **Robert Webb Huddleston**, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer and spouse

of Ambassador (ret.) Vicki Huddleston, passed away in Santa Fe, N.M., on Sept. 11.

Mr. Huddleston served in both the Department of State and USAID. He graduated from Williams College and served in Army intelligence prior to joining the Department of State, serving in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. After leaving State he joined USAID, serving in Rio de Janeiro, Freetown and Bamako.

He is survived by his wife, Vicki Huddleston, and his children Michele, Stuart, Robert and Alexandra, as well as four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

■ **John William Koehring**, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer with USAID, died of stroke-related complications after several months of declining health in Virginia Beach, Va., on Sept. 16.

Mr. Koehring was born in Syracuse, N.Y., on Nov. 13, 1934, the son of Ralph William Koehring and Mary Imogene Prince. He spent his boyhood in DeWitt, N.Y., attending Moses DeWitt elementary school and high school in Fayetteville, N.Y., where he played football and basketball and earned the rank of Eagle Scout.

After graduating from high school in 1952 he entered Dartmouth College, graduating in 1956. While at Dartmouth, Mr. Koehring played football and rugby and was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon. In addition to academics and sports, he worked at the Hanover Inn, where he learned the life skill of selecting and cutting meat.

While at Dartmouth, he was in the Navy ROTC. After graduating, he worked at the Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., before transferring to deep sea diving, an occupation he practiced in every major naval theater of the world. He spent four years in the Navy before joining USAID.

# OBITUARIES

Over the span of more than 40 years, including his time in the U.S. Navy, Mr. Koehring served in Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of the Congo and as USAID representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris.

He also served as USAID mission director in Cameroon, deputy assistant administrator for Africa, Regional Economic Development Services Office mission director in Kenya, mission director in Sudan and director of the management control staff in Washington, D.C.

In 1985 Mr. Koehring was awarded the Presidential Meritorious Service Award. He retired as a Career Minister and enjoyed a more tranquil life of fishing and bonfires in the Adirondacks and surf fishing on the Outer Banks.

Mr. Koehring is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Bready Koehring, and three sons: Joseph P. Koehring, John Fritz Koehring and Ralph Vincent Koehring, himself a Foreign Service officer. He is also survived by his sister, Gretchen Strong of Southwest Harbor, Maine, and six grandchildren: Caleb, Jacob, Kazimir, Josephine, Louisa and Gideon.

Memorial contributions may be made to Heifer Project International.

**■ George W. Landau**, 98, a retired State Department Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died of renal failure on Oct. 9 at his home in Bethesda, Md.

Mr. Landau was born in Vienna, Austria, on March 4, 1920, and graduated from high school in 1938, shortly after the annexation of his native country by Nazi Germany. He left Austria immediately thereafter and made his way by train to Amsterdam and then by steamship to Colombia, South America, where he had a distant relative. Although he spoke no

Spanish at the time, it was the beginning of a relationship with Latin America that was to mark the rest of his life.

He remained in Colombia for three years, working a series of odd jobs, including teaching English, which was not his native language. During this period, he successfully helped his parents emigrate from Austria to Colombia, where they lived for the remainder of their lives.

Eventually, he obtained a job in Colombia with Otis Elevator Company, which sponsored him for a visa to the United States. He arrived in New York City on July 1, 1941.

Mr. Landau was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1942, completed officer candidate training, and became both a U.S. citizen and a military intelligence officer in 1943. As the war drew to a close, he was assigned to interrogate captured prisoners of war in Austria.

At the American base in Gmunden, he met his future wife, Maria, who was working there as a bilingual secretary. They were engaged and, after she came to the United States on a plane of war brides, married in New York City in 1947. After the war, Mr. Landau remained in the Army Reserve, retiring with the rank of colonel in 1975.

In 1957, after several years in the import-export business in New York and in Colombia, Mr. Landau began his diplomatic career through an Eisenhower-era program designed to recruit people with business experience into the Commercial Service. He first served as a commercial attaché at Embassy Montevideo, later transitioning from the Commercial Service to the Foreign Service.

During his posting in Uruguay, Mr. Landau was part of the U.S. delegation that created the Alliance for Progress during the Kennedy administration. From

1962 to 1965, he was first secretary and political officer at Embassy Madrid. In 1965, he was designated for the Senior Foreign Service and spent a year at the National Defense College in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

From 1966 to 1972, he served as director for Spanish and Portuguese affairs in the State Department, where he helped negotiate agreements allowing the United States to maintain military bases in both countries.

Mr. Landau served as ambassador to Paraguay from 1972 to 1977, Chile from 1977 to 1982 and Venezuela from 1983 to 1985. During his tenure in Chile, he was instrumental in helping to resolve the mystery over the 1976 assassination in Washington, D.C., of Orlando Letelier, a former Chilean foreign minister and ambassador to the United States, and his American aide.

The FBI ultimately tracked down the assassins, who confessed that they had acted on instructions of the Chilean secret police. After a protracted legal battle, two top Chilean intelligence officers during the Pinochet regime were convicted and served jail terms in the United States.

After retiring from the Foreign Service, Ambassador Landau served as president of the Americas Society and the Council of the Americas in New York, the premier institutions devoted to strengthening business and cultural ties within the hemisphere. He retired from that position in 1993.

Amb. Landau received numerous honors from the United States government and other governments, as well as the American Foreign Service Association's 2013 Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy. He was a long-time member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Academy of

Diplomacy. He served as governor of the Metropolitan Club of New York and was also a member of the Metropolitan Club of Washington, D.C., AFSA and DACOR.

Amb. Landau was predeceased in 2010 by his wife of 62 years, Maria Landau. He is survived by his sons, Robert of Anchorage, Alaska, and Christopher of Chevy Chase, Md., their wives, and four grandchildren.

■ **Wolfgang Lehmann**, 96, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Jan. 7, 2018, at an assisted-living center in Rockville, Md. The cause was congestive heart failure.

Assigned to the Army in World War II, he served in military intelligence, interrogated prisoners of war in Italy and participated in the postwar occupation of Austria.

Mr. Lehmann spent 32 years in the Foreign Service. He served as deputy chief of mission in South Vietnam during the fall of Saigon, spent four years as American consul general in Frankfurt and worked on the staff of the Central Intelligence Agency director.

After retiring in 1983, he worked as a consultant on international affairs. His wife, Odette Chatenet Lehmann, passed away on May 24, 2018, in Washington, D.C.

■ **Princeton Lyman**, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died at home in Silver Spring, Md., on Aug. 24. The cause was lung cancer.

Mr. Lyman received his Ph.D. in political science from Harvard University in 1961 and then joined USAID. His first overseas posting was to Korea in 1964.

On his return to Washington, Mr. Lyman worked in technical assistance programs in USAID's Bureau for Africa before being asked to head the bureau's

project development office for the continent. In this role, Mr. Lyman became one of USAID's leading voices for African development.

He was instrumental in developing U.S. foreign assistance policies and strategies to, for example, address a major drought in the Sahel region that had caused the death of 100,000 people.

Working with the assistant administrator, he also designed effective economic assistance programs in the Horn of Africa and led innovative initiatives to advance opportunities for minorities and women.

From 1976 to 1978 Mr. Lyman was USAID mission director in Ethiopia. He joined the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs in 1980. As deputy assistant secretary, he played a critical role in what became known as "Operation Moses," the secret airlift from Sudan to Israel of thousands of Ethiopian Jews.

Mr. Lyman went on to become ambassador to Nigeria (1986-1989), director of refugee programs (1989-1992), and ambassador to South Africa (1992-1995). In South Africa, Ambassador Lyman played a crucial role in what no one at the time had expected: the lifting of apartheid and a peaceful transition of power after the election of Nelson Mandela.

After a final assignment as assistant Secretary of State for international organization affairs, Amb. Lyman retired for the first time in 1999, becoming the executive director of the Global Interdependence Initiative at the Aspen Institute. From 2003 to 2006, Amb. Lyman held the inaugural Ralph Bunche Chair in African Policy Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Amb. Lyman was called back to government service in 2011, when he served as President Barack Obama's special envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, helping to implement the 2005 Compre-

hensive Peace Agreement. Amb. Lyman retired again in 2013 and joined the U.S. Institute of Peace as a senior adviser to the president, where he remained until shortly before his death.

Amb. Lyman served on several boards, including the National Endowment for Democracy, the Niger Delta Partnership Initiative, the Buffleshoek Trust in South Africa and the Board on African Science Academy Development for the National Academy of Sciences.

He was a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies.

Amb. Lyman was the author of *Partner to History: The U.S. Role in South Africa's Transition to Democracy* (2002), as well as numerous articles and publications on foreign policy, African affairs, economic development, HIV/AIDS, United Nations reform and peacekeeping.

Amb. Lyman's friends remember him as a talented diplomat, a man of principle and integrity, and as a friend and mentor to many young professionals at USAID, State and elsewhere.

Amb. Lyman is survived by his wife, Lois M. Hobson; his daughters Tova Brinn, Sheri Laigle and Lori Bruun; 11 grandchildren; and two great-grandsons. He is also survived by his brother Harvard and his sister, Sylvia. He was predeceased by his wife of 50 years, Helen Ermann Lyman, who accompanied him to his posts, and by three brothers.

■ **Thomas A. Moser**, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer with USAID, passed away at home in Middlebury, Vt., on June 3. The cause of death was metastasized bladder cancer.

Mr. Moser was born in Portland, Ore., in 1927. His whole family worked in the

fields, picking hops and living in ramshackle cabins with other field hands. At the age of 9—in the midst of the Great Depression—he and his family moved to Hyattsville, Md., where his father found work at the Government Printing Office.

Mr. Moser served briefly in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II before graduating from the University of Maryland. After graduation he worked on the Marshall Plan, a forerunner of the United States' foreign aid programs.

He began his overseas career as a training officer in Indonesia. While on home leave from Indonesia in 1956, he met his future wife, Ginny, at a cocktail party in Georgetown. They were married in Hong Kong in 1957 and returned to Jakarta to start married life.

Subsequent postings took the family to Kenya, Malawi, Liberia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand and, finally, to The Gambia, where Mr. Moser served as USAID representative.

In mid-career Mr. Moser attended the National War College, where he was selected as a distinguished graduate in the class of 1974 while simultaneously earning a master's degree from George Washington University.

Mr. Moser retired from USAID in 1983. He worked for various nongovernmental organizations before moving to Cornwall, Vt., in 1992. There Mr. Moser supported the Middlebury Hospice's annual art auction, served Meals on Wheels and was a Lister. He also volunteered for 10 years as guardian ad litem for children caught up in the court system.

Mr. Moser's family remembers him as a man with great energy, endless curiosity and a deft sense of humor.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Ginny, and five children: Daniel (and wife, Debbie) of Alexandria, Va.; Peter (and wife, Annie) of Seattle, Wash.; Abby

(and husband, Mat) of Washington, D.C.; Spencer (and wife, Valerie) of North Adams, Mass.; and Liz of Towson, Md.; as well as 10 grandchildren: Jackson, Aidan, Cassandra, Liam, Sophie, Reed, Teddy, Sawyer, Eva Rae and Sarah.

■ **Jacob M. "Jack" Myerson**, 92, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on July 7.

Mr. Myerson was born on June 11, 1926, in Rock Hill, S.C., to Solomon and Lena Myerson. He earned a master's degree from George Washington University in 1950.

Before joining the Foreign Service, Mr. Myerson was a private in the 69th Infantry Division that met the Russian army at the Elbe River.

In 1957, Mr. Myerson moved to Washington, D.C., to be the first desk officer in the European Bureau of the State Department for what later became the European Economic Community. He was responsible for organizing the U.S. involvement in European and Atlantic regional organizations, NATO and the Council of Europe.

In 1970, he was appointed economic counselor of the U.S. mission to the European Economic Community in Brussels and worked there as a Minister Counselor until 1975, when he moved to New York City as the U.S. representative to the U.N. Economic and Social Council.

From 1977 to 1980 he was economic minister in Paris, where he spent much of his time after retirement. He served as deputy secretary general of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development from 1980 to 1998.

He was awarded the Japanese Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver Medal.

Mr. Myerson lived a rich life outside of his career and developed an interest in modern art after retirement. He endured

the loss of two wives, Nicole Neuray and Helen Hayashi, and his only child, Sylvie Anne Myerson.

He is survived by his grandson, Nayan Myerson-Jain; his granddaughter, Lila Myerson-Jain; his son-in-law, Vidyut Jain; and his longtime companion, Sarah Shafer.

■ **Joyce Lownes Hoyt Robinson**, 97, spouse of the late Ambassador Henry A. Hoyt, died on May 28, in Clemson, S.C.

Mrs. Robinson was born Aug. 4, 1920, in Gladwyne, Pa., to the late Walter and Florence Lownes. She graduated from Ursinus College in 1942 and joined the Women's Army Corps as an officer in military intelligence. She coded and decoded messages to Latin America in Miami, Fla., and at the Pentagon.

She was sent to the University of Michigan to learn Japanese, and immediately after the war, at the age of 25, went to Japan. Serving under General Douglas MacArthur, she supervised 150 Japanese men monitoring written communications. She left the army with the rank of major.

In 1948 Mrs. Robinson spent a year traveling by land around South America. During this trip she met and married Henry (Hank) A. Hoyt, who worked for the U.S. embassy in Paraguay. The couple served together in Cuba, Venezuela, Uruguay and Argentina. Amb. Hoyt died in 1967 while serving as the U.S. ambassador to Uruguay.

Mrs. Robinson moved her family back to the Washington, D.C., area and worked for the Overseas Education Fund as associate executive director and director of Latin America programs.

She also served for 14 years as U.S. alternate delegate to the Organization of American States' Inter-American Commission of Women and on the board of

the Public Members Association evaluating Foreign Service officer performance records.

In 1972 Mrs. Robinson married Hamilton "Robby" Robinson. She earned a degree in accounting from the University of Maryland, and then served as bookkeeper for her husband's business. They enjoyed traveling, ballroom dancing, church activities, investment clubs, Rotary and spending time with friends.

The couple gathered their large family together for special events and enjoyed several sailing trips together on clipper ships, an experience Mrs. Robinson shared twice with her children and their families after Mr. Robinson's death.

Mrs. Robinson moved to the Clemson Downs Retirement Center in 2007 to be near family. She is survived by four children: Joanne Hoyt Young (and her spouse, Dave); Pamela Hoyt Schmutz (and her spouse, Jim); James Warren Hoyt (and his spouse, Amalin); Henry Augustus Hoyt (and his spouse, Janice); a stepdaughter, Maryethel Miller; and 13 grandchildren: Brian, Timmy, Cathy, Chris, Jonathan, Carolyn, Jeremy, Jimmy, Jonathan, Michael, Jackie, Alex and Nathan; and 13 great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Robinson was predeceased by her parents and her sister Charlotte Oleweiler and brother Walter (Bud) Lownes.

**C. Richard Zenger**, 94, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away in Portland, Ore., on May 22.

Born in Portland, Ore., on March 11, 1924, Mr. Zenger was raised by his mother, Nell Springer Zenger, a physical education teacher. He attended Boise Elementary School and Jefferson High School, where he was elected student body president and made many lifelong friends.

In December 1941, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mr. Zenger enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served in the Pacific theater as a radioman with the First Armored Amphibian Battalion. After the war, he married Edna Joyce Whitney, his high school sweetheart, and they started their family.

When the Korean conflict erupted, Mr. Zenger was called back to active duty. He survived the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir, which took place in the dead of winter, and which he called "the worst experience of my life." One day, as a forward spotter for an artillery company, Mr. Zenger had been one of the first to observe a fog bank that turned out to be the breath of thousands of Chinese soldiers advancing on his company's position.

Mr. Zenger graduated from the School of Architecture at the University of Oregon, which he attended on the GI Bill. He practiced architecture in Oregon City before joining the U.S. Foreign Service in 1957.

For the next 24 years he devoted his career to pioneering self-help and low-cost housing programs, developing savings and loan programs to support home ownership and providing utilities to established informal housing settlements.

With his family, he lived and worked in Nicaragua, Ecuador, Argentina, Panama, Ethiopia, Washington, D.C., and Tunisia. In 1967 he was awarded a sabbatical to participate in a Harvard-M.I.T. Joint Center for Urban Studies seminar.

When Mr. Zenger retired from the Foreign Service in 1981, he and his wife celebrated their love of travel by embarking on a yearlong trip that started in Tunis, then wandered around the Mediterranean and eastward across Asia. Carrying only a small canvas bag each, and eschewing air travel, the couple moved

from place to place by train, bus, boat, pickup truck and on foot.

By the time they arrived back in Portland, they had spent time in 15 countries (documented in Dick's journal), eaten an amazing array of food (detailed in Edna's letters) and challenged each other to 365 games of Scrabble. Mr. Zenger was ahead by one game.

The couple settled in Portland but continued to travel internationally for his consulting work with regional housing offices. They explored Oregon and the Pacific Northwest as hikers and birders, and spent many weeks each winter at Cannon Beach. While in his seventies, Mr. Zenger hiked the Oregon Coast solo from Astoria to the California border. His desire to know more about his ancestry also took him to Falchern, Switzerland, the tiny alpine village where his grandfather had been born.

Family members note that in the last years of his life, the loving and constant care of Mary-Ann Zenger was integral to Mr. Zenger's well-being.

Mr. Zenger is survived by his wife, Edna, his partner for the past 72 years; daughters Rebecca, Robin, Amy and Mary Ann; daughter-in-law Gabrielle Francis-Zenger; sons-in-law Stephen Link and Jack Williams; and grandchildren Matthew and Ian Loveless, and Beatrix and Isobel Zenger.

He was preceded in death by his son, John Whitney Zenger, and his son-in-law, Stephen Loveless. ■

*If you would like us to include an obituary in *In Memory*, please send text to journal@afsa.org. Be sure to 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.*

## For High School Juniors (and Sophomores)

**Research Your Colleges Over Winter Break—and Get a Head Start on the College Admissions Process**



**T**his fall marks the 12th season I've been working with high school seniors on their college applications, and many of them are in a state of hyper-stress right now.

Why? Because, despite being urged to start early, they waited too long to research colleges and write essays.

Before you can apply to colleges, you need to know which colleges to apply to—and why. But the demands of school generally mean that most students let college research go until the summer before senior year. In the interest of stress management, that's too late.

So, juniors: Don't worry. You're going

to circumvent that stress cycle by using this winter break to your advantage. You can research universities in just 30 to 60 minutes a day over the course of one week. By the end of winter break, you'll have a realistic list of colleges you'd most like to attend, accompanied by notes about each one, including application deadlines and required essays.

This means that you can then move forward with planning possible visits to those colleges. It means you will know if you need to schedule more SATs, ACTs or SAT Subject tests. It means you'll know what college application essays you'll need to write over the summer. And by the time senior year starts, you'll be ready to submit your applications—way ahead of everyone else, to your great relief. If you don't believe that getting started early makes a huge difference, just ask a current senior!

You may even want to start this research process as a high school sophomore, while bearing in mind that your interests and passions may change over the course of the next year or two. But it can't hurt to start putting together a rudimentary list during

**Getting into college is a complicated and daunting process. Here is a plan for circumventing the stress.**

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

10th grade, when most of the college admission pressure is still low.

If you haven't already, you need to hold a very important conversation with your parents, who presumably will be paying for all or most of your college expenditures, including tuition, housing, meals and travel expenses. Ask them straight out: how much can they afford to pay? Is there a college savings account or a 529 account in your name? What, if anything, will be your contribution? Are you expected to take out college loans? Are you expected to attend an in-state school (or a private institution that gives you enough aid to cost no more than a public one)?



*Francesca Huemer Kelly, the spouse of a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, has worked as a freelance writer and an editor, and is currently coaching high school students on their college application essays. She is a co-founder of Tales from a Small Planet and a former FSJ AFSA News editor.*



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Once you have that information, you can make sure that, if needed, you have colleges on your list that demonstrate a tradition of generous financial aid and merit scholarships, especially if your family doesn't qualify for financial aid. (And even families who do qualify don't usually get enough.)

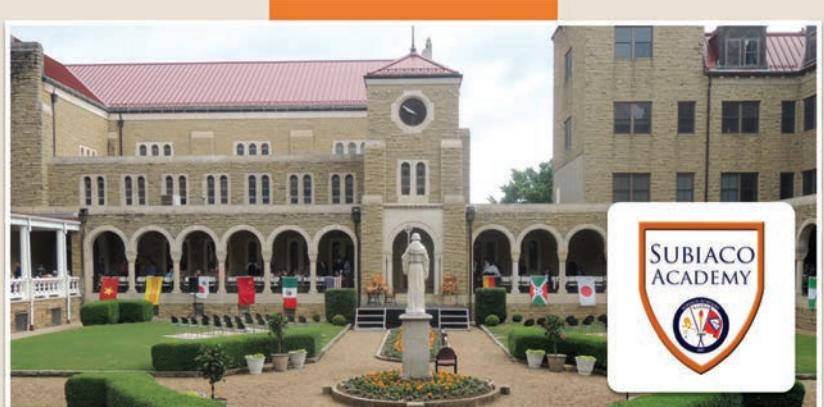
So, let's assume it's now late December. You've had the financial conversation, you've caught up on sleep and you've stuffed yourself with holiday foods. Time to get that college list together. Are you ready to do this? Let's get started! Here's your seven-day program.

### Day 1: Organize a system.

First, you will need a way to record notes on each college. You can do this electronically on a spreadsheet, in Google docs/sheets, OneNote or other online software; or you can keep handwritten notes in a notebook or portable filing system. Your high school might even offer software like Naviance or College Planner Pro that will allow you to record and organize the information. If not, the very practical website [www.admissionpossible.com](http://www.admissionpossible.com) has different organizers and checklists available for downloading.

For your filing or spreadsheet system, you will need the following categories, some of which can be combined:

- Name of College or University (location/URL)
- Tuition, Room and Board Costs
- Majors, Classes and Activities that you're interested in
- Deadlines for Application and for Scholarships (which are often earlier than the general application deadline)
- Type of application: Common Application, Coalition Application, Universal Application or the college's own unique college application.
- Number of Essays Required. (Start



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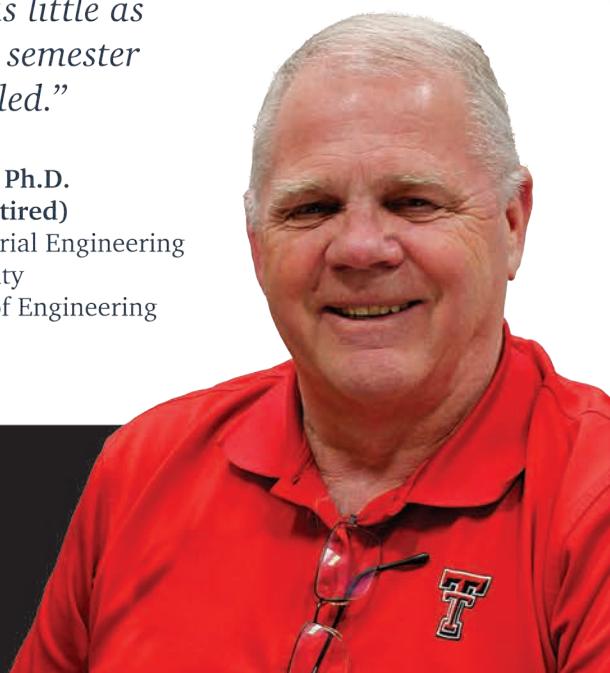


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## It can't hurt to start putting together a rudimentary list during 10th grade, when most of the college admission pressure is still low.

a document where you can cut and paste all essay prompts. Use last year's prompts until the college publishes new ones, usually in August before your senior year.)

- Other requirements for admission (particularly important for non-U.S. colleges)
- Lots of room for your own personal notes

***Did you complete your homework for Day 1? You should now have a system to organize your list of colleges, either online, on spreadsheets or in notebook/files.***

### **Days 2-4: Decide on where to study and how to study, giving yourself choices.**

Obviously, the location of your ideal university is determined by many factors: climate; ease of travel home; cost; preference for rural, urban or suburban; and of course, academics. But how you study is just as important as where.

For example, most universities in the United Kingdom and the European Union demand a much narrower focus on your chosen major (called "course") right from the outset. Many Canadian institutions do, as well. (Most U.K., E.U. and Canadian

universities offer three-year programs, but non-citizens may have to do a foundation year to start.) Pre-professional programs in the United States also allow you to focus on your major from the start. Performing arts conservatories are one example, but there are also specialized engineering, pre-med and other programs. Babson College near Boston is an example of a liberal arts college that focuses on business and entrepreneurship. And don't forget Switzerland's famous hospitality programs such as Les Roches.

But perhaps you're not sure yet what you want to major in. That's where most

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FROM THE FSJ EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT JUNE 2018

## The Vocational Education Option: A Student's Search for Meaning in Today's Economy

BY MARYBETH HUNTER

**H**ere's something all parents have in common: they want what is best for their children. This goes for both educational pursuits and career aspirations.

The trick is, how does one define what is best? Parents want their children to be happy, successful and thoughtful. So how do they channel their children's natural strengths and abilities into the ideal post-high school educational path?

One option that is often overlooked is the vocational technical post-secondary path for Foreign Service children. This could be in lieu of, or in addition to, a traditional four-year college track.

Contemporary society offers complex educational choices—choices that can leave parents and students feeling overwhelmed. While reviewing educational options, they might find themselves pondering the true purpose of education. How does one navigate the financial cost of college and the troubling implications of student debt for young adults? And how can parents ensure—or at least increase the odds—that the skills young people gain relate to the demands of the competitive job market?

Several Foreign Service families have addressed these

difficult questions by exploring vocational technical school options. Here are some reasons why vocational technical schools can be considered an attractive choice.

First, they teach concrete skills that graduates can apply in the job market. Many technical skills are in short supply today and are sorely needed by industry due to the changing nature of labor demands. For example, technical skills such as those used in the construction trades are now in high demand and cannot be outsourced. The work must be done on site, with the available local labor.

Second, this path to remunerative employment is typically faster and targeted to a specific career. Students take anywhere from two to five years (often including apprenticeships or other working periods) to complete a program to become certified or to earn a degree.

*Marybeth Hunter is the education and youth officer in the State Department's Family Liaison Office. She traveled overseas with her Foreign Service family for more than 21 years, and has worked as a teacher and a community liaison office coordinator abroad. To see her complete article, including a resources list, go to [www.afsa.org/education](http://www.afsa.org/education).*

## You need to hold a very important conversation with your parents, who presumably will be paying for some or all college expenditures.

American colleges hold an advantage: traditional U.S. institutions allow you to dabble for your first two years of college, declaring your major in the spring of sophomore year so that you may start to specialize during your last two years of college.

Then there are the block system colleges, like Colorado College or Cornell College in Iowa. At these, you will study one subject at a time, very intensely. Imagine six weeks of nothing but archaeology: going on digs and field trips, reading, writing, watching documentaries and hearing lectures. Some students prefer—and are

more successful with—this intense focus.

Other nontraditional colleges in the United States include those that allow you to create your own major (e.g., Hampshire, Marlboro, Evergreen State, among others), including some that do not have specific course requirements. At the other end of that spectrum are the two St. John's Colleges (one in Annapolis, one in Santa Fe) that teach a classics-based curriculum with no choice of electives. And then there are practical universities like Northeastern, where you alternate studies with work in your field, taking five years to graduate but getting tons of on-the-job experience.

Finally, consider single-gender colleges like Mt. Holyoke or Smith for women; Wabash or Morehouse for men. Most are excellent and not as difficult to get into as their coed equivalents; and they're usually located near other colleges or universities where you can also take classes. Barnard, for example, is literally across the street from Columbia University, so it's not as if you're living in a convent.

Once you've considered these factors and have an idea where and how you might want to undertake your course of study, it's time to find the colleges and universities that are strong in the field or



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## Traditional U.S. institutions allow you to dabble for your first two years of college, declaring your major in the spring of sophomore year.

fields you're interested in. Here's where the internet shines. Below are some websites where you can search for colleges by major, location and other factors. You will probably need at least two one-hour sessions to devote to this task—but this varies greatly depending on your research style and how deeply you want to dig.

### For colleges in the United States (and some in Canada):

[https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/)—College Board's Big Future offers a lot of tools to help you in your college search.

<http://www.diycollegerankings.com>—Counselor/parent Michelle Kretzschmar manages a site that ranks colleges in a completely different way than the usual rankings. For her, easily paying for higher education without going into debt and graduating from college in no more than four years are the top priorities. And if you're an athlete looking to continue playing your sport at college, her additional focus on college athletics is informative.

<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>—This is a comprehensive site where you can search by state and by major and

get all sorts of stats on every college.

Once you've found a couple of colleges using the online tools above, try going to <http://www.collegeresults.org>, where when you type in the name of one college, the site will provide you with the names of similar colleges.

Although the *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings have been given too much weight by the media, you can use them to search for factors such as merit aid: <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/most-merit-aid>.

*U.S. News* and other ranking sites do give you a general idea of what a



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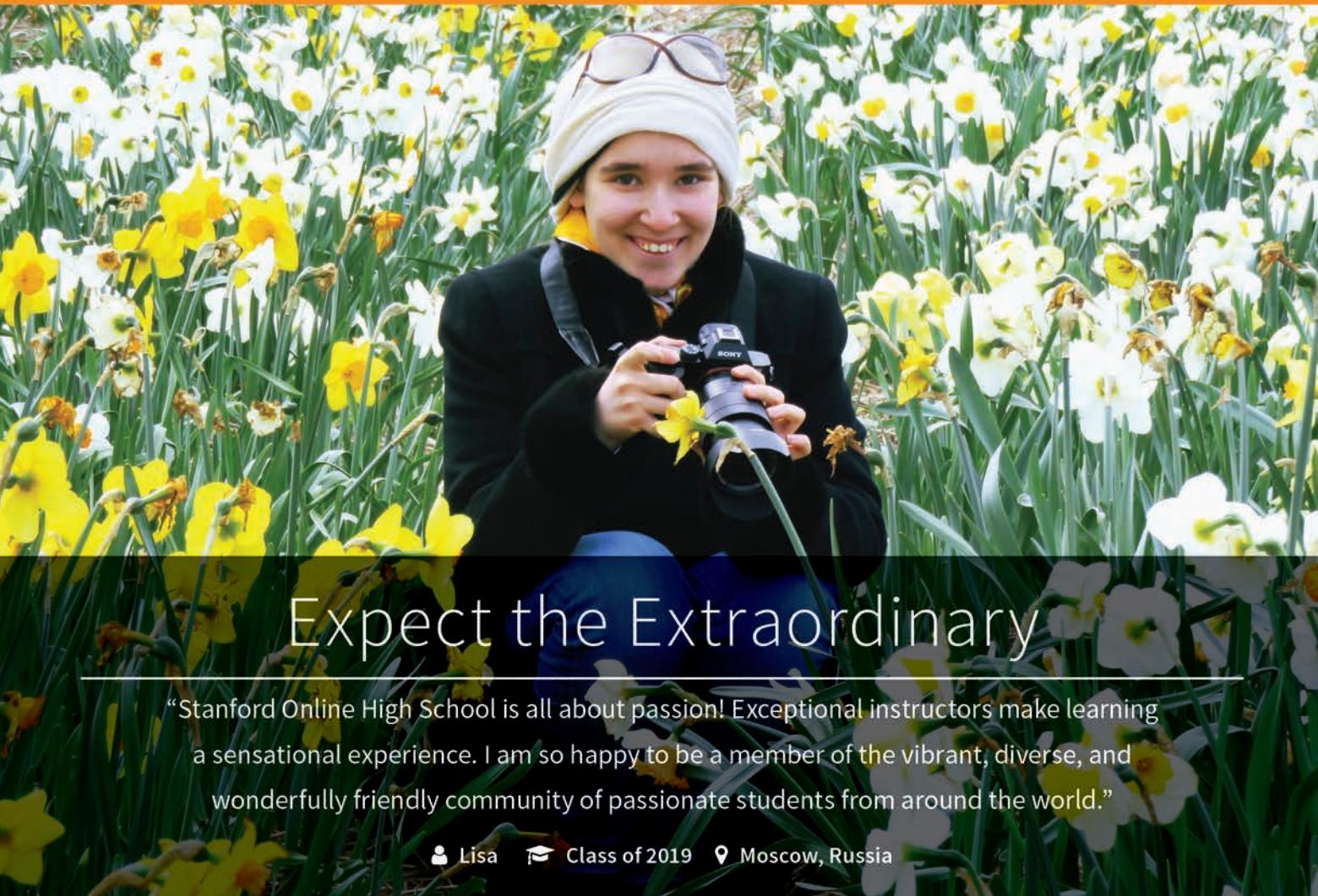
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Depending on how much time you want to spend, you can probably research about three to five colleges a day.

college's reputation is, but you should try not to get tangled in the ranking weeds. The way rankings are calibrated can be highly subjective. You may find the college ranked #79 is a better fit for you than the college ranked #15, and you may get just as good an education at #79. And if cost is a factor, remember that colleges that are just a little less selective may give you more financial or merit aid. That also goes for colleges that are in the middle of the country; for some reason, students tend to gravitate to the coasts.

#### To research universities outside of the United States:

First see if your school offers Unifrog software. This service provides a way to search and save colleges in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and other European countries. If not, try these sites for searching in Europe, Canada, and Australia:

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)—a must if you will be applying to U.K. universities

[www.universitystudy.ca](http://www.universitystudy.ca)—Canada

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/study-in-europe\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/study-in-europe_en)—links to study programs in Europe

<http://www.aaicu.org>—Association of American International Colleges and Universities: international institutions offering a U.S. curriculum

<http://australianuniversities.com.au/colleges/list.php>—Australia

*Did you finish your homework for Days 2-3? You should now have a list of potential colleges to investigate further.*

#### Days 4–7: Research individual colleges.

Now that you have a list of possible colleges based on your research thus far, here is the fun part: researching each col-



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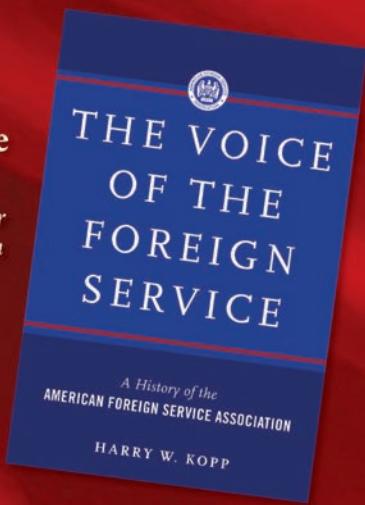
## Spread a little understanding in the New Year!

-Best wishes from FS Books

A History of the American Foreign Service Association

By Harry W. Kopp for the American Foreign Service Association

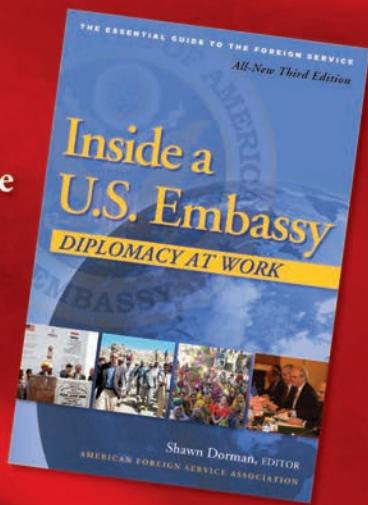
[afsa.org/voice](http://afsa.org/voice)



The Essential Guide to the United States Foreign Service

Edited by Shawn Dorman

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Visit the Family Liaison Office's *College Application FAQs* webpage to learn more about:

- Scholarships
- Choosing a school
- Testing
- Applications



[state.gov/flo/education](http://state.gov/flo/education)

Do not be wedded to the idea that there is only one college that can make you happy.

lege. Why is this fun? Because you get to imagine a possible future at each campus taking specific classes, joining clubs, eating at the cafeteria and studying in the library. Depending on how much time you want to spend, you can probably research about three to five colleges a day before you start blurring details of one school with another. (But that's why you'll be taking notes.)

**1. First, get a rough idea of your chances of admission.** You know your GPA; you know the rigor of your courses; and hopefully you have one SAT or ACT score under your belt by now. These are your stats. How do your stats match up with the typical student accepted by a particular college? You can find out quickly by searching online "Name of College + Acceptance Rate." (Naviance software, should your high school offer it, also provides a gizmo called the Scattergram that is very helpful in determining your odds of acceptance.)

A quick Google search yields an acceptance rate of 5.5 percent for Princeton, and a 67 percent acceptance rate for Allegheny College. A site such as [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com) can provide you with additional quick stats, such as acceptance by gender and average SAT score of accepted students. Your final list will eventually include a mix of reach (Princeton is a reach for anyone, even if you have 1,600 SAT scores and a 4.0 unweighted GPA), match and safety schools. (Match = your stats match those of the average admitted student; Safety = your stats are better than those of the average admitted student.)

**2. Choose a college from your tentative list, and visit that college's website.** Many students go first to Admissions, but

you should click first on Academics—you know, the main reason you're attending college—and check out the curriculum for the major you're interested in. Jot down names of interesting courses and professors. Note course requirements. Look at a secondary major in case your interests change.

**3. Explore further on that college's website.** Go to the school newspaper and read some articles to get a feel for campus issues. Look up activities and clubs. Research courses in other subjects you're interested in outside of your major. Find study abroad programs. Make a note about anything that's interesting and appealing. Not only do these notes help you put together a great list of schools, but you will need them if the college requires a "Why I Want to Attend This College" essay, or if you interview at the college.

**4. If you like what you're seeing, go to the Admissions page.** Write down application type and deadlines, including essay requirements. (Yes, these essay requirements are for the current application year, and may not be updated until August, but they usually don't change from year to year.) Are there additional requirements for specialized programs? Are there early deadlines for scholarships? Does the school offer an early action or early decision deadline? Many colleges have a page or blog written by an admissions officer, who may even answer questions from prospective students.

**5. Once you've exhausted the college's own website, search for information elsewhere.** First stops: YouTube and Facebook. There may be tours, videos of

*Continued on page 110*

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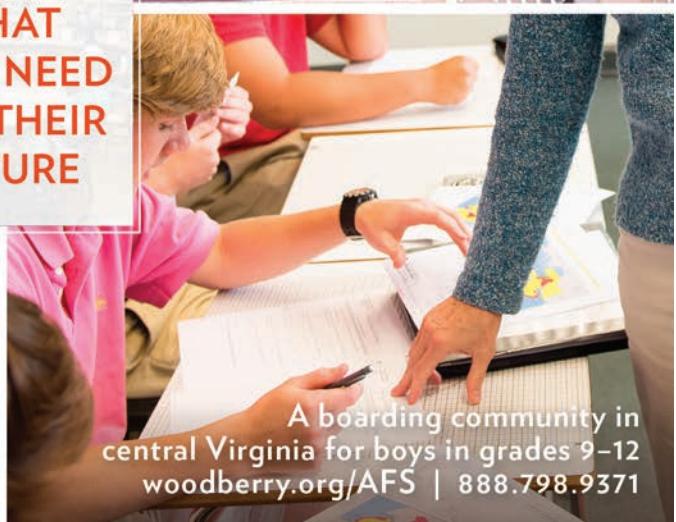
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## SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

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School	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent Int'l.	Levels Offered	AP/IB <sup>♦</sup>	TABS common application	Accept ADD/LD	Miles to Int'l. Airport	International Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage <sup>♦♦</sup>	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (US \$)
<b>ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH</b>													
Milton Academy	102	700	50/50	50	14	K-12	Y/N	N	Limited	8	Y	N	57650
<b>JUNIOR HIGH/SENIOR HIGH</b>													
Admiral Farragut Academy		300	60/40	50	30	8-12	Y/N	N	Limited	22	Y	N	50,000
Southwestern Academy	107	175	60/40	75	75	6-12, PG	Y	Y	Limited	27	Y	Y	39,900
Subiaco Academy	96	189	All Boys	60	15	7-12	YN	Y	Y	249	Y	N	27,060
Woodberry Forest School	107	385	All boys	100	10	9-12	Y/N	Y	N	73	Y	N	55,600
<b>SENIOR HIGH</b>													
Cheshire Academy	98	437	50/50	55	.	8-12 PG	Y/Y	Y	.	42	Y	Y	59,880
EF Academy New York	101	700	55/45	97	95	9-12	N/Y	N	Limited	38	Y	N	41,985-47,770 <sup>a</sup>
<b>OVERSEAS</b>													
American Overseas School-Rome	96	591	50/50	N/A	.	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Y	21	Y	N	13,933-30,334 <sup>c</sup>
Berlin Brandenburg International School	111	700	50/50	20	65	K-12	N/Y	N	Y	15	Y	N	42,000 <sup>c</sup>
EF Academy Oxford	101	160	50/50	100	100	11-12	N/Y	N	N	43	Y	N	46,425 <sup>ac</sup>
EF Academy Torbay	101	300	55/45	100	100	9-12	N/Y	N	N	26	Y	N	46,425 <sup>ac</sup>
Frankfurt International School	113	1,800	50/50	NA	80	K-12	N/Y	N	Limited	19	Y	N	22,120
John F. Kennedy School Berlin	99	1,617	50/50	NA	47	K-12	Y/N	N	Limited	15	Y	N	None
Leysin American School in Switzerland	100	340	50/50	100	80	7-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	75	Y	N	88,000 <sup>d</sup>
TASIS The American School in England	109	700	50/50	24	39	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	8	Y	N	56,871 <sup>bc</sup>
TASIS The American School in Switzerland	109	705	50/50	35	75	PK-12, PG	Y/Y	Limited	Limited	40	Y	N	83,384 <sup>d</sup>
<b>SPECIAL NEEDS</b>													
The Gow School	104	150	87/13	87	33	6-12, PG	NA	N	Y	20	Y	N	65,800

<sup>♦</sup>Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate <sup>♦♦</sup>Dec. 25-Jan 1. NA, Not applicable <sup>a</sup>Sibling discount <sup>b</sup>Financial aid available

<sup>c</sup>Dollar value subject to exchange rate <sup>d</sup>Aid for federal employees <sup>e</sup>Gap year <sup>f</sup>Need-blind admission; will meet full financial need <sup>g</sup>Host families



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## SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

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

School	Page	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent Int'l.	Levels Offered	AP/IB*	TABS common application	Accept ADD/LD	Miles to Int'l. Airport	International Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage**	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (US \$)
<b>DISTANCE LEARNING</b>													
Stanford Online High School	103												
		Enrollment is 704, with a boy/girl distribution of 50/50. State Department covers tuition. WASC Accredited, diploma-granting independent school (7-12). Global and academically motivated student body, American college-preparatory education. Advanced Academic program (AP and university-level courses). Student services and vibrant student life. State Department covers tuition. ohs.stanford.edu											
Texas Tech University TTU K-12	105												
Texas Tech University Worldwide eLearning	97												
<b>OTHER</b>													
AAFSW Associates of the American F.S. Worldwide													
		Publisher of <i>Raising Kids in the Foreign Service</i> . A volunteer organization that supports Foreign Service employees, spouses, partners and members of household. <a href="http://www.aafsw.org">www.aafsw.org</a> See FSHub.org.											
FLO	106												
		Family Liaison Office: Information and resources for Foreign Service families. Contact <a href="mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov">FLOAskEducation@state.gov</a> , or go to <a href="http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm">www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm</a> .											
FSYF	115												
		Foreign Service Youth Foundation: A support network for U.S. Foreign Service youth worldwide. Go to <a href="http://www.fsyf.org">www.fsyf.org</a> .											

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

*Continued from page 106*  
student events or even blogs by current students. (Another fun activity: Search online for “Name of College” + “famous alumni” or “famous graduates.”)

**6. Finally, go to “review” websites, where students and others give honest opinions of their colleges.** Sites to try: [unigo.com](http://unigo.com), [collegeconfidential.com](http://collegeconfidential.com), [niche.com](http://niche.com). Please keep in mind that one disgruntled student’s opinion should not be a factor in your decision; but many disgruntled students might be a red flag.

**Homework status: By Day 7, you should have a list of 10-20 colleges that you’d be happy to attend.**

### What Your List Means

Having this list will allow you to move forward in the application process. But remember that this is just a starting point.

You may be intrigued by a college representative’s visit, or suddenly hear about a college you’ve never heard of before—or even consider attending school in a different country. You may end up hating a college if you finally visit the campus. (Visits, while helpful, are not convenient or affordable for everyone.)

So, your list may change, and that’s a good thing for the next few months. Now that you’re a pro at researching colleges, you can easily find 15 minutes here or there to make the research ongoing. That said, by the end of 11th grade try to stick with the list you’ve got so you can move forward with writing essays over the summer.

Your final college list should include a mix of institutions in cities, suburbs and rural areas; schools that are large, small or in-between; schools that are in different

regions of the country or even in more than one country; and schools that offer several potential majors or programs of interest. Make sure you love all of the colleges on that list, even the safety schools.

Finally, do not be wedded to the idea that there is only one college that can make you happy. There are thousands of institutions where you can get a great education and where you will make lifelong friends. When the college admissions process gets daunting—and it will—look at your list and know that you’ve done your homework and chosen a well-researched list of schools that offer many possibilities.

You could even say that this list represents something bigger than just a college list. It’s not a bad way to approach life: with solid preparation, open expectations and hope for a great adventure. ■

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FROM JUNE 2016 FSJ EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

## Applying to Boarding School: Lessons Learned

BY JOHN F. KROTZER

**T**he reasons parents chose the boarding school route are as varied as the students themselves: unsuitable schooling at post, special needs support, gifted student opportunities and the need for stability have all been regularly cited.

In my conversations with these parents, one thing that most have in common is that boarding school was not part of their child's long-term education plan. Something happened, and suddenly boarding school was an option they needed to evaluate quickly!

Such was the case with us when we learned in 2014 that our next post was going to be Beijing. While the international schools there look great, the requisite language program my wife would enter meant that our oldest daughter would end up attending three different schools during her last three years of high school—a very unappealing proposition to any teenager.

We jointly decided that boarding school in the United States would be the best option for her, and I began to quickly learn as much as I could about the process.

I spoke with the State Department's Family Liaison Office

and the Office of Allowances, and I networked with as many boarding school parents as I could find. (The Facebook page "AAFSW Boarding School Parents," for which I am an administrator, was unfortunately not yet in existence, but is now a great network and resource.) I also did a lot of research online.

Ultimately, she applied to five schools in New England, interviewed on campus at each of them, and waited patiently. We were very optimistic, as she was an honor student with great grades, very strong test scores and lots of extracurricular success.

To our surprise, she was admitted to only one school and waitlisted at the other four. Despite all of our research, we discovered a number of key things about the boarding school application process too late. I hope a few of these lessons will be helpful to those in the Foreign Service thinking about boarding school in the future.

*John F. Krotzer is a Foreign Service family member and, most recently, the community liaison officer at Consulate Mumbai. He and his family are now in Beijing. The complete article appeared in the June 2016 FSJ.*

# Opportunities for Students



## National Security Language Institute for Youth

**Who:** U.S. citizen high school students, ages 15-18, with minimum 2.5 GPA.

**What:** Opportunities to study less commonly taught languages in immersion programs abroad. Languages include Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Korean, Tajiki Persian, Russian and Turkish.

**When/Where:** Summer or academic year/Selected countries worldwide.

**How:** Apply via [www.nslifyouth.org](http://www.nslifyouth.org).

**Funding:** Travel, lodging with host families and language studies are funded.

## Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for High School Students and Young Professionals, Germany

**Who:** High school students (ages 15-18), U.S. citizens, nationals and legal permanent residents, with minimum 3.0 GPA; graduating high school seniors and young professionals (ages 18-24), U.S. citizens, nationals and legal permanent residents, with relevant experience in their career fields (work, internship or volunteer).

**What:** Cultural exchange to study or intern in Germany. Meet with government officials while learning German language and culture. Live with a host family and make connections with State Department program alumni.

**When/Where:** Academic year/Germany (high school students); calendar year (graduating high school seniors and young professionals).

**How:** Apply via [www.usagermanscholarship.org/app](http://www.usagermanscholarship.org/app) (high school students) and [www.usagermanschol](http://www.usagermanschol)

[arship.org/postsecondaryprograms](http://arship.org/postsecondaryprograms) (graduating high school seniors and young professionals).

**Funding:** Travel, lodging and academic studies are funded.

## U.S. State Department Youth Leadership Programs

**Who:** U.S. citizen high school students, ages 15-17. Specific programs may be open only to students from a particular city, state or geographic region.

**What:** Leadership training exchange program to gain firsthand knowledge of foreign cultures and examine globally significant issues.

**When/Where:** Three to four weeks in summer/Worldwide.

**How:** Apply to individual programs via <https://exchanges.state.gov/us>.

**Funding:** Travel, lodging and program fees are funded.

## Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Abroad Program

**Who:** U.S. citizen high school students at time of application, ages 15-18.

**What:** Cultural exchange opportunities to enroll in local high schools and live with host families in selected countries with sizable Muslim populations.

**When/Where:** Academic year/Selected countries worldwide.

**How:** Apply via [www.yes-abroad.org](http://www.yes-abroad.org).

**Funding:** Full scholarship.

## Pathways Internships

**Who:** U.S. citizen students or recent graduates, age 16 and older.

**What:** Paid internship opportunities to work in federal agencies and explore fed-

eral careers while attending school, with possible eligibility for conversion to permanent employment in the Civil Service.

**When/Where:** Full-time and seasonal openings, announced on an ongoing basis/United States.

**How:** Apply to individual vacancies via [www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads](http://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads).

**Funding:** Internships are paid. Payment follows the General Schedule wage plan.

## U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program

**Who:** U.S. citizen college students with minimum 60 credits at start of internship who will be continuing their studies immediately after the internship.

**What:** Opportunities to gain practical, professional experience in a foreign affairs environment and insight into the substance and daily operations of U.S. foreign policy.

**When/Where:** 8-14 weeks, full-time, in summer, spring and fall/U.S. Department of State (Washington, D.C., other U.S. cities and more than 100 U.S. embassies).

**How:** Apply via [usajobs.gov](http://usajobs.gov). Deadlines vary, but traditionally are mid-October for summer, early March for fall and early July for spring of the following year. Interested students should sign up for email alerts using the "Keep Me Informed" feature on [careers.state.gov](http://careers.state.gov) and clicking the "Student Programs" box on the menu. More information at [careers.state.gov/intern/student-internships](http://careers.state.gov/intern/student-internships).

**Funding:** Internships are unpaid. SmartBenefits Metro Transit Subsidy applicable to unpaid U.S. assignments. Students must find their own housing. College credit may be earned.

## Critical Language Scholarship Program

**Who:** U.S. citizen undergraduate and graduate students who have completed one year of coursework at start of program and who are at least 18 years old by May prior to the program.

**What:** Opportunities to study one of 14 critical languages in immersion programs abroad. Languages offered: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish and Urdu.

**When/Where:** Summer/Selected countries worldwide.

**How:** Visit [www.clscholarship.org/index.php](http://www.clscholarship.org/index.php).

**Funding:** Program, housing and travel costs are covered.

## Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship

**Who:** U.S. citizen undergraduates who are Pell Grant recipients and have been accepted into a credit-eligible study abroad program or overseas internship (including internships with the U.S. Department of State) of at least two weeks duration for students studying at a two-year institution and four weeks for those at a four-year institution.

**When/Where:** Spring, summer, fall or academic year/Any country except Cuba or those on the U.S. Department of State travel warning list.

**How:** Apply via [www.gilmanscholarship.org](http://www.gilmanscholarship.org). Deadlines vary according to program.

**Funding:** Up to \$5,000, with an addi-

tional \$3,000 available for critical-need language study.

## Boren Awards for International Study—Boren Scholarships (undergrads) and Boren Fellowships (graduate students)

**Who:** U.S. citizen undergraduate or graduate students in or applying to a U.S. graduate degree program.

**What:** Funding for study abroad.

**When:** For scholarships, semester, academic year and summer; for STEM fields only, summer. For fellowships, 12 weeks to one year.

**Where:** Worldwide excluding Western Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

**How:** Apply via <https://borenawards.org>.



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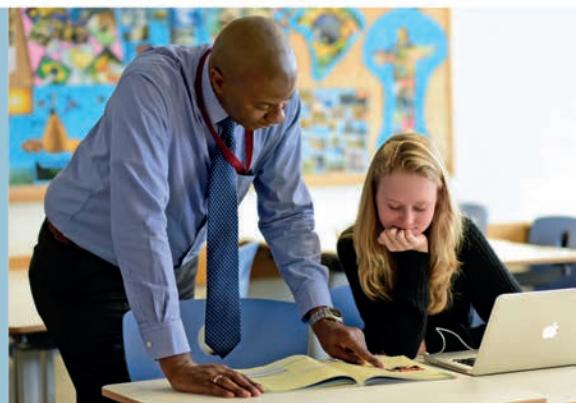
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org/apply-now. Note that Boren Fellowship applicants must commit to working in the federal government for at least one year after graduation.

**Funding:** Scholarships, up to \$20,000 for study abroad; fellowships, up to \$24,000 for overseas study and up to \$6,000 for domestic language study.

### Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Summer Enrichment Program (undergraduate)

**Who:** U.S. citizen full-time undergraduate students with a minimum 3.2 GPA.

**What:** Six-week program designed to provide undergraduates with a deeper understanding of current issues, trends and career opportunities in international affairs.

**When/Where:** Summer/Washington, D.C.

**How:** Apply via [www.rangelprogram.org](http://www.rangelprogram.org). Deadline is early February.

**Funding:** Tuition, travel, housing, two meals per day and a stipend of \$3,200.

### Charles B. Rangel Graduate Fellowship Program

**Who:** U.S. citizens who plan to attend graduate school and who are interested in a Foreign Service career. Members of minority groups historically underrepresented in the Foreign Service and those with financial need are encouraged to apply.

**What:** Funding for two years of graduate study in a field related to the work of the Department of State and two paid summer internships, the first on Capitol Hill and the second at a U.S. embassy. After graduation, fellows must fulfill a five-year service commitment as a Foreign Service officer with the Department of State.

**When:** First internship takes place

the summer before the start of graduate school in the fall.

**Where:** U.S. graduate school of candidate's choice. Internships in D.C. and abroad.

**How:** Apply via [www.rangelprogram.org](http://www.rangelprogram.org).

**Funding:** Costs of graduate study (tuition and living expenses) are covered, up to \$37,500 per academic year. Internships are paid.

### Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program

**Who:** U.S. citizens planning to attend graduate school in a field related to the work of the U.S. Department of State and who are interested in a Foreign Service career. Members of minority groups historically underrepresented in the Foreign Service and those with financial need are encouraged to apply.

**What:** Funding for senior year and the first year of graduate school, two paid summer internships with the Department of State. After graduation, fellowship recipients must fulfill a five-year service commitment as a Foreign Service officer with the State Department.

**When:** First internship takes place the summer before the start of graduate school.

**Where:** U.S. graduate school approved by the Pickering Program.

**How:** Apply via [www.pickeringfellowship.org](http://www.pickeringfellowship.org).

**Funding:** Up to \$37,500 per academic year. Internships are paid.

### Fulbright U.S. Student Program

**Who:** U.S. citizen graduating college seniors, master's students, doctoral students and young professionals.

**What:** A wide range of fellowships for academic study, research and teaching English abroad.

**When/Where:** Varies according to program/Around the world.

**How:** Current students must apply through their school. See: [eca.state.gov/fulbright/fulbright-programs](http://eca.state.gov/fulbright/fulbright-programs) for a full list of programs, and <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/fulbright-program-advisers> for a list of Fulbright on-campus advisors.

**Funding:** Varies based on program.

### Presidential Management Fellowship

**Who:** U.S. citizen graduate students in the final academic year of their degree or U.S. citizens who have completed a graduate degree within two years of the application deadline, who have a clear interest in public service.

**What:** The premier federal government leadership development program, designed to develop a cadre of potential government leaders.

**When/Where:** Two years, full time/Washington, D.C., and Department of State offices around the United States.

**How:** Apply via [www.pmf.gov](http://www.pmf.gov) and [www.usajobs.org](http://www.usajobs.org). Application opens for two weeks during September.

**Funding:** Two-year appointment as a salaried federal government employee.

### Virtual Student Federal Service\*

**Who:** U.S. citizen recent high school graduates starting college or university in the fall and current undergraduates.

**What:** Opportunities to work on projects at various federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of State, Department of Defense, USAID, etc.

**When:** 5-10 hours weekly throughout the academic year.

**Where:** Students remain on campus and work online.

**How:** Apply via [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). Students apply for up to three specific projects. For details, see [www.state.gov/vsfs](http://www.state.gov/vsfs). Applica-

tions are due in July for the following academic year. Interested students should sign up to receive the program announcement using the "Keep Me Informed" feature on careers.state.gov and clicking the "Student Programs" box on the menu.

*\*Formerly the Virtual Student Foreign Service, this program rebranded itself in fall 2017 as the Virtual Student Federal Service and now includes more than 40 agencies.*

### U.S. Foreign Service Internship

**Who:** U.S. citizen undergraduate sophomores or juniors with a 3.2 GPA and an interest in international affairs.

**What:** A two-year Foreign Service internship that takes place during the summer. The first summer, students are in Washington, D.C., and work on a policy

desk while receiving classroom education about U.S. foreign policy. The second summer is spent at an embassy abroad.

**When/Where:** Two years, full time/ Washington, D.C., and Department of State offices around the United States.

**How:** Apply via [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). The application window opens for a week during late September. More information at <https://careers.state.gov/usfsip>.

**Funding:** Appointment for two summers as a salaried federal employee.

### Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Internship

**Who:** Students at an accredited college or university.

**What:** An internship concerning diplomatic history. Interns listen to and read

records of oral history for stories that could be noted in "Moments in U.S. Diplomatic History." Interns may also sit in on oral history interviews with Foreign Service officers and ambassadors.

**When/Where:** During the summer and academic year. Located at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Virginia. Online internships are also a possibility.

**How:** Email Executive Director Nathan Holt the following: a resumé, cover letter and 3- to 5-page writing sample. Deadlines for applications are early December for the spring semester; mid-March for the summer semester; and mid-July for the fall semester. Visit <https://adst.org/about-adst/interns> for more information.

**Funding:** Unpaid except for a stipend to help cover transportation costs. ■

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## Will a Coherent Strategy Emerge?

### U.S. Counterterrorism From Nixon to Trump—Key Challenges, Issues and Responses

*Michael B. Kraft and Edward Marks, CRC Press, 2017, \$69.95/hardcover, \$47.18/Kindle, 240 pages.*

REVIEWED BY PARKER BORG

Terrorism as a military tactic can be traced back at least to Roman times, but for Americans it only began surfacing in the past 50 years—and mostly in foreign lands. Events of 9/11 dramatically changed our perspective. Terrorism, which had plagued most of the rest of the world for generations, hit Americans at home for the first time.

The George W. Bush administration responded to 9/11 as an existential national crisis and declared a global war on terrorism, one which put security ahead of personal privacy and Fourth Amendment freedoms. Battling this new terrorism threat and the ramifications of our responses to it seems sometimes to have become the overriding U.S. foreign policy concern of the early 21st century.

Michael B. Kraft and Edward Marks have written a new book about U.S. efforts to combat terrorism in the years between the Nixon and Trump administrations. Up front I need to acknowledge that I worked with both of the authors in State's counterterrorism office during the Reagan administration.

Before opening the book, I wondered what would be the objective of this volume. Would the target be a general audience interested in the evolving world of terrorist threats and U.S. responses? Or perhaps the audience might be future policymakers seeking analysis about the effectiveness of American actions over the years? Maybe it would be a blueprint of

current problems and recommendations for the Trump administration? All could serve as useful contributions.

The opening page offers an excellent enticement to read further: high praise by nine academics and practitioners in opening blurbs. The preface lays out that the book "is intended to put into context the strategic challenge facing the Trump administration," asking whether the new administration would deal with the problem as an existential threat as the Bush administration had done, or as merely a serious threat as the Obama administration did.

This is not a long book: only six chapters and 206 pages, of which the last 83 pages are "Key Documents," consisting mostly of excerpts from statements by U.S. officials, but also a few references to documents from the Obama years and the first months of the Trump administration.



Of the final sections, Chapter Five on the Obama administration is the strongest, setting forth the efforts after 2009 to scale back on the excesses of the Bush administration and providing good perspective on the state of play on cybersecurity, countering violent extremism, lone wolf terrorists and international cooperation.

Chapter Three, covering the early years of U.S. terrorism policy from Nixon to Clinton (only 12 pages to cover these 32 years, and given the title "Background"), is the weakest part of the book. Considering the book's title, this section should probably have been given more attention.

Most of the chapter focuses on the rise of modern terrorism (although omitting developments in Latin America). In its five final pages it reviews organization within the U.S. government to fight terrorism, a bit of U.S. legislation and a few U.S. military

**Before 9/11 the war against terrorism focused on international cooperation, police actions and the judicial system, and only occasionally on operations by specially trained military units.**

The authors are to be commended for this useful compendium.

The first chapter provides a solid discussion of the terrorist threat, the key elements of the policies of the Bush and Obama administrations, and the questions facing the Trump administration. The second chapter, labeled "Definitions, Sanctions and Legislation," looks specifically at these three issues.

The final four chapters examine terrorism from the perspective of separate administrations. One problem with the book is that the first chapter is sufficiently comprehensive that the final chapters occasionally seem repetitive.

actions, but overlooks the evolution of policy in these years.

While those developments may be less relevant now because of 9/11, many current U.S. policies and programs trace their foundations to these earlier years. The chapter doesn't examine actions to enhance either interagency or international cooperation, what might have been learned from these policies, or whether any have contemporary relevance.

Anti-terrorism laws and the programs created as a result of legislation are the core of the volume. While the provisions of the legislation are sometimes spelled out, there is little background about the inter-

nal politics behind various initiatives (e.g., administration sponsored? put forward by one party?) and not much effort to analyze the effectiveness of any of these laws, programs and policies over time.

Beyond the threat of the so-called Islamic State and lone wolf terrorists, one wonders what other terrorism issues might emerge in the future. What should the United States be doing to prepare?

The book discusses the threat of cyber-terrorism and makes brief reference to the new role of the internet as a meeting place for terrorists, but the authors give little attention to “enhanced interrogation,” for instance, other than noting President Obama’s opposition (whether it’s current policy or not, this is of the historical record).

Likewise, there are only a few descriptive paragraphs about drones. What has been or should be our policy regarding this latest weapon of choice against individual terrorists?

The elephant in the room is the question of U.S. military involvement. Before 9/11 the war against terrorism focused on international cooperation, police actions and the judicial system, and only occasionally on operations by specially trained military units.

Since 9/11, the role of the U.S. military has expanded to the point that it seems the first reaction to any terrorist incident is likely to be a military response—and almost every military action overseas is labeled as part of the war against terrorism. The authors describe this growing involvement, but seem to accept it without analyzing its effectiveness or its impact, either on the terrorist threat or in augmenting the ranks of new generations of anti-American terrorists.

The book’s final chapter, “The Policy Challenge for the Trump Administration,” sets forth again the choice on counterter-

rorism policy between Bush’s existential threat and Obama’s serious threat. But rather than recommending an option, the authors state: “It has become clear that it [terrorism] cannot be separated from other foreign policy concerns.”

In its early months the Trump administration already added border security, immigration and refugees into its mix of terrorism concerns. In the final paragraph, the authors—without referring to these new sources of terrorism—note that the most significant change of the Trump administration to date has been the activism of the military. In the book’s penultimate sentence, the authors conclude by saying “eventually a coherent strategy will emerge.”

We are each left to judge for ourselves whether this might happen.

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*Ambassador (ret.) Parker W. Borg served as deputy director of the State Department’s counterterrorism office from 1984 to 1986. A retired career FSO, he worked on national security issues at the Center for International Policy from 2002 to 2003 and taught international relations at universities in Rome and Paris from 2005 to 2009.*

## Finding Her Place in the Middle East

### **Veils in the Vanguard: Insights of an American Ambassador’s Wife in Kuwait**

*Catherine Raia Silliman, CreateSpace, 2018, \$9.99/paperback, \$5.99/Kindle, 218 pages.*

REVIEWED BY DONNA SCARAMASTRA GORMAN

As the wife of a former U.S. ambassador to Kuwait, Catherine Raia Silliman certainly has a unique perspective on the Middle East. But if that were all she had to offer, her story of the two years she spent in

Kuwait as his wife might have quickly grown stale.

Fortunately, Mrs. Silliman is a talented writer and a Middle East expert in her own right. She first traveled to Izmir, Turkey, in 1976 as a 16-year-old exchange student. She was in Cairo during her junior year at Tufts University in 1979 when Iranian students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran. And she later earned a master’s degree in Middle Eastern studies from the University of Chicago.

Silliman was a State Department Foreign Service officer for nearly 15 years before marrying FSO Doug Silliman and moving with him to an assignment in Islamabad. Shortly afterward, she resigned from the department and accompanied him on assignments to Tunisia, Jordan and Turkey while raising two sons.

In 2014, her husband became the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait, and Silliman decided to write a book “as a way of helping to narrow the huge void in our cultural understanding, to share with others the complexities of this region and, in particular, shed light on the important role women play.”

Foreign Service readers will be riveted by the inside story of how the family waited through an interminable ambassadorial nomination process. Mr. Silliman was informed in April 2013, while he was finishing up two years on an unaccompanied assignment in Baghdad, that he was being considered for the position of ambassador to Kuwait. In December of that year he was formally nominated but, because of political infighting in Congress, the confirmation process slowed to a trickle.

The family waited for word of their future, stuck in limbo in Northern Virginia, trying to make schooling decisions for their teenage sons. Amb. Silliman was finally confirmed in July 2014, and the family arrived in Kuwait just one month later.

**Silliman slowly finds her feet as she begins to meet prominent Kuwaiti women—and men—and starts to unravel the mysteries of Kuwaiti culture.**

Once in Kuwait, Silliman has to figure out how best to fulfill her role as spouse of—and equal partner to—the ambassador in a culture where few other spouses participate in receptions or public events, many activities are separated by gender and men frequently don't even shake hands with women. Silliman slowly finds her feet as she begins to meet prominent Kuwaiti women—and men—and starts to unravel the mysteries of Kuwaiti culture.

Silliman explains the ways in which Kuwaiti women themselves support and encourage the culture of gender separa-

tion, outlining the various perspectives, both positive and negative, that Kuwaiti females have on gender segregation laws.

Far from feeling restricted by their status as women in a country where females frequently cover their heads and bodies under abayas, many Kuwaiti women support the existing social structures. Kuwaiti women are progressive in comparison with women from neighboring countries: they can drive, vote and attend university. Yet they are still limited in their choices, in everything from career and marriage to



fashion, by the idea of honor that is so important to both men and women in Kuwaiti families.

During her time in Kuwait, Silliman attends weddings, funerals, iftar dinners and academic conferences. She covers divorce, religion and even Western advertising in this broad-ranging memoir that will interest anyone who has ever considered doing a tour in the Middle East. ■

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*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.*

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# Maps Are Useful – But Can Be Misleading

BY EDWARD L. PECK

**W**ork in the Foreign Service, dealing with U.S. interests, objectives and activities all over the world, derives some utility from knowing what our three-dimensional Earth really looks like. It cannot be reproduced with anything remotely resembling accuracy on a two-dimensional piece of paper, but awareness of the problems resulting from the effort to try can be useful.

My interest in maps, which has become a bit of a fixation, began in the fifth grade, when I asked a teacher how Australia, which the map showed as a rather small South Pacific island, could be ranked as a continent. We went down the hall, and for the first time I saw a globe. It revealed that Australia is in fact an extremely large island, and merits the label. But I was puzzled: why the visual disparity? I have since learned.

Flattening Earth's image requires that parts of it be extensively stretched, in width and height, resulting in four highly significant distortions: size, shape, direction and distance. The larger the area covered, and the farther it is from the equator, the greater the distortions (especially east-west). Consider this: the North Pole, which is a point, appears on a map of the world as an area that is 24,000 miles wide—that's the length of the equator. This explains why Greenland looks huge:



World Map – Mercator Projection – from 1569. This version produced Mark Lane and MapLink. © 2005 ODT Maps, <https://ManyWaysToSeeTheWorld.org>

It really isn't.

Americans, who have been raised with and rely on Gerardus Mercator's 16th-century map, are not aware of how inaccurately it presents the world. For example, the distance from Tokyo to Singapore is actually 210 percent longer than from London to Moscow; yet is only 10 percent longer on the map, because Tokyo-Singapore is more vertical, more north-south, and closer to the equator. London-Moscow is horizontal, more east-west, and farther from the equator.

There are additional issues, one of

which is to accept memories of what we have seen as representing reality. The United States and Russia are only 55 miles apart in the Bering Sea, but are widely separated visually on most maps. Santiago, Chile, is actually farther east than Key West, Florida.

Going through the Panama Canal from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic, your ship is actually traveling northwest. The last state you will fly over from Miami to Tokyo is Alaska, on a Great Circle route, since you cannot do it on a map's straight line.

The distortions are amplified in the Mercator projection map. Because the equator is far below the middle of the Mercator map, the relative size of the Southern Hemisphere in comparison with the Northern Hemisphere is greatly reduced: Europe looks as large as South America. In addition, the 70 percent of Earth's surface that is water is crammed

---

*Edward L. Peck, a Foreign Service officer from 1956 to 1989, served as chief of mission in Mauritania and Iraq. His other assignments included postings to Sweden, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt. Ambassador Peck later served as executive secretary of the American Academy of Diplomacy. Currently he travels the world on cruise ships giving lectures on topics such as "Thinking About Our World" and "Representing a Superpower—What American Ambassadors Do, and Why They Should be Professionals." He shares maps of the world with all his audiences, and explains why in this essay.*

into a much smaller area.

The Peters projection map—also known as the Gall-Peters projection (named for the two men who helped bring it to prominence, James Gall in 1855 and Arno Peters in the early 1970s)—deals with some of these problems. The Peters projection map shows each country in its correct relative size. It is still a two-dimensional projection, so there are some issues, but it is far closer to reality than Mercator.

Controversial when it was introduced (but recently added to the school curriculum in Boston), the Peters projection map presents an image that is startlingly different than what we are used to seeing, and vastly more accurate and informative. I have enjoyed distributing that map to A-100 classes at the Foreign Service Institute, eight Department of Defense schools and on 107 cruises on 11 different cruise lines, always generating a highly gratifying, surprised reaction. (Thank you to ODT Maps, which provided me many hundreds of copies of that and other eye-opening maps to distribute.)

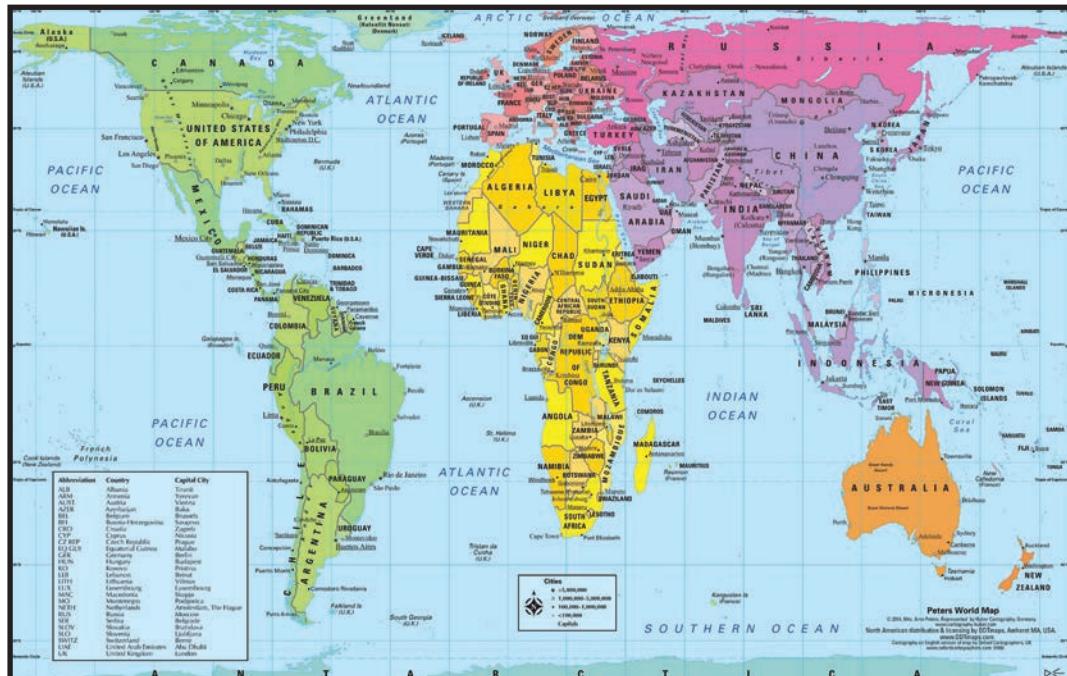
The Hobo-Dyer projection is another example of the cylindrical equal-area projection, but it aims to be more visually pleasing than the Peters projection. The map, created by Mick Dyer for ODT, is two-sided, with one side reversing north and south, as shown here, for additional perspective.

Americans are justifiably not famous for their profound interest in or knowledge of much of the rest of the world, in part because of our country's vast

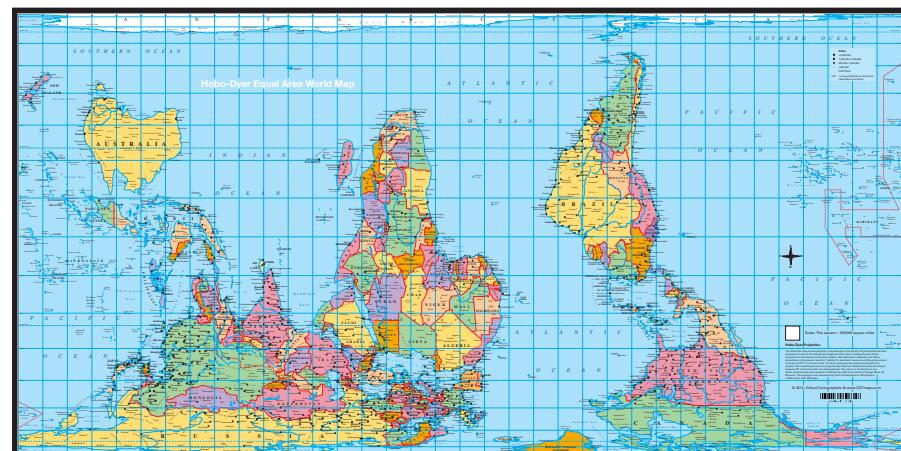
size and relative isolation. We have two ocean borders, thousands of miles wide, and only two land borders. By contrast, Brazil has borders with every country in South America except two.

Better maps and greater attention to geography in our educational system would not be very expensive, but it could be very beneficial. ■

Note: ODT Maps is offering FSJ readers \$25 worth of world maps free. Use the code "donation\$25" when checking out of the ODT Maps store at <http://ManyWaysToSeeTheWorld.org>. Special thanks to ODT Maps Founder Bob Abramms for generously sharing the maps ([ODTmaps.com](http://ODTmaps.com)).



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Hobo-Dyer Equal Area Projection. © 2015 <https://ManyWaysToSeeTheWorld.org>



This was our first outing after arriving at post: a day hike with colleagues to Ureka, the southernmost part of Equatorial Guinea's Bioko Island, 32 kilometers off the coast of West Africa. Known as the wettest place on the African continent and one of the world's 10 wettest locations, Ureka receives more than 34 feet of rain annually. I love this black & white photo; it's as if the hikers were being called to the outcropping of rocks and trees at the water's edge. And yes, it was raining. ■

---

*Sabrina Beauchamp is a Foreign Service family member currently assigned to Malabo. A certified personal trainer and fitness nutrition specialist, she enjoys photography, tennis and cooking, and also teaches swimming. She took the photo with her Samsung Note 5.*

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