

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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DECEMBER 2020



FACE OF THE FS AWARDEES IN ACTION

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Foreign Service Proud: Very, Very Proud

BY ERIC RUBIN

This month, we have the pleasure and privilege of honoring members of the Foreign Service community for special contributions to our Service and to our country's security, prosperity and standing in the world. We are especially pleased to honor Ambassador Edward Perkins with the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award celebrating his decades of public service and his dedication as a teacher, mentor and role model for current and future generations in the Foreign Service.

Sadly, Amb. Perkins left us last month at the age of 92. His was a great American life and a great Foreign Service life.

In the compelling interview with Amb. Perkins in this issue, he tells the story of calling on President Ronald Reagan before departing for Pretoria as the first Black U.S. ambassador to South Africa (those were the days when American presidents routinely met with their outgoing ambassadors, not just as a courtesy but as a sign of respect for the Foreign Service).

President Reagan asked Amb. Perkins what he hoped to achieve in Pretoria, and Amb. Perkins said boldly that he hoped to help end the system of apartheid. And he did exactly that.

Reading of the profiles of our award recipients, I am



Ambassador Eric Rubin is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

struck by their spirit of sacrifice, generosity and patriotism. The thought occurred to me: these are not cynical people. Like the Foreign Service as a whole, they are among the least cynical people I know.

The stories of how our colleagues helped bring home more than 100,000 of their fellow Americans when COVID-19 struck remind me of what service really means. Service in the face of danger, service to others, service to a larger ideal. We should be proud to uphold that vision, and we should keep it in mind as our country and the world navigate uncharted waters.

I am also gratified to know that the spirit of constructive dissent is still strong in our Service. As a recipient of the AFSA William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent myself, I know how intimidating it can be to challenge the system and challenge senior leaders. It is lamentable that there have been very few Dissent Channel messages sent in recent years, and that the Secretary's Open Forum is leaderless and seemingly moribund. Both were a response to the difficult days of the Vietnam War, when members of the Foreign Service were unable to find a channel for expressing their constructive concerns about the war.

Some, like former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake (also featured in this month's edition), resigned in frustration. Others suffered reprisals and in a few cases were the targets of wiretaps by State Department senior leaders.

The dissent awards we announce this month honor our colleagues who spoke up, constructively and internally, with the goal of advancing our national interest and improving our policies. They deserve our deepest thanks and respect.

Dan Serwer's essay on the 25th anniversary of the Dayton Accords emphasizes that, at the end of the day, diplomacy is the chief alternative to war. It should help us remember the good that America and Americans can do in the world, and how much the world still needs us to lead despite our own political divisions and flaws. The Balkans are at peace today. It's not a perfect peace, and there are still difficult challenges to overcome. Compared to the bloody days of the 1990s, however, it is something to be valued and cherished.

The hashtag #FSProud is just that—a hashtag. But it represents a lot more. We can and should feel justifiably proud of the contributions that members of our Service have made to advance our country's interests and to make life better for others. We know it is not easy duty, and frequently comes with a heavy dose of sacrifice and danger.

We at AFSA are working hard to share the news of what the Foreign Service is doing: with the American public, with the media and with our representatives in Congress. I hope all of you will as well, as we begin a new year with hopes for health, safety and a return to prosperity for everyone. ■

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Recognizing Excellence

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Every December, the *FSJ* celebrates and honors the recipients of the annual AFSA awards for constructive dissent, for outstanding performance and for lifetime contributions to American diplomacy. We continue that tradition this month, at the close of an unusual and difficult year—from the impeachment hearings that brought Foreign Service colleagues into the national spotlight as witnesses, to the COVID-19 pandemic that led to worldwide disruption.

Election Day in the United States was peaceful, and as we go to press, the transition to a Joe Biden presidency begins. At the same time, Donald Trump has yet to concede defeat, and on Nov. 10 Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told the press there will be a “smooth transition to a second Trump administration.” We’re in for a bumpy ride to January.

COVID-19 caused indefinite postponement of the AFSA awards ceremony but did not deter us from recognizing excellence in the Foreign Service, as illustrated by the 13 recipients of this year’s awards.

Our coverage begins with an interview with Ambassador Edward J. Perkins, recipient of AFSA’s highest honor—the Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy.

While finalizing pages, we learned the sad news that Ed Perkins passed away on Nov. 7. We are grateful to have had a chance to hear him reflect on his journey. His story



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

is inspiring, and his enduring optimism is contagious.

This year was not the easiest time for voicing dissent. Yet, in a climate that prized loyalty over honesty, colleagues spoke out and stood up, dissented within the system and tried to right policies and practices they saw as wrong.

Julie M. Stufft received the Christian A. Herter Award for a senior-level FSO for her work at the National Security Council advocating for protection of American citizens through strong travel advisory messaging in the early days of the pandemic.

Monica Smith also received the Herter Award, for successfully challenging the approach of the USAID West Bank and Gaza Mission to managing U.S. engagement in the water sector.

Jason Smith received the William R. Rivkin Award for a mid-level officer for his dissent regarding language used by Embassy Jerusalem in addressing different religious communities.

Lindsay Dana received the W. Averell Harriman Award for an entry-level officer for her successful efforts to change a gender-biased non-immigrant visa online application form.

Dave Heddleston received the F. Allen “Tex” Harris Award for an FS specialist for successfully urging the State Department to reexamine certain overseas security measures.

The recipients of the 2020 Awards for Exemplary Performance all went “above and beyond” to support and strengthen their overseas communities.

Rick Bassett (Avis Bohlen Award

Editorial Calendar 2021

JAN-FEB: U.S. Diplomacy for the 2020s

MARCH: Notes to the New Administration

APRIL: FS Realities in an Age of Disruption

MAY: Polar Diplomacy & Climate Change

JUNE: Great Power Competition

JULY-AUG: Diversity, Inclusion, Equity: An Update on Progress

SEPTEMBER: 20 Years after 9/11—Diplomacy Lessons

OCTOBER: Afghanistan Today

NOVEMBER: In Their Own Write

DECEMBER: AFSA Award Winners

for an FS family member) brought the community together through music in Liberia. Jenny McCoy (Nelson B. Delavan Award for an office management specialist) helped the community rebuild after a terror attack in Sri Lanka. Jennifer Mauldin (M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Office coordinator) created a strong support network in Karachi, a post hit hard by COVID-19.

Two FSOs were selected to receive the Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy: Alexandra Shema helped strengthen Moldova’s fledgling democracy, and Rafi Foley championed efforts to restore democracy in Venezuela.

Jason Vorderstrasse (Contributions to the Association Award) has done more than anyone to honor forgotten diplomats who died in the line of duty overseas.

AFSA Senior Labor Management Adviser James Yorke (AFSA Special Achievement Award) has directly assisted thousands of AFSA members during 25 years with the association.

Beyond the awards, you’ll find a look at the Dayton Accords at 25, the commiseratory conundrum and managing college during a pandemic.

We’d love to hear from you. Please consider writing for the *Journal* in 2021. Best wishes for the year ahead. ■

A Tribute to Ralph Bunche

Thank you for publishing James Dandridge's informative article about Dr. Ralph J. Bunche's enduring contributions to peacebuilding and diplomacy ("Ralph J. Bunche, U.N. Architect," September).

In 1997 the State Department named its library in honor of Ralph Bunche in recognition of his political and humanitarian contributions to the department and the United Nations, and for his contributions to the world of learning.

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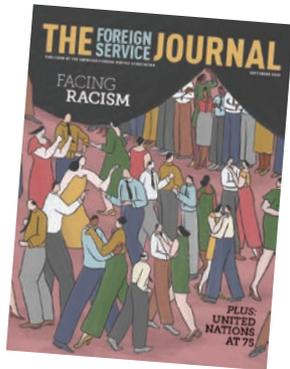
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Diversity Déjà Vu

Your September *Journal* ("Facing Racism") brought on a sense of diversity déjà vu. During the five decades in which I served, there was a lot said and little done about diversity, except under the dictates of litigation; and it appears we are still on that path.

To avoid undue length, here are a few suggestions designed to exploit the nature of our system and FSOs' ambitions to help improve the situation:

- Leaders can immediately mandate that all meetings be diverse, ideally including diversity in race, gender and sexual orientation; but at the very least we ought to be able to manage full gender representation.
- Leaders can take on responsibilities



for recruitment and retention, and ask that subordinates do the same. The idea is that any contact with an outside group, such as a civic organization, business council or university, should include a recruiting pitch.

- More systemically, contributions to retention and recruitment should be made precepts for assignment and promotion. This change could be initiated by leaders and assignment decision-makers asking whether candidates had done anything to promote diverse recruitment and retention. If bureaus owning desirable assignments asked the question a few times, word would get around fast.

• Over time, demonstrated support for recruitment and retention should be included in precepts for senior leadership assignments and promotion into the Senior Service. Mere assertion of commitment to equal employment opportunity principles would not suffice.

- Diplomats in Residence (DIRs) could be instructed to focus greater attention on historically Black colleges and universities, and other institutions focused on diverse communities. DIRs could be rated based on their success in recruiting from such communities, and promotion and award panels could be instructed to give increased weight to such success.

It should be standard operating procedure that all contacts with higher educational institutions, such as participation in seminars, be coordinated with DIRs to ensure recruitment is included.

When the State Department is serious about a goal or an initiative, an important way it demonstrates this attitude and determination is to name a special coordinator with authority and a high-level direct report.

Of course, there are many systemic changes that should be made focused on promotion and assignment precepts, as well as other possible changes. But there is always a risk that such efforts will devolve into long-term admiration of the problem, rather than solving it.

Moreover, such changes do nothing to say that this time it's going to be different. The changes noted above make that point, while working toward longer-term solutions.

Henry S. Ensher
FSO, retired
McLean, Virginia

Yes, We Need Options for POVs!

I wholeheartedly support Warren Leishman's recommendation that FS members be given alternatives to shipping personal vehicles to and from overseas posts ("Stop Shipping Your Personal Vehicle!" Speaking Out, October). From personal experience, I realize that the default to "shipping" causes not only extra expense for the government; in some cases, it also rules out better options for employees.

When I was posted to Guatemala, I had to fight to be allowed to drive our vehicle back instead of shipping it, even when I



Submit letters
to the editor:
journal@afsa.org

demonstrated the cost savings. There was supposedly no “overland route,” although we had no trouble driving through Mexico to our home leave in California. If we had not driven, we would have been waiting for our vehicle in D.C. and had to rent a car during our home leave.

When I was posted to Malta, shipping our 6-year-old car to a right-hand-drive island seemed like a waste of government money. Instead, we purchased a new car from a dealer in Malta. Using our tax-free status meant it was relatively inexpensive, and we were able to sell it for almost what we paid when we departed three years later.

As a management officer, I also helped a few employees purchase used cars from Japan, another right-hand-drive country. Because most Japanese keep their cars less than three years, used cars are cheap, and the shipping from Japan was less expensive than from most other posts.

Some employees then sold those cars to incoming employees, so there were further savings to the government. And this provided another advantage to employees: They had a car on arrival rather than waiting, sometimes for months, for their shipment to arrive.

Obviously, none of us benefited from the thousands in government savings. In fact, if my husband and I hadn’t had enough funds to purchase our vehicle outright, my idea wouldn’t have worked.

So I think Mr. Leishman’s idea to give a POV stipend would encourage more folks to save the government an average \$8,000-9,000 for round-trip shipping while offering other advantages, including the environmental ones he also mentions.

Marietta Bartoletti

FSO, retired

San Francisco, California

A Good Suggestion Now, and Then

Warren Leishman’s Speaking Out piece (“Stop Shipping Your Personal Vehicle!” October) made some commonsense recommendations to both save money for the U.S. government and minimize the frustrations associated with transfers overseas and between posts. It also brought back memories of my first posting in Tunis.

After a year of Arabic in Washington, I transferred with my family to Tunis to complete a one-year U.S. Information Agency junior officer tour and a follow-on year at the FSI campus in Tunis. Under USIA, new FSOs typically spent one year rotating through different sections of the embassy in preparation

for serving as spokespeople during our careers.

Tunisia in the early 1990s was saddled with a molasses-like bureaucracy, and the admin officer asked me during my time in his office to look into ways to streamline the customs and shipping processes that frustrated many an incoming embassy staffer.

This was doubly the case for FSI students, who were assigned to Tunis for less than a full year of training, but often spent up to half of their time at post without their household effects (HHE) and POV. In my own family’s case, we didn’t receive our HHE until after Thanksgiving, well after the weather had changed and with an awful lot of baby food and undersized diapers to sell.



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One of my recommendations involved forgoing HHE shipments for FSI students but doubling their air freight allowances, theoretically saving money and also ensuring students had access to their shipments after only a few weeks at post.

In support of Mr. Leishman's suggestions, my research revealed that many FSI students waited for months for their cars to clear customs, only to have to ship them out again to follow-on posts well before their tour ended.

In addition, because FSI students were often new hires, many shipped cars were worth considerably less than the cost of shipping. Having either a pool of used cars for sale to choose from on arrival or the use of a stipend with which to purchase a car locally would have saved time, frustration and—I agree completely with Mr. Leishman—U.S. taxpayers' money.

Let me finish by noting that while the admin officer agreed with my recommendations, he feared that raising these cost-saving issues with Washington might well lead to shedding an unwelcome congressional light on the benefits provided to FSOs by the department, and so such recommendations usually did not go beyond post management level.

Dick Wilbur

FSO, retired

Barrington, Rhode Island

None Is So Blind...

After reading the October letters from retired FSO Richard W. Hoover and Ambassador (ret.) Dennis K. Hays, both criticizing colleagues who've had the temerity to address institutional racism, I must ask: What country are they living in? What century?

Mr. Hoover takes great umbrage at

Ambassador (ret.) Michael McKinley's July-August Speaking Out column ("Changing Mindsets on Race at State"), in which he testifies to some of his encounters with the racism entrenched within the Foreign Service. Yet he offers no shining counterexamples from his own career to rebut Amb. McKinley's testimony.

For his part, Amb. Hays complains that America should pay more attention to the looting and the destruction of property that occurred on the margins of some Black Lives Matter protests this summer. I join him in calling for the perpetrators of those crimes to be brought to justice.

At the same time, I wonder why he and Mr. Hoover do not extend that same tender concern to the victims of police brutality, unjust imprisonment and, yes, systemic racism—both in American society and its institutions, including the Foreign Service.

Steven Alan Honley

Former FSO

Washington, D.C.

A Modern Workplace

Despite my ignorance of tech, I was surprised and impressed by Andrew Moore's "Practical Suggestions for a Modern Workplace" (Speaking Out, June), drawn from his experience at Google, as an Eagleburger Fellow no less. Several of his suggestions parallel and repeat my own nontech thoughts and those of others gleaned from our FS experience.

One is for State to make long-term training desired and promotable so that officers stop avoiding it for fear it harms their promotion prospects—a cause that I, a former head of training assignments in career development, and others have long espoused.

A second suggestion includes ways to increase collaboration among all FS employees, a cause I defended in the December 2013 FSJ ("A Plea for Greater Teamwork in

the Foreign Service").

A third is to share past expertise by the department facilitating its employees to author "internal pages that share best practices, ideas and tools." State did once compile such lessons by former ambassadors, though that publication is now buried in some old file.

Finally, Moore suggests that State develop expert career pathways as an option for officers "to grow in their careers by building expertise not only by managing people and resources" as many Silicon Valley companies do. (In practice, State promotion panels often reward such expertise despite State's concurrent drive to defend its primacy in foreign policy making by copying some management practices better suited to the military.)

It is reassuring to see contemporary suggestions for Foreign Service reform build on past experience. ■

George B. Lambrakis

FSO, retired

Pornic, France

CORRECTIONS

In the November Speaking Out, "Female, (Won't) Curtail & Yale: Waiting to Exhale," the late poet Audre Lorde's first name is misspelled. In the "In Their Own Write" summary of *Betrayal by a Father and the Power of Forgiveness*, the author's name is Rosa, not Rose. And in "Of Related Interest," the write-up on *The Ambassadors*, author Paul Richter covered the State Department for the *Los Angeles Times*, not *The New York Times*. We regret the errors.

RESPONSE TO GEORGE SHULTZ "ON TRUST," NOVEMBER COVER STORY

Secretary Shultz's Vision for Training and Leadership

BY RENA BITTER

Those of us who make up the Leadership Management School of the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center don't simply work at the institution named after the 60th U.S. Secretary of State; for us, George Shultz's legacy is the bedrock of our mission. In celebrating the 20th anniversary of the school's founding this year, we are mindful of Secretary Shultz's vision and emphasis on leadership, which he has reprised in the November *Journal* ("On Trust").

As the Secretary reminds us, trust is a fundamental requirement in diplomacy. We must always be prepared to earn and maintain that trust to succeed in advancing America's agenda around the world, and we must prepare our workforce by offering them the very best and most relevant training possible.

Twenty years ago, LMS was focused primarily on delivering mandatory leadership courses, but we have continued to evolve to facilitate a culture of leadership throughout the department and to provide crisis management training. To help American diplomacy address 21st-century challenges successfully, NFATC (still known as FSI) is ratcheting up other types of training including languages and area studies and fostering resilience in our workforce.

FSI is expanding training in new fields

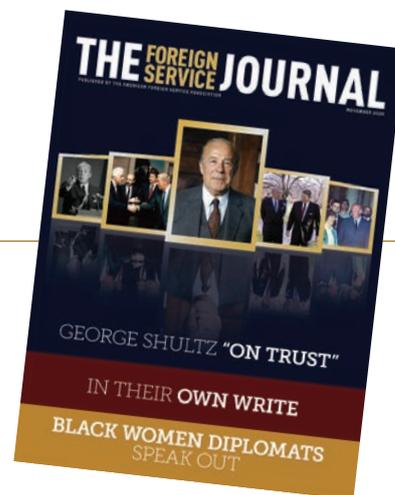
Ambassador Rena Bitter is dean of the Leadership Management School of the Foreign Service Institute.

like data visualization and knowledge management, while also strengthening instruction in areas such as media engagement, commercial advocacy and data analytics. These days, we are doing most of our training virtually in response to the global pandemic.

As Shultz noted in his essay: "[How] future leaders of the State Department and its Foreign Service manage the professional development of incoming diplomats and policy advisers will require changes, and that is really hard to do." Change is hard, but at LMS we have registered significant successes and innovations. After COVID-related restrictions affected in-person delivery of leadership courses, the LMS team converted many classroom-based courses into virtual offerings, including training for deputy chiefs of mission and principal officers.

In late August, however, LMS delivered an Ambassadorial Seminar in person, on campus. In many ways, the central pillar of the Ambassadorial Seminar is the concept of "trust"—how to effectively earn the trust of one's Mission and the trust of a host government. To maintain the trust and confidence of the individuals in the seminar, we worked to ensure a safe classroom environment, using in-person classroom time, an outdoor learning space and virtual sessions. This novel course design prepared 15 ambassadorial nominees with the necessary tools to aid them in their future roles.

COVID-related restrictions have also meant that, at the very moment many



posts were testing their ability to respond to crises, LMS' crisis management training (CMT) teams could no longer travel to facilitate in-person exercises around the world. CMT pivoted to delivering virtual exercises and making training materials available online.

We didn't just change the mode of delivery, we adapted the material, seeking to meet posts' current needs. Our online tools and resources provided those in the field with a flexible and easily accessible means to address the current pandemic crisis and revise their emergency action plans.

Twenty years after its founding, LMS is committed more than ever to strengthening the department's most valuable resource—its workforce. The LMS of today seeks to equip the State Department's current and next generation of leaders with the skills and resources they need to meet global challenges with resilience, fortitude and foresight.

In so doing, LMS—and, indeed, all of FSI—is constantly striving to live up to George Shultz's expectations of us as caretakers of an effective, trustworthy and principled U.S. diplomatic corps.

To view the list of LMS' professional services and courses, please visit <https://fsihomepage-usdos.msapproxy.net/LMS>. ■

Sexual Harassment Up at State, OIG Finds

A State Department Office of the Inspector General report released on Oct. 2 found that sexual harassment cases reported to the department's Office of Civil Rights had increased by 63 percent between 2014 and 2017.

Even so, the OIG reports, "sexual harassment is likely underreported" at State. The reasons cited in the report include "a lack of confidence in the department's ability to resolve sexual harassment complaints, fear of retaliation, reluctance to discuss the harassment, lack of understanding of the reporting process and, in some cases, specific advice not to make reports."

An OIG survey of 2,000 randomly selected State Department direct-hire employees found that 47 percent of employees who said they have experienced or observed sexual harassment in the department in the last two years had not reported it.

The department has taken some steps to increase awareness of sexual harassment, but has not updated guidance for supervisors about reporting sexual harassment and assault, the OIG found.

OIG also found that State lacks guidance on coordination between OCR, the Office of Special Investigations, the Bureau of Global Talent Management's Conduct, Suitability and Discipline Division, and other relevant departments.

A State Department spokeswoman responded to the report, saying that the agency takes all allegations of harassment and discrimination extremely seriously and has policies prohibiting sexual harassment, *The New York Times* reported on Oct. 2.

In April, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report "criticizing the State Department for poor sexual

Contemporary Quote

“We are not going to control the pandemic. We are going to control the fact that we get vaccines, therapeutics and other mitigation areas.”

”

—White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows in a CNN interview with Jake Tapper on Oct. 25.

harassment reporting procedures, a lack of accountability from senior leaders and insufficient training that allowed "repeat offenders to continue to abuse," according to the *Times* report.

Purging the USAGM

In September, we reported that Michael Pack—following his June confirmation as chief executive officer of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees the U.S. Agency for Global Media—quickly took action against the agency's leadership and career staff.

Pack fired or pushed out the heads of every constituent network, starting with the Voice of America; froze all spending; ousted the organizations' bipartisan governing boards, replacing them with Trump loyalists; and rejected calls to sign off on J-1 visa extensions for foreign nationals working for VOA in Washington, which will not only end their employment but force them to leave the United States.

In October, Pack took aim at VOA's White House bureau chief, Steve Herman (who is also the USAGM representative on the 2019-2021 AFSA Governing Board).

NPR reported on Oct. 3 that two of Pack's senior aides, Frank Wuco and Samuel Dewey, had "investigated" the veteran journalist's social media postings and found posts and tweets unflattering to President Donald Trump. The duo

recommended that Elez Biberaj, VOA's acting director, remove Herman from his position for "conflicts of interest."

Two days later, Biberaj declared that he would reject any outside or political pressure on his newsroom's coverage. To date, he has taken no action on the recommendation.

Observers noted that the internal investigation itself appears to violate statutory protections for VOA's newsroom from political interference, a so-called legal "firewall." The investigation was first reported by NPR.

The Government Accountability Project, a public interest group, filed a whistleblower complaint with the State Department inspector general on behalf of Herman. The Committee to Protect Journalists said it was "deeply concerned."

On Oct. 6, Representative Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, renewed his call for Pack's resignation, pointing to a new policy on conflicts of interest announced by Pack less than an hour after NPR inquired about the investigation of Herman. The new policy addresses journalists' use of social media.

Pack had also ignored a subpoena compelling his appearance at a Sept. 24 bipartisan hearing into allegations of wrongdoing at the agency, citing unspecified "administrative proceedings."

The committee's ranking member,

Rep. Michael T. McCaul (R-Texas), shared Engel's outrage, accusing Pack of ignoring "the will of Congress" and refusing to answer "basic questions" the committee has asked him in other matters.

On Oct. 27, Voice of America reported that Pack was using his powers as chief executive to roll back the "firewall" rule that protects VOA and other U.S.-funded news networks from editorial interference. Republican and Democratic lawmakers were sharply critical of the move.

Democracy Under Lockdown

The COVID-19 pandemic has weakened democracy around the world, "providing cover for governments to disrupt elections, silence critics and the press, and undermine the accountability needed to protect human rights as well as public health," states an Oct. 2 Freedom

House report, "Democracy Under Lockdown."

Since the pandemic began, democracy and human rights have weakened in 80 countries, the report finds: "Governments have responded by engaging in abuses of power, silencing their critics, and weakening or shuttering important institutions, often undermining the very systems of accountability needed to protect public health."

The report found that democracy has become weaker in 80 countries since the start of the pandemic, while remaining about the same in 111 countries. Democracy has become stronger in only one country, according to Freedom House. (We asked. It's Malawi.) Some of the worst effects have been seen in struggling democracies and highly repressive states.

"What began as a worldwide health crisis has become part of the global

crisis for democracy," said Michael J. Abramowitz, president of Freedom House. "Governments in every part of the world have abused their powers in the name of public health, seizing the opportunity to undermine democracy and human rights."

"The new COVID-era laws and practices will be hard to reverse," added Sarah Repucci, vice president for research and analysis at Freedom House and a coauthor of the report. "The harm to fundamental human rights will last long beyond the pandemic."

Country experts identified four major democracy problems related to the pandemic: lack of government transparency regarding information about the coronavirus; corruption; lack of protection for vulnerable populations; and governmental abuses of power.

50 Years Ago

Commonplace Thoughts on Home Leave

Home leave is peculiar to diplomats. It is the coming home between stays abroad, the time of finding out that home is alien, and the last embassy is home. It is the time of recognizing that America has moved ahead and left you behind, even while you have moved ahead and left America behind. It is the seeing of the familiar through eyes grown foreign. It is the thrill of being back among kin, and the shock of finding that old ties go slack. It is a suspension between rediscovery and rejection. Home leave is a floating. Home leave is the time you cannot get home. ...

Coming back to Washington is like coming back to a house and finding all the furniture changed, or coming back to a hometown and finding Main Street the same but all the old familiar people gone.

To think about home leave without thinking about the technical impossibility of the thing is most difficult. I mean the moving around of a whole family without the means to do it comfortably, squeezing into places not big enough

physically or spiritually, putting everyone out, feeling so homeless that the term home leave becomes a sour joke. But in this sense home leave is a microcosm of the diplomatic life, which on the surface cannot be done, or at least cannot be done without frequent disaster. Yet some people do it. Home leave makes us aware of the high opportunity of the diplomatic life and the usually sad realization of it. Our friends envy us the opportunity, and we mourn how sadly we fall short. If both the chance and the missing of it are somehow grand, I suppose we had better not complain.

—Jack Perry, former newspaperman and Foreign Service officer, excerpted from an article of the same title in the December 1970 FSJ.





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Local APHIS Staffer Murdered in Mexico

Edgar Flores Santos, a Mexican employee working for the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Tijuana, was found dead in a field southeast of the city on Oct. 1. American Military News reported that he was found with nine gunshot wounds from multiple weapons.

U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Christopher Landau tweeted: "Consulate General of the United States in Tijuana and the entire US diplomatic mission in Mexico are mourning the loss of one of our own."



FROM THE GOFUNDME SITE

AFSA President Eric Rubin sent condolences to the APHIS team via AFSA.net on Oct. 15: "On behalf of AFSA's Governing Board and professional staff, please accept my condolences on the tragic and senseless murder of your Locally Employed staff colleague Edgar Flores Santos on Oct. 1. Edgar was a beloved member of the APHIS team at U.S. Consulate Tijuana, Mexico.

"We all know how crucial our local colleagues are to the success of our mission. Without them, the daily business of American diplomacy would be impossible. Their contributions are myriad, and they make our foreign policy and global engagement stronger and more successful. In Edgar's case, he helped protect U.S.

and Mexican food security, which affects every American."

Mr. Santos leaves behind his wife, Ely, and two children. A GoFundMe page has been set up to support the family at www.gofundme.com/f/in-loving-memory-of-edgar-flores-santos.

Many Still Afraid to Dissent, Study Finds

In a study of dissent channels at six U.S. federal agencies, including the State Department and USAID, titled "Stifling Dissent: How the Federal Government's Channels for Challenging Policies from Within Fall Short," the Project on Government Oversight (POGO) found that many federal employees think these channels are a "waste of time," and many would fear retaliation if they were to use one.

"The overwhelming reason why people don't use the [dissent] channels, according to the people we've talked to, is they don't think it would make a difference," report co-author Nick Schwellenbach said in an Aug. 20 interview with the Federal News Network.

Most agencies that have dissent channels, he adds, "seem to have neglected them"—USAID being the "most stark example."

"During the Obama administration," Schwellenbach says, "USAID created what's called the direct channel, which is sort of an offshoot of the Dissent Channel at State. And the direct channel is open to employees ... as well as contractors, and they can apparently disagree about virtually any policy that USAID has. However, there's essentially no information about the direct channel anywhere on the USAID website."

State's Dissent Channel, founded in 1971 in response to concerns over American policy during the Vietnam

War, is the oldest dissent reporting mechanism in the U.S. government, the report notes.

“Using the dissent channel can carry a degree of stigma,” POGO reports, stating that it’s only used five to 10 times a year. “To some, it signifies a failure to effectively advocate a position through normal channels.”

POGO urges the executive branch and Congress to improve dissent channels where they exist, and to create new ones at agencies that don’t have them.

All agencies with dissent channels should offer an independent office that receives and assesses the policy dissent; include a formal method to appeal management’s response; and track and provide the public, at least annually, a publicly releasable summary of the dissent and its resolution, POGO continues.

The project also recommends that agencies offer awards to employees for constructive dissent, noting AFSA’s annual dissent awards.

The Project on Government Oversight is a nonpartisan independent watchdog that exposes waste, corruption and abuse of power. It champions reforms to promote a more ethical and accountable federal government.

USAID Fights Future Pandemics

The U.S. Agency for International Development on Sept. 30 announced the launch of a five-year, \$100 million project to prevent future pandemics.

Strategies to Prevent Spillover (STOP Spillover) will attempt to anticipate and address threats posed by emerging viral zoonotic diseases that might jump from animals to humans. It will play a large part in the implementation of the U.S. government’s Global Health Security

Strategy, issued by the White House in 2019.

Experts from Tufts University and 12 partner institutions will work to strengthen the capacity of high-risk countries “to gain and use essential knowledge about how viruses emerge; collaborate with them to identify human behaviors that lead to outbreaks; and help them prepare their public health systems to contain spread during a pandemic,” according to an Oct. 7 report in Tufts Now.

“Over the last five years alone, more pandemics have emerged than in the previous 15 years,” said Saul Tzipori, a professor of microbiology and infectious diseases at Tuft’s Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. Tzipori, who will be a lead researcher on the project, told

Tufts Now that rural areas where people “live near wildlife are more likely to see diseases transfer through infected food and shared drinking and bathing water.”

Program director Deborah Kochevar, a senior fellow at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, told Tufts Now that the project will “focus on what people can do differently in their daily routines to stop infectious diseases.”

“Considering more than 70 percent of emerging infectious diseases originate from animals, STOP Spillover is a critical next step in the evolution of USAID’s work to understand and address the risks posed by zoonotic diseases that can ‘spillover’—or be transmitted—from animals to humans,” according to a Sept. 30 USAID press release announcing the project.

Site of the Month Diverse Diplomacy Leaders Speaker Series diversediplomacy.com

Georgetown University’s Institute for the Study of Diplomacy is hosting an online speaker series featuring diverse diplomacy leaders who share insights about their careers and about diversity and inclusion at the State Department. These senior diplomats also answer questions from students considering careers in foreign policy.

The series was launched in December 2018 by Rusk Fellow Caroline Savage. It’s part of ISD’s mandate to connect students with foreign policy professionals to better understand the opportunities and challenges of a foreign policy career.

The series aims to include a diverse

representation of foreign policy professionals from different generational, gender, religious and ethnic lines, in order to encourage young people from diverse communities to pursue careers in foreign policy.

Speakers have included Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Julie Chung, Ambassador (ret.) James Irwin Gadsden, Ambassador (ret.) Lino Gutierrez, Ambassador (ret.) Linda Thomas-Greenfield and, most recently, Ambassador Dereck Hogan.





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U.S. Leaves Climate Pact

On Nov. 4 the United States became the first country to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. The Trump administration had given a one-year notice to leave the climate agreement, also known as COP21, on Nov. 4, 2019.

World leaders crafted the nonbinding agreement in 2015 to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global temperature increases. It was signed and adopted by 190 nations, including the United States. President Donald Trump has long opposed the agreement.

“The Paris accord would have been shutting down American producers with excessive regulatory restrictions like you would not believe, while allowing foreign producers to pollute with impunity,” he said at an energy conference on Oct. 23, 2019, in Pittsburgh.

The climate treaty requires countries to set voluntary targets to reduce greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide.

“With our exit from the accord, we are among only a few countries worldwide not signed on to the global agreement,” Dr. George Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said in a Nov. 4 statement. “At the same time, the U.S. is the second-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world,” after China.

President-elect Joe Biden tweeted on Nov. 4 that the Biden administration would rejoin the agreement on his first day in office, Jan. 20.

SHAPE Act Takes Aim at Harassment and Assault

On Sept. 30, three Democratic representatives (Eliot Engel of New York, Jackie Speier of California and Joaquin Castro of Texas) introduced the State Harassment and Assault Pre-

vention and Eradication Act of 2020 to support the “brave (State Department) employees who spoke up about the toxic climate” they suffered as government employees.

The SHAPE Act would require the State Department to develop a comprehensive policy to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination. It would establish an Office of Employee Advocacy and an international 24/7 hotline.

The act also would require annual reports to Congress on sexual harassment claims; provide alternate work assignments or paid leave for those who file complaints; eliminate forced nondisclosure or nondisparagement agreements; mandate bystander intervention training, supervisor training, executive leadership training and implementation of standardized sexual assault protocols.

“Our nation’s diplomats serve in every corner of the world, including hot spots like war zones and regions with civil unrest, to provide for the security of our nation,” said Rep. Castro. “The remote nature of a diplomat’s work also makes them more vulnerable, and too often their complaints of sexual harassment, assault and discrimination are not adequately addressed, and victims lack support. The global #metoo movement has shone a spotlight on these systemic failures, including at the U.S. State Department, and it’s long past time to take action with real reforms.”

“On behalf of dozens of survivors of harassment, bullying, assault and discrimination at the U.S. State Department, we are pleased to work with Reps. Speier, Engel and Castro to introduce the SHAPE Act,” said retired Foreign Service Officer Amy Dahm. ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Cameron Woodworth and Steven Alan Honley.

Food & Fun, or Debt & Despair?

The Commissary Crisis and the Future of Employee Associations

BY LLYWELYN GRAEME

During 20 years in the Foreign Service I have had a variety of commissary experiences at different posts. Many (Abuja 2000, Wellington 2006, Dili 2014, Nicosia 2017) had no commissary at all; Lagos had a commissary and even a boat you could use as a taxi to and from work; two posts had vibrant and highly useful commissaries (Beijing 2004 and Kyiv 2010).

These and other commissaries around the world provide access to goods, and sometimes services, that are difficult or impossible to obtain at post—USPS stamps, Halloween candy, peanut butter, Comet cleanser, and the like.

The commissaries are operated by employee associations, volunteer groups of employees who come together to improve morale and provide whatever the membership needs or wants. Some associations have rental cars, others a gym or apartments for rent; some manage onsite cafeterias or gyms at the embassy or consulate.



Llywelyn Graeme joined the Foreign Service in 2000 as a State Department office manager. He was previously a radio DJ on two conti-

nents; a member of the Federation of Radio & TV Actors and the stage hands union, responsible for the Star Wars fan club, Wizards of the Coast Pokémon team, Nintendo Super-Agent; and also worked at Microsoft, Nordstrom's and the Starbucks roasting plant. He is featured in the 2005 edition of Inside a U.S. Embassy.

Associations can be a powerful tool to improve life overseas.

Here in Copenhagen, as president of the 70-member American Embassy Employee Association (AEEA) I have had the painful responsibility of closing our commissary. We were losing money every month, and if it had continued, we would have lost the entire association and, with it, our reasonably priced cafeteria option. Given that the nearest restaurant sells \$24 hamburgers, we need the cafeteria for reasons of morale.

Elsewhere, I have heard that Embassy Stockholm lost its commissary and possibly the association. Our embassy in neighboring Oslo has an active commissary; however, I understand that liquor prices there are quite high (whereas liquor prices in Denmark are quite reasonable—we are the home of Peter Justesen, after all).

Why are commissaries, and the employee associations that run them, under pressure? Is their eventual extinction inevitable? Here are some insights and suggestions based on our experience in Denmark. While it is, of course, unique to our time and place, I want to share this with the Foreign Service community as a cautionary tale.

Though we were unable to salvage the commissary, we *were* able to maintain our employee association, with a positive cash flow. Admittedly, it is only hundreds of dollars a year, but at least we are no longer losing thousands a month. And, had we acted sooner, we might be in an even better position today.

What to Do?

In 2018, to determine what to do about the commissary, we AEEA board members thoroughly reviewed our financial situation, the number of employees, sales and costs. It turned out that commissary sales had been declining for at least the last three years. We identified four primary reasons for lower sales.

1. Changes in the Danish Economy.

In the 1990s American food was rarely available in Denmark except in extremely pricey specialty stores. But starting about 2010, the larger grocery stores added specialty aisles: “Asian food,” “Mexican food” and even “American food.” Of course, much of what we consider American is found in the other aisles: tortillas and salsa in the Mexican, soy and sweet and sour in the Asian, and so on.

Further, because Denmark’s economy is only now climbing out of the 2008 Great Recession, meat prices in stores are comparable to those in the United States (though restaurant prices remain very high).

2. Diplomatic Post Office. The DPO was started in 2003 and has rapidly spread throughout the world. DPO costs are lower for the department than the Diplomatic Pouch, and you can send liquids and small knives and can easily return items (among many other advantages for employees).

Where once you had to carefully husband your small stock of dark molasses, you can now get it shipped to you from the United States any time you want! The ease and speed of using DPO cannot be

Employee associations are not unlike any other small business in that they must pay constant attention to market conditions and make course corrections as changes occur.

overstated. Since the service began, I have seen 50-pound bags of dog food and cases of toilet paper and paper towels—all items people used to need to get from the commissary—come through on a weekly basis.

3. Frozen Out. Our commissary provided some things that could not be handled through the DPO, primarily frozen and chilled items (as well as the small number of things that are banned in the mailroom). At first we thought we could make enough money on holiday turkeys and hams, along with frozen bagels (it's still hard to get blueberry bagels here), burritos and really good Marie Callender's chicken pot pies.

But these turned out to be the things we lost the most money on. Our commissary ordered from Ramstein Air Base (great people, and not at all responsible for our troubles), who marked up about 20 percent to cover their costs. The real kicker, however, was that the chiller unit on the truck added thousands of dollars to the cost to get the food from Ramstein to Denmark.

That, on top of our operating costs, meant that the markup went as high as 50 to 60 percent. If we had had a larger operation, the cost of the truck would be spread over a larger order, lowering the cost per item; but we are a medium-sized embassy. The reality is that it was just not possible to get a shipment of frozen items at a price people were willing to pay.

4. Amazon Prime. Though it is a little unfair to single out Amazon as the final, and most relevant, reason our commis-

sary collapsed, it has had a much larger impact than Walmart, Costco or Target. Just as Amazon has contributed to the loss of many small-town stores, I believe it was instrumental in the closure of our small-town commissary.

With new, faster DPO, free second-day shipping and 24-hour internet shopping, it is not inconceivable that you order something Friday night and it arrives at the mailroom the next Friday!

As a result of these factors, we were forced to cease commissary operations. At my last two posts, neither of which had a commissary, fellow board members and I struggled to maintain an active employee association. I feel fortunate that in Copenhagen we could retain the cafeteria and dry cleaning, but it was only because we were able to form an active board willing to do a lot of heavy lifting and make tough choices.

We will certainly miss the commissary. We just might not notice until we need a certain chocolate sprinkle for our daughter's 7th birthday cake in less than 24 hours.

One thing that has made our lives easier, however, was that our assessment to the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs (also known as Food & Fun) went way down. Records show we used to send thousands of dollars a year to D.C., but last year it was only \$900, and this year only \$500. By next year we will be a "microassociation," and the assessment will be even less.

Implications for the Future

But this brings up a larger problem. While focused on the problem in Copenhagen, I had not considered the impact of commissary closings on Food & Fun. If commissaries are closing at many posts around the world, or losing sales, what is this doing to the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs budget?

After all, this office provides central support and oversight of employee associations. In Copenhagen, their support and direction played a critical role in maintaining our association post-commissary.

In addition, while it is outside the scope of this article, I do wonder whether annual DPO shipment costs are more, or less, than the department expected when the DPO was introduced. I am very curious to know whether department management sees the DPO as an option that is sustainable in the long term.

When I joined State 20 years ago, it was a given that my mail from Seattle to West Africa would be occasional and delayed. But those who have joined the Foreign Service in the last five to 10 years may have much higher expectations for quicker mail service.

Ramstein, post management and the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs all worked hard with our association for several years to try to get us onto a sustainable footing. But in the end, systemic changes to the local economy, high costs and customer preferences doomed us.

It is Food & Fun's belief that employee associations are not unlike any other small business, in that they must pay constant attention to market conditions and make course corrections as changes occur. (The framed memo from M dated 1958 stating that we were authorized to keep the commissary

open, which I found recently in the deep files, suggests that our crisis was not necessarily a new phenomenon.)

Associations Are Small Businesses

Like small businesses, the associations carry some risk, too. I learned to appreciate this when I approached an incoming officer to ask if she wanted to serve on the board. She declined because she had been personally sued by a former commissary employee when she was on the board of a post that closed up shop a couple years ago.

In fact, given that having an employee association board is a requirement, the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs strongly recommends that

associations maintain liability insurance so that board members and officers are protected in instances of legal action.

Not all commissaries will survive, but employee associations should take a good hard look at what they are doing across the board. Are you meeting your members' current needs? Do you still need a full-time commissary with multiple staff? Or are you, like we were, on the long slow road to obsolescence?

I would strongly advise every embassy employee association around the world to take a clear-eyed look at your finances and operations. Should you turn your commissary space into a day-care/yoga studio with a place for members to relax? Don't keep doing what you are doing just because it has

Speaking Out is the *Journal's* opinion forum, a place for lively discussion of issues affecting the U.S. Foreign Service and American diplomacy. The views expressed are those of the author; their publication here does not imply endorsement by the American Foreign Service Association. Responses are welcome; send them to journal@afsa.org.

worked for the last 20 years. Who knows what the next 20 will bring!

I believe that we could have survived here in Denmark had we responded to the situation earlier. While it is too late for us, a serious look at fundamentals might be just in time for you at your post.

I hope you have better luck than we did. ■



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A Conversation with Ambassador *Edward J. Perkins*

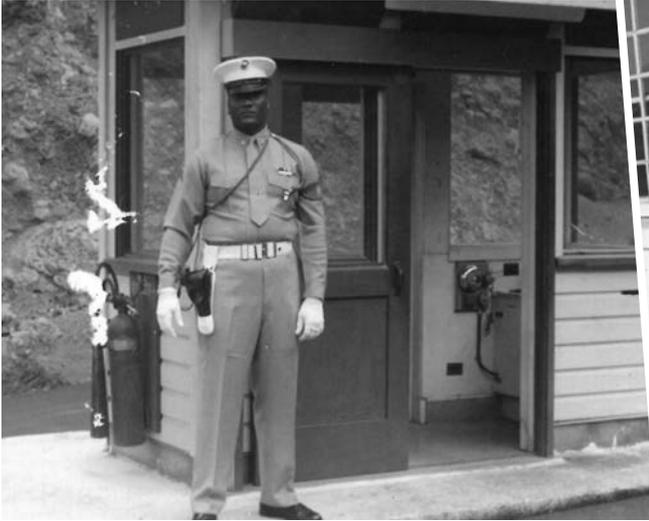
2020 Recipient of the AFSA Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy

NOTE: Ambassador Edward J. Perkins died on Nov. 7, days before this interview about his life and work went to press. He was 92. We extend our condolences to the family and are particularly grateful to his daughters, Katherine and Sarah, for helping to make this well-deserved tribute possible.

Career Minister Edward J. Perkins, a four-time ambassador, is this year's recipient of the American Foreign Service Association's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award. Ambassador Perkins is the 26th recipient of this prestigious award, given annually in recognition of a distinguished practitioner's career and enduring devotion to diplomacy. Past honorees include George H.W. Bush, Thomas Pickering, Ruth A. Davis, George Shultz, Richard Lugar, Joan Clark, Ronald Neumann, Sam Nunn, Rozanne Ridgway, Nancy Powell, William Harrop and Hank Cohen. The AFSA Awards Ceremony, originally scheduled for Oct. 18 at the State Department, has been delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Edward J. Perkins was born in Sterlington, Louisiana, on June 8, 1928, and grew up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Portland, Oregon. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and master's and Doctor of Public Administration degrees from the University of Southern California.

President Ronald Reagan talks with Ambassador to South Africa Edward J. Perkins at the White House in May 1987. Seated at right are Secretary of State George Shultz, U.S. National Security Adviser Frank Carlucci and, at far right, National Security Council Senior Director for Africa Hank Cohen.



He served in the U.S. Army for three years and later spent four years in the U.S. Marine Corps. He worked for the State Department after the Marine Corps and joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1972.

In 1978, Mr. Perkins was assigned to Accra, Ghana, as counselor for political affairs, serving there for three years. From 1981 to 1983, he was deputy chief of mission in Monrovia, Liberia. Returning to Washington, he directed State's Office of West African Affairs until 1985, when he was appointed ambassador to Liberia.

The following year, he was confirmed as ambassador to the Republic of South Africa, where he served until 1989. He was the first Black U.S. ambassador to serve in that country. Ambassador Perkins was then appointed as Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Personnel in the Department of State, serving in that position for three years. In 1992, he became U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and U.S. representative on the U.N. Security Council, serving in that capacity until 1993, when he was named U.S. ambassador to Australia, his final Foreign Service posting. On Aug. 31, 1996, Ambassador Perkins retired from the Foreign Service with the rank of Career Minister.

During his 24-year diplomatic career and in "retirement," Ambassador Perkins received numerous awards, including the Presidential Distinguished and Meritorious Service Awards and the Department of State's Distinguished Honor and Superior Honor Awards; and in 2001, the State Department presented him with the Director General's Cup. In 1992 George Washington University named him Statesman of the Year. He is an active member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and, in 1993, received their highest honor, the Laurel Wreath Award for Achievement and Diplomatic Service.



At left: Edward J. Perkins on patrol in Korea, 1947. At right: Perkins and his wife-to-be, Lucy Ching-mei Liu, shortly after they met in Taipei in 1958.

Following his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1996, he was appointed as the William J. Crowe Chair and as executive director of the International Programs Center for the University of Oklahoma, serving

from August 1996 until December 2010. He also served as a senior adviser at The Stevenson Group, a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm.

Ambassador Perkins has served as the Distinguished Jerry Collins Lecturer in Public Administration at Florida State University; as a member of the Presidential/Congressional Commission on the Public Service; and as a member of the White House Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiation. He is a member of and has served on the boards of numerous professional associations in the areas of defense and international affairs.

In 2006 the University of Oklahoma Press published Ambassador Perkins' memoir (written with Connie Cronley), *Mr. Ambassador: Warrior for Peace*. He has also co-edited several books, all published by the University of Oklahoma Press: *The Middle East Peace Process: Vision versus Reality*, with Joseph Ginat and Edwin G. Corr (2002); *Democracy, Morality and the Search for Peace in America's Foreign Policy*, with David L. Boren (2002); *Palestinian Refugees: Traditional Positions and New Solutions*, with Joseph Ginat (2001); and *Preparing America's Foreign Policy for the 21st Century*, with David L. Boren (1999).

Ambassador Perkins' beloved wife, the former Lucy Ching-mei Liu, passed away in 2009. They have two daughters, Katherine and Sarah, and four grandchildren.

FSJ Editor-in-Chief Shawn Dorman worked with Katherine and Sarah to conduct the following interview with Ambassador Perkins in September. All photographs are courtesy of the Perkins family.

EARLY DAYS AND JOINING THE FOREIGN SERVICE

FSJ: Tell us a little bit about your childhood. Where did you grow up?

EJP: I was born in 1928 in Sterlington, Louisiana. My mother attended a college where she met my father, who was studying to become a minister. They got married without the consent of my grandparents; shortly thereafter, I was born. They divorced, and my mother took me back to her parents' 360-acre farm in a town called Haynesville, in northern Louisiana, where she had grown up with nine siblings. All the siblings would eventually leave the farm except for my Aunt Savannah, who helped raise me.

When my mother and I lived on the farm, she met her second husband, Mr. Grant, at Pleasant Grove Church where he was leading a church group (he was a traveling minister). My mother began to see him against the advice of my grandparents, who didn't trust traveling ministers. During one of his visits to the farm, he asked my mother to marry him, and when they left for Pine Bluff, Arkansas, she told my grandmother that she would eventually send for me.

I continued to live with my grandparents and my Aunt Savannah; this arrangement seemed the most natural thing in the world. I called my grandmother Mama—she brought me up with love and strict discipline. I moved to Pine Bluff when I was 14 to live with my mother and Mr. Grant; and we later moved to Portland, Oregon, where I graduated from Jefferson High School in 1947. I was accepted to go to Lewis and Clark College, but at the last minute, without telling my mother, I decided to enlist in the Army.

FSJ: When and how did you decide you wanted to be a diplomat?

EJP: When I left the Army in 1950 and became a civilian working for the military, I met American diplomats whose work intrigued me, and decided that I wanted to do the same thing. I realized that I had to get a college degree, and with the guidance and gentle push from a mentor, I moved back to the United States in 1953 and enrolled at Lewis and Clark College; as it was, the pull of overseas living overcame my desire to get a degree at that time. One of my classmates who had just delisted from the Marine Corps told me that his experience had made him a better person. I decided that the Marines was going to be my next adventure; it was one of the best decisions I made.

FSJ: You served in both the Army and the Marine Corps overseas. How did military service help prepare you for the Foreign Service?

EJP: When I joined the Army, I trained in Fort Knox, Kentucky, for 10 weeks before being sent overseas to Korea and then Japan. In Japan, I was assigned to the Army's central personnel department in the 212th Military Police Company, where I learned about administration and the concept of personnel management. Later, the Marine Corps helped me learn self-discipline and focused my attention on the things that one needed to succeed. I enrolled in a self-study correspondence program at the University of Maryland to get a university degree. My military experience also exposed me to other countries and cultures, an opportunity I would not have had if I stayed in Oregon.

FSJ: Is it correct that you met your late wife, Lucy Ching-mei Liu, in Taiwan, and that both your daughters were born while you were serving in Asia with the U.S. military?

EJP: Yes, I met my wife, Lucy, in Taiwan. She was from a beautiful city called Miaoli. I was working as a personnel officer for the military exchange service in Taipei and she was one of the clerks in the same office. It took me a year to gain enough courage to ask her out for dinner. I took her to the Grand Hotel, owned by Madam Chiang Kai-shek, for our first date. When I first asked Lucy to marry me, she said no because her father would never agree.



The Perkins family in 1983 at Katherine's graduation from the Emma Willard School in Troy, New York. From left: Perkins, Sarah, Katherine and Mrs. Perkins.

When I asked again sometime later, she suggested that we elope and then tell her parents that we were married. I didn't think it was a good idea; but after her parents declined my proposal and locked her in her room in the house where she grew up, we ended up eloping after Lucy's dramatic escape. Her parents finally came around after meeting our children when they visited Thailand. They came and stayed with us in Bangkok and presented me with a gift of two scrolls as a symbol of peace and reconciliation. My daughters were born overseas: Katherine in Japan, when I was working for the U.S. military, and Sarah in Thailand, when I was working with USAID.

FSJ: *When did you join the Foreign Service? What was the application process like?*

EJP: I joined in 1972. When I was working for USAID in Bangkok, I decided to take the Foreign Service examination. Nicholas Thorne, who was the administrative coordinator for Southeast Asia at U.S. Embassy Bangkok and a former Marine, was key to my success. He was able to arrange for me to take the written exam in Thailand. After I passed, I had to travel to Washington, D.C., to take the oral exam. Thorne assisted in arranging my travel by military air. He gave me advice on how to prepare and told me to read the back issues of *Newsweek* and newspapers, particularly the international sections. I had five days to further prepare after I arrived in D.C., and a friend pressed me on everything from art to quantitative analysis and world politics. I went to the bookstore and picked up a book about French artists that included Pablo Picasso. One of the photos was of a sculpture by Picasso, which I had previously seen during a visit to Paris. During the oral exam, I was asked whether I liked art; I told them about my love of Picasso and that particular sculpture. They questioned me about this sculpture, appearing doubtful of my knowledge, and were shocked when I was able to tell them more than they had expected.

Some 10 years later I was about to embark on an ambassadorial assignment to Liberia and met one of the examiners, who told me they had asked random questions during my oral exam because they didn't believe I knew anything about the world. While I had surprised him 10 years earlier, he was even more shocked to hear that I was going to Liberia as ambassador. But my desire and dream to be a Foreign Service officer and my life experiences had prepared me. I am grateful that the few people who believed in my dream were there to provide the support and guidance I needed to make it a reality, and one of them was Nicholas Thorne.

FSJ: *You joined the Foreign Service not long after the civil rights movement gathered momentum. Did you find the State Department to be welcoming?*

EJP: There were no other Black diplomats in my orientation class. There were only 20 or so around the world, and most of them were posted to Africa. The department was not welcoming at the time, and Blacks in the Foreign Service faced prejudice.

When I was looking for an assignment in one of the geographic bureaus, none of the bureaus wanted me. There were no "vacancies," even with the support of then Executive Secretary (and later Secretary of State) Larry Eagleburger. I was selected to be deputy chief of mission in Mozambique, but the ambassador there opposed me, saying he needed someone who had experience as a reporting officer, which I did not have at the time. So I was sent to Accra as political officer.

OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS

FSJ: *What was that first overseas posting like?*

EJP: When I arrived in Accra in 1978, I was the only one in the political section except for a few CIA operatives. However, I did not let that stop me from striving to be the best political officer the post had ever seen. As a result of my efforts, I received the annual global reporting award.

Despite my family and I living through a bloody coup, I enjoyed my time in Ghana. It was a beautiful country, rich in culture and scenery, and I could not have asked for a better first assignment. The Ghanaians are an interesting, open and welcoming people. I developed networks in all areas of Ghanaian society. Pretty soon, it seemed that everywhere I went in Ghana, I was known. I took the job as a political reporting officer seriously, following the advice Mao Tse-tung gave to his army: "Be a fish in the sea. Swim among the people. Get to know them." That was also the great Sun Tzu's philosophy.

One of the highlights of my time in Ghana was when another Black FSO, James Washington, and I found the grave of W.E.B. DuBois, the father of the civil rights movement in America. DuBois was also the first Black man to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard and was one of the founders of the NAACP. He had left the United States at the age of 92 and moved to Ghana, where he died. Nobody remembered where he was buried. We found the plaque that marked his grave, cleared the overgrown site and sent a photograph to the NAACP publication where it was featured in the issue commemorating the magazine's 100th anniversary.



U.S. Ambassador to Liberia Edward J. Perkins presents his credentials to Liberian Head of State Samuel K. Doe on Aug. 28, 1985. Inset: U.S. Embassy Accra Political Counselor Edward Perkins, second from right, engages with a tribal chief in Ghana in 1978.



FSJ: *What was it like serving as deputy chief of mission and later ambassador to Liberia?*

EJP: After my tour in Ghana, I was assigned as the deputy chief of mission in Liberia for Ambassador Bill Swing. He was still awaiting confirmation, so I went directly from Ghana to Liberia, had some overlap with the outgoing DCM and served as chargé until Ambassador Swing's arrival. Monrovia was a post where there were many administrative issues, given the large number of U.S. government agencies represented. USAID had a big program, as well as the Voice of America, which had the largest station in Africa there. This new reality required me to make a big switch in my approach. There were also many political concerns.

The country had undergone a coup prior to my arrival in 1981, and some of the previous leaders who were descendants of former American slaves (called Americo-Liberians) had been executed. The current leader, Samuel K. Doe, was a former Army sergeant with little education. There were tensions between the Americo-Liberians and African Liberians, and it was my job to try to work with these two groups. The Americo-Liberians expected the United States to support them and help overthrow the president and return things to where they had been in the past, while the African Liberians wanted justice and compensation for the way they had been historically treated like slaves. I told both groups that it was the U.S. position to support Liberia as a country and as a people, not just one particular group.

FSJ: *President Ronald Reagan tapped you as the first Black U.S. ambassador to apartheid South Africa in 1986. What was your mission there, and how did you manage it?*

EJP: When President Reagan interviewed me for the job, he asked me what I would want to accomplish in South Africa, and I told him that I would try to change the system using the power of his office. He asked me how I would do it. I told him that I would get to know the Black South Africans, as well as other South Africans. I told him that we didn't know Black South Africans well, that they were suspicious of the United States, and we needed to gain their trust. I added that we needed to work toward a peaceful transition in South Africa, and we needed to convince the Afrikaner government that their time was up. Finally, I told him that I would expect to speak on his authority, and that everything I would say would be on his behalf.

It was difficult and challenging because the Afrikaners were a small group of people who had come from Flanders to South



Edward Perkins greets Nelson Mandela and his wife, Winnie, at the Jefferson Room in the Department of State during Mandela's first visit to the United States, June 1990.

Africa to start a new life; they felt people were trying to take away the lives they had built over hundreds of years. I told President Reagan that the denial of rights to the other racial groups in South Africa was untenable and could not continue, but that it would be my job to understand all the actors in the country, by meeting them.

FSJ: *I read that when you found a totally segregated society in South Africa, you said: "Our embassy must be a giant change agent." Can you tell us about the significance of attending the Delmas Treason Trial and about your attempts to visit Nelson Mandela in jail?*

EJP: The Delmas Treason Trial was the trial of 22 anti-apartheid activists, including three senior United Democratic Front leaders: Moses Chikane, Mosiuoa Lekota and Popo Molefe. The men used peaceful protest to let the country know that apartheid was wrong; the Afrikaner government accused them of terrorism and wanted to use their trial and resulting sentences as a lesson to others. The trial took place in the small village of Delmas, in northwest South Africa. I decided to attend but did not make my decision public.

At the last minute, the political officer and I got in the car and told the driver to take us to Delmas. The driver, who we knew was a government operative, tried to stall by telling me that he needed to change the oil. I told him to stay in the car, that he would not get the opportunity to tell the government of our movements. He was frightened but drove us to Delmas. When I walked into the courtroom, everyone went silent; by the time the court recessed, the three senior UDF members

had made the decision to meet with me and had already outlined their requests related to their prison conditions on paper. For example, they wanted all of the *Time* magazines going back six months plus issues of *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. Delmas became well known throughout the world.

I let it be known to the government that I was trying to get inside the prison to meet Nelson Mandela. I sent letters to the Minister of Justice after attending the Delmas Treason Trial. I also called on him to ask permission to visit his most

famous prisoner, and his response was always "it isn't time." I always replied: "Your time will never equal my time, so I will save my request till next week." Every week I sent a letter, and he sent the same response. During my last week as ambassador, I told him to talk to his president to give the U.S. permission to visit, noting that the minister did not want to be known as the person who barred me. He never vocalized the reasons for the decision, but his expression told me that it was out of his hands.

FSJ: *Do you think that U.S. embassies and diplomats can still be change agents in the world? What advice do you have for today's FSOs?*

EJP: Yes, I do believe that U.S. embassies and diplomats can still be change agents. When serving overseas, diplomats should strive to get access to all parts of host-country communities to make a difference. This means representing the United States at its best. American diplomats should also be a reflection of the various communities that we come from and make the effort to represent the best parts of our society. I would advise them to do what I did—learn to represent not just the State Department, but the heart and soul of the United States. To do this, you need to understand the Constitution and the various constituencies of our country.

FSJ: *A 1987 Time magazine article, "Quiet Sting: A Diplomat Makes His Mark," described you as "cultivating a low profile, then discarding it at strategic intervals to issue carefully chosen shots." That sounds like an excellent strategy. Can you tell us about a time it worked well?*



U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Edward J. Perkins and, at right, U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger at the United Nations General Assembly in 1992.

EJP: As part of my strategy in South Africa, I needed to get to know Afrikaners and visit the communities where they lived. I traveled to a couple of towns, but the one that affected me most was an Afrikaner village three miles from Pretoria whose population ranged from the very poor to the well off. We parked the car on the outskirts of town, and I walked up and down the streets and observed people of various ages; they also looked at me carefully, wondering what I was doing there. Finally, someone came up and asked who I was; they couldn't believe I was the U.S. ambassador. I talked to three Afrikaner women; it was my way of letting them know that I represented the United States in South Africa, and I was not going to become a myth by keeping myself apart from the people.

FSJ: You served as ambassador to the United Nations from 1992 to 1993. What was your impression of the United Nations then? How do you think that role and standing have changed?

EJP: The role as I understood it, especially after my conversation with President George H.W. Bush, was that the United Nations existed to make a difference. With that in mind, my approach was to cultivate relationships with all members of the U.N. Security Council and as many members of the General Assembly as I could.

In my view, the U.N. still exists to make a difference, but the U.S. view of the U.N.'s role is always influenced by the view of the current U.S. president. When I was there, I had the support of President Bush, who wanted to effectively use the U.N. to make changes. He had an open line and made it possible for me to call him whenever there was a resolution that needed his guidance. I was able to work closely with the president and Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger on sensitive issues. President Bush respected the U.N. and its mandate, and understood how it could support and advance U.S. interests.

WASHINGTON ASSIGNMENTS

FSJ: You spent time in Washington working on personnel issues and rose to the top job of Director General in 1989. What was the priority issue for you as Director General?

EJP: The first priority issue was remaking the Foreign Service to better support U.S. economic prosperity. At the time, U.S. foreign economic policy was going through a rebirth, which meant that officers in the economic cone needed to be pushed in new directions, while all other officers in other cones had to be reminded of the importance of economic issues. We worked closely with the Department of Commerce on this initiative because they had been encouraged by Congress to play a more active role overseas supporting U.S. companies and investments.

The second priority was giving full attention to two important personnel issues: getting more minorities and more women into the Foreign Service. To do that, we had to mobilize support in the building and on Capitol Hill. Groups like the Congressional Black Caucus played a major role in helping to get authorization for these initiatives in the State Department's budget.

Shortly after I became Director General, I recognized that the department needed to improve its outreach to communities outside Washington, D.C., such as the Appalachian region. State did not recognize the value of recruiting officers from regions such as this one. As part of the outreach strategy, I organized visits by Department of State personnel to state governors. I, myself, visited Governor Douglas Wilder of Virginia. I told him that we needed assistance from governors to recruit from their communities that may not have exposure to foreign policy or international issues.

FSJ: Can you tell us about the Thursday Luncheon Group?

EJP: Several of us founded the Thursday Luncheon Group with only a few members, including officers from what was then



President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher, center, talk with U.S. Ambassador to Australia Edward J. Perkins during a luncheon for Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating in Washington, D.C., in September 1993.

the U.S. Information Agency. I realized the value of having a support and advocacy group for Black officers and actively recruited more African Americans at State to join. I also recognized the need for advocacy work and organized members to visit the Congressional Black Caucus to discuss ideas for a recruitment program targeted toward minorities. This resulted in a law that required the State Department to create what became the Pickering Program. The Thursday Luncheon Group also worked our connections in the department to get the Secretary to approve the program.

***FSJ:** As a longtime AFSA member, do you think the association's role has changed? What would you recommend AFSA focus on today?*

***EJP:** I joined AFSA a couple years after joining the Foreign Service. I think AFSA is still going strong, but I don't think it is working on all the issues that it should focus on. I don't think AFSA pays enough attention to minorities. It should seek minority input to better guide the Foreign Service toward an adequate representation of the entire United States.*

AFSA needs to see itself as both a community activist and as an element of change. It can use Foreign Service officers from these communities to get things done, just as we did.

***FSJ:** After retiring from the Foreign Service in 1996, you became chair and executive director of the International Programs Center at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, and stayed until 2010. Can you tell us about your work there?*

***EJP:** The center had been established by David Boren, then president of the University of Oklahoma, to develop a foreign policy studies program. I was its first director, and I was given a free hand and an academic and supporting staff. The goal was twofold: first, to create a strong and degreed approach to include foreign affairs within the university's academic program; and second, to sponsor foreign affairs events at the university during*

the school year. I also taught graduate seminars on international relations.

The first foreign affairs event—"Preparing America's Foreign Policy for the 21st Century," in September 1997—was a huge success and put the university and Oklahoma on the map. I received a large number of congratulations at the dinner on the last night of the event from Oklahomans and university staff who did not believe we could bring foreign relations giants such as Henry Kissinger to the campus. It was a lot of work, but it paid off.

While at O.U., I established an international affairs curriculum that metamorphosed into the College of International Relations.

***FSJ:** What inspired you to write your memoir, Mr. Ambassador: Warrior for Peace?*

***EJP:** I wanted to tell the story about the things that I overcame and accomplished that made me a successful Foreign Service officer. I tried to address the major events in my life and share the things that I have done to educate myself in preparation to meet the challenges in a long career. I also wanted to acknowledge the people—family, friends and professional colleagues, especially my late wife—who played a great role in my life.*

THE FOREIGN SERVICE CAREER

FSJ: *You were ambassador four times, a great accomplishment. Any secrets to your success you can share?*

EJP: Knowing oneself is very important. Eastern philosophy has also been the key to my success. When I first came across the Bushido code, which is a way of understanding oneself, and the writings of Sun Tzu and Miyamoto Musashi, I took the elements that would help make a difference in my life. These elements helped me get up in the morning, prosper in my work and go to bed peacefully at night. I return to these works often; they have always helped me understand my place in the universe.

FSJ: *How successful have the State Department and the Foreign Service been in increasing diversity and inclusion?*

EJP: The State Department and the Foreign Service have been partially successful; not nearly enough has been done. It shouldn't be the responsibility of one office (management), but of the entire department and both Foreign Service and Civil Service communities. We represent all elements of this nation wherever we go, and we need to make sure all elements of the United States are also represented overseas.

FSJ: *What advice would you give foreign affairs agencies on how to retain diplomats of color once they are in the Foreign Service?*

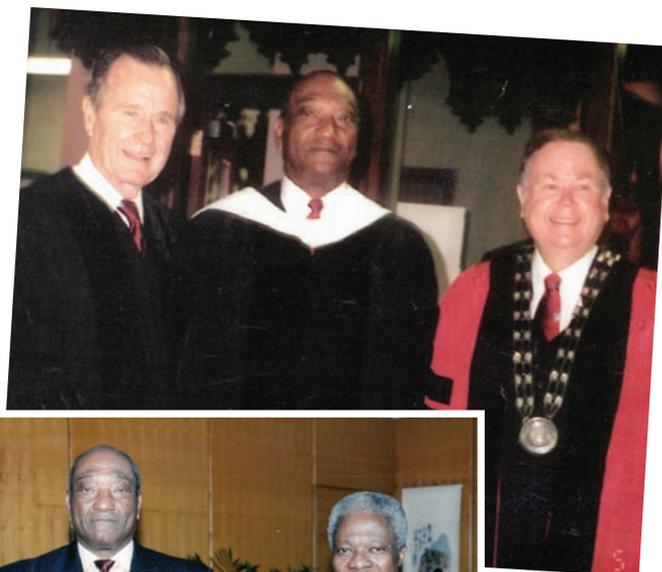
EJP: Every effort should be made to ensure that diplomats of color become part of the Foreign Service family, part of the Foreign Service as a whole. We bring diplomats of color into the Service to fill a void needed to represent and support the mission; if this void isn't filled, then the mission isn't being fulfilled. We need to be "whole" to successfully carry out the words and the meaning of the Constitution and the Foreign Service Acts of 1924, 1946 and 1980.

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

EJP: Know yourself, and make sure that you keep yourself open to learning about the outside world and its communities while applying yourself to new situations. And do it often.

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

EJP: First is to recognize that we have a government that did not spring from the head of Zeus, but was created and developed through trial and error, ultimately with the goal of promot-



On Graduation Day at the University of Oklahoma, May 1997, Ambassador Edward J. Perkins, center, then director of the International Programs Center at the university, with former President George H.W. Bush, at left, and University of Oklahoma President David Boren. President Bush gave the commencement address. Inset: Ambassador Perkins and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan meet on March 15, 1999.

ing a better way of life. My advice is to know why you want to join, and continually educate yourself on the evolution of our constitutional system and why the Foreign Service was created to promote our interests abroad. You also need to read and educate yourselves on how to be effective in this changing world.

FSJ: *Are you optimistic about the future of professional diplomacy?*

EJP: Yes, I am optimistic—probably more so now than ever before. The system of communication has improved drastically, making it easier now to send cables, guidance memos and reporting from the field than when I began in the Foreign Service. The ease of communication also makes it more dangerous to miscommunicate, so you must think of what the message is and why you want to convey it before you send it because messages reach a wider audience than before. We have an increasingly qualified corps of officers who are ready to go into the world and represent all of the people behind the Constitution of the United States. ■

2020 AFSA AWARD WINNERS

– CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT –

Christian A. Herter Award for a Senior Foreign Service Officer

Julie M. Stufft

Protecting Americans During a Pandemic

On detail to the National Security Council, Senior Foreign Service Officer Julie Stufft worked to protect American citizens abroad in the early days of the pandemic. She advocated policies that some senior officials initially viewed as unthinkable, but ultimately proved essential in limiting the spread of COVID-19. Many of these, such as global travel advisories, State and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention independence in issuing travel guidance, and advisories for all U.S. citizens against traveling on cruise ships, were eventually adopted by the executive branch.



Julie Stufft.

At the NSC, Ms. Stufft served as special assistant to President Donald Trump and senior director for border and transportation security—the first State Department detailee to hold the position. As the most senior FSO working in a policy position in the White House, she courageously advocated, at the highest levels of the U.S. government, for the core mission of the Foreign Service: protection of, advocacy for, and clear and accurate guidance to U.S. citizens overseas.

Widely respected at the NSC for her candor, professionalism and extensive consular experience, Ms. Stufft was assigned in February by the vice president’s White House Coronavirus Task Force to lead agencies in recommending policies to limit risk of viral spread through international travel. She advocated policies that would define the pandemic response on travel. It was an onerous task to win favor for some of these policies, since restrictions on international travel would place heavy financial burdens on the cruise line, airline and other major industries.

When the CDC determined that there was a high rate of viral spread on large cruise ships, reluctance among senior economic advisers to harm the industry caused the issue to be repeatedly shelved during task force discussions. Ms. Stufft pushed aggressively for joint State and CDC

Award winner profiles compiled by Associate Editor Cameron Woodworth. All images are courtesy of the award winners, unless otherwise specified.

statements advising all Americans to avoid travel on cruise ships, as the industry could not protect passengers from COVID-19 transmission. This policy position prevailed in the face of tremendous direct industry pressure to retract the statements.

“As a consular officer, I know to my core that protecting Americans overseas and publicizing the best guidance for them are vital,” she tells the *FSJ*. “During the pandemic, I advocated for fast and aggressive messaging to U.S. citizens by State and CDC, when such messaging was seen by some as a risk to economic stability.”

Ms. Stufft’s recommendation to senior officials that global travel advisories be issued to warn Americans against the spread of COVID-19 also met with strong resistance. Some flatly stated they would not support it because of the economic impact. Ms. Stufft pressed the point that State’s and CDC’s travel advisory processes were based on risk to Americans, not economic considerations, ultimately winning the support of NSC leadership and other senior officials, and the advisories were issued.

Ms. Stufft was also instrumental in promoting State’s right to issue country-specific travel advisories and repatriations that helped bring Americans home during the pandemic. In the earliest days of the pandemic, individual country travel advisories required agreement from all principals. As a result, advisories for some locations, where U.S. diplomatic missions were drawing down personnel, were held up for days or weeks. Ms. Stufft argued that State and CDC were obligated to immediately issue their own advisories, removing them from the gummed-up senior leadership review process so that Americans could receive timely guidance.

Detailed to the NSC during a time in which some foundational State Department practices and policies were questioned in the White House, Ms. Stufft—sometimes the only career State Department official in the room—sought not only to offer the best policy advice, but to be the best representative of the U.S. Foreign Service to those unfamiliar with career diplomats. She brought others from State into the effort and saw that everyone who worked closely with them gained a deeper understanding of the professionalism, creativity and determination of FS personnel.

Consider constructive dissent as part of the policy process, not separate from it.

—Julie M. Stufft

“In an environment often characterized by a lack of trust between career officials and political appointees,” she tells the *FSJ*, “I saw senior White House staff and other political appointees who, despite never having been exposed to this policy set, grasp the importance of protecting and advising

Americans abroad and strongly advocate for that position. I was nominated for this award by leadership who understand the inherent value of constructive dissent; but I won’t forget that they had more to lose in their advocacy than I did, and they did the right thing.”

Ms. Stufft feels strongly about the importance of constructive dissent. “As a deputy chief of mission, I finally understood the essential role of constructive dissent in foreign policy making,” she says. “I think early in our careers, we may wonder if dissent is really compatible with adhering to the chain of command—we picture dissenters as lone wolves rebuked by their supervisors for eschewing the policy process. On the contrary, I’ve never had a supervisor who did not appreciate well-considered opposing viewpoints. As DCM,

I was thrilled to have someone on my staff say, ‘Julie, I think we need to rethink this policy, and here’s why.’ Consider constructive dissent as part of the policy process, not separate from it.”

Julie M. Stufft currently serves as managing director for visa services in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Ms. Stufft previously served as DCM in Moldova and Djibouti. She has also served in Russia, Ethiopia and Poland, as well as in the State Department Operations Center. She was a 2014-2015 Fellow to Seminar XXI at MIT’s Center for International Studies. Ms. Stufft is originally from Ohio and holds degrees from Case Western Reserve University and Duke University. She speaks Russian, Romanian, French and Polish.



Julie Stufft with her family in front of the White House during her tenure on the National Security Council.



Monica Smith speaking at a USAID event with implementing partners in Nazareth, Israel, in 2017.

concern that USAID funds for Gaza could be diverted to assist Hamas. The WBG mission also experienced intense scrutiny via oversight from Congress and high-level interest from the White House, especially in connection with U.S. peace efforts in the region.

After the 2014 war between Israel and Hamas, USAID invested heavily in constructing water and sanitation infrastructure in Gaza to help prevent a humanitarian crisis. To operate in Gaza, the mission relied on carefully documented legal and policy decisions made in Washington. However,

in 2018, political and economic relationships shifted, calling into question the ability of the mission to rely on previous authorizations and, potentially, putting the continued implementation of U.S. government-funded construction projects at risk.

Ms. Smith determined that two steps were necessary: The mission needed to thoroughly vet specific individuals and consult with various offices in Washington before proceeding with economic assistance activities in Gaza. (The West Bank/Gaza vetting program was mandated by the United States Congress.) She drafted a detailed memo for officials in Washington, laying out the programmatic history, legal guidance, input from the technical office, policy implications and next steps. She then met with mission management to advise on these issues.

Although Ms. Smith's advice was based on her review of more than a decade of existing policy and legal guidance on the topic, mission management strongly pushed back, voicing their disagreement through various channels.

In the end, Ms. Smith and the technical office (led by Cybill Sigler) devised a solution that allowed USAID-funded water activities in Gaza to be completed in compliance with U.S. law. Ms. Smith and the technical office proposed that the mission negotiate with the Palestinian Water Authority in Ramallah, in the West Bank, which agreed to designate a new point of contact for ongoing construction issues. Ultimately, Ms. Smith's efforts allowed the mission to

Christian A. Herter Award for a Senior Foreign Service Officer

Monica Smith

Standing Up for the Rule of Law

Monica Smith strongly advocated changing the way USAID's West Bank and Gaza Mission engaged in the Gaza water sector, given the pervasive influence of Hamas there. In so doing, she persistently challenged the approach of mission management, at great personal cost. Her astute assessment of the risk of inadvertently assisting a terrorist actor led to a significant shift in the way the mission operated in Gaza and the West Bank.

Based in Tel Aviv as the senior resident legal officer for USAID's WBG mission, Ms. Smith was there in part to help the mission navigate an extremely fluid foreign assistance environment. She advised the mission on policy restrictions regarding terrorist organizations and the provision of support in Gaza.

Providing economic assistance in Gaza is complicated by the fact that Hamas, a designated terrorist organization, controls the territory. U.S. legislation makes it a crime to provide material support to terrorist organizations. There was real



Monica Smith.

Being a leader, and a person in a position of authority, gives us a special responsibility to speak up, encourage discussion of difficult issues and support our colleagues who do the same.

—Monica Smith

continue the critical work of bringing clean drinking water to more than one million Gazans.

“This award has special meaning for me because as a lawyer, I feel called to uphold and promote the rule of law, even when it is difficult to do so,” Ms. Smith says.

She says the late civil rights hero and congressman John Lewis, and his advice to get into “good trouble,” serves as an inspiration. She hopes that in the future, more female Senior Foreign Service officers will be recognized for constructive dissent. Historically, a majority of Christian A. Herter award winners have been men (38 out of 46).

“Being a leader, and a person in a position of authority, gives us a special responsibility to speak up, encourage discussion of difficult issues and support our colleagues who do the same,” she says. “This applies to Foreign Service officers of all ranks—we are all leaders in our own way. At the same time, we cannot be blinded by a desire to be constantly liked or lauded. Sometimes doing the right thing means that you will make some people unhappy.”

Monica Smith, a Senior Foreign Service officer, currently serves as the resident legal officer for USAID/Colombia and lives in Bogotá with her husband. Previously, she served as the special senior legal adviser for USAID’s Office of the General Counsel. She has also served as a USAID lawyer in Islamabad, Budapest, Amman and Cairo. Moreover, she served as the acting mission director during the close-out of the USAID Regional Service Center in Budapest.

Ms. Smith is a graduate of Harvard Law School and earned her bachelor’s degree in political science at the University of Pennsylvania. While a law student, Ms. Smith interned with the All-India Democratic Women’s Association in New Delhi, researching systematic gender bias in the Indian courts. She also volunteered in Boston as an asylum and refugee case worker. She speaks German and Spanish, and a bit of French and Arabic. She is an accomplished triathlete and once spent a year and a half traveling by bicycle around the world.

William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer

Jason Smith

Recognizing the Importance of Words

U.S. Embassy Jerusalem Political Officer Jason Smith used various methods of constructive dissent to help direct and shape U.S. policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one of the most politically charged and controversial American foreign policy issues.

His objectivity, intellectual integrity and moral courage were a model for Foreign Service officers at Embassy Jerusalem and throughout the Service.

Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and release of the U.S. Vision for Peace shifted decades of U.S. policy on the conflict. In this challenging environment, Mr. Smith was the embassy lead working with the Muslim and Christian communities in Jerusalem.

Mr. Smith raised concerns over public remarks by Embassy Jerusalem leadership and written content that appeared to imply a preference in U.S. foreign policy for a specific religious narrative about Jerusalem’s holy sites and the ongoing conflict. He raised his concerns through official embassy channels and, in coordination with his supervisory chain, presented his views to embassy leadership.

Mr. Smith conveyed the effect that these remarks and content had personally on officers at post and on the diverse and multireligious embassy team, as well as the potential effect on interfaith relations and religious violence in the embassy’s area of responsibility. As a result, the embassy subsequently expressed willingness to expand engagement with faith leaders and different communities on the conflict, an important signal of U.S. objectivity for both the embassy community and external audiences.

Later, when embassy leadership proposed using new terminology to refer to a specific community, Mr. Smith again raised concerns about the impact this could have, both on colleagues working at the embassy and on engagement with and reporting on this community. He organized meetings with



Jason Smith.



Jason Smith, at right, leads then USAID Administrator Mark Green and his delegation on a walk through Jerusalem's Old City in 2019.

concerned colleagues and embassy leadership to discuss the matter. He also raised the issue with AFSA and through other department channels.

Mr. Smith worked with colleagues to submit a dissent cable raising the concerns to State Department leadership. State leadership then used his constructive dissent, policy input and alternatives to engage embassy leadership in finding alternative language for use in public documents that addressed some of Mr. Smith's concerns while upholding strategic American policy decisions included in the U.S. Vision for Peace.

"Words are important, especially for us," Mr. Smith tells the *FSJ*. "As diplomats representing the United States and American values, our choice of words—whether they are inclusive or exclusive, and how they can be interpreted by the people in the countries where we work—can have an immense impact, for both good and ill, on our work to advance U.S. interests."

Mr. Smith took away two important lessons from the experience. "First, dissent can and should be empowering, and good leadership—and trust in that leadership—is critical to achieve that. Good leaders will take the time to listen to different perspectives, even if they don't agree with them, and they will support those individuals in doing so," he tells the

Dissent does not need to be a solo journey. I was privileged to be able to work with a number of exceptional colleagues who shared my concerns and joined with me in raising them, not only at post but in Washington.
—Jason Smith

Journal, adding that he personally felt empowered by leaders who took the time to listen and consider his concerns.

"Second, dissent does not need to be a solo journey," he says. "I was privileged to be able to work with a number of exceptional colleagues who shared my concerns and joined with me in raising them, not only at post but in Washington. I am honored by being selected for this

award, but must recognize and express my deep appreciation for those others who also raise their voices when needed, and for those who listen."

Jason Smith has served as a political officer in the Palestinian Affairs Unit of U.S. Embassy Jerusalem since 2019. Prior to that, he served for a year in the political section of U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem. With the State Department since 2008, he has also served as the human rights and labor officer in Tegucigalpa; in the Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs in Washington, D.C., during the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba; and in Islamabad and Damascus.

Prior to working for State, Mr. Smith worked in Sri Lanka responding to the 2004 tsunami, at a nongovernmental organization in Washington managing a USAID Cuba program and as a missionary in Paraguay, where he learned Spanish (mixed with Guarani). He speaks Spanish, and some Arabic and Urdu. He has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in international development. The son of Foreign Service officers, Jason has lived in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and Latin America, but currently calls Maryland home.

W. Averell Harriman Award for an Entry-Level Officer

Lindsay Dana

Ending Gender Bias on Visa Application Forms

During her assignment as a consular officer in Bogotá, Lindsay Dana saw that female non-immigrant visa (NIV) applicants were prompted by the online application form through a shorter series of questions than was asked of male applicants, causing important information gaps for consular adjudicators.

Ms. Dana worked with post management and the Bureau of Consular Affairs to push for a fix, resulting in a departmentwide correction to equalize NIV online application questions for all genders as of June 2020.

For years, the DS-160 online application form had been configured to ask male applicants a more extended series of questions related to their previous employment, international travel, education, and participation in the military or in paramilitary groups. Women were asked a much shorter and less informative series of questions. This discrepancy had no apparent rational basis; it was based simply on outdated gender profiles. It was particularly troublesome in Colombia, where travel, education and employment are highly relevant to evaluating an applicant's ties, and where large paramilitary organizations, whose membership is estimated at 20 to 30 percent female, have operated for years.

"Since consular officers seek—often under time pressure—to establish an applicant's economic ties to their home country, I saw that women, who might have had significant work experience, multiple degrees or diverse travel, were being inherently disadvantaged by this configuration," Ms. Dana tells the

FSJ. "Additionally, from a national security standpoint, it was concerning that consular officers had a more limited capacity to judge security threats from female applicants."

Ms. Dana noticed the problem and brought it to the attention of the consular section's management. She worked with management to make the case to the Bureau of Consular Affairs for a change, noting both the issue of inequality and the national security importance of asking questions that could highlight

concerns of visa misuse, technology transfer, paramilitary ties or unusual travel.

"I did what was in my power at post to mitigate these concerns, and developed training for my colleagues on ways to balance those gender inequalities by verbally asking additional questions during the interview of female applicants," she says, given that she was unsure of what final action would be taken and when.

"After written advocacy and consistent follow-up with Washington offices over the next year, I was thrilled to see the requested change take final effect in early June 2020. The worldwide online applica-

tion form now asks both male and female applicants the same full series of questions."

Ms. Dana's persistent advocacy for this change and her willingness to challenge the way things had always been done played a big role in prioritizing this fix. Every visa decision is a national security decision, CA stresses, and the additional information adjudicators now have, thanks to Ms. Dana's advocacy, means these decisions will be better informed.

"The gender-specific configuration of prompts was an unfortunate relic that disadvantaged female applicants from explaining their full background, and placed higher security reporting standards on male applicants," she observes.

Ms. Dana offers thanks to "those who worked tirelessly in Washington to bring this change into effect. I'm grateful to my consular managers who supported my advocacy, and to my colleagues who followed this issue with me and celebrated its correction."

She also talks about the importance of dissent, even when it seems too difficult to change a system. "We can either shrug and let issues continue to cause problems for the department, or we can dissent. I hope this example helps encourage my fellow entry-level officers to choose the latter," she tells the *Journal*.



Lindsay Dana.



Lindsay Dana in the Harry S Truman Building.

We can either shrug and let issues continue to cause problems for the department, or we can dissent. I hope this example helps encourage my fellow entry-level officers to choose the latter.

—Lindsay Dana

She attributes her persistence to the conviction that the accomplishments of women worldwide—the efforts women make toward their education, their careers, their foreign travel experience—absolutely matter to the United States Department of State and those who represent it.

Lindsay Dana, an entry-level public diplomacy officer, is currently serving a consular tour in Manila after completing her consular tour in Bogotá. She was raised in California’s Bay Area, but now calls Denver home. She is a graduate of Colorado State University in Fort Collins, where she studied Spanish and biomedical science. She joined the State Department in 2017 with a background in international student affairs and university advising. She has traveled to more than 35 countries and had lived in Spain and Costa Rica prior to joining the Foreign Service.

F. Allen “Tex” Harris Award for a Foreign Service Specialist

David “Dave” Heddleston

Protecting Those Who Protect Us

Dave Heddleston, a supervisory special agent for the State Department’s Diplomatic Security Service (DSS), says that one of the key ingredients to ensuring that diplomats stay safe is, literally, a vehicle.

At overseas posts, dedicated government-owned vehicles are



David Heddleston.

made available to DSS special agents to protect personnel abroad; but, depending on the post, those vehicles sometimes are not available to DSS special agents serving as regional security officers with protective or investigative responsibilities after hours. DSS agents serving domestically generally have government-owned vehicles at their disposal for those purposes. Mr. Heddleston would like to see DSS agents serving overseas have the same access to government-owned vehicles as those serving domestically.

“I have experienced firsthand the difficulties and arbitrary decision-making that take place when regional security officers attempt to secure transportation designed to protect U.S. government personnel and their families working and living abroad,” Mr. Heddleston, who joined DSS in 2004, says.

“Some posts argue insufficient vehicles exist, while others have plenty of vehicles but refuse to allow DSS agents to utilize them,” he tells the *Journal*. “Foreign policy and fiscal budget planning remain lacking in this regard. Peers from other federal law enforcement agencies frequently express dismay that the department does not support the use of dedicated vehicles by all DSS agents assigned to a regional security office.”

In an extensively researched and compellingly written dissent channel cable (19 State 131254), Mr. Heddleston argued the case for the State Department and DSS to change overseas vehicle usage policy so regional security officers can provide a more secure environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

He argued that a uniform overseas policy that provides dedicated government-owned vehicles at any time of the week, day or night, to regional security offices would improve the emergency response capabilities of DSS agents assigned overseas and allow them to more efficiently and effectively carry out the myriad law enforcement and security functions for which they are responsible.

Mr. Heddleston urged the department to prioritize funding and resources to empower chiefs of mission and DSS personnel to provide equitable law enforcement and security services abroad.

He noted that DSS agents assigned to domestic field offices and various headquarters offices and divisions with protective and investigative responsibilities are provided individually dedicated government-owned vehicles for after-hours response, consistent with the capabilities of their federal law enforcement counterparts from other agencies. But no such program exists for DSS agents carrying out similar functions and responsibilities overseas.



Dave Heddleston working in Oman in 2018.

While current policy allows for DSS personnel to negotiate the use of dedicated official vehicles for emergency response, Mr. Heddleston argued that such authorities and procedures should be grounded in official department policy and not subject to the whims of individual post management or changes in post leadership.

“I hope that my cable provides a one-stop resource justifying the use of dedicated vehicles for overseas law enforcement and security functions, the legal and federal precedence for such use, and the benefit of allowing DSS special agents to utilize vehicles instead of keeping them secured in motor pools,” he says.

Mr. Heddleston also discussed the importance of dissent for a healthy Foreign Service. “Meaningful dissent offers a mechanism for dedicated professionals to voice concern and offer recommendations to the most senior leaders, without alienating management and leaders who may concur with the concepts but not hold the authority to implement them,” he says.

“I am not the only member of the Foreign Service to vocalize concerns over DSS’ ability to deliver effective service to our constituents abroad. It is the actions of my dedicated colleagues and senior leadership in response that make my dissent relevant. I am proud that my dissent resonated with leaders, implementers and policymakers who shared similar concerns and took action to reexamine the department’s overseas law enforcement and security response measures.”

Mr. Heddleston currently serves as the first supervisory

I am not the only member of the Foreign Service to vocalize concerns over DSS’ ability to deliver effective service to our constituents abroad. It is the actions of my dedicated colleagues and senior leadership in response that make my dissent relevant.

—Dave Heddleston

special agent at DSS’ newly established presence in Orlando, Florida. His previous overseas assignments include Iraq, Nigeria, Libya, Kenya and Oman. Domestically, he has served at the Washington Field Office, the Office of Special Investigations and the Office of Protective Intelligence Investigations, where he conducted extraterritorial counterterrorism and hostage investigations.

He began his federal law enforcement career in 2001 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps, rising to the rank of sergeant. His overseas military deployments include two tours of duty during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He earned a bachelor’s degree in criminology from the University of South Florida. In 2019 and 2020, he earned master’s degrees in criminal justice administration and diplomacy through Norwich University.

– EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE –

Avis Bohlen Award for a Foreign Service Family Member

William “Rick” Bassett

Creating Community Through Music in Liberia

Since September 2018, musician Rick Bassett has been an anchor of the U.S. embassy community in Monrovia, Liberia, according to Christine Elder, who served as the U.S. ambassador there until March. Mr. Bassett—an award-winning professional composer and orchestrator with numerous Broadway credits—has been creative and generous in sharing his time and exceptional talents to provide joyful interludes for American, Liberian and international colleagues there.

In the embassy’s first official Locally Employed Staff Appreciation Day, Mr. Bassett directed a chorus of American embassy staff, including Marines, in a choral performance, that featured his new arrangement of “My Favorite Things,” from “The Sound of Music,” in honor of the Embassy Monrovia local staff.

Here is a sample lyric:

*Memos and emails and cultural advising
Training, maintaining, and much organizing
For all the things they do on our behalf
Thank you to all the Liberian staff!*

*Guard force and RSO keep us protected
ISC keeps our computers connected
Mailroom brings packages tied up
with strings
These are a few of my favorite things!*

“The effort to create such a unique ‘thank you’ was a gesture that our more than 350 LE staff—many of whom have been with the embassy for decades through civil wars and the Ebola epidemic—appreciated to the depths of their souls,” Ambassador Elder says of Mr. Bassett.

Mr. Bassett provided piano accompaniment when Saycon Sengbloh, the Liberian-American TV and Broadway star, visited Liberia in 2018. He also assisted in establishing A Dya Zu Zu, a nongovernmental organization in Liberia that helps local artists.

Because of the country’s deep historical ties and religious connections with the United States, many Liberians are familiar with both traditional and contemporary American gospel music. When the embassy hosted the U.S. gospel group “Oscar Williams and the Band of Life,” Mr. Bassett helped the public affairs section organize concerts and workshops that connected the group with local choirs and audiences. The free concerts and radio performances reached and inspired thousands of Liberians. The performances were all the more meaningful because they were the last embassy cultural events before the onset of the coronavirus in Liberia.

During the most stressful days of the pandemic, Mr. Bassett put his talents to use by teaming up with the post’s temporary regional medical officer to create a five-minute recording combining calming music and a meditative script to help relieve stress in the embassy community.



Rick Bassett, in blue shirt, poses with performers from his musical “Hope” in Uganda in 2019. From left to right: Byamugisha Gilbert, Bassett, Tayo Shonubi and Tamale Michael Patrick.



Rick Bassett with performers of the national anthem at an Embassy Monrovia July 4th event in 2019. From left to right: Bassett; Cortney Conrad Smyth, the embassy office management specialist who sang the American national anthem; Samson Tarpeh, director of the Agape National Academy of Music in Monrovia; and George Glomah Washington, a student-teacher at the academy.

In addition to dedicating his musical talents to the greater good, he has been a frequent host for arriving families, and played a crucial role in supporting those who left abruptly on global authorized departure during the pandemic as well as those who remained at post. He and his wife, *chargé d'affaires* Alyson Grunder, organized numerous take-out and delivery meals.

Rick Bassett has used music to connect with embassy and local communities through five overseas tours. He has frequently performed the American and local national anthems for official events at post. In Ethiopia, he taught jazz at Addis Ababa University and at a local seminary; co-directed the “Motley Singers” chorus; and directed the international school’s jazz band. In Uganda, he was music director for several shows at the National Theatre, including “Hope,” a musical he wrote and composed in 2007 that was revived in Kampala in 2019. In Tokyo, he taught at Kunitachi College of Music.

Mr. Bassett and his wife have a daughter and a son. Throughout the family’s many moves, he has maintained his New York City-based professional life, providing orchestrations for musicals on Broadway and performances by the Boston Pops, the New York Pops, the National Symphony Orchestra and the Washington National Opera.

Mr. Bassett says he is “impressed by all Foreign Service family members as they find their own pathways to engage with overseas communities and support their families and careers.”

Nelson B. Delavan Award for an Office Management Specialist

Jennifer “Jenny” McCoy

Giving Extraordinary Support to Embassy Community after a Terrorist Attack

During the Easter Day 2019 terrorist bombings in Colombo, Sri Lanka, suicide bombers attacked three churches and three luxury hotels, killing 269 people. Jennifer McCoy—the office management specialist (OMS) for the U.S. embassy’s Regional Security Office—was among the first employees to arrive at the embassy to deal with the aftermath. She made sure all embassy personnel were accounted for, while simultaneously bringing together key staffers for meetings.

Ms. McCoy quickly determined that there would be a significant reporting need, so she documented the timeline of events and actions by the embassy. This documentation proved essential in helping Washington, D.C., understand the unfolding situation. It also became a significant part of a “lessons learned” cable produced after the attacks.



Jennifer McCoy.



Jenny McCoy with board and staff from the AERAC. From left to right: Sean Peterson, Saman Mandawalla, Michael Cragun, Kristen Perry, Kelly Peters, McCoy, Srimal Kariyanwasam, Firaz Mahamood and Antony Kanappilly.

It really doesn't matter where you are in the world; it's the people you are with who make the difference.
—Jenny McCoy

When a wounded and traumatized temporary duty (TDY) employee appeared at the embassy covered in blood and debris, Ms. McCoy jumped into action, helping her shower, getting her clean clothes and providing crucial emotional support. As the board president of the American Employee Recreation Association of Colombo, Ms. McCoy gathered supplies from AERAC to provide clothing and food to other victims who came to the embassy. And working with the Community Liaison Office, she helped provide food for employees during the following week, as many worked night and day with no time to get meals.

Numerous TDY employees were sent to the embassy in the weeks following the attacks. The majority came to help with security, and Ms. McCoy became the control officer for dozens of them. She prepared diplomatic notes to get them visas and equipment, made hotel reservations, provided supplies, prepared office space and met other needs as they arose. Her support did not go unrecognized, as a steady stream of visitors stopped by to drop off challenge coins, sweets, coffee and other tokens of gratitude for Ms. McCoy.

“Being awarded this honor leaves me somewhat speechless,” she tells the *FSJ*. “I am touched beyond measure that my U.S. Embassy Colombo team nominated me, and that AFSA has chosen me as the awardee.”

Colleagues recognize her as an incredibly hard worker, an innovative thinker and a dedicated community servant with a constant desire to help others. She did such a good job as an OMS filling in temporarily for the Colombo front office that they ended up keeping her there for more than three months.

As president of AERAC, Ms. McCoy helped establish numerous recreational events for the community. Her financial guidance helped the association build a sizable reserve fund. During a government shutdown, she set AERAC up to fund short-term loans for embassy employees. The loans ended up not being needed, but the excess reserve funds are now being used to install a children's pool at the AERAC recreational facility.

Ms. McCoy credits the AERAC team she worked with. “They are phenomenal, and it was my privilege to be the president of the board,” she tells the *Journal*. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. McCoy proved herself again as she found ways to support the community, working with her team to ensure food supplies and essentials were always available.

“I am so grateful to my family of colleagues in Colombo for their unwavering support and good humor despite some extremely challenging circumstances throughout the time of my tour,” Ms. McCoy says. “My RSO colleagues are among the best of the best, and it was my honor to work alongside them, as well

as with the numerous TDYers who came to support us after the tragic events of the terrorist bombings.”

“To me, a post is all about the sense of community and the development of kinship from shared experience,” she adds. “It really doesn’t matter where you are in the world; it’s the people you are with who make the difference. I have always tried to be an active member of my community during my years as a military spouse and now as part of the Foreign Service. While I have never felt underrecognized, this award is validation that the importance I place on community is also appreciated and valued by others.”

Ms. McCoy, who hails from Iowa, is currently serving as the RSO OMS for U.S. Consulate Dubai. She and her husband, Shannon, were posted as a military family at embassies in Accra, Kyiv, Moscow and Nairobi before she joined the State Department Foreign Service as a specialist in 2018. As a military spouse, she had her own business as a dance and fitness instructor. The couple have two sons: Brendan, a newly commissioned naval officer, and Aidan, a freshman at Iowa State University.

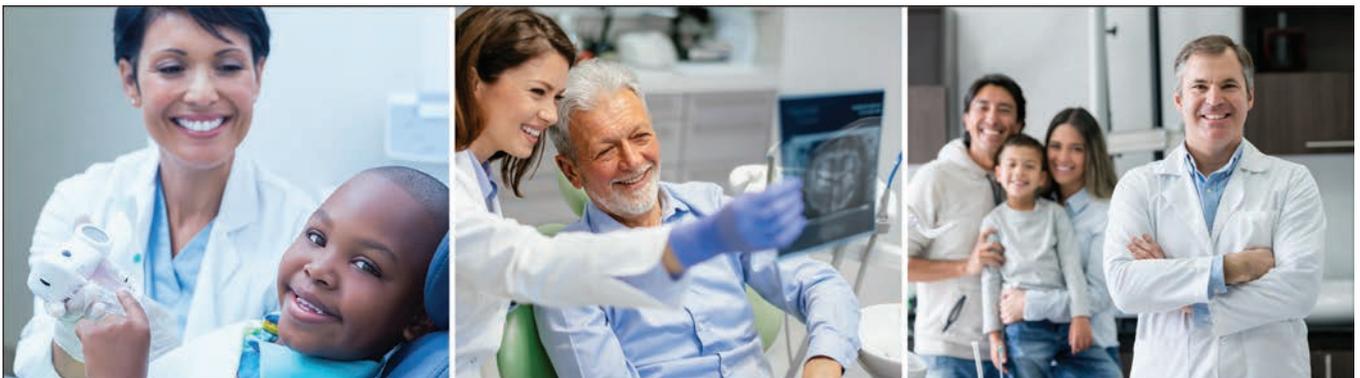
M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Office Coordinator

Jennifer Mauldin

Building a Support Network During COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Pakistan, Karachi became the epicenter of the disease. Fifty percent of the consulate’s American staff there left on authorized departure. Eighty percent of its local staff began teleworking from home or went on authorized leave. Fortunately, Community Liaison Office Coordinator Jennifer Mauldin was there to help.

“One would think it would be impossible to maintain community with half of your American staff back in the United



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States in the middle of a worldwide pandemic. But Jennifer worked her magic,” Consul General Robert Silberstein wrote in nominating Ms. Mauldin for the M. Juanita Guess Award.

“I am honored and humbled to be selected for this award, but know that I am only one of many CLOs around the world working to strengthen their communities in difficult times,” Ms. Mauldin tells the *Journal*. “The Karachi community is so special. People are living for a year or two without their families, so developing a network of support, empathy and shared experiences is so important.”

Ms. Mauldin provided comfort and counseling for the consulate’s American staff. She launched virtual weekly meetings with staffers, and used the platform to share updates on COVID-19 and new department guidelines. These virtual meetings were an opportunity for the community to express their feelings and share concerns. Ms. Mauldin

regularly wrote personal notes to every employee on authorized departure, checking on their health and welfare. She extended a helping hand to local employees, as well, assisting the consul general craft weekly messages to them and organizing a virtual town hall with post leadership and the Embassy Islamabad social worker. More than 100 local employees participated.

Americans remaining at post also struggled. Ms. Mauldin maintained community spirit by organizing virtual hail-and-farewell celebrations, connecting Karachi-based employees with those on authorized departure and organizing biweekly grocery orders and food deliveries from top restaurants.

She also volunteered to support the evacuation of American citizens, making hours of phone calls to American citizens who had registered to depart Pakistan and traveling to the airport to help process the roughly 1,000 American citizens the consulate facilitated on four U.S. government-chartered flights out of Karachi in April.



Jennifer Mauldin.



Jennifer Mauldin assists American citizens leaving Karachi on a U.S. government-chartered repatriation flight during the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020.

“Ms. Mauldin’s dedication and genuine care for each member of our consulate community is evident in all she does,” says CG Silberstein. “Her creativity, positive spirit and willingness to try new things—even during the most adverse circumstances—sets her far apart from all others and makes her worthy to be recognized as the Community Liaison Officer of the Year.”

Ms. Mauldin arrived in Karachi in the summer of 2018 and spent two years serving as CLO for the high-threat post in a city of more than 20 million. Given the security limitations and movement restrictions, she had to find creative ways for the community to experience Pakistan. Whether bringing a wedding ceremony onto the consulate property or coordinating consistent

volunteer opportunities with local orphanages, Ms. Mauldin had the pulse of the community.

During the summer of 2019, a series of equal employment opportunity (EEO) crises rocked the post at the same time as many newcomers, serving for the first time in a high-threat post, experienced culture shock.

“Jennifer was by my side as we navigated this threat to post resilience and effectiveness,” CG Silberstein says. “Together, we developed a new initiative called ‘Better, Safer, Stronger,’ that went beyond addressing EEO issues. We took a hard look

at our alcohol policies, gender balance at events and SOPs for how we onboard new staff.” The result was stronger morale and higher productivity.

Adds Silberstein: “She cares deeply about the community and acted as my unofficial DCM and adviser, in addition to doing all ‘CLO things’ extremely well.”

Consulate staff report that during her tenure Ms. Mauldin was at the heart of many important mission successes, among them the 2020 U.S. Independence Day celebration, a 600-person event held in February to avoid the intense July heat.

Ms. Mauldin has spent 15 years as a Foreign Service family member traveling with her husband, Jimmy Mauldin, an economic-coned officer currently studying at the National Defense University Eisenhower School, and their four children. She served as CLO in Chennai, Rabat and New Delhi. She is now back in the United States working as a special assistant in the Office of the Inspector General.

Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy

Alexandra Shema

Establishing Building Blocks for Democracy in Moldova

Political Officer Alexandra Shema's leadership and engagement with political leaders, the opposition and civil society strengthened Moldova's fledgling democracy. She provided timely analysis that was instrumental in shaping the embassy's policy recommendations for Washington and supporting the country's democratic reforms.

Last year, an unlikely coalition of pro-Western and pro-Russian opposition parties gave Moldova, long considered a "captured" state, its best chance in a decade for real democratic reforms. Ms. Shema's reporting helped Washington navigate a weeklong standoff between dueling governments and rising tensions that threatened to turn violent. Her actions enabled the United States to send a timely and critical message to Moldova's authorities: The international community would not tolerate repression. Ms. Shema's efforts also helped genuinely independent institutions to flourish, reinforced U.S. leadership in Moldova's democratic development and hardened its institutions against malign foreign actors.

Ms. Shema worked closely with the ambassador, the deputy chief of mission, USAID and the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau to reform Moldova's justice sector. Her advocacy targeted \$7 million in U.S. assistance to strengthen institutions and combat high-level corruption. Ms. Shema helped guide a range of actions to support these goals,



Alexandra Shema.

including the appointment of a new, independent constitutional court and prosecutor general, the removal of several corrupt officials, and increased budgets and staffing for Moldova's corruption-fighting institutions.

Ms. Shema also wrote a widely covered speech for the ambassador that laid out the United States' expectations for Moldova's anti-corruption and judicial reform. She choreographed and helped lead the first U.S.-Moldova Good Governance Dialogue, drawing on her network of contacts to facilitate an open discussion between the government, opposition parties and civil society. Participants praised her initiative as a model for building stronger checks and balances on the government; the Ministry of Justice now includes civil society and a wide range of stakeholders in ongoing public consultations.

While the roots of democracy take decades to nurture, reforms Ms. Shema fostered in Moldova are already showing results. One significant example: The constitutional court, once subverted to oligarchic control, now has independent members who were installed during the pro-reform government's brief tenure. And when Moldova's current government later signed a problematic 200-million-Euro loan agreement with Moscow, the constitutional court ruled it was unconstitutional and undermined Moldova's sovereignty.

"For me, this award is a recognition of the inspiring and exceptional work the entire Embassy Chisinau team has done to promote democratic values, free and fair elections, and justice reform in Moldova," Ms. Shema tells the *FSJ*. "It is also a reminder that there is still a lot more work to be done, and an encouragement to keep fighting every day for the Moldovan people to have a more free, just, prosperous and democratic future."

Alexandra Shema has served as the political officer at Embassy Chisinau since July 2018. She previously served as a human rights officer in Paris and

as the immigrant visa chief in Guayaquil, Ecuador. She began her Department of State career in July 2009 as a Presidential Management Fellow, serving as a foreign affairs research analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and later



Ambassador Dereck J. Hogan and Alexandra Shema attend an election event in Moldova.

For me, this award is a recognition of the inspiring and exceptional work the entire Embassy Chisinau team has done to promote democratic values, free and fair elections, and justice reform in Moldova.

—Alexandra Shema

as a Belarus desk officer in the Bureau of European Affairs. Ms. Shema has a master's degree in international affairs from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Georgia. She speaks Romanian, French and Spanish.

Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy

Rafael "Rafi" Foley

Championing Democracy in Venezuela

The future of democracy and freedom in Latin America hangs in the balance in Venezuela. As political counselor and deputy chief of the U.S. Mission to Venezuela, Rafi Foley has been instrumental in fostering pro-democracy initiatives there in the face of an intractable regime that poses a dangerous human rights and security threat to the country and the region.

Venezuela's de facto leaders have undermined democracy at home and abroad. Nicolás Maduro—still holding onto power after a contested 2018 election and indicted in the United States on drug charges—has links to Colombian and Middle Eastern terrorist organizations and to organized crime. The United States government and the Venezuelan opposition are determined to see



Rafi Foley.

democracy restored in Venezuela and have succeeded in constraining the Maduro regime's reach and its totalitarian ambitions.

Mr. Foley has influenced democratic actors across the political spectrum in Venezuela, helping them to coalesce around common strategies and leaders. For example, he played a behind-the-scenes role in the election of a young legislator, Juan Guaidó, as president of the Venezuelan National Assembly. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Guaidó, backed again by a united opposition on the basis of an emergency provision of the Venezuelan Constitution, boldly assumed the interim presidency of Venezuela. Today, 60 countries, including the United States and the world's largest democracies, recognize Mr. Guaidó as interim president.

In January 2019 Maduro gave all U.S. diplomatic personnel 72 hours to leave Venezuela. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo responded that Maduro had no authority to do so. The embassy drew down to 23 Americans, half of them security staff. Mr. Foley was selected to stay in Caracas to carry on his responsibilities as political counselor and became acting deputy chief of mission. In a tense stalemate with the regime, the embassy continued operating for several weeks.

Then, in early March 2019, all of Venezuela experienced major electricity blackouts. For several nights, all Americans were required to sleep in their offices. Water and fuel resources became unreliable, and the airport was intermittently closed. Secretary Pompeo ordered the withdrawal of all remaining U.S. personnel. Up until his last day in Caracas, Mr. Foley continued to support democratic actors there.

Back in the United States, Mr. Foley has been an indispensable member of the small team that made up the virtual U.S. Embassy Caracas, initially in Washington, D.C., and then in Miami, Florida. He worked on extended temporary duty in Bogotá, and his work there helped to convince the department to move the Venezuela team from Miami to Bogotá. The Venezuela Affairs Unit was established in Bogotá in August 2019 as a functionally independent post focused on returning democracy to Venezuela and supporting the heroic struggle of Venezuelan democratic actors. Mr. Foley became its deputy chief.

Mr. Foley's work to restore democracy in Venezuela has continued at an unrelenting pace at the VAU. As a direct result of the VAU's teamwork, and Mr. Foley's contributions to it, there is intense pressure on President Maduro, preventing him from consolidating power and keeping in check his ability to undermine democracy in neighboring countries.

"On the Venezuela Affairs team, both overseas and in Washington, we recognize the enormous implications of Venezuelans' struggle to regain their freedom and fundamental human rights,"



Rafi Foley visiting Port of Spain in October 2019.

On the Venezuela affairs team, both overseas and in Washington, we recognize the enormous implications of Venezuelans' struggle to regain their freedom and fundamental human rights.

—Rafi Foley

Mr. Foley says. "I feel the Palmer Award is also a recognition of their valiant efforts and personal sacrifices."

Mr. Foley tells the *FSJ* that he is humbled to receive the award, adding: "I am proud to work side by side with dozens of U.S. government colleagues and Venezuelan opposition leaders and activists, whose commitment is an inspiration and a testament to the resilience of human beings' uncompromising longing for freedom and the pursuit of happiness."

He was recently promoted to the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as deputy chief of the Venezuelan Affairs Unit in Bogotá. He has also served in Caracas, Managua, Baghdad, Islamabad, Geneva and Malabo. His assignments have been in the areas of human rights, humanitarian affairs, multilateral diplomacy and support for democracy.

Mr. Foley holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Montclair State University in New Jersey, a master's degree in international relations from Columbia University in New York and a certificate in the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church from the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. He was born and grew up in Spain. He is fluent in Spanish and Italian.

AFSA Achievement and Contributions to the Association Award

Jason Vorderstrasse

Honoring Early Diplomats Who Died Overseas

Foreign Service Officer Jason Vorderstrasse has made it his mission over the past 13 years to discover and honor early American diplomats and consular officers who died overseas in the line of duty but whose names were unknown when AFSA unveiled its original Memorial Plaque in 1933. His diligent efforts over more than a decade have served to advance AFSA's role as the professional association of America's diplomats by highlighting the distinctive risks of overseas service.



Jason Vorderstrasse.

In 2007, Jason Vorderstrasse was an entry-level FSO serving in Hong Kong. A colleague told Mr. Vorderstrasse that he had visited a local cemetery and seen the grave of a U.S. diplomat whose name was not inscribed on the AFSA Memorial Plaques. Mr. Vorderstrasse visited the cemetery and found the gravestone. Conducting online and archival research, he established that U.S. Consul F. Russell Engdahl died in 1942 while a prisoner of the Japanese military. Additional research identified two U.S. envoys who died of disease in Macau in 1844. Mr. Vorderstrasse nominated all three for inscription on the AFSA Memorial Plaques, and AFSA unveiled their names on Foreign Service Day 2009.

But that was only the beginning of Mr. Vorderstrasse's efforts. Over the past decade, he has dedicated hundreds of additional hours researching in the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database, Google Books and other online references, along with the archives of the State Department's Office of the Historian, to find and document more early consular officers and diplomats who merit inscription of the AFSA Memorial Plaques.

"When I first began researching the lives of deceased



Jason Vorderstrasse, about to release endangered totoaba fingerlings, in Puertecitos, Baja California, Mexico in February 2016.

It is a credit to AFSA that the organization took on this task almost 100 years ago, and it has been my privilege to play a small role in helping ensure that these heroes are not forgotten.

—Jason Vorderstrasse

diplomats 11 years ago, I had no idea that until the early 20th century there had been no organized effort to mark the deaths of those who died in tragic or heroic circumstances,” Mr. Vorderstrasse tells the *FSJ*. “It is a credit to AFSA that the organization took on this task almost 100 years ago, and it has been my privilege to play a small role in helping ensure that these heroes are not forgotten.”

His task was complicated by the fact that hundreds of U.S. envoys have died overseas during the last 240 years, but AFSA does not inscribe the names of those who died of natural

causes. Mr. Vorderstrasse’s research not only had to identify the previously overlooked deaths but had to document that they qualified for inscription due to having died from tropical diseases, violence, accidents while in official transit or other circumstances—distinctive risks of overseas service.

His research was painstaking. For each case, he reviewed multiple primary-source documents (such as contemporaneous newspapers, books, family histories, college alumni reports and genealogical records) to ensure that the date, place and circumstances of death were accurate. In many cases, he consulted with State’s Office of the Historian to examine official records. He then compiled that documentation for review by AFSA’s Awards and Plaques Committee.

As his research advanced, Mr. Vorderstrasse personally visited several final resting places of these early envoys. Finding some of the graves suffering from poor upkeep, he convinced cemetery authorities in Southampton, New York, to refurbish the gravesite of Robert Sterry, who died in a shipwreck while returning from France in 1820. His research into the three U.S. diplomats buried at the Old Protestant Cemetery in Macau led to a memorial ceremony there.

In a March 2014 *Foreign Service Journal* essay, Mr. Vorderstrasse reported documenting an additional 32 names of diplomats and consular officers who died overseas in the line of duty. By 2019, the number had risen to 39.

In December 2019, on the recommendation of the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee, the AFSA Governing Board voted to add those 39 names to the plaques (along with nine other historical names documented by two other AFSA members) when funding is available to install and inscribe additional marble plaques. In early 2020, he nominated five additional names that the Governing Board approved in June 2020. This was followed by one additional name in 2020. He shares his story of this project in the November *Foreign Service Journal*, "America's Overlooked Diplomats and Consuls Who Died in the Line of Duty."

AFSA is currently coordinating with the Department of State's Bureau of Administration in hopes of adding additional memorial plaque space on which to inscribe these names

in time for the annual AFSA Memorial Plaque ceremony in May 2021. For now, the names are memorialized on a virtual plaque on the AFSA website at afsa.org/memorial-plaques.

"Research is generally a solitary process, so receiving this award is welcome recognition of the value of the many hours I have spent in archives, cemeteries and online," Mr. Vorderstrasse says. "When the new plaques are unveiled with additional rediscovered names, I hope it will inspire those who pass through the C Street lobby to learn more about those who gave their lives as part of our shared work to advance U.S. diplomatic initiatives around the world."

Jason Vorderstrasse is currently serving as the diplomat in residence for Southern California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. He joined the State Department in 2004, and has previously served in Kingston, Hong Kong, Tijuana and Washington, D.C. He holds a law degree from Golden Gate University and a bachelor's degree in international relations from Pomona College.

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AFSA Special Achievement Award

James Yorke

Working for Members, an Unsung Hero

AFSA Senior Labor Management Adviser James Yorke is an unsung, behind-the-scenes hero who has directly assisted thousands of AFSA members during his 25 years with the association.

There may be no one at the State Department who knows more than Mr. Yorke does about the rules, regulations and laws regarding travel, transportation, allowances and assignments. In many cases, he has assisted in negotiating those Foreign Affairs Manual provisions. Armed with this deep knowledge, he has convinced the department hundreds of times to extend benefits to employees who State initially said did not qualify. He has helped convince state governments to offer in-state tuition rates to the children of Foreign Service members who are domiciled but not physically present in those states, saving Foreign Service members thousands of dollars.

Mr. Yorke's excellent, long-term relationship with Charleston Global Financial Services has made it possible for AFSA to assist many employees suffering from payroll errors and unjustified debt collection efforts. Members panicked by a collection notice for an indebtedness they were never notified they had incurred have, after Mr. Yorke has intervened, received the welcome news that the collection notice was being canceled. In one case, Mr. Yorke helped a member recoup more than \$20,000 in per diem expenses that Charleston had disallowed.

Mr. Yorke's responsiveness to member inquiries is legendary. He typically provides comprehensive and authoritative responses to members within 24 hours. AFSA's attorneys and grievance counselors, Governing Board members and the retiree counselor turn to him for expert input in cases involving allowances and active-duty benefits and other matters.

Mr. Yorke is tenacious in advocating for members who have been wronged by the system. At the same time, he employs

"tough love" with members who have no case so they can get on with their life and career without wasting time. He is a patient teacher and generous about sharing his knowledge and experience with his colleagues, thereby strengthening AFSA's entire Labor Management team.

While AFSA governing boards sometimes have been accused of focusing more on career issues for Foreign Service officers ahead of specialists, Mr. Yorke has taken the lead for AFSA in assisting Foreign Service specialists (who outnumber generalists). For example, he has negotiated with the State Department to improve the career path for office management specialists, and has worked extensively on issues involving information management specialists and Diplomatic Security agents.

Mr. Yorke gets involved in assisting with cases involving the other foreign affairs agencies, as well—ably assisting members of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and U.S. Agency for Global Media in similar issues relating to allowances, medical clearances, spousal employment and grievances. He has also provided invaluable assistance to colleagues within Labor Management on negotiations of the various collective bargaining agreements (such as the FAS and APHIS framework agreements), institutional issues such as a move by USAGM to essentially do away with the Foreign Service Correspondents Corps, and standard operating procedures for those agencies.

For two decades, Mr. Yorke has compiled AFSA's annual tax guide—valued by members as one of the top benefits of belonging to AFSA. He has written many columns in *The Foreign Service Journal's* AFSA News section and posted on AFSA's website articles detailing the ins and outs of employee allowances and benefits.

"James is wonderful. No one at AFSA is easier to work with," says *FSJ* Editor Shawn Dorman. "He always either knows the answer to any question, or he knows how to find it."

"James is an essential member of the AFSA Labor Management team," AFSA General Counsel Sharon Papp, who has worked with Mr. Yorke for 25 years, tells *The Foreign Service Journal*. "We could not keep up with all the demands placed on the Labor Management team without James' consistent and tireless efforts, his encyclopedic knowledge of the rules and regulations, and his willingness to help his LM colleagues out."



James Yorke.

James is an essential member of the AFSA Labor Management team. We could not keep up with all the demands placed on the Labor Management team without James' consistent and tireless efforts, his encyclopedic knowledge of the rules and regulations, and his willingness to help his LM colleagues out.

**—AFSA General Counsel
Sharon Papp**

Born in the United Kingdom, James Yorke was first hired by AFSA in 1992 after 30 years of service in the British Navy. He worked with AFSA until 1995, when he accompanied his FSO wife, Jean Louis, on an assignment to Bogotá. He returned to AFSA in 1998, where he has worked ever since. He has been living and working from North Carolina since 2010.

2020 AWARDS RUNNER-UP

**Nelson B. Delavan Award
Runner-Up for an
Office Management Specialist**

Jean Monfort

Boosting Morale in Conakry

Serving at U.S. Embassy Conakry in Guinea, Office Management Specialist Jean Monfort stretched far past the responsibilities listed in her job description. Stationed in the Regional Security Office, she has made strong contributions to the mission, helping to build morale and improving perceptions of the post.

With no prior training, Ms. Monfort took on the role of ePerformance human resources officer for the mission, working

remotely with the regional human resources officer to handle the Employee Evaluation Report season. For a time, she was the only OMS at the mission. She found a way to split responsibilities between the front office and the RSO. She has also helped other sections, including assisting the political-economic section as a control officer for an ambassadorial trip upcountry.

In the absence of a community liaison office coordinator (CLO) at post, Ms. Monfort stepped up to keep the mission engaged. She organized a dining club to show newcomers and temporary duty employees the city. She put together trips both in and out of the capital, encouraging people to shed their preconceived notions of Guinea. Her coworkers nicknamed her “Shadow CLO.” One of her biggest achievements was creating Conakry’s new post video, which has been met with overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Ms. Monfort also participated in the public affairs English language program as a regular volunteer at the Thurgood Marshall Information Resource Center. She made it a point to bring in USAID and other organizations when she took over as chair of the First and Second Tour (FAST) Officer and Specialist’s committee. In short, her personal *modus operandi* is one where there are no “tribal” departments, but a singular mission.

“Posts are like ecosystems,” she tells the *Journal*. “This means in tough places—and Conakry can be tough—it’s important to build a community, one that stretches out past your office or section. If we are one team, that means we have to contribute when we are able. It is the only way, not just to survive, but thrive. This is not easy. It can be infuriating. It requires being stubborn and unashamedly optimistic.”

Jean Monfort brings an eclectic background to the State Department. She has worked as a college professor, children’s puppeteer and singer, legal administrator and editor in chief, among other things. She and her husband were married via Montana proxies while living in Guinea. She joined the Foreign Service in 2018 and is excited about where this life will lead her. ■



Jean Monfort.

THE DAYTON ACCORDS

A retired FSO and veteran of the Balkan crisis offers a clear-eyed assessment of Bosnia and Herzegovina a quarter-century after Dayton.

BY DANIEL SERWER

AT 25

Twenty-five years ago, the United States brought forth on the European continent a new state dedicated to the proposition that citizens are not equal as individuals but rather endowed with group rights. Those three groups (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats), denominated as “constituent peoples,” are entitled to block numerical majority decisions. We have tested whether that state—Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H)—or any state so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

The answer is now clear: It can endure, but it cannot function effectively to enable its citizens to prosper and enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. B&H is trapped in a scheme of governance that permanently empowers those who appeal to group

ethnic identity and disempowers those who try to appeal across ethnic lines to people as individuals or groups that include more than one ethnicity. There is no real possibility of alternation in power or representation of civic interests, only reformulation of elite bargains among ethnically defined and centrally commanded political parties.

Political Paralysis

This ethnically based scheme is not a total failure. It ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, attracted massive international reconstruction assistance and permitted some people to return to their homes and restart their lives. B&H today has a per capita gross domestic product close to double that of the former Yugoslavia before the 1990s wars. People of all ethnicities can travel safely in the entire country, even if living and working in areas where they are in the minority can still be difficult. Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim Bosnians worship freely, many of them in restored churches and mosques.

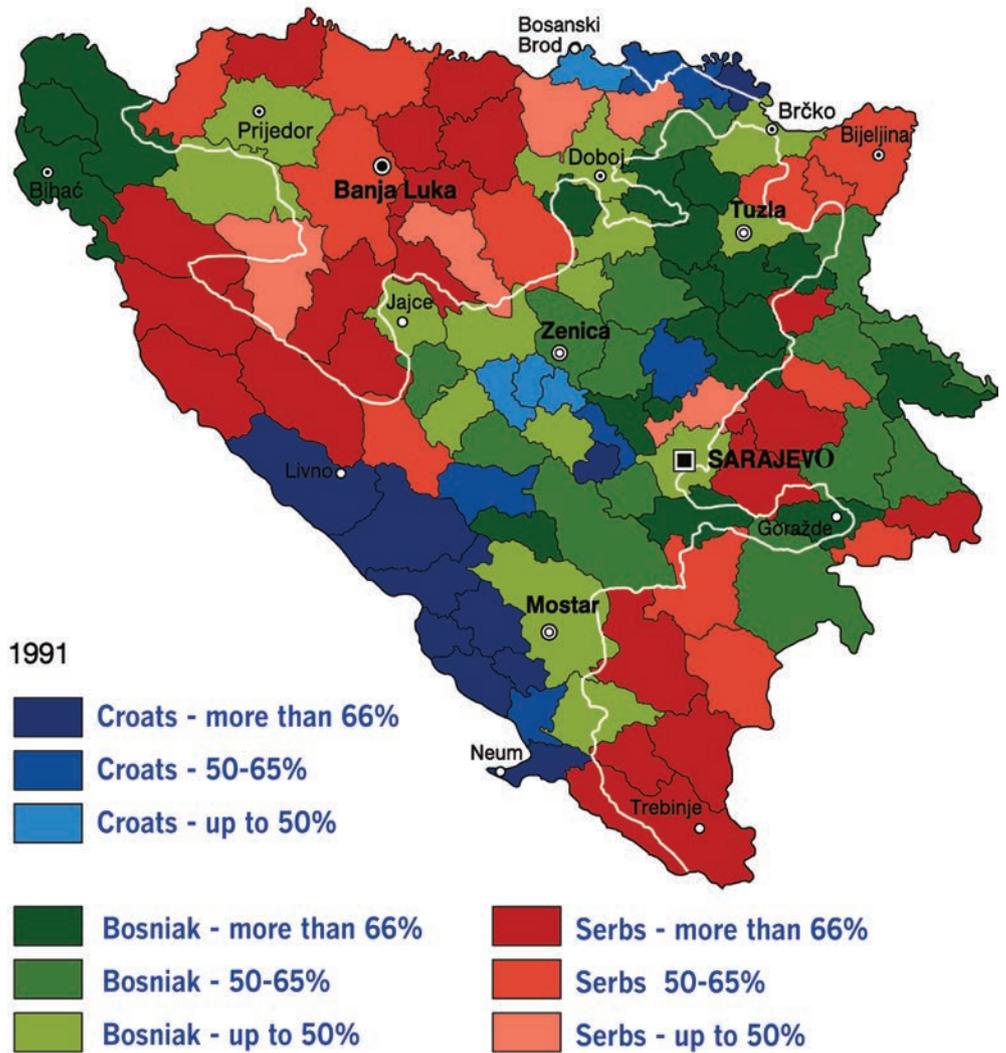
But politics at all levels remains frozen in a constant struggle of conflicting ethnic group rights. The elaborate architecture of the state—division into two “entities,” majority-Serbian Republika Srpska (R.S.) and the (Croat-Bosniak) Federation; division of the Federation into cantons; and, ultimately, division of both entities into municipalities—ensures ethnic vetoes over all important decisions and many unimportant ones. Government jobs, state-owned companies and other public resources



Daniel Serwer, a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies since 2010, retired from the U.S. Foreign Service in 1998 after serving as deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires in Rome, providing support to the Bosnian

Federation during the war, and negotiating the first agreement reached at the Dayton peace talks. He served thereafter as vice president for peace and stability operations at the United States Institute of Peace. He blogs at www.peacefare.net and tweets @DanielSerwer.

Ethnic Map of Bosnia & Herzegovina, 1991



are divided up on an ethnic basis. Difficult-to-remove party bosses thrive and stash ill-gotten gains abroad, while citizens complain and hope to emigrate.

The promise of eventual European Union membership, a strong incentive for reform

when it was first enunciated in the early 2000s, is now in doubt, as Europe is preoccupied with its own problems and unreasonably delayed accession negotiations with qualified candidates like North Macedonia and Albania while refusing Kosovo visa-free travel. With the United Kingdom exiting, and ethnic nationalists dominant in Poland and Hungary, the European Union is no longer the beacon of liberal democracy it once was.

Nor is the United States, where the Trump administration has applauded Brexit and is trying to undermine the E.U. The substantial successes of peace implementation in the first 10 years after Dayton resulted from the United States and Europe working in tandem for the same ends. That has become far more difficult. The current dissonance between Washington and Brussels echoes in the Balkans, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

What is to be done?

A Near-term Threat

Nothing needs to be done in haste. B&H has been peaceful, if poorly governed, for most of the past 25 years. It can continue in that state a while longer, if only because those in power benefit from its dysfunctionality. But there is a risk that an ethnicity-based land swap between Kosovo and Serbia could destabilize the country. That proposal would exchange majority-Serbian territory in northern Kosovo for majority-Albanian territory in southern Serbia, with dire consequences for the future of Serbs living elsewhere in Kosovo and Albanians living elsewhere in Serbia.

Milorad Dodik, the Serb representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina's collective presidency, has said that such a land swap will trigger his promise of declaring Republika Srpska independent. He has already prepared the ground for this move by denying the validity of the constitutional court's decisions in R.S. and arming



sive control. In the longer term, what needs to be done is to end the division of the country into two ethnically defined entities derived from the warring parties of 1992-1995 and embedded in the current constitution.

A Critical Reform

As necessary as that division seemed at Dayton in 1995, it is a birth defect that prevents B&H from ever qualifying as a serious candidate for E.U. accession. Belgium is constitutionally similar, but it is a charter member of the European Union, and Brussels is the Union's executive capital. The E.U. will not be taking in any new members whose governance is as dysfunctional as Belgium's, and B&H's is far worse. Only with the best intentions, which do not exist, would it be possible for Dayton's Bosnia and Herzegovina to qualify for E.U. accession.

There is no reason other than its hard-to-amend Dayton constitution why B&H could not be governed without the entities of R.S. and the Federation (including its 10 cantons). The central government in Sarajevo would need to be responsible for foreign affairs (including trade and customs), monetary and fiscal policy, and defense, as it is today, as well as have all the authority needed to negotiate and implement the *acquis communautaire*, the body of E.U. law and regulation that all new members are required to accept.

The Sarajevo Parliament would need to be liberated from the various ethnic vetoes by which it is now constrained. But simply requiring a supermajority (60 percent or more) to form a governing coalition would ensure that no single ethnicity could rule alone. The court system's independence, professionalism and capacity to protect individual rights would need to be improved. The constitutional court would need to continue to have three foreign members, to break ethnic blockages.

Without the entities and the cantons, the basic unit of subnational governance would then be the municipalities (aggregated in the larger population centers to form city governments), which have long had far more potential to get things done. Since they became popularly elected in 2003, B&H's mayors have learned how to govern more effectively than their party masters in most of the cantons and Sarajevo. No matter their ethnicity,

the R.S. police far beyond the level required to counter criminality. He has also gotten Russian paramilitary training for them and boasted of wiretapping his opponents, many of whom might line up to support R.S. independence.

Citizens who are loyal to Bosnia and Herzegovina will not let Republika Srpska go without a fight. If Dodik moves toward independence, a Bosniak-led force might try to seize the northeastern municipality of Brcko, the scene of horrific Serb atrocities and ferocious fighting during the 1992-1995 war. It links the two wings of Republika Srpska: one in the east and one in the north and west, where the R.S. capital of Banja Luka lies. The Republika Srpska cannot survive without Brcko, so it will be the center of gravity of the next war, even though today the municipality is a model of reintegration as the result of successful American arbitration and supervision that made it constitutionally distinct from both the Federation and R.S.

How can such a disaster be avoided? Most immediately, by avoiding any land swap between Serbia and Kosovo and moving all (European) troops still stationed in B&H to Brcko, where they would prevent both R.S. and the Federation from gaining exclu-

What needs to be done is to end the division of the country into two ethnically defined entities derived from the warring parties of 1992-1995 and embedded in the current constitution.

mayors need to fill potholes, attract investors, keep the schools running, and maintain law and order. It is hard to reduce governance at the municipal level to ethnicity.

Ethnicity would not, however, evaporate as a political factor. Devolving additional authority to B&H's 143 municipalities would empower local ethnic majorities. Most (if not all) of the 64 municipalities in Republika Srpska are majority Serb. Most of the 79 municipalities in the Federation are majority Bosniak, but a significant number are majority Croat. Eliminating the entities and cantons would still leave ample opportunity for ethnic nationalists to prove their point at the ballot box, but there would also be electoral competition within plurality or majority ethnicities, raising the political value of local minorities.

This is not a new idea, but it contradicts the current constitution and would weaken B&H's ethnic warlords, who for more than 25 years have commanded the resources required to muffle dissent. The moment to move forward with such a reform may have arrived. Tight fiscal conditions in the aftermath of the COVID-19 epidemic will provide a powerful incentive to simplify the constitutional architecture. Croatia and Serbia, also weakened financially, will want to reduce subsidies to their co-nationals in B&H. Strained finances could incentivize massive popular mobilization. Bosnians would need to insist on reform, as they began to do in the aftermath of disastrous floods in 2014 and continued to do in multiethnic demonstrations against police abuses of power in 2018 and early 2019.

International Support Needed

Bosnian mobilization will need international support to effectuate change. The United States and the European Union are the prime candidates for foreign partners. Bosnia and Herzegovina is smaller in population than more than half of U.S. states, whose counties and other local subsidiary governments are roughly analogous to B&H's "municipalities." B&H is also smaller than 20 of the European Union's 27 members. There is no need for either entities or cantons to govern a country of this size, and the E.U.'s principle of subsidiarity (doing things at the lowest level of governance possible) favors empowering the municipalities. Strengthened municipal governance in both Macedonia and Kosovo since their 1999 and 2001 wars has

been successful and has empowered numerical minorities.

Some may worry about a ripple effect in the region, especially in the municipalities of Serbia's Bosniak-inhabited Sandzak or Vojvodina and Montenegro's Serb-inhabited municipalities in both the north and south. But those areas have a mutually deterrent relationship: Anything Serbia asks for municipalities inside Montenegro it should be willing to concede to municipalities inside Serbia. Reciprocity is one of the most fundamental of diplomatic principles.

Twenty-five years after Dayton, this is the constitutional reform Bosnia and Herzegovina needs: simplification of its state architecture, with devolution of powers to the municipalities while the central government (B&H citizens call it the "state" government) focuses on preparing the country for E.U. and NATO membership. The Brcko District, in all but name a municipality that has had a special, autonomous status for more than two decades, points in the right direction. It has prospered while managing its ethnic tensions better than most of the rest of the country.

There is no sign that the powers that be in Bosnia and Herzegovina will seize the opportunity without tandem pressure from Washington and Brussels, which has been vital to all substantial progress since the war. In the aftermath of COVID-19, they, too, will lack the means to subsidize B&H as they have for 25 years. The United States and the European Union would need to convince Turkey and Croatia to use their considerable leverage in B&H with the Bosniak and Croat communities, respectively. Belgrade and Moscow would likewise need to use their influence in Banja Luka. Belgrade knows that strengthening municipal governance has benefited Serbs in Kosovo, and Moscow understands it could be part of the solution in Ukraine's Luhansk and Donetsk, as well.

The United States and the European Union have good reason to be proud of what they did for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 and thereafter. But the process has stalled short of completion. Enabling the country to enter NATO and the E.U. as a fully functioning state of all its citizens would be eloquent testimony to renewed American and European commitment to democracy worldwide. Municipalization, combined with refocusing the "state" government on NATO and E.U. membership, would hasten that day. ■

A Look Back

Reestablishing interreligious and interethnic trust, tolerance and coexistence among Serb, Croat and Bosniak proved a daunting task.

BY ROBERT M. BEECROFT

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, conflict in Europe seemed a remote possibility; but developments in the Balkans determined otherwise. From June 1991, when open warfare broke out between Croats and Serbs, until November 1995, when the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the “Dayton Agreement” or “Dayton Accords”) was signed, the region was the setting for horrific turmoil and bloodletting—some 100,000 civilian casualties, two million internally displaced persons and international refugees, and the first act of genocide in Europe since World War II.

The events led to an unexpected change of assignment for me. While on consultation in Washington, D.C., in June 1996, I paid a courtesy call on Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs John Kornblum, who proceeded to unleash a bolt from the blue: Balkan Special



Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft retired from the State Department in 2006 after 36 years of service. His overseas assignments included Belgium, France, Germany, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Jordan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the U.S. Mission to NATO in Brussels. He was a member of the negotiating team at the SALT II nuclear arms talks in Geneva. In Washington, he served in the Bureaus of European and Political-Military Affairs, taught at the National War College, and was a member of the 40th Senior Seminar. From 2009 to 2016, he returned to the State Department as a supervisory senior inspector in the Office of Inspector General, leading inspections of U.S. missions in Kuwait, Syria, Taiwan, Vietnam, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and several bureaus in the department.

Envoy Richard Holbrooke wanted to curtail my Amman assignment and send me to Sarajevo as the special envoy and coordinator for the Bosnian Federation.

Things moved fast. I met with Holbrooke the next day. As the European Bureau's assistant secretary in 1994-1995, he had been the driving force in U.S. efforts to end the Balkan crisis. In 1996 he was succeeded by John Kornblum, but he maintained a small office in the department, eventually serving pro bono as "Special Envoy for the Balkans." I was to work with Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) and Croat officials, senior military officers of the United Nations Intervention Force (IFOR) and European Union Special Envoy Carl Bildt in implementing the Dayton Agreement. I would be based at Embassy Sarajevo but report directly to Washington.

Holbrooke expressed serious concern about the viability of the shaky "Bosniak-Croat Federation" that had been cobbled together at Dayton. He described in detail the principal characters I would be dealing with. And for the next several weeks, I drank from a firehose of briefings and background information about the Balkan wars, ex-communists reborn as nationalists, powerful imams and bishops, and the deep-seated cultural tribalism in the region. Winston Churchill's comment, "The Balkans produce more history than they can consume," came to mind frequently.

Sarajevo, August 1996

After a quick farewell return to Amman, I proceeded to Vienna and across the Alps by Embassy Vienna vehicle to Croatia. At Zagreb airport, I checked in at the NATO dispatch office for Norwegian Air Force C-130 flight to Sarajevo, where the airport was controlled by the French military. The terminal had been shelled repeatedly and was in ruins. An armored embassy van with a Bosniak driver named Drac navigated at high speed along a four-lane street known locally as Sniper Alley. We passed block after block of shattered apartment buildings and burnt-out churches and

mosques before pulling up at the Holiday Inn, a boxy, mustard-colored pile built for the 1984 Sarajevo Winter Olympics. Across Sniper Alley loomed the functional, high-rise Bosnian Parliament building, a crumbling wreck that had been one of the first targets of Serb shelling in 1992.

Like virtually every building in Sarajevo, the Holiday Inn had been shelled; but it continued to operate, thanks largely to its informal role as a convenient neutral ground for all parties. Until an alternative could be found, I would be living in a sparsely furnished room on the third floor. A single naked light bulb hung from the ceiling of my room. The elevators had not functioned in several years, so getting from the cavernous lobby to the upper floors meant navigating an uneven, rubble-strewn concrete stairway. Somehow, a dedicated hotel staff continued to produce decent meals and copious drinks. Everyone who was anyone—embassy officials, NATO, United Nations, European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe civilians and military, nongovernmental organization (NGO) representatives, demining experts, journalists, Bosnian politicians of various ethnicities—gravitated to the Holiday

Inn to drink, eat, haggle, compare notes and share gossip.

The United States had recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) as an independent sovereign state in August 1992, at the very beginning of the war. The first American ambassador, Victor Jackovich, presented his credentials to the newly constituted Government of B&H in June 1993, but due to the shelling and sniping, Embassy Sarajevo operated from Vienna for the first year. On July 4, 1994, as the war raged on, Ambassador Jackovich formally transferred operations to Sarajevo. A 10-minute walk from the Holiday Inn, U.S. Embassy Sarajevo had been the Parliamentarians' Club back when B&H was a constituent republic of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Today's purpose-built U.S. embassy is several blocks away and looks out on the former Sniper Alley.



Special Envoy Robert Beecroft arriving at the Presidency Building in Sarajevo for a meeting with President Alija Izetbegovic.

COURTESY OF ROBERT M. BEECROFT

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As Federation special envoy I mostly freelanced, based on the situation on the ground. ... My mandate was to engage with a wide range of Bosniak and Croat government, religious, cultural, educational and media figures.

Wearing Two Hats

Following the departure for personal reasons of Amb. Jackovich's successor in December 1996, I served as both U.S. special envoy for the Bosnian Federation and Embassy Sarajevo chargé d'affaires until September 1997. Separating the two functions was a challenge at times.

As Federation special envoy I mostly freelanced, based on the situation on the ground. What instructions I did receive were mostly informal—phone conversations with John Kornblum, drop-in visits from Dick Holbrooke and his team and quick trips to Vienna to confer with U.S. Ambassador Swanee Hunt. My mandate was to engage with a wide range of Bosniak and Croat government, religious, cultural, educational and media figures and seek ways to strengthen the stability and effectiveness of the Bosniak-Croat Federation (“entity”) within B&H. I had no mandate to deal with the Serbs in their separate entity, Republika Srpska.

As embassy chargé, on the other hand, I received instructions through normal State Department channels. My responsibilities covered U.S. diplomatic operations throughout the entire country—the Federation, Republika Srpska and Brcko District—including monitoring compliance with Dayton provisions at the state, entity and municipal levels. This was a complex effort that focused on the three “constituent peoples” of Bosnia, as defined by Dayton: Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. In addition to the citizens of B&H, my team and I engaged with a broad range of international players, including the Office of the High Representative, OSCE, E.U., NATO, the U.N. Stabilization Force (SFOR, the successor to IFOR) and the media.

I made it a point to visit OHR headquarters frequently, both to exchange information and, where possible, to coordinate our efforts and avoid misunderstandings. The Dayton Agreement had specified that “in view of the complexities,” a “High Representative” be designated to facilitate implementation of the settlement. Carl Bildt was the natural choice. He had become prime minister of Sweden in 1991 at the age of 42, and in 1994 the European Union appointed him E.U. Special Envoy to the Former Yugoslavia. Bildt brought to the job an air of quiet authority, a subtle and probing intellect, an encyclopedic knowledge of world and

European history, and a thorough understanding of the issues and personalities in B&H and the region. In early 1996, along with a small and dedicated international staff, he began OHR operations inside a former bank building in the heart of Sarajevo. (It is no coincidence that the flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina is blue and yellow, like the flag of Sweden: it was designed by Carl Bildt.)

In response to the U.N.'s failure to keep the peace in B&H and prevent genocide at Srebrenica, Dick Holbrooke took steps to minimize the organization's role. The High Representative received formal political guidance not from the U.N. but from an 11-member steering board of the Peace Implementation Council, consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, United States, the presidency of the European Union, the European Commission and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, represented by Turkey. Informal consultations between the High Representative and individual states also took place on a regular basis. This arrangement gave Bildt and his successors unusual flexibility and autonomy.

OHR's mandate and priorities often differed from mine. OHR focused on the multiple challenges of “state-building” throughout B&H in all its dimensions—political, economic and social. By contrast, my role as special envoy was limited to the Bosniak-Croat Federation. As embassy chargé d'affaires, I would sometimes have to carry the bad news to Bildt that Washington disagreed with the High Rep's position on one or another issue.

Tribes and Tribalism

Newcomers to the Balkans are invariably struck by the powerful influence of “national”—i.e., tribal—identity. The Slavic languages make a clear distinction between *liudi* (people) and *narod* (peoples). At Dayton, American and European negotiators dealt with this individual-versus-tribe tension by designating the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs as the three “constituent peoples” of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The underlying hope was that with the passage of time, passions would eventually subside, and human relations could return to something approximating the Yugoslav era, with its interethnic marriages and highly successful 1984 Winter Olympic Games. It would not be easy.

To complicate matters further, Dayton’s “constituent peoples” formula did a serious disservice to B&H citizens who do not fit the template. The Dayton Accords lump together Bosnia’s Jews, Roma, Hungarians, Italians, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Albanians, and so forth, as “others” (*ostali*). By deliberate omission, these “others” are ineligible to hold several high government offices, most importantly the three-headed B&H presidency. In 2009, two Bosnians—Dervo Sejdic, a Roma, and Jakob Finci, president of the Jewish community—challenged this in the European Court of Human Rights. The court ruled in their favor, but more than a decade later, the B&H Parliament still has not agreed to constitutional reforms proposed in 2011 that would have rectified the situation.

In designating Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs as the “most equal” inhabitants of B&H, the Dayton negotiators bowed to geopolitical reality. Bosnia’s Serbs and Croats could depend on the moral and material support of their ethnoreligious cousins next door in Serbia and Croatia. Bosniaks did not have this option. At Dayton, this basic fact was present in the flesh for all to see. The only party to the talks who actually came from B&H was the Bosniak representative, Alija Izetbegovic. Two individuals who were not citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina represented their respective B&H “peoples” in the talks—President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia.

In early 1997 Assistant Secretary Kornblum instructed me to seek a private meeting with the chair of the Federal Presidency, Alija Izetbegovic. I was to express Washington’s concern that a full year after the end of the war, an unspecified number of “foreign fighters” continued to live in remote villages inside the Federation, some with their families. Most had traveled to B&H from the Middle East and North Africa in 1993 and 1994 and called themselves mujahideen.

The presidency building in Sarajevo is a massive Austro-Hungarian structure that would not be out of place on the Ring in Vienna. My armored van pulled up to the portico, and Bosnian Protocol, which continued to operate in the best Austro-Hungarian tradition, escorted me to the president’s

office. At the age of 71, Izetbegovic (1925-2003) had achieved legendary status as a hero or a villain, depending on one’s ethnic affiliation and political leanings. In 1970 he published an “Islamic Declaration,” which Yugoslav authorities quickly banned. He spent five years during the 1980s in a Yugoslav prison for “hostile activity inspired by Bosnian nationalism.” We had met before, but this was my first formal *démarche* to him. After welcoming me to his imposing office and shaking hands, he slumped down on a sofa and gestured for me to sit in

a chair on the other side of the coffee table. He looked worn and tired, his rumpled brown suit too big for his shrunken frame; but his gaze was piercing. We spoke English.

An iconic photograph, taken at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base on Nov. 21, 1995, shows President Izetbegovic, flanked by Serbia’s Milosevic, Croatia’s Tudjman and Secretary of State Warren Christopher initialing the Dayton document, which they formally signed in Paris three weeks later. I reminded Izetbegovic of that historic event and his commitment to Dayton,

specifically to Article III, Paragraph 2 of Annex 1A: “all foreign Forces, including individual advisors, freedom fighters, trainers, volunteers, and personnel from neighboring and other States, shall be withdrawn from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” I asked him how soon, and by what means, would foreign fighters still in B&H leave the country. Going beyond my instructions, I threw in a sweetener: As a co-signatory of Dayton, the United States would be prepared to facilitate their departure as necessary and appropriate.

The president shrank further into the sofa, lost in thought. Finally, he looked up and shook his head: “I have a blood debt to these people. They came to the rescue of the Bosniaks when Europeans and Americans did not.” He assured me that he was aware of the commitment he had made at Dayton but would not take an active role in the apprehension or expulsion of foreign fighters from B&H. I took this to mean that he would not lift a finger himself but would not intervene to oppose efforts by other Dayton signatories, including the United States. It was a characteristically Balkan way of transferring responsibility to outsiders



Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to the Dayton Agreement. Green shows Bosnian Serb territory, and pink shows Bosnian Federation territory.

who could be blamed later if necessary. Bosnians of all ethnicities would have understood his gambit. I reported the conversation in detail to Washington, which chose not to press the matter further in diplomatic channels.

I also had several pleasant conversations with the Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mustafa Cerić, at his headquarters adjoining the beautiful Emperor's Mosque, built in 1457 after the Ottoman conquest of Sarajevo, and facing the Miljacka River. Nearby is the so-called Latin Bridge over the Miljacka, where Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in 1914.

When speaking with Americans, Cerić regularly stressed what he considered two fundamental points concerning the future viability of B&H: 1) Bosniaks are both Muslims and Europeans, and see no contradiction between the two; 2) Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs coexisted peacefully for centuries, and the goal now was to reestablish an interreligious relationship of trust, tolerance and coexistence. In 2012 Cerić left his post as Grand Mufti, and later ran unsuccessfully to become the Bosniak member of the three-member co-presidency of B&H. He is now president of the World Bosniak Congress.

... and the Croats

The overwhelmingly Roman Catholic Croats are the least numerous of Bosnia and Herzegovina's three "constituent peoples." In 1997 Bosniak political and moral power and authority unquestionably rested with Izetbegović, but no single Croat politician could claim similar authority over the Croat "nation." While the country's Bosniak population tends to concentrate in well-defined urban areas (e.g., Sarajevo, Tuzla, Gorazde, Zenica, Bihac), most Croats live in smaller settlements along the lengthy Bosnian-Croatian border, with other pockets in the country's center, such as the mountain towns of Jajce and Fojnica.

B&H Croat leaders, with encouragement and material support from Zagreb, had declared their own unrecognized statelet of "Herceg-Bosna" in 1991, with its de facto capital in West Mostar. (East Mostar remained under Bosniak control throughout the war.) Croat shelling in 1993 destroyed the historic 16th-century *Stari Most*, or "Old Bridge," over the Neretva River between East and West Mostar—a graceful structure commissioned by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1557. The bridge has been rebuilt by French engineers, using stones from the original quarry.

Kresimir Zubak was president of Herceg-Bosna from 1994 until the minstate's official disappearance in 1996. Zubak quickly became active in Bosnian politics, serving as the first president of the Federation and, from 1996 to 1998, as the Croat member of the tripartite B&H presidency. My dealings with Zubak were civil and

correct, but hardly warm. He was reserved, calculating and cautious, visibly measuring the impact on the Croat minority and his own political standing of any move the internationals might be considering. He also remained in close contact with Croatia's President Tudjman in Zagreb, who strongly influenced Croat policy on both sides of the border. There would be no breakthroughs with Zubak.

Jadranko Prlić was a more receptive Croat interlocutor. After serving early in the war as prime minister of Herceg-Bosna, he was Federation defense minister during "Operation Storm," a tide-turning Croat-Bosniak offensive in mid-1995 that inflicted the first significant military defeat on Serb forces in B&H. He then became the first foreign minister of B&H, remaining in that post from 1996 until 2001. In 2013 the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia indicted Prlić for alleged war crimes against Bosniaks and sentenced him to 25 years in prison. The judgment was upheld by an appeals court in 2017.

I also met several times with Franjo Komarica, the bishop of Banja Luka. He was an erudite and thoughtful man, and his distress at the expulsion of his parishioners from the Posavina region of R.S. was intense. By contrast, the Bishop of Mostar, Ratko Perić, rejected without explanation all requests for meetings with international officials. I eventually took advantage of a brief trip to Rome to convey my displeasure directly to a senior member of the Vatican Secretariat of State. He expressed awareness and disapproval of Bishop Perić's behavior, as well as the Holy See's reluctance to take action against him. He referred me to church officials in Zagreb, with whom I later had interesting and frank conversations.

Too Much History Per Capita

I returned to Washington at the end of August 1997, handing over the reins in Sarajevo to Ambassador Richard Kauzlarich. Washington did not appoint a successor as special envoy. The consensus seemed to be that Dayton had succeeded in establishing a new, if complex, political reality in B&H. At the time, I did not suspect that I would be returning to Sarajevo four years later as head of the largest OSCE operation in the world, with 800 civilian and military personnel, four regional centers and 24 field offices throughout the country. Along with two loyal and experienced deputies, French Ambassador Henri Zipper de Fabiani and Russian Ambassador Viktor Tkachenko, I spent the period between 2001 and 2004 focusing on the conduct of elections, reform of the judicial system, education reform, media freedom and good governance in B&H.

Today, ethnic politicians and their political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to dominate the political and eco-

Still more troubling, ethnic grievances and resentments are reasserting themselves inside the country, particularly in the Republika Srpska.

conomic scene. Sadly, they show little interest in grooming a successor generation of leaders, much less handing over power to it. The brain drain of young Bosnians of all groups has accelerated, as the best and brightest leave the country and the Balkan region for opportunities in western Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia. The economy is stagnant, uncoordinated and corrupt. Elsewhere in the neighborhood, Croatia and Slovenia have become E.U. members and NATO Allies; Montenegro has joined NATO; and even Serbia toys with the prospect of eventual E.U. and NATO membership. But Bosnia and Herzegovina is stuck.

Still more troubling, ethnic grievances and resentments are reasserting themselves inside the country, particularly in the Republika Srpska entity of B&H. Two decades ago, Milorad

Dodik was seen by the internationals in Sarajevo (including me) as a young, promising Serb political figure. Today, as president of Republika Srpska, Dodik persistently undermines the ineffective Sarajevo central government and looks to Moscow for support.

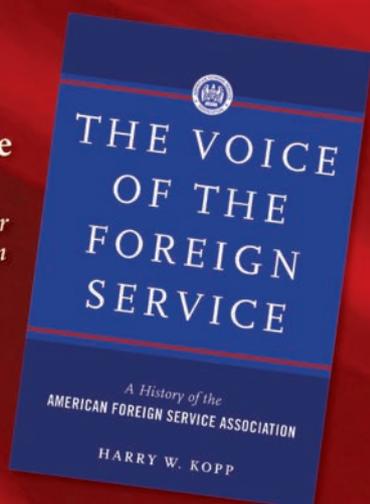
In 1888 Otto von Bismarck mused: "One day, the great European War will come out of some damned foolish thing in the Balkans." In the 20th century, his prophecy came true, not once but twice. If Bismarck is to be proven wrong in the 21st century, we need to pay serious attention to Balkan affairs, now and in the future. To take no meaningful and effective action as Bosnia and Herzegovina continues its slow downward tailspin is a recipe for eventual crisis. As in the 1990s, the United States will not escape involvement. ■

Spread a little understanding in the New Year!

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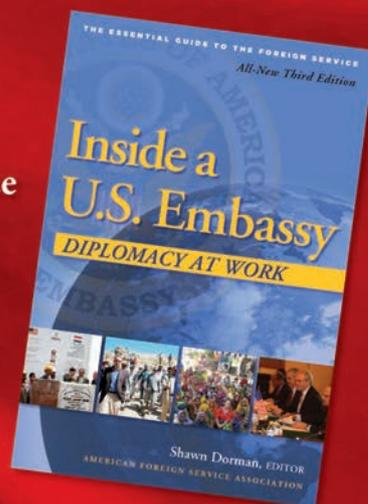
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Idealism, Diplomacy and Power

Tony Lake's Story

Through six decades and two major foreign policy crucibles—Vietnam and the Balkans—Tony Lake showed a steady commitment to public service, as well as a belief in speaking truth to power.

BY RENNIE A. SILVA

Fifty years ago, Anthony Lake resigned from the Foreign Service over the war in Vietnam. He later returned to government service and went on to play a pivotal role in developing the Dayton Accords that ended the Bosnian War. The conviction that it is essential for diplomats and foreign affairs officials to speak truth to power was a constant in his career, the lessons of which remain relevant today.

A “Low-Profile” Kind of Guy

On a wall in Lake's home office hangs a framed photograph of him with President Bill Clinton inside Marine One. Light streams into the helicopter from a small panel window, illuminating Clinton; Lake is seated off to the side. “I love that photo, because the president is in the spotlight, and I'm in the shadows,” Lake says, only half-joking. During a career that spanned six decades and five administrations, he worked on foreign policy at the highest levels: He served as national security adviser, director of policy planning and executive director of UNICEF; he played a leading role in helping to end conflicts in Bosnia, Northern Ireland and Eritrea; and he advised more than a half-dozen presidential candidates, including Bill Clinton and



Rennie A. Silva currently serves as a political officer at U.S. Embassy Vilnius. His previous assignments include U.S. Embassy Riyadh and the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs in Washington, D.C. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Cambodia from 2007 to 2009. The views expressed are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. government.

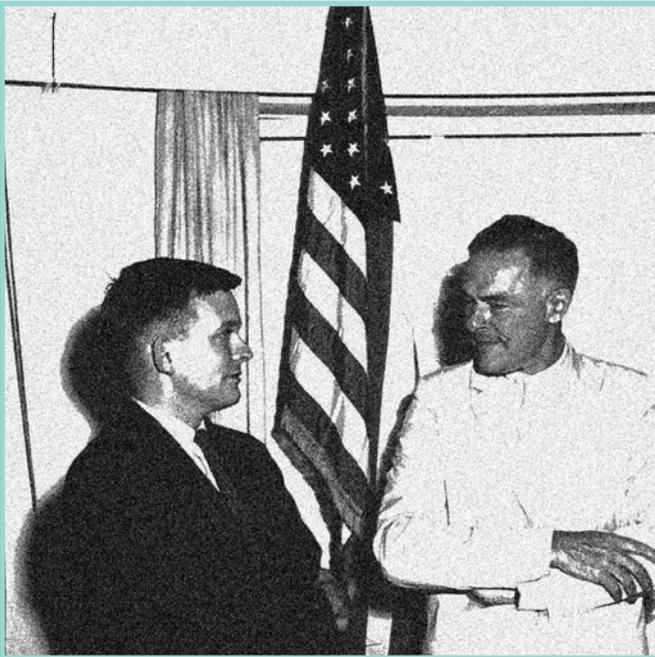
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Barack Obama. Yet, according to friends and colleagues, he has always shunned the spotlight. “Tony is a low-profile kind of guy,” says I.M. Destler, who first met Lake when they were freshmen at Harvard in the late 1950s and later co-authored a book on American foreign policy with him.

I first learned about Lake more than a decade ago, when I joined the Peace Corps and was assigned to Southeast Asia, the same region where he started his own career in the Foreign Service a half-century earlier. His work on Vietnam and eventual decision to leave the Department of State over the war fascinated me. When I reached out to Lake earlier this year and asked to discuss his story in depth, he initially greeted my request with self-deprecating humor: “I've had a hard time holding down a job,” he quipped.

Lake's self-effacing manner belies not only his lifelong commitment to public service but also his enduring affinity for the Foreign Service: When a group of officers testified before Congress during the 2019 impeachment hearings, Lake co-drafted an appeal soliciting contributions to the AFSA Legal Defense Fund to help defray their legal expenses. “Serving in the Foreign Service seems more challenging now than at any point in my lifetime,” he states.

Speaking truth to power resonates with Anthony Lake. Not only has he seen this movie before, but he also personally starred in a prequel: 50 years ago, Lake resigned from the U.S. Foreign Service over President Richard Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia. He had been special assistant to National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, with responsibility for the Vietnam negotiations. The Nixon administration responded to his resignation by having the FBI tap his home phone. Lake later sued, settling after a decade and a half for a signed letter from Kissinger admitting that the retaliatory measure had been “unconstitutional” and acknowledging that Lake's loyalty had been beyond reproach.



U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., at right, with his staff assistant, FSO Anthony Lake, at Embassy Saigon in 1963.

These days, Lake shows little enmity toward his erstwhile boss, while still disagreeing with his policies and methods. “Kissinger was brilliant, but just as important, he was sufficiently confident in his own opinions to encourage his staff to challenge him,” Lake remembers. Instead of embittering him, Lake’s time in the Nixon White House affirmed his view that dissent is an act of loyalty, not only to one’s country, but also to one’s boss. “Officers have a responsibility to raise their concerns over policies they see as detrimental to the national interest,” he asserts emphatically. “Smart bosses will solicit alternative perspectives and hear all the facts; in the end, it is they who have the biggest personal stake in getting their decisions right.”

Starting Out on the New Frontier

The arc of Anthony Lake’s career began in 1962, the year he joined the Foreign Service. The son of a New Deal Democrat father and an Eisenhower Republican mother, Lake had ideas and aspirations that were influenced by John F. Kennedy, whose campaign message of a “new frontier” imbued him with a sense of possibility for America’s role in the world. Lake volunteered to go to Vietnam because it was “a chance to be a part of something important.” When he completed language training and arrived in Saigon in the spring of 1963, the U.S. diplomatic and military presence was a small fraction of what it would become, with life more closely resembling a scene from Graham Greene’s *The Quiet American* than a set from Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*. On the trip to his new post, Lake read Greene’s historical fiction about intrigue, hubris and betrayal amid the collapse of French colonial rule in Vietnam. He arrived unshaken in his

belief that America would prevail where France had not. “In retrospect, we were breathtakingly naive,” he says.

As a vice consul, Lake spent his first months on the job assisting American citizens. On learning that one of his predecessors had botched the repatriation of the remains of a deceased American by sending the wrong body home, he acquainted himself with the local morgue and watched the staff embalm a cadaver. In the local jails, he visited Americans who had been arrested on the streets of Saigon. At the embassy, he certified marriages between American soldiers and Vietnamese women. Though the work could at times be seamy, he loved it nonetheless. “It was one of best jobs I’ve ever had,” Lake says fondly of the experience.

Halfway through his first year at post, Lake was called to serve as staff assistant to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. “He was a towering figure, both in stature and manner—thoroughly patriotic and almost professionally affable,” Lake recalls. Lodge, who had fought in World War II and served as a senator, ambassador to the United Nations and Republican nominee for vice president, possessed one of the most impressive résumés in American diplomatic history. His selection as President Kennedy’s envoy to South Vietnam signaled the increasing geopolitical importance of the country as a new front line in the Cold War. Working for Lodge, Lake would later write, offered “the exhilaration of being present at great events.”

In the fall of 1963, Lake would witness an event that was to become a watershed moment in the history of America’s involvement in Vietnam. On Nov. 1 he and his wife were having lunch inside their villa when they heard bursts of machine gun fire erupt outside. After taking shelter in a bedroom closet, Lake crawled to a nearby window and peered out at the gun battle unfolding on the street; a coup against South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem was underway. As bullets sporadically flew, he relayed developments in real time to the U.S. military attaché over the phone. After midnight, Lake watched a column of rebel tanks roll by the house, heading in the direction of the presidential palace: “At that moment, I knew that it was over for Diem.”

Many of Saigon’s residents, jubilant over Diem’s demise, believed the coup had been orchestrated by the United States. While the Pentagon Papers were to later charge that senior American officials in Washington and Saigon had been complicit in the removal of the Vietnamese president, Ambassador Lodge would maintain that he had faithfully followed orders from President Kennedy to “not help in the planning” of Diem’s ouster. However, when South Vietnam was rocked by a second coup barely three months later, U.S. support was immediate and unambiguous; Washington swiftly dispatched Secretary of Defense Robert

Lake's time in the Nixon White House affirmed his view that dissent is an act of loyalty, not only to one's country, but also to one's boss.

McNamara to tour the country hand-in-hand with its newly installed leader. Today, Lake describes the decisions made during that period in terms tantamount to crossing the Rubicon: “We sent the message to the Vietnamese that we were the ones who really controlled their country, which meant that we had become responsible for fighting their war.”

A Deepening Quagmire

When Lake was assigned to the American consulate in the provincial capital of Hue in the fall of 1964, he eagerly embraced his new surroundings. As one of six provincial reporting officers at the time, he traveled widely throughout the countryside, receiving briefings from U.S. military advisers and using his language skills to meet with village leaders. As he reported on developments in the region, he came to realize that nationalism, not communism, was driving the growing insurgency in the country. “We found ourselves in a trap,” he says. “The government relied on us to survive, but the more we helped it do so, the more we undercut its credentials—and the more our ally looked like the puppet of a foreign power.”

As the war in South Vietnam grew, so did the threats to U.S. diplomats. Lake's official duties entailed working in areas where the Viet Cong were active; they would later capture one of his colleagues, Foreign Service Officer Douglas Ramsey, and hold him prisoner for seven years. In reflecting on his experience, Lake laments the fact that increasing security restrictions and rising partisan political rancor would make a Foreign Service assignment like his tour in Vietnam all but impossible today. “In my view, officers such as Christopher Stevens are heroes, not victims,” he remarks. “Diplomats have the same right as the military to risk their lives in service to their country.”

When Lake returned to the Harry S Truman building in the summer of 1965, Vietnam followed him. Initially assigned to State's Vietnam Desk, he later joined the staff of Under Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach, a skeptic of the war. Lake's duties included notetaking for the weekly meetings of the “Non-Group,” the senior-level discussion sessions on Vietnam held Thursday

afternoons on the seventh floor of the department. He listened as the participants, several of whom had been early architects of the war, struggled in vain to find ways to prevent the conflict from engulfing Lyndon Johnson's presidency. Lake watched as developments took a physical toll on McNamara, later writing of his own difficulty seeing “personally decent men make policy about people as if they were merely playing chess, when so many Americans and Vietnamese were dying.”

By the time Richard Nixon became president in January 1969, Lake had been assigned to pursue graduate studies at Princeton. It was there that he received a phone call from Henry Kissinger asking him to return to Washington. Lake had taken Kissinger's class at Harvard as an undergraduate student; now the new national security adviser was recruiting his former student to join his staff. Aware of Lake's opposition to the war, Kissinger suggested that he could work from inside the White House to end it.

After initially hesitating, Lake accepted the job. It was to be his last in the Foreign Service.

The Decision to Resign

To explain his decision to resign over the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, Lake cites a term coined to underscore the disastrous consequences of complicity in Washington, D.C., during the Vietnam War. In a 1968 *Atlantic* article, “How Could Vietnam Happen?,” East Asia specialist James Thomson described how the “effectiveness trap” led working-level government officials, when faced with policies they knew to be ill-conceived, to censor themselves. “The inclination to remain silent or to acquiesce in the presence of the great men—to live to fight another day, to give on this issue so that you can be ‘effective’ on later issues—is overwhelming,” wrote Thomson. It was this phenomenon that had helped propel the United States into a war the author described as “brutal, probably unwinnable and, to an increasing body of opinion, calamitous and immoral.”

Lake's own liberal political views never aligned with the conservatism of the Nixon administration. However, he passionately shared Kissinger's stated desire to bring the war in Vietnam to a close and understood that his position on the NSC staff afforded him proximity to power: when the national security adviser traveled to Paris to initiate secret talks with the North Vietnamese, Lake accompanied him. Back in Washington, he and another staffer wrote early drafts of a speech on the war that President Nixon delivered to the nation over televised broadcast, while recommending to Kissinger that the president avoid rhetoric that would sink Nixon deeper into what he described as “the Johnsonian bog” in Vietnam.



President Bill Clinton and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake at the White House in September 1994.

WILFREDO LEE/AP/SHUTTERSTOCK

But by April 1970 it became clear that his presence no longer offered an opportunity to have any positive effect. Kissinger summoned Lake and a few other dovish aides to his office on a Saturday morning, where he outlined plans for a South Vietnamese/American offensive against Viet Cong bases inside Cambodia. The aides voiced their objections to the operation, which they regarded as a reckless widening of the war. Kissinger said to Lake: “I knew what you were going to say,” indicating that his voice no longer carried any weight. One week later, on the eve of the invasion, Lake and two other aides tendered their resignations.

After leaving the Foreign Service, Lake worked on several presidential campaigns, completed his Ph.D. and ran International Voluntary Services, an international equivalent of the Peace Corps. During the Carter administration, he returned to the Department of State as director of policy planning. He also raised cattle in West Virginia, selling cut-to-order beef to friends (Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was a regular customer). Lake later took up teaching at Amherst and Mt. Holyoke colleges, and wrote books on American foreign policy.

As the 1992 election cycle began, Lake was living quietly on his family farm in Worthington, Massachusetts, with no plans to re-enter the fray. The end of the Cold War appeared to have placed national security on the back burner as a political issue; most of the Democratic candidates seemed willing to concede the realm of international affairs to President George H.W. Bush. But one prominent exception would draw Lake back into the fold: Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton did want to include foreign policy in his campaign. Sandy Berger, who had been Lake’s deputy on the policy planning staff and had known Clinton since they worked together on the McGovern campaign in the early 1970s, arranged a meeting between the two.

Lake had asked to talk with the presidential candidate about a book he intended to write. Instead, they spent most of their time discussing economic conditions in Worthington and the hardships his neighbors faced. “Clinton was attuned to people’s everyday lives,” remembers Lake. Following the meeting, Clinton’s team asked him to write an address that would become the leading foreign policy speech of the campaign; Lake signed on shortly thereafter, advising the candidate from his Massachusetts farmhouse.

Back to Washington, and the Balkan Challenge

Clinton’s election victory would bring Lake back to Washington, D.C., once again. When the president-elect asked him to serve as national security adviser, he reluctantly agreed to return to the West Wing. Lake approached the position with a

The son of a New Deal Democrat father and an Eisenhower Republican mother, Lake had ideas and aspirations that were influenced by John F. Kennedy.

keen sense of history and a strong desire to avoid the kind of deep rifts between the White House and the State Department that had plagued the Nixon and Carter administrations. “I had witnessed the negative examples of the past, and I did not want to repeat them,” he recalls.

Elected on a campaign promise to focus on the American economy, the new president was disinclined to devote time to international affairs during his first year in office. His inattention came at a price: Unsuccessful military operations in Somalia and Haiti embarrassed the White House and elicited sharp criticism of an administration that Lake now concedes was initially “disjointed” in its handling of foreign policy. These early setbacks would then be overshadowed by developments in Bosnia, where Clinton faced a burgeoning crisis that had first started during the tenure of his predecessor. President George H.W. Bush’s national security team had recoiled from the conflict, as Bosnian Serb forces laid siege to Sarajevo and embarked on a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing across the fledgling country. Initial American and European entreaties to end the bloodshed foundered, exposing a dithering lack of resolve to address the worst human suffering in Europe since World War II. “The breakup of Yugoslavia posed the first major post-Cold War test for the United States and its European allies,” wrote Ivo Daalder, who served under Lake on the National Security Council staff during the Dayton negotiations and later authored a book on Bosnia policy: “It is a test they failed miserably.”

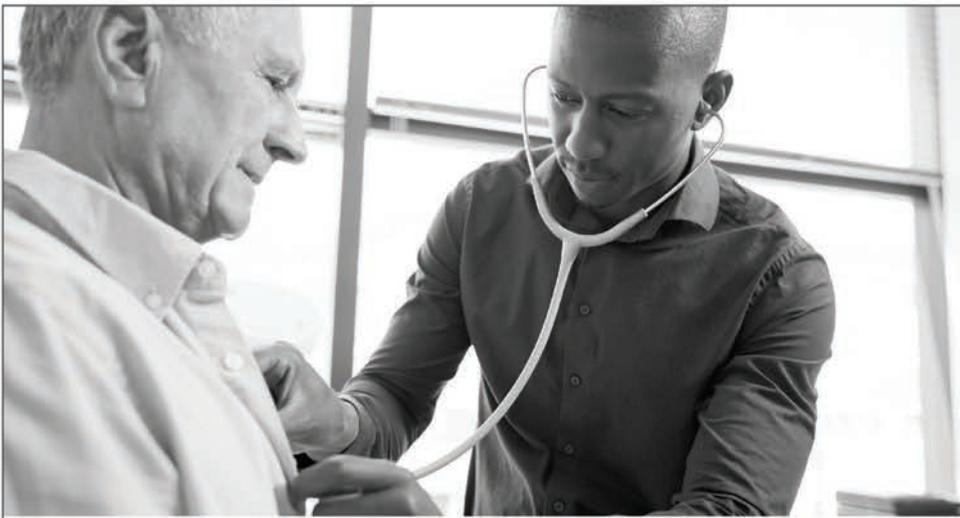
“Diplomacy that is not backed by power can be feckless,” Lake comments dryly, speaking in unabashed realpolitik terms, “but power without diplomacy can be homicidal.” At the beginning of his career, he had watched successive administrations use military force inside a political and diplomatic vacuum in Vietnam. Three decades later, as Lake oversaw interagency deliberations on how to end the violence in Bosnia, he confronted the opposite problem. Only a credible threat could bring the warring sides to the negotiating table, but proposals to use American military power in the Balkans faced stiff

resistance on several fronts. European allies, who had deployed lightly armed troops to Bosnia as part of the United Nations Protection Force, were fearful of retaliatory measures against their soldiers by the more heavily armed Bosnian Serb forces; senior leaders in the Pentagon were wary of mission creep and the prospect of deploying ground forces; and Secretary of State Warren Christopher sought to focus on containing the conflict rather than ending it. Lake, along with Vice President Al Gore and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright, pushed vigorously but unsuccessfully to break the impasse.

After two years and minimal progress on Bosnia, the White House was running out of time to act. By 1995 conditions on the ground were worsening, and the war was at risk of becoming a political liability for the president at the outset of his 1996 reelection campaign. Sensing an opportunity to chart a new course, Lake gathered a group of aides in his West Wing office on a Saturday morning in June 1995, much as Kissinger had summoned Lake 25 years before. But this time, the outcome would be markedly different. “The goal was to take a more flexible diplomatic approach to end the war, combined with removal of some of the barriers to the use of military force,” recalls Lake, who led a daylong discussion on ideas and options. The result was the so-called “endgame strategy.”

Buttressed by support from Albright and Gore, Lake presented the plan to Clinton in August, and he promptly approved it over the objections of the Department of State. The president immediately dispatched Lake to Europe to sell the strategy to the Allies and assuage lingering concerns in the region. “We pushed on open doors,” Lake recounts modestly of his meetings with senior officials in the United Kingdom, France, Russia and elsewhere, where he succeeded in winning broad international support. His trip paved the way for a negotiating team led by Richard Holbrooke to conduct shuttle diplomacy and convene the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia for negotiations at Wright Patterson Air Force Base outside Dayton, Ohio. What resulted would become one of the most significant foreign policy achievements of Clinton’s presidency—the 1995 Dayton Accords.

Twenty-five years after Anthony Lake’s conscience compelled him to resign from the U.S. Foreign Service over the Vietnam War, his enduring commitment to American diplomacy helped end the Bosnian War. After devoting his life to public service, he remains firm in his belief that principles and pragmatism are both essential elements of American foreign policy. “We can aspire to live up to our ideals without living under illusions,” says Lake, conveying a tempered optimism. “Cynicism is a form of surrender.” ■



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AFSA Works for Diversity and Inclusion: An Update

On Oct. 5, AFSA released this update from AFSA President Eric Rubin on its work in support of increasing the representation of minorities in the Foreign Service:

In August AFSA concluded a survey on our members' experiences with bias and discrimination and suggestions on how to improve workplace culture in the Foreign Service.

According to the survey responses, many of you have either personally experienced bias or discrimination or have personally witnessed bias or discrimination in the workplace. For example, Foreign Service members of color told us in overwhelming numbers that they had been targets of intentional microaggressions.

In the survey, respondents prioritized ways to move the Foreign Service culture to one that truly values a diverse and inclusive workplace. Your priorities included building awareness of unconscious

bias, having more diverse leadership, instituting widespread accountability for bias-based and discriminatory actions, assuring senior leadership support and providing opportunities to have honest conversations about race.

You can find slides of survey responses, broken out by agency and by demographic groups, on AFSA's website. An article on the survey results appears in the AFSA News section of the October *Foreign Service Journal*, the companion to our September *FSJ* focus on diversity and inclusion.

We also asked in our survey how AFSA can best advocate for a more diverse and inclusive Foreign Service in all our agencies, and a good number of you responded with suggestions for future AFSA advocacy. (For some current State and USAID advocacy thinking, please see State VP Tom



Yazdgerdi's columns in the September and October *FSJs* and USAID VP Jason Singer's Sept. 21 AFSA-net message to members.)

In addition to these current suggestions and your survey recommendations, we are considering measures suggested by employee affinity groups at the foreign affairs agencies, as well as steps recommended by those who testified during recent congressional hearings on diversity and inclusion.

A committee of the AFSA Governing Board is examining all of these elements for future AFSA advocacy. To help in our deliberations, AFSA has partnered with three Rangel Fellows at the Kennedy

Each issue of *The FSJ* since July includes articles related to diversity and inclusion.

School of Government at Harvard to look at the real-world effectiveness of these recommendations and any possible downsides. We will look to best practice in the private sector when applicable, and we will examine policies at all our foreign affairs agencies to glean the best ideas.

As I mentioned when we first invited members to take the bias survey, AFSA will conduct further surveys addressing gender and other forms of bias. We are committed to continuing our efforts to confront bias and discrimination, to understand the implications of new developments such as the recent executive order on diversity and inclusion training and to advocate actions that will have a lasting impact.

A Foreign Service that truly represents our country is a great strength. The effort to bring that about is certainly worthy of our serious and sustained attention. As always, please let us know your thoughts at member@afsa.org. ■

CALENDAR

Please check www.afsa.org for the most up-to-date information. All events are subject to cancellation or rescheduling.

December 1
AFSA Scholarship Applications available

December 2 | 1-2 p.m.
Webinar: "Know Your Rights"

December 3 | 1-2 p.m.
Retiree Webinar:
"The View from Washington"
with AFSA President
Ambassador Eric Rubin

December 14
Federal Benefits Health
Benefits Open Season Ends

December 16 | 12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

December 25-January 3
AFSA Holiday Closure

January 15
AFSA Governing Board
Election Cycle Begins

January 18
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

January 19 | 12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

January 20
Inauguration Day:
AFSA Offices Closed



2020: How Are We Doing?

2020 has been a tough and unusual year for us all. In this time of a continuing pandemic and a hyperpartisan political landscape, I want to update you on AFSA's response to key issues that affect the well-being of our members.

End of Global Authorized Departure. By the time this issue goes to print, we will be days away from the Dec. 9 deadline for those on GAD to either return to post or take a no-fault curtailment. We know that our members have faced a difficult decision, especially as the COVID-19 situation abroad (and at home) has worsened in recent weeks.

For that reason, AFSA President Eric Rubin wrote to Under Secretary of Management Brian Bulatao on Oct. 6, asking that the sliding scale on lodging and per diem be removed and that posts *not* be treated with a one-size-fits-all policy.

While the sliding scale is unfortunately still in place, AFSA nonetheless got a win—the department will pay for any costs of breaking a lease.

We continue to worry that as the pandemic worsens overseas, employees might have to return to an unsafe situation, or that post leadership might feel pressured not to seek authorized or ordered departure, even if the situation warrants.

Indeed, as of this writing, AFSA does not know of a single post that has formally reversed course and returned to an earlier phase under the Diplomacy Strong initiative. If you think this is happening in your case, please let us know, and we will follow up.

New COLA Methodology. As you know, the department has instituted a new methodology for calculating the cost of living allowance (COLA) for overseas posts (see 20 STATE 378 and 20 STATE 100230).

In Fiscal Year 2020, the department hired an independent contractor to determine the COLA based on three commercial surveys, rather than having posts do it themselves. The three survey companies are widely recognized, reputable sources of COLA rates used by multinational corporations.

While AFSA generally supports rationalizing this process and taking the burden off posts and bureaus to conduct the yearly “basket of goods” survey, we have expressed concern to the Bureau of Global Talent Management that the methodology may not account for some unusual circumstances—for example, the economies of some small island nations that import many of the goods available.

AFSA also noticed that

COLAs were reduced in a majority of posts, and that the department felt compelled to cap this loss at 20 percent. We will continue to engage with GTM and the Bureau of Administration to ensure our members get answers on how a particular COLA was calculated. Please let us know if you have any comments or concerns.

The Annuity Exception. The annuity exception allows members of the Foreign Service at the FS-2 level or below who are TIC-ed out but have yet to reach age 50 to remain in the Service, without further promotion, until reaching that required milestone, at which point they retire with their pension and health insurance.

This provision came about as a result of the tragic suicide of one of our members in 1971 before he reached the age of 50 and 20 years of service.

In recent years, the department has looked into eliminating the annuity exception—which could hurt members who may TIC out at the FS-2 level because of limited promotion opportunities. (For a fuller discussion, see the June 2019 State VP column: [afsa.org/terrible-twos](https://www.afsa.org/terrible-twos).)

The department first told us that the annuity exception was contrary to the spirit of the up-or-out

system and later told us that the Office of the Legal Adviser maintained it was at odds with the Anti-Deficiency Act.

On Oct. 1 AFSA President Rubin wrote to the Director General underscoring in the strongest possible terms our opposition to eliminating the annuity exception.

The DG responded on Oct. 7, noting that while there are no current plans to change policy, this provision would continue to be examined in the context of the Foreign Service Act. We will remain vigilant.

Worldwide Availability on Entry. AFSA continues to be interested in a class-action suit pending before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission involving 250 applicants with disabilities who were denied entry to the Foreign Service because they were not 100 percent “worldwide available.”

We understand that this issue remains in litigation, and there are reports that the parties may engage in settlement discussions.

As we weigh whether to support the continuation of the policy of 100 percent worldwide availability on entry, we want to consider the merits of the class-action suit and any potential settlement proposals. We will keep you informed as the process goes ahead. ■



A Brief Reflection on Measuring Impact

As I write this in October, we're a short way from the presidential election; we're entering month seven of COVID-related telework; and USAID has, per the press, put a hold on all diversity and inclusion trainings. And it's only Tuesday.

Amidst all these high-level domestic concerns, I found a smidgen of hope in a few articles highlighting the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Granted, one article was celebrating the "accomplishment" of the parties' agreement on 19 discussion ground rules. Still, these days I'll take that as a positive.

Like many FSOs, I served a year at USAID/Afghanistan. And, like many FSOs, I had a far better experience—per-

sonally and professionally—than I had anticipated.

I worked with fantastic people across the inter-agency, as well as from the Afghan government, implementing partners and other institutions. I made lifelong friends with folks I might never have met otherwise.

I like to think I taught a thing or two to the awesome economic growth team I led—I certainly learned from them, as well as from an exemplary ambassador and deeply dedicated mission director. And, yes, I missed my wife and boys.

My team and I focused on getting things done during my yearlong tour. We cleaned up several half-developed projects—great ideas floating around the bureaucracy that

needed either an extra push or a final nail.

We launched new initiatives, striving to be responsive to our Afghan counterparts while safeguarding U.S. taxpayer money and operating in a highly politicized context (both from Afghan counterparts and Washington!). And we tried—really tried—to consider and build in sustainability and impact.

But how do you do that in a one-year tour? How do you do that amid changing priorities, frequently rotating staff, fluctuating budget and personnel levels, constant—and at times conflicting—"guidance" from above and, of course, reporting, reporting and more reporting? The answer is we just do it; that's why we became FSOs.

At the end of the (long) day,

I do believe that my team and I played a part in achieving the current Afghan peace talks.

Could I quantitatively measure our contribution? Enter it into one of the myriad mandatory reporting spreadsheets and templates? No, not really. And even the excellent fact sheets, stories, pictures and outreach of USAID communications colleagues don't really demonstrate causality.

But all FSOs know that their collective contribution to USAID's mission is far greater than their individual, day-to-day roles or, often, even what they and their teams achieve during a tour.

And they know that the impact they have on host-country farmers, teachers, children, mothers, economies, civil society, elections, the marginalized and, yes, on U.S. national security, is immeasurable. ■

AFSA Supports EEO Complaint for Equal Pay

AFSA is supporting an equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaint filed on behalf of three women who reached the Senior Foreign Service working for USAID, but argue that they were paid considerably less than dozens of less experienced and lower-ranked male colleagues at USAID.

Each woman worked for USAID for more than 27 years, and each reached the rank of Career Minister. After discovering in 2016

that they hadn't been paid as much as lower-ranked male colleagues, they made multiple informal attempts to get USAID to correct the inequality.

When the agency took no action, the three filed a formal complaint in January 2017 against USAID alleging violation of the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

The women documented disparities in pay that affected their base salary, as well as

other compensation based on a percentage of that base salary, such as danger pay, post differential, contributions to Thrift Savings Plan and pensions.

On May 12, after a lengthy EEO process, USAID issued a Federal Agency Decision denying the complaint.

The women appealed to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's appellate body, the Office of Federal Operations, on

Aug. 12. The appeal is still pending.

Observers consider the complaint a litmus test of USAID's commitment to enforcing the Equal Pay Act in its most senior ranks.

"AFSA is proud to stand with our members to support this effort to right this longstanding wrong by USAID," Ken Kero-Mentz, secretary of the AFSA Governing Board and chair of AFSA's Legal Defense Fund, says. ■



Support Our Foreign Service Community

December is the month of giving. For many, that means donating time and/or money to one or more nonprofit organizations.

While many charities have suspended in-person volunteer opportunities due to the pandemic, they still welcome financial donations to help fund their operations.

Here are three organizations that support distinct parts of the Foreign Service community—youth, spouses and seniors—plus one organization that educates the public about what the Foreign Service does. I am a longtime supporter of all four.

If your finances permit you

to make charitable donations this holiday season, please consider supporting one or more of these good causes.

Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF) is dedicated to helping Foreign Service youth embrace the adventure of their internationally mobile childhood. Programs include webinars, workshops, family meet-up events, five annual contests and college scholarships. You may become a member or contribute by credit card on the FSYF website at fsyf.org or via Combined Federal Campaign code 39436.

Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) is the primary advocate and support network for family members of Foreign Service employees. You can become a member or contribute through PayPal on the AAFSW website at aafsw.org.

The Senior Living Foundation of the American Foreign Service (SLF) assists retired Foreign Service members and their survivors who find themselves in financial difficulties. Support can take the form of monthly grants to cover costs, such as home health care or medical transportation, as well as

one-time grants for items like hearing aids and wheelchairs. You may contribute by credit card on the SLF website at SLFoundation.org.

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) works to capture, preserve and share the experiences of America's diplomats with the public via programs including recording the oral histories of Foreign Service retirees and their family members, and facilitating the preparation and publication of books and memoirs.

You can become a member or contribute by credit card on the ADST website at adst.org. ■

Early and Mid-Career Retirement Planning Seminar

In a Sept. 24 online virtual presentation, AFSA Retiree VP John Naland summarized the steps that early and mid-career employees should take to best position themselves for life after the Foreign Service.

Mr. Naland, a former director of the State Department's Office of Retirement, took members through the steps they need to take to ensure they are ready for retirement.

He shared a detailed checklist outlining the things prospective retirees need to do and the websites they need to visit to prepare for a

successful transition. View the checklist at <http://bit.ly/retirechecklist>.

In his one-hour overview of Foreign Service retirement, Mr. Naland touched on the following topics:

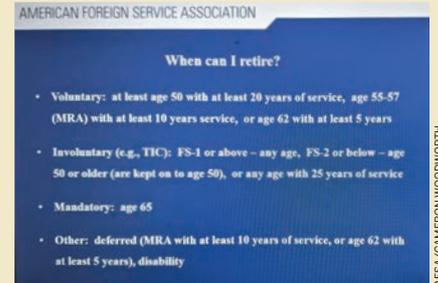
- What if you resign before you can retire?
- Understanding your pension (aka your annuity)
- Retirement planning resources
 - AFSA services for retirees
 - TSP: Stocks vs. bonds, Roth IRAs vs. traditional
 - Health insurance and life insurance after retirement
 - Divorce and Foreign Service retirement benefits

• Social Security: When to start, will it still be there?

• Prognosis on future benefits cuts
"This is unofficial guidance," Mr. Naland said at the beginning of the presentation.

"This is your retirement. You need to do the due diligence. Consult the official State Department publications, and the Foreign Service Institute has some great retirement planning courses."

One of the FSI retirement courses, he added, provides 30 hours of information.



AFSA Retiree VP John Naland shares retirement planning tips with AFSA Members during a Sept. 24 video presentation.

Mr. Naland's presentation is available to AFSA members at afsa.org/video.

You can also visit AFSA's one-stop shop for retirement information at afsa.org/retirement-services. ■

USAID 2020 Promotion Boards: Concerns on Diversity, Inclusion and Transparency

BY JASON SINGER, AFSA USAID VICE PRESIDENT

The following was shared with the membership as an AFSA net on Sept. 21.

On Aug. 3, USAID published a notice outlining its new promotion board selection process. It stated: "All potential appointees will be randomly selected from the group of SFS and FS-1s currently occupying Senior Leadership Group positions."

This is an extremely small pool of candidates, one that actively excludes all FS-2s, as well as all FS-1s and above not currently in SLG positions, denying them opportunities to contribute and participate in a critical agency arrangement.

Drawing from the small set of active SLG colleagues is statistically more likely to yield a less diverse board than drawing from the larger pool of candidates declared eligible in the Automated Directives System, including those at the FS-2 level and above. This is not a matter of opinion. It is a matter of math affirmed by the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity.

In addition, the agency's unilateral imposition of a new process contravenes recently negotiated ADS 463 on the promotion process and runs counter to the agency's Core Values, including, most notably, inclusion.

AFSA is concerned that

the agency's unilateral decision will undermine the hard work and trust that the Community of Stakeholders put into development of the still-new Foreign Service promotion process, jeopardizing its credibility.

AFSA has engaged in discussions with the agency to try to understand its position and to convey member concerns. The agency's stated rationale—that Office of Human Capital and Talent Management's "goal is to cultivate a Board of senior-most FSOs that includes a rich combination of leadership experience and technical expertise that is representative of the Agency"—flies in the face of the ADS requirement to ensure diverse representation.

The requirement reads: "The Agency strives to ensure diverse representation on the Promotion Boards in terms of backstops, background and experience, in Washington and in the field, in addition to race, ethnicity/national origin, sex and disability pursuant to Section 602(b) of the Foreign Service Act."

Despite discussions and a written request for clarification, the agency is forging ahead with its apparently random selection process

As a next step in the formal Labor Management process, AFSA has requested diversity data on current and past promotion boards, including by backstop. AFSA will continue to engage with members, the agency and other stakeholders.

and has already appointed the 2020 promotion boards.

I would like to be clear: I am confident that board members will carry out their duties with the highest professionalism and integrity. But I am equally confident that the agency's lack of transparency and disregard for diversity and inclusion concerns are a step backward.

This is a unique and invaluable learning moment in our nation's history and for the Foreign Service. The recent Government Accountability Office report on USAID and diversity made clear that lack of attention from senior leadership was a key cause of diversity challenges at USAID.

To its credit, the agency acknowledged the need to redouble efforts to achieve greater diversity and inclusion. Unfortunately, the recent notice and its proposed approach to promotion board composition only seem to reaffirm the GAO finding.

As a next step in the formal Labor Management process, AFSA has requested diversity data on current and past promotion boards, including by backstop. AFSA will continue to engage with members, the agency and other stakeholders.

I encourage you to convey your own concerns and thoughts to HCTM and discuss and share ideas on improving diversity and inclusion. And, as always, please feel free to reach out to AFSA at member@afsa.org or to me at singer@afsa.org. Thank you. ■

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AFSA NEWS

Retirees Join AFSA for Outreach Efforts

AFSA's outreach team hosted webinars on Sept. 10 and Oct. 15 for retired members to discuss the official launch of our public outreach campaign: "The U.S. Foreign Service: Our First Line of Defense" and how people can become involved.

The hourlong webinars included information about the campaign strategy and objectives, as well as the resources available to members who want to serve as speakers or share our campaign through social media. They also included an overview of how to use virtual platforms such as Zoom and discussion of best practices for virtual presentations.

The goal of the campaign is to broaden the domestic constituency for the Foreign Service. The campaign highlights the various and critical ways in which members of the Foreign Service protect and advance our national security and keep Americans safe, at home and abroad.

AFSA members can get involved by joining our growing roster of messengers; by sharing stories and videos on social media using our social media toolkit; and by reaching out to your local community colleges and other local organizations to see if they'd be interested in hosting a virtual presentation.

The webinars were recorded and are available on our campaign page: afsa.org/first-line-defense.

There you will also find:

- General talking points.
- An explainer video. It's

a useful tool to include in presentations or remarks.

- Our social media toolkit.

Our newest resource, this toolkit includes messages, videos and hashtags.

- The campaign's social media calendar, including social media dates relevant to the campaign and the Foreign Service in general.

- Community college finder, to help find schools in your area that you can reach out to.

We hope the AFSA resources are useful, either for incorporation into your existing presentations or for new ones.

If you need additional materials or have further questions, please let us know. We also appreciate hearing about your outreach efforts and events. Please let us know where you've been speaking by completing this form: afsa.org/telling-foreign-service-story.

To join our campaign, please visit afsa.org/first-line-defense or email AFSA Strategic Messaging Coordinator Nadja Ruzica at ruzica@afsa.org.

AFSA stands ready to support members as needed, whether with presentations, additional resources or virtual platform inquiries. We look forward to hearing from you! ■

AFSA Dues Increase for 2021

AFSA has raised dues for 2021 by 1.4 percent for all individual membership categories.

This is in addition to the increase agreed to by the membership in the dues referendum held in September (afsa.org/referendum).

In concrete terms, this amounts to an increase of between six and 24 cents per pay period, depending on an individual's membership category.

In accordance with Article IV of the AFSA Bylaws, the Governing Board can choose to increase dues by no more than the cumulative increase in the national Consumer Price Index, published by the Department of Labor, since the effective date of the previous dues increase.

Active-duty and retired members paying dues via payroll and annuity deduction will see a small increase in the amount automatically deducted from their paychecks and annuities. Those paying annually will be billed the new rate on their regularly scheduled renewal date. ■

Active Duty

Foreign Service Grade	2020 Annual	2020 Bi-Weekly	2021 Annual*	2021 Bi-Weekly*	Annual Increase*
SFS	\$429.09	\$16.50	\$448.28	\$17.24	\$19.19
1-3	\$331.74	\$12.76	\$349.57	\$13.45	\$17.83
4-6	\$189.95	\$7.31	\$199.20	\$7.66	\$9.25
7-9	\$100.43	\$3.86	\$108.43	\$4.17	\$8.00

Retiree

Annuity Level	2019 Annual	2019 Monthly	2020 Annual	2020 Monthly	Annual Increase*
Under \$25K	\$73.69	\$6.14	\$81.31	\$6.78	\$7.62
\$25-\$50K	\$115.79	\$9.65	\$124.00	\$10.33	\$8.21
\$50-\$75K	\$154.65	\$12.89	\$168.98	\$14.08	\$14.33
Over \$75K	\$193.62	\$16.14	\$208.50	\$17.38	\$14.88
Retiree Spouse	\$57.90	\$4.82	\$58.71	\$4.89	\$0.81

Associate

Category	2020 Annual	2021 Annual	Annual Increase
Associate Member	\$118.98	\$120.65	\$1.67



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, Oct. 21, 2020

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the AFSA Governing Board met via Zoom conference on Oct. 21.

The board made the following decisions, which will need to be ratified at the next in-person Governing Board meeting, according to AFSA bylaws.

Legal Defense Fund: The board approved disbursements from the LDF for \$6,342, \$3,120 and \$807 for legal fees for AFSA members with ongoing matters before the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Sinclair Language Awards: Governing Board members approved the Awards and Plaques Committee's decision to grant the Matilda W. Sinclair Language Award to 10 individuals for their achievements in the

study and utilization of difficult languages in 2019.

Associate Membership: The board approved two people as associate members of the association.

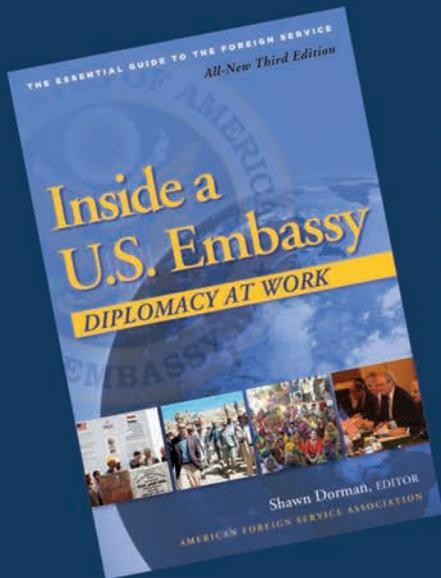
Dues Increase: Governing Board members approved a 1.4 percent dues increase for members for 2021, in accordance with the consumer price index.

Resignation: The board accepted the resignation of State Representative Lillian Wahl-Tuco, and thanked her for her service.

Awards and Plaques Committee: The board appointed Mary Daly as the chair of the Awards and Plaques Committee.

Membership Committee: The board appointed Maria Hart to the Membership Committee. ■

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www.afsa.org/inside

U.S. BOARDING SCHOOLS Resilient in the Pandemic and Beyond

Boarding schools have responded seamlessly to continue delivering quality education during the pandemic.

BY DAVID H. CHARLTON AND RANDAL E. BROWN



David H. Charlton is president of Church Schools in the (Episcopal) Diocese of Virginia, a position he has held for more than 20 years.

The child of Episcopal missionaries, he lived all over the world before settling in Virginia and has extensive experience in the non-profit education sector. He can be reached at david.charlton@ecsdu.org.



Randal E. Brown is the boarding admissions officer for Church Schools in the (Episcopal) Diocese of Virginia and a longtime

independent school professional. He is also a retired lieutenant colonel in the Army National Guard and an Iraq veteran. His two daughters are happy products of boarding school, as is he. He can be reached at randal.brown@ecsdu.org.

As an industry, boarding schools transitioned smoothly from residential to distance learning with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. Both students and parents were pleasantly surprised with the well-thought-out delivery of the academic program.

In addition to academics, boarding schools placed emphasis on nurturing the strong personal relationships students have with peers and teachers. During the pandemic, it has been more important than ever to maintain close communities. Chapel, advisory programs and other optional virtual gatherings remained popular and sustained morale even though everyone was apart.

In the fall of 2020, most schools remained open, welcoming their boarders back into dormitories where residential learning resumed. Schools have well-considered reentry plans in place to keep students, faculty and staff safe inside a “bubble.” Accustomed to structured life away from home, return-

ing students found an appropriately regimented reception on campus that was both warm and safe.

In new twists to old procedures, campus receptions involved COVID tests, temperature checks and temporary quarantine while awaiting test results, followed by reentry into dorms and classes. Masks, social distancing, small meal settings and fewer athletics mean school looks and feels different.

Still, while teenagers often grouse at structure and change, all have been encouraged by a real spirit of cooperation and camaraderie that allowed students to overcome early misgivings.

Life on hall may still include roommates, as a dorm or hall becomes its own “pod” and is managed as you might a large family, while interaction with other halls or dorms is restricted. Liberal leave policies have been suspended and replaced with lots of on-campus weekend activities. Similarly, academic calendars may now have only two large breaks: Thanksgiving through the New Year’s holiday and an

Mandatory wrist bands that monitor students' temperature, oxygen levels and sleep patterns are in place in many schools, as are phone apps that measure social distancing.

extended spring break midway through the spring semester.

Finally, technology plays an important role. Mandatory wrist bands that monitor students' temperature, oxygen levels and sleep patterns are in place in many schools, as are phone apps that measure social distancing.

The industry demonstrated it could adapt rapidly to the new circumstances and keep everyone safe and their studies progressing. Several lessons have been learned that ensure American boarding schools will remain at the forefront of best practices in secondary education. First and foremost is that students learn best in small caring communities that remain in place, fostering the strong relationships at the core of effective teaching and learning.

Continuing Appeal for Foreign Service Families

As they have for decades, American boarding schools remain a popular choice for Foreign Service parents to educate their children, whether they are posted at home or abroad. FS careers are rewarding, but they come with a lot of transitions for professionals and their families.

Each new overseas assignment brings excitement, as well as its own set of complexities, many surrounding an officer's dependents. Is this a safe posting for Americans? Are there suitable educational options for the kids? When are we

likely to move again? What are the different educational allowances? How can the State Department assist us in navigating our options?

By the time they are teenagers, children start to consider these complexities, as well, and to express opinions. "Another move! Are you kidding me?" exclaimed one such student on news of a new posting. The constancy of a single high school experience now outweighs any excitement that may come from a new location.

For this student and many like him, maintaining some level of continuity and social stability is often a major consideration. Parents see the value, as well. These students want to settle into a new school with the knowledge they can commit, because they know they will stay to graduate with friends and teammates. Like many other children with parents working abroad, this student and many like him chose an American boarding school.

Eva, a freshman at a Virginia boarding school, offers this about her experience: "During my first visit to [campus], I had an instant connection to one of the teachers, because we had both lived in Oman at the same time. During my first semester away from home, sophomores helped me with homesickness, and my teachers helped me stay focused on coursework. They encouraged me to play basketball for the first time, and I loved it. I am getting the attention I need in the classroom, and friends who are day students (local students who do not board)

often invite me to stay with them over the weekend. [It] feels a lot like the Foreign Service to me because everyone looks out for one another."

Says Eva's mother, Christy, a member of the Foreign Service: "Boarding school felt like an international school with a strong sense of community. I can see that she's more confident about trying a new sport or activity without the fear of failure."

More Affordable than You Might Think

These students and many like them would like their high school experience to be four years at the same institution, and boarding schools are uniquely suited to meet this need. Foreign Service parents exploring the boarding school option should inquire about the possibility of a four-year financial aid package rather than the typical annual arrangement.

Some schools can tailor a multiyear award that accounts for a change in educational allowances. This can be particularly helpful for a family that starts abroad and is then posted at the agency headquarters in Washington, D.C., for a short tour. A multiyear financial aid package can make remaining at the same school possible.

For those families who do end up posted in Washington, D.C., the large number of mid-Atlantic boarding schools may be particularly attractive. Just a few hours from the district by car, parents based at agency headquarters or coming through for consultations or short courses will find it easy to attend their child's sporting events, parents' weekend and arrange short weekend stays.

If family members find themselves in a short-term evacuated status from their assigned post, placements at boarding

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schools are often possible. Whether parents are in Washington, D.C., abroad for an extended period or abroad for a short term, they will have the peace of mind knowing that their child is well taken care of.

College Prep Plus

Schools that are primarily boarding institutions will tend to offer more features and services for students whose parents live far away. An international student office, or a dean charged with the boarding student experience, is decisive in creating and maintaining programs that are important to a boarder. Weekend activities, health care, supervision, dormitory and food all head the list of topics of interest for

Foreign Service parents exploring the boarding school option should inquire about the possibility of a four-year financial aid package rather than the typical annual arrangement.

boarding students, but especially for those for whom the campus is their home away from home.

In addition to faculty who live on campus to support the well-being of the boarders, these schools often have a “guidance team” that supports the needs of teenagers who negotiate a world with far more variables than their parents experienced.

A well-staffed nurse’s office with close ties to nearby pediatricians, departments of health and other health specialists is common. On-campus behavioral health counselors, chaplains, dorm staff and academic advisers support students through the inevitable ups and downs of teenage life. A college counselor is instrumental in helping every student navigate their higher education options.

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In fact, academic preparation for college is perhaps the strongest feature of American boarding schools. Schools meet students where they are and provide the right measure of challenge and support to ensure their success. Honors, International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement courses are common, as are systems to support students who encounter difficulty.

Some schools have a dedicated department staffed with professional experts to support students who have learning differences or disabilities and who need structure, support and, most importantly, strategies to overcome their specific learning difference or disability.

Students can tailor parts of their

academic program to their particular interests. Faculty who live on campus are always available to work with their students and are deeply invested in their success.

For these reasons, and many more, attractive college doors swing open for boarding school graduates each year.

An International Atmosphere

The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) lists tens of thousands of students in member schools, most of them in the United States. Nearly half of the boarding students in these schools are from countries outside the United States, and many of the students who carry American passports are the children of parents working abroad.

The international “feel” of a boarding school campus offers a measure of familiarity to diplomatic dependents whose worldviews give them the ability to adapt to new surroundings quickly and easily and make friends anywhere.

“One of the big attractions was the diversity of the students,” offers one Foreign Service mother. “Living in a dorm for our daughter was fantastic. She didn’t lose that ‘home feeling,’ and she always got support.”

The student’s father reflects: “We’ve been overseas for 15 years and have experience with four international schools. We found that the quality of the teachers was hit or miss. At [boarding school], the teachers were all excellent. For children who need a little extra attention and sup-

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An international student office, or a dean charged with the boarding student experience, is decisive in creating and maintaining programs that are important to a boarder.

port, the international schools weren't very flexible and didn't have that. But at [boarding school], our child had great support and really thrived."

In an exhaustive study of boarding school students, graduates and their parents, TABS found boarding school students spent twice as much time outside of class with teachers and coaches than did students in public schools.

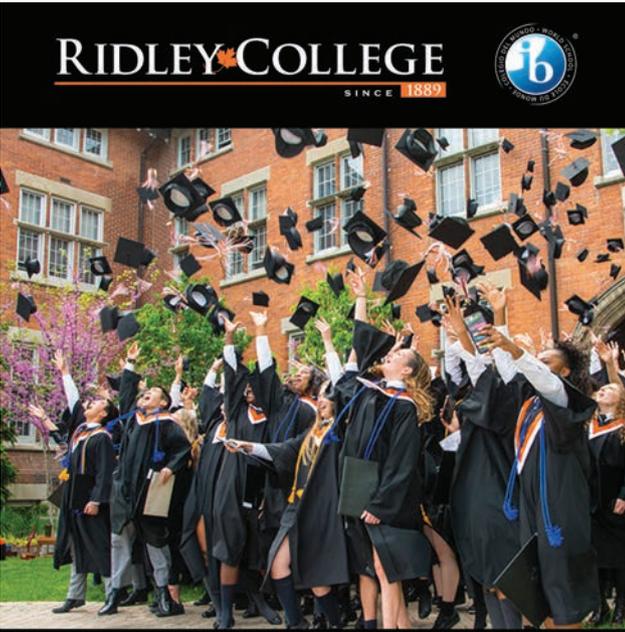
Not surprisingly, 87 percent of boarding school alumni report being "very well prepared" for college.

Accessing Boarding Schools

TABS maintains a comprehensive website of member North American boarding schools to assist students and parents in navigating their options. Individual boarding schools have well-

staffed admissions offices expert in responding to family inquiries and hosting families on campus or virtually. Admissions officers typically travel extensively, both domestically and internationally, to visit PK-8 schools, meet with educational consultants and attend school fairs. They are also adept at hosting virtual open houses and other virtual events for families that cannot visit campus.

The Department of State also offers excellent support to its families. If you are considering boarding school for your child, contact the Family Liaison Office's Education and Youth Team. For information, email FLOAskEducation@state.gov or visit FLO's website at state.gov/m/dghr/flo. ■



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COVID ON CAMPUS

How FS College Kids and Their Families Are Managing the Uncertainty

One FS parent of a college student candidly recalls the initial days of COVID-19 and shares her experience and that of other families navigating today's unprecedented circumstances.

BY DONNA SCARAMASTRA GORMAN

At the end of February, I flew from Moscow to the United States. The plan was to squeeze in a quick visit with my parents in California before heading to Atlanta on business. But on my second day in Atlanta, it became clear that airports were going to start closing soon. My boss—another Foreign Service spouse—and I decided to fly out on the next available flights rather than stay and risk getting stuck, away from our families at post.



Donna Scaramastra Gorman's articles have appeared in Time magazine, Newsweek, The Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor and The Foreign Service Journal.

A Foreign Service spouse, she has lived in Amman, Moscow, Yerevan, Almaty, Beijing and Northern Virginia. Formerly an associate editor for the Journal, she is currently posted in Moscow with her husband and four children.

I was waiting at the gate in Atlanta—it was spooky, as I was almost the only person there—when my oldest son called from Virginia with the news that his university was adding a week to spring break while they tried to come up with a plan. “There’s no way they’re going to reopen,” he told me. “I think I should fly back to Moscow now.”

But I told him not to. After all, we didn’t know for sure that his school would move online. This was at the very beginning of the pandemic, when the situation was even murkier than now. If he flew back, he’d risk not getting back to school when classes resumed in two weeks. Better, I told him, to wait it out at his girlfriend’s house and go back to school when it reopened. And anyway, I pointed out, if it didn’t reopen, we could just use the education allowance to fly him back in a few weeks.

Still, I had an impending sense of dread, and found myself really regret-

ting that I hadn’t gone to see him before going to Atlanta. I’ve had some bad experiences as an FS mom: We’ve survived stitches and seizures, broken bones and breakups, and even the infamous “Edamame Up the Nose” emergency room incident of 2010. But this seemed worse somehow. There was a deadly disease jumping international borders, and I was leaving my son to face it alone.

When my plane finally took off, I watched as the little computer image of a plane flew across the map on the seat in front of me. The digital plane flew over Northern Virginia, where my son was now waiting in limbo, and I wanted to cry. It was a sickening feeling, knowing he was down there somewhere, and that I had made the decision to leave him there while I flew home without him. I felt very alone in my sadness and worry.

Leaving Campus Behind

BY SEAMUS GORMAN

For me, the beginning of March is when COVID-19 transitioned from a frightening story in the news to an event with profound personal consequences. Tom Hanks announced that he had been infected with the coronavirus, the NBA suspended its season and universities across America began to close their facilities. As college students across the United States packed and went home to their families, I discovered I was stuck.

I'm a Foreign Service family member, and the rest of my family was about 5,000 miles away, in Russia. Because of COVID-19 travel bans, getting back there would be extremely difficult—and I wasn't even sure whether to make the attempt. There were only a few flights into Moscow. I could try to get on one. But if I made it back, I knew I might get stuck again and be unable to return to school in the fall. If I decided instead to stay in Virginia, school might move online, and I would have stayed for nothing. Worse, I knew if I got sick, I'd be on my own.

When the Arab Spring broke out in the early 2010s, my family was posted in Amman. I was 13 years old, and I remember having to pack a go-bag with everything I might need, just in case we had to evacuate in a hurry. We had to prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

This Foreign Service experience from my past helped me navigate the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. What would happen if I got sick? If school shut down? How could I prepare for the worst? The distance between my family and me made the question of what to do more difficult for me than for many of my peers, but my FS experiences better equipped me to handle it.

Ultimately, I decided that the worst case, if I got very sick, would be much easier to handle if I were with my family in Moscow. My State Department connection created a difficult situation because I was separated from my family. But strangely, it also provided a solution: Eventually, through the Operational Medicine program I was able to get on an OpMed flight back to Moscow. And after a 14-day quarantine, during which I did not write this essay as I'd planned, I was finally reunited with my family.

Now back in Russia, I am taking a gap semester. Instead of going to school in Virginia, or logging into online classes, I am working at the embassy and studying Russian—remotely, of course. Instead of walking across campus, I walk around Moscow. Instead of eating at a school dining hall, I am ordering Georgian food *na dostavky*—for delivery.

My situation isn't easy—I'm away from close friends and had to put my college career on hold. But I realize I am also extremely fortunate to have the opportunities that being connected to the State Department has given me. I'm living in my parents' basement, yes, but it's a pretty interesting place to be.

Seamus Gorman is a Foreign Service family member who has lived in Moscow, Yerevan, Almaty, Beijing, Amman and Northern Virginia. He is currently a junior at James Madison University.



COURTESY OF SEAMUS GORMAN

Seamus Gorman on the job, providing VIP visit support in Moscow.

The Foreign Service Family

But it turns out, I was far from alone. All across the globe, Foreign Service parents and their college-age kids were having the same conversations at that exact same time. What's going to happen next? What should I do? What if I get sick?

And we parents, for the most part, had no answers for our children. We had the same general thoughts, though: Don't worry. It's going to work out in the end. When it's time, we'll get you back to post. After all, we have those fancy black passports. We're not just Americans, we're U.S. diplomats. We're used to flying in and out of sketchy situations, and our passports are our shields.

Except this time, the danger was worldwide, and the State Department was directing all its resources into securing our embassies overseas and getting U.S. citizens home. Nobody, it seems, was thinking about that small group of people who desperately wanted to travel in the other direction, who needed to get back into those suddenly locked-down embassies.

That small group of people included my baby.

FS College Students: Not Quite EFMs

Part of the problem is that, despite the fact that I still see him as my tiny firstborn, the child who loves Tonka trucks and won't eat vegetables if they are touching

on a plate, the State Department sees him as the 6-foot-tall, Selective Service-registered, able-to-vote adult that he is, and they believe that he's fully capable of living on his own. The truth lies somewhere in between. We parents know our students are capable adults. We also know that they still need us.

I spoke with several FS parents to get their perspectives. One was told that educational travel to her post in Europe wouldn't be an option. "I was a bit shocked at the idea that a freshman—age 18—didn't need to come home (as in, to post) in the summer," says Christina. She had to stay at post when global authorized departure was offered; as a result, she hasn't seen her freshman in nine months.

And, she continued, the situation was

also difficult for her new college graduate. Her daughter was "graduating into a pandemic," without support and without a job, and yet she was "expected to be old enough to figure it out." "We managed," Christina goes on to say. "But I don't think it was quite reasonable."

Another FS parent, Dina, was able to take advantage of global authorized departure and returned to the States from her post in the Middle East. "After my freshman son was kicked out of the dorm, with no home to go to, we found a place to stay together," writes Dina. Her husband, whose job during the pandemic is essential, stayed behind and, consequently, hasn't seen his family in six months. Since he's due to leave soon for an unaccompanied tour, the family will

likely be separated for at least another year.

Still, Dina isn't complaining—she's approaching the situation with the resignation, resilience and humor for which FS spouses are known. Her son is studying to be a pilot, she says, but his university is still online only. "I'm not sure how I feel about a self-homeschooled pilot," she quips, but at the same time, she feels "incredibly supported by the State Department," which was able to reunite mother and son amid the pandemic.

One factor that makes all the difference for these parents is which college their kids are attending, as each school has different issues and different policies in place. Tsoniki Crazy Bull, who is currently posted in West Africa, has a student



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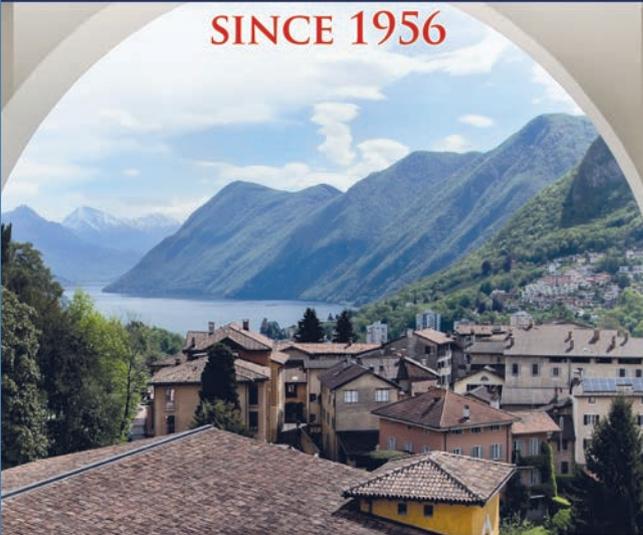
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LOOKING FOR RESOURCES?

While they don't specifically focus on college students or their families—nobody does!—the Foreign Service Institute's Center of Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience (CEFAR) has a list of resources available at <http://bit.ly/CEFAR-resources>, including an article about how to support your high school senior as he or she transitions to college (see <http://bit.ly/supporting-hs-senior>).

In addition, check out the "COVID Coach" mobile app (see <http://bit.ly/COVID-coach>). Developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, this free app has self-care tools, including meditation prompts, and trackers to check your mood and help you set daily goals.

To learn about non-COVID State programs for college students that will be helpful both now and when things get back to normal, go to the Family Liaison Office's webpage College and Beyond (see <http://bit.ly/FLO-college-and-beyond>).

—DSG

who graduated high school last spring and planned to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts in the fall.

But "IAIA is a tribal college, and these schools are all located on or near reservations, which have been hit very hard during the COVID-19 pandemic," explains Tsoniki, so the university quickly made the decision to change to an online learning format.

Their freshman wasn't interested in taking a gap year, and so she adjusted her sleep schedule—she's six hours ahead of the school in Santa Fe, New Mexico—to allow her to join classes remotely. "I've said it's like practice for when she gets to leave for college," her mom laughs. "We hardly see each other."

The family is transferring to Europe soon, which means their freshman will once again have to adjust her clock to keep up with her peers. Says her mom, however, "I have been very thankful as to how IAIA has handled this transition. ... Tribal colleges have really stepped up to be leaders during this time, showing what can be done."

The Dreaded "R" Word

Spend enough time with FS family members, and you'll hear somebody grumble about the "R" word: resilience. Too often, that word is directed at spouses and children who are expected to step up and deal with all manner of problems and insufferable situations, some of which could reasonably be expected to break a person.

Most of us have dealt with serious illnesses, horrible moves, housing we hate, absentee spouses and posts with no access to decent junk food. Through it all, we're often told we just need to be more resilient. So we smile on the outside even when we're wondering how the heck we wound up in this place, crying in the bathroom at noon on a Tuesday because we couldn't find our way to the grocery store, let alone ask for the right laundry detergent once we finally got there.

It turns out, though, that this resilience, which many of us have spent years cultivating, is what's getting all of us FS parents through these crazy times. Most of the parents I spoke with

were maintaining a positive perspective even in the face of all the unknowns. And while it would be easy to blame the State Department, nobody seemed to know how the department could have done things differently.

Christina says that her kids are “used to me traveling far away, but for me this was different: No way to return in an emergency is hard!” Her children are now settled, well, as settled as they can be during this global upheaval. One is living with a friend, while the other has found employment in her hoped-for field. The family has been lucky, she says, but she hopes that in the future the department will have “better back-up planning” to help families like hers.

What’s Next?

As for us? We finally got our son back to post on a State Department OpMed (Operational Medicine) flight. He’s taking a gap semester (or year? Who really knows?) and working at the embassy—something that certainly wouldn’t be available to him if we were in the States. So the initial negative—feeling like our son was stranded and out of reach—has turned into a positive as he works to make this gap time meaningful.

I’ve been grateful for the supportive community of parents I’ve found since the start of the pandemic. The Foreign Service College Bound Facebook page is full of parents like me, all going through this together and finding different ways to reach that light at the end of the tunnel. My son’s university has a fairly robust parents group, and I was touched by the number of parents, whom I’ve never met and never will, who learned of our situation and immediately raised their hands with offers to help my son move, or to help him safely stay at school if he chose that option instead.

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Friends from past posts reached out to offer to move him out, move him in, store his car, feed him. (No small task, that last one. Gone are the days when my baby turned up his nose at foods that touched on the plate; he can now destroy your monthly food budget over the course of a long weekend!)

I have no idea what's next, for my college kid, for my next-in-line child, who is applying to colleges right now, or for the rest of our family, still locked into Phase 1 here in Moscow. I'm pretty sure the State Department as an institution isn't coming to save us any time soon. But like many of the parents who spoke with me for this article, I'm feeling more okay as the days pass. We'll figure it out somehow, together. ■



The Gorman family in Red Square after Seamus' 14-day quarantine.

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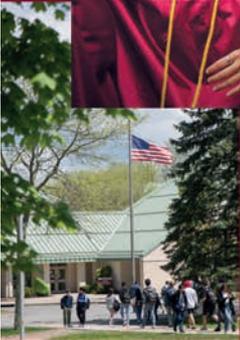
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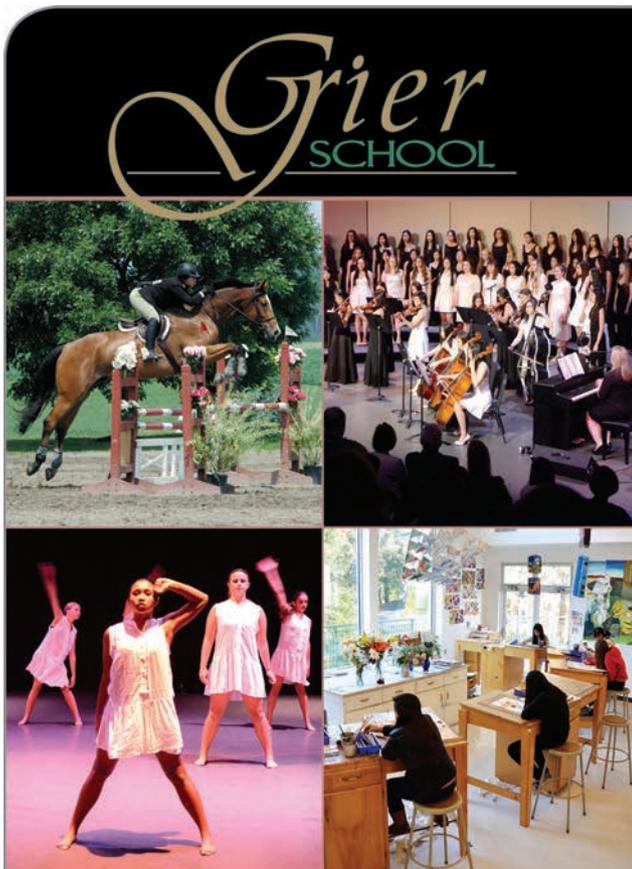
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EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

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School	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent Int'l.	Levels Offered	AP/IB*	TABS common application	Accept ADD/LD**	Miles to Int'l. Airport	International Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage***	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (US \$)
■ ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH													
Garrison Forest School	80	520	All Girls	30	8	PK-12	AP	N	Limited	20	Y	N	62,015-66,810 ^b
Ridley College	82	667	54/46	52	34	K-12, PG	IB	N	Y	41	Y	Y	54,260 ^{abcdef}
St. John's Northwestern Academies	86	150	87/13	88	21	K-12	AP	N	Y	35	Y	Limited	14,000-44,000 ^{abg}
Stuart Hall School	4	326	52/48	24	23	PK-12	AP	Y	Y	143	Y	Y	55,000 ^{bd}
TASIS – The American School in Switzerland	85	700	50/50	35	75	PK-12	AP/IB	N	Limited	40	Y	Limited	96,000 ^{bcddef}
■ JUNIOR HIGH/SENIOR HIGH													
Grier School	90	300	All Girls	85	40	7-12	AP	Y	Y	120	Y	N	55,900-56,900 ^{ad}
Saint James School	88	225	55/45	75	25	8-12	AP	N	N	60	N	Limited	51,000 ^b
St. Margaret's School	4	101	All Girls	70	22	8-12, PG	AP	Y	Y	50	y	Y	42,240-52,250 ^{abd}
Wilbraham & Monson Academy	89	415	56/44	49	30	6-PG	AP	Y	Y	28	Y	Limited	62,300 ^b
■ SENIOR HIGH													
Christchurch School	4	210	60/40	70	25	9-12	AP	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	52,750 ^d
EF Academy New York	89	450	53/47	98	95	9-12	IB	N	Limited	40.5	Y	Limited	58,500 ^a
Kimball Union Academy	89	340	55/45	75	25	9-12, PG	AP	Y	Y	125	Y	Limited	66,700
The Madeira School	82	320	All Girls	51	15	9-12	AP	Y	Limited	16	N	N	64,500 ^{be}
New Hampton School	87	336	55/45	75	20	9-12, PG	AP/IB	Y	Y	95	Y	Limited	64,700 ^b
St. Timothy's School	85	185	All Girls	70	30	9-12, PG	IB	Y	Limited	20	Y	N	33,900-59,900 ^{bde}
■ OVERSEAS													
American Overseas School Rome	87	560	50/50	NA	70	PK-12	AP/IB	N	Y	20	Y	Y	6,075-30,700 ^{bc}
Berlin Brandenburg International School	90	740	50/50	20	65	K-12	IB	N	Y	15	Y	N	42,000 ^e
EF Academy Oxford	89	185	42/58	100	100	11-12	IB	N	N	48	Y	Limited	56,000 ^{ac}
Frankfurt International School	96	1,800	50/50	NA	80	K-12	IB	N	Limited	12	Y	N	28,760 ^{bc}
John F. Kennedy School Berlin	93	1,617	50/50	NA	47	K-12	AP	N	Limited	15	Y	N	NA
Leysin American School in Switzerland	95	310	50/50	100	85	7-12, PG	AP/IB	Y	Limited	75	Y	N	88,000 ^{abd}
St. Stephen's School	81	294	47/53	15	64	9-12, PG	AP/IB	N	Y	12	Y	N	44,380 ^b

*Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate **Attention Deficit Disorder/Learning Disabilities ***Dec. 25-Jan. 1 NA, Not applicable
^aSibling discount ^bFinancial aid available ^cDollar value subject to exchange rate ^dAid for federal employees
^eGap year ^fNeed-blind admissions; will meet full financial need ^gHost families

EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

Go to our webpage at www.afsa.org/education.

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■ SPECIAL NEEDS													
The Gow School	97	135	80/20	93	10	6-12, PG	N/A	N	Y	30	N	Limited	72,500
■ DISTANCE LEARNING													
TTU-K-12 (Texas Tech)	93	1,970	48/52	NA	54	K-12	AP	N	Limited	NA	N	NA	3,000-4,600
■ HIGHER EDUCATION													
Thunderbird School of Global Management	79	388	53/47	13	45	NA	NA	NA	NA	19	Y	Y	70,000-110,000 ^b
■ OTHER													
AAFSW	92	Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide; Publisher of Raising Kids in the Foreign Service. A volunteer organization that supports Foreign Service employees, spouses, partners and members of household. www.aafsw.org . See FSHub.org.											
DACOR	96	DACOR Bacon House Foundation offers Dreyfus Scholarships to children and grandchildren of FSOs attending Yale or Hotchkiss. Contact dacor@dacorbacon.org or go to www.dacorbacon.org/scholarships_fellowships.php .											
FLO	97	Family Liaison Office: Information and resources for Foreign Service families. Contact FLOAskEducation@state.gov .											
FSYF	92	Foreign Service Youth Foundation: A support network for U.S. Foreign Service youth worldwide. Go to www.fsyf.org .											

♦Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate ♦♦Attention Deficit Disorder/Learning Disabilities ♦♦♦Dec. 25-Jan. 1 NA, Not applicable
^aSibling discount ^bFinancial aid available ^cDollar value subject to exchange rate ^dAid for federal employees
^eGap year ^fNeed-blind admissions; will meet full financial need ^gHost families

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COLLEGE OPTIONS

Community College with a Guaranteed Transfer Program

With online learning now a prevalent alternative, many students are finding a different path toward their degree. Is it right for you?

BY FRANCESCA HUEMER KELLY

It may be college application time, but it's feeling, well, just a little different this year. Because of the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and the timing and effectiveness of a possible vaccine, many high school seniors are wondering what exactly they are applying to. If they're lucky enough to get into the college of their dreams, can they actually attend there in person?

This is one of the reasons—cost being another—that an increasing number of

young people are turning to community colleges for their first two years of university-level courses. They and their parents are figuring, Why pay top dollar for what might well be an online education?

That's a good question, and there is not just one good answer. If you're offered admission to an excellent school that offers a "name," such as Harvard or Stanford, accept the offer. You may not be able to immediately move into your dorm room or go to a campus party, but you will nevertheless be getting a top-notch education from renowned professors.

The same may be true of selective liberal arts colleges: The small classes and availability of mentors will still be a plus, even online. And if you receive a large financial-aid package from any four-year institution, there is probably not an appreciable financial benefit in turning that down in favor of attending community college.

Aside from those exceptions, there are some economic and other advantages in spending your first two years at a community college that offers a guaranteed transfer to an acceptable four-year university.

What Is a Guaranteed Transfer?

Public and even some private universities partner with certain community colleges, accepting transfer students after two years if they maintain a certain grade point average and fulfill other requirements. This initiative has elevated the status of participating community colleges, and two-year colleges such as Montgomery College (linked to the University of Maryland and other institutions) and Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA, linked to a variety of VA universities) are now fairly competitive in the quality and range of their course offerings.



Francesca Huemer Kelly, the spouse of a retired Foreign Service officer and ambassador, counsels students on their college application

essays through www.essayadvantage.net.

A freelance writer, co-founder of Tales from a Small Planet and former editor of AFSA News, she has also served as a college counselor at two international schools.

And then there's mental health. If you choose to apply only to community colleges with a guaranteed transfer, and not to four-year colleges, you will most likely find an enormous reduction in the stress usually associated with the college application process—and with college tuition bills.

(Or you can apply to a few four-year colleges but relax knowing you have the community college backup plan. That said, many students and parents are willing to trade autumn stress and higher tuition costs for that coveted four-year-college sweatshirt or bumper sticker come April.)

The guaranteed transfer system is also appealing because, in two years' time, you won't have to go through the usual transfer application process,

which can be just as stressful as the freshman application process. As long as you meet the requirements dictated by your eventual four-year institution, you're guaranteed admission.

What Can I Do Now?

If this sounds intriguing, visit the "Transfer Student Admission" pages of a few of your favorite four-year universities to determine if they offer guaranteed transfer programs from certain community colleges. You can also search under the term "articulation agreement," which is the agreement between a community college and a four-year college that paves the way for easy transfer. Be aware, however, that some articulation agreements include guaranteed transfer, while others do not.

Know ahead of time that certain majors, such as nursing, have easier pathways to guaranteed transfer than other majors. And flagship campuses of state universities tend not to offer guaranteed transfers nearly as often as satellite campuses do.

Most likely, any community college that takes part in a guaranteed transfer system will be accredited, but it's always good to check. You can learn more about the seven regional accrediting organizations on the U.S. Department of Education website and find out if a college is accredited at <http://bit.ly/accredited-schools>.

Resources to Check Out

Below are listings of some of the colleges taking part in the guaranteed



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transfer system in the MD-VA-DC area, as well as a mention of some well-regarded guaranteed transfer programs in a few other popular states.

Remember to check residency requirements well ahead of time, especially if you are considering community college outside your home state. You will need to factor in additional living costs if you will not be living with family members.

Maryland: The University of Maryland takes part in the Maryland Transfer Advantage Program (MTAP), guaranteeing transfer from various Maryland community colleges (<http://bit.ly/MD-MTAP>).

Montgomery College, Prince George's Community College and Anne Arundel Community College are just

three of many Maryland community colleges that offer guaranteed transfer to the University of Maryland, as well as to other colleges both in Maryland and out of state.

Note: As with all guaranteed transfer programs, transferring with your major of choice may not be available at all universities or campuses. (See <http://bit.ly/transfer-moco> for Montgomery College; <http://bit.ly/transfer-pgcc> for Prince George's Community College; and <http://bit.ly/transfer-aacc> for Anne Arundel Community College.)

Maryland's Higher Education Commission offers a comprehensive guide on community colleges and transfer to four-year institutions at <http://bit.ly/MD-hec>.

Virginia: A popular choice for many Northern Virginia residents is NOVA (Northern Virginia Community College). NOVA offers guaranteed admissions agreements, where you are able to transfer to a multitude of colleges and universities (some outside Virginia), including William and Mary and the University of Virginia. Each university has its own requirements to guarantee transfer, and not all majors are available. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/VA-gaa>.

For a full picture of all Virginia community colleges that offer transfer agreements with universities, please visit Virginia's Community Colleges website at <http://bit.ly/VA-transfer-agreements>.

Washington, D.C.: The community college at the University of the District of



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Columbia (UDC) does not offer guaranteed transfer programs. Most D.C. residents seem to gravitate toward community colleges in Virginia and Maryland.

Georgetown University, The George Washington University and other universities in the district have guaranteed transfer agreements with area community colleges.

California: The transfer admission guarantee (TAG) program guarantees transfer to several of University of California's excellent universities (note that UCLA and Berkeley do not take part in this program). Check requirements at <http://bit.ly/CA-tag>.

California state universities accept even more guaranteed transfers than the UC system does. The California Commu-

nity Colleges network brings you a program called "A Degree With a Guarantee," which lists all participating community colleges and state universities (see <http://bit.ly/CCC-degree-guarantee>).

In addition, private universities such as Loyola Marymount partner with some community colleges in both California and Arizona in guaranteed admissions programs. This serves as a reminder that even private universities may offer guaranteed transfer.

Illinois: The College of Lake County, in the Chicago suburbs, offers guaranteed transfer to a long list of colleges and universities, both in and outside Illinois (see <http://bit.ly/IL-gt>).

Illinois' statewide transfer program, called iTransfer, offers comprehensive

information about articulation agreements at <http://bit.ly/IL-itransfer>.

New York: The State University of New York (SUNY) branches offer one of the better-known guaranteed transfer programs in the United States: <http://bit.ly/SUNY-gt>.

These are just a few of the most popular guaranteed transfer programs. There are many more across the United States. To find community colleges in any state, visit the American Association of Community Colleges' website: <http://bit.ly/AACC-gtp>.

Finally, the website collegexpress.com publishes guaranteed transfer programs and articulation agreements for most states. Search the website for "articulation agreements." ■

Looking for Virtual Learning Resources?

Many Foreign Service families are continuing to explore ways to help their children adjust and be successful while experiencing school from home due to COVID-19. FLO's Education and Youth Team compiled a list of virtual learning resources to assist parents in navigating this new learning environment.

Visit www.state.gov/flo/education to learn more.



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Once More—Never Again

Eyewitness: My Journey to The Hague
Isak Gasi and Shaun Koos, BrandyLane Publishers, 2018, \$29.95/hardcover, e-book available, 270 pages.

REVIEW BY GEORGE W. ALDRIDGE

Shortly after the euphoria of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, Europe once again witnessed a genocide of noncombatants: Bosniaks (Muslim Bosnians) were targeted for being an ethnic and religious minority, like European Jews 50 years earlier during World War II.

Isak Gasi, a well-known Yugoslav international canoe and kayak champion who was one of the victims, has written a book about his experience: *Eyewitness: My Journey to The Hague*. Written in collaboration with his friend and fellow avid canoeist Shaun Koos, the book was published in connection with the 25th anniversary of Gasi's release from the Serb-run Luka prison camp, where he was brutally mistreated. In it, Gasi interweaves his personal ordeal with the tragic events of the Bosnian War.

As a second-tour junior officer in Copenhagen from 1993 to 1995, I never expected to see concentration camps in southeastern Europe, much less meet emancipated detainees such as Isak Gasi.

But the State Department's instructions to me were straightforward: find Gasi, and escort him to an undisclosed location to provide federal investigators and forensic artists with firsthand accounts of Serbian atrocities in his hometown of Brcko, an ethnically mixed port city near the geographical intersection of Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia.

For the ultranationalist Bosnian Serbs, capturing Brcko and ethnically cleansing

its majority Bosniak population and large Croat community were prerequisites to linking the northern and eastern components of their envisioned "Republika Srpska."

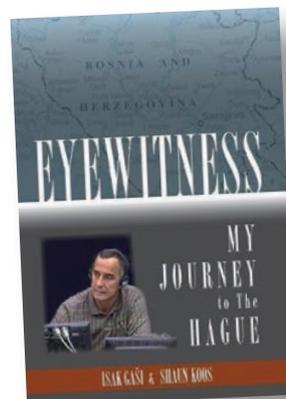
Gasi's eyewitness accounts were so credible and irrefutable that he was eventually called to testify on six occasions before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague—at the trials of Slobodan Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic, Momcilo Krajisnik, Vojislav Seselj and Dusan Tadic.

In May 1997 Tadic would become the first person convicted of war crimes in Europe since the end of World War II. Thereafter, guilty verdicts were eventually reached in every trial that Gasi gave testimony.

As Gasi recounts in the book, he was repeatedly assaulted and nearly executed as a prisoner at the Serbs' Luka death camp. He knew many of his torturers; several were local acquaintances.

Others he met during his years traveling throughout the country as a top-flight Yugoslav athlete who had carried the Olympic torch into Bosnia for the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, a city considered to showcase former president of Yugoslavia Marshal Tito's vision of inter-ethnic and communal harmony.

In lamenting the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Gasi and Koos reflect on the extremist ideology that justified the Serbs' war crimes against the Bosniaks and the Croats. While Gasi dismisses Karadzic, Mladic, Seselj and others as mindless, prejudiced killers, he regards Milosevic as a brilliant demagogue who mesmerized the Serbian masses, convincing them they had been historically wronged by their fellow Yugoslavs. Bosniaks, in turn, were



demonized as "Turks" who had betrayed their fellow Slavs.

In Gasi's estimation it was Milosevic who wielded Serbian grievances into justifications for mass murder. Milosevic captivated his fellow

Serbs, capitalized on their historic grievances and convinced them they had to right past wrongs by taking revenge on their neighbors.

Although Bosnian Serbs were routinely threatened by Serb paramilitary units like Arkan's Tigers, not all participated in the pogroms. Gasi mentions several, including his beloved neighbor Mira Lazic and longtime teammate Mirko Nisovic, who risked their lives protecting Bosniaks and Croats.

Others openly shared Gasi's regret that nationalist hatreds had destroyed Yugoslavia. And it was Serbs, he notes, who protected Admir Karabasic, one of the few survivors of the Korican Cliffs massacre.

Besides offering a chilling account of Yugoslavia's demise, *Eyewitness: My Journey to The Hague* provides a useful timeline of Balkan history and a glossary of key characters and places with a pronunciation guide.

"Unless societies are vigilant," Gasi warns in conclusion, "there is no such thing as 'never again.'" ■

During more than 27 years as an FSO, George W. Aldridge served in Jamaica, Denmark, Ethiopia, Belize, Morocco, Kenya, Tunisia, Sudan and Lebanon. Prior to entering the Foreign Service in July 1990, he was a political science instructor at three Texas junior colleges and the director of the southwest office of the National Association of Arab Americans. Mr. Aldridge is from Belton, Texas.



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An Unexpected Foray into Albania

BY DOLORES BROWN AND MARIA SILVER

Imagine walking the long tunnel to the tricked-out bunker of Albania's former president, Enver Hoxha, who led—and isolated—his country from 1941 until his death in 1985. We contemplated all the human effort expended to satisfy Hoxha's paranoia as he held his country in fear. It was unforgettable.

The “we” here are two retired Foreign Service officers who, true to our roots, remain intrepid. Together, we have more than 50 years of experience with the State Department. We bonded in the mid-1990s while working together on Belarus, another cloistered European dictatorship. Dolores was the analyst for Belarus in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, while Maria was the desk officer.

Analyzing declarations by the wily Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko, a former collective farm boss, we delighted in each other's skepticism and wicked sense of humor. It helped that we were both alumnae of the same college (though we just missed each other at Barnard back in the 1970s) and aficionados of Eastern European history.

Twenty-plus years later, we reunited at Foreign Affairs Day 2019. Reminiscing, we wryly noted that the Belarusian dictator, still in power, had outlasted us on the job. It turned out that Maria, who has done nearly a dozen reemployed annuitant

Dolores Brown, who is AFSA's retirement benefits counselor, also role-plays as a deputy chief of mission for Diplomatic Security's Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) training. Maria R. Silver is a reemployed annuitant consular officer.



Maria Silver, at right, and Dolores Brown toast their renewed friendship at the Mullixhiu Restaurant.



A pillbox bunker in downtown Tirana.

assignments since her 2011 retirement, was headed to Albania.

Dolores' eyes widened. Long closed to tourists—much less U.S. diplomats—the country had transfixed her for years. She jumped at the opportunity to ask Maria if she'd like some company.

Soon we found ourselves on an unexpected foray into what was Europe's fiercest communist state ... and poised at the entrance to that long cold tunnel. Signs warned that it's not for the claustrophobic.

We ventured through several sets of reinforced concrete doors two feet thick and explored tour highlights such as “decontamination” showers and weird audio recordings of

Hoxha's harangues and throngs singing the national anthem, replete with the line “with pickax and rifle.”

Hoxha's five-story hideout, fitted with secret corridors and escape routes, was supposed to protect the ruler from nuclear, biological or chemical attack (which never came). In Albania, the people had bunkers, too. Both urban and rural landscapes are dotted with what look like giant beached sea turtles, testaments to Hoxha's delusion that Albania would be punished for being Europe's purest communist state.

He didn't allow his population out or foreigners in. Adding to the absurdity, these bunkers wouldn't have protected anyone from anything, except perhaps a stray tornado. Many are now used by Albanian teenagers for partying.

We shook our heads and agreed that we need to give the Albanian people credit for being uniquely long-suffering in a world that offers extensive competition.

Located in the Balkans, Albania has been victim to centuries of power politics. Conquered by the Byzantines, Ottomans, Slavs, Serbs, Italians and others, it boasts a rich mix of Muslim, Greek Orthodox, Catholic and Sufi traditions (in the approximate order of prevalence) among its population of three million in a country the size of Maryland. Despite—or perhaps because of—its history, the country is internationally recognized for protecting Jews during the Holocaust.

Albania has probably the most kaleidoscopic mélange of religions, political systems and cultures that we had ever seen in such a small country, which makes it so utterly quirky.

An Albanian history professor who had lived through Hoxha's reign shepherded us through Tirana, recounting personal experiences and historical insights.

He reminded us that Hoxha had been so upset at Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin that he broke off relations with the Soviet Union and informally allied with Maoist China shortly after. The professor described the obligatory Chinese clothing of that period, one of the most bizarre geopolitical vignettes we had ever heard.

We meandered to the Museum of Secret Surveillance, also known as the House of Leaves, which opened in 2017 in the building that served as the Albanian Secret Service's headquarters during the communist era. Visitors can view the tools of oppression of a country that was struggling to feed its own people and had fewer than 3,000 cars at the time.

A foray into central Tirana revealed an enormous glass and marble pyramid built after Hoxha's death to honor him and to house some of his possessions, pharaoh-like. Graffitied in a manner familiar to any New Yorker, it sits empty while authorities bicker over its fate. And



Dolores in front of Hoxha's bunker, a major Albanian tourist attraction.

COURTESY OF DOLORES BROWN

We need to give the Albanian people credit for being uniquely long-suffering.

just a few blocks away is one of Tirana's main plazas, now named Mother Teresa Square.

We also journeyed to the town of Berat, an Ottoman-era architectural jewel on the UNESCO World Heritage list, overnighting in a centuries-old stone guesthouse found on Airbnb. We climbed to the Citadel, the fortress that dominates the town, and gazed across the valley at giant letters that had spelled "E-N-V-E-R," Hoxha's first name, before Albanians rearranged them to spell "N-E-V-E-R."

We met many Albanians set on overcoming the past, such as Elton Caushi, the owner of Albania Trip, a company that is deftly promoting the country's political patrimony and natural beauty. He recounted matter-of-factly how two young female Albanians desperately attempted to swim to Greek Corfu, covering their heads with hollowed-out watermelons to elude capture.

He and other creative entrepreneurs are at the heart of Albania's integration into the West. Indeed, *T: The New York Times Style Magazine* named Tirana one of the 10 most enchanting places its writers visited in 2019.

And, indeed, Albanians are unabash-

edly pro-American and great admirers of American values, as the staff at Embassy Tirana helped us to understand. One of the embassy's locally employed staff members said that the American landmark that most impressed him was Arlington National Cemetery—for its palpable display of respect for our fallen leaders and military members.

We capped our trip at Mullixhiu, a farm-to-table restaurant run by an Albanian chef who cut his teeth at the internationally renowned Danish restaurant Noma and returned home to establish a world-class restaurant in Tirana. We enjoyed an amazing dinner: *jufka*, homemade pasta with wild juniper berry; clay-baked quail; and a coffee dessert drunk from tiny pitcher spouts.

Albania is now in NATO and a candidate for accession to the European Union. As Albanians slowly recover from decades of isolation and repression, they are transforming one of Europe's poorest countries into a democratic society—and fascinating tourist destination.

We are grateful to Albania. It brought us together again, reminding us of the fortitude of the human spirit and why we became diplomats in the first place. ■

Saturday at Pettah Market. The Sri Lankan government lifted COVID-19 movement restrictions at the end of June. As life in the city of nearly a million residents slowly began to return to normal, I thought it was important to document the revitalization. Without question, the busiest place in Colombo is Pettah Market. The shopping district is about 12 square blocks of wall-to-wall goods—from textiles, to hardware, to fresh fruits and everything in between. If you can't find what you're looking for in Pettah Market, then you're not really trying! ■

Carille Guthrie is an avid traveler and self-taught photographer. She serves as the operations and maintenance transition coordinator for the new embassy compound in Colombo. She took this photo with a Nikon D750.



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