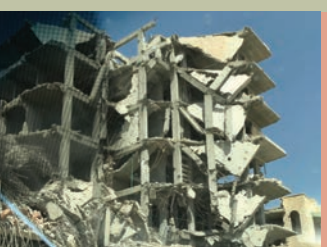
THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

MAY 2021

ARCTIC **DIPLOMACY**

CLOSING THE **EDUCATION GAP**



RAQQA'S **INFERNO**

JOIN US FOR COFFEE WITH ADMISSION EVERY FRIDAY @ 9 A.M.

Please Contact The Admission Office For The Zoom Link And More Details.

IN-PERSON CLASSES | ATHLETICS & MORE
NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED LEARNING SKILLS PROGRAM
MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL PACKAGES | ROLLING ADMISSION
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SAILING TEAM

CHRISTCHURCH SCHOOL

A CO-ED BOARDING SCHOOL FOR GRADES 9-12. FOUNDED IN 1921
LOCATED ON 125 BEAUTIFUL ACRES ON THE RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER IN VIRGINIA

ADMISSION@CHRISTCHURCHSCHOOL.ORG | 804.758.2306 ext. 122

clements
WORLDWIDE

Keep yourself and your family **covered wherever you're posted.**

International Car*
- Worldwide protection
- Transit and All Perils coverage included

Household Effects & UAB
- Full transit, at post, and storage coverage
- Replacement cost protection

Professional Liability
- $2 million liability limit
- Administrative and criminal defense coverage

Take care of all your insurance needs with our full suite of products designed for the diplomatic community in more than 170 countries.

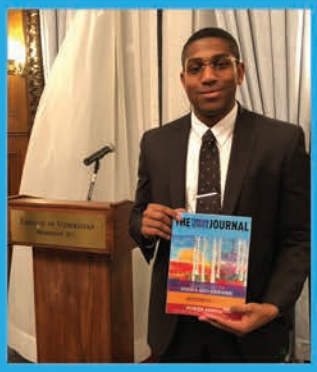
With nearly 75 years of experience as a full-service broker, we can create solutions for your specific insurance needs.

*Save 10% on auto policies purchased before May 1, 2021

Get your quote today.

1.800.872.0067
Info@Clements.com
Clements.com/MissionsAbroad

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL






READ AROUND THE WORLD

Give your contacts, your friends & family an inside look at diplomacy with a GIFT SUBSCRIPTION to

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

Visit www.afsa.org/subscribe-fsj for details and to sign up, or email journal@afsa.org

Visit the online archive at www.afsa.org/fsj-archive

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

May 2021 Volume 98, No. 4

Cover Story

Feature

FS Heritage

Focus on Arctic Diplomacy

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

Perspectives

Departments

Marketplace

AFSA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

59

On the Cover—The Arctic Region. Map by U.S. Department of State, 2015.

Our Priorities—and Yours

BY ERIC RUBIN

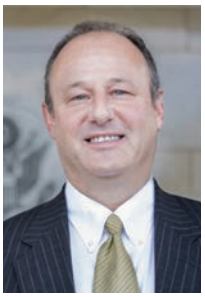
This is a time of positive and hopeful change. AFSA welcomes the public commitment of President Biden to work cooperatively and constructively with federal unions, federal employee groups and the entire federal workforce to deliver results to the American people we serve.

We have been pleased to see a significant number of active-duty career officers nominated for and appointed to senior leadership positions, and we hope to see many more in the months to come.

Our Service, across all six departments and agencies, faces a daunting set of challenges in the areas of morale, diversity, recruitment, inclusion, retention, resources, promotions, evaluations, assignments and benefits. Here I would like to highlight some of our top priorities for the rest of 2021 and beyond.

Morale and Retention: The best way to stem the uptick in attrition (which varies greatly by agency, specialty and grade) is to address the systemic problems our members report to us daily. We need to fix the problems in our workplace culture and in the way people are treated.

This is not just about bias and discrimination, although that occurs all too often. It is also about building a culture of respect, collegiality, mutual support, shared commitment and accountability.



The Foreign Service also needs to expand so it can get the job done properly for the American people. We need to resume our position as the world's biggest and most influential diplomatic and foreign assistance corps.

We must ensure that we have sufficient time and resources for training and professional education throughout our careers. We need to address the concerns of all members of our Service: single, tandem, married, employees with children, and employees with disabilities, to name a few.

A Foreign Service that feels appreciated and well supported is a Service that will stay and do the best possible job for the American people.

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity: In recent months, AFSA has conducted a series of member town halls across the globe in addition to deep-dive consultations with employee affinity groups at both State and USAID, starting with the Thursday Luncheon Group, the first State Department affinity group (est. 1973). Our goal is to draw up a list of objectives and suggested reforms based on the best thinking and analysis from our membership and from the affinity groups.

We will be sharing our ideas with you, with members of Congress and with the leadership of all the foreign affairs agencies, with a view to making significant progress toward a Service that is truly representative of our country.

A Seat at the Big Table: The Foreign Service Act of 1980 was written at a time when it was assumed that career officers would make up a significant portion of our top policymakers. Senior career officers used to play a major role in policy formation, not only in the departments and agencies but also on the National Security Council staff. While the erosion of influence did not start with the Trump administration, it certainly was exacerbated under a president who saw career public servants as the "deep state."

Our colleagues are now back at the table where they belong, offering the benefit of their extensive experience to our elected policymakers who ultimately make the decisions. We hope to see many more from the career Service named to senior positions this year, with the balance restored between political and career ambassadors.

We will also insist that all political appointees be fully qualified, not simply appointed in exchange for campaign donations.

Equality of Benefits: There is no reason why members of the Foreign Service should be denied full overseas comparability pay, denied in-state college tuition for their kids in their state of residence, denied their full pensions if they take a Civil Service position with the federal government after retirement, or denied the ability to break leases and cell phone contracts without penalty when they receive official change of station orders. We will work hard to get redress on these issues this year.

These are just some of the priorities on our agenda for the rest of 2021 and beyond. Please keep your ideas, thoughts and suggestions coming to member@afsa.org. ■

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

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

Editor-in-Chief, Director of Publications
Shawn Dorman: dorman@afsa.org

Senior Editor
Susan Brady Maitra: maitra@afsa.org

Managing Editor
Kathryn Owens: owens@afsa.org

Associate Editor
Cameron Woodworth: woodworth@afsa.org

Publications Coordinator
Dmitry Filipoff: filipoff@afsa.org

Business Development Manager—Advertising and Circulation
Molly Long: long@afsa.org

Art Director
Caryn Suko Smith

Editorial Board
Alexis Ludwig, Chair
Hon. Robert M. Beecroft
Daniel Crocker
Joel Ehrendreich
Harry Kopp
Jess McTigue
Christopher Teal
Joe Tordella
Vivian Walker
Hon. Laurence Wohlers
Dinah Zeltser-Winant

THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

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

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

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Postmaster: Send address changes to
AFSA, Attn: Address Change
2101 E Street NW
Washington DC 20037-2990

CONTACTS

www.afsa.org

AFSA Headquarters:
(202) 338-4045; Fax (202) 338-6820
State Department AFSA Office:
(202) 647-8160; Fax (202) 647-0265
USAID AFSA Office:
(202) 712-1941; Fax (202) 216-3710
FCS AFSA Office:
(202) 482-9088; Fax (202) 482-9087

GOVERNING BOARD
President
Hon. Eric S. Rubin: rubin@afsa.org
Secretary
Ken Kero-Mentz: KeroMentzKA@state.gov
Treasurer
Virginia L. Bennett: vibennett@gmail.com
State Vice President
Thomas Yazdgerdi: YazdgerdiTK@state.gov
USAID Vice President
Jason Singer: jsinger@usaid.gov
FCS Vice President
Jay Carreiro: Jay.Carreiro@trade.gov
FAS Vice President
Vacant
Retiree Vice President
John K. Naland: nalandfamily@yahoo.com
State Representatives
Joshua C. Archibald
Maria Hart
Kristin Michelle Roberts
Carson Relitz Rocker
Jason Snyder
Tamir Waser
USAID Representative
Trevor Hublin
FCS Alternate Representative
Mike Calvert
FAS Alternate Representative
Mary Parrish
USAGM Representative
Steve Herman
APHIS Representative
Russell Duncan
Retiree Representatives
Mary Daly
Philip A. Shull

STAFF
Executive Director
Ásgeir Sigfússon: sigfusson@afsa.org
Executive Assistant to the President
Richard Bruner: bruner@afsa.org
Office Coordinator
Therese Thomas: therese@afsa.org

PROFESSIONAL POLICY ISSUES
Director of Professional Policy Issues
Julie Nutter: nutter@afsa.org

ADVOCACY
Director of Advocacy
Kim Greenplate: greenplate@afsa.org

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Director of Finance and Facilities
Femi Oshobukola: oshobukola@afsa.org
Manager, HR and Operations
Cory Nishi: cnishi@afsa.org
Controller
Kalpna Srimal: srimal@afsa.org
Member Accounts Specialist
Ana Lopez: lopez@afsa.org
IT and Infrastructure Coordinator
Aleksandar "Pav" Pavlovich: pavlovich@afsa.org

COMMUNICATIONS
Director of Communications
Ásgeir Sigfússon: sigfusson@afsa.org
Manager of Outreach and Internal Communications
Allan Saunders: saunders@afsa.org
Online Communications Manager
Jeff Lau: lau@afsa.org
Awards and Scholarships Manager
Theo Horn: horn@afsa.org

MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH
Director, Programs and Member Engagement
Christine Miele: miele@afsa.org
Manager, Outreach and Strategic Communications
Nadja Ruzica: ruzica@afsa.org
Coordinator of Member Recruitment and Benefits
Perri Green: green@afsa.org
Retirement Benefits Counselor
Dolores Brown: brown@afsa.org
Member Events Coordinator
Frances Raybaud: raybaud@afsa.org

LABOR MANAGEMENT
General Counsel
Sharon Papp: PappS@state.gov
Deputy General Counsel
Raeka Safai: SafaiR@state.gov
Senior Staff Attorneys
Zlatana Badrich: BadrichZ@state.gov
Neera Parikh: ParikhNA@state.gov
Labor Management Counselor
Colleen Fallon-Lenaghan: FallonLenaghanC@state.gov
Senior Labor Management Advisor
James Yorke: YorkeJ@state.gov
Labor Management Coordinator
Patrick Bradley: BradleyPG@state.gov
Senior Grievance Counselor
Heather Townsend: TownsendHA@state.gov
USAID Labor Management Advisor
Sue Bremner: sbremner@usaid.gov
Grievance Counselors
Benjamin Phillips: PhillipsBE@state.gov
Briana Odom: OdomB@state.gov

Arctic Diplomacy Briefing

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Welcome to your personal Arctic diplomacy primer, featuring some of the people who know Arctic issues best. They include "the Arctic Senator," the State Department's Coordinator for the Arctic Region and our friends at the newly reopened Consulate Nuuk, Greenland, as well as two ambassadors (one American, one Icelandic) who have served on the Arctic Council.

Our timing is fortuitous as foreign ministers and special envoys head to Reykjavík for the May 19-20 ministerial meeting of the council, the vehicle for coordination and cooperation in the region since 1996.

This is an exciting and opportune time to visit Arctic issues, a time of urgent need for multilateral efforts to combat climate change and stem the tide of melting ice. It is also a time to identify and home in on U.S. political, economic, social and other national security interests and responsibilities in the Arctic region.

Ambassador David Balton, now a senior fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center's Polar Institute, sets the scene with an overview on "Advancing U.S. Diplomacy in the Arctic."

I was able to catch up with U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region James P. DeHart for a conversation about U.S. plans and initiatives in the Arctic today and his role as the first person to hold this new position.

Intrigued by the U.S. reopening of a consulate on the island of Greenland in June 2020 after having closed Consulate Godthaab (now Nuuk) in 1953, we asked the folks at the new consulate to tell us about "Setting Up Shop in Nuuk." FSO Eavan Cully brings us that story from the fast-growing center for Arctic issues and activity.

In "Toward a Sustainable Arctic," Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson, chair of the Arctic Council's Senior Arctic Officials from 2019 until this month, fills us in on how Iceland has worked to address priority issues—economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection—during its chairmanship of the council.

And, finally, we are thrilled to have a view from Capitol Hill on "Arctic Exceptionalism" from Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, a prominent Arctic champion. She urges that the United States treat the region as a "front-and-center" issue and build capacity for serious and dedicated U.S. Arctic diplomacy for the future.

Speaking of building capacity, our cover story takes aim at how the United States can reclaim a leadership position in managing international problems. Ambassador (ret.) David Miller Jr., Ambassador (ret.) Thomas Pickering and former FSO Rand Beers—all three of whom helped establish and lead the U.S. Diplomatic Studies Foundation—argue that more investment in professional education for diplomacy is essential in "Revitalizing State: Closing the Education Gap."

FSO John Fer, in the Speaking Out column, "How the 1619 Project Can Help Public Diplomacy," advocates that U.S. diplomats do more to engage foreign audiences on difficult topics, problems and questions, including and maybe especially those that we are grappling with at home.

In this month's feature, we take a dark journey into northeastern Syria. In "Raqqa's Inferno—A Diplomat Reads Dante in Syria," Ambassador (ret.) William Roebuck, assigned there from 2018 to 2020, finds that Dante's imagery in *The Inferno* captures the depth of suffering and destruction he saw there.

FS Heritage takes us back to the Red Scare of the 1950s and the contentious but ultimately successful confirmation process for Charles E. Bohlen to become U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union. His daughter, Ambassador (ret.) Avis Bohlen, tells the story.

In Reflections, retired FSO Peter Harding recounts the unusual day-in-the-life-of-a-diplomat story of a 1997 incident in Chad in which he helped rescue a Peace Corps volunteer from Sarh.

And in the President's Views column, Ambassador Eric Rubin discusses some of AFSA's current priorities, including advancing diversity and boosting morale and retention in the U.S. Foreign Service.

As this edition illustrates well through the lens of Arctic diplomacy, the United States is back at the table on a wide array of diplomatic efforts. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on how it's going. Please write to us at journal@afsa.org.

Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

Risk Management Required

Congratulations on the Ron Neumann and Greg Starr article in the March *FSJ*, "Changing a Risk-Averse Paradigm at High-Threat Posts Abroad"!

Finally, *finally*, the issue of the security takeover of development and diplomacy is out in the open. The cause—OK, who's responsible—has been identified, and the need to change that makes eminent sense.

As part of the team for shelter after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, I was given a map of areas that were off limits for security reasons. It was almost the entire city, and so what could one do? Ignore it.

We are adults. We are not foolish; yet we also know that we need to be out seeing what is happening and engaging with those we want and need to work with. Had there been a rational approach to identifying the truly unsafe places, that would have been useful.

That Haiti experience reminded me of the Sri Lankan government's declaration of no-build zones that made no sense at all after the 2004 tsunami. It was also ignored.

Had it been made to point out the truly unsafe areas, it, too, would have been useful in working with the communities on relocation—always a sensitive issue. How does one relocate fishing communities into the hills, miles away from their livelihood?

The issue of face time is the important one, for it conveys to those we work with that we are with them and need to work together where they are. To invite partners, nationals and others, as well, to come to our safe havens is only to make them vulnerable and targets.

Well done, American Academy of Diplomacy and *FSJ*. I hope that something constructive is done about security. It is necessary, like any tool.

Earl Kessler
FSO, retired
Santa Fe, New Mexico

An Excellent Suggestion

I am reasonably sure that there will be a number of comments on the extensive, thoughtful, rational and reasonable collection of "Notes to the New Administration" in the March *Journal*.

There is one, in particular, that promises to have a significantly meaningful effect if instituted, and I would like to very strongly support it.

On page 53, Alexander Titolo recommends that the name "Foreign Service" be changed to "United States Diplomatic Service" to give the public an idea of what our small and out-of-sight organization does.

Think about it. Many other agencies, with names that clearly describe what they do, have employees assigned abroad, engaged in, yes, "foreign service."

(There are other grounds for confusion, too. When I told my boss I was leaving Shell Oil to join the Foreign Service, he asked why in the world I wanted to be in the French Army. I said, "Foreign Service," not "Foreign Legion"—which, of course, went right past him.)

Given that our nation is not generally considered to have a population broadly and deeply knowledgeable about and interested in much of the rest of the world, the name "Diplomatic Service" would at least provide a clue.

Credit is due, as well, to the Harvard Belfer Center report, "A U.S. Diplomatic Service for the 21st Century" (by Nick Burns, Marc Grossman and Marcie Ries), which suggests such a name change in its list of 10 actions.

AFSA has a large number of major issues to deal with, as the "Notes" make clear. But this one is not only likely to have a very beneficial effect; it should be relatively easy to implement because it will not generate a political struggle.

Ed Peck
Ambassador, retired
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Father-Son Ambassadors

Further to Stephen Muller's engaging article on father and son ambassadors ("Like Father, Like Son: The Francis Ambassadorships," March *FSJ*), I would add that London was host to a threesome: John Adams (1785-1788), his son John Quincy Adams (1815-1817) and his son Charles Francis Adams (1861-1868) all headed up the U.S. mission in London.

And, to add a fourth generation, Charles' son, Pulitzer Prize–winning author Henry Brooks Adams, was his father's secretary during those seven years in London. ■

Robert Fretz
FSO, retired
Edmonds, Washington

Share your thoughts about this month's issue.

Submit letters to the editor: journal@afsa.org

TALKING POINTS

Foreign Policy for the American People

In his first major foreign policy speech, Secretary of State Antony Blinken sought to connect American foreign policy to the everyday needs of Americans.

"More than at any other time in my career—maybe in my lifetime—distinctions between domestic and foreign policy have simply fallen away," Secretary Blinken said in the March 4 speech at the State Department. "Our domestic renewal and our strength in the world are completely entwined. And how we work will reflect that reality."

Secretary Blinken said the Biden administration is setting foreign policy priorities by asking three questions: "What will our foreign policy mean for American workers and their families? What do we need to do around the world to make us stronger here at home? And what do we need to do at home to make us stronger in the world?"

In his speech, Blinken outlined eight priorities:

- Stopping COVID-19 and strengthening global health security.
- Turning around the economic crisis and building "a more stable, inclusive global economy."
- Renewing democracy, which is under threat.
- Creating a "humane and effective immigration system."
- Revitalizing ties with U.S. allies and partners.
- Tackling climate change.
- Securing a U.S. position of leadership in technology.
- Managing the U.S.-China relationship.

STATE DEPARTMENT

Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks on March 4 at the State Department.

Blinken said turning around COVID-19 is the top priority, because no one "will be safe until the majority of the world is immune." He said the United States would work with partners "to keep the global vaccination effort moving forward." He emphasized the importance of improving the economy, noting that the pandemic has "laid bare inequalities" in America.

"So we've got a double challenge: to protect Americans from a lengthy downturn, and to make sure the global economy delivers security and opportunity for as many Americans as possible in the long term," he said.

Blinken stressed the importance of developing a "just plain decent solution" to immigration problems. The United States must adhere to its core principles in the immigration discussion, he said, adding that "cruelty, especially to children, is unacceptable."

View the speech at bit.ly/blinken-speech.

Truman Center Offers Midlevel Perspectives on Reform

The United States has a "once-in-a-generation opportunity to remake the State Department" by making it more inclusive and innovative, says a new report from the Truman Center for National Policy.

"Transforming State: Pathways to a More Just, Equitable, and Innovative Institution" is the latest of many reports recommending reforms for State. It is different, however, in that it was authored by dozens of midlevel current and former State Department officials.

The report recommends strengthening equity and transparency in promotions and assignments at State by ensuring gender parity and racial equity in promotion panels; piloting blind review in employee evaluation reports; and conducting a data-driven analysis on barriers to promotion.

It calls for empowering the State Department's new chief diversity officer to dismantle barriers to recruitment and retention of employees from underrepresented groups, and strengthen and enforce accountability for supervisors who are the subject of harassment investigations.

The report's authors also advocate creation of an entry program for midcareer Foreign Service specialists focusing on new areas such as global health, technology, data literacy and climate change.

Noting that knowledge of diplomacy and global affairs outside foreign policy circles is sorely lacking, the report recommends establishing an "Office of State and

Continuing USAID's Record

USAID has a successful record of responding to emergencies, and we will count on the next Administrator to put dollars provided for humanitarian assistance to good use. The agency has also done tremendous work in combatting food insecurity, expanding access to water, and empowering women to participate in their economies.

—Senator James Risch (R-Idaho), ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, at the March 23 confirmation hearing for USAID Administrator Samantha Power.

Foreign Service Families Act

Senator Sullivan and I [will] soon be reintroducing legislation we introduced last year, the Foreign Service Families Act. It's to provide Foreign Service spouses and families serving overseas with the same opportunities that we rightly provide now to military spouses.

—Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), at the SFRC nomination hearing for Brian McKeon on March 3.

Local Diplomacy" to expand diplomatic engagement across the United States.

"This office would serve as the connective tissue between state and local officials, urban and rural communities, and foreign policy leaders at the federal level," the report states, and it would help make foreign policy more relevant to America's middle class.

The report also recommends the establishment of an "Office of Innovation Diplomacy," connecting "decentralized innovation hubs across the country."

In her introductory letter, Truman Center CEO and President Jenna Ben-Yehuda, a former Civil Service officer, says the report provides "concrete recommendations grounded in the lived experience across the full range of State Department employment."

The report's goals and recommendations are mixed with powerful personal testimonials to give context. Co-chairs Representative Joaquin Castro (D-Texas), Ambassador (ret.) Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley and Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) point to the need for a culture change at State that will require long-term bipartisan commitment.

Read the full report at bit.ly/truman-report.

Filling Top Jobs

The Biden administration and Congress are slowly filling top foreign policy positions, with nominations lagging for many senior posts at the State Department and USAID.

On March 26 President Biden announced his intent to nominate two career FSOs to top positions at State: Daniel J. Kritenbrink as assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs (EAP), and Brian A. Nichols as assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere affairs (WHA).

Uzra Zeya, a retired FSO, has been nominated to serve as under secretary for civilian security, democracy and human rights.

On March 17 the president nominated Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins as under secretary for arms control and international security, and Jose Fernandez—a former assistant secretary for economic, energy and business affairs—as under secretary for economic growth, energy and the environment.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced on Feb. 24 that the department would create a new chief diversity officer position.

Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) placed holds on top nominees in March, saying he would lift them only when the State Department said it would punish entities involved in the Nord Stream 2 Russia-to-Germany gas pipeline.

Cruz released his hold on Brian McKeon—and the Senate unanimously confirmed him for Deputy Secretary for management and resources on March 18—but said he would maintain the hold on Deputy Secretary nominee Wendy Sherman until further sanctions are imposed against ships and companies involved in the pipeline.

Some positions that don't need Senate approval have been filled. On March 19, the State Department announced that Ambassador Pamela Spratlen, a career FSO, will oversee an investigation into illnesses reported by diplomats serving in Cuba in 2017.

On Feb. 4 President Biden named career FSO Tim Lenderking—who previously served as deputy assistant secretary for Gulf Affairs—as special envoy for Yemen.

On March 22, career SFS officer Ricardo Zuniga was appointed to be special envoy for the Northern Triangle.

On March 15, USAID announced that 19 political appointees had joined

its team, including agency Chief of Staff Gideon Maltz.

On the ambassador front, *The New York Times* reported on March 19 that hundreds of political donors and former lawmakers were vying for 35 political ambassador slots, as the administration looks to decrease the number of political appointees in State Department positions.

The administration was expected to name its first slate of ambassadorial nominees by mid-April. News on ambassadorial appointments is tracked by AFSA at https://afsa.org/list-ambassadorial-appointments. News about the status of top federal positions can be found at https://ourpublicservice.org/political-appointee-tracker/.

Power to Address "Gargantuan" Challenges at USAID

At her March 23 Senate confirmation hearing, USAID Administrator nominee Samantha Power promised to address what she called four "gargantuan" challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflict and state collapse, and democratic backsliding.

The former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations testified that COVID-19 has shattered decades of development gains, "imperiling progress on everything from food security to gender equality and access to education." She pledged that USAID would support efforts to improve health infrastructure in developing countries.

On climate change, Power said countries are facing a "surge in droughts, storms, food shortages and climate-associated humanitarian emergencies." She added that USAID can help countries become resilient "while supporting their efforts to reduce carbon emissions."

The world is seeing more conflicts today than at any time since the Cold War, Power said. USAID can help by mitigating suffering, she said, and "working with U.S. diplomats and our international partners to address the root causes of such crises."

U.S. MISSION KOREA

Then-USUN Ambassador Samantha Power at the United Nations in 2016.

Power said she supports restoration of funds for programs cut by the Trump administration that would address the causes of migration, including violence and corruption, in Central American countries.

Power also pledged to "urgently address" diversity, equity and inclusion at USAID.

Contemporary Quote

"The prevalence, and pervasiveness, of racial discrimination might make the situation look hopeless. But let me be clear: I remain hopeful. I am hopeful because I have seen how communities and countries can enact change. And I have experienced that progress in my own lifetime."

—Linda Thomas-Greenfield before the March 19 UN General Assembly Commemorative Meeting for International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Speaking Out Against Assignment Restrictions

The March 16 murders of six Asian American women in Atlanta drew attention to the rise of "hate incidents" against members of that demographic in the United States and sparked new attention to long-standing complaints from Asian American Foreign Service personnel that they face security clearance discrimination based on ethnicity.

In a March 18 *Politico* article, "Foreigners in Their Own Country: Asian Americans at State Department Confront Discrimination," Ryan Heath describes the process of "assignment restrictions" at the State Department and the efforts to overturn it.

In 2017, AFSA conferred its William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Officer on Christina T. Le, Thomas T. Wong, Mariju L. Bofill and Cecilia S. Choi for taking on this issue.

Le and Wong, successive presidents of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association, described their efforts in a September 2017 *Foreign Service Journal* article, "In Pursuit of Transparency in Assignment Restriction Policies."

Four years later, however, the situation persists. "While we appreciate the department's efforts to codify an appeals process," AAFAA president Shirlene Yee

wrote in "Notes to the New Administration" (March *FSJ*), the problem has not yet been solved, leaving "many employees, disproportionately of Asian American descent, still trapped in a cycle of fighting perceptions of disloyalty."

In a March 18 statement, "Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders in National Security Statement on Anti-Hate and Discriminatory Practices," hundreds of national security professionals appealed for an end to the discrimination, which has been perpetuated and accelerated, they say, under the COVID-19 pandemic and concentration on great-power competition.

Several members of Congress are speaking out. One of them is Rep. Andy Kim (D-N.J.), who before his 2018 election to Congress spent several years working for the State Department.

In March media interviews and in a related Twitter thread, Rep. Kim described his own experience while working for State.

"What confused me more is that I didn't even apply to work on Korea," one tweet read. "State was proactively telling me they didn't trust me."

Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) spoke out against the assignment restrictions when Secretary Blinken testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 10, noting that he had recently met with AAFAA. He said in an interview that diplomatic discrimination and violence against members of Asian American communities are "different manifestations of the same issue: the inability of our government and some people to distinguish between a foreign government and Americans of Asian descent. It was that inability that caused the American government to intern over 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent [during World War II]."

ARB to Review Murder of Local Employee

The State Department announced on March 9 that it is convening an accountability review board (ARB) to study the October 2020 murder of Edgar Flores Santos, a local staff member at U.S. Consulate Tijuana who worked for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (see December 2020 Talking Points).

The ARB, to be headed by Ambassador (ret.) George Staples, will submit its findings and any recommendations to Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Meanwhile, Mexican authorities confirmed the capture of two men suspected of involvement in the homicide, Telemundo 20 reported Feb. 2. The men are thought to be part of a criminal cell involved in the distribution of narcotics in Tijuana.

Police discovered the body of Santos in October 2020 in a field outside Tijuana, a few days after he was reported missing. Police said he had been shot nine times. His work truck was found at the crime scene.

Santos is survived by his wife and two young children.

Democracy Under Siege

"As a lethal pandemic, economic and physical insecurity, and violent conflict ravaged the world in 2020, democracy's defenders sustained heavy new losses in their struggle against authoritarian foes, shifting the international balance in favor of tyranny. Incumbent leaders increasingly used force to crush opponents and settle scores, sometimes in the name of public health, while beleaguered activists—lacking effective international support—faced heavy jail sentences, torture or murder in many settings."

That is the opening paragraph of Freedom House's "Freedom in the World 2021" report, issued on March 3, documenting the 15th consecutive year of decline in global freedom.

Ominously, the countries experiencing deterioration outnumbered those with improvements by the largest margin recorded since the negative trend began in 2006. With India's decline to "Partly Free" status, less than 20 percent of the world's population now lives in a "Free" country, the smallest proportion since 1995.

The annual report evaluates 195 countries and 15 territories, assessing the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, the functioning of the government, freedom of expression and of belief, associational and organizational rights, the rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights in each.

Despite the Jan. 6 insurrection and other disquieting developments, the United States not only maintained its 2020 democracy score of 83 out of 100, but inched up three spots on the Freedom House list. However, that feat reflects the fact that other democracies fared even worse, not that the U.S. improved. As the study's authors note, "The long democratic recession is deepening."

50 Years Ago

Home Rule for the District of Columbia

Preoccupation with foreign affairs may not be an altogether valid reason for remaining aloof from the complex of conflicting interests at play in the efforts to achieve some measure of self-government for the District of Columbia. Foreign Service personnel living in the District may be called upon to vote with other residents in a referendum on home rule and later be free to participate in local election activity. The subject may be of more than academic interest to those who have homes in the Washington area and others who plan to retire there. The legislation (S-1118) that barely failed of enactment in 1965, like others before it, called for prior approval by referendum and exemption of District elections and political activity connected with them from the Hatch Act. The new District Delegate to the House, Walter Fauntroy, has vowed to press for home rule. It seems likely that the move for self-government will once again gather momentum.

The recent achievement of District representation in the House is the latest step in a move for national representation that began in 1882.

—Henry B. Day, a retired Foreign Service officer, excerpted from an article of the same title in the May 1971 FSJ.

NMAD Features Legacy of Edward J. Perkins

The life and legacy of the late Ambassador Edward J. Perkins was spotlighted in a Feb. 24 special "Diplomacy After Hours" program of the National Museum of American Diplomacy.

The distinguished American career diplomat, who served as U.S. ambassador to Liberia, South Africa, the United Nations and Australia, received AFSA's 2020 Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy. He was interviewed in the December 2020 *FSJ*.

National Museum of American Diplomacy Acting Director Jane Carpenter-Rock (bottom left) discusses Ambassador Edward J. Perkins' legacy with his daughters, Katherine Perkins (top right) and Sarah Perkins, on Feb. 24.

In the virtual program, subtitled "Reflections on Families in the Diplomatic Service," NMAD Acting Director Jane Carpenter-Rock explored Amb. Perkins' life and legacy in a conversation with his daughters, Katherine Perkins and Sarah Perkins.

You can view the video at bit.ly/nmad-perkins.

Trio of State Employees Under Fire

A trio of State Department employees has come under fire for espousing intolerant and racist views in the past few months. According to press reports, in early March, former State Department official Federico Guillermo Klein was arrested on six charges relating to his participation in the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol—including assaulting a police officer.

Klein, a Trump administration political appointee, was assigned to the State Department as a staff assistant in the Office of Brazilian and Southern Cone Affairs in January 2017 and held a top secret security clearance. He continued to work at State until resigning on Jan. 19, the day before Trump left office.

At a March 9 court hearing, federal magistrate judge Zia Faruqui ordered Klein to remain in jail pending trial.

On Feb. 26, *Politico* reported that Fritz Berggren, a midlevel State Department employee, has used social media for several years to publicly call "for the establishment of Christian nation-states," warning that white people face "elimination" and railing against Jews, as well as Black Lives Matter and other social movements.

Berggren is assigned to a State Department unit that works on special immigrant visas for Afghans and served as a financial management officer at U.S. Embassy Bahrain.

"We will not comment on internal personnel matters beyond saying that these are personal views and do not represent those of the State Department," a department spokesperson told *Politico* when asked about Berggren. "As a department, we embrace and champion diversity, equity and inclusion as a source of strength."

Since the *Politico* story, Berggren has continued to write on his Blood and Faith blog, welcoming *Politico* readers and posting on such topics as "The Unforgivable Sins of the Jews" and "Jewish Fragility."

On March 4, CNN reported that Nick Sabruno, the top State Department Diplomatic Security official in Afghanistan, was removed from his position for making racist comments about Vice President Kamala Harris and declaring the "death of America" in a Facebook post after the November presidential election.

CNN reported that after news of the Facebook post surfaced, Sabruno was sent back to Washington, D.C. Sabruno's profile is no longer visible on Facebook. He is a member of the Senior Foreign Service.

End of Visa Ban

The State Department announced that most applicants who were denied visas under the Trump administration's Muslim visa ban may now reapply, Middle East Eye reported on March 9.

The move comes after President Joe Biden issued an executive order on Jan. 20 overturning the so-called Muslim ban, under which former President Donald Trump banned visa applications from citizens of 13 countries. Biden called the ban "a stain on our national conscience."

The State Department, in a March 8 press release, said people who received a final refusal on or after Jan. 20, 2020, due to the ban "may seek re-adjudication without resubmitting their application forms or paying any additional fees, provided the underlying visa petitions remain valid."

People denied a visa before that date may apply again, but they will have to pay for the visa application fee again, the department said.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, said State should do more.

"We ask the Biden administration to be creative and work with community-based groups to bring relief to all the families that were separated and harmed because of the discriminatory and xenophobic bans," said CAIR National Government Affairs Director Robert McCaw in a statement.

As of September 2020, more than 40,000 visa applications had been denied under the Muslim ban, NBC News reported.

Virtual Diplomatic Training

Diplomatic training will remain mostly virtual until at least October 2021, Foreign Service Institute Director Julieta Valls Noyes told NPR on March 4.

Valls Noyes, a former U.S. ambassador to Croatia, said that FSI will see a phased-in return to in-person classes, but some things may stay virtual. Instructors have learned to be flexible, she said, even teaching overnight so diplomats overseas can take online training in their time zones.

FSI has boosted its online training efforts significantly since the start of the pandemic. As the institute tweeted: "Since mid-March 2020, FSI has adapted the curricula of 455 in-person classroom trainings for remote delivery & developed offerings specific to the current moment."

FSI also tweeted that it reached more than 31,000 students virtually in 2020, and that it has supported 256,000 course enrollments despite the pandemic. More than 60 congressionally mandated crisis management exercises were set up for remote delivery to embassies and consulates around the world. ■

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

Site of the Month: *ArcticToday* *arctictoday.com*

ArcticToday is a comprehensive digital news source focusing on the Arctic region. It was founded in 2012 to serve as an "Arctic news wire," and features articles about the economy, energy, tourism, shipping, politics, security and the environment of the Circumpolar North.

While its editor is based in the United States, the site features original content from ArcticToday's correspondents and contributors, who are scattered throughout Europe and Canada. Its most frequent contributors are located in Copenhagen, Alaska and Washington, D.C.

A nonprofit, ArcticToday also partners with news organizations in Norway, Iceland and Canada, and publishes syndicated content from Reuters. It also features opinion pieces from Arctic policy experts.

In addition to the website, ArcticToday content reaches readers on several platforms, including a weekday newsletter and social media channels.

How the 1619 Project Can Help Public Diplomacy

BY JOHN FER

To be effective, U.S. public diplomacy should make a point of presenting how Americans wrestle collectively with acknowledging our own history, including past sins, and try to improve along an arc of moral justice that is spelled out in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

An excellent subject for such a presentation is *The New York Times*' 1619 Project, which was launched in August 2019 to mark the 400th anniversary of the beginning of American slavery. An ongoing initiative in print and digital form with articles and photos, "it aims to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of our national narrative," the *Times* states.

Not only is the project an important focal point in the discussion of the problem of racism taking place in the United States today, but the controversy surrounding it illustrates both the complexities of the issue and the give and take of vigorous debate in a democracy.

Recognizing Complexities

To make clear where I'm coming from with this, I'm going to back up for a moment. In a previous life, when I taught eighth grade social studies, I began our Constitution module with a lesson on

There is no reason not to point to the vitality of democracy on display in this moment.

fractions: the three-fifths clause. For a moment, my students shed their awkwardness and aloofness to agree in unison: "That's messed up, Mr. Fer." Indeed.

That year, I pledged a graduate chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, the country's oldest predominantly African American fraternity, and the first one to integrate. Of the organization's renowned members (including Martin Luther King Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Jesse Owens and Duke Ellington), Paul Robeson was the one I most admired.

Quite possibly the most well-rounded American to ever live, Robeson was the definition of a Renaissance person, truly excellent in half a dozen disparate fields: athletics, drama, singing, activism, linguistics and law. Yet no one in the United States seemed to know who he was.

Through further reading I discovered that Robeson's life was destroyed by the witch hunts of the Red Scare days, and his legacy carefully erased from history, ironically just as Stalin did to his rivals in the Soviet Union. My research also showed me that Paul Robeson had significant faults. His extramarital exploits were as varied and frequent as his public engagements, a flaw I find indefensible, especially after reading his wife's touching biography of her husband.

Robeson also was a staunch promoter of Stalin, even when the facts of his barbaric reign were revealed and verified. To many, this lapse in judgment warrants the treatment Robeson received in life, as well as the lack of attention he receives in death. To a smaller group—in which I count myself—it provides the opportunity to examine a great person in totality, serious flaws and all. While I cannot defend Stalin, I can understand how Robeson, who once charged the United States with genocide against African American people, could make such a difficult choice between the Soviet Union and his home country.

As a public diplomacy officer, I've tried to promote opportunities to engage foreign audiences on such difficult topics—which exist in the United States and in every other country in the world—to show how to articulate and evaluate tough problems, to show how democracy works.

In 2013, during my second tour, I suggested we put together a panel of alumni and American officers to discuss Senator William J. Fulbright, a man who launched the world's most renowned scholarship with the aim to bridge cultures and save humanity, yet also voted against

John Fer is the information officer at U.S. Embassy Tbilisi. With the State Department since 2009, he has served in New Delhi, Managua, Moscow, Riga and Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he worked as a firefighter/EMT for Montgomery County, Maryland. He is an Air Force veteran and a returned Peace Corps volunteer (Nepal). He and his wife, Victoria, have two sons.

every piece of civil rights legislation that crossed his desk. I was turned down.

Today the sins of racism in the United States and the complexities of the characters on all sides are out in the open. There is no reason not to point to the vitality of democracy on display in this moment.

The Controversy

Some argue that the 1619 Project is politically motivated and historically inaccurate, and that it perpetuates the racism it claims to reject. In presenting it fairly and most usefully, we need to include critical commentary on some of the project's assertions, as well as the differing views on its purposes, assumptions and effects.

Significantly, one of the historians enlisted to fact-check by *The New York Times*, Leslie M. Harris of Northwestern University, said in a March 2020 *Politico* article that the *Times* ignored her fact-checks.

An expert in African American life and slavery in the pre–Civil War era, Professor Harris had been asked to validate one of lead author Nikole Hannah-Jones' central assertions—namely, that protecting slavery was "one critical reason" the colonists declared independence from Britain.

Harris "vigorously disputed the claim," as she put it, countering that while slavery was an issue during the Revolutionary period, the protection of slavery was not one of the main reasons the 13 colonies went to war.

Harris' concern, as she explained, was that such "overstated claims" and inaccuracies could undermine the "spirit of 1619," which was to cast Black Americans in the spotlight they deserved from the beginning of settlements in America.

What a display of Fitzgeraldian intelligence we'd give if we could hold the following thoughts in our mind and present them at public events: 1) African American contributions should stand front and center in the descriptions of America's development, before and after 1776. 2) Ignoring the valid fact-checks of experts is bad journalism.

American minds may be too mesmerized by their own media machines to engage each other in liberal discourse, but that doesn't mean we can't set a better example abroad.

Thoughtful, discerning, critical assessments like those put forward by Leslie Harris are exactly what we should be showcasing as the best of America.

Popularizing Complexity

In another enlightening exchange, Conor Friedersdorf, a staff writer at *The Atlantic*, hosted a podcast, The Philanthropy Roundtable, in which Harris and Columbia University Professor John McWhorter, also African American, debated the value of efforts like 1619.

Though he levied significant criticism at Hannah-Jones' contention of 1619 as the "true founding" of the United States, McWhorter said he would tell this to young Black Americans and new immigrants to America:

"In terms of what makes America unique, 1776 or various years thereabouts, are absolutely crucial, beyond the flags and the songs. I would tell them that this land was built on the backs of unpaid laborers and enslaved people, and that went far back beyond 1776. … But frankly, I would also tell that young Black person to resist the idea of supposing that the entire history of the United States must be reduced to a story of how well people were doing in learning of how to think of Black people as equals."

Harris largely agreed, adding: "The message is not just that there was a big problem—and there was—in terms of the ideals of freedom and the continuation of slavery. It's that how do people think through that? What were the limits on their thinking? And why did it take so long for it to end? … These are important questions because we need to understand how change happens historically. … We have tales of intergenerational struggle and possibility in this country."

McWhorter and Harris' debate over the 1619 Project shows Americans at their best: championing free speech; embracing the marketplace of ideas, complexity and nuance; and neither heaping outrage on nor giving a free pass to controversial statements.

Media Integrity

The 1619 Project staff and Nikole Hannah-Jones won a Pulitzer Prize for their efforts, but their work should not be exempt from a thorough examination. "Newspapers should have no friends," Joseph Pulitzer said—and therefore, their journalists should have the thick skins, open minds and gracious egos to accept and learn from valid criticism.

To her credit, Hannah-Jones told *The Atlantic* that she accepted general criticism and planned to better contextualize 1619's claims in a forthcoming textbook.

In fact, it was up to her employer, *The New York Times*, to have spoken up, to insist on accuracy. Yet the *Times* doubled down, revealing another aspect of the 1619 Project controversy: In the environment of extreme political polarization in the U.S. today, our moneyed and partisan

media machines have found it unprofitable to present both sides fairly.

This pervasive media bias is tough to witness from abroad, especially while championing American democratic ideals in public. Perhaps PD practitioners can do what American media refuse to do: allow for and encourage open, respectful analysis in the marketplace of ideas.

There are currently hundreds if not thousands of media literacy programs funded, executed and sustained through U.S. diplomatic missions across the world. We should use these opportunities to present such difficult issues to foreign audiences in the spirit (if not the practice) of American freedom of speech and the press.

Showcasing the Marketplace of Ideas

For example: We frequently criticize countries in which oligarchs control most media outlets and therefore what publics get to consume. We should accompany the same criticism with the admission that *The Washington Post* is owned by the world's richest man, *The New York Times*' market cap runs in the billions and News Corp's billions more. How do the bottom lines at those publicly traded companies influence which headlines make it above the fold?

We rightly champion freedom of religion the world over and immediately denounce anti-Semitism whenever it surfaces in public channels. Those are the right things to do. But should "hate speech" be banned? Who determines what is hate speech? Where does it go once it is disallowed on mainstream platforms?

Foreign audiences should be able to consider venture capitalist Joe Lonsdale's argument in defense of free speech without fear of being shushed or canceled: "As a Jewish man whose 100-year-old Bubbie (grandmother) lost many of her close and extended family in the Holocaust, I am disgusted by people who deny it. But when we restrict the free and open debate of ideas—no matter how asinine—we put ourselves into dangerous territory that leads to arbitrary violations of our liberty."

Visitors to our overseas PD events should be able to view rapper Killer Mike's anguished appeal to Atlantans after the George Floyd killing, and analyze why he had to say to CNN: "Stop feeding fear and anger every day."

They should be encouraged to wonder why journalists like Matthew Yglesias and Glenn Greenwald left Vox and The Intercept, outlets they co-founded.

This piece, itself, with its pointed callout of American mainstream media, should be picked apart via critical thinking, kindness and cooperation, not agitation or us-versus-them dismissals.

American minds may be too mesmerized by their own media machines to engage each other in liberal discourse, but that doesn't mean we can't set a better example abroad.

During the Cold War, public diplomacy played an outsized role in showing audiences behind the iron curtain that values such as free speech and the promotion of a diverse marketplace of ideas were what made America great.

Despite today's political polarization, it remains a winning formula. ■

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.

COVER STORY

Revitalizing State Closing the Education Gap

To reclaim leadership in handling international problems, State must increase investment in professional development of its greatest asset: its people.

BY DAVID C. MILLER JR., THOMAS R. PICKERING AND RAND BEERS

Amb. (ret.) David C. Miller Jr. is president of the U.S. Diplomatic Studies Foundation. He served as U.S. ambassador to Tanzania and to Zimbabwe and as special assistant to the president for national security affairs in the George H.W. Bush administration.

Amb. (ret.) Thomas R. Pickering is co-chairman of the U.S. Diplomatic Studies Foundation. A retired career Foreign Service officer, he is a former under secretary of State for political affairs and a seven-time ambassador: to Jordan, Nigeria, El Salvador, Israel, the United Nations, India and Russia.

Rand Beers is co-chairman of the U.S. Diplomatic Studies Foundation. A former Foreign Service officer and member of the Senior Executive Service, he has served as acting secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and deputy assistant to the president for homeland security.

In a nation in need of strong, clear leadership in a broad range of domestic areas, the Biden administration will also face profound foreign policy and national security challenges. Tensions with China will only grow, played out in many regions where Beijing is aggressively asserting itself diplomatically with soft power. Russia will continue its disruptive actions along its border and elsewhere. Rebuilding our alliances and re-establishing international organizations will be a priority. COVID-19, a declining economy and human rights cover concerns both at home and abroad.

The State Department must reclaim a leadership role in handling international problems. Yet any rebuilding effort will fall flat if it does not include a significantly increased investment in the professional development of the department's greatest asset: its people.

We arrive at this conclusion having spent decades serving in or working closely with the State Department. Education

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/RAWPIXEL

and training, other than for languages, have long been underresourced and seldom a leadership priority, but must be an integral part of the effort to revive American diplomacy, prosperity and leadership.

Our nation needs the State Department to continue to excel. The issues require well-trained diplomats and smart diplomacy. Science and technology, disease and health, arms control and nonproliferation, climate change and the global economy present newer challenges, along with the enduring issues of development, drugs, crime, corruption, migration, ethnic tension and terrorism. These are but some examples where specific professional education is not just useful but essential.

We have for too long fallen back on the U.S. military to deal with our critical international challenges, but the military is not recruited and prepared for, or expert in, integrated power solutions, and it is downsizing in recent conflict zones. This puts the State Department, more than ever, in the front line of security and stability as "the tip of the spear." This, in turn, requires a department fully prepared to step into the role. It offers an opportunity for State to learn from the past, look to the future in resetting priorities and, importantly, expand and enhance training and education for its workforce in its changing, varied and critical missions.

Professional Development at State

Instead of investing sufficiently in formal education and training, the State Department has relied heavily on a kind of "apprenticeship training" in which observation and experience is the model. Its Foreign Service and Civil Service officers are often left to learn primarily through "on-the-job training." While experience is a necessary ingredient in professional development, it can be hit or miss, especially when not linked to a formal, continuous education process. Indeed, because learning through experience will always be available, the time has come to make the best use of it. And that requires professional education that moves beyond simply teaching for the next job and instead creates a framework of knowledge and skills through which to evaluate experience and enhance career development.

While active mentorship by more senior personnel is presumed to teach and refine experiential learning into needed skills, it is also the case that mentors themselves are not only pressed for time, but sometimes need more training in what skills to focus on or how to frame a subordinate's experience for broader departmental objectives. Moreover, officers themselves are constantly jumping from one issue to another. They are often challenged to find the time to reflect on lessons learned from experience or to use that reflection for career development to make themselves better able to develop new policies to solve new problems.

The State Department has relied heavily on a kind of "apprenticeship training" in which observation and experience is the model.

The unstructured approach to professional development is inadequate. The lack of leadership support for, and investment in, formal education must change so that classroom learning can pair with and better focus experiential learning and develop better officers over the longer term. State cannot depend on excellence at the time of recruitment as a substitute for continuing professional education. It can no longer rely on on-the-job training or mentoring without strategically planned, expanded, sustained, formal professional education at all levels.

A "business look" at the State Department is revealing. The department has some physical assets—headquarters, embassies and other structures—but its heart is its people. People produce its product. Our diplomats represent the United States and its values to the world. Any firm ignoring its main asset, starving its diverse workforce of learning, time and resources, soon ends up on the rocks. Professional education needs to provide its members, all its members, with what they need to know and teach them how to use it effectively. Most of all, it needs to teach them how to confront new and constantly changing situations, employing foresight and innovation to avoid purely reactive approaches.

The State Department can benefit from how other federal departments and agencies approach education. While their missions and the content of their training are different, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Department and others invest more time and resources in formal professional education. The U.S. military treats education and training as absolutely central to its missions; personnel spend 15 to 20 percent of their time in formal profes-

Diplomatic Studies Foundation: Who We Are, What We Do

The U.S. Diplomatic Studies Foundation, formally established in 2017, provides financial and intellectual support to the Foreign Service Institute for the development and implementation of innovative education and training. The foundation's goal is to work with the State Department to develop officers of excellence to support the diplomatic objectives of the country through lifelong learning and continuous innovation in both instructional technique and focus of instruction.

The foundation is supported entirely by private contributions from individuals and major foundations. It operates under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed with FSI in February 2019 and recently extended to February 2022. The MOU provides the framework for FSI to adopt improvements to existing courses and explore new educational opportunities, with the shared goal of the foundation and FSI to transition those experiments to public funding if and as they prove successful.

DSF has engaged recently retired ambassadors to enhance area studies training with practitioners, and is also bringing together senior State Department and congressional professionals in a seminar to inform and improve contacts with each other. The foundation is exploring training to help diplomats work better with American businesses to promote U.S. commercial interests overseas. DSF is also promoting a new concept of tabletop simulations called "Peace Games" to augment classroom teaching, drawing on the military's widely developed war-gaming experience.

sional development. By contrast, with the exception of foreign language instruction, formal State Department education and training lack sufficient participation by our diplomats to enable them to reach their full potential for operating in today's complicated security environment.

State Department personnel are exceptionally capable and committed individuals, many of whom make great sacrifices to serve our nation. While the Foreign Service Institute is committed to providing the best education possible within its existing operating budget, our foreign policy professionals deserve and need a commitment to more extensive professional development.

Confronting the Budget Problem

To approach an acceptable level of professional development, leadership must prioritize education and training as it deals with the lack of budgetary support it receives from Congress. For years the State Department has blamed budget constraints, together with higher priorities, for not investing more in education and training and for ignoring internal and external reform proposals. While funding levels for the department are certainly an issue, especially now for the new administration, without a top-level commitment to education, that funding will continue to be underprioritized and underresourced by Congress. Recent studies have estimated that the State Department needs a 2,000-person increase in staffing to avoid having to take personnel out of operational work for enhanced professional education. This requires a related leadership commitment, as well.

The harsh reality is that it will be difficult to increase the State Department budget substantially over the next several years as our nation faces huge budget deficits and critical domestic needs coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant economic downturn. This will require weighing the education and training investment in human capital, the department's most important asset, against other priorities. Is every item of State's planned construction more urgent at this time than educating its personnel? Can the State travel budget be a source of savings for education using the COVID-19 experience to show the efficacy of virtual meetings? Similarly, FSI has done a remarkable job of transitioning nearly all its training to the virtual world. Can the efficiencies created through virtual instruction be leveraged to allow the department to do more with existing resources?

Without also challenging business-as-usual budgets, the department will continue to short the professional development of its people. On a broader government level, however, the State Department budget does not occur in a vacuum. Former Defense Secretary James Mattis once famously said: "If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition." What if that statement could be turned on its head?

We are optimistic that the Biden administration, working closely with Congress, will rise to the challenge and exhibit

the commitment to prioritize and then fund upgraded State Department education and training.

Five Steps to Consider

Here are some basic steps deserving of consideration from the perspective of the U.S. Diplomatic Studies Foundation.

Give high priority to a comprehensive review of the careerlong progression of tradecraft and general skills that all employees need, linked to a thorough needs assessment. Begin planning now for a full set of revised courses at the entry-, mid- and senior levels for the longer-term future. This revision should be based on existing studies of needs and any necessary new research to provide officers and staffs, the Congress and the public with the best overall solution to this issue. Assessments should also prepare a way to acquire all the needed authorities and funding.

Prepare ambassadors for their expansive and critically important mandate. The president traditionally writes a general instruction letter to new ambassadors and places an incredible amount of responsibility and accountability in the hands of the chief of mission. This includes broad oversight of all U.S activities in a host country (excluding military-commanded combat activities). While career Foreign Service ambassadors have a wealth of prior foreign policy experience both at home and abroad, these men and women only receive roughly three weeks of ambassadorial training before representing the United States across the entire range of international activity of the U.S. government in their host country.

The current course simply does not allow enough time for thorough coverage of the scope of ambassadorial responsibility and, more generally, the criticality of that role. Moreover, greater provision needs to be made for noncareer appointees, brand-new to the task, who need a more in-depth orientation. But any course of this nature on the eve of becoming an ambassador or, for that matter, an assistant secretary is going to be too little, too late, if it is not built on a solid professional education as well as experience.

Increase the quality and quantity of midlevel training. There is a significant gap in essential training at the midlevel. The midlevel is also where the department begins identifying potential seniors and seeing higher frequency in the departure of minority employees. This is where the department can make the biggest statement about its commitment to the career development of its personnel.

By programming more training opportunities for employees and ensuring availability for attendance, the department can directly and forcefully affirm its commitment to the professional development of all its officers. It has for decades provided a widely successful course in upgrading economic proficiency. In the last 20 years, it has added a careerlong progression of courses in leadership and management. Those courses need complements in other areas—e.g., where newly arising knowledge and skills are required such as in technology and climate generally, and cyber security particularly.

The unstructured approach to professional development is inadequate.

Increase the frequency of training, and tie training to promotion. Although the percentage of State Department officers' time spent in training may not realistically equal their military counterpart's (15 to 20 percent), State should, with the exception of language training, approach levels similar to the more parallel CIA (about 5 percent). The department must supplant the current culture that sees training as career-stalling with a new culture of education being career-enhancing by making certain courses, and a student's performance in them, a requirement for promotion.

Provide initial, joint residential training for new officers. A residential training experience on entry into the Foreign and Civil Service allows officers to build camaraderie and a unified State Department identity. Joint residential training can also help build needed personnel cohesion within the department, overcoming the culture gap that exists between the Foreign Service and Civil Service.

Improved education and training reform is not "Mission Impossible." There is an emerging broad coalition of retired and currently serving senior State Department officials and congressional leaders that will support meaningful education and training. A number of recent studies are available; the recommendations are similar, and the agenda is clear. The Diplomatic Studies Foundation is prepared to help start and initially fund some of this effort.

Getting it done, giving the women and men who serve the State Department the intellectual software they need to best serve our nation, will require breaking some china and taking some heat. The State Department and the nation it serves deserve no less than that commitment from the new Secretary of State and administration. ■

Advancing U.S. Diplomacy in the Arctic

Despite challenges posed by Russia and China, the Biden administration has a chance to further constructive, cooperative relations among nations concerned with the Arctic.

BY DAVID BALTON

During the Cold War, attention paid to the Arctic focused primarily on national security matters. Beginning in the mid-1990s, governments broadened their gaze to consider the economic potential—and the environmental challenges—of the region. Particularly in the last decade, as a warming climate ushered in profound environmental changes in the region, Arctic governments and residents have scrambled to stay ahead of emerging issues.

Coastlines are eroding, sea ice is vanishing, and permafrost is thawing. These phenomena and others are already causing seri-

David Balton has been a senior fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center's Polar Institute since 2018. He previously served as deputy assistant secretary for oceans and fisheries in the Department of State's Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science, attaining the rank of ambassador in 2005. There, Ambassador Balton was responsible for coordinating the development of U.S. foreign policy concerning oceans and fisheries, overseeing U.S. participation in international organizations dealing with these issues, and managing U.S. foreign policy relating to the Arctic and Antarctica. Previously he served in State's Office of the Legal Adviser for 12 years and for six years as director of the Office of Marine Conservation at State.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ous problems in the Arctic and point to trouble ahead for other parts of the planet. At the same time, a more open Arctic Ocean is sparking ever greater interest in potential resource development, shipping and tourism, among other opportunities.

As a result, the Arctic has witnessed a remarkable spurt in the numbers of international institutions and arrangements designed to manage expanding human activity in the region, and deepen human understanding of it. Despite serious tensions between Russia and other Arctic nations concerning other issues and parts of the world, Arctic governments have largely chosen to compartmentalize the region, setting those tensions aside in favor of cooperating in pursuit of shared interests.

That is, until recently. During the last two years of the Trump administration, the spirit of international cooperation that has largely characterized Arctic affairs came under threat. First, the United States reversed course on climate policies and found itself seriously out of step with other Arctic governments in that regard. At the same time, Russia stepped up its efforts to rebuild its military infrastructure and expand its capabilities in the Arctic, and engaged in provocative actions against the West. Finally, China declared itself a "near-Arctic state" and sought to increase its influence in the region in ways that have caused concern.

Despite the ongoing challenges that Russia and China pose, the Biden administration has taken office with a chance to renew constructive, cooperative relations among nations concerned with the Arctic. The decision to rejoin the Paris climate agreement represents a first step in that direction, but most of the journey still lies ahead. This article focuses on one venue—the Arctic Council—in which a key part of that journey can take place.

Creation of the Arctic Council

The eight nations of the Arctic—Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States—established the Arctic Council in 1996 through a nonbinding instrument known as the Ottawa Declaration. The council, though not a formal international organization with legal personality and assessed budgetary contributions, has served, in the words of the declaration, as a high-level forum to promote "cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants, on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic."

COURTESY OF DAVID BALTON

David Balton chairs a Senior Arctic Officials meeting in Juneau, Alaska, in March 2017.

The inclusion of Arctic Indigenous peoples in virtually all aspects of the council's work makes this forum unique. Six groups of "Permanent Participants," representing Indigenous communities throughout the region, take part in council meetings in their own name and right, not as part of national delegations. Decisions of the council, though in principle made only by consensus of the governments, in practice also require the consensus of the permanent participants as well.

The Arctic Council, largely through its six standing working groups on various aspects of monitoring and protecting the Arctic, has produced groundbreaking analyses of Arctic climate change, biodiversity, shipping and countless other topics. At its biennial ministerial meetings, which all U.S. Secretaries of State have attended since 2011, the council adopts far-reaching recommendations on an extraordinary range of issues.

U.S. Leadership in the Council

The chairmanship of the Arctic Council rotates every two years among its eight members. The United States most recently chaired the council from May 2015 to May 2017, a term that spanned two U.S. administrations. Indeed, when Secretary of State Rex Tillerson presided over the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, in 2017, he brought to fruition a set of programs and projects that the Obama administration had launched two years earlier.

The United States has found many ways to exercise leadership within the council even while not leading the body as a whole. Experts from the United States have very frequently spearheaded the work that the council undertakes, such as the 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment and the 2009 Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment.

Three times in the past decade, the council created task forces to negotiate new treaties for the Arctic region. In each case, the United States co-led these task forces, which produced in quick succession (at least by the normal standards of diplomacy) the 2011 Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, the 2013 Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparation and Response in the Arctic, and the 2017 Agreement on Enhancing International Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic.

It is worth noting that Russia also co-chaired each of these task forces. Indeed, the success of each endeavor depended substantially on cooperation between Russia and the United States in working through the challenges that each group confronted. Having served as U.S. co-chair for the first two task forces, I can say from experience that successful leadership of the negotiations required a great deal of behind-the-scenes communication and trust, which occurred despite rising bilateral tensions at the time.

Similar communication and trust also existed between the American and Russian co-chairs of the third task force, which was established after the Russian invasion of Crimea and the resulting international sanctions. This demonstrates the willingness of the two governments in those years to "compartmentalize" the Arctic and pursue cooperation there despite conflicts elsewhere.

Breakdown in 2019

In May 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo traveled to Finland to participate in the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Rovaniemi that would conclude Finland's chairmanship and launch the incoming Icelandic chairmanship. Before reaching Rovaniemi, he stopped in Helsinki to deliver a well-publicized speech about the region.

There, Secretary Pompeo declared that the Arctic "has become an arena for power and competition … complete with new threats to the Arctic and its real estate, and to all of our interests in that region." He raised particular concerns about Chinese "aggressive behavior" in the Arctic. He also sharply criticized Moscow, citing a pattern of aggressive Russian behavior in the region: "Russia is already leaving snow prints in the form of army boots." And for good measure, he noted the "long-contested feud" between the United States and Canada concerning the rights of vessels to transit the Northwest Passage.

The following day, at the ministerial meeting itself, the Arctic Council failed—for the first time in its history—to reach agreement on a declaration, the biennial document that summarizes the accomplishments of the outgoing chairmanship and provides a mandate for the new chairmanship. Most accounts of the event correctly lay the blame for this failure at the feet of the United States, for rejecting language in the draft declaration concerning climate change in the Arctic that all other Arctic Council members believed to be essential.

Tensions over climate change continued to plague the body through the end of the Trump administration.

Afterward, the council struggled to move forward. Tensions over climate change continued to plague the body through the end of the Trump administration. The coronavirus pandemic has also required the council to meet only virtually, which poses hardships for a circumpolar group whose participants

ARCTIC COUNCIL

A ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council takes place in Iqaluit, Canada, in April 2015.

LINNEA NORDSTÖM/ARCTIC COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

The flags of the eight Arctic Council member-states and six Indigenous Permanent Participant organizations.

live in almost all time zones. Despite these challenges, the government of Iceland has done a creditable job of keeping the council functioning as well as possible, making progress in several areas.

Looking Ahead

The Biden administration now has the chance to change the narrative within the Arctic Council. Most obviously, it can—and almost certainly will—join other member-states and permanent participants in using the council as a venue in which to combat the causes and effects of climate change. For example, the United States can contribute to renewed efforts by the group to reduce emissions of black carbon (soot) in the region. These particles settle on the Arctic's white surfaces, turning them dark and reducing their reflectivity of sunlight, which in turn causes those surfaces to grow warmer. The council previously set an "aspirational goal" to reduce black carbon; now should be the time to take concrete measures to meet that goal.

More generally, the United States can once again become a leader in the many programs and projects that relate in some way to the warming Arctic climate. During the Trump administration, officials who represented the United States in the council had some leeway to allow such work to move forward, so long as it stayed under the political radar screen. Now, with the full support of the White House, U.S. representatives to the council can press their counterparts to take bold action and bring to bear the significant expertise and resources of the United States in support of such action.

The Biden administration should also consider proposals to create the position of "Arctic ambassador" or the equivalent. There is some precedent for creating such a position. During the Obama administration, Secretary of State John Kerry appointed Robert Papp, a former commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, as "Special Representative for the Arctic." In that role, Admiral Papp oversaw preparations for, and execution of, the 2015-2017 U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council. But a career civil servant continued to serve as the senior U.S. official representing our nation in the Arctic Council.

More recently, Secretary Pompeo appointed James DeHart, a Foreign Service officer, as "U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region." But he, too, does not represent the United States in the Arctic Council—that responsibility now rests with Meredith Rubin, an FSO. It may be time to rethink these arrangements, and raise the level of U.S. representation in the council to the ambassadorial level, a step that other Arctic Council members took years ago.

The United States should also urge the other Arctic states to strengthen the council itself. Despite its remarkable evolution, the Arctic Council lacks a long-term strategic plan, adequate and predictable funding, and a consolidated secretariat. Its current structure, put into place in 1996, needs revision to enable the

council to respond to current and future needs of the region. It should also become more accountable, by instituting a practice in which its members regularly report on their implementation of decisions that the body has taken.

Russia takes over as Arctic Council chair this month and may not have much appetite for taking any of these steps. Then again, Moscow will want to claim success at the end of its two-year term, and may be open to one or more of these ideas after all. Even if it is not, efforts that the Biden administration initiate now could bear fruit beginning in 2023, when the Arctic Council will embark on a six-year span during which a succession of Scandinavian governments (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) hold the chair.

ARCTIC COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

During the 2015 Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, Canada, local Inuit residents join U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Minister for the Arctic Council Leona Aglukkaq.

Beyond the Arctic Council

Finally, the Biden administration should pursue ways to improve governance of the region—and particularly of the Arctic Ocean—outside the Arctic Council. The region will need an architecture that is more robust than the council, with its inherent limitations in terms of authority and structure, can provide.

As noted above, melting sea ice has made the Arctic Ocean dramatically more accessible. Commercial shipping has already increased, particularly along Russia's Northern Sea Route, with further increases expected. Yet the Arctic Ocean remains poorly understood and poorly charted. Current arrangements and rules relating to the Arctic Ocean—including those generated by the Arctic Council, the International Maritime Organization's Polar Code, the 2018 Arctic Fisheries Agreement and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum—are not likely to prove either sufficiently strong or sufficiently well coordinated to manage increasing human activity there in the coming years.

MARIO HOPPMAN

A German research vessel floats among the icebergs in the central Arctic Ocean in 2015.

The United States can and should lead efforts to improve this regime in a variety of ways. In that regard, the initial meeting between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau included a focus on the Arctic region, and committed the United States and Canada to work together on "Arctic governance," among other things. To strengthen Arctic governance, the two governments might begin by jointly proposing the creation of a marine science body for the Central Arctic Ocean and, sometime thereafter, a marine management body for the Central Arctic Ocean.

A Balanced Approach to the Arctic

A CONVERSATION WITH U.S. COORDINATOR FOR THE ARCTIC REGION JAMES P. DEHART

The Arctic is a place of cross-cutting interests—security, science and economic development, among others—and the different pieces need to fit together.

James P. DeHart, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister Counselor, is the U.S. coordinator for the Arctic region at the State Department. He served previously as senior adviser for security negotiations and agreements, assistant chief of mission in Kabul and deputy chief of mission in Oslo, among many other assignments. He is a former chair of the FSJ Editorial Board.

FSJ Editor Shawn Dorman interviewed him in March.

Shawn Dorman: *What is the role of the U.S. coordinator for the Arctic region? When and why was the position created?*

Jim DeHart: The previous administration created the position last July and asked me to fill it. The logic of having a coordinator was to ensure we were taking a balanced approach to the Arctic region, giving attention to the full range of U.S. interests there—security, scientific research, Coast Guard cooperation, economic development and so on—and integrating these interests into a coherent approach. This is even more important because the Arctic is changing rapidly due to climate change and becoming more accessible to all sorts of new activities.

SD: *What are the major U.S. priorities in the Arctic?*

JDH: Fundamentally, we want to make sure the region remains peaceful, free of conflict without any threats to our homeland, and a place where international cooperation prevails. We want residents of the Arctic, including Indigenous communities in our own state of Alaska, to prosper. And now, with the new administration, we have a major focus on tackling the climate change crisis, a global effort in which the Arctic is a critical domain because it's warming much faster than the rest of the planet. Our renewed focus on climate is very much welcomed by our allies and partners in the Arctic region, with whom we work very closely.

An eagle flying near Nuuk, Greenland, in October 2020.

HILARY LEBAIL

SD: *What's the home bureau for the coordinator? Who do you work with inside State and among other U.S. government, non-governmental and international entities?*

JDH: We are an S-slash office [S/AR], not resident in any bureau, which I think makes sense because we need to work across all interested bureaus and offices, each of which views the Arctic through its own particular lens. The Arctic is a place of cross-cutting interests—security, safety, science, economic development, to name a few—and the different pieces need to fit together. We're a small office, only four of us, so you might say we're sparsely populated, like the Arctic. We work across the federal government and do a lot of outreach with organizations such as the Wilson Center and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Alaska congressional delegation, Alaska Native communities, and the large orbit of scientists and other professionals dedicated to Arctic work.

SD: *Compared to some other regions, the Arctic has an unusually large interagency footprint. And now the military service branches are releasing separate Arctic strategies. To what extent is Arctic policy fragmented among the various agencies and services? Is there a role for State to play in bridging priorities and overcoming the fragmentation?*

JDH: Yes, just since last July, we've seen new Arctic strategies from the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Army and Department of Homeland Security. The common denominator among them is increased U.S. attention and presence. Clearly, there's a growing sense of the Arctic as a distinct realm of U.S. foreign and security policy, and different parts of the U.S. government are working to keep pace with developments there. As our new administration sets out its vision for the region, State can undertake the essential diplomacy, and we may see updates by the service branches to align with the new administration's priorities.

SD: *Does your office coordinate with the new U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry? If so, how?*

JDH: Yes, we are coordinating closely with his team. We must leverage our diplomacy in the Arctic region, including through the Arctic Council, to advance our administration's broader climate change goals.

SD: *You mention the Arctic Council. With so much new interest and activity in the region, is the Arctic Council still the best venue for international Arctic cooperation?*

JDH: Yes, absolutely. We see the Arctic Council as the region's premier multilateral forum. Through the years, we've negotiated significant agreements on pollution control and response, on search and rescue, and on scientific cooperation. A lot of very

U.S. NAVY

Three polar bears approach the USS *Honolulu* while it surfaced 280 miles from the North Pole in 2003. Today, polar bears are a vulnerable species due to sea ice loss from climate change.

concrete work takes place in the various working groups, somewhat under the radar. It's also unique in that the Native and Indigenous peoples of the region have a seat at the table together with the eight Arctic governments. And it's a rare venue where the United States and Russia cooperate productively. This year is the 25th anniversary of the Arctic Council, and we're looking forward to the chance to advance Arctic diplomacy at the ministerial meeting hosted by Iceland on May 19-20.

SD: *What do you anticipate will change when Russia assumes chairmanship of the Arctic Council for a two-year term at the end of the ministerial? What are your concerns?*

JDH: We're prepared to work with the Russian chair, as we have with previous chairs. We see opportunities for cooperation, including on climate. We look to Russia to adhere to Arctic Council norms and practices, and to sustain the council's circumpolar focus—meaning continued attention to the needs of the entire Arctic region.

SD: *What are U.S. concerns about Russian influence and activity in the region?*

JDH: Let me first point out that the Arctic Council does not do military security. We address those issues, together with our allies, outside the council, through NATO and other means. In that context, we have serious concerns about Russia's military buildup in the Arctic, its aggressive military exercises and the lack of transparency in some of its military activities. We have also expressed our concern about Russia's regulation of the Northern Sea Route, which is not in accordance with international norms.

SD: *When it comes to U.S. Arctic policy, where is the balance between environment, climate change and sustainability on one hand, and security and economic interests on the other?*

JDH: All these interests are crucial, and I think we should try to align our efforts as much as possible. For example, remote communities across the region are desperate for investment to create jobs and livelihoods. The right kinds of investment, for example in renewable energy, can support those communities while also contributing to our climate change goals. In doing so, we can guard against unsustainable investments by others that could be damaging to local communities—and undermine our security interests, as well.

SD: *You're talking about China?*

JDH: Yes, mostly. We've seen how Beijing has done things elsewhere in the world, and all too often China's investment activities have led to unsustainable debt, environmental damage, unkept promises in terms of developing the local labor force, a lack of transparency leading to corruption and other problems. We think that sort of unsustainable development has no place in the Arctic.

SD: *So how should the U.S. handle the significant interest China—a non-Arctic nation—has shown in the region?*

JDH: We're not saying no to all investment by China, but we are insisting on transparency and adherence to high standards and local requirements. We also think it's necessary to have investment screening laws so that investments touching on critical infrastructure—for example, ports, airports and digital networks—are looked at through a national security lens. The Chinese have shown a great deal of interest in acquiring critical infrastructure across the Arctic region, and that is definitely a concern.

SD: *Is the United States behind in the "race for Arctic resources"? What does that even mean?*

JDH: We don't see a race for resources in the Arctic. Although the physical changes taking place are dramatic, it's going to remain a challenging operating environment for a long time to come. As the sea ice recedes, we'll see more shipping, more tourism and more economic activity, and the Arctic will become a busier place. But I think this will happen over decades, not overnight. Still, we need to prepare for this

inevitable transformation. It's sort of a strategic planner's dream.

SD: *But isn't there a larger geopolitical competition that's taking place in the Arctic?*

JDH: Countries around the world see the Arctic becoming more accessible. So, many of them are developing the capabilities required to be more present and involved in the future, such as icebreakers. But keep in mind: The Arctic is not "ungoverned" space. There are rules in the Arctic, starting with the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, which puts most of the resources within the territorial jurisdictions of the Arctic states. Connected to this is a well-functioning international process to settle the extended continental shelf claims, the seabed claims, of the Arctic states. These rules and frameworks help keep things predictable and peaceful.

JIM DEHART

Jim DeHart, State Department Senior Oceans Policy Adviser Gregory O'Brien and Office of the U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region Senior Adviser Hillary LeBail during an October 2020 visit to the U.S. consulate in Nuuk.

SD: *Wait, but the U.S. hasn't signed the convention. Do we still follow the rules it lays out?*

JDH: We do. We treat the Law of the Sea Convention as customary international law, and we follow it. It's very much in our interest to do so.

SD: *Would ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the way the United States is able to influence events in the Arctic? Might the United States ratify UNCLOS in the coming months and years?*

JDH: I think it's unquestionably in our interest to become a formal party to the agreement, especially as we prepare to submit our own extended continental shelf claim in the Arctic; but putting this question to the Senate entails many considerations beyond my remit.

SD: *How is science diplomacy playing out in the Arctic? Is this an area of broad cooperation, including with competitors?*

JDH: Yes. I don't know of any other region of the world, except maybe Antarctica, where international collaboration on science is so strong. The work we do in the Arctic with our international partners is amazing, and especially critical to understanding climate change and projecting future trends. By the way, this includes not just the states of the Arctic, but many great partners from outside the Arctic region, as well. I'm proud to say the United States leads the way on Arctic science, and I have the utmost admiration for the work of the National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NASA and our science community writ large. NASA has a satellite that measures the depth of the Greenland ice cap with precision down to the width of a pencil!

SD: *What are the priorities for our new consulate in Nuuk, Greenland? Has there been concern from locals or from Denmark about that time when the U.S. president talked about buying Greenland?*

JDH: As you know, we have consulates all over the world, which enable us to reach beyond capital cities and build relations with levels of society and communities that might otherwise be difficult to reach. Greenland is a uniquely great place to have a consulate because it is so remote and has distinct cultures and communities that take some time to get to know. I had the chance to travel to Greenland in the fall, and I can tell you we have a great consulate team there. I think we're now in a position to take our relations with the Greenlanders to the next level, including cooperation on sustainable tourism, new commercial opportunities and educational exchanges.

SD: *So, we are not trying to buy Greenland?*

JDH: We're not in the real estate business. We're in the diplomacy business, working to deepen our ties with the people of Greenland and, for that matter, with the entire Kingdom of Denmark. Denmark, of course, is a great friend and ally.

SD: *What will success look like for the United States in the Arctic?*

JDH: When the Arctic becomes synonymous with peace, with international cooperation, with good science, and with better futures for Arctic peoples—I think that's success.

Setting Up Shop in Nuuk

In June 2020 U.S. diplomats reestablished a consulate in Greenland in what is now a fast-growing city that is coming into its own as a center for Arctic issues.

BY EAVAN CULLY

In 1940, following the Nazi occupation of Denmark, the United States opened its first consulate in Greenland. It was built in Godthaab, the capital of Greenland until 1979, when the town was renamed Nuuk. Godthaab had about 600 residents, and the new consulate building had to be mail-ordered from Sears, Roebuck & Co. Although that building still stands today, the town around it has grown significantly.

When the United States shuttered the consulate in 1953, it was a one-person outpost in a city of 1,600. The March 1954 *Foreign Service Journal* recorded the event: "Godthaab is gone. I know because I closed it. And so passes into history what surely was one of the strangest posts in the entire American Foreign Service," wrote Consul Wayne W. Fisher in "The Passing of Godthaab."

In June 2020 the new U.S. consulate opened in what is now a fast-growing city of 19,000 that is increasingly coming into its own as a center for Arctic issues.

When the international media focus on Greenland, it is generally to give alarming updates on the increasing melt from the only permanent ice sheet outside Antarctica, which covers three-quarters of the island. If the ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica continue to melt at their current rates, scientists expect sea levels could rise 3 to 5 inches by the end of this century.

Eavan Cully is the public affairs officer at U.S. Consulate Nuuk. She joined the Foreign Service in 2015 and has also served in Vancouver and Beijing, and in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Millions of lives and livelihoods are in jeopardy as shorelines disappear and island nations sink below sea level. Other changes will occur, as well, as northern shipping routes become more navigable, fish species migrate in search of colder water and more. Greenlanders acknowledge these challenges—and opportunities—and seek a path of sustainable economic growth.

Challenge and Opportunity

Every business, organization and institution on this island, which is an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, is small by American standards. Greenland's only university, Ilisimatusarfik, graduates fewer than 100 students a year; the Greenland branch of the World Wildlife Federation consists of a single person. The government ministers are often double- or triple-hatted: just last year there was a Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education, Culture and Church.

The challenges facing government and entrepreneurs in Greenland are enormous. Distant, small population centers remain unconnected by roads, serviced by costly air and sea travel dependent on the whims of difficult-to-predict weather. Accordingly, providing the domestic market with basic medical services and schools, not to mention fresh food or consumer goods, is a difficult task. While the capital is powered by renewable resources, many communities on the island depend exclusively on diesel generators for electric power.

Greenland's main industry is fishing, which makes up approximately 95 percent of its exports and roughly a third of the island's economy. Reliance on this growing but unpre-

dictable industry makes Greenland potentially vulnerable to international commercial headwinds.

China is now Greenland's largest country market for seafood exports. Beijing's ambitions in the Arctic are unclear, but Chinese companies have stakes in potential large-scale mining projects in Greenland. And just last December, Russia tapped a prominent local businessman—with sizable ties to Greenland's fishing industry—as its first honorary consul in Nuuk.

Other industries, such as tourism and mining, have potential to play a larger part in Greenland's economy, but are still in their nascent stages. Greenland's natural beauty is pristine and rugged in a way that would appeal to well-heeled adventure tourists, but the logistics, time and expense of getting to the island and traveling from one town to another present formidable obstacles. Mineral resource extraction could be another avenue for diversification of the economy, but the harsh Arctic environment coupled with local concerns over environmental impact have so far kept large mining operations at bay.


EAVAN CULLY

The Consulate Nuuk seal after a winter storm.

There are today a dozen honorary consuls in Greenland, all of them local businessmen. They represent the interests of the other Nordic states as well as countries such as France and Latvia and as far away as South Korea. Only the United States and Iceland have formal diplomatic presences on the island, however, with the Icelandic consulate general established in Nuuk in 2013.

Momentum for a Broader Relationship

The military has played an important role in U.S. activities in Greenland for decades. Thule Air Base, our northernmost military installation, has been in operation since the early 1950s. Other former Air Force bases now serve as Greenland's primary airports. According to a declassified Jan. 8, 1946, report to the Secretary of State on wartime activities from Consulate Godthaab, its responsibility at that time was "to act as a liaison capacity between the Greenland administration and the United States military and naval authorities in Greenland."

Since the closing of Consulate Godthaab, the United States has conducted reporting and public diplomacy programming on Greenland from Embassy Copenhagen, including support for visiting American students and scholars to Greenland, which has recently become a popular research and exchange program destination. While this allowed us to keep generally apprised of what was happening here, it made it difficult to form lasting relationships. Many Greenlanders are used to well-intentioned people coming here for visits or for short-term jobs. But without a demonstrable commitment to the island, it is hard to gain the trust necessary for true relationship-building and partnerships.

During the past three years in Washington, Nuuk and Copenhagen momentum grew to broaden U.S.-Greenland ties, including in trade and investment, in education and tourism, and in mineral resources and energy. The mutual desire to create a stronger, healthier, multifaceted relationship helped launch our current consulate. Three officers from Embassy Copenhagen were assigned: Greenland Affairs Officer Sung Choi was named principal officer, and a public diplomacy officer, as well as a development adviser from USAID were soon added to the roster.

Plans for opening the consulate were well underway at the start of 2020, when the pandemic began its course around the world. With so much of the population on the island located in small, remote settlements with limited health care services and providers, it became imperative to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to Greenland. When the consulate opened in June, Sung was the only American diplomat on the island. Instead of a reopening with customary pageantry, the consulate enjoyed an intimate gathering of Greenlandic and Danish guests.

EAVAN CULLY

The U.S. consulate is currently housed at the Joint Arctic Command Office in Nuuk's Back Harbor. (Inset) The former U.S. consulate building in downtown Nuuk.

Carefully bumped elbows replaced handshakes. The U.S. ambassador to Denmark delivered prerecorded remarks, thanking the Danish and Greenlandic governments for their steadfast support. The then-commander of Denmark's Joint Arctic Command, Major General Kim Jørgensen, extended congratulations from the Danish foreign minister, who was unable to travel. "I am happy to welcome the U.S. back to Greenland," Greenland's then–Minister for Foreign Affairs Steen Lynge said in person.

EAVAN CULLY

From left to right: Eavan Cully, USAID Development Adviser David Brown, Office Manager Pernille Kleeman and Consul Sung Choi.

Our First Year

We are almost through our first year in operation, and we are building on the foundations laid by Embassy Copenhagen's in-depth reporting, programming and relationship-building in the years leading up to the opening.

As a PD officer, I've been grateful for Greenland's COVID-19 mitigation and the opportunity it has given us to do in-person outreach. Nuuk was one of the few posts in the world able to hold multiple in-person U.S. election-related events, which were critical to our messaging against disinformation. In keeping with the island's reputation for ruggedness, last November's election watch gathering went ahead despite a winter storm with gusts topping 100 mph.

In southern Greenland, I was able to give a presentation on the U.S. national parks to students studying to be Arctic guides for what Greenland hopes will be a growing (and sustainable) tourism industry. Working with our colleagues in Copenhagen's environment, science, technology and health section, we have begun a series of virtual seminars connecting the U.S. Department of the Interior and its National Park Service to government and tourism stakeholders all across Greenland.

And last fall, we were proud to launch the Arctic Education Alliance, a collaboration between American and Greenlandic education institutions that will help strengthen the next generation of students, workers and entrepreneurs. These continued partnerships demonstrate to Greenlanders that we are committed, and that we are looking to build capacity in areas where they themselves are hoping to grow.

Beyond economic development, we want to also draw on the strong cultural and linguistic bonds that Greenland's majority Inuit community have with those across the North American Arctic. The commonalities—from cultural identity to geography—between Alaska and Greenland underscore that America has a well of understanding as to the opportunities and challenges that define life and development paths in the far north. Before the pandemic, cultural envoys from Alaska helped bridge the gaps between us, hosting workshops on drum dances and musical traditions that connect Inuit cultures across the centuries of migration, colonization and growing autonomy.

Cultural centers around Greenland have not been shy in asking for more opportunities to engage with Alaskan Inuit and other American Indigenous groups. These cultural connections allow us to interact with young Greenlanders, and leave lasting impressions about our shared history and values.

While Greenland is not a low-income country, it is trying to diversify and expand its economy, industries and social systems

in ways compatible with its infrastructure potential and population size. The USAID officer at post, David Brown, has facilitated a landscape analysis of the island's capacity for growth, providing a baseline from which future projects can be planned and evaluated. Focusing on the potential for tourism development in Greenland, USAID has been engaging with stakeholders in the private sector and with government agencies across multiple municipalities, looking for opportunities for investment in areas where Greenland could expand domestic employment and education.

EAVAN CULLY

Visitors explore an ice sheet near Kangerlussuaq, Greenland.

Building Trust and Friendship

The consulate secured temporary office space within the Danish Joint Arctic Command headquarters in Nuuk until our dedicated space in the center of the city can be developed. Local staff hiring has been sluggish, but we have an office manager who is a miracle of productivity and efficiency. We continue to work closely with U.S. Embassy Copenhagen on reporting, programs and events as we work out the nuts and bolts of diplomatic life in Greenland—from working with government ministries to set up the mechanics for academic exchanges to finding ways to receive and deliver diplomatic mail.

When Consul Wayne Fisher closed the first U.S. consulate in Greenland in 1953, he lamented: "It was with some emotion that I had to take down the insignia over the entrance and lower the flag for the last time. Not only because of my personal feelings of regret at having to haul Old Glory down in this remote land, but because it had come to mean so much to the Greenlanders as a symbol of American friendship for and interest in them."

HILLARY LEBAIL

A view of Nuuk in October 2020.

On June 10, 2020, at the consulate opening, Principal Officer Sung Choi said: "This is truly a special occasion for us in the U.S. government as we are reopening our presence in Nuuk for the first time since 1953. … We are back with a committed diplomatic presence that serves to strengthen ties with all of Greenland's communities."

At noon, Sung hoisted the American flag once more in Greenland, and cabled out that we had begun official operations. While the flag has frozen to the pole a few times since then, we are proud to have it flying again as a testament to the deepening U.S. relationship with Greenland, and the entire Kingdom of Denmark.

Toward a Sustainable Arctic

Iceland has worked to address priority challenges—economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection—during its chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

BY EINAR GUNNARSSON

Iceland has chaired the Arctic Council for the past two years and is preparing to hand over the gavel to Russia at a ministerial meeting in Reykjavík this month. During our chairmanship, we wanted to call attention to the core mission of the Arctic Council since the signing of the Ottawa Declaration in 1996: Sustainable development and the importance of balancing its three pillars—economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. In a rapidly changing world, we see the value of remembering and reflecting on our starting point.

With that in mind, we chose sustainability as the overarching theme of our two-year term, and "Together Toward a Sustainable Arctic" as the title for our chairmanship program.

Einar Gunnarsson, chair of the Arctic Council's Senior Arctic Officials from 2019 to 2021, joined the Icelandic Foreign Service in 1996. Over the course of his 25-year diplomatic career, Ambassador Gunnarsson has served as Permanent Secretary of State of the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009-2014) and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York City (2015-2018), among many other assignments.

The Heat Is On

Those of us in the Arctic already feel the effects of climate change, and appreciate that it is a real global threat, growing at an unprecedented scale. As such, it calls for worldwide mitigation actions. Even if the best-case scenario plays out, with a fully implemented Paris Agreement, we can still expect to see temperatures rise in the Arctic region by at least 3 to 5 degrees Celsius by the middle of the century, with unforeseen negative consequences.

It is therefore crystal-clear that we need stronger global action and cooperation to reduce emissions, along with increased adaptation efforts, to deal with the drastic impact climate change is already having on our region.

To help us in this battle, we must strike a balance among economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These three pillars of sustainable development are also clearly reflected in Iceland's four chairmanship priorities: the Arctic marine environment, climate and green energy solutions, the people and communities of the Arctic and, last but not least, a stronger Arctic Council. We believe that these four areas serve to highlight some of the most pressing issues facing the Circumpolar North today.

The Big Blue

Oceans cover a large portion of the Arctic, and a vast majority of Arctic communities are shore-based but owe their livelihoods to ocean-based activities. The Arctic states therefore have a duty and responsibility to safeguard the Arctic Ocean, which the council's working groups have significantly advanced through increased scientific knowledge and understanding of the marine environment. This focus on oceanic matters and the Arctic marine environment is one of the links between Iceland and the United States, as shown by the fact that the United States concentrated on the same two issues during its own chairmanship (2015-2017).

Iceland has built on the work accomplished then; inter alia, the Arctic Council has launched a new platform for discussing Arctic marine-related topics: the Senior Arctic Officials Marine Mechanism. We hope that the SMM will become an annual gathering of marine leaders and experts under the auspices of the council, contributing to informing senior Arctic officials' work and enhancing circumpolar cooperation on the Arctic marine environment.

Even though our focus has been, and will remain, the emerging and ongoing challenges climate change presents, there are opportunities to be found, as well. The melting sea ice is gradually opening up new sea routes, giving better access to natural resources and prompting an increase in Arctic tourism. We already have regular sea routes between Iceland and four U.S. ports; one of those, Portland, Maine, is sometimes called the United States' eastern gateway to the Arctic.

In 2014 the government of Iceland and the state of Maine signed a memorandum of understanding outlining a desire to increase cooperation in business development, transport, logistics and culture. It also called for further cooperation on such Arctic-related issues as environmental security and search-and-rescue operations. Evidently, there is real potential to build sustainable business opportunities in the Arctic, and for Iceland and the United States to strengthen our cooperation by building on these opportunities together.

The New England Ocean Cluster in Portland, inspired by the Icelandic Ocean Cluster in Reykjavík, is a good example of an innovative "blue economy" consulting project creating new opportunities for cooperation. The aim of the "Ocean Cluster" groups is to connect people within the ocean economy, and to encourage an innovative and sustainable approach to realizing economic opportunities. The "ocean cluster" concept has a direct link to work in the "blue bioeconomy" area, which focuses on the use and conversion of living aquatic resources into a wide variety of products and services such as food, feed, biobased materials and bioenergy.

In Iceland, we have seen successful companies born out of this methodology. One of them has even developed a method for extracting enzymes from fish skin that is revolutionizing the treatment of chronic wounds.

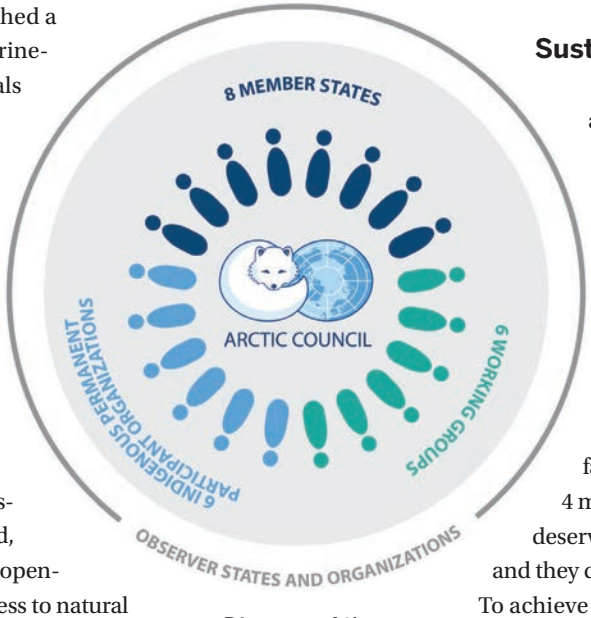


Diagram of the structure of the Arctic Council.

Sustaining Sustainability

For the past quarter-century, sustainable development has been at the heart of our collaboration in the Arctic Council and its six working groups, where scientific data, traditional knowledge and local knowledge are used to balance and build a foundation for assessment and policy recommendations to benefit communities in the Arctic. We are very conscious of the fact that the region is home to roughly 4 million people. Arctic inhabitants deserve a prosperous, sustainable future; and they deserve a say in shaping it.

To achieve that, our chairmanship of the Arctic Council has focused on inclusive cooperation with its observers, as well as among the Arctic states and their Indigenous peoples' councils, which are permanent participants. We are very pleased with the increasing emphasis on youth engagement demonstrated by the Arctic states and led by the permanent participants. At the ripe "old" age of 25, it is only fitting for the Arctic Council to celebrate its anniversary by exploring ways to engage youth in its work. Young people have a vested interest in the future of their planet, and their voices and perspectives need to be heard if we are to keep moving forward.

Adversity and Resilience

Along with sustainability, the resilience of Arctic communities and their capacity to recover and restore themselves after

ARCTIC COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

Even though our focus has been, and will remain, the emerging and ongoing challenges climate change presents, there are opportunities to be found, as well.

different kinds of crises and changes in their environment are both of huge importance in a rapidly changing climate. In 2017, at the end of the last U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the foreign ministers established an Arctic Resilience Action Framework to organize regional resilience actions in such areas as, for example, management of Arctic wetlands and integration of isolated power systems.

COURTESY OF EINAR GUNNARSSON

Senior Arctic Officials of the Arctic Council meeting in Reykjanesbær, Iceland, in June 2019.

During Iceland's chairmanship, we have endeavored to keep this light shining. We hosted the second biannual Arctic Resilience Forum as a webinar series, co-organized by the Sustainable Development Working Group and the Arctic Initiative at the Harvard University Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, where participants discussed their resilience-related work.

The ability to withstand adversity and bounce back relates as strongly to COVID-19 in the Arctic as to the effects of climate change; the importance of increased resilience for ourselves and future generations cannot be overstated. The raging pandemic has brought the world more or less to a halt for the past year, forcing us to rethink, reevaluate and collaborate in new and innovative ways. The Arctic Council has, in fact, demonstrated great resilience and endurance in the face of these extraordinary circumstances with an even greater degree of close cooperation—despite not being able to meet in person, and despite coping with insufficient bandwidth and connectivity in some cases.

COVID-19 and the Arctic

Last spring the Arctic Council prepared and published a briefing document on the pandemic's effects in the Arctic. The main findings explained how the virus may pose an increased risk to Arctic communities because of existing vulnerabilities and challenges in the area. However, it also pointed out how some of the strong characteristics of Arctic peoples and societies may help us get through the pandemic. After all, Arctic inhabitants have already had to adapt to harsh living conditions, isolation and a rapidly changing environment.

The pandemic has highlighted the lack of infrastructure in some Arctic communities and the fragility of supply chains, where food security is already being affected by receding sea ice, especially in the Indigenous communities in the region. Even though these are hard-hitting truths, we must also look at the opportunities these changes bring about; like it or not, this is our future, and we must adapt to survive. Therefore, it is important for the 4 million inhabitants of the Arctic region to hold on to our flexibility and adaptability, while keeping the principles of sustainability and continued peace and security in the Arctic close to heart.

Security in the Arctic

The Ottawa Declaration that established the Arctic Council explicitly excludes military security from the council's scope, and rightly so. By focusing on the three pillars of sustainable development and cooperation among the eight Arctic states and the six Indigenous permanent participants, and by steering away from troubled waters elsewhere in the world, the Arctic Council has contributed significantly to maintaining stability in the Arctic region.

But the geostrategic importance of the council's work must

not be ignored or underestimated. Coexisting peacefully and maintaining the Arctic as an area of low tension serve all members of the Arctic Council. It is in Russia's interest, just as much as it is for the United States, Iceland and the other member-states. It may sound like a contradiction, yet arguably, not talking about military security in the Arctic Council contributes to maintaining Arctic security.

The pandemic has highlighted the lack of infrastructure in some Arctic communities and the fragility of supply chains.

Toward a Sustainable Arctic

As our chairmanship draws to a close, we can look back and see that it was a particularly difficult time to lead the Arctic Council. But as noted before, despite its challenges, the pandemic has also brought about new opportunities for collaboration. True, we have, unfortunately, had to cancel or postpone several events and mold others to fit an online format. In addition, some of our chairmanship projects have had to be delayed due to the pandemic and will hopefully be completed under the incoming chairmanship. But most of them are on track, which is a success in itself, considering the circumstances of the past year.

It is now more important than ever that we nurture the already good relationships and collaborations that we enjoy in the Arctic Council. For it is only by strengthening our foundation, with both traditional and scientific knowledge, national policymaking and global cooperation, that we can address the challenges that face us in the region today and, together, ensure a more sustainable Arctic for future generations. ■

Arctic Exceptionalism

Can the Arctic's unique distinction as a zone of peace be maintained? "The Arctic Senator" explains what it will take.

BY LISA MURKOWSKI

A battle-ready flotilla of 50 warships and 40 military aircraft cruised across the North Pacific. In its path was a small fleet of American fishermen. When the flotilla's course encroached on the U.S. fishing grounds, the flotilla aggressively directed the fishing fleet to leave the area. The fishermen, a resilient and experienced group—the "seen it all" type—were understandably shocked. Seeing no choice, they quickly fled the scene. After all, what could an unarmed collection of fishermen do in the face of such a force? When the prop mist settled, the fishermen were left wondering what they had just confronted. One even pondered whether America was being invaded.

This incident is not an anecdote from Pearl Harbor or the Aleutian Campaign. It was a Russian military operation that took place this past August in the Bering Sea. It was the largest assemblage of military resources in the region since the Cold War and included nuclear submarines equipped with cruise missiles, warships, advanced fighter jets and strategic bombers. The exercise, known as Ocean Shield, did not cause any physical harm, but this should not obscure its threat. Ocean Shield forced a U.S. Bering Sea fishing fleet to run from their fishing grounds even though they were legally operating inside the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The involuntary withdrawal cost the fishermen millions of dollars and also put a fissure in the armor of "Arctic exceptionalism"—the decades-old norm by which the Arctic has remained a zone of peace.

Arctic exceptionalism has long been the normative concept that prescribes the Arctic as a unique region with a set of unwritten rules, beliefs and history that has given it a level of immunity

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) is the first Alaska-born senator and the state's senior senator. Sen. Murkowski is the U.S. Representative to the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region and co-chair of the Senate Arctic Caucus. She is considered the leading expert among her congressional colleagues on Arctic issues and is dedicated to helping America develop its role as an Arctic nation.

KARINA BORGER

Senator Lisa Murkowski in Svalbard, Norway, during a May 2019 international Arctic congressional delegation that she led. The focus of the trip was to develop a better understanding of the region, further the U.S. relationship with the other Arctic nations, and visit with American troops in the Far North.

to many of the world's geopolitical problems. Arctic states, stakeholders and citizens exist and operate in the region and with each other largely without conflict. Arctic exceptionalism has held firm since the end of the Cold War, but in the face of today's environmental changes, it is being challenged.

With the opening of new sea routes and easier access to oil, gas and critical minerals, a "new Arctic" is forming. Many countries, including the United States, are turning to their militaries and antagonistic rhetoric to safeguard their interests in the region and make their intentions known—and this is leading many people to now question if the Arctic can, in fact, remain exceptional.

An Exceptional Challenge

The Arctic can and must remain exceptional, but ensuring that it does will be a challenge. It will require the U.S. Congress to pay greater attention to the region. It will require our executive branch, along with businesses and corporations, to invest in infrastructure and expand connectivity. It will require us to maintain our energy independence and reverse growing mineral dependence from countries such as China. And it will require us to exercise serious and dedicated Arctic diplomacy—a capacity we will have to create.

The U.S. Foreign Service is the first line of America's national security apparatus. Despite a budget that is no more than 3 to 5 percent the size of our defense budget, it is the State Department that is expected to set the course for our national interests abroad, to have the tough conversations, to try to find common ground. Yet in recent years it's been the military, sometimes out of necessity and sometimes by mistake, that has assumed that role. As the late George Shultz recently wrote in this very journal, "Reliance on military threats, with little or no effort at diplomacy, is the most prominent feature of our relations with nations that we associate with anti-American sentiments and actions." We cannot let this trend continue in the Arctic.

Every one of our military service branches has published a new Arctic strategy in the last 18 months. U.S. military operations in the High North have increased in size, scale and frequency. In Congress, I have sponsored and supported legislation to aid these strategies and operations. And I have commended the Defense Department for its renewed focus on the Arctic. Make no mistake, we need an Arctic-capable military, just as we need and expect our military to effectively operate in all regions—deserts, jungles, mountains and cities. Diplomacy works best with the backing of a strong military.

The military, however, cannot be the first tool of diplomacy, especially in the Arctic, where peace has been and *still is* the

It will require us to exercise serious and dedicated Arctic diplomacy—a capacity we will have to create.

norm. As we build an Arctic-capable military, should we not also build an Arctic-capable diplomatic corps?

Needed: Arctic-Capable Diplomats

The United States is one of the only Arctic countries without an Arctic ambassador—a diplomatic post that even many *non-Arctic* countries have. The Arctic is not represented at the assistant secretary of State level inside the State Department, as most global regions are, but is instead represented within the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, which has done an admirable job.

It was only in 2014 that we gained a "Special Representative for the Arctic," appointed by President Barack Obama. This position was eliminated in 2017 only to be replaced by President Donald Trump in 2020 with the "Coordinator for the Arctic Region." Establishing the special representative position and then the coordinator position was important for America's Arctic advocates. That good progress continued when the consulate in Nuuk, Greenland, reopened this past summer—a positive step toward expanding our diplomatic presence in and commitment to the Arctic region.

To many countries outside the United States, though, those actions were emblematic of our government's historic neglect of the region. They highlighted the slow and uncertain path of establishing robust and consistent American diplomatic Arctic leadership. And they did little to disprove our often-wavering commitment and piecemeal approach. Moreover, these diplomatic moves are still overshadowed by the suggestion of securitizing the Arctic rather than seeking common ground.

In 2019 I attended the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Finland, where then–Secretary of State Mike Pompeo suggested it was time to bring security issues into the multilateral Arctic discussion. There is merit to this suggestion, because we cannot ignore that the region is becoming increasingly militarized, regardless of what we may hope or desire. However, security issues should remain off the Arctic Council's agenda. There are appropriate platforms to discuss Arctic defense—the Munich Security Conference's Arctic Security Round Table being one. Bringing back the Chiefs of Arctic Defense meeting is another.

It wasn't the remark about security by our chief diplomat that stayed with me, however. Instead, it was when he felt the need to rebuke China for its assertion of being a "near-Arctic state." Let me be perfectly clear: China is not an Arctic state, and declaring itself a near-Arctic state, as Mr. Pompeo correctly stated, "entitles them to exactly nothing." But the very fact that our top diplomat needed to dissuade a non-Arctic country from being interested in the Arctic said less about China's interest in the region than it did about how he viewed our own nation's ability to diplomatically safeguard our own interests in that region.

Ready or not, Arctic and non-Arctic countries are coming to the Arctic, and both Arctic and non-Arctic countries know the region's resources play a vital role in their futures. Russian President Vladimir Putin believes upward of $30 trillion of wealth exists in the region. Chinese President Xi Jinping sees benefit from Russia's oil and gas, fuel that is shipped from Russia's Kola Peninsula along the Northern Sea Route, through the Bering Sea, to the Chinese coast—coming to within a stone's throw of the United States along the way. There is no question as to why the Russian military had such a large presence in the Bering Sea last summer, nor any wonder why China calls itself "near-Arctic."

Expanding America's Arctic Leadership

If we are meeting China and Russia at the negotiating table, then the Arctic—the region itself, what it represents and what it entails—is a front-and-center issue, not some far-off place. The United States must treat it that way. This means having Arctic-literate diplomats and statesmen, not just Arctic soldiers and sailors. To this end, I tirelessly advocate for establishing Arctic leadership and expect the current and subsequent administrations to build on what previous administrations have started. I have directly asked President Joe Biden to consider expanding America's Arctic leadership across the executive branch, within both the State and Defense Departments, on the National Security Council and beyond.

I have asked that the Arctic Executive Steering Committee be reestablished, with additional seats for Alaska Native leadership. I recommended that a senior adviser for the Arctic report to the president's special envoy for climate—because one cannot craft and execute actionable climate policy without considering the Arctic, and one cannot address the broad and interrelated aspects of climate without addressing the realities of resource extraction. And I have also asked the new administration to quickly appoint the first executive director of the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies, a congressionally authorized

and funded regional studies center I helped secure through legislation that promotes security cooperation in the Arctic.

I have confidence and trust in our State Department leaders to effectively represent America's interest and values abroad. As the late Senator John McCain said: "Our values are our strength and greatest treasure. We are distinguished from other countries because we are not made from a land or tribe or particular race or creed, but from an ideal that liberty is the inalienable right of mankind and in accord with nature and nature's Creator." I ask that our current diplomatic leaders and Foreign Service and Civil Service officers recommit to representing our national values in the Arctic while also representing the values of a proud and true Arctic nation to the rest of the world.

The United States must be prepared to shape the contours of a future Arctic that takes into account the equities of all Arctic peoples and reflects the norms, values and interests of the United States and like-minded nations. And when our ideals differ from those of other nations, we must deflect the urge to immediately call on our tanks and troops. We must diplomatically engage in the Arctic in the same way our diplomats do so well across the rest of the world. I believe that in doing this, our diplomats will uncover the ideas and meet the people who truly make the Arctic exceptional, which in turn will allow the Arctic to remain a place of harmony and collaboration.

> Ready or not, Arctic and non-Arctic countries are coming to the Arctic, and both Arctic and non-Arctic countries know the region's resources play a vital role in their futures.

The Arctic can continue to be a place of peace *if* we only try. ■

FEATURE

Raqqa's Inferno
A Diplomat Reads Dante in Syria

ALL PHOTOS–WILLIAM ROEBUCK

For this FSO, Dante's imagery in *The Inferno* seemed to capture the depth of suffering and destruction he saw.

BY WILLIAM ROEBUCK

In June 2020, I wrapped up two and a half years of service as the senior U.S. diplomat on the ground in northeastern Syria. It was a terribly frustrating but also enriching experience. Frustrating, and saddening, because the Syrian conflict, with its bloodshed, destruction and human suffering, seemed immune to all our efforts to find a diplomatic solution.

Enriching because, among other reasons, I worked closely with the leadership of a talented local partner, the Syrian Democratic Forces, in the difficult but ultimately successful fight the U.S.-led coalition waged against ISIS. I was present in March 2019 at the Omar Oil Compound in Deir al-Zour when they declared the liberation of northeastern Syria from ISIS

William Roebuck retired from the Foreign Service in November 2020. During a 28-year diplomatic career, he served as U.S. ambassador to Bahrain and completed postings in Jerusalem, Baghdad and Tripoli; he also did political reporting in Gaza while posted in Tel Aviv. Ambassador Roebuck received the State Department Award for Heroism for his work in Syria.

Driving through Raqqa in late February 2018 was to witness a "great wasteland" of destruction.

control. It was also my privilege to work closely in the field with U.S. Special Forces, with whom I was embedded, during my long sojourns in Syria beginning in early 2018.

Warned before my first deployment about the remote location and sketchy Wi-Fi, I understood that the experience represented an opportunity—in off-duty hours—to put some deep notches in the reading belt. I looked forward to knocking out a few books I had long eyed warily but slunk away from. Perhaps that explains how I ended up with Dante in my carry-on as I headed out on that first trip to Syria. I had begun *The Inferno* (Robert Pinsky's relatively recent translation) before finishing my service as ambassador in Bahrain in late 2017, and hadn't gotten far.

But when I rode into the largely destroyed city of Raqqa for the first time, in late February 2018, just a few months after the four-month military campaign had liberated it from ISIS, I had a jolt of recognition. I was seeing a vision of Dante's hell before my eyes.

A "Great Wasteland" of Destruction

In a line of armored jeeps accompanying a few visiting senior U.S. officials and escorted by both U.S. Special Forces and elements of our SDF counter-ISIS partners, we entered the city from the northwest. It was a cloudy, cold morning, with a bit of fog drifting through the streets. I had never seen anything like it—blocks and blocks where every single building had been hit. It reminded me of World War II photographs of the destruction of Dresden. Roofs were knocked off, some hanging like a lean-to down to the ground, against floors pancaked into crashing vectors of destruction. Slabs of concrete jutted out at wrong angles, like fractured limbs broken beyond what any cast would ever repair. More concrete hung from blasted ceilings, dangling in a mesh of wrinkled steel rebar like large insects caught in some horrific, oversized spider web.

Here and there, spray-painted, quasi-official graffiti notations were visible, in Arabic and sometimes English: "Clear," meaning the building had been cleared of ISIS-planted mines or improvised explosive devices by one of the U.S.- or internationally funded nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) doing critically important, and dangerous, demining work. (At war's end, Raqqa had the distinction of being one of the most heavily mined little corners of the globe.) At other points along the route, once-ominous ISIS graffiti were visible—Arabic voices from the grave,

In Raqqa there were blocks and blocks where every single building had been hit, roofs knocked off, floors pancaked into crashing vectors of destruction.

so to speak, still declaiming the wonders of the Islamic State or cryptically insisting "We remain."

The destruction went on as far as one could see. (A subsequent helicopter ride over the city revealed that the blocks accumulated into square miles of devastation. Assessments by the Reconstruction Committee of the Raqqa Civil Council, the local post-liberation governing body for the city, estimated that 30,000 to 40,000 homes—65 percent of the total in the city—and an equivalent or greater number of nonresidential buildings had been leveled or damaged beyond repair.)

To my eye the destruction was fantastical, where old structures melted away or were staved in beyond recognition, frozen in contortions of havoc. A giant cell tower near the town square, struck by coalition bombing, was bent in half, like a monstrous praying mantis. Some scenes were reminders of the evil that ISIS had visited on the city: The front of the amphitheater, for example, was adorned with rows of unused mass graves ISIS had dug to intimidate residents with some "you next" iconography. There, and at Naim Traffic Circle (where ISIS declared Raqqa the capital of the caliphate in 2014), group executions had been common.

Even in the most desolate parts of the city, there were a few people around—some working to clear rubble in front of what seemed to have been their shops or dwellings, others trying to tear down the most thoroughly wrecked parts of structures they hoped to save. A man with a jackhammer, alone on the heavily damaged roof of a three-story building and clearly heedless of any personal safety issue, pounded away at outsized slabs of upended concrete.

With a mix of brutal realism and a clear lack of familiarity with how fiercely locals would remain attached to their little piece of Raqqa, no matter how destroyed, someone in my car suggested it would be easier to rope off the catastrophically destroyed city and build a new one nearby. I thought about the guy with the jackhammer, silhouetted in the early afternoon sun, pounding away in a gesture consisting of equal part futility and defiance, and understood that would never happen.

Near some of the most destroyed structures, scrappy Raqqawi entrepreneurs had gathered mangled steel rebar in large squiggly hairballs. They were using technology that seemed faintly medieval to straighten the rebar into long spaghetti strands they could resell. Others weren't as industrious; they just sat outdoors on decrepit furniture they had apparently dragged out of their homes or buildings. They drank tea, smoked cigarettes and just hung out, stuck in some postapocalyptic scene that blended ordinary, urban Arab domesticity with horrific devastation.

Each seemed to be saying with his body language, "I'm back, remaking this place into my place, one broken piece of furniture or cracked brick at the time, if necessary." Women in black abayas, partially or fully veiled, with hands often gloved in black as well, hurried past, with a child or two accompanying in varying degrees of compliance. The older, unaccompanied children we saw were invariably friendly, smiling and flashing V for victory signs. But the adults, mostly men, seemed sullen and reserved.

In less destroyed parts of the city, neighborhoods like Mishlab or Jezra on the outskirts, there were more signs of coming back to life: workers sweeping dirt and rubble out of their shops and garages, recently refurbished bakeries selling bread—a key staple in Syria—to long lines of people, kids zipping in and out of traffic on rickety bicycles, welding shops firing off sparks, and stands selling drinking water, while drinking-water delivery trucks circulated nearby, sloshing with contents recently pumped out of the Euphrates or more sketchy canals the river fed.

Eventually, as the returning population swelled past 150,000 during 2018, running water was restored to most of the city, and its recovery moved forward slowly, as schools, businesses and health clinics progressively reopened. The Department of State's Syria Assistance Transition Response Team, known as START Forward, coordinated the U.S. government's stabilization assistance program aimed at restoring essential services in northeastern Syrian locales like Raqqa, working closely with NGOs and local implementers.

Listen and Learn

After that first ride through Raqqa, back in my CHU (containerized housing unit) at the makeshift U.S. military outpost on the ramshackle grounds of an abandoned cement factory a couple hours' drive from Raqqa, I reflected on what I'd seen. I reviewed Canto XXV of *The Inferno*, which describes a series of horrible transformations that characters undergo: two heads merging into one, serpents growing feet, the hind paws of a creature merging to form the "member that man conceals." Dante's intense, bizarre, even grotesque imagery seemed to my mind to capture the depth of suffering and destruction in Syria.

The sense of sorrow was overwhelming. As Dante traversed the circles of his *Inferno*, he notes repeatedly that "pity overwhelmed" him. He speaks of being "half lost in its coils" and of being unable to speak because of the pity he felt, despite regular moments of stern judgment (consistent with the work's context in 14th-century battles over papal authority). One could hear similar tones of judgment, though of very different origin, in Raqqa. Someone, often not originally from the city, would invariably insist, for example, that some Raqqa notable, or swaths of the community, had at one time pledged allegiance to ISIS, with the usually unspoken implication that the city's suffering was, on some level, not completely undeserved.

Throughout his journey, Dante emphasizes the importance of listening to people, seeing their suffering and listening to their tales of woe, no matter how difficult it is to remain on that "deep and savage road" of sustained empathy. At one point his guide, Virgil, urges him to "speak directly" with the suffering soul they encounter and "hear from him about himself." Each time I visited Raqqa over the next two years, I tried to listen carefully—to the complaints from locals about the slow pace of recovery, the perceived small scale of assistance in comparison with the huge scale of destruction, and to residents' usually surreptitious complaints about what

Only 30 percent of the electrical grid in the city is currently operational, with the vast majority of residents still relying on generators.

they viewed as heavy-handed, intrusive Kurdish political influence and security presence in the overwhelmingly Arab city—influence that had come in during the fight against ISIS and stayed.

Sometimes I did not understand precisely what people were trying to tell me. One afternoon in front of a severely damaged school building, a man asked defiantly why I was there, indicating that the visit of a U.S. diplomat was not helpful. "Who did this?" he said, pointing to the destruction all around. "Who will fix it?" He mentioned the importance of respect; the citizens of Raqqa were experiencing its opposite, he opined, given what he viewed as a stingy international response in the face of so much destruction.

He spoke warily, eyeing the Kurdish security escorts accompanying our group whom he viewed as outsiders bent on preventing critical views from being heard. I struggled with my rusty Arabic to pry out more meaning from his enigmatic and disjointed, but piercing observations. Recalling the conversation later, I thought of Dante, who describes becoming "like those who, feeling laughed at, hesitate / Not comprehending what's been said to them / And helpless to reply."

Just as Dante leaned on Virgil, I relied on trusted guides to lead me through Raqqa's inferno. They included a small number of talented Foreign Service officers and members of that START Forward team, as well as the U.S. military's civil affairs teams, who also focused on restoring basic services such as repairing water pumping stations and small bridges, and cleaning out irrigation canals. My guides in the city also included dedicated local officials and first responders, often affiliated with the Raqqa Civil Council or the municipality. They described in detail—and took me on inspection tours of the city to show me—the overwhelming levels of destruction and make clear the massive assistance needed to rebuild the shattered city.

I talked to many others, as well, like the local attorney who knew the ancient history of Raqqa and guided me over its long-forgotten (and abbreviated) heyday as a capital of the storied ninth-century Abbasid Caliphate and the city's lineage centuries later as an Ottoman-era customs post. His historical references to Islam reminded me of Dante's recognition of the great contributions of Muslim philosophers like Avicenna and Averroes, and brought to mind scholarly commentary making the case that the Prophet Mohammed's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem represented possible source material for Dante's great allegory.

One of my most faithful and talented guides did not himself escape the inferno. Raqqa Civil Council adviser Omar Alloush led me through the political maze that constituted Arab-Kurdish relations and shared the backstories behind the effort to help Raqqa recover and rebuild. A Kurd who played a critical role in the effort to stand up local governance and improve the sometimes thorny relations between Arab and Kurdish communities in northeastern Syria, he was killed in his nearby hometown of Tel Abayad in October 2018 by unknown assailants.

Hope and Fear

Since late 2017 when ISIS was driven out of the city, Raqqa has struggled with limited international assistance flows. This is the result, in part, of the obstructionist Syrian regime, whose toxic presence in Damascus dried up prospects for larger-scale reconstruction assistance (for which stabilization assistance typically prepares the way) and, frankly, by inadequate funding for stabilization assistance from donor countries, including from the United States.

After President Donald Trump, irritated that coalition partners were not contributing more to this effort, froze $200 million in U.S. government stabilization assistance in 2018, partners stepped up with funding to support the U.S. programs; but by mid-2019, that burden-sharing effort lost steam. And as of the fall of 2020, most stabilization programming for Raqqa, like the rest of northeast Syria, faced a cascading series of shutdowns as funding streams dried up. (Funding for humanitarian assistance, focused on the desperately poor and vulnerable in refugee and displaced persons' camps, meanwhile, has been more robust, with the U.S. leading the way.)

As of this writing, a third of 40-some schools in the city have been refurbished to rudimentary levels and are operational. Most of the hospitals in the city are operational at varying levels. But only 30 percent of the electrical grid in the city is currently operational, with the vast majority of residents still relying on generators. And while close to 80 percent of Raqqa province relies on agriculture, the pumping stations, irrigation canals, grain silos and the rest of the farming infrastructure remain severely damaged.

On visits to the city in 2018 and 2019, I noted particularly the remains of the two bridges across the once-majestic Euphrates, now shrunk by persistent drought and upriver Turkish damming

(Right) William Roebuck, at center with microphones, and tribal sheikhs in Busayrah, Deir al-Zour province, in August 2018, during a visit to hear local views and ensure continued cooperation in the fight against ISIS in northeastern Syria.

projects completed over past decades. Coalition forces bent on cutting off ISIS forces in the city from reinforcements or escape routes had systematically targeted them with airstrikes. Destruction of the bridges cut Raqqa off from its northern and western provincial hinterlands, the agricultural engine on which the city's economy depends.

Like characters in Dante's *Inferno*, who board ferries across the river Styx, residents of Raqqa have had to make their way across the river amid a disorderly fleet of dhows, fishing boats and other barely river-worthy craft, spewing diesel fumes and ferrying residents and visitors into and out of the city. The wrecked bridges are also emblematic of the isolation that Raqqa citizens articulated, a feeling of being cut off from an international community that willfully ignored the city's destruction and need for greater help with rebuilding.

(Left) The author with U.S. military, on a visit in the Deir al-Zour area in 2019.

Mixed in with concerns about isolation, Raqqa's predominantly Arab citizens also articulated a range of fears about their future. Despite the complaints about Kurdish influence and a heavy-handed SDF security presence, they expressed fear that Kurdish-dominated SDF would abandon them prematurely, because the Kurds sought a "separate peace" with the Syrian regime to lock in autonomy for the Kurdish heartland farther east. (This has not happened; SDF commander General Mazloum Abdi, a Kurd, has made clear his intention to continue providing security to these Arab areas.)

While sometimes blaming the U.S. for destroying their city and refusing to help rebuild it, most I spoke with nonetheless expressed satisfaction with the continuing U.S. military presence in the northeast and voiced fears about the U.S. not staying the course. The Syrian regime's propaganda remained aggressive. Some residents, confronting what they viewed as the unavoidable prospect of an eventual American withdrawal from the region, contemplated the painful choice—as they articulated it—between a future dominated by the Syrian regime or Turkey.

Like Dante's interlocutors, who urged him to bear witness to their suffering, many I spoke with asked that their fears—and resentments—be communicated to Washington. Those fears were exacerbated in October 2019 when, in the wake of Turkey's Operation Peace Spring military action, U.S. military forces withdrew from Raqqa and the rest of the western half of northeastern Syria. To date, the SDF has maintained its presence in these areas and pushed back against Russian and Syrian regime efforts to assert control of the areas from which the U.S. withdrew.

Finding the Words

As I struggled to articulate for Washington the cluster of fears, resentments and contradictions and half-contradictions I had heard about the future of Raqqa, I thought of Dante's concern that he would not "find words … [or the] harsh and grating rhymes to befit that melancholy" place. In his 14th-century poetic vernacular, Dante underscored the need for objective, fact-based reporting: "May the muses help my verse … so that word not diverge from fact, as it takes its course." He and Virgil emphasized the importance of experience, of seeing the world as it is, not distorted by preconceptions. Dante also understood the power of narrative;

It wasn't only the contradictions and ambiguities that made capturing Raqqa's story challenging. As in Dante's *Inferno*, there was an obscure palette of history and politics in the background.

Students in class at a refurbished school in Raqqa in 2018.

he urged the people he met, in their "punished state," to speak to him—"So that your memory in men's minds … won't fade."

It wasn't only the contradictions and ambiguities that made capturing Raqqa's story challenging. As in *The Inferno*, there was an obscure palette of history and politics in the background. The Syrian backdrop is no less complex—whether it is the fractious, hard-to-follow histories of this or that militant group opposing the Assad regime but also expending tremendous energy killing its jihadi rivals, when not collaborating with them, as they all fought for influence after the defeat of ISIS's physical caliphate; or whether it's the sometimes equally hard-to-follow diplomatic clashes—in Damascus, Geneva, Washington or Astana—as we, the United Nations, Russia, Turkey and others struggled over how to end the civil war and start the real conversation on the future of Syria.

Always my thoughts returned to that tough, determined citizen of Raqqa, up three stories on his fractured roof, blasting away with his jackhammer at debris that only high explosives and a wrecking ball could adequately address. He would do whatever he could to reclaim his home. I also thought of Dante's 14th-century world, long gone except in a literary universe that we access with a combination of patience, suspension of disbelief, and appreciation for language and story—not unlike the effort a diplomat must make to report with empathy and honesty the devastation he sees and the suffering and concerns he hears about.

The Inferno concludes on an encouraging note of sorts, with Dante and Virgil making a nocturnal climb from the underworld "back up to the shining world … Where we came forth, and once more saw the stars." It reminded me of a nighttime visit I made to Raqqa to gauge atmospherics in the troubled city. Warned ahead of time that Raqqa at night, with its desolate, destroyed neighborhoods and lack of security, took on a more ominous, frightening note, I was surprised to discover a bustle of commercial and social activity in significant parts of the city: young men in a rustic internet café, families sitting on carpets and chatting outside their homes, amid patches of rubble, and a rickety Ferris wheel keeping kids amused in a recently refurbished park.

By the sheer determination of its local inhabitants, Raqqa will continue to recover. But the road ahead, to cite Dante one final time, is likely to be "tangled and rough" at best, given the ongoing conflict in Syria, the meager levels of international assistance and the absence of a single, galvanizing international consensus regarding that nation's future.

A Victory Against McCarthy

The Bohlen Confirmation

Nominated as U.S. ambassador to Moscow by President Eisenhower, Charles E. Bohlen met resistance head-on from Republican senators during the Red Scare.

BY AVIS BOHLEN

When President Dwight D. Eisenhower took office on Jan. 20, 1953, Charles E. (Chip) Bohlen was at the peak of his Foreign Service career. Only George Kennan could rival his reputation as a Soviet expert. After interpreting for President Franklin D. Roosevelt at Tehran and Yalta, he had served with distinction under President Harry Truman, earning a promotion to counselor of the State Department in 1948 and participating actively in all major events of this seminal period, including the Marshall Plan, the Berlin blockade and the creation of NATO. Endowed with good looks, an easy sociability and an irreverent

Avis Bohlen, the daughter of Charles E. Bohlen, is a retired Foreign Service officer. She served as ambassador to Bulgaria (1996-1999) and as assistant secretary for arms control (1999-2002). Other postings include deputy chief of mission in Paris, multiple tours in the European Bureau and service on arms control delegations in Geneva and Vienna. She is currently writing a biography of her father.

A portrait of Charles E. Bohlen, circa 1951.

ULLSTEIN BILD/GETTY

U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Charles Bohlen attended various international conferences, such as the Potsdam conference in Germany in July 1945. Left to right: Soviet leader Josef Stalin, Bohlen (interpreter for President Truman), V.N. Pavlov (interpreter for Stalin), President Harry S Truman, Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko, Press Secretary Charles Ross, Secretary of State James Byrnes and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov.

wit, Bohlen had a wide circle of friends in Washington and was popular with his colleagues and the press alike.

But as a charter member of what the Republican right was calling Truman's "architects of disaster," Bohlen expected little from the new Republican administration. He was surprised, therefore, when John Foster Dulles, the new Secretary of State, informed him on Jan. 23 that the president personally had chosen him to be U.S. ambassador to Moscow. Eisenhower in his memoirs judged Bohlen "one of the ablest foreign policy officers I had ever met." The two men had known each other and played golf together in Paris when Eisenhower was supreme allied commander in Europe and Bohlen was minister in the Paris embassy.

Bohlen would certainly not have been Dulles' first choice, however. Their close association at various international conferences during the early postwar years had bred a mutual antipathy. Put off by Dulles' ponderous, moralizing anti-communism (a favorite phrase of Bohlen and his friends was "dull, duller, Dulles"), Bohlen never hesitated to disagree with him publicly.

He became even more critical when Dulles, shedding any pretense of bipartisanship, became a strident critic of Truman's foreign policy after 1948 to curry favor with the Republican right wing. Dulles, for his part, openly admitted, as State Department security chief Scott McLeod recorded in his diary, that he personally disliked Bohlen for having "repeatedly undercut him" in the past and "did not consider [Bohlen] the type of individual who should be named ambassador to Russia." But of necessity Dulles bowed to the president's wishes.

Though naturally pleased, Bohlen accepted "with misgivings, given the political climate of the times," he recalled. He worried that his long association with the Democrats, and in particular his role at Yalta, would prove a liability for the president, whom he deeply respected. He warned the Secretary that, if asked, he would give the version of what happened at Yalta, "which I knew to be correct and which would by no means tally with [that of] the Republican National Committee." Dulles, slightly taken aback, suggested he downplay his role. Bohlen declined to come across as "the village idiot."

Partisanship and Anti-Communist Hysteria

Bohlen's fears were well founded. The Republicans had returned to power in a poisonous atmosphere of vicious partisanship and anti-communist hysteria. "A miasma of fear and suspicion infected America," Bohlen would write. Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wis.) was at the height of his popularity and power, peddling to an anxious public a welter of false charges about communist spies in government, and enabled by a Republican Party that dared not criticize him. Multiple security investigations during the Truman administration had effectively rooted out any communist agents, but McCarthy's witch hunts would continue unabated under Eisenhower.

In 1953 McLeod, a rabidly anti-communist former Senate

staffer with close personal ties to McCarthy, had been named security chief at the State Department where, according to Dulles' biographer Townsend Hoopes, he zealously pursued suspected "drunkards, homosexuals, incompetents or incompatibles" (real spies being in short supply). In a few short weeks, he fired several hundred Foreign Service officers.

Dulles personally reinforced his message: Assembling his senior officials on the front steps of the State Department in a chill January wind, he told them in "words as cold and raw as the weather," Bohlen recalled, that the new administration expected not just their loyalty but "positive loyalty." Morale in the State Department sank to a new low.

Bohlen's nomination was forwarded to the Senate on Feb. 26, 1953. On March 2, he testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Republican senators—particularly Homer Ferguson of Michigan, whose campaign slogan had been "betrayal at Yalta"—pressed him hard on the wartime conference.

Bohlen held his ground, however, giving detailed, factual answers and refusing to admit wrongdoing. The Yalta agreements had failed, he argued, because the Russians had not lived up to their commitments; moreover, the effort to cooperate with the Russians was a political necessity of wartime. After the hearing was over, Bohlen felt it had gone fairly well and didn't "anticipate trouble."

He was spectacularly wrong. His defense of Yalta, which made headlines the next day, came as an unwelcome surprise to the Republicans; overnight, his nomination became an issue. The big guns of the Republican right—Senators Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, William Knowland of California and, most ominously, Joseph McCarthy—came out in full revolt. Dulles was deluged with demands that the nomination be withdrawn.

Simultaneously, rumors began to circulate that derogatory information about Bohlen's personal life had been found during his FBI background security check (astonishingly, the first of Bohlen's career). Never a strong supporter of Bohlen, Dulles favored withdrawing the nomination. Eisenhower, however, as noted in the State Department's *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, told Dulles firmly in a phone call that "he had not the slightest intention of withdrawing Bohlen's name," and instructed him to pass the message to Senate Majority Leader Robert Taft.

At stake now was not just Bohlen's nomination, but also the president's ability to run his own foreign policy and choose his own appointees. Meanwhile, a quick check with Bohlen's Foreign Service colleagues put to rest any doubts about his moral character. Unsettling matters still further, the death of Joseph Stalin on March 5, 1953, was creating new uncertainty on the international scene and redoubled the urgency of getting Bohlen to Moscow as quickly as possible.

Bohlen, who was then inopportunely quarantined with German measles ("Lucky it wasn't the red variety," he quipped to friends and family), offered to withdraw. Dulles not only assured him of the president's continued support, Bohlen recalled, but for reasons that would soon become clear, Dulles asked Bohlen to promise that "no matter what happened or might be revealed," he would not quit and leave the president in the lurch. Bohlen gave his solemn word.

When, later that same day, Dulles read the summary of the completed FBI background check, he dismissed the personal allegations against Bohlen as "spotty and unsubstantiated" hearsay, according to Hoopes. (To give just one example of the flimsy charges used to destroy careers in the early 1950s: One openly gay source, who claimed to have an infallible sixth sense for spotting "queers," is quoted in Bohlen's FBI file as saying that he "walks, acts and talks like a homosexual" and believed him to be one.)

Quid Pro Quo

On March 18, both Dulles and Bohlen were scheduled to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Dulles told Bohlen it would be better if they rode separately to Capitol Hill and were not photographed together. Bohlen, astonished and offended, wondered whether Dulles would have the guts to stand up to the senators. But, in fact, the Secretary of State gave strong and decisive support to the nomination. In a private meeting, he reassured the Republican senators that nothing in Bohlen's FBI report put into question his loyalty to the United States or his personal character.

Before the full committee, Dulles lauded Bohlen's qualifications and Soviet expertise, and emphasized the urgency of getting him to Moscow in this critical period after Stalin's death. He reassured the doubters that the ambassadorship to Moscow was not a policymaking role. Bohlen then testified again, going over much the same ground, after which the committee voted

A Note on Sources

All quotations from Charles E. Bohlen are from his memoir, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (Norton, 1973), unless otherwise noted. Quotes from Charles Thayer are from his diary or letters, housed in the archives at the Harry S Truman Library and Museum. The material on Dulles can be found in *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* by Townsend Hoopes (Little, Brown, 1973). Quotations from Scott McLeod came from his diary, portions of which are in my possession.

—*A.B.*

EVERETT COLLECTION

President Dwight D. Eisenhower in conversation with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Charles Bohlen, shortly after his confirmation, on April 2, 1953.

15–0 to send the nomination to the full Senate. The following day President Eisenhower gave Bohlen a ringing endorsement in a press conference.

Bohlen's confirmation was henceforth assured, but not without several bumps along the way. Unlike Dulles, after reading Bohlen's FBI file, Scott McLeod had concluded that he was a grave security risk. Miffed at being overruled by Dulles in his Senate testimony, McLeod, according to his diary, went over the Secretary's head to complain to a top White House aide that Bohlen was "the keystone son of a bitch" of the Foreign Service, and the president should know he was a grave security risk.

Dulles and the White House were furious at this act of open insubordination, but after several frantic rounds of consultations, they decided, according to Hoopes, that firing McLeod would cause a "firestorm" on the right and was therefore too dangerous. But then the Dulles-McLeod dispute leaked to the press, leading to further uproar in the Senate.

By this time, McLeod was feeling somewhat abashed at the problems he was creating for the president and promised Dulles he would toe the line and support the president. Like some cloak-and-dagger spy drama, while Dulles publicly denied there was anything derogatory in Bohlen's file, McLeod was spirited secretly out of the State Department with a staff member assigned to keep him out of reach of a subpoena from McCarthy, who was hot on his trail. He was kept overnight in an undisclosed location until he could be transported to his home in New Hampshire.

With the Senate in an uproar over his FBI file, Bohlen now found out why Dulles had extracted his solemn promise not to withdraw "no matter what happened": His brother-in-law Charles Thayer, consul general in Munich, was about to be dismissed from the Foreign Service on the baseless charge—thrice disproven under Truman, but now revived—that he was, in the commonly used parlance, a "homosexual security risk." Bohlen confronted Dulles, who confirmed that this was, indeed, why he had made Bohlen solemnly promise not to resign. Angry and disgusted, Bohlen agonized over whether to withdraw his name. But in the end, he felt bound by his promise to the president.

Cloak and Dagger

By this time, Bohlen's confirmation had become a national cause célèbre, with daily, largely favorable, press coverage and letters of support from all over. The final Senate debate on March 23, with the FBI file now a central issue, was "long, angry, sometimes eloquent, sometimes quite personal," according to Hoopes, pitting Republican against Republican.

McCarthy, the loudest and most long-winded, infuriated Taft by implying Dulles had lied when asserting that there was nothing derogatory in Bohlen's FBI file. McCarthy claimed, falsely, on the Senate floor, to have certain knowledge that there was something "so derogatory" in the file that "we cannot discuss it [here]." At the end of many hours of debate, Taft postponed further discussion.

Simultaneously, at the other end of town, Charlie Thayer, sitting incognito in Bohlen's office at the State Department, was facing the unpleasant realization that his career was at an end. He had arrived secretly in the United States and made his way

"as inconspicuously as possible" to the State Department, he recorded in his diary. It became clear that the State Department had withdrawn "its protection." Fighting the charges would be futile, Bohlen said, since the president and Dulles were bent on "'getting along' with McCarthy."

Thayer agreed to sign a letter of resignation, but then had to fight hard to exclude any mention of the unproven "morals charges" (i.e., homosexuality). As Thayer recalled, only when Bohlen "got mad, his hands and his face twitching with anger," and threatened to withdraw his name did the State Department agree. All the while, the teletype in the next room continued to clatter out reports of the Senate debate on Bohlen. Bohlen's wife, Avis, called to ask her husband if he knew where her brother, Charlie, was; Bohlen, sure his phone was bugged, lied that he had no idea.

That night, after seven hours in the United States, Thayer flew back to Munich in great secrecy "like a fugitive criminal." He felt, he would write later in a letter to a friend, that he "was in a cross between a madhouse and a gangsters' hideout. Everyone was looking over his shoulder, whispering, sighing and groaning as though the devil was about to get them."

On March 24, Taft, after overnight consultations with the Foreign Relations Committee and the administration, proposed to the Senate that two senators, himself and Democratic Senator John Sparkman from Alabama, be authorized to read the file in Dulles' office. The next day, they were able to report back to the full Senate that Bohlen was a "completely good security risk in every respect." Though McCarthy and others continued to denounce the nomination, on March 25, 1953, the Senate voted to confirm Bohlen 74–13. When Dulles called Taft to thank him for his efforts, according to Hoopes, Taft replied curtly, "No more Bohlens."

Standing Up for State

"Hurray, huzzah and hosanna," wrote one of Bohlen's supporters. He was quietly elated: "I do not deny the feeling of triumph that possessed me," Bohlen would write. He had not only "won the battle to occupy the position I trained for [for] nearly 25 years," but also scored a victory for "the nonpolitical career Foreign Service [drawing] a line beyond which the witch hunters like McCarthy and McCarran could not pass." This established "that Dulles and Eisenhower, not McCarthy or McLeod, would control State Department functions" and "preserved the President's right to choose his representatives overseas."

Bohlen would always be proud that his nomination, McCarthy's first serious defeat, had played a role in stopping the demagogue. He himself had come through his ordeal with flying

> At stake now was not just Bohlen's nomination, but also the president's ability to run his own foreign policy and choose his own appointees.

colors, winning high praise for his unwillingness to compromise his principles.

But the battle left many scars and was far from won. The Foreign Service continued to be ravaged by McLeod's purges. During his farewell call on President Eisenhower, Bohlen, in his capacity as president of the American Foreign Service Association, described frankly the damage being done by the endless security checks and loyalty investigations, and the pervasive fear it had inspired in the State Department.

Eisenhower in effect shrugged, conceding Scott McLeod's appointment had been a mistake, but he could not be removed "without a great big stink," Bohlen recalled. Still less did Dulles, always afraid of angering the Republican right, stand up for the State Department or the Foreign Service. Bohlen's confirmation was a setback for McCarthy, but more than a year would pass before the Senate summoned the courage to censure the senator from Wisconsin—demonstrating, not for the last time in American history, how a demagogue can manipulate a backlash from his loyal supporters to intimidate his party into silence.

Before his departure, Bohlen met with Dulles, who advised with his habitual tactlessness that it would be "wiser for you and your wife to travel together," Bohlen recalled. Dumbfounded, he asked why. "Well," Dulles replied, "you know there were rumors in some of your files about immoral behavior, and it would look better if your wife was with you." Bohlen, outraged, replied frostily that he did not intend to change his plans. ■

Inside Diplomacy Event

Boosting America's Global Presence

"The world needs our diplomats, our Foreign Service, right now more than at any other time."

That's the message of Liz Schrayer, president and CEO of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, the first guest in AFSA's new Inside Diplomacy series. The Inside Diplomacy program will explore national security issues as they relate to the profession of the Foreign Service.

Schrayer joined AFSA President Eric Rubin on March 11 for an hourlong Zoom conversation about America's role in the world today. Schrayer noted that she testified in Congress in March 2020—on the day before the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. She told congressmembers that the high-water mark of American spending on international affairs, as a percentage of gross domestic product, was in 1985. But on the day she testified, the percentage of spending was about half of what it was 35 years earlier.

"There is no way you can convince me that we're half as challenged in the world today as we were at the height of the Cold War," she said, adding that it is time to reverse the trend.

Ambassador Rubin noted that for the first time since World War II, America no longer has the largest diplomatic service in the world.

SCREEN CAPTURE

USGLC President and CEO Liz Schrayer spoke with AFSA President Eric Rubin March 11 for the inaugural Inside Diplomacy speaker event.

"We are now number 2 behind China, which has more embassies and consulates and more diplomats serving overseas. The difference is small, the numbers aren't that much greater, but it's an important datapoint," he said. "And the question is, is being number 2 good enough? Can we afford to do better? Of course the answer is yes we can, if we choose to. That's why this is such an important discussion right now."

Schrayer added that despite the suffering and economic hardship caused by the pandemic, initial polling showed that citizens want the United States to remain engaged in the world.

"The pandemic is clearly a wakeup call," she said. "This global pandemic is the ultimate reminder that we're interconnected in the world, that an infectious disease literally can travel 36 hours to our doorstep and impact everybody's life."

In the spring of 2020, she said, USGLC found that 95 percent of the people it surveyed said it is important for the United States to work with other countries to fight diseases that could spread globally. Eighty percent said that the United States should spend resources to help fragile and weak economies around the world respond to the pandemic. She said she was astounded by the numbers.

But as the pandemic wore on, she said, weariness and fear set in, and she noted a "turning inward" in every country, and the rise of vaccine nationalism. USGLC convened multiple focus groups in the fall, and found that people feel "really strongly" both that the United States should engage in the world and that "we have to take care of needs at home."

Schrayer said her conclusion is that there is a "very, very small number" of isolationists in America—less than 10 percent of the population. The vast majority of Americans want an active U.S. role in the world. The United States needs to show up.

"We need a seat at the table," she said. "But we can't do it alone. They want us to partner. And it needs to be effective when we show up. It needs to be fair. China can't take advantage of us. Everybody needs to pay their fair share. But so do we."

The door is wide open to connect with fellow citizens, she added. "But we need to do it in a way that makes sense to people who are feeling great pain, great suffering, great fear, and want to get back our economy, our health, our security."

USGLC is a coalition of more than 500 businesses and nongovernmental organizations that advocates for strong U.S. global leadership through development diplomacy.

Visit afsa.org/videos to view the conversation.

CALENDAR

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

May 6
AFSA Foreign Service Day Virtual Programming

May 7
Virtual Foreign Service Day

May 13
12 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Election Town Hall

May 19
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

May 26
Inside Diplomacy: Arctic Diplomacy featuring Jim DeHart, U.S. coordinator for the Arctic region

Contact: State VP Tom Yazdgerdi, YazdgerdiTK@state.gov | (202) 647-8160

The Importance of Leadership Training

Leadership training is critical to improving the culture of the department. Recent steps to increase access and ensure that training promotes a more inclusive workplace are welcome changes. But we all need to do more to get the most out of this training, in particular making it a regular part of how we develop our skills.

Leadership training has been mandatory for many years, but we don't value it as an institution. Managers generally find reasons to cancel subordinates' training—there is always urgent business in the office. The department cut funding that would support overseas employees taking it midtour.

All of this has led to classes being impossible to sign up for during summer transfer season or right after promotion lists are released. This is not leadership training; it is box checking.

One of the few positive consequences of COVID-19 has been the increased use of virtual training by the Foreign Service Institute, including for leadership courses. This has allowed more students to enroll from wherever they may be located.

FSI has provided courses for distant time zones in the past, and may do so in the future if bureaus ensure there will be sufficient participation. It is something members have told us they welcome.

It is important not to sacrifice the long-term benefit of leadership training for the exigencies of the moment. Indeed, learning to accept and embrace those trade-offs for future benefits is a key leadership lesson. But too many managers still pull students out at the last minute, citing the press of business.

AFSA calls on senior leaders at posts and in bureaus to allow their team members to participate—and not just attend the course, but be able to focus on it. A student who has to check in with the office at every break and spend their lunch on the phone doing their usual job is not going to get much out of the course.

We want students to have more flexibility on when and how to take the course going forward. We welcome FSI's intention to offer some online sessions each year to facilitate more students having access to the training, but in addition to in-person options.

I know from my own experience that some of the most valuable parts of leadership training are the informal conversations with fellow students. In my last class a Civil Service colleague and I shared a similar challenge in our teams; we discussed it over lunch, and I came away with a new perspective, which helped me address a long-standing problem.

FSI has made the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course a prerequisite for all leadership courses, even if you have taken it before, and is integrating discussion of bias into all courses. New modules in the Ambassadorial Seminar and the Deputy Chief of Mission/Principal Officer (DCM/PO) course are designed to foster a greater awareness of how the actions of top leaders set the climate throughout an organization.

Leadership training is more than a once-a-grade activity. It is a constant process of learning and growth.

These are important, but initial, steps to address the issues of workplace culture that members tell us are a major reason why they consider leaving the Service.

One of the most important parts of leadership training is the opportunity to receive feedback through 360-degree assessments. If completed honestly by a range of bosses, peers and subordinates, including those who are critical of us, they give the information necessary to translate the principles of the class into personal action plans.

So, the next time you get a request to fill out a 360 evaluation, do the person a favor by taking the time to fill it out honestly and thoughtfully. And when you have to pick the people you will send yours to, don't be afraid to list a few who aren't your biggest fans. We will not get better hearing only from people who like us or who are like us.

Leadership training is more than a once-a-grade activity. It is a constant process of learning and growth. Teams should continue the conversation with speakers, internal discussions around specific readings or other opportunities. Consular Affairs has been a leader in this area.

And for additional help as you move into a new job or face a particular management challenge, FSI has a coaching service that can support you through the process.

AFSA believes that effective leadership training is a crucial component in addressing a range of institutional challenges we face. It is not a magic bullet, but an important tool.

We want to hear from you about what is working and what is not. Your comments help guide us as we engage with the department. Send us a note at member@afsa.org.

Contact: jsinger@usaid.gov | (202) 712-5267

What a Difference a Year Makes

An exciting opportunity is at hand!

I wrote in the April 2020 *FSJ* about the importance of labor management relations. I quoted from Chapter 10 of the Foreign Service Act, dedicated to the topic, which specifies that "the unique conditions of Foreign Service employment require a distinct framework for the development and implementation of modern, constructive, and cooperative relationships between management officials and organizations representing members of the Service."

To put it mildly, the previous administration's union-related executive orders and related actions were neither particularly constructive nor cooperative from a union perspective. That said, I pledged in April 2020 "to doing my best to build, maintain and strengthen this framework for the benefit of the agency's mission and its people."

I have tried to maintain that pledge, and I very much appreciate the relationship with USAID leadership. But still, what a difference a year makes.

On Jan. 22, President Joe Biden signed "Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce" (E.O. 14003). In addition to its reassuring title, the order's first section affirms this: "It is the policy of the United States to protect, empower, and rebuild the career federal workforce. It is also the policy of the United States to encourage union organizing and collective bargaining. The federal government should serve as a model employer."

I could not agree more—particularly in the case of USAID, where many of our projects strive to strengthen capacity of host country government institutions and their employment models. The United States should set the example.

But wait, it gets better.

On March 5, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management issued implementation guidance for the executive order. Among the guidance areas is one focused on "ensuring the right to engage in collective bargaining."

Though it sounds dry, this section provides guidance to USAID leadership to engage in discussions on matters that are critical to USAID Foreign Service officers.

The implementation guidance specifies: "These subjects cover the numbers, types and grades of employees or positions assigned to any organizational subdivision, work project, or tour of duty, and the technology, methods and means of performing work. A failure by agency managers to engage in bargaining over the subjects covered by 5 U.S.C. 7106(b)(1) would be inconsistent with the president's directive. Therefore, in order to carry out the policy decision of the President reflected in the EO, agencies must commence bargaining in good faith over all of these subjects."

This is a big change. So big, in fact, that OPM notes: "Because bargaining over these subjects has most recently been at the discretion of the agency, it may be a new experience for some management and union representatives, and OPM is available to provide technical assistance to support implementation of this policy."

What will this mean? Well, time will tell. But, at a minimum, this guidance means that AFSA and the agency will have more—and hopefully more constructive—dialogue on topics related to the careers of FSOs, Foreign Service Limited appointments, personal services contractor hiring, assignments, and increasing the size and impact of the career Foreign Service so that we can achieve our shared goals.

If you have ideas on how AFSA can constructively engage under the president's new directive, please share them. ■

NEWS BRIEF

FOREIGN SERVICE SPOUSES: SHARE YOUR STORIES!

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, one of AFSA's sister organizations, invites spouses and partners of employees in the U.S. Foreign Service to take part in its new spouse oral history project.

Your contributions will help ADST shine a light on the vital and changing roles spouses have played in the history of U.S. diplomacy, and should be a fun way to share your experiences with your friends and family.

Interviews of spouses center on three areas: Personal background about you—your childhood, family, education and work history; your experience as a spouse at foreign posts; and your experience as a spouse in Washington, D.C., posts.

Interview sessions usually last one hour, and several interviews are typical.

ADST has the world's largest collection of U.S. diplomatic oral history. Its website, adst.org, features more than 2,500 oral histories, covering almost eight decades. It also facilitates the publication of books about diplomacy by diplomats and others.

To register to participate, please visit: adst.org/cox-spouse-oral-history-project. ■

Contact: naland@afsa.org

Staying Connected with Colleagues

The pandemic has shuttered most of the 18 state and regional Foreign Service retiree associations around the country. These groups, while independent of AFSA, support the common goal of keeping Foreign Service retirees and other former foreign affairs personnel in touch with each other and the profession to which they dedicated decades of their lives.

The group that I coordinate—the 260-member Foreign Affairs Retirees of Northern Virginia—suspended bimonthly luncheons in March 2020 when our venue in the Fort Myer Officers' Club closed.

While a few members suggested that I organize guest speaker presentations via Zoom, I view the best part of the meetings to be the informal table talk before the presentation during which longtime friends catch up with each other and meet other colleagues who served at the same posts during different years. I did not see how those social connections could be re-created online for 80 participants (our typical in-person attendance).

Hopefully, by the time you read this column, COVID-19 cases nationwide will be down and vaccination rates up. If a return to seminormalcy is in sight by fall, I encourage the leaders of these retiree associations to make plans to resume their operations.

If you have never participated in one of these groups, please see the list in your 2021 AFSA Directory of Retired Members or at afsa.org/retiree-associations. They are in 18 cities across 13 states, with several serving a multistate region (for example, New England). If you live near one, please consider contacting the organizer to join.

If the leaders of any of these groups have stepped down during the long pandemic hiatus, or if there is not a group in your area and you are interested in starting one, AFSA is available to help area retirees connect with each other to form a coordinating committee.

Please contact Christine Miele, AFSA's director of programs and member engagement, at miele@afsa.org.

In addition, I am available to share my insights on programming and coordination based on five years leading the Northern Virginia group. You can reach me at naland@afsa.org.

Annual Report: Legal Defense Fund

BY LDF COMMITTEE CHAIR KENNETH KERO-MENTZ

The governing documents (bit.ly/ldf-sop) for AFSA's Legal Defense Fund—which provided much-needed support to members during the congressional hearings involving Ukraine and a potential class action EEO case against USAID—call for an annual report to our membership.

Since October 2019, the LDF raised nearly three quarters of a million dollars from members and supporters. (See my previous column on this at bit.ly/ldf-oct2020.) Between October 2019 and Dec. 31, 2020, AFSA has assisted 12 members with legal fees, spending roughly $468,000.

The LDF Committee, working with the AFSA Governing Board, has invested the remaining funds, just over $300,000, to ensure our members will be protected in the future, as well.

Looking forward, we'll be going back to our roots.

The AFSA Labor Management staff routinely provides legal assistance to hundreds of Foreign Service members annually, both active-duty and retired, from all six foreign affairs agencies. Inevitably, cases come along where AFSA is unable to provide the time and attention or does not have the particular expertise that is required.

It is for these reasons that the Legal Defense Fund was initially created in 2007. Over the years, the LDF has provided financial assistance to more than two dozen members, enabling them to retain outside attorneys with expertise in a particular area of law.

These cases have been—and will continue to be—limited to those with legal issues that have far-reaching significance for the rest of the Service, such as cases involving due process or fundamental fairness.

Prior to the Ukraine-related proceedings, the LDF saw, at most, only one or two requests for assistance a year.

Moving ahead, the LDF Committee and the Governing Board look forward to helping our members through this program that supports individuals and all members of the Foreign Service.

We will also continue to raise funds for the LDF as needed via AFSAnet and *The Foreign Service Journal*, to ensure the long-term sustainability of this vital member-centered program.

If you think you require assistance through the Legal Defense Fund, please reach out to AFSA at afsa@state.gov.

AFSA Webinar

Fostering Constructive Dissent

With a new administration in office, conditions are ripe to foster a stronger culture of constructive dissent in the Foreign Service, AFSA President Eric Rubin said during a March 18 webinar, "How to Get Your Voice Heard."

Ambassador Rubin and several guests shared with AFSA members the best ways to use the various options for dissent available to Foreign Service employees who feel they need to speak up about policy issues.

"Constructive internal dissent is part of the Foreign Service DNA," Amb. Rubin said, noting that AFSA took the lead in incorporating dissent into the policy process in the wake of the Vietnam War, helping to develop the State Department's Dissent Channel in 1971. Constructive dissent is important in helping policymakers reach good decisions.

AFSA supports dissent through its award programs, offering four annual Constructive Dissent Awards.

Amb. Rubin said he was proud of Foreign Service employees who spoke truth to power during the first impeachment trial of President Donald Trump in 2019-2020, as well as AFSA's role in supporting them morally and also through AFSA's legal aid fund.

Today AFSA is working to resurrect the Secretary's Open Forum, which was also founded during the Vietnam War, he said.

AFSA President Eric Rubin

Moises Mendoza, W. Averell Harriman Award Winner

Monica Smith, Christian A. Herter Award Winner

AFSA Deputy General Counsel Raeka Safai

"People should be able to speak up and speak sincerely, and then policymakers need to decide what they are going to do. And we should not publicly challenge their decisions once they have been made. We are a nonpartisan, nonpolitical career service," he said.

Two AFSA Constructive Dissent Award winners offered advice on dissenting. Senior Foreign Service Officer Monica Smith, a USAID legal adviser and recipient of the 2020 Christian A. Herter award, said she turned to AFSA's Labor Management for support and guidance.

She added that it's important to find allies in your agency who understand your position, and who can give you a gut check about whether you are taking appropriate steps.

Moises Mendoza, a political officer who won the W. Averell Harriman award in 2019, said that while dissent is never easy and can, in fact, be scary, "I think you can never go wrong when you stand with your principles."

He also encouraged people who might dissent to find allies who can help see their dissent through.

"I saw a situation that didn't make sense, and I tried to think outside of the box to change it," Mendoza said. "Sometimes a little disruption can be a good thing for the institution."

AFSA Deputy General Counsel Raeka Safai noted that the Foreign Affairs Manual says people can use the Dissent Channel without fear of retribution.

If you believe you are a victim of retribution, you can bring your concerns to the Office of the Inspector General, who will investigate.

Each agency has a whistleblower ombudsperson who can tell people about their rights and remedies, Safai said, adding that AFSA can help people who choose to file grievances if they feel they are victims of retaliation for speaking out.

She also encouraged people to visit the Government Accountability Project's webpage, whistleblower.org/resources.

Amb. Rubin added that *The Foreign Service Journal*'s Speaking Out feature is another place where members can dissent, provided the subject is not classified, and that members can always email AFSA to ask for assistance with dissent issues.

Ambassador (ret.) Tom Boyatt, one of the founders of the Dissent Channel and an AFSA stalwart, was a surprise guest at the event. "All of this is a very precious thing," he told the audience. "It doesn't exist anyplace else in the government, or as far as I know in any other place in the world. We must defend it and use it wisely."

View a video of the event at afsa.org/videos.

Diplomats at Work: Telling Foreign Service Stories

On March 24 nearly 260 people attended AFSA's first "Diplomats at Work" event, a virtual webinar with guest Kala Bokelman, a Diplomatic Security Service supervisory special agent.

Diplomats at Work is a new virtual speaker series that tells the stories of the Foreign Service, introducing the work of diplomats to new audiences.

"We are that bureau within State that is the law enforcement and security arm, providing a safe and secure platform for diplomats to go out and do their jobs," Bokelman explained. "That is one of the key components of our job, safety and security. In every embassy and almost every consulate, you'll find an agent."

Bokelman added that DSS agents also provide protection for American athletes when they compete in international events, such as the Olympics or the World Cup soccer championships, as well as for all foreign dignitaries who come to the United States.

"Not only are we sworn law enforcement officers, we're also diplomats, liaising with our counterparts overseas and in the United States at the state and local levels," she said.

Conveying a real sense of what the job entails, Bokelman shared her experience helping to break up a child pornography trafficking ring in Costa Rica. Her article about the case appeared in the June 2018 *FSJ*.

"I always like to say diplomacy solved this case," she says. "The embassy as a whole had made combatting human trafficking and child exploitation a priority." The political section was working to help change Costa Rican laws to make them more in line with international standards, she explained, and the public affairs section came up with a training program that sent Costa Rican law enforcement officials to the United States for 30 days.

SCREEN CAPTURE

Diplomatic Security Service Supervisory Special Agent Kala Bokelman speaks during the March 24 AFSA Diplomats at Work webinar.

Kala Bokelman has been a Diplomatic Security Service special agent for 16 years. Her domestic assignments have been in the San Francisco Field Office and in Washington, D.C., headquarters. She has also served in Maputo, Baghdad and San Jose.

In 2018, she returned to Washington, D.C., for assignment in the Overseas Criminal Investigative Division and currently leads the Recruitment Division for DSS. Roughly half of her time in DSS has been spent investigating crimes involving human trafficking, sexual assault and fugitive returns.

Diplomats at Work, a quarterly event, is part of AFSA's outreach efforts to broaden the domestic constituency for the Foreign Service. This series strives to reach audiences at universities, community colleges and other local organizations throughout the United States to share stories of the important and varied work of the U.S. Foreign Service and how that work relates to all Americans.

AFSA members may view the webinar at afsa.org/videos.

Webinar: All About Federal Long Term Care Insurance

Nathan Sebert, a senior account manager at Long Term Care Partners, spoke with AFSA members in a March 2 webinar about the benefits of the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program.

Sebert discussed the importance of long-term care planning, and reviewed benefits and features of the new FLTCIP 3.0 plan, which offers a premium stabilization feature.

He also provided tips on designing your own plan, reviewed plan costs and covered information on FLTCIP eligibility and enrollment.

Sebert joined Long Term Care Partners, which administers the FLTCIP, in 2006. He is a certified long-term care insurance consultant (CLTC) and a long-term care professional (LTCP).

Members may view a recording of the webinar at afsa.org/videos.

NEWS BRIEF

AFSA ANNOUNCES NEW SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

AFSA is partnering with the New England Innovation Academy, dedicated to preparing the next generation of innovators through its unique human-centered design. The school was founded this year.

Beginning this fall, NEIA will offer AFSA members' children enrolling in grades 6 to 12 a guaranteed minimum scholarship of $10,000 that can be increased to $42,000 (a full scholarship) based on financial need.

NEIA seeks to fosters a global community that "empowers its students to strive for equity through its immersive and hands-on curriculum that fosters empathy, curiosity and collaboration, and that inspires young learners to positively effect change in the world."

The school describes its curriculum as a tailored project-based approach to education designed to provide students with a sense of ownership over their own learning, as well as valuable real-world connections.

NEIA's Massachusetts campus is a collection of open and connected learning spaces designed to support group learning, individual study and quiet reflection. NEIA tells AFSA it is committed to developing an environment that is responsive to the needs of both students and teachers, supports personalized curricula and reflects the school's local and global community.

AFSA welcomes NEIA's offer to provide our members' children with discounts off the tuition for this unique educational opportunity.

If you are interested in learning more about NEIA and what it has to offer, please visit https://mailchi.mp/neiacademy/afsa and sign up for an information session.

For information on other educational offerings provided by AFSA, please visit afsa.org/educational-partners or contact Awards and Scholarships Manager Theo Horn at horn@afsa.org.

View from Washington Webinar

A Foreign Service Ripe for Change

AFSA holds its "View from Washington" webinar four times a year. The Zoom call gives retirees the chance to hear about AFSA's current areas of focus.

More than at any time since he started his Foreign Service career 36 years ago, there is serious focus in both parties on Capitol Hill to reform, update and improve the Service, AFSA President Eric Rubin told retired AFSA members in a March 4 webinar.

AFSA holds its "View from Washington" webinar four times a year. The Zoom call gives retirees the chance to hear about AFSA's current areas of focus, including expanding and reinvigorating the Foreign Service, restoring morale and improving retention.

Amb. Rubin acknowledged that the past few years have been a very difficult time for the Foreign Service. "This is a pivotal time, especially from the past four years, but not only from the past four years," he said, adding that a number of trends have been building for a long time.

America's foreign affairs agencies have been understaffed and underfunded consistently since the end of the Cold War, he said, adding that the United States is now second to China in terms of number of diplomats and diplomatic posts.

Encouragingly, the Biden administration and Congress are both interested in restoring the Foreign Service. "I think this will be a more productive time than under any recent administration," he said, adding that it is a good time to revisit the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

Amb. Rubin said one of AFSA's biggest concerns is improving diversity in the Service. "We have a very major diversity problem," he said. "I'm sorry to say that many of you worked in a more diverse Foreign Service than we have now." AFSA is also working to improve morale and retention in the Foreign Service.

He added that AFSA hopes to see a significant number of career Foreign Service officers nominated for high positions, such as assistant secretaries and ambassadors. He said he is also interested in seeing embassies built in cities again instead of in bunkers in suburbs.

"We have to get away from the Accountability Review Board model, where when something happens, someone has to be punished. Not that we should eliminate all risks, but we should mitigate them," Rubin said.

He also noted that he has sent *The Foreign Service Journal*'s March 2021 "Notes to the New Administration" feature, which includes several dozen recommendations from AFSA members, around to administration officials. "Ideas are being taken seriously now," he said.

NEWS BRIEF

FSI LEADERSHIP COURSE OFFERINGS IN FY21

The Foreign Service Institute's Leadership and Management School has asked AFSA to help publicize their program of leadership distance learning courses.

These courses are mandatory for most promotions and can be taken virtually from anywhere in the world.

The courses are offered on D.C. time. Course dates were listed in Department Notice #78087 on Feb. 18. They will be available online through the end of this fiscal year—September 30.

The Leadership and Management School points out that many of these courses are undersubscribed. Therefore, there are plenty of opportunities for overseas students to get this mandatory training.

AFSA welcomes this initiative by LMS, and we encourage members to take advantage of these opportunities.

AFSA Outreach: A Full Slate of Events

May will see two major AFSA outreach efforts: Foreign Service Day virtual programming on Thursday, May 6, and an Inside Diplomacy event on May 26 at 1 p.m. EDT.

We hope members have been busy sending letters to the editor in advance of Foreign Service Day on May 7 and taking part in the social media campaign to help spread the word about the work and value of the Foreign Service. May 7 will mark the end of the outreach challenge. Later this month, we will report how the letter writing campaign went and will reveal the victor(s).

The second installment of our Inside Diplomacy series is focused on Arctic diplomacy—fittingly, given the theme of this month's *Journal*. The event will feature special guest U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region Jim DeHart (interviewed in this edition of the *FSJ*). We are honored to be able to sit down with Jim to talk about such an important topic.

Please join us online for the discussion at 1 p.m. on May 26. To register, please visit our website at afsa.org/events.

If you missed the first Inside Diplomacy event with guest Liz Schrayer, president and CEO of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, you can find the recording on our website: afsa.org/first-line-defense.

The Inside Diplomacy series explores current national security issues as they relate to U.S. foreign policy and the Foreign Service. With our first event, we set the stage with the topic "The Future of U.S. Global Leadership," a forward-looking discussion of what needs to happen to put diplomacy once again at the forefront of our foreign policy, and what that means for the Foreign Service.

At this writing, we are at work on our next Diplomats at Work event, slated for June. This virtual series is focused on reaching new audiences, primarily community colleges and local organizations, to share the story of the Foreign Service.

Our first Diplomats at Work event, featuring Supervisory Special Agent Kala Bokelman from the Diplomatic Security Service on March 24, was well received, and can be viewed at afsa.org/videos.

Thank you to AFSA members who have helped spread the word in your communities about this new series. We will call on you again in June to help us promote the next event of the series, which will focus on the reopening of the U.S. consulate in Nuuk, Greenland.

As always, if you have questions about AFSA's outreach program or would like to join the outreach messenger roster, please contact Nadja Ruzica by emailing ruzica@afsa.org.

Biden Administration Issues Workforce Protection Guidance

Several weeks after President Joe Biden issued Executive Order 14003, "Protecting the Federal Workforce," the Office of Personnel Management issued guidelines instructing federal agencies on how to implement this policy.

Biden's executive order rescinds EOs issued by the Trump administration, which had made it easier to fire federal workers, restricted collective bargaining and significantly limited the use of official time—the practice of allowing federal workers who are union representatives to use government time when, for example, negotiating collective bargaining agreements and representing union members in grievances and investigations.

In addition, EO 14003 directs agencies to "bargain over permissible, non-mandatory subjects of bargaining when contracts are up for negotiation."

"We're serious, and the president is serious, about resetting labor-management relations, and the executive order issued on Day 3 [of the administration] is very clear, and we wanted the guidance to be true to that," an official told *Government Executive*, a government business publication.

"We are genuine when we say we want to engage with federal workers and union representatives as partners as we tackle the challenges we've got to deal with in the government," the official added.

EO 14003 notes that "career civil servants are the backbone of the Federal workforce" and that "it is the policy of the United States to protect, empower and rebuild the career Federal workforce." The EO also says it is the "policy of the United States to encourage union organizing and collective bargaining."

The new OPM guidance, issued on March 5, instructs agencies to reopen their contracts with labor unions "as soon as is practicable" to reverse the damage done by the previous EOs.

Fortunately, none of AFSA's existing framework agreements with the six agencies where it is the exclusive representative for Foreign Service personnel need to be reopened.

According to AFSA General Counsel Sharon Papp, AFSA and the State Department have long had a collaborative labor-management relationship, and this continued even under the Trump administration executive orders.

AFSA is planning to work more closely with the American Federation of Government Employees and the National Federation of Federal Employees, the unions that represent State Department Civil Service employees. ■

AFSA Governing Board Meeting, March 17, 2021

National Museum of American Diplomacy: The Governing Board approved a motion to sponsor NMAD's "Go Abroad" film.

Membership Committee: The Governing Board approved the application of one new associate member.

Congressional Policy Priorities: The Governing Board approved adding support for the following pieces of legislation to AFSA's list of policy priorities for the 117th Congress: the Foreign Service Families Act; the Department of State Student Internship Program Act; the Lavender Offense Victim Exoneration (LOVE) Act; the Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila Federal Law Enforcement Protection Act; and a bill to provide for the appropriate balance between empowering diplomats to pursue vital diplomatic goals and mitigating security risks at U.S. diplomatic posts. ■

Jeanine Ashton, (née Bayard), 94, the wife of career USAID Foreign Service Officer Norman R. Ashton, passed away on Jan. 16 in Woodbridge, Va., after a short illness.

Born in Coucy-le-Château-Auffrique, Aisne, France, on May 6, 1926, to Michel and Renée Bayard, Ms. Bayard was the eldest of two daughters. She had a wonderful childhood surrounded by several generations of family; after graduating from high school, she left home to go to trade school, where she refined her skills as a seamstress.

In 1940, during World War II, the German army invaded northern France, including the Bayard family's village. Like most French then, they experienced rationing, bombings and occupation by German forces, and were forced to flee when German officers seized the family home. They returned once Allied forces regained control of the region.

On Feb. 19, 1945, Ms. Bayard, along with a group of girlfriends, thought it would be fun to try to stop a U.S. Army convoy of the Red Ball Express passing through on its way to the front. The driver of the lead truck was Norman Ashton, a Downingtown, Pa., native. Despite her limited knowledge of English, and his of French, their courtship flourished, and they were married on Dec. 26, 1946.

Immediately after the wedding, they moved to Normandy, where Mr. Ashton worked for the U.S. Army in grave registration for both the Normandy and Brittany cemeteries. On occasion, she would join him as he drove truckloads of war casualties to Le Havre and Cherbourg to be returned to the United States for burial. In 1947, along with their newborn daughter, they moved to Germany, where they would live for the next nine years, and where their second daughter was born.

In 1952 Mrs. Ashton made her first visit to the United States. Although she carried a U.S. passport, she was nevertheless detained and sent to Ellis Island, N.Y. It would take three weeks before she was reunited with Mr. Ashton and their 4-year-old daughter.

In 1956 Mr. Ashton joined one of the precursors to the U.S. Agency for International Development that had been spun out of the Marshall Plan, and the family was posted to Belgrade (1956-1961).

In 1961, when USAID was created with the merger of the International Cooperation Administration, the Mutual Security Agency and the Foreign Operations Administration, the Ashtons were transferred to Dakar (1961-1962).

There followed assignments in Nicosia (1962-1964); Washington, D.C. (1964-1966); Ankara (1966-1969); and Kabul (1969-1971). Mrs. Ashton became the French tutor at all the posts where she lived.

In 1963 she and her daughters were evacuated from Cyprus to Beirut due to the outbreak of war between the Turkish and Greek factions on the island. It took six months before Mr. Ashton was able to join them. In 1971 the family returned to the United States, settling in Bethesda, Md. Mr. Ashton retired from USAID in 1976.

Despite a life spent abroad, family ties to France remained a constant for Mrs. Ashton, and she never missed an opportunity to return there. She was trilingual (French, English and German), and raised her daughters to be bilingual in English and French.

Her extended stateside family credits her influence for their collective love for almost anything French and an unbreakable emotional connection to Coucy-le-Château-Auffrique.

Mrs. Ashton's family members recall her tenacious character, adaptability and self-sufficiency learned during WWII, which enabled her to handle all the family's postings with grace and diplomacy. She was known for her hospitality, incredible cooking and sewing skills, which were evident in all the dresses she made for herself and her daughters over the years. She nurtured, encouraged and held high expectations of her daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Ashton was predeceased by Norman, her husband of 62 years, in 2008; her eldest daughter, Diana Hobson; a sister and brother-in-law, Arlette and Guy Carmagnani; and a nephew, Gil Carmagnani.

She is survived by her youngest daughter, Corinne Connor (Daniel); a nephew, Eric Carmagnani; a son-in-law, James B. Hobson; four grandchildren, Michelle Fulton (Robert), James Neal Hobson (Sarah), Jacqueline Connor (Steven) and Julian Connor (Angela); and two great-grandsons, Zachary and Gabriel Fulton.

John Francis Coppola, 73, a former Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on Feb. 14 in Washington, D.C.

Born on July 26, 1947, in New Jersey, Mr. Coppola graduated from Thiel College in Greenville, Pa., and received a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

Mr. Coppola traveled extensively for work and pleasure. As a Foreign Service officer for 11 years, he lived in Mexico, El Salvador and Tunisia, and directed the U.S. pavilions at the World Expo 88 in Brisbane and the Seville World's Fair in 1992 in Spain.

His consulting work took him to Spain, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Canada.

Mr. Coppola was passionate about sharing his knowledge and expertise with other artists and museum profession-

als. His consulting and teaching work focused on helping museums refine their collections, management approaches and collection policies. He particularly encouraged museums to become more representative of and welcoming to the communities they served (or should serve).

As an active member of the American Alliance of Museums, Mr. Coppola directed that organization's first Museum Assessment Program of a foreign museum, the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in Santo Domingo.

He taught museum management and curatorial studies for the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design at The George Washington University and at Stanford University's Washington, D.C., campus. Among his favorite artist-students was his great-niece Carson Sandefur.

He also served as director and curator of the Harmony Hall Regional Center Gallery in Fort Washington, Md., and managed several artist-run galleries in Washington, D.C. He was active in the International Council of Museums, served on the Board of Friends of the Art Museum of the Americas, and was an adviser to the Stonewall National Museum and Archives. He was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on the advisory board for the Institute of Library and Museum Science.

Mr. Coppola was a painter, printmaker and sculptor. He studied art at the Corcoran Gallery of Art; Smithsonian Institution; Tamarind Institute, University of New Mexico; Miasa Hanga Center in Japan; and Studio Camnitzer-Porter in Italy. He was also an art critic for the *Miami Herald* and *Latino* magazine.

His artwork was most recently exhibited as part of the "America Is …" exhibit at the Touchstone Gallery in Washington, D.C. He delighted in carrying a business card that read: John Coppola, Exhibitionist.

Even before he got his first press pass to cover the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, Mr. Coppola was a political junkie. He was never at a loss when asked to opine on any aspect of national or international politics, always knew the details of the most recent polls and could at the slightest provocation recite verbatim major portions of the U.S. Constitution.

Mr. Coppola is survived by his sister, Phyllis (Paul) Natoli of Dripping Springs, Texas; nieces Denise (Casey) Brooks of Zanesville, Ohio, Diane (Barrett) Sandefur of Austin, Texas, and Danielle (Isaac) Orao of Austin; great-niece Carson Sandefur; and great-nephew Gabriel Orao.

Donations in Mr. Coppola's name may be made to Food & Friends or Friends of the Art Museum of the Americas, both in Washington, D.C., or the Stonewall National Museum and Archives in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Joseph C. Huber, 95, a retired Foreign Service officer with USAID, died Nov. 26, 2020, at Heritage Pointe in Warren, Ind., of complications from COVID-19.

Mr. Huber was born on the family farm on Sept. 12, 1925, in Warren, Ind. After graduating from high school, he was drafted into the U.S. Navy in 1943. During World War II, he was a flight engineer on seaplanes serving in the Philippines, China and Japan. He was recalled during the Korean War and served as a communications specialist in Washington, D.C.

In 1950, after graduating from Purdue University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural education, he taught high school for several years while managing the family farm. He sold livestock feed and became an assistant county agent.

In 1958 he joined the International Cooperation Administration's overseas intern program and was assigned as an extension adviser at the U.S. embassy in Bogotá and, later, Barranquilla, Colombia.

In 1962 he joined USAID and moved to La Paz, Bolivia, as an agricultural program adviser. In 1968 he was transferred to Rio de Janeiro and then to Recife, Brazil, to work in the Food for Peace Program.

Continuing with Food for Peace, Mr. Huber was assigned to Managua following an earthquake. He advised the USAID mission director on shipping, warehousing and distribution of food commodities to earthquake victims. During his time in Nicaragua, he did several temporary assignments to Honduras, Haiti and Tanzania to assist in disaster relief.

Retiring from USAID in 1976, Mr. Huber went on to work as a pesticide field investigator for the Indiana State Chemist and Seed Commissioner's Office.

He is survived by daughters Mary and Jane, brother David and stepsister JoAnn, seven grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Willene; sons Tom and Bill; and stepbrothers Jack, George and Perry.

Edmund "Pat" Hamilton Kelly, 86, a retired State Department Foreign Service officer, passed away peacefully with his family by his side on Feb. 5 at Green Ridge Village in Newville, Pa., after a long illness.

Mr. Kelly was born June 30, 1934, in Delaware, Ohio, the youngest son of the late Ruth Curran Kelly and Albert Rice Kelly. After the untimely death of his father, his mother married the late Luther Sheets.

Mr. Kelly grew up in Kilbourne, Ohio, on their pastoral family farm set close to the banks of his beloved Alum Creek. He graduated from Elm Valley High School in 1952.

Mr. Kelly then served a four-year tour in the U.S. Navy, stationed mostly in Yokosuka, Japan. It was in those years that he became known simply as "Kelly."

Through the GI Bill, he attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. The unique Antioch co-op work study program introduced Mr. Kelly to the United Nations in New York City, Colonial Williamsburg and the Cleveland Council on World Affairs.

These experiences, and a summer of Chinese language study at Yale University, sparked an interest in international affairs that led to a 25-year career as a Foreign Service officer.

Mr. Kelly and his family served overseas in Seoul, Vientiane, Lima and Okinawa with the balance of assignments at the State Department in Washington, D.C.

Following his rewarding career in government service, he moved to the private sector and worked for nine years in association management. He particularly enjoyed his leadership role as the executive director for the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics.

He later added a third dimension to his professional journey, pursuing his interest in law. He eventually retired after eight years as the legal assistant to the general counsel for Nuclear Fuel Services.

Outside work, Mr. Kelly was an adventurist who loved to travel and try new things. He had a passion for ice skating, commuting into Washington, D.C., on his Vespa, flying ultralight planes and, above all other unique interests, captaining his houseboat on the Potomac River.

In later years, he perfected his notorious spin serve in table tennis and hiked sections of the Appalachian Trail in Cumberland County, Pa., with fellow seniors from his Green Ridge Village community.

Mr. Kelly loved his family deeply and was a very proud grandfather.

He is survived by his loving wife of more than 60 years, Kathryn "Kitty" Barrick Kelly; son Sean Hamilton Kelly (Suzanne); and two grandchildren, Shannon and Scott Kelly.

He was predeceased by his brother, David A. Kelly (Marge) and their son, Charles "Chuck" Kelly, and their grandson, Ryan Kelly; and his stepbrothers, Henry Sheets and Ed Sheets; stepsister Helen (Sheets) Fleming; and step-nephews Michael Sheets and Dick Fleming.

"Uncle Pat" is remembered fondly by his family, including niece Ruth Ann Kelly; nephew Gene A. Kelly; grand-nephew and grand-nieces Gabriel Kelly, Stephanie Kelly and Allison Kelly; Jolynn Zawilski; and step-nephews and step-nieces Vickie Sheets, Luke Sheets, Nick Sheets, Col. Amanda Sheets, Bob and Bill Fleming, among many others.

Donations may be made in his memory to the Green Ridge Village Fund, 210 Big Spring Road, Newville PA 17241.

Cora Der Koorkanian, 86, spouse of a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Nov. 17, 2020, in Spokane, Wash., surrounded by her family.

Mrs. Der Koorkanian was born on Jan. 28, 1934, in Bucharest, Romania, the youngest of nine siblings. She and her family survived the Holocaust and in 1950 left Romania for Israel, where she graduated from the Tel HaShomer Military School of Nursing and worked as a registered nurse in pediatrics. She left Israel for New York City to work at Mount Sinai Hospital and from there moved to Brazil to work in research.

In 1976 she married George Der Koorkanian, a member of the U.S. Foreign Service, and they spent 31 wonderful years together. The Koorkanians traveled the world, living overseas in Thailand and Germany, settling after Mr. Koorkanian's retirement in Manchester, N.H.

In 2016 Mrs. Koorkanian moved to Spokane to be close to family. She quickly made numerous friends in the community and enjoyed spending much time with her grandchildren, who could walk to her house.

Mrs. Koorkanian is survived by daughter Diana Koorkanian-Sauders; son-in-law Robert Sauders; grandchildren Joshua and Naomi; and numerous nieces and cousins in Israel and France.

Memorial donations may be made to the Congregation Emanu-El (Spokane) Sustainability Fund, the Temple Beth Shalom (Spokane) Yom HaShoah Fund or to support the needs of refugees through the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society or World Relief Spokane.

John F. Kordek, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died at home on Feb. 16 in Arlington Heights, Ill., with his wife by his side.

Mr. Kordek was born on June 9, 1938, in Chicago to John and Harriet (née Rogalski) Kordek. Following graduation from Weber High School, he joined the U.S. Air Force and served four years on active duty with the Strategic Air Command 818th Air Division of the Eighth Air Force.

After completing his active military service, Mr. Kordek graduated from DePaul University in Chicago in 1964 with a bachelor's degree. He earned a graduate degree at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, and also studied at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

While a college senior at DePaul, Mr. Kordek was recruited by the U.S. Foreign Service. He worked for 26 years with the U.S. Information Agency, the International Cooperation Administration and the U.S. State Department, attaining the rank of Career Minister and serving as an ambassador.

Ambassador Kordek served in Serbia, Croatia, Italy, Belgium, Poland, Venezuela, Botswana and Washington, D.C. He also worked in numerous other countries as part of official U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy delegations.

One of his first jobs in the Foreign Service was to escort jazz musician Louis Armstrong on a visit to the former Yugoslavia in 1965 as part of a State Department cultural program.

Amb. Kordek held many senior positions in the U.S. Foreign Service, including deputy chief of mission in Warsaw during the rise to power of the Solidarity movement and the visits of Pope John Paul II to Poland.

During President Ronald Reagan's presidency, he was the USIA director of European affairs and then counselor, the agency's highest career official.

He participated in the Geneva and Reykjavík summit meetings between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, as well as in numerous international negotiations.

President Reagan nominated Mr. Kordek to be U.S. ambassador to Botswana in 1988, and the U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed him.

Following retirement from the Foreign Service in 1990, Amb. Kordek joined DePaul University, where he worked for 15 years as associate vice president and taught courses on World War II and the Holocaust. He also lectured at many universities and organizations.

In 1995 President Bill Clinton appointed Amb. Kordek to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council in Washington, which oversees the operations of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Amb. Kordek served on the council's executive committee and the Committee on Conscience, which monitors genocide worldwide.

President Clinton also selected Amb. Kordek to be a member of the U.S. presidential delegations to commemorate the 50th anniversaries of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the 1945 liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi death camps. He traveled on these delegations with, among others, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel.

Amb. Kordek is the recipient of many honors, including a presidential award from President Ronald Reagan for "sustained superior conduct of U.S. foreign policy."

Amb. Kordek served on several boards of directors when he returned home to Illinois, including the Illinois Humanities Council and the International Visitors Center of Chicago. He chaired the Chicago-Warsaw Sister Cities program and was co-chair of the National Polish American–Jewish American National Council.

In retirement, Amb. Kordek and his wife continued their travels, visiting all the earth's continents. He loved opera, classical music and jazz, and he was a voracious reader of world history.

Amb. Kordek is survived by his spouse of 56 years, Alice (née Kleczynski); son Andrew (Elizabeth) Kordek; daughter Catherine (Lynn) Stover; grandchildren Joshua Kordek, Henry Stover and Will Stover; brother Phillip (Theresa) Kordek; and sister Judy (Chester) Pasowicz.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial may be given to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis TN 38105-9959.

Jay P. (Peter) Moffat Jr., 88, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on Oct. 23, 2020, in Maryland.

Mr. Moffat was born on Jan. 17, 1932, in New York City. His father, Jay P. Moffat, was the U.S. ambassador to Canada, and his grandfather, Joseph Clark Grew, was the U.S. ambassador to Japan, where he tried to avert Tokyo's entry into World War II.

Mr. Moffat graduated from Harvard University in 1953 and married Pamela Mary Dawson that same year.

From 1953 to 1956 he served in the U.S. Army. In 1956 he entered the U.S. Foreign Service as an intelligence research officer in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

His first overseas posting, as a consular officer, was to Kobe, from 1958 to 1961. He was then assigned as a political officer in Paris from 1961 to 1965.

Back in Washington, D.C., he served as officer in charge of Benelux affairs from 1965 to 1968, and as staff assistant to Secretary of State Dean Rusk from 1968 to 1969.

In 1969 Mr. Moffat was assigned to Bern as a political officer before being transferred in 1971 to Port of Spain to serve as deputy chief of mission (DCM). In 1974 he attended the NATO Defense College in Rome for six months.

From 1974 to 1976, he was deputy executive secretary in the State Department. From 1976 to 1980 Mr. Moffat was DCM in Rabat. He next attended the Executive Seminar in National and International Affairs at the Foreign Service Institute and served as temporary DCM in Gambia and Lesotho.

Mr. Moffat was DCM in N'Djamena when the embassy reopened in 1982 before being appointed ambassador

to Chad in 1983. He served there until 1985, during the Chadian-Libyan conflict, and then served as the senior vice president of the National War College before retiring in 1997.

In retirement, Amb. Moffat divided his time between his homes in New Hampshire and Washington, D.C. He loved solving *The New York Times* crossword puzzles, playing tennis, hiking and reading.

He is a lineal descendant of two founding fathers: Benjamin Franklin and John Jay, the latter of whom was negotiator of the Treaty of Paris and the first U.S. chief justice.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by three children, Sarah, Matthew and Nathaniel, as well as seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Philip W. Pillsbury Jr., 85, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died peacefully at his home in Washington, D.C., on March 3 due to complications from Parkinson's disease. He was surrounded by his family.

Born in Chicago on Nov. 20, 1935, Mr. Pillsbury was the elder son of Philip W. Pillsbury and Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury. His father was president and chairman of the Pillsbury Company, which was founded by Mr. Pillsbury's great-grandfather, Charles Alfred Pillsbury. On his mother's side, he was descended from Myles Standish, an English settler who came to America on the *Mayflower*.

Mr. Pillsbury attended the Blake School, the Hotchkiss School and Yale (class of 1957). Following graduate school in Paris, at Sciences Politiques, and The George Washington University, he began a lifelong career with the United States Information Agency, which began in Spain, Italy, Mali and Madagascar.

After returning in 1966 to the United States, he temporarily left the Foreign Service and used his connections and profound understanding of African life and culture as project director of the Urban League Twin Cities in Minneapolis.

During these four years through 1970, he fostered the deepest of relationships with key members of the civil rights movement and used his African photographs and art collection to connect with members of the Minneapolis urban society in ways not many could.

Mr. Pillsbury resumed his career in the Foreign Service in 1970 in Lubumbashi, Zaire, where he promoted American culture and arts. He then served in Tehran (1972-1974), Turin (1976-1980) and Buenos Aires (1980-1984).

He returned to Washington, D.C., where he attended the National War College as a civilian for a year, before running the USIA Youth Exchange until 1990.

In 1995 Mr. Pillsbury was appointed by President Bill Clinton to the Joint Commission of the Environment for the Panama Canal.

Mr. Pillsbury served his country on five continents and invariably left an indelible mark on those he met. He learned to understand and respect local customs and ways of life in a characteristically unassuming manner.

A farewell letter he wrote on leaving Mali in 1962 crystalizes his Foreign Service experience: "I leave as a friend of Mali. More, I love your country and your people. My stay has given me my life's richest human experience. Most of all I have learned that love and sincerity between friends crosses all boundaries of politics, race, religion and customs—that we all have the same emotions in our souls and can meet in a spirit of brotherhood. However, until this is understood by all we can have no lasting peace in this world."

Among his many board memberships, his impact was felt most deeply at the Hotchkiss School, the Octagon Society, the Foreign Student Service Council, the American Architectural Foundation, the Society of the Cincinnati, Alliance Française of Washington, D.C., Blair House and many others.

Mr. Pillsbury was also proud to have served as his class agent for both Hotchkiss and Yale, as well as the National War College. He was a member of the Woodhill Club of Wayzata, Minn., the Metropolitan Club, the Chevy Chase Club and the Yale Club of New York City.

Mr. Pillsbury was preceded in death by his brother, Henry Adams Pillsbury, and his first wife, Marion Winsor Mirick.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Caroline (Nina) Hannaford Pillsbury; three children, Fendell, Caroline Oliver and Philip III; nine grandchildren, Dustin, Andrew, Dalton, Elizabeth, Serena, Anna, Winston, Millicent and Thomas; sons-in-law Michael and Drew; and daughter-in-law Cynthia.

In lieu of flowers, a donation may be made in his memory to the Parkinson's Foundation.

If you would like us to include an obituary in In Memory, please send text to journal@afsa.org.

Be sure to include the date, place and cause of death, as well as details of the individual's Foreign Service career. Please place the name of the AFSA member to be memorialized in the subject line of your email.

One Man's Service

The Good American: The Epic Life of Bob Gersony, the U.S. Government's Greatest Humanitarian
Robert D. Kaplan, Random House, 2021, $30/hardcover, e-book available, 544 pages.

Reviewed by Peter F. Kranstover

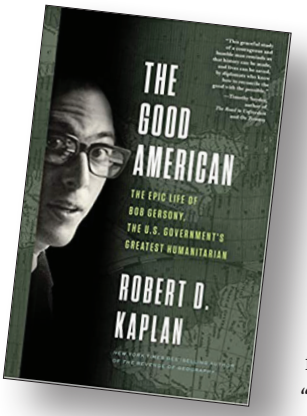
Robert D. Kaplan has written 19 books on a variety of global issues, but his latest, *The Good American*, may be the first in which he takes the liberty of describing his studied protagonist, Bob Gersony, as somewhat like himself.

Kaplan and Gersony share several characteristics: Both are New Yorkers with personal, unorthodox approaches to contemporary international crises. The book makes for a revealing read, as it follows Gersony's work ethic and frenetic travels for more than four decades to obscure, conflict-ridden parts of the globe.

Told in Kaplan's patented declarative style, this is the story of an American original, a contemporary and friend of the author's who served in Vietnam after leaving school, overcoming an early and natural sense of disquiet about the world and himself.

Through brains and willpower, Gersony would fundamentally shape and affect several major U.S. foreign policy initiatives on four different continents. For this reviewer, it confirms the power of vision, rooted in a clear sense of right and wrong, and underlines the importance of the United States remaining engaged internationally.

Gersony crafted through his own investigative methodology a specialized niche in the world of refugees, foreign aid, disaster relief and international affairs. After Vietnam, he reinvigorated a language school in Antigua, Guatemala, before being thrown into relief work there following the devastating earthquake in February 1976.



This led to a 40-year career as a government contractor for the State Department, USAID and the United Nations. His scope of work could have said, and maybe did: "Resolve intractable problems in faraway places, and other duties as assigned."

His scope of work could have said, and maybe did: "Resolve intractable problems in faraway places, and other duties as assigned."

Relying on a simple modus operandi of posing fundamental questions to ordinary people—the marginalized, the displaced and the refugee—and showing them some basic respect, Gersony wrote credible narratives about those caught in the thick of humanitarian crises.

His information, gleaned from assiduously focused interviews in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Balkans, invariably became invaluable to U.S. embassies, even essential to their efficient function, however uncomfortable it was for Washington.

Debates over our role in the world are salient these days, much more so than during the Cold War, when we enjoyed a certainty about ourselves and were untroubled by our motives. Critiques of our country's motives and role, from Vietnam to Iraq, emerged during the course of his long professional career.

He nonetheless found his place as a "lowly contractor," whose work was embraced by Secretary of State George Shultz and senior policymakers, both career and political, in the State Department and USAID, often in real time. His work made a significant and positive difference to many people, as Kaplan shows.

The Good American shows us how large the human factor looms in successful humanitarian work. Yes, one needs a bureaucratic framework, an efficient use of funds, wise counsel and honest colleagues, but results require a keen sense of the area and the bravery to speak truth to power.

Having some knowledge of the way power functions in Washington does not hurt either, as Kaplan illustrates with complimentary and helpful profiles of a number of Foreign Service officers who represent the best of government service.

Instructive—but also chilling and dramatic—are his chapters on Ger-

sony's work in Uganda in the early 1980s, documenting President Milton Obote's killing of civilians, and later in Mozambique, exposing the truth about the Mozambican National Resistance's civilian massacres, funded by the South African apartheid regime.

His career reminds us that international affairs and foreign aid are noble antidotes to apathy and even evil. The bureaucracy works, but only because of its dedicated employees. Doing the government's business may sometimes suffer from inertia and inattention, but that is only because it is a human business.

As his friend from the early 1970s in Guatemala, I do not think Gersony would put too fine a point on what he accomplished. Nonetheless, his efforts are a manifestation of some of the best work people and institutions do in making and influencing foreign policy.

Kaplan's long and detailed narrative, with lots of exotic people and locales, will draw you in quickly and hold you. ■

Peter F. Kranstover served for 30 years in Latin America, Africa, Washington, D.C., and Pakistan as a Foreign Service officer with USAID. He lives in Cedarburg, Wisconsin.

Want to review a recent book related to diplomacy or development for the *FSJ*?

Please send a note with your pitch to journal@afsa.org

WELCOME TO THE NEW *FSJ* LODGING SECTION!

SUMMER TRANSFER SEASON IS HERE.

Contact these advertisers for options on short- and long-term stays.

MOVING?
Be sure to send address updates to member@afsa.org

Residence Inn Arlington/Rosslyn

1651 North Oak Street,
Arlington, VA 22209

Visit our website for more details:
www.marriott.com/wasrr

- 176 Spacious suites with full kitchens
- Free breakfast each morning as well as complimentary Wi-Fi
- Complimentary access to Gold's Gym (restrictions apply); Discounted parking with unlimited in and out privileges
- Full per diem and sliding scale per diem rates accepted. Please contact Jannelle.Marshall@rirva.com for reservations or more details

Affordable lodging in the heart of Washington, DC

DACOR Bacon House Guest Rooms

A unique stay in a historic building previously home to Chief Justices of the Supreme Court, Congressmen, foreign dignitaries, famous socialites and more. Now the home of DACOR, an organization of foreign affairs professionals.

https://www.dacorbacon.org/guest_rooms

dacor@dacorbacon.org
202.682.0500

1801 F Street, NW
Washington, DC
20006

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL guide to EXTENDED STAY HOUSING

Your Go-To Resource!

Find it online at
www.afsa.org/extendedstay

FUND FOR AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

OUR STORY IS IMPORTANT. HELP US TELL IT.

Donate online at afsa.org/donate

Make a tax-deductible gift to the Fund for American Diplomacy and help AFSA tell the story of the Foreign Service.

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

You can make a contribution at www.afsa.org/donate

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

LANGUAGE SERVICES

Language Operations Company offers private, semi-private and group classes to prepare you for FSI, OPI and DLPT exams. We excel in training federal and private students to reach their language goals through an ILR scale-based curriculum that combines language and culture.

Language Operations Company
Tel: (703) 477-1502.
Email: contact@langops.com
Website: www.langops.com

LEGAL SERVICES

ATTORNEY WITH OVER 25 YEARS' successful experience SPECIALIZING FULL-TIME IN FS GRIEVANCES will more than double your chance of winning: 30% of grievants win before the Grievance Board; 85% of my clients win. Only a private attorney can adequately develop and present your case, including necessary regs, arcane legal doctrines, precedents and rules.

Bridget R. Mugane
Tel: (301) 596-0175 or (202) 387-4383.
Email: fsatty@comcast.net
Website: foreignservicelawyer.com

EXPERIENCED ATTORNEYS REPRESENTING FS officers in grievances, performance, promotion and tenure, financial claims, discrimination, security clearance issues, and disciplinary actions. We represent FS officers at all stages of proceedings from investigation to issuance of proposed discipline or initiation of a grievance, through hearing before the FSGB. We provide experienced, timely and knowledgeable advice to employees from junior untenured officers through the Senior FS and often work closely with AFSA.

Kalijarvi, Chuzi, Newman & Fitch
Tel: (202) 331-9260.
Email: intake@kcnlaw.com

REAL ESTATE

Homeward bound? It is never too early to start planning for your HST assignment. As a former FSO and full-service Realtor, I will help you find the perfect residence and investment. My unique listing search tool allows "nice to have" features without penalty & "must haves" to search from afar. Contact me to learn how I ensure a seamless transition whether you are buying or selling.

ALAN DAVIS, REALTOR
Long & Foster
6045 Burke Centre Pkwy.
Burke VA 22015
Cell/Text: (571) 229-6821.
Email: alandavisrealtor@gmail.com
Website: www.alandavisrealtor.com

FLORIDA'S PARADISE COAST—Naples, Bonita Springs, Estero Excellent amenities, activities, cultural events in beautiful Southwest Florida. Outstanding home values.

Thomas M. Farley, LLC. Retired SFS.
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Realty
Email: tomfarley@BHHSFloridaRealty.net

HEADING OUT? HEADING "HOME" TO DC? As an immigrant and Foreign Service spouse, I know what a hassle international moves can be—especially without a GSO or CLO! Whether you are looking to buy, sell or rent, in DC or VA, **I can help smooth your transition.** For a realtor who understands the unique needs and strains of Foreign Service life, please email me at marian.thompson@compass.com or text/call 703-967-1796.

Marian Thompson
Compass
3001 Washington Blvd. 400
Arlington VA 22201
Cell/Text: (703) 967-1796.
Email: Marian.thompson@compass.com
Website: www.compass.com/agents/Marian-Thompson/

BUYING OR REFINANCING A HOME? Jeff Stoddard has specialized in home finance for FSOs for 20 years and is able to provide FSO-specific financing.

Contact: Jeffrey Stoddard
Tel: (703) 725-2455.
Email: groupstoddard@gmail.com

SARASOTA FLORIDA REALTOR Marian Walsh (FSO Spouse) is your real estate guide to retirement living in Sarasota.

Marian Walsh, Medway Realty
Tel: (941) 483-0803.
Email: florida.walsh@gmail.com
Website: https://walsh.movetosarasotafl.com

MAIN STATE BOUND? Tap into my 30+ years of providing exclusive representation to FSOs buying and selling real estate. You need unique and special consideration to find the right property. Let me assist with your next home, guiding you through the myriad details for a smooth transaction.

Marilyn Cantrell, Associate Broker, Licensed in DC and VA
McEnearney Associates, McLean VA
Cell: (703) 819-4801.
Email: Marilyn@MarilynCantrell.com
Website: MarilynCantrell.com

TAX & FINANCIAL SERVICES

IRVING CPA, PLLC. Scott Irving, CPA, has more than 20 years of experience and specializes in Foreign Service family tax preparation and tax planning.

Tel: (202) 257-2318.
Email: info@irvingcom.com
Website: www.irvingcpa.pro

PROFESSIONAL TAX RETURN PREPARATION. Arthur A. Granberg, EA, ATA, ATP, has more than 40 years of experience in public tax practice. Our Associates include EAs & CPAs. Our rate is $150 per hour; most FS returns take just 3-4 hours. Located near Ballston Mall and Metro station.

Tax Matters Associates PC
4600 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 414
Arlington VA 22203
Tel: (703) 522-3828.
Fax: (703) 522-5726.
Email: aag8686tma@gmail.com

TEMPORARY HOUSING

CORPORATE APARTMENT SPECIALISTS. We have 25 years of experience serving the Foreign Service community. Sliding scales and TDY per diems are welcome! We offer a variety of locations throughout Virginia, Maryland and DC. Our all-inclusive pricing includes updated furniture, tasteful décor, all houseware items, all utilities, high-speed Wi-Fi and an expanded cable package.

Tel: (800) 914-2802.
Email: bookings@corporateapartments.com
Website: www.corporateapartments.com

DC GUEST APARTMENTS. Not your typical "corporate" apartments—we're different! Located in Dupont Circle, we designed our apartments as places where we would like to live and work—beautifully furnished and fully equipped (including internet & satellite TV). Most importantly, we understand that occasionally needs change, so we never penalize you if you leave early. You only pay for the nights you stay, even if your plans change at the last minute. We also don't believe in minimum stays or extra charges like application or cleaning fees.

Tel: (202) 536-2500.
Email: DCDIGS@gmail.com
Website: www.dcguestapartments.com

DCLuxe Properties. Washington, D.C., corporate housing, offering large fully furnished and generously equipped one- and two-bedroom units in the heart of the popular **Dupont Circle** neighborhood. In-unit washer/dryer, cable TV, high-speed internet and weekly housekeeping are standard amenities. Your privacy is important to us—no shared spaces or large apartment buildings. The subway, grocery stores, drug stores, dry cleaners and restaurants are all within 3 blocks of your unit. We have more than 20 years of experience with USG sliding scale per diem.

Live like a local!
For more information and photos, contact us:
Email: host@dcluxe.com
Website: dcluxe.com

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION: **The Remington is back!** 2 blocks to Main State, ideal for language classes, across from GWU. Newly renovated one bedroom-one bath, stainless steel appliances, Ikea kitchen, wood floors throughout, upgraded bathroom, washer/dryer. Gym, paid parking, balcony, utilities included. We work with gov't sliding scale per diem.

Tel: (202) 308-5371.
Email: jarvisarrey@gmail.com

OTHER

PET SHIPPING WORLDWIDE:
ACTION PET EXPRESS. Veteran-owned since 1969.

Tel: (888) 318-9696.
Email: info@actionpetexpress.com
Website: www.actionpetexpress.com

FOR SALE: Rock Creek Cemetery Burial Plots; 8 lots in Section 2 for DACOR

Contact: John Buttles
Email: jsbuttles@gmail.com

Kathleen Stafford Fine Art Gifts Watercolors from over 35 years+ of Foreign Service postings—from Iran to Khartoum.

Email: Stafford333@gmail.com
Website: www.Kathleen-Stafford.com

Contact Molly Long to be included in this section: ads@afsa.org or (202) 719-9706

AD INDEX

When contacting one of our advertisers, kindly mention you saw their advertisement in *The Foreign Service Journal*.

Rescuing a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sarh

BY PETER HARDING

Sometimes, it turns out that a diplomat has to choose between lying for his country to save a life and telling the straight and narrow truth, only to potentially suffer the consequences. The consular course at the Foreign Service Institute may hesitate to use an experience I had in Chad in 1997 as an example in the American Citizen Services' "thinking on your feet" handbook, but I'd like to think there might be a hidden wink and an unspoken nudge in the hesitation.

I was stationed at Embassy N'Djamena from 1996 to 1998. The incident in question occurred almost precisely midway through my tour. Our embassy had a solid front office and country team, but was often gravely shorthanded. In my case, I had many hats to wear: I was the political officer, economic officer and commercial officer, as well as the sole consular officer. I had three separate offices in two different buildings and only one Foreign Service National assistant.

Always busy multitasking (as the saying now goes) but always coming up a day late and a dollar short, I would come in on the weekends to catch up and read correspondence. One Sunday near the end of my first year, there was a handwritten note on my desk from the ambassador that read: "I need to see you right away."

I walked over to the residence, which was in the same compound as the chancery, to meet with him. As soon as I arrived, the ambassador said: "We have a 'situation' down south, which I need you to help resolve immediately. It seems that a Peace Corps volunteer was involved in some kind of accident and has been arrested. The PCV has apparently been charged with manslaughter, and the victim's family is threatening to lynch him."

I made some calls in my capacity as commercial officer and discovered the Esso-led oil consortium in country had a small Twin Otter aircraft that flew daily to the southern oil fields near Sarh, where the incident in question had occurred. Foolishly dressed in a grey pin-striped wool suit, I met up at the airstrip with the Peace Corps nurse, a Cameroonian named Dorothy, to fly down to Sarh, about 500 kilometers south of N'Djamena.

Dorothy and I were the only passengers on board. The pilot, a Pakistani from Rawalpindi, informed me that he could drop us off in Sarh around 11 a.m. and would be returning at about 2 p.m. He told us that if we weren't at the airstrip at 2 o'clock sharp, he would take off directly for a return flight to N'Djamena regardless.

On arrival, we grabbed a local taxi and asked where the governor's office was. "The governor is not here," the driver replied. "A relative of his was recently killed in a bicycle accident, and he is out of town attending the funeral." (Uh-oh!)

"So who is in charge?" I asked.

"The attorney general," he said, cautioning that the man was notoriously corrupt.

When we arrived at the AG's office, I asked for an immediate audience.

The meeting included the attorney general himself, his assistant, nurse Dorothy, me and the frightened-looking Peace Corps volunteer, who had been released from jail (at our insistence) with a bandage on his head.

The attorney general's assistant then told us the story:

A village chief, a close relative of the governor, possibly drunk on palm wine, was coming down a hill on his bicycle. Riding up the hill was this young PCV wearing a helmet. Improbably, neither one saw the other, and they collided.

As fate would have it, the front tires of the bicycles perfectly touched each other, and both riders went over the handlebars and conked heads. The PCV survived because he was wearing a helmet, but the village chief died. The village chief left behind four wives and as many as 25 children.

The young man was formally charged with manslaughter. In addition, as is the custom in this part of Chad, his family and friends were demanding either revenge or compensation.

Once his assistant had finished, the AG promptly asked me, "So, which will it be?"

"Well, he's an American citizen, so we intend on taking him back to N'Djamena as soon as possible for medical treatment."

Peter X. Harding is a retired FSO who served in 10 countries during a 30-year career. He is also a Vietnam veteran and served two consecutive winter-overs in Antarctica before joining the Foreign Service.

COURTESY OF PETER HARDING

Peter Harding, the U.S. political-economic-commercial-consular officer in N'Djamena, during a political and economic reporting trip along the border with Nigeria in 1997—months after the incident recounted here. The Chadian government provided Harding with an armed escort because the area was (and still is) dangerous.

"You can do that under one condition: that you sign a piece of paper I've prepared, which will ensure financial support for the village chief's wives and children as long as they live."

"I'm afraid I don't have the authority to do that, even as a consular officer."

"Well, I strongly advise you to sign this piece of paper because if not, once the funeral is over, a large crowd will gather here, and we will be unable to prevent the lynching of this young man."

I asked the AG if I could use his telephone to call the presidential palace. In those days, it took at least 20 minutes to place a long-distance call from Sarh to the capital. I was finally able to get hold of one of President Idriss Déby's closest advisers, with whom I had a good working relationship.

I explained the situation and asked if he or the president could intercede on our behalf. He told me that the way they ran things in the capital was to *not*, repeat, *not* interfere in local affairs, and that there was nothing he could do to help me. Luckily enough, there were no speaker phones back then, and I was the only one who heard this.

Deciding to take advantage of that fact, I told the presidential adviser, in a voice that was probably louder than strictly necessary: "Hey, that's great! Thank you very much. We'll have him on the next plane headed north. I'm greatly indebted for your help on this. My best regards to the president." I then hung up the phone.

The AG looked shocked. I grabbed the PCV's hand and signaled to Dorothy to hurry down the stairs immediately and into the waiting taxicab. We beelined to the dirt airstrip. As I looked at the sky, I thanked God that the red Twin Otter was circling and ready to land. Still, it would be a close call.

Once the plane touched down and taxied to a stop, I ran up to the pilot and asked how long he planned to be on the ground. He said, "No more than 20 minutes to refuel."

"How about two minutes?! And skip the refueling," I said, pointing down the road to two army Toyota pickup-type trucks with soldiers clustered in the back. They were wearing red berets, carrying rifles and heading our way pell-mell in a cloud of dust.

The pilot was able to take off in the nick of time, just as the trucks loaded with soldiers arrived on the scene. I prayed the soldiers would not open fire and bring the plane down in an explosion of flames.

Once airborne, out of reach of gunfire and safely on our way to N'Djamena, my heart went from thumping wildly back down to normal. We radioed ahead so that the embassy folks could meet us at the airport and whisk us back to the compound.

After hearing the story, the ambassador was concerned that I, as a U.S. Foreign Service officer, had essentially lied to a high-level Chadian official. Nonetheless, we got the PCV on an Air France flight out of the country early that same evening.

I fully expected to be "PNGed"—expelled from the country by the host government, persona non grata—as soon as the next day. In the morning, I received the dreaded call from my friend, the presidential adviser at the palace.

"Pete, you have no idea what a beehive you kicked down there in Sarh," he said. "It really caused a firestorm!"

I waited for the fateful words and began mentally preparing to pack my bags. Instead, he let out a loud laugh.

"*Mon Dieu, c'est quelque chose que nous aimerions même faire!* (My God, that's something we would have liked to have done!)," he said and hung up the phone, still chuckling.

The African Affairs Bureau in the State Department (AF) was also concerned about the episode, at first. Eventually, though, the storm blew over. It was not the first time AF had encountered an unorthodox case in which an overly rigid adherence to rules and regulations might have played out in counterproductive fashion in the real world.

(Note: The bureau has a good reputation among "Africa hands" for being quite understanding about such things. The embassy country team, together with the Peace Corps director, also discussed ways in which Mission Chad might compensate the village for the loss of its chief.)

In the end, I was paid one of the best compliments I'd ever received. It was from Dorothy, the Peace Corps nurse from Cameroon, who said to me with a smile, "*Eh bien, Monsieur Harding, vous êtes un vrai diplomate!* (Well, Mr. Harding, you are a real diplomat!)" ■

BY TOM FENTON ■ KOH SAMUI, THAILAND

In this picture is a ruthless killing machine that would eat you as soon as look at you. Also in the picture, a dragon. We spotted this little guy hiding out, completely unfazed by the ferocious beast in whose mouth he was lounging. In fact, after I took this shot, he put his head down and resumed his nap.

The dragon is at the base of "Guanyin with Eighteen Arms" (see inset), the main statue at Wat Plai Laem, a modern Buddhist temple complex on the island of Koh Samui, Thailand, that incorporates elements of Chinese and Thai traditions. Guanyin is the Buddhist bodhisattva associated with compassion. We visited Wat Plai Laem in November 2020. ■

Tom Fenton is an information management specialist currently posted in Bangkok, which he says is a pretty good place to ride out a global pandemic. His previous posts were Budapest and Khartoum. He shoots with a Canon 80D. He would like to stress that no cats or dragons were injured in the taking of this photo.

Please submit your favorite, recent photograph to be considered for Local Lens. Images must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi at 8" x 10", or 1 MB or larger) and must not be in print elsewhere. Include a short description of the scene/event, as well as your name, brief biodata and the type of camera used. Send to **locallens@afsa.org**.

Avoid a gap in your professional liability coverage - transfer to Starr Wright USA, the nations' leading provider of Federal Employee Professional Liability Insurance (FEPLI).

Special Offer For All AFSA Members:

- ★ A **13-month policy** for the cost of 12 months
- ★ A **10%** AFSA member **discount** on your policy
- ★ Coverage dating back to your Hirshorn policy start date - **avoid gaps**

FEPLI is so important, agencies are required to reimburse up to 50% for qualified employees.

SAVE NOW!

STARR WRIGHT USA
PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Apply Today:

swu.insure/FSJ

OTHER PURIFICATION COMPANIES JUST DON'T HOLD WATER.

Since 1990, the B. David Company has supplied EPA inspected, USA produced water purification systems to thousands of families living in houses and apartments at United States embassies and consulates in 70+ countries. Our systems guarantee protection against waterborne illnesses caused by pathogens – from *E.coli bacteria* and viruses to cysts such as *giardia lamblia*. • Our systems are built on green technology with no chemicals, electricity use or water waste and have third-party certification to NSF P-231, 42, and 53 testing protocol. • With our 10-year warranty and 7-day customer service, there's no reason why you wouldn't want to tip your toes in our water. For testing purposes, we will send you either our 4000 Nanotechnology Certified Under Counter System or the BDC-6000BB Nanotechnology Certified Whole House System to your post **free of charge**. No obligation or commitment is required. Please send the model number you would like to test, your name, title and location to info@bdavidwater.com.

For more information, visit our website at bdavidwater.com or email info@bdavidwater.com.

B.David Company

World Health Through Water Purification Systems