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PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

JULY-AUGUST 2021

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:
PERSPECTIVES

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A Governing Board Term Unlike Any Other

BY ERIC RUBIN

As the current AFSA Governing Board's term comes to an end, I think it is fair to say that despite very unusual circumstances we accomplished a great deal, both in terms of achieving positive change that benefits our members and protecting the Foreign Service and our members from threats and hostile challenges.

Our biggest successes in the difficult environment of the Trump administration were protective: We supported members who had to testify or give depositions in the first impeachment process against President Trump; lobbied and negotiated to get the rules changed so we could raise money to support their legal defense; and then raised about \$750,000 in direct donations (thanks to the generosity of our members and others) so that no AFSA member was out of pocket a single penny for legal expenses related to impeachment. We also publicly defended our members' courage in stating the truth under oath and defying instructions not to cooperate with legal subpoenas from Congress.

Then came COVID-19. Much of the final year of our board term was devoted to pushing for information and transparency on vaccinations, health resources,

authorized and ordered departure, and equity in the vaccine rollout process. We finished the term with every AFSA member, as

well as every American family member and Foreign Service National employee overseas, having had access to one of the approved vaccines.

We did not just play defense, however. We worked intensively with members of Congress and their staffs to make certain that our foreign affairs and foreign assistance accounts were adequately funded, despite the previous administration's attempts every year to gut them.

After the November 2020 elections, we reached out to build relationships with the new committee chairs in the House and Senate, and with the congressional leadership, to advocate for needed changes to our foundational legislation and for urgent action on diversity, equality of benefits and protection from harm.

We worked rapidly to establish close ties to the new Biden administration after the inauguration, promoting AFSA's priority goals and objectives and seeking to be a partner in efforts to make progress on diversity and inclusion, professional education and training, and reform of parts of our Foreign Service career path. We began the campaign to press for a significant expansion of the Foreign Service in all agencies, a goal that may be within reach.

Despite the shutdown of our offices for nearly a year and a half, we maintained member services and outreach at their pre-pandemic levels, and leveraged the new technologies of telework and virtual public platforms to ensure that we kept members engaged and informed.

AFSA also broadened its ties with the employee affinity and resource groups at State and USAID, as well as with important outside organizations such as the American Academy of Diplomacy, the Council of American Ambassadors, the Association of Black American Ambassadors, the USAID Alumni Association, DACOR, the National Museum of American Diplomacy, and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. In unity there is strength, and thanks to our outreach efforts we are now coordinating more closely with all these groups.

AFSA also maintained a high public profile, with numerous interviews, television appearances and social media outreach. This proved to be of enormous help in getting our message out during the pandemic.

Our member services have not flagged, and we have managed to ramp up representation on matters large and small. *The Foreign Service Journal* has kept up an impressive pace, with more relevant content from and for members, and more advertising to pay for it.

AFSA's current governing board will step down in mid-July, with gratitude to our members for their ideas and support and with a determination to hand over our list of priorities to the next board with clear evidence of progress on most of them.

There is a lot for the next board to tackle. As always, please send your advice, concerns and suggestions to us at member@afsa.org. ■



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

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Diversity Perspectives

BY SHAWN DORMAN

A year ago, the FSJ Editorial Board decided to devote the 2021 July-August edition to “a progress report” on diversity and inclusion in the Foreign Service. We hoped it might feature dramatic change, the fruit of a year of intense, unprecedented attention to the problems of racism, diversity, inclusion and equity.

As we got closer to putting this edition together, however, it became clear that it’s too early for the ribbon-cutting ceremony: We don’t yet have a Foreign Service that is truly “representative of the American people,” as mandated by the 1946 (and 1980) Foreign Service Act. But things *are* happening.

So we opted to keep a focus on the *process of change*—fraught and messy as it is—as we have been doing for the past year, checking in on the direction being taken, assessing the realities and seeking new data and more views, and endeavoring to hold the institutions and our own community accountable for real change. (As we went to press, the September 2020 *FSJ* received a Gold EXCEL Award from Association Media & Publishing.)

The good news is that real conversations are continuing, in particular through new vehicles such as the diver-

sity councils set up in bureaus and at posts. Several serious studies have been undertaken by groups both inside and outside the

Service leading to reports and recommendations that can help show the way (Truman Center, Belfer Center, Council on Foreign Relations).

State has created a top-level chief diversity and inclusion officer position and appointed Ambassador (ret.) Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley as CDIO, giving the position real authority.

Recommendations from the affinity groups—and AFSA—are being sought and welcomed by the administration. Congress is pushing new legislation to advance diversity.

There is wide agreement that a cultural shift is required, and that fundamental change is no simple task. There’s a chance that this is a real inflection point.

We offer this month’s collection of perspectives to help keep the subject front and center, opening with a primer on diversity in the Foreign Service from author and former FSO Harry W. Kopp. For anyone considering today’s reckoning with gender, ethnic and racial diversity in the Service, this is a good place to start.

FSO Kathryn Drenning, a member of the board of Executive Women @ State, writes on what it will take for “Achieving Parity for Women in the Foreign Service.”

In “Asian Americans Can No Longer Be Silent, and Neither Should You,” Kim Bissonnette shares her family’s Cambodian-American journey.

Tianna Spears—the consular fellow whose viral blog post about harassment she experienced by CBP officials at the U.S.-Mexico border sparked difficult

conversations that continue a year later—shares her thoughts today in “The Power of Vulnerability.”

FSO Michael Honigstein urges colleagues to face and then work to overcome “Three Myths That Sustain Structural Racism at State.” In “Rooting Out Microaggressions,” FSO Charles Morrill takes a close look at the various forms of microaggressions and how they create a toxic work environment, offering suggestions on how to combat the problem.

FSO Maryum Saiffee brings us a close-up of the tools and services the Transition Center provides and explains how they can help build a more agile and inclusive workforce.

Elsewhere, in a timely follow-on to the May *FSJ* article on expanding professional education (Tom Pickering, David Miller and Rand Beers), this month’s feature from FSO Joel Ehrendreich offers a specific plan to get there: “State U—A Proposal for Professional Diplomatic Education and Outreach to America.”

In the Speaking Out, two diplomats—one German and one American—offer suggestions for Foreign Service reform in both countries. And in Reflections, we travel back to southern Arabia circa 1966 with FS spouse Kate Carr.

AFSA President Eric Rubin reviews the 2019-2021 Governing Board term in his column, and AFSA News includes the complete term report. The 2021-2023 Governing Board takes office July 15.

After a tough couple years, here’s hoping the next two will see improvements on many fronts. As always, we want to hear from you. Write us at journal@afsa.org. ■



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.



Visiting Greenland

Your Arctic focus (May *FSJ*) was a grand slam, especially [Coordinator for the Arctic Region] Jim DeHart's cogent presentation, which I will draw from in my work with the U.S. military.

While serving as deputy chief of mission in Copenhagen, I made five visits to Greenland in three years (including joining Denmark's queen and prime minister to mark the 50th anniversary of handing the U.S. WWII-era military command back to Denmark).

So I appreciated Eavan Cully's focus on the public diplomacy dimension for why we reopened a Greenland consulate after a nearly 70-year absence. I would have enjoyed learning more about the nuts and bolts of setting up shop in Nuuk, which is closer to Washington, D.C., than Copenhagen.

Larry Butler

Ambassador, retired

Thomaston, Maine, and Reston, Virginia

The Arctic: A Compelling Story

Congratulations on the Arctic coverage in your May edition. I was a senior Arctic official during our first chairmanship of the Arctic Council, so it was great to catch up on all that's happened and to get such a comprehensive look at the picture today. It's a compelling story that deserves attention.

I was struck by the piece on our consulate in Nuuk because I had served in the Arctic (1986-1988) when Embassy Oslo used to operate the U.S. Information Office in Tromsø—which, sadly and unwisely, we closed during the budget crunch of 1995.

Tromsø was a "presence post" that had started off as a U.S. Information Service library and was picked up by State in the 1960s to signal our interest in Nor-

way's border region with the Soviet Union.

The work was mostly public diplomacy in nature—meeting in various small towns with the mayor, the newspaper editor, the chamber of commerce and the English language class at the high school—but it did give me an appreciation for the geopolitical significance of the Arctic and the special role of Indigenous peoples (in Norway, the Sami) who later became an important and interesting component of the Arctic Council's portfolio.

Great initiative to tackle this theme!

Richard B. Norland

U.S. Ambassador to Libya &

U.S. Special Envoy for Libya

Libya External Office, Tunis

A Foreign Service Officer's Art

Ambassador William Roebuck's article on reading Dante in Syria (May *FSJ*) struck me as not only beautifully written but as a piece that captures so much of what a great Foreign Service officer does.

He reports in a way that grabs the reader, that compels understanding of the foreign view, and that lays out what needs to be done as a policy matter for the United States and why it needs to happen. To do so with brevity and clarity is professionalism. To do it with beauty is art.

Ronald E. Neumann

Ambassador, retired

Washington, D.C.

An Elegant Piece

William Roebuck's essay, "Raqqa's Inferno: A Diplomat Reads Dante in Syria," in your May edition is extraordinary. In almost 10 years of reading nearly everything out there on the Syrian catastrophe, I've not read anything better.

Indeed, it is one of the most elegant and striking pieces I've ever read on any subject. I was stunned by the author's eloquence and insight.

My students at Bard College will be reading it not only for the information it conveys, but as an example of how best to communicate in English.

Ambassador Frederic C. Hof

*Professor and Diplomat-in-Residence
Bard College*

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

On the Recognition of Armenian Genocide

President Joe Biden's April 24 acknowledgment that the Turkish government carried out a deliberate campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide of its Armenian citizens in 1915 merits careful reflection, notably within State's Office of Global Criminal Justice.

At first glance, Ankara's knee-jerk reaction seems inane. Numerous eyewitnesses, among them U.S. diplomats and Turkish government officials, including Ahmed Djemal Pasha, then known among Syrian and Lebanese Arabs as "the Butcher" or "the Bloodthirsty," reported on the executions and mass deportations.

Moreover, the genocide was the culmination of several earlier massacres of Armenians and Assyrian Christians instigated by Ottoman officials, which included the Adana pogroms of April 1909 and the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-1896. That the Turks wanted to expel the Armenians and Assyrians from central and eastern Anatolia was no secret. But why?

Undoubtedly, ethnic and religious rivalries, even animosities, played major roles. The Turks resented Europeans intervening in their internal affairs on behalf of the Ottoman Empire's



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Christians (among them, my own Maronite ancestors in Mount Lebanon). Armenians and Assyrians were convenient scapegoats for Turkish resentments about being pushed around.

These sentiments were exacerbated in the 1800s by Russia's repeated efforts to court fellow Eastern Orthodox Christians in its military campaigns to control the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara and the Turkish Straits (Bosporus and Dardanelles); free their fellow Slavs from Ottoman domination in the Balkans; and even recover Constantinople for Christendom.

During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, both sides committed atrocities targeting noncombatant Muslim and Christian civilians, particularly in Bulgaria and areas of Albanian Muslim settlement. The Russians further sought to cleanse Crimea of its Tatars, whose survivors sought refuge among the Ottomans. Such war crimes designed to eliminate rival communities were not new.

Rather, these horrors occurred in the aftermath of a Russian campaign in the early 1860s to forcibly empty the northwest Caucasus of its Circassian (or Adyghe) population. Perhaps as many as 1.5 million Muslim Circassians and Abkhazians were either murdered or expelled.

In justifying his military's indiscriminate killings and mass expulsions, one Russian general derided the Circassians as "subhuman filth," while a Russian prince heartlessly declared to several concerned Americans: "These Circassians are like your American Indians—untamed and uncivilized. ... Extermination only will keep them quiet." Most refugees who survived fled to the Ottoman Empire.

Memories are very, very long among expelled people. Spend an afternoon, as I have, in the crowded enclave of Bourj Hammoud northeast of Beirut,

home to most of Lebanon's 150,000+ Armenian community. The streets are named after former Armenian cities and villages in Anatolia, and the locals talk of returning. For them, irredentist aspirations—whether in Turkey or in Nagorno-Karabakh—are not far-fetched; they are deeply held.

This, in part, explains why Ankara has refused to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide (or come to grips with the Kurds' continued quest for an independent state).

Perhaps we could help ease Turkish resentments and anxieties by fully acknowledging that we, too, committed terrible wrongs in subjugating Native Americans, that we recognize the Circassian Genocide of 1860-1864, and that we oppose a redrawing of Turkey's borders without Ankara's consent.

George W. Aldridge
FSO, retired
Arlington, Texas

Age: An Unacknowledged Bias

With the increasing and long-overdue focus on the lack of diversity in the Foreign Service, Congress is considering legislation to create a midlevel entry program targeting underrepresented groups.

Predictably, AFSA is opposing this legislation and will no doubt cite statistics to show that the department has no trouble attracting so-called "second careerists" to join the Foreign Service.

This is consistent with the failure of AFSA or State Department leadership to recognize the unique challenges faced by those of us who come to this career later in life.

It begins in A-100 class, as speaker after speaker leads off their talks with "you guys are too young to remember" and continues when members of the

Senior Foreign Service address entry-level officers and talk about "your generation" as if all entry-level officers are the same age.

On more than one occasion, when someone is giving an example of how not to behave in the Foreign Service, I have heard them pointedly note that the person in question is a "second careerist"—as if this category somehow made it more likely that they would behave badly.

Such microaggressions signal that anyone whose age does not match up with their rank does not merit equivalent consideration as individuals on a more traditional career path.

In an up-or-out system, it stands to reason that those who join earlier have a higher chance of reaching the upper echelons. Thus, we cannot hope to address the lack of diversity in the higher ranks of the department only by increasing hiring of underrepresented groups and hoping that enough of them will endure the many challenges and humiliations they will inevitably face so that in 20 years or so we'll have a diplomatic corps that truly represents our country.

The proposed legislation offers one possible solution, but it is bound to fail without a change in the Foreign Service culture—in particular, the tendency to devalue experience outside of government and a bidding system that puts far more emphasis on established relationships than on demonstrated skills.

If AFSA wants to truly represent all its members and promote a more inclusive and diverse State Department, it needs to begin by being more open to new ideas, rather than just defending the practices that got us here in the first place. ■

Timothy Savage
FSO
Embassy New Delhi



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The Department of International Affairs in the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University invites applications for a 9-month non-tenured Professor of the Practice position in the area of American Diplomacy. By American Diplomacy, we mean the use of statecraft by American leaders to manage foreign relations, reduce external risks, and exploit opportunities to advance the security and prosperity of the United States, broadly defined. We seek candidates whose demonstrated leadership and career achievements in the conduct of American Diplomacy equip them to inspire and mentor graduate students who seek similar careers and does so in a way that broadens the intellectual and pragmatic discussion of American diplomatic practice, history and tradition. In addition to having first-rate credentials as a practitioner of American diplomacy, the successful candidate will have significant experience in a geographical region or functional specialty of particular interest to American foreign policy and in mentoring and developing aspiring public servants in international affairs.

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The start date for this position will be September 1, 2022.

The successful candidate will be expected to supervise the International Affairs Department concentration in American Diplomacy. Bush School faculty teach master's degree students in international affairs. Additional information about the Bush School and department is available at <http://bush.tamu.edu>.

Applicants should upload a formal letter of interest that includes reference to the position, a curriculum vitae, and other information relevant to the experience and the interest of the candidate in a teaching position at the Bush School, at the Texas A&M Interfolio site apply.interfolio.com/88592 in DOC or PDF format.

Contact: Peg Hosea (979) 458-2276 plhosea@tamu.edu

The review of applications will begin September 1, 2021, and will continue until the position is filled.

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USAID's New Diversity Policy

On May 3, her first day on the job, USAID Administrator Samantha Power approved USAID's new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, emphasizing the importance she and the agency place on the issues.

"Each of us has a responsibility to address bigotry, gender discrimination and structural racism and uphold individual dignity. This isn't just one of our values; it's our mission—one hand extended out to another to meet people where they are and treat others as equals," Power said.

Under the new DEI strategy, USAID commits to three goals: improving and enhancing diversity throughout the agency; enhancing inclusion and equity for everyone in the workplace; and strengthening accountability for promoting and sustaining a diverse workforce and an inclusive agency culture.

USAID leadership will seek out and address internal systems that inhibit inclusive diversity efforts. The agency will create a range of policies and programs to improve and increase diversity. It will also develop outreach strategies to attract talent from diverse backgrounds.

Agency leaders will champion staff participation in DEI initiatives. The agency will establish and enhance training on diversity fundamentals, bias and principles of inclusion for all staff, including managers and supervisors.

USAID says it will consistently apply DEI principles across program and management. All agency leaders will be required to show evidence of their support for DEI principles, and the agency pledges to be transparent and use workforce data in its efforts to promote DEI.

Contemporary Quote

ee We need a strong Department of State. We need a strong Foreign Service to meet the challenges that we face around the world, and the budget you proposed contains resources to recruit, train, retain a first-rate, diverse workforce. I think you'd also agree that one of the key tools in both recruitment and retention is how we treat our Foreign Service families serving overseas. Four years ago Senator [Dan] Sullivan [R-Alaska] and I founded the bipartisan Foreign Service caucus here on the Hill; and, based on our conversations with the American Foreign Service Association and others, we introduced a bill called the Foreign Service Families Act. ... It essentially provides Foreign Service families serving overseas the same kind of amenities and benefits that many military families serving overseas have.

—Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.)

Certainly, as described and in terms of the objectives, I couldn't agree more. And by the way, now that I've had the opportunity to travel a little bit on the job, every place I go I spend time with our embassy and the embassy community, and I share your high regard and determination to support the families of the men and women who are part of our Foreign Service. Because, as we both know, they're serving too.

—Secretary of State Antony Blinken

From an exchange during the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the Biden administration's 2021-2022 international affairs budget, June 8.

"Unexplained Health Incidents" Update

More than 130 U.S. diplomats, intelligence agents, soldiers and other U.S. government personnel have been affected by the mysterious, debilitating health incidents that started five years ago, *The New York Times* reported on May 12. That's far more than the 60 cases confirmed initially, which were concentrated in Cuba and China.

The newer tally includes cases in Europe and other parts of Asia, according to the *Times*, which added that the Biden administration has not determined who or what is responsible for the episodes, or whether they represent actual attacks.

The alleged attacks may be starting to hit closer to home. CNN reported on May 17 that two White House officials were

struck by the syndrome late last year. There was another suspected case in Northern Virginia in 2019.

In March, the State Department named Ambassador Pamela Spratlen, a retired career FSO, to head the Health Incident Response Task Force, which was formed in 2018 to coordinate the response to the alleged attacks. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been briefed on the issue several times, CNN reports.

CIA Director and retired Career Ambassador William Burns has moved aggressively to improve the agency's response, meeting with victims, visiting doctors who have treated them and briefing lawmakers, according to the *Times*.

Members of Congress from both parties have started to criticize what they see as a "years-long failure" to address the issue, Politico reports.

U.S. Diplomats Push Vaccine Diplomacy

Frustrated U.S. diplomats are pressing Washington to move faster on donating COVID-19 vaccines abroad, Politico reported on May 13, even after the State Department elevated vaccine diplomacy, appointing former USAID Administrator Gayle Smith as coordinator for global COVID response and health security.

The diplomats pointed out that China and Russia have been using donations of their homegrown vaccines (Sinopharm and Sputnik V, respectively) to extract political concessions from nations seeking aid.

The White House announced on May 5 that it supports a World Trade Organization initiative to waive intellectual property protections for COVID-19 vaccines, making the technology freely available to the whole world. World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus praised the announcement as a “monumental moment in the fight against COVID-19” that reflects “moral leadership.”

However, even if the European Union goes along with the request (which is not a foregone conclusion, given German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s staunch opposition to such waivers), it will take months before recipient countries are able to manufacture their own doses.

In the meantime, Foreign Service officers in South Asia, the Middle East and Africa continue to urge the Biden administration to release its entire stockpile of AstraZeneca vaccines to COVAX (COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access).

A May 11 *Washington Post* profile notes that Samantha Power had been pushing that approach even before becoming USAID Administrator. “The United States can reenter all the deals and international organizations it wants,” she wrote in the January-February issue of *Foreign Affairs*, “but the biggest gains in influence will come by demonstrating its ability to deliver in many countries’ hour of greatest need.”

By spearheading global vaccine distribution, the United States could beat China at the biggest soft-power contest in

generations, regain its reputation as the world’s “indispensable” nation and, not incidentally in Power’s view, do good.

PDAA Honors Outstanding Public Diplomacy Initiatives

Winners of the 2021 Public Diplomacy Association of America’s annual awards for excellence in public diplomacy showcased U.S. support for democracy and human rights, combating trafficking in persons, encouraging entrepreneurship and crafting calibrated messaging on immigration policy. There were four winners.

Public Affairs Section, U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong & Macau.

Confronted with the Chinese Communist Party’s harsh crackdown on democracy and human rights in Hong Kong, as well as attempts to implicate the United States in the resulting political unrest, the consulate’s public affairs section (PAS) launched a campaign on multiple media platforms to push back.

Podcast of the Month: The Embassy Wealth Podcast: <http://bit.ly/embassy-wealth>

In this new podcast, Foreign Service Officer Josh Lustig and former FSO (now a licensed realtor in the Washington, D.C., area) Tanya Salseth interview members of the foreign affairs community to crowdsource the best financial and investment advice.

“So many of us have gotten great information from our colleagues, people who might live on the other side of the world, and oftentimes that information is gotten by completely accidentally sitting next to them in the cafeteria, hearing that they’re doing something cool and then learning about it from them and maybe trying it yourself,” Lustig said in their first podcast. “It’s really exciting for us to be able to give that experience and make it global.”

Episodes so far include building side hustles and

investing in hotels, with FSO Acquania Escarne; “conservative” investing in turnkey new construction in Florida, with retired FSO Matt Shedd; a discussion with Diplomatic Security Agent Joe Burkhead about his experience purchasing 90 rental units; and planning for Foreign Service retirement with financial planner and FS family member William Carrington.

“It’s a podcast featuring smart people talking about life, investing, personal finance and other peculiarities that come with the international nomadic lifestyle,” says Lustig.



The appearance of a particular site or podcast is for information only and does not constitute an endorsement.



U.S. CONSULATE KOLKATA/AVIJIT BHATTACHARYA

The grand finale of the East India Anti-Trafficking Women's Hockey and Leadership Camp, part of the anti-trafficking initiative supported by U.S. Consulate General Kolkata and attended by 110 young women, took place in February 2020 at the SERSA Hockey Stadium in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

The campaign highlighted positive U.S. government support for Hong Kong and its autonomy, spotlighting Chinese government efforts to restrict Hong Kong's fundamental freedoms and reinforcing shared U.S.-Hong Kong values through expanded people-to-people ties. After the Fulbright program was suspended in Hong Kong, PAS also established a network of U.S. government exchange program alumni.

Sohini Das, public engagement specialist, U.S. Consulate General Kolkata. Combating human trafficking is a priority for U.S. diplomatic missions in India. With eastern India a major trafficking hub, Public Engagement Specialist Sohini Das in Kolkata developed a multilayered approach to the problem.

The cornerstone of this initiative is the Anti-Trafficking-in-Persons Conclave that brings together key anti-trafficking players to address new and ongoing challenges. Targeted activities throughout the year culminate in the annual conclaves, which have produced significant collaborations leading directly to positive legislative and judicial results.

Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Algiers. Algeria faces a significant youth bulge in its population, high unemployment and a stagnant economy dominated by inefficient state-run companies. In response to this challenging envi-

ronment, the embassy PAS produced a "Shark Tank"-style reality television show, "Andi Hulm" (I Have a Dream), to promote the importance of entrepreneurship and support U.S. businesses in Algeria.

The 10-episode show, which was produced in cooperation with American businesses operating in Algiers, culminated in the crowning of a champion who received a cash prize and a State Department-funded incubation exchange in the United States. The series aired on Algeria's most-watched television channel during primetime, reaching millions of Algerians weekly and garnering social media buzz and positive press reviews.

Allyson Hamilton-McIntire, assistant information officer, U.S. Embassy Mexico City. The Central American migrant surge at the U.S. southern border posed major challenges for Embassy Mexico City, in particular the need to communicate different messages to those who had pending U.S. asylum cases and to the much larger number who did not.

Assistant Information Officer Allyson Hamilton-McIntire developed a finely nuanced communication strategy on migration policy aimed at these two vastly different audiences. For the thousands of migrants with pending asylum cases, Hamilton-McIntire filled the exist-

ing information vacuum with detailed guidelines, timelines and procedures on the asylum process.

She employed a variety of communication tools from traditional to contemporary—TV monitors at migrant shelters, roadside billboards, printed flyers, the WhatsApp groups that migrant caravans employ and interviews with authoritative U.S. officials—to deliver clear information and a deterrence message aimed at potential migrants.

PDAA is a nonprofit voluntary association of public diplomacy professionals.

Climate Crisis Takes Center Stage

In an April 19 speech on global climate leadership, Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on U.S. diplomats to challenge countries lagging on climate change.

"When countries continue to rely on coal for a significant amount of their energy, or invest in new coal factories, or allow for massive deforestation, they will hear from the United States and our partners about how harmful these actions are," he said.

The Secretary's speech, in Annapolis, Maryland, came ahead of a U.S.-hosted virtual summit on climate leadership that week. President Joe Biden invited 40 world leaders to discuss measures they will take to reduce emissions under the 2015 Paris Agreement, Reuters reported.

Blinken said the Biden administration would put the climate crisis at the center of its foreign policy and national security.

"That means taking into account how every bilateral and multilateral engagement—every policy decision—will impact our goal of putting the world on a safer, more sustainable path," he said. "It also means ensuring our diplomats have the training and skills to elevate climate in our relationships around the globe."

Nominations and Appointments

On May 21, President Joe Biden appointed career FSO Sung Kim to serve as the U.S. special envoy to North Korea.

During the week of April 22-29, the Biden administration announced the following nominations to top positions in U.S. foreign affairs agencies:

Political appointee Sarah Margon, assistant secretary of State for democracy, human rights, and labor.

Political appointee Christopher P. Lu, alternate representative of the United States to the sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and representative of the United States to the United Nations for U.N. management and reform.

Career FSO Donald Lu, assistant secretary of State for South and Central Asian affairs.

Political appointee Jessica Lewis, assistant secretary of State for political-military affairs.

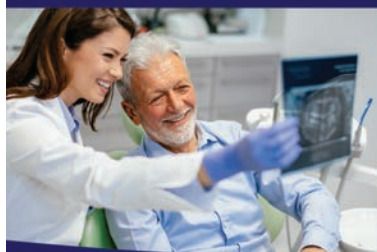
Political appointee Adam Scheinman, special representative of the president for nuclear nonproliferation, with the rank of ambassador.

Political appointee Lee Satterfield, assistant secretary of State for educational and cultural affairs.

Career civil servant C.S. Eliot Kang, assistant secretary of State for international security and nonproliferation.

Political appointee Marcela Escobari, assistant USAID Administrator.

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Call for Urgent Action on Afghan Special Visas

Nearly 100 former U.S. officials, including four former U.S. ambassadors to Afghanistan, urged Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin to do more to provide visas to Afghans who assisted U.S. forces, Reuters reported on May 13.

“U.S. history is replete with instances where we failed to understand or prepare to mitigate the terrible consequences that might confront those ... who stood beside us and believed in us when the going was tough,” the former officials wrote to Blinken and Austin. “We have a moral obligation to do better this time.”

President Joe Biden has announced that the United States would withdraw its forces from Afghanistan by Sept. 11.

The former officials called on the Biden administration to process special immigrant visas (SIVs) more quickly, and to raise quotas on admittance on an emergency basis when the United States withdraws from the country.

Biden already has shown an interest in making sure Afghans who helped the

United States war effort can immigrate to the United States. He issued an executive order on Feb. 4 for a review of the U.S. Special Immigrant Visa program for Afghan and Iraqi allies who have helped the U.S. military.

U.S. Ambassadors to Russia Speak

In May the Middlebury Institute of International Studies’ Monterey Initiative in Russian Studies launched “The Ambassadorial Series,” a one-of-a-kind docuseries featuring in-depth interviews with eight former U.S. ambassadors who reflect on decades of complex relations between the United States and Russia.

Meant to be a service to scholars and students of American diplomacy vis-à-vis Russia, the series is “a unique resource for those who want to better understand the evolving relationship between the two countries,” the introduction to the accompanying transcript states.

The hourlong videos, the first known set of interviews of all but one of the living U.S. ambassadors to the Soviet Union / Russian Federation, are hosted

by Jill Dougherty, former CNN Moscow bureau chief.

Covering the period from 1987 to 2019, the series includes the following former ambassadors to Russia: Jack F. Matlock, Thomas R. Pickering, James F. Collins, Alexander Vershbow, John Beyrle, Michael McFaul, John F. Tefft and Jon Huntsman Jr.

The ambassadors recall their experiences, sharing insights, nuanced analyses and thoughts on the challenges and geopolitical issues they dealt with and the changes they witnessed.

Payne Fellowship Establishes Resource Group

In 2020 a group of Payne alumni established the Payne Fellowship Network Employee Resource Group to build greater awareness of and support for the Payne Fellowship at USAID.

The PFN was created to support the recruitment, onboarding and retention of talented FSOs; to provide Payne Fellows and alumni means to better support one another; and to leverage the existing

50 Years Ago

To Moscow—With Nostalgia

The Foreign Service has a number of unstated conventions. One of these is the reticence with which Foreign Service officers speak of their past posts. All of us, I am convinced, accumulate over the years a collection of movable feasts along with some less digestible experiences. Inwardly we compare our good posts much as old Paris hands roam the world, the comparative merits of Paris bistros programmed forever into their minds. A voice within us vibrates when we hear, at a remote distance, of a remarkable accomplishment of our former country of assignment, or when a face, a tune or a picture brings to life again the experiences which made the old post a part of ourselves.

Yet we seem to think that this mental baggage is too frail to stand exposure. To hear Foreign Service officers

exchange small talk over sherry at an AFSA luncheon is to be in a world where housing, amenities and the idiosyncrasies of ambassadors are the only things that matter.

Moscow exemplifies this convention. A good word is seldom heard about it. Our diplomats and journalists have produced over the years a sizable body of literature that usually reads like an article in *Foreign Affairs* to which a touch of the Post Report has been added.

—Excerpted from an article with the same name by former Foreign Service Officer Peter Semler in the July 1971 Foreign Service Journal.



A Vital Step

Today, the House passed a bill authorizing the @StateDept's work—including my legislation for paid internships and to support Foreign Service families with disabilities. I voted for this vital step to rebuild America's infrastructure for diplomacy.

—U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) tweet, May 18.

Improve Reporting, Expand Training

We must ensure our State Department personnel are prepared to meet 21st-century global challenges. That's why I'm proud that my bill to improve State Department reporting requirements and an initiative to expand Foreign Service officer training programs passed the House today as part of the State Department Authorization Act. I thank my colleagues for coming together to support a streamlined, more efficient State Department.

—U.S. Rep. Young Kim (R-Calif.) Facebook post, May 18.



network of mentors, champions and resources within the agency to ensure the program's success.

For more information, contact Payne FellowshipNetworkBoard@usaid.gov.

Video Game Diplomacy Initiative

The State Department is joining forces with the Stevens Initiative and Games for Change to launch a virtual exchange program for 2,700 students from grades 6 to 12 in the United States, Israel, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Students will work together to develop social impact video games.

Students will work together in teams on projects based on United Nations sustainable development goals. At the end of each school year, teams will submit their games for judging in a competition. The program runs until June 2023.

Students from Atlanta, Detroit and New York City will join forces with

students selected by Israel's Beit Berl College and Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art, the UAE's twofour54 Abu Dhabi, and the Bahrain Ministry of Youth and Sports.

"People-to-people exchanges are critical to advancing global peace and understanding," said Matthew Lussenhop, acting assistant secretary of State for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. "Through early adoption of virtual exchanges, the Stevens Initiative has elevated technology to foster collaboration between students in the United States and counterparts in the Middle East and North Africa."

The Stevens Initiative is named for the late Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, who was killed in Libya in 2012. ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Cameron Woodworth, Steve Honley and Dom DiPasquale (for "PDAA Honors Initiatives").



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A U.S.-German Look at the Essentials for Modern Diplomacy

BY MIRKO KRUPPA AND KENNETH KERO-MENTZ

International relations are changing rapidly because of complex challenges, the pace of developments and the number of global actors on the international stage. Even when living far from international borders in middle America or the middle of Germany, many people understand that global trends affect their daily lives.

International competition can lead to lost jobs as economies change, and concerns about the environment and consumer protections have led to growing skepticism toward globalization and even democracy in the U.S., the European Union and around the world. And a wave of authoritarianism and unilateralism is challenging multilateral peace and security structures.

As U.S. and German diplomats, we're worried, but also hopeful. We face an undeniable need to revive, reform and reimagine our mission. Success will depend on a nonpartisan consensus within our

societies and governments to commit the political and budgetary support necessary to bring about modern, attractive and diversity-driven diplomatic services.

As representatives of our respective Foreign Services, we believe that the time for such action is now. Here are some of our suggestions for needed reforms in both the United States and Germany as we move forward.

Enable Agility, Ensure Diversity

Our diplomatic efforts must become more agile. Diplomats need to be politically and structurally empowered to act swiftly to secure a more peaceful, just and prosperous world for all, while seeking compromise in multilateral structures like the European Union and with pluralistic democracies. Multilateral efforts to establish globalized legal standards for the common good naturally limit some sovereignty of nation-states.

For example, as a dedicated E.U. member, Germany's Foreign Service (*Auswärtiges Amt*) acknowledges the growing pressure to adapt our approaches in foreign policy. As an exporting nation, Germany depends on the E.U.'s regulatory power in the world. As a nation-state it continues to defend its national interests; and as Germany is a pluralistic society with a difficult past, its diplomats actively favor compromise over (military) might.

Autocratic regimes, by contrast, increasingly feel challenged by (and oppose) the legal standards and global institutions that sustainable globalization needs to thrive. We must be able to combat our counterparts from autocratic regimes, which are hellbent on short-term tactical wins in their effort to return the international order to power struggles in which the strong dominate the weak. Our diplomatic outreach must seek compromise and trust-building with allies and adversaries alike.

It is also essential to increase diversity within our services (which remain, despite earlier efforts, too white and male) and make better use of all our human resources to enhance our credibility and ensure we accomplish our mission on behalf of our governments and the pluralistic societies we represent.

Analyzing and explaining political, socioeconomic and cultural developments is what diplomats do best; it's our *raison d'être*. We provide insights for our governments to design policies



Mirko Kruppa was reelected as chairman of the Staff Council of the German Foreign Ministry (Auswärtiges Amt) in November 2020. Since becoming a diplomat in 2001, he has served in Kazakhstan, China, South Africa, Taiwan (R.O.C.) and Russia (E.U.-Delegation in Moscow).



Kenneth Kero-Mentz is secretary of AFSA (2019-2021 term). During nearly 21 years in the U.S. Foreign Service he served in Brazil, Germany, Iraq, Sri Lanka and in Washington, D.C., including two years as AFSA's vice president representing his colleagues from State. He retired in late 2020.

Mirko and Ken became friends nearly 15 years ago during Ken's posting in Berlin, which included a year as a trans-Atlantic diplomatic fellow at the German Foreign Office. Both are dedicated advocates for their respective colleagues and Foreign Services. Over the course of several conversations, they realized both systems have similar challenges and opportunities, and this article is the result.

and develop solutions, and then we explain these policies to our host-country counterparts, both within and outside government.

To best accomplish these goals, we believe both our countries need a diplomatic corps reflecting more racial, ethnic and professional diversity. This is critical, especially now when barriers to scientific, cultural and other exchanges are rising in key regions such as China.

Indeed, it is our diverse strengths that allow us to credibly reach nontraditional interlocutors in a world that is increasingly driven by civil society, nongovernmental actors, scientists, business leaders and “new” media.

Promote Career Training and Development

Complex issues such as climate change, internet governance and nuclear proliferation have increased in breadth and complexity and, typically, need multilateral solutions. One of the German Foreign Ministry’s 11 divisions, for example, is solely dedicated to E.U. coordination—namely, making sure that the necessary expertise from all federal German ministries can merge into joint government positions to be negotiated into E.U. policies and regulations in Brussels.

Multilateral arenas like the United Nations organizations or the World Trade Organization are based on the work of highly specialized legal and practical experts trained in using their diplomatic toolbox for day-to-day negotiations.

Traditional diplomatic career paths based on standard two- to three-year rotations must go hand in hand with careers in which some among us specialize in these emerging, cross-cutting and complex policy matters. Secondments and exchanges with other governmental

institutions could provide new professional development prospects for our career diplomats, allowing them to build core competencies in these key areas.

We also need a careerlong program of education and training sustained by a training float reserve capacity like in the U.S. military or as legally prescribed (but not yet implemented) by the German Law on the Foreign Service.

In short, we need a career development system that allows diplomats to design their own regional, thematic and linguistic expertise and career development path while ensuring that the needs of the service are met.

Modernize Management, Support Innovation

Next, we must modernize our management practices, eliminating bureaucratic hurdles and allowing our diplomats to more ably take action to combat global challenges. In his book *Reinventing Organizations*, Frederic Laloux has shown how successful companies working in complex environments rely on agile teams and lean management to act quickly while remaining focused on the key drivers of their overall strategy.

In contrast, both the German and U.S. diplomatic corps still have tedious and creativity-stifling bureaucracies with stiff hierarchies that hinder our ability to accomplish the goals of our respective governments. The German Foreign Ministry’s in-house regulations and its “house culture,” for example, foster an excessive use of co-signatures and horizontal coordination long before the hierarchical signoffs even get started.

Autocratic regimes lack public accountability or legislative scrutiny and are able to swiftly coordinate ad hoc initiatives, leaving us in the dust. We need to empower our frontline diplomats

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.

to take action and more quickly defend our interests against autocratic maneuvering. We have to accept that a more agile diplomatic service requires more room for individual action-taking and a mandate to delegate the responsibility coming with it.

Most importantly, we need data-centric, inclusive and decentralized decision-making processes with fewer clearances before reaching the Minister of Foreign Affairs or Secretary of State. As defenders of the multilateral world order, we must be able to nimbly counter strategies of escalation dominance and/or reflexive control to ensure that local publics and host governments are informed and mobilized.

The trans-Atlantic partnership and history’s most successful joint security shield are the foundation for the predictable and stable security environment that is indispensable for Western prosperity and our highly integrated cooperation patterns in North America and Europe.

Vastly updating and upgrading our digital capabilities goes hand in hand with eliminating outdated bureaucratic impediments. We’ve seen dramatic improvements over the past year, in no small part thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, but more needs to be done. In a digital age, we need to take advantage of the collaborative tools now available, such as workflow systems that minimize time spent on one-off memos,

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and software solutions that provide tools for sharing knowledge, mobilizing networks and generating innovative policies from our collective “hives.”

We also need to encourage lively debate. American diplomats have the Dissent Channel (created during the Vietnam War), but it must be reinvigorated to allow for more discussion when policies go astray. Those who stand up and speak out must be protected and even rewarded, rather than silenced.

By incentivizing innovation, rewarding those who speak up and lauding individual accountability, we can decentralize decision-making and implementation processes and change our risk-averse culture, leading to team-oriented management and visionary leadership free of micromanagement.

Enhance the Work-Life Environment

The life of a diplomat is challenging, especially for the families we bring with us to our postings around the world—children, spouses and sometimes even parents. Our foreign ministries should formalize professional opportunities for spouses, ensuring that their strengths and knowledge are honored and rewarded as we move from post to post.

This would not only add expertise and networks to the “whole of mission” effort, but it would also strengthen our diplomatic services’ attractiveness for applicants from more diverse backgrounds.

With this in mind, financing and institutionalizing a Diplomatic Reserve Corps would be an important tool. In Germany, for instance, this must be coupled with reforming social security regulations that discourage diplomatic spouses from seeking employment; and

discontinuing tax exemptions that give excessive benefits to households with one spouse unemployed (*Ehegattensplitting*).

These days, diplomats spend less time in an office and more time meeting and interacting with civil society and the political, economic, thought and media leaders of our host countries to strengthen ties through personal relationships and trust. As social media users, amateur chefs, musicians, craftspeople or sports lovers, our diplomats should have a task-supportive work-life as their working environment—rather than the traditional “9-5” (or in our case, often 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.) workday.

Connecting this concept with what was highlighted above on wasteful bureaucratic processes, our 21st-century diplomats can best serve their societies by broadly and authentically representing them—for example, by bringing international exchanges of sportsmen and sportswomen to their host countries, in the best tradition of Ping-Pong diplomacy.

The power of sports diplomacy should no longer be left to officials of the International Olympic Committee or FIFA, soccer’s world governing body. In our social media-driven times, personally committed diplomats can generate more impact and reach more people through their own activity than a report sent to headquarters.

In the 21st century, diplomats remain indispensable for any government, and we can be even more helpful when motivated and supported by a modern work environment. We loyally serve our elected leaders, our nations and our fellow citizens. Indeed, we are the heart of our societies’ missions overseas to the benefit of our respective countries and the global arena. ■

Diversity and Inclusion in the U.S. Foreign Service: A Primer

Here is a historical look at gender, ethnic and racial diversity in the Foreign Service and the long and uneven battle for progress.

BY HARRY W. KOPP

In November 1936, *The Foreign Service Journal* published a photographic register of all 701 officers of the U.S. Foreign Service. Look at the faces: 700 white men and one white woman. Elsewhere in the *Journal* of that era, one could find an occasional racial slur. A 1937 appreciation of the late American minister to Finland praised his “rich repertory of Southern negro stories,” one of which the author gratuitously repeats.

Recounting these facts is not to single out the Foreign Service as particularly racist or sexist. Then as now, the Service reflected the values of American society at large, or more specifically of its leading institutions. Similar numbers prevailed in the Army and the Navy, in chambers of commerce, in state and local governments, schools and universities, indeed throughout most of civil society. The stereotypes that on rare

occasions appeared in the *Journal* were, as Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. has documented, pervasive across white American society, often in far more vicious form. In its social attitudes and behavior, the Foreign Service has always been a follower, not a leader.

The Foreign Service Act of 1946 included language to “insure ... that the officers and employees of the Foreign Service are broadly representative of the American people.” The Congress that enacted that law had 11 white women and two Black men in a House of 435 members; in the Senate, every one of the 96 members was a white male. That Congress wasn’t bothered that the Foreign Service lacked women or minorities—its concern was a surfeit of Ivy Leaguers.

In 1940 about a third of the officer corps held degrees from Harvard, Yale, Princeton or Columbia. The *Journal* again: “Since Harvard is synonymous in many minds, however unjustly, with tea-drinking, peculiarities of speech and sartorial affectations, it is perhaps responsible for the persistent impression in certain areas of the United States that Foreign Service Officers are not as ‘American’ as they should be.” With regard to race, ethnicity and gender, neither Congress nor the Service could see its own blind spot.



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In its social attitudes and behavior, the Foreign Service has always been a follower, not a leader.

In 1970 the corps of FSOs was still 95 percent male (2,945 of 3,084) and only 1 percent Black (34 of 3,084). All female FSOs were single and, until 1971, were required—apparently by administrative practice, not by law—to resign if they wed. Women and Black officers were restricted in where they could serve. Women were almost never sent to Islamic nations (lest they give offense) or to communist countries (lest they be sexually entrapped and blackmailed). Black officers were disproportionately assigned to Africa and parts of Latin America, a problem that persists today. A departmental task force in 1977 described the public view of the Service as “elitist, self-satisfied, a walled-in barony populated by smug white males, an old-boy system in which women and minorities cannot possibly hope to be treated with equity.”

Pressure groups began to form among aggrieved employees during the 1960s and 1970s. The Women’s Action Organization came together around 1970. Informal discussions among Black officers in foreign affairs agencies led to the formation of the Thursday Luncheon Group in 1973. These groups lent their support to two class-action suits filed in federal court. One, led by FSO

Alison Palmer, charged the Department of State with discrimination against women in hiring, promotion and assignments; the other, led by FSO Walter Thomas, grew out of a finding by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, chaired at the time by future Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas) that the State Department “typically” discriminated against Black officers in assignments, performance evaluations and promotions.

The department fought these cases long and hard. The women’s case in one form or another ran on for more than 20 years, with the plaintiffs winning court orders that forced changes in department policies including, eventually, changes in the Foreign Service written exam. The Thomas case needed 10 years of litigation to produce a settlement awarding the plaintiffs retroactive pay and promotions. The presiding judge rebuked the department: “You shouldn’t be having an adversarial relationship with these people just because of their color. You should be ... doing what’s right.”

Affirmative Action

These cases were still in the courts when Congress passed the Foreign Service Act of 1980, which governs the Service to this day. Like its 1946 predecessor, the 1980 act calls for a Foreign Service “representative of the American people.” But it also instructs the department to “pursue equal employment opportunity through affirmative action” and to manage its hiring, promotions and assignments “in accordance with merit principles.”

“Affirmative action” is a roomy phrase. When it is understood as measures against discrimination, it leads in one direction;

but when it is understood as steps against inequality, it leads somewhere else entirely. With regard to the first, it is hard to dispute Chief Justice John Roberts, writing in 2007: “The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.” But Justice Harry Blackmun, concerned with equality, had a powerful and opposite argument: “In order to get beyond racism,” he wrote in 1978, “we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently. We cannot ... let the equal protection clause perpetuate racial superiority.”

Efforts to address inequalities by preferring members of some groups over



Personnel of the Department of State in 1936—all white and overwhelmingly male.

AFSA/FSJS SUPPLEMENT NOVEMBER 1936

others in hiring, promotions or assignments can leave those not preferred aggrieved. How, they ask, can personnel actions based on group characteristics accord with merit principles?

Tension between affirmative action and merit principles erupted in the 1990s, when budget and personnel cuts combined with rising numbers of political appointees to produce a shrinking Service with dwindling opportunities for promotion. In 1987, the Foreign Service numbered about 9,400 officers and specialists. By 1992 that number had fallen to 8,000, and by 1997 to around 7,000. Members of the Service, especially midrank officers, had reason to fear for their futures.

These pressures made changing the demographic composition of the Service more difficult and resistance to change more intense. When several officers complained in the pages of the *Journal* about discrimination against white males, the Thursday Luncheon Group responded in a forceful August 1994 letter: Only 268 of nearly 4,000 officers are black, “fewer than 15 blacks have entered the Foreign Service since 1991,” white officers could not be threatened by these numbers, and “diversity and excellence are not mutually exclusive.”

A 1989 report by the General Accounting Office (now the Government Accountability Office) found the State Department short of EEOC targets for minorities and women in the federal workforce. In response, the department funded two academic fellowship programs, named for Career Ambassador Thomas Pickering and Congressman Charles Rangel, that provide financial support, mentoring, professional development and assistance for (primarily) minority-background students interested in a Foreign Service career. USAID launched a similar program, the Payne Fellowships, in 2012.

To improve diversity in the candidate pool, the State Department sent diplomats in residence—recruiters—to to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and to Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) where a large proportion of the student body has a Latino background. After the turn of the century, the department modified its Foreign Service entry

Tension between affirmative action and merit principles erupted in the 1990s.

procedures in ways that increased chances for minority candidates to reach the oral assessment.

These efforts failed to produce the hoped-for results (see chart). Foreign Service hiring surged in 2001-2004 and again in 2009-2012, but minority hiring did not. Black officers were a smaller percentage of the officer corps in 2015 than in 1987. Hispanic and Asian American officers fared better, and women made significant gains.

During the recent hiring freeze (Jan. 23, 2017, to May 15, 2018), the department under congressional pressure brought on board about 60 Pickering and Rangel fellows, slightly increasing the share of minorities at the entry level. At the senior level, however, minorities fared poorly. Ambassador (ret.) Michael McKinley wrote in *The Atlantic* that “the most visible high-ranking Hispanic, African American, South Asian and female career officers were fired, pushed out or chose to leave during the first year of the Trump administration.” President Donald Trump appointed, and the Senate confirmed, 189 career and noncareer ambassadors: only five were Black.

Foreign Service by Gender, Race and Ethnicity (round numbers)

Year		Total	Women (%)	African American (%)	Hispanic (%)	Asian (%)	Other (%)
1987	FSO	5,200	22	6	4	2	No data
	All FS	9,400	24	5	3	2	<0.5
2005	FSO	6,300	37	5	5	No data	6
	All FS	10,900	34	6	6	5	2
2010	FSO	7,500	39	5	4	No data	7
	All FS	12,700	35	6	6	6	3
2015	FSO	8,300	40	5	6	7	6
	All FS	13,500	35	7	7	6	4
2020	FSO	8,000	42	6	7	7	6
	All FS	13,700	37	8	8	7	7

SOURCES: GAO, DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

By the turn of the millennium, conditions for LGBTQ employees had clearly improved.

GAO Report of 2020

Two generations have passed since the Service was described as a “walled-in barony populated by smug white males.” A GAO report in 2020, covering the period 2002 to 2018, showed uneven progress. According to the GAO:

- Over that period, the proportion of racial and ethnic minorities in the Service rose from 17 percent to 24 percent. In the Senior Foreign Service, minorities were 13 percent in 2002 and 14 percent in 2018. By contrast, in 2018 minorities were 21 percent of the entire Senior Executive Service.
- The proportion of women in the Foreign Service rose from 33 percent to 35 percent, and in the Senior Foreign Service from 25 percent to 32 percent. Women were 35 percent of the entire Senior Executive Service.
- Promotion rates for minorities were the same as for whites (except for promotion to FS-3, where the rate was higher for whites).



The FSJ spotlights diversity issues. Shown here, covers from May 2013, June 2015 and October 2020.

Promotion rates were higher for women than for men. Attrition rates for reasons other than retirement or death were slightly lower for minorities than for whites, and equal for men and women.

- Racial and ethnic minorities in 2018 were roughly the same percentage of the Foreign Service as of all Americans classified by the Census Bureau as “professional workers” or “officials and managers.” Once again, employment trends in the Foreign Service were in line with trends in American society as a whole.

LGBTQ

Changes in American social values led to opening the Foreign Service to women and racial and ethnic minorities—but only after lawsuits and court orders forced the government to act. Changes in America’s social values were also the starting point for acceptance of employees regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identification. In this case, however, the department’s leadership was sympathetic to the cause, as were most members of the Foreign Service. Judicial intervention proved unnecessary.

As many commentators have observed, change in this area was relatively rapid. In the 1950s, generally accepted social values were virulently hostile to homosexuality, which was widely denounced as deviant, perverse and an offense against God. Senator Joseph McCarthy’s campaign to root out “subversives” stirred and elevated emotions that others exploited to launch a purge of suspected homosexuals. Their contention, rarely challenged, was that gays were vulnerable to blackmail and were therefore a security risk. “The constant pairing of ‘Communists and queers,’” wrote David Johnson in his book *The Lavender Scare*, “led

many to see them as indistinguishable threats.”

In the 1950s and into the 1960s, State fired many hundreds of men suspected of being gay. Uncounted others quietly resigned rather than engage in a long and costly fight with an uncertain outcome and a high risk of exposure. Even into the 1980s, gay men and women at the State Department were routinely denied security clearances.

As the HIV/AIDS epidemic took hold in the United States in the 1980s, gay men and women across the country became more politically active. The organizing efforts of two State Department Foreign Service officers, David Buss and Bryan Dalton, led to the formation of Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (now known as glifaa) in 1992. According to the archived history on glifaa's website, the group's efforts "led to reform of the security clearance policy ... as well as increased visibility of gay and lesbian issues in foreign affairs agencies."

The Foreign Service Act of 1980, like the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, required "fair and equitable treatment" for all employees and candidates "without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age or handicapping condition." In 1994 Secretary of State Warren Christopher built on those provisions to prohibit discrimination in the State Department on the basis of sexual orientation. President Bill Clinton extended that protection to all federal civilian employees by executive order in 1998. Secretaries Madeleine Albright (1997-2001) and Hillary Clinton (2009-2013) extended to same-sex partners of State Department employees serving abroad the same benefits provided to opposite-sex partners, and Secretary Clinton took steps to prohibit discrimination against employees and job applicants on the basis of gender identity.

By the turn of the millennium, conditions for LGBTQ employees had clearly improved. Today, the nomination of gay men and women to positions requiring Senate confirmation attracts little notice.

A Special Moment

Diversity in the workforce can be quantified and measured, but inclusion cannot. Many minority members of the Foreign Service, even some with years of service and great professional achievements, feel undervalued and disrespected—not fully accepted and included. Some who came into the Service through the Pickering and Rangel fellowship programs conceal that fact, for fear that their colleagues will treat them as back-door entrants, not *real* FSOs—yet they have proved themselves twice, first just by getting into these highly competitive programs, then again by passing both the Foreign Service officer test and oral assessment, as all must do within five years.

Some with minority backgrounds have to contend with not-so-funny jokes based on stereotypes fashioned by whites. Women may be denigrated in subtle and unsubtle ways: "The department does not do a good job with issues like racism and sexual harassment," said a female public diplomacy officer.

In 2018, attrition rates for reasons other than retirement or death were slightly lower for minorities than for whites, and equal for men and women.

"When it's a senior guy doing the harassing, you don't get treated fairly."

There is widespread expectation that after the depredations of the past four years, the Biden administration will undertake a major rebuild at the Department of State. Proposals for reform have come from Harvard's Belfer Center, the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Academy of Diplomacy, and any number of columnists and op-ed writers. Ambassador (ret.) Linda Thomas-Greenfield and Representative Joaquin Castro (D-Texas), among others, have called for new legislation to replace the 1980 Foreign Service Act, though without indicating what new authorities might be sought or requirements imposed. Every proposal addresses in some way the issues of diversity and inclusion. Surely the administration will need to take these questions on. In April, Secretary of State Antony Blinken appointed the first-ever chief diversity and inclusion officer, Ambassador (ret.) Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley.

Shifting attitudes across American society have opened possibilities that did not exist before. Adam Serwer, a clear-eyed observer of racial politics, wrote in last October's *Atlantic*: "There has never been an anti-racist majority in American history; there may be one today. ... [I]n these moments, great strides toward the unfulfilled promises of the founding are possible."

In the January/February 2021 *Foreign Service Journal*, the Association of Black American Ambassadors put forward specific recommendations for action to improve diversity, equity and inclusion at State and USAID, with an appeal for "clear and visible support from the highest levels."

The president and the Secretary of State face excruciating demands on their time. Those who want to see broad changes in the Foreign Service are right to call for their support, but should not count on their sustained attention; reformers also need to consult and mobilize support from below. Without pressure from employees at all levels in the Department of State and other foreign affairs agencies, this moment, too, could slip away. ■

Achieving Parity for Women in the Foreign Service

A better understanding of the barriers to women's advancement—and good data—is needed to continue moving forward.

BY KATHRYN DRENNING

At his Senate confirmation hearing, Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated: “I’m committed to advancing our security and prosperity by building a diplomatic corps that fully represents America in all its talent and in all its diversity: recruiting, retaining, promoting officers with the skills to contend with 21st-century challenges and who look like the country we represent.” As the board of Executive Women @ State, one of the largest department employee affinity groups (EAGs) with more than 2,000 members, we can see the changes this administration promised already underway.

Women now lead the State Department as Deputy Secretary



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of State, ambassador to the United Nations and under secretary of State for political affairs, among other senior positions. We applaud the appointments of these accomplished experts in foreign affairs. Secretary Blinken has expressed his support for diversity, equity and inclusion by appointing the first chief diversity and inclusion officer to oversee the department’s efforts, and by meeting with us and other EAGs.

To be sure, this is not the first administration to envision a diverse Foreign Service. Yet despite this oft-repeated goal and nearly a century of effort, our diplomatic Service is far from fully representing American women’s talent and diversity. Women still comprise only 41.9 percent of Foreign Service generalists, 28.9 percent of Foreign Service specialists and 32.4 percent of the Senior Foreign Service (combined generalists and specialists).

And while State continues to make progress on recruiting women, not nearly enough women are moving up the ranks. In 2020, women made up only 28 percent of ambassadors representing the United States overseas, down from an already inadequate 33 percent in previous years. Women of color and women with disabilities, in particular, have been noticeably excluded from these and too many other top positions.

Representation at the Top

Executive Women @ State welcomes this administration's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. We are working tirelessly and in collaboration with fellow EAGs and employee organizations on two immediate priorities: filling senior leadership positions with career Foreign Service and Civil Service women, and stemming the departure of women, particularly at the midlevel, from the department. We see a true opportunity in this moment to achieve great progress toward our vision of gender parity in both numbers and roles for career women at all levels—particularly in the senior levels at State.

Nothing would enhance the status of career women at the State Department more than regularly being selected for top jobs—ambassador and special envoy, deputy chief of mission, assistant secretary and deputy assistant secretary—as well as achieving gender parity in those appointments across bureaus. Drawing from this group before they leave the department will send a clear signal that women can, and will, advance in the Foreign Service. Doing so also would bring the State Department in line with historic practices at the Department of Defense, Central Intelligence Agency and other national security agencies.

Representation at the top will have a significant impact on women's career advancement in the department, but we must also focus on identifying and removing the institutional barriers keeping women from advancing in greater numbers and driving them to leave before they can compete for top jobs. The 2020 Foreign Service promotion statistics show that women, when given the chance, are competitive; they earn promotion at a higher rate than men. But because fewer women than men are competing, the gender imbalance grows as women advance through the ranks.

For example, once women reach the Senior Foreign Service, they are promoted at a near-equal number. But not enough women get there: As a result, women make up a smaller percentage of the SFS than the ranks up to FS-1, and there are fewer women available to take top jobs. Women make up only 40 percent of the total number of people promoted into the SFS (from FS-1 to FE-OC) and from FS-2 to FS-1, suggesting that something is preventing women from advancing through the midlevels. Among specialists, the promotion statistics show women are concentrated in specialties that begin at lower ranks where fewer opportunities to advance keep them even further from parity after the FS-4 rank.

In March 2016, the FSJ considered the topic of women in the Foreign Service, as Editor in Chief Shawn Dorman put it at the time, “with a look back, a look ahead and a few ideas for keeping a positive trend going.”



No one-size-fits-all solution exists for women's advancement in the Foreign Service. The intersectionality of gender, race, sexual orientation, caregiver status, skill code and other factors creates unique challenges across the department's female workforce. We won't achieve gender parity until we understand and address this phenomenon. To begin this effort, we need to identify the barriers to women's advancement at State. We are encouraged by the department's ongoing efforts, greatly furthered by the advocacy of EW@S and the EAG / equal opportunity community, to increase data transparency generally.

Identifying Barriers to Advancement

Now we need more data on why women leave the department. We urge State to direct resources toward studying why women are not better represented in senior positions, what pushes women and minorities to leave the department at the midlevel, and what prevents more diverse talent from rising through the senior ranks.

Nothing would enhance the status of career women at the State Department more than regularly being selected for top jobs.

In particular, we have no visibility into how intersectionality plays into Foreign Service members' experiences in the department and their decisions to leave. But we know from first-person accounts—like the Speaking Out column from six Black, female, Ivy League graduates and members of the Foreign Service in the November 2020 *Foreign Service Journal*—that they face unacceptable bias in our workplace.

Absent official statistics, EW@S undertook a survey last September that asked our members to rate 22 possible barriers to advancement of women within the department. More than 700 respondents, including 482 members of the Foreign Service, ranked barriers on a scale from zero (no impact) to five (huge impact) from three categories: barriers related specifically to gender, barriers related to family life, and barriers related to workplace challenges. Respondents identified the following three issues as having the largest impact.

Unconscious bias related to gender. Respondents cited managerial assumptions that women with caregiver responsibilities would not want certain kinds of career-advancing assignments; co-worker expectations that women take on housework, social planning and other work to keep an office running that is not deemed “career-enhancing”; and embassy leadership reflections of host-country sensibilities around gender norms—and misconceptions about a woman’s comfort in those environments—when determining the numbers of women attending meetings and official events.

Lack of a mechanism, or its failure, to hold higher-level personnel accountable for gender bias or discrimination. Respondents worried that reporting bias and discrimination from a rater or reviewer would lead to a bad employee evaluation report, as well as negatively affect their corridor reputation—a consequence that directly impedes advancement in the Foreign Service.

A culture that discourages the use of work-life balance flexibilities. Respondents repeatedly described offices where

overwork is rewarded and incentivized on an individual basis, even when the department officially discourages it, and where people who use permitted workplace flexibilities are permanently derailed from career advancement.

In addition, the Foreign Service respondents highly ranked barriers like the exclusion of women from informal networks of leadership personnel, and the failure to identify and select them for career-enhancing positions, suggesting that the current design of advancement in the Foreign Service may inherently leave women behind. EW@S has shared the results

of this survey with department leadership and is engaging with bureau leaders on how to address these barriers.

Data Needed

All these barriers to advancement have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The threat of illness and lack of medical care at one’s duty station, the increased caregiving responsibilities brought on by school closures and risk to elderly parents, and the blurring of the boundary between home and

work that the pandemic brought about are taking their toll. In the economy as a whole, studies already demonstrate that the pandemic has forced women out of the workforce at alarming rates, with permanent repercussions for their future employment prospects. With this in mind, Executive Women @ State urges State to investigate whether the resignations of women since the pandemic began were connected to that event, and whether the use of provided flexibilities was successful in moderating its effects.

We know that assembling the data we seek will not be easy. The department has been transparent about the limitations of its current systems to produce much of this information. However, several encouraging initiatives are underway to find new ways to gather and analyze these statistics.

To achieve his goal of a Foreign Service that looks “like the country we represent,” EW@S urges Secretary Blinken to fully support these initiatives and provide the resources sufficient to realize their goals. We have the momentum now to make meaningful progress toward gender parity; let’s use it. ■



Asian Americans Can No Longer Be Silent, and Neither Should You

Generations of citizenship and sacrifices for and contributions to America notwithstanding, Asian Americans face the need to prove their loyalty over and over.

BY KIM BISSONNETTE

Events during this past year have deeply affected me and my family, particularly within the last few months, when we have seen an uptick in anti-Asian American crimes in the United States, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. Stop AAPI Hate—a group that tracks xenophobic crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders—reported more than 6,600 hate incidents against Asian Americans between March 2020 and March 2021: 8.7 percent of the incidents involved physical assaults, and 71 percent included verbal harassment.

Some of the rhetoric around COVID-19 exacerbated the situation for Asian Americans. People began to look at Asian Americans as foreigners who brought the virus to the United States, ignoring the fact that these communities have been established in the United States for generations and have no ties to China or to the Chinese government.

Kim Bissonnette is a U.S. government official who has served in multiple overseas tours.

The Asian American community is often treated as a monolith that is either invisible or seen as “the model minority.”

The recent wave of violence against Asian Americans is a painful reminder that although we have been citizens for generations, and have made countless sacrifices for and contributions to America, we still face discrimination and the need to prove our loyalty over and over. This is the case whether we work for the public sector or the private sector or are independent businesspeople.

As an Asian American officer, I can no longer remain silent, pretending to be invisible, a prisoner of the “model minority” myth that has done such great disservice to the Asian American community.

My First Overseas Tour

During my first overseas tour, my husband and I attended a welcome reception for newcomers at our ambassador’s residence. As we chatted with a white senior-level military officer assigned to our U.S. Mission to NATO and his wife, the much-dreaded “where are you from” question came up. Since we were in a room full of Americans, I answered that I was from Minnesota. The military officer pressed, asking where I was really from. I quickly understood that he was only interested in my ethnic background, so instead of telling him that I was born and raised in France, I said “Cambodian.” He nodded and stated: “That’s what I thought, because you have really strong features.”

I must have made a face at the comment because his wife jumped in to clarify that her husband really meant that I was “really beautiful as an Asian woman.” I again winced at the comment, but decided to drop it because the couple was from an older generation, though I recognized at the time that their attitude was still unacceptable. The military officer proceeded to ask me what I did for a living. When I explained where I worked, he did not seem to understand. “Doesn’t that job require that you have a security clearance?” he asked. “Yes, it does,” I replied

promptly. He then turned to my white American spouse, asking where he worked. When my husband noted that he was still exploring job opportunities, the military man was shocked: He could not process this information.

Asian Americans are exhausted and frustrated by these types of interactions.

The Model Minority Myth

The Asian American community is often treated as a monolith that is either invisible or seen as “the model minority”—smart, quiet, family-oriented folks who keep their heads down and work hard.

In reality, Asian Americans are extremely diverse—coming from different backgrounds, cultures, languages and socioeconomic classes. In the case of my family, for example, both of my parents were refugees from Cambodia who separately survived the ruthless Khmer Rouge Communist regime from 1975 to 1979. My mother gave birth to her first child (my brother) in a Khmer Rouge labor camp, witnessed her first husband being taken away in the middle of the night to be executed, lost her youngest sister to disease and starvation, and was then separated from the rest of her family when she had an opportunity to flee to France, where she met my father and had me and my sisters.

When my mother eventually left for France with her 6-year-old son, she sold the few belongings she managed to hold on to to smugglers who helped her make an escape to a Thai refugee camp. By the time she and my brother arrived in France, she had only the clothes on her back. My father had had his own personal struggles, fighting the Khmer Rouge from a hideout in the Cambodian mountains with no choice but to abandon his first wife and kids in a small village in the countryside.

After years of economic and social hardship while trying to acclimate to a new language, people and culture in France, my parents had a second opportunity to make a better life for themselves and their children when my aunt sponsored us to the United States in late 1997 to be reunited with the rest of my mother’s family.

I highlight the Cambodian story because this community has suffered unspeakable psychological trauma. Yet its struggles are completely overlooked because, among other things, the “model minority” myth about Asians erases critical differences among the various Asian groups. Today, Cambodian Americans rank among America’s poorest, with some of the lowest educational attainment rates when compared with other racial and ethnic

groups. Fully 23.9 percent of Cambodian Americans live in poverty, and fewer than 15 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher. When we came to the United States, my siblings and I did not speak English; but the model minority myth led our educators to believe that we needed fewer academic resources when, in fact, we needed more.

A Multifaceted History

The history of Asians in America is itself multifaceted. Most of us have learned about the disgraceful ways we Americans treated our Japanese American community during World War II, but not much else.

"There are a lot of people who don't know the history of Asians in America, and that essentially whitewashes our existence from this country," actor and prominent Asian American rights activist Daniel Dae Kim said in a recent Washington Post Live interview. Kim pointed to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which excluded an entire race from this country until it was officially repealed in 1943.

Further, Kim observed, the largest lynching in America, in Los Angeles in 1871, saw 18 Chinese people lynched at the hands of a mob of 500, none of whom served any jail time. More than 100 years later, in 1982, Vincent Chin was murdered. A Chinese man, he was attacked because people thought he was Japanese at a time when the American auto industry was failing; he was scapegoated, and his attackers never served a day of jail time.

Growing up as an Asian kid in France had its share of adversity. I was always the only Asian student in school. Desperately wanting to blend in with the French kids, I refused to

Remember that racial justice and anti-bias work exist beyond a Black-white binary.

Speak Khmer to my mom in public and threw out the Cambodian food she prepared for me for lunch. When I came to the United States, a 15-year-old girl in high school, I thought I could start fresh in the land of opportunity, the big melting pot where everyone was American, no matter your skin tone. Within a few weeks, I came to realize that people in the U.S. still saw me as "other."

Even worse, I felt like an alien. I could not yet speak English and would never fit in a school that was predominantly upper middle class and white. With a thick French accent, I didn't quite fit a high school kid's stereotype of an Asian foreigner either. Today, most people can't detect my French accent, unless I tell them where I am from. What they don't realize is that my high school experience in Minnesota was so traumatic that it pushed me to try my hardest to speak like a white American by watching countless TV shows, mimicking the words and sounds of my peers, and reading books any chance I had just to reach a semblance of belonging.

Speaking Up

As a collective, we Asian Americans need to raise awareness and make our stories and needs visible. It's about speaking up, whether you are a witness or a victim. It's about a proactiveness to learn and do better, volunteering, working with or donating to community organizers who have experience in these issues, taking bystander intervention and unconscious bias training courses, writing to your congressional representatives to support legislation that seeks to address this issue, or just having important race conversations within your personal networks.

Stand up and speak out against anti-Asian racism, and be an ally. Remember that racial justice and anti-bias work exist beyond a Black-white binary. Donate to community organizations that strive to make a difference in this field. Reflect on and identify your own biases. Do the uncomfortable work of educating yourselves and having tough conversations. Don't be silent. ■

RESOURCES

We Are Not A Stereotype

A video series from the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center

Asian/Asian American Children's Books

A collection of titles from Lee and Low publishers that highlights the diversity of Asian and Asian American identities.

The Power of Vulnerability

A Black former consular fellow, whose report of her ordeal at the hands of U.S. officials at the border with Mexico shook up the State Department, shares her thoughts today.

BY TIANNA SPEARS

It's been more than a year since I came forward with my story of what happened to me while serving as a first-tour State Department consular fellow in Juarez in 2018 and 2019. I experienced repeated harassment and racial profiling by U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials when crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. As horrific as the harassment was, the utter lack of support from the State Department proved just as damaging. It took me time to realize that my experience was not only abnormal, but traumatic.

There is power in calling something by its name.

On my last day as a consular officer, I had a going-away lunch with a few colleagues. Then I cleared my desk and went home to my apartment. It felt like a failure that the dream that I'd worked so hard for was over. On my flight back home to North Carolina, I was pulled into a back room by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and all my belongings were searched. Afterward, I sat in a bathroom stall at the Houston airport and wept.

The thing about trauma is that often, we carry it alone. We do not know whom to trust. I found myself in an environment that was downright unsupportive. Who feels safe to speak up when it



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ing communities of color. She has written for American Diplomacy, Durham Magazine, the Los Angeles Times, the Matador Network and Politico, and was featured on ABC News, CNN and NPR and in Business Insider, CNN, INDY Week and The New York Times.

is clear that advocating for yourself is grounds for retaliation and loss of a career? For most, losing their job and primary source of income is not an option; but I learned that you have to choose yourself, time and time again.

The Importance of Resilience

In preparation for my first assignment with the State Department, to Ciudad Juarez, I was lectured on the importance of resilience. One trainer, Beth Payne, discussed her most challenging experiences and the tools she used to overcome them. Beth spoke from the heart, giving our class a worksheet while telling her story, a speech intertwined with parenting, trauma, grief and death. Something told me to hold on to that worksheet. Little did I know that I would need it less than three weeks later when I arrived in Mexico in October 2018.

For the next six months, I was repeatedly harassed by CBP officials at the border and flagged into secondary inspection for what I estimate to be 25 times. On two occasions, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials placed their hand on their gun. It took me a long time to realize that the officials could have killed me and gotten away with it.

The ongoing harassment from CBP and lack of any institutional support from State had a devastating impact on my health and my career. Quite frankly, I am not the same person any longer.

A year later, I am beginning to find the courage to accept that I am on a new journey. This new path is not remotely close to what I planned for my life—which is disappointing and has taken some time for me to begin to accept. But it is also freeing. Disappointing, because I worked hard to get where I was, but freeing because I can now give myself grace to find the resources and community I need.

Only Imagine

Imagine how different things could have been if, when I told the Juarez regional and assistant security officers that I was being harassed by CBP officials, they had just said: “We believe you.” I wouldn’t be dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety at the age of 28. Instead, I would be on my second tour, just like the rest of my class.

Instead, I was repeatedly placed in situations where I was left to explain the harassment I continued to experience, begging people in power to listen to me and act accordingly. I was handed white fragility served with a side of tears, of people in power scared to just do the right thing. I was silenced. After being transferred to Mexico City, I emailed Juarez management, and no one responded.

The ongoing harassment from CBP and lack of any institutional support from State had a devastating impact on my health and my career.

Imagine if the people in power actually cared about the people they managed.

How many of us have lost dreams or had dreams deferred?

The State Department consistently educates and promotes the idea of resilience, but continues to erect barriers and create circumstances that require resilience. Life is hard enough in the Foreign Service, but how many of you could have careers that you dreamed of if it was just a little bit easier?

During the period since my May 2020 blog post went viral, I have used my new platform to raise more than \$33,000 for local organizations and nonprofits in Durham, N.C., my community. I made new friends, met an incredible woman who I am honored to call my mentor, and received more than a thousand emails of support. I’m extremely grateful for every single person who reached out with words of encouragement. As I’ve been on this journey, I am continuously reminded that we are absolutely nothing without our community.

A Pervasive Pattern

What surprised me most was how many people told me they were shocked that I came forward with my story. Far too many people suffer alone and in silence. To my dismay, I received numerous emails detailing a long history of abuse by CBP. As far as CBP goes, the agency has not been held accountable in my case or others. How does one seek justice when the perpetrator is the one investigating the crime?

While my story is traumatic, it’s not the first at State, which is full of managers who contribute to a culture of “pale, male and Yale.” I’ve discovered that my experience resonated with many people of color who work for the department because they, too, have been harassed while crossing the U.S. border—and not just five, 10, 20, 30 years ago, but recently. They also have experienced blatant racism and discrimination, only to be dismissed, ignored and eventually have the experience repeated.

If State has this kind of leadership, we should find other role models.

If it takes a blog post from me, a 28-year-old former consular officer, to spur State into action, so be it.

After my blog post went viral, the State Department scrambled for answers. On Sept. 22, 2020, when Representative Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) asked then-Director General Carol Perez about my case directly in a House Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing on diversity at the State Department, she acknowledged the obvious: “The experiences of Tianna Spears were horrific.”

Then she added: “This is our call to action: When something is happening, please encourage the person to speak up, to come to us. Sometimes we don’t know and that is one of the issues we’re going to have to tackle, which is how to have honest conversations that do not have a negative reverberation. Because if you don’t tell us, I’m sorry, but I have 75,000 people, it’s hard to know an individual is facing this kind of horrific treatment ...”

But I did speak up! I repeatedly emailed and met with upper management. I explained myself over and over. My hair fell out in my sink from the harassment and stress, as State Department officials told me: “Don’t cross the border.”

Enough. Why waste precious breath attempting to convince those committed to misunderstanding? Why hold your breath waiting for your oppressor to validate your experience? An individual can create more change and progress by holding strong to their values. Rather than having the life beaten out of you, it’s best to put your hands up; and as I’ve learned, there is power in vulnerability and telling your truth.

I do not believe in organizations that preclude people who look like me from having a seat at the table. Nor do I believe in organizations that gaslight former and current employees. There is nothing—no justice, apology or action—that Customs and Border Protection, Carol Perez and the State Department can give me to change the outcome of my experience.

And that is where my healing begins.

Conversation is accountability. If you need to control the outcome of a conversation, that is not a safe space to voice concerns; it is a public affairs strategy. If your organization cannot participate in conversations without fear of expected and well-deserved “negative reverberation,” it’s time for new leadership.

Throwing additional people of color into a burning building only increases the fatality rate, and the onus should not be on people of color to suffer in the name of diversity and inclusion.

How can the United States shape foreign policy if our foundation at home is shattered? How many more calls to action are needed?

If the State Department truly placed importance on diversity and inclusion, the organization would not continuously produce years of such dismal results on diversity and inclusion. Years of lip service. There have been op-eds, decades of inaction and performative actions, essays, legislation, the recent Truman Center report, task forces and congressional hearings on reforming the State Department. And each issue of *The Foreign Service Journal* offers solutions and fresh perspectives on ways to improve the State Department. But what will it take and how much longer for a much-needed reform?

Do Something

The State Department knows exactly why people of color quit its ranks in such large numbers early in their careers. How many more studies are needed?

The culture of the State Department is flawed in fixable ways. How many employees know the names of their colleagues, treat visa applicants like human beings, do the right thing, and operate with empathy? Unfortunately, the organization is also flawed in institutional and systemic ways.

Managers who mistreat, harass and terrorize staff must be held accountable. Most know the common perception of the EEO process is that it is difficult to navigate and may invite future retaliation.

How many people have mental illness and health conditions from being thrown into hardship tours without any support? Or from being harassed by managers who are reassigned after repeated complaints, but seldom disciplined, and thus left to repeat previous egregious behavior?

If it takes a blog post from me, a 28-year-old former consular officer, to spur State into action, so be it. But this time, do me a favor and actually do something about these issues.

As Malcolm X said when asked in 1964 about progress on racial discrimination: “If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and pull it out six inches, there’s no progress. If you pull it all the way out, that’s not progress. Progress is healing the wound that the blow made. And they haven’t even pulled the knife out, much less heal the wound. They won’t even admit the knife is there.”

How much longer? ■

Three Myths That Sustain Structural Racism at State

Countering bias and recognizing overt racism are important, but it's time to go beyond this work and take a hard look at institutional racism in the department.

BY MICHAEL HONIGSTEIN

The State Department's establishment of diversity and inclusion councils, and the return of anti-bias training, are good tools to deal with the challenge of relatively overt racism. However, I am concerned that too many people at State believe those steps are sufficient.

Like most American institutions, our agency has a problem with institutional racism, and that problem will only be solved once we discuss it openly. These conversations have started, in editorials, blogs and two excellent recent issues of *The Foreign Service Journal* dedicated to that topic. Much of this discussion, like the work of the diversity and inclusion councils, has focused on countering bias and recognizing relatively overt racism. That is important, but we must go beyond it and take a hard look at institutional racism in the department.



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Right now, the councils' work risks becoming a distraction—something to do so we can believe we are doing something, without threatening the systemic advantage enjoyed by white males.

Messaging around creation of the diversity and inclusion councils has directed the councils to look at all forms of diversity. One of the first, from then-Director General Carol Perez, focused on ensuring singles feel included. This is important, and a real problem, but it is not the primary challenge the Foreign Service faces.

The idea that “all diversity matters,” like “all lives matter,” is true, but not the exigent issue at this time. Our diversity and inclusion councils should concentrate on efforts to dismantle structural racism in the department. Right now, the councils' work risks becoming a distraction—something to do so we can believe we are doing something, without threatening the systemic advantage enjoyed by white males.

To seriously address structural racism in the State Department, I believe we need to start by addressing three pernicious and interrelated myths that help perpetuate our system of white male privilege: Diversity is a bonus, equal is fair, and white males should be the default frame of reference. These are by no means the only myths that keep structural racism alive in the department, but they are three of the most prevalent and destructive.

Myth 1: Diversity Is a Bonus

We often talk about diversity as an important “add-on” — something to strive for, so long as it does not prevent us from hiring the best people. I know of one senior department official who, after speaking to a group on the importance of diversity, reassured the audience by adding, “Don't worry; we will still have qualified people in all our positions.”

Diversity is not just nice to have; it is critical to finding solutions to the difficult foreign policy challenges we currently face.

I have been in political sections where everyone is a white male, and we had a lot of the same (old) viewpoints. Conversely, a truly diverse section can come up with the kind of novel analysis and solutions we need to be ready for the future.

Diversity is a requirement. We need it to meet today's challenges. Too often at State, people justify giving jobs to white guys because they are assumed to be “more qualified,” based on prior work in the region. This approach ensures that bureaus with a history of insufficient diversity silently discourage new, diverse candidates from even trying to break in. This reinforces a self-perpetuating system that is harmful to both the individual and the institution, and it is the essence of systemic racism.

Myth 2: Equal Is Fair

This myth can be especially hard to see through for those who have benefited from privilege. We have created an entire infrastructure to cater to the needs of white men; and we believe that if everyone is treated the same in that system, then it is fair. Many of the cables on diversity from the Director General's office repeat this myth, saying our goal in promoting equity is to ensure everyone is treated the same—not to give special treatment to some groups. This sounds laudable on the surface, but different people have different needs. Treating all employees like they are white men is not fair; and meeting the needs of different groups is no more special treatment than the special treatment white men already get.

Yet this thinking pervades the State Department's (and America's) views on racial equity in ways large and small. For example, we do not prepare our minority officers for the racism they will face in Eastern Europe, some Asian posts and some Latin American posts. Regional security officer briefings often don't even acknowledge the separate threats faced by minorities in these places. The particular challenges for women who serve in the Persian Gulf states and in other countries with patriarchal cultures are sometimes recognized. But the pervasive threat to people of color overseas, especially in majority-white countries, is not treated with the same seriousness.

I am beginning to believe that of all the advantages I have been given as a white male, one of the greatest is the privilege of walking down an average street and not having to worry about being racially abused or sexually assaulted, with little chance the perpetrator will be brought to justice. I want to underscore that the difference is race and gender, not socioeconomic. My wife

is Black, but she grew up in the same place I did—we even went to high school together—with the same socioeconomic background. Yet she does not enjoy the same luxury.

Having that confidence is so empowering, and the physical and mental toll of stress in its absence is measurable (for more information, research “weathering”). It is going to take a while to fix that in America, but we can work to give the women and people of color within our ranks that confidence within our own corridors.

Myth 3: White Males Should Be the Default Frame of Reference

This myth is particularly pernicious, and the previous two myths feed into it. The idea that equal treatment is white male treatment is part of this, but the problem goes far beyond that. Even President Joe Biden’s important and laudable executive order on advancing racial equity, which will undoubtedly improve the situation, still uses the white male perspective as the default framing.

It orders a review of all the barriers facing people of color, but not a commensurate examination of privilege. It is implicitly framed to look at the “barriers” that prevent women and people of color from succeeding in a white male world, without looking at what makes this a white male world. This is especially clear in Section 8, “Engagement with Members of Under-served Communities.” Engaging these communities is an important activity, and their voices must be heard, but where is the engagement with “overserved” (white) communities?

The burden is misplaced. The victims of racism, chauvinism and bigotry must not be held responsible for finding their own way out of the problem. We need to do our own homework, for things will not get better until the beneficiaries of our structurally racist system work to identify their privilege and fight to end it.

The Good News: We Know How to Fix This

The good news is that the State Department has some of the world’s leading experts in promoting diversity, ensuring equality and establishing equity at work daily around the world. This is a classic “physician, heal thyself” situation. To heal our department, we must use the tools we have been taught to promote human rights: seek transparency, shine light and demand concrete steps be taken through open and honest dialogue.

There are many ways we can do better, and I know that with

Releasing block statistics for the entire department that combine specialists and generalists, and do not break statistics down by bureau or category of employment, obscures as much as it reveals.

the collective expertise of our extraordinary colleagues, we can find innovative solutions. However, the first step is the same as when we are promoting human rights elsewhere: to get a clear and honest view of the problem.

The Director General should publish statistics on gender and race for Foreign Service generalists and Foreign Service specialists separately, and for every bureau at every level (entry-, mid- and senior). Releasing block statistics for the entire department that combine specialists and generalists, and do not break statistics down by bureau or category of employment, obscures as much as it reveals.

The department has resisted releasing a breakdown of the statistics in this way. The disparity among bureaus in terms of diversity and inclusion that is apparent, for instance, should be unacceptable. I believe that if such data were made public, it could not be sustained.

We also have to be able to speak openly about the real problems our colleagues face, which will take a significant shift in department culture. This article may be seen as controversial, when it should be seen as commonplace. With some notable and praiseworthy exceptions, much of the work of our diversity and inclusion councils seems to focus on the easier conversations about “education,” “implicit bias” and “raising awareness.”

These are important tasks, too. But we all need to become educated on the problems of structural racism, and fast. Class has been in session for hundreds of years, and the final exam is coming up. Many of us at State have some cramming to do, but we are all good students. So I am confident that if we really work hard, we can pass the test put before us. ■

Rooting Out Microaggressions

What does exclusion look like? An FSO explores the concept of microaggressions—and suggests how shining a light on them can help foster a culture of inclusion.

BY CHARLES MORRILL

Without a doubt, the treatment of women and minorities in the Foreign Service has come a long way over the past few decades. But the fight for equal treatment is not over, and rooting out microaggressions is the next step.

According to the Department of State's Office of the Historian, it was not until the 1960s that women and minorities were given meaningful opportunities to serve their country in the State Department and other foreign affairs agencies. A half-century after the ending of overtly discriminatory practices, far too many employees report that they still "pick up a vibe" that they are not welcome or don't feel like valued members of the team.

This vibe is what microaggressions are all about: subtle snubs, slights and invalidations that have the cumulative effect of making members of minority groups feel isolated, unworthy

and unwelcome. Unchecked, microaggressions can impinge on the performance of the victim, lead to possible conduct issues and result in higher turnover among minority employees.

On his first day in office, President Joe Biden started to make good on a campaign promise to make the federal workplace a more inclusive place by issuing executive orders to expand antidiscrimination practices and restore diversity awareness training.

But to recruit and retain a Foreign Service that fully reflects the American people, this training must include a better understanding of microaggressions and the role they play in creating a noninclusive culture. That knowledge, in turn, should equip the victims of such treatment to defend themselves and empower allies to speak up.

Death by a Thousand Cuts

The term "microaggressions" has been around since the 1970s, coined by an African American professor at Harvard named Chester Pierce, who first defined them as subtle, nonverbal "putdowns." While initially the focus was on racial microaggressions, the term has since been expanded to include both verbal and nonverbal acts against any marginalized group. In this context, "micro" does not refer to being small or innocuous, but rather underscores the pervasiveness and difficulty of identifying and detecting these offenses.

In their seminal book, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life* (Wiley, 2010), Derald Wing Sue and Lisa Spanierman define



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the term as “verbal and nonverbal interpersonal exchanges in which a perpetrator causes harm to an individual target, whether intended or unintended.” These encounters make the recipients feel overlooked, disrespected and devalued because of their race, gender or sexual orientation. Any single microaggression in isolation may be minimally impactful. But the cumulative impact can be detrimental to the emotional and psychological well-being of the victim.

As societal norms and legal protections against overt discrimination have evolved, scholars of microaggression contend that while people may no longer participate in overt or bigoted behavior, they may engage in unconscious or subconscious behavior that reflects their implicit biases. No matter how subtle or innocuous such actions may seem, they contribute to a toxic work environment.

A Toxic Taxonomy

The study of microaggressions now recognizes a taxonomy of four broad subcategories: environmental microaggressions, microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations.

Environmental microaggressions appear in the form of exclusionary policies and practices in institutions, including universities, religious organizations and all levels of government, creating a “hostile” workplace. The underrepresentation of minorities in leadership positions, for example, can constitute an environmental microaggression.

Microassaults are conscious and deliberate actions, subtle or not, meant to harm the intended victim through name-calling, marginalization or purposeful discriminatory actions. They are most closely aligned with traditional forms of racial, sexual or gender-based prejudice—such as giving rewarding assignments to less qualified candidates who happen to belong to a manager’s group, while denying career-enhancing opportunities to minority employees. For instance, instead of sharing the workload and developmental opportunities, a section chief routinely taps his white male “superstar” to take on the most challenging, high-profile taskings, such as control officer for a VIP visit, and then rewards him with a Superior Honor Award.

Paradoxically, victims of discrimination often find it easier to deal with microassaults than more subtle microaggressions. Because the blatant racism is clear, they do not need to expend psychological energy and suffer stress deciphering intent.

Verbal microassaults include name-calling and jokes that disparage a group, harming the victim’s reputation and well-being. Because of strong public condemnation of such behaviors, Sue and Spanierman posit that microassaults are

No matter how subtle or innocuous such actions may seem, they contribute to a toxic work environment.

most likely expressed in conditions that afford the perpetrator a degree of protection—such as when they are issued anonymously, in the company of those the perpetrator believes share their views, or when the perpetrator loses control (e.g., they are drunk or angry).

Microinsults convey rudeness or insensitivity and demean a person’s identity and humanity. Yet they are not always consciously intended to insult, particularly when they are commonplace utterances. For example, who hasn’t heard “That’s so gay!” used in reference to something that is out of the norm, weird or odd? Or take the embassy newsletter that runs an article about “contributions to society” of an enslaved person during Black History Month.

Such clumsy or derogatory expressions reinforce stereotypes and negative perceptions of a person’s identity as part of a minority group. Eye-rolling and other nonverbal cues by aggressors convey that one does not respect or validate an individual, group or idea. Body language and facial expressions can send a message to both the targets and bystanders that the target of the microinsult does not belong in a given social group or work environment.

Among the types of microaggressions, *microinvalidations* are perhaps the most insidious. Sue and Spanierman define these as communications that negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of the marginalized group. Microinvalidations come into play through the assertion that the dominant Eurocentric culture, heterosexuality or gender identity within the workplace is the norm, and everything else is deviant.

When a colleague says something like “He speaks good English,” it reinforces the notion that the target is an outsider, a foreigner. And while it may be well intended, telling an African American colleague that “I have lots of friends who are Black” can come across as a defensive maneuver to obfuscate one’s racism. Similarly, “queer blindness”—ignoring the lived reality of LGBTQ colleagues—makes them feel less included, not more.

Microinvalidation occurs in other ways, too. For example, at post an African American human resources officer (HRO)

Disengaged, underperforming and feeling that they don't belong, some victims of microaggression ultimately separate voluntarily or involuntarily from the organization.

meets staunch resistance from the deputy chief of mission (DCM) when implementing a new departmentwide policy, forcing her to check and double-check to see if there are exceptions. The DCM finally relents when the white male management counselor convinces him this actually is the new policy. Or, in another example, an RSO convenes a “core” Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting, that excludes the Black community liaison office coordinator and the female economic section chief yet includes other white male noncore members.

A Culture of Exclusion

Microaggressions, especially microinvalidations and microinsults, within the workplace are easily overlooked, which enhances their perpetrators' power to maintain dominance and keep minority employees marginalized. Recent studies of microaggressions aimed at the LGBTQ community provide a framework for understanding the ways that social, cultural and ideological paradigms of normalcy are shaped by those with power and define notions of what is “normal.”

Experts suggest that microaggressions typically have three components: perpetration, context and response. *Perpetration* refers to the type of microaggression and the relative power differential between the perpetrator and target. *Context* refers to the setting in which the microaggression takes place, be it among friends or loved ones; in an institutional setting, such as a university, a house of worship or the workplace; or in interactions with governmental bodies at any level. Perpetration and context are important, but it is the emotional, cognitive and behavioral *response* that is of most concern.

Sue and Spanierman's research indicates that when subjected to microaggression, people engage in intense self-questioning, trying to figure out what is going on before settling

on a response. Because microaggressions are subtle and often ambiguous, victims may spend an undue amount of time pondering, “Did this really happen?” This is classic “gaslighting,” a form of psychological manipulation in which the victim is made to believe that “It's all in my head.”

While it is well documented that overt discrimination detrimentally affects mental and physical health, quality of life and the self-esteem of victims, microaggressions can also place considerable psychological, emotional and physical stress on a victim. Employees who fall into multiple, intersectional categories (e.g., Black and gay) can be expected to experience even greater self-doubt in such situations.

Studies have shown that people ultimately respond to microaggressions in one of two ways: engagement or disengagement. If they opt to engage, they may carry out direct or indirect confrontation with the perpetrator, advocate on behalf of others and become active in public awareness initiatives. All too often, however, unsure of themselves and their place in an organization, victims or bystanders do the opposite: they disengage. They keep their heads down, avoid uncomfortable situations, and withdraw emotionally and psychologically from the organization.

It is not surprising, then, that experiencing microaggressions can have a negative impact on job performance and productivity, for they are associated with a host of consequences: anxiety, depression, a feeling of helplessness or inadequacy, loss of motivation, trouble sleeping, intrusive thoughts and a decreased ability to focus. In many cases, alcohol abuse or other unhealthy behaviors can ensue. Disengaged, underperforming and feeling that they don't belong—that they are abnormal, incompetent or not trusted—some victims of microaggression ultimately separate voluntarily or involuntarily from the organization.

Toward a More Inclusive Culture

While individuals may suffer personally and professionally, ultimately it is the *organization* that pays the price for tolerating a noninclusive work environment. Fortunately, our foreign affairs agencies have not been the exclusive domain for straight “pale, male and Yale” employees for many years. And while there is still a long way to go, our workforce increasingly reflects the full diversity of America. However, our push to build on this progress will be for naught if we don't do more to create a truly inclusive culture in which diversity—in all its forms—can take root and thrive. So, what can we do to build a more inclusive culture?

As a first step, we need to make the “invisible” visible. As part of our diversity and inclusion training at FSI and in the field, we need to define and explain microaggressions, so that perpetrators, victims and bystanders can all recognize them when they happen. All too often, perpetrators, not believing that they themselves harbor racist or homophobic views, carry out microaggressions without realizing the damage they are doing. Unfortunately, they largely do this with impunity. As leaders, we need to become more self-aware and be prepared to challenge our own thoughts and perceptions before passing judgment on colleagues.

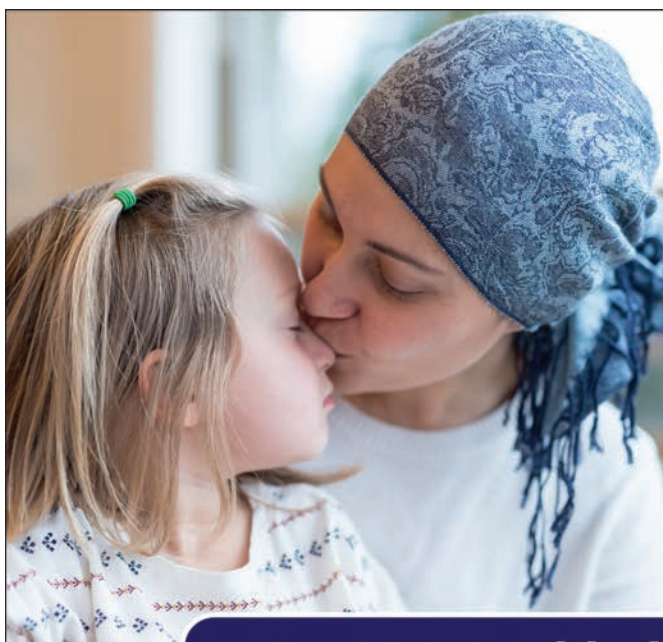
Second, we need to encourage and empower victims and bystanders to speak up and speak out. Simply having the courage to speak up and call someone out directly can put a quick end to offensive behavior.

Third, we can support our employees by offering them access to professional coaching and counseling resources. The former can help employees crystalize their thoughts and come

Simply having the courage to speak up and call someone out directly can put a quick end to offensive behavior.

up with an engagement plan, while the latter can help them deal with the cognitive and emotional stress microaggressions cause, to protect their physical and psychological health.

Finally, in the fight against microaggression, allies play a vital role by calling perpetrators out when they witness them and letting the perpetrators know that this behavior hurts the Foreign Service. Working together, we can root out this scourge and create a climate in which diversity can thrive. ■



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How the Transition Center Expands Inclusion

Described as a “hidden gem” by this FSO, FSI’s Transition Center has a range of tools and services that are vital in helping build a more agile, inclusive Department of State.

BY MARYUM SAIFEE

When I got my invitation letter to join the Foreign Service just over a decade ago, New York was collapsing into the abyss of a financial crisis and my transition to Washington was abrupt. I arrived feeling overwhelmed and out of place. My A-100 orientation

class was large and relatively diverse. But when I look at who in my cohort has decided to leave the Foreign Service, I see it has been mostly women and people of color. The attrition in my class is emblematic of a larger picture portrayed in a recent Government Accountability Office report citing deep-rooted racial disparities that go back decades. For example, the number of Black women in the Foreign Service was at 2 percent in 2002. Fifteen years later, in 2017, the number had only risen to 3 percent.

I would have become another data point in the GAO’s mapping of our diversity exodus had it not been for a more flexible leave without pay (LWOP) policy that gave breathing space to State Department employees needing to push pause for a variety of life reasons. My previous overseas tours—Baghdad, Erbil,

Lahore and Cairo, amid two evacuations—had taken a toll. The Foreign Service is an exhilarating career, but transitions become rockier as we rise up the ranks. And for women of color like me, there is the added complexity of navigating systemic racism and sexism, particularly when posted overseas where our credibility and competency are routinely questioned because we don’t look like “American” diplomats (read: white and male).

As Secretary Antony Blinken frames diversity as a national security imperative and a precondition to solving the complex challenges of the 21st century, the Foreign Service Institute’s Transition Center could be the department’s best kept secret in building this more agile and inclusive workforce. When I left a two-year LWOP to join the Transition Center’s team, I didn’t know very much about it. Like many Foreign Service officers, I knew FSI/TC offered a retirement course. And I vaguely remembered a resource center at FSI with blue boxes full of content to prepare for overseas assignments—but that was it.

Cultivating Life Skills as a Tool for Retention

Since joining FSI/TC earlier this year, I’ve discovered that the center is a hidden gem that hosts a broad range of programming that is fundamental to answering the Secretary’s call for retaining a diverse workforce. The Training Division’s Life Skills Unit equips the foreign affairs community with literacy on critical life skills ranging from personal finances and tax considerations in a foreign affairs context to employment opportunities for eligible family members, regulations and allowances when it comes to eldercare and parental leave, and so much more.

FSI/TC and the courses it offers are a reminder that Foreign Service and Civil Service professionals are more than worker bees churning policy, issuing visas or running operations at post: They



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Pathways to a More Just, Equitable, and Innovative Institution.”

The views in this article are the author’s and do not necessarily represent those of the State Department or U.S. government.

are also multidimensional humans facing a host of life challenges, made all the more complex with transnational moves and caring for (and sometimes grieving the loss of) loved ones scattered across the world during a global shutdown.

Managing Expectations to Promote Agility

To help members of the foreign affairs community mentally prepare for an onward assignment, the Overseas Briefing Center has now migrated to a fully virtual “Post Info To Go” platform, with information that caters to the needs of diverse Foreign Service communities. Creating accessible, updated information from diverse lived experiences is essential to managing expectations and fostering resilience. To ensure that content resonates with all members of the foreign affairs community, OBC regularly solicits feedback from underrepresented groups. For example, the OBC team collaborated with the Bureau of Global Talent Management and the Disability Action Group, an employee resource group, to create a survey on accessibility options available within host nations. Elsewhere, OBC revamped the questions on its general survey to be more accommodating of singles. In a time of pandemic when post realities are changing by the day, Post Info To Go’s digital platform lends itself well to continually updating content to be timely, relevant and inclusive.

Investing in Institutional Resilience

A more recent addition to the FSI/TC family is the Center of Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience. CEFAR leads on-demand resilience programming for domestic offices and posts around the world. During the pandemic, CEFAR has reached more than 20,000 members of the international affairs community with webinars and customized trainings for offices and bureaus seeking to strengthen teams and boost performance. I took part in CEFAR’s four-part listening series on resilience customized for singles earlier this year. Resilience itself is a loaded term, so I approached the workshops with a bit of skepticism. As a woman of color, I’m often told to be more resilient in the face of institutional shortcomings and systemic failures.

These sessions were different. They focused on framing resilience (which includes cultivating a growth mindset, as well as fostering well-being) in both the institutional and individual contexts. After mining more than 1,000 comments from participants, CEFAR integrated the data into user-friendly infographics customized for the foreign affairs community. This included actionable tips for managers and the broader community to build a more singles-inclusive environment, as well as resilience resources for singles themselves. Follow-up also included a



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/VEDRAN ANDONOVSKI

(Above) The Transition Center, located in Building E at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center campus in Arlington, Virginia, is a vital part of the Foreign Service Institute.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/LAURA MILLER

(Left) Laura Miller, the Transition Center's division director of training, teleworking.

(Below) Overseas Briefing Center Resource Specialist Maureen Johnston and Haris Kalajdzic, then a program assistant at the Transition Center.



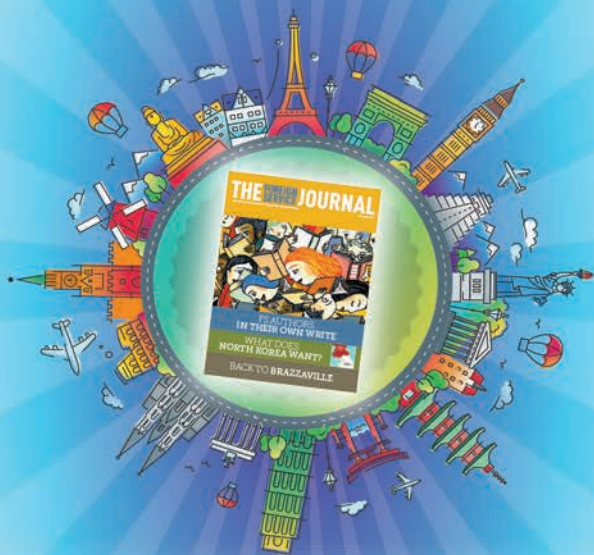
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/FSI/PA

In November 2021

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

will highlight recently published books
by Foreign Service-affiliated authors.

*Calling
~ ALL ~
FOREIGN
SERVICE
Authors!*



Authors from the Foreign Service Community whose books have been published in 2020 or by September 2021 are invited to send us a copy of the book, preferably the e-book, along with a press release or background.

For more information, and for instructions on how to submit materials, email journal@afsa.org.

**Deadline for submissions
is August 23.**

multibureau working group to discuss structural interventions, policy reform and ways to bring about sustainable culture change. For me, this series presented a useful model that could be piloted and potentially applied to other underrepresented groups, particularly those with high attrition.

Leveraging a Digital Transformation to Democratize Access to Knowledge

Over the last year, FSI rapidly transitioned almost entirely to virtual offerings. FSI/TC, particularly the Life Skills Unit, was already using digital courses before the pandemic, and we were able to innovate further by exposing students to new digital tools like Slido and Mural, as well as making available a compilation of recorded webinars. While there is no substitute for in-person interaction, and some courses will likely revert to meeting in person when it is again safe, the ability to offer courses in a digital format and make slides, toolkits and archived recordings available to participants helps democratize access to this vital knowledge for State Department employees, their families and the broader foreign affairs community.

Because of the courses I have been exposed to at the Transition Center as both an instructor and participant, I feel more equipped to handle some of the upheaval and uncertainty embedded in a Foreign Service career. Uprooting every few years, serving in compounds like Baghdad or Lahore where you are perpetually on high alert, or missing life milestones (weddings, reunions, funerals and so forth) can feel isolating and stressful. For example, had I taken the Regulations, Allowance, and Finances seminar—a course that went into exceptional detail on how to navigate an evacuation—earlier in my career, my two evacuations out of Egypt, in 2011 and again in 2013, would have been much smoother.

As Foreign Service officers, we are hardwired to put our personal lives on the back burner to serve the broader mission. However, this isn't sustainable and ultimately leads to burnout. This is all the more acute for marginalized groups grappling with larger, systemic inequities. Secretary Blinken noted in recent remarks welcoming the State Department's first-ever chief diversity and inclusion officer, Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, that diversity work "is not just the work of the CDIO—or any other individual with 'diversity' and 'inclusion' in their title. ... It is the job of every single member of this department."

FSI's Transition Center touches every stage of one's career life cycle and has the potential to not only lay the foundation for a more agile and inclusive workforce, but also create an enabling ecosystem where all employees can thrive, sustain their well-being and realize their full potential. ■

State

A Proposal for Professional Diplomatic Education and Outreach to America

This timely project proposal offers a single solution to achieving several top-priority goals.

BY JOEL EHRENDREICH

Three forces are creating a perfect storm right now, exposing the need for generational reform at the State Department.

First, the belief that the Foreign Service should pursue professional education for its officers during their careers is widespread, considered long overdue by many.

Second, the State Department has long endeavored to build its domestic constituency, reaching out to the American people to better explain why and how its work is relevant to them.

Third, subnational diplomacy (also known as city and state diplomacy) is playing an increasingly significant role in foreign policy. Subnational diplomacy can be a key contributor to the new administration's vision, as articulated in the Interim National Security Strategy Guidance, for a "foreign policy for the middle class."

We need to recognize what is at stake, and seize the moment to, as Secretary of State Antony Blinken said at his confirmation



Joel Ehrendreich is a Senior Foreign Service officer currently working in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. He previously worked as the foreign policy adviser (POLAD) to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and on various assignments in the State

Department bureaus of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, South and Central Asian Affairs and African Affairs. In 2011, he won AFSA's William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent. He is a member of the FSJ Editorial Board.

For the State Department to win in the years ahead, its leaders need to learn more than languages and writing skills; we need a culture of learning.

hearing, “modernize and rebuild, so our team around the world has the tools and the support they need to get the job done.” This proposal, “State U,” offers a single solution that would go a long way toward achieving those goals.

Specifically, during their midlevel years, Foreign Service officers should be required to complete one year of graduate or post-graduate education in the field of international affairs or a similarly relevant discipline. The immediate benefits are multifaceted. Such training provides a better educated workforce as the competition for influence around the world intensifies; strengthens the Secretary as the provider of the State Department’s combined wisdom to the president, Congress and foreign leaders; builds leadership; prepares officers for the next level of responsibilities; develops critical and strategic thinking; and enhances diplomatic skills.

Ideally, FSOs would spread out to universities around the country, benefiting from the perspectives they can gain from outside the Beltway. Geographic diversity would then provide the means to address the second and third issues: building State’s domestic constituency and engaging in subnational diplomacy. Officers assigned across the country would have the opportunity to conduct hometown diplomacy, interacting with state and local governments, schools, business groups, and think-tanks, serving as a point of contact for local communities.

We Need Professional Diplomatic Education

For the same reasons that the U.S. military emphasizes professional military education (PME) as an integral part of its officers’ career paths, the State Department should implement “professional diplomatic education” (PDE) for its officer cadre. Since the end of World War II, the military has used PME as an important part in the career development of its officers and, to a lesser extent, its enlisted personnel.

As military representatives explained at a U.S. House of Representatives hearing in July 2009, the goals of PME are “to contribute to the preparation of our military officers as they progress through their careers for leadership at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.” Senior military officers are expected to have spent more than three years enrolled in professional education over the course of their careers, and usually are given time away

from the field to obtain at least one master’s-level degree. To give just one example, the Marine Corps—which numbers 186,000 in all—has approximately 16,500 officer and enlisted students involved in resident programs (515 of which are one-year programs) and 85,000 students involved in distance learning.

The State Department does an excellent job of providing entry-level orientation, language training, area studies and deputy chief of mission/ambassadorial training; but when it comes to broader development of foreign affairs knowledge, generally speaking, we’re left to pick it up while on the job. For the State Department to win in the years ahead, its leaders need to learn more than languages and writing skills; we need a culture of learning.

According to the 2017 study, “Developing Diplomats: Comparing Form and Culture Across Diplomatic Services,” Chinese diplomats are only eligible for promotion after earning credits from short-term and long-term training courses; it is a system that encourages a culture of continuous improvement within the diplomatic service. A unique feature of their professional development is that approximately 140 officers are sent to major national and international universities annually to complete a full year of graduate-level academic study. Chinese Ambassador to Washington Cui Tiankai received a postgraduate degree from Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies.

Indian and Brazilian diplomats, in addition to rigorous in-career training, spend time in their countries’ various states to experience the diversity of their own country and share their experiences with constituents, the same study found. While we certainly don’t need to mimic the practices of any other country, it is apparent that our competition is pulling ahead of us in terms of formal professional development of their diplomats.

Outreach to the American Public

At the same time, the lack of a recognizable domestic constituency harms the Department of State, both in building support for policies and in the battle for resources from Congress. When Americans don’t understand what we’re doing—or how it affects them—they are less likely to support our policies and budget requests for their taxpayer dollars. Stereotypes of diplomats as

It is apparent that our competition is pulling ahead of us in terms of formal professional development of their diplomats.

elitists spending taxpayer dollars overseas while problems at home remain unresolved go unchallenged.

State does have a few programs in place to address the domestic constituency deficit. The Diplomats in Residence program sends some 20 senior officers to faculties at American universities. Our Hometown Diplomats program tasks a small number of officers each year to make limited outreach in their local communities.

What we need, however, is a calculated, strategic approach at a scale that is large enough to have a lasting impact. This proposal envisions posting hundreds of FSOs around the country for professional education every year. Building off the Diplomats in Residence and Hometown Diplomats programs, we should require our State U students to not only speak to faculties and other interested classes at the universities they're attending, but also reach out to other universities in the area, or high schools, governors and mayors, businesses and business clubs, think-tanks, the media and other interested groups.

Repeated annually, across the country, we will exponentially increase our domestic outreach, making contact with sections of the public we've never reached before. The State Department would no longer be a stranger to those on Main Street. The converse is also true: Main Street would become a greater part of who we are. We will gain a greater understanding of what our foreign policy means to Americans outside Washington circles, and what Americans want their diplomats to be doing for them.

The Need for Subnational Diplomacy

American cities and states are becoming increasingly active participants in global diplomacy. From transnational issues such as global warming and pandemic response to terrorism (both international and domestic) and economic development, local institutions are seeking to engage more than ever before with the State Department and international partners. Although foreign policy is the domain of the federal government, the active and growing involvement of American cities and states should be welcomed and encouraged. The logic is circular, but in a good way: The department must enlist cities and states to better advance American interests overseas and, in turn, achieve a foreign policy that benefits the middle class back home.

Currently, however, we do not have a mechanism for this. To

be sure, State runs numerous subnational programs—from law enforcement exchanges and training for foreign police to immigrant immersion programs and local consultations over water rights issues along our borders. But overall, our subnational engagement is ad hoc and rarely coordinated in any way with our strategic foreign policy goals.

In fact, this discrepancy between our cities and states desiring more inclusion in foreign policy and the lack of a mechanism to do so has already caught the attention of Congress. At the time of this writing, Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and others were preparing to reintroduce a bill that would require State to create an Office of Subnational Diplomacy. The bill states: "It is the sense of Congress that it is in the interest of the United States to promote subnational engagements, align such engagements with national foreign policy objectives, and leverage federal resources to enhance the impact of such engagements."

Led by an ambassador-at-large, this office would, among other things, advise the Secretary on subnational issues, help mayors and governors engage with their foreign counterparts, coordinate with the interagency and promote U.S. foreign policy goals through support for subnational engagements. The bill has received widespread support, including from the Council on Foreign Relations, the Truman Center, the German Marshall Fund, the American Academy of Diplomacy and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

How the Program Could Work

The program could be implemented as follows, perhaps starting with a pilot program of smaller scale. Establish a procedure to send up to X percent (the exact number would be determined by human resources needs) of midlevel Foreign Service officers annually to master's, Ph.D. or faculty programs. Participants with a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree in a program not related to international affairs, would attend one-year master's degree programs in international affairs or a related field.

Participants with master's degrees in international affairs or a related field could pursue further master's credits in another related field (such as management or public administration), begin a doctoral program (if State regulations allow) or serve on the faculty of a university international affairs or related program (similar to or as part of the Diplomats in Residence

At the same time, the lack of a recognizable domestic constituency harms the Department of State, both in building support for policies and in the battle for resources from Congress.

program). Participants with a Ph.D. could pursue further doctoral credits or serve on the faculty of a university international affairs or related program. Waivers could be given to those officers for whom further professional education is deemed of little benefit.

Participants could attend one of the universities State is already associated with (through the Diplomats in Residence program), one of the existing security studies programs at a Defense Department facility, or write a justification to attend any accredited program in the United States. In fact, State should encourage participants to spread out across the country. Participants would be expected to perform public outreach and subnational diplomacy functions, in addition to successfully completing coursework.

Participation in the program would be done through the normal competitive bidding process. As successful completion of State U would be a requirement for entry into the Senior Foreign Service, the department would choose bidders who demonstrate the potential to serve in the senior ranks; low-ranking officers would likely not get their bids for these assignments.

Costs and Other Considerations

The cost of implementing such a program would essentially entail tuition/books, domestic travel and personnel hiring to create a “training float.” As all officers would be assigned domestically, there would be no requirement for per diem or housing.

Because funds would have to be appropriated by Congress, it might seem easy to dismiss the concept as impossible given financial constraints. However, with a new administration able to set new priorities, such a program might not be as unattainable as one would imagine. Recently, members of Congress have expressed interest in providing State with the budget it needs to stay ahead of today’s competition. In mid-March, a group of progressive House and Senate Democrats announced a proposal that called for nearly \$13 billion in new money in the coming foreign affairs budget cycle. This included money to boost the diplomatic corps, and explicitly noted that members “are calling for the hiring of 1,200 more diplomats for the State Department in fiscal 2022 at a cost of \$480 million.”

Further, the Murphy subnational bill cited above includes

specific language that would authorize “no fewer than 30 total Foreign Service officers and members of the Civil Service each year to [be assigned to] state, county and municipal governments”—a signal that congressional support for dispatching State officials domestically may be ripe.

In addition to cost, one important issue to address would be how to adapt the department’s promotion practices to affirm the value of professional diplomatic education. The employee evaluation report (EER) should be amended to account for the different nature of such an assignment and include ways to assess performance during the year of State U. Those who excel at their coursework, or perform exceptional outreach during the year, should be recognized by promotion panels in the same way any officer would be for exceptional work. If, like the Department of Defense, selection for this academic training is a strong indicator for future promotion to leadership ranks, and the State Department demonstrates it values the program year as much as other assignments, buy-in should be wide and quick.

State does not have to reinvent the wheel to establish such a program. State could consult with DOD, where, as mentioned, there is a long tradition of professional education and well-established management practices. There shouldn’t be any unforeseeable devil in the details.

Modernize and Rebuild

So, what’s the goal? To build a workforce that—on both the individual and institutional levels—is able to think strategically about America’s foreign policy, in touch with the American public, for the purpose of optimizing America’s diplomacy.

How will it be measured? Within 10 years, 100 percent of career Senior FSOs have graduate level degrees in foreign affairs or a related field. Contact between Foreign Services officers and the American public is 300 times greater than current baselines. And outreach to American companies domestically increases by 500 percent compared to current baselines.

The bottom line is that professional education is just one part, albeit a critical part, of greater reforms the State Department needs to make. This project could be the most visible example from the incoming administration of its investment in its people, an enduring legacy that transforms our diplomacy. ■

Foreign Service Day Remembrances and Activities



Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) and AFSA State Vice President Tom Yazdgerdi deliver remarks during the AFSA Memorial Ceremony on Foreign Service Day, May 7, in front of the memorial plaques in the State Department's C Street lobby.

In a somber Foreign Service Day memorial ceremony on May 7, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and AFSA State Vice President Tom Yazdgerdi unveiled the names of Foreign Service colleagues added to the AFSA memorial plaques in the State Department's C Street lobby this year, honoring those who died in the line of duty.

Because of the pandemic, Foreign Service Day, along with AFSA's day of programming on May 6, were virtual this year.

"Even during a pandemic, this is a special day," Secretary Blinken said in a live feed on the State Department's YouTube page (see bit.ly/blinken-afsa-plaques). "It's our homecoming. It's

a chance for retired Foreign and Civil Service members to come back, to see old friends, to get briefed on some of the leading issues of the day.

"It's a chance for us to honor outstanding public servants who have made remarkable contributions to the United States. And it's a moment to remember with gratitude those who gave their lives in service of American diplomacy."

He added that he looks forward to the day when the C Street lobby can be full of people again for Foreign Service Day.

Honoring Service and Sacrifice

"The original Foreign Service Day was first celebrated by AFSA, DACOR and the Department of State

CALENDAR

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

July 5
Independence Day:
AFSA offices closed

July 15
New AFSA Governing Board takes office

July 15
1 p.m.
Diplomats at Work—Working in the Arctic

July 21
12-2 p.m.
First meeting of the 2021-2023 Governing Board

August 18
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

August 27
Deadline: Nominations for Sinclair Language Awards

September 6
Labor Day:
AFSA offices closed

AFSA SOFT REOPENING



Erin Nicholson, chair of the AFSA Committee on Elections, certifies the results of the 2021-2023 Governing Board vote on June 10 at AFSA headquarters in Washington, D.C. While not yet reopened for public events, AFSA has had a "soft reopening" on June 1 after nearly 15 months of closure and full telework. We look forward to welcoming our members back to the building in the coming months.

in 1965 to honor the service and sacrifice of our Foreign Service and Foreign Service family members," Yazdgerdi said in his introductory remarks. "But even before that, for more than 80 years, AFSA has had the privilege of honoring the now 320 fallen colleagues whose names are inscribed on these walls."

Continued on page 54



Should the Foreign Service Act of 1980 Be Overhauled?

Much has been said in recent months by think-tanks and influencers about the need to overhaul the Foreign Service Act of 1980, at a time when so many of us are focused on diversity and inclusion and new ideas on performance evaluation and assignments at State.

That landmark piece of legislation laid the foundations for the modern Foreign Service. It created the Senior Foreign Service, strengthened the up-or-out system, added new benefits and allowances such as danger pay, set parameters for grievances, and authorized a single worldwide bargaining unit, with AFSA as the exclusive representative.

In the four decades since the act was passed, changes in personnel policy at State—from death gratuities and reductions in force to requirements for entry into the SFS—have occurred by amending this act, usually via large appropriation bills such as the National Defense Authorization Act. Is something more than that necessary now?

What Do Major Reform Reports Say? Two major reports on State Department reform—from Harvard's Belfer Center and the Council on Foreign Relations—argue in favor of amending the act.

Specifically, the Belfer Center report would mandate a 10-percent limit on

noncareer chief of mission appointments; establish a 15 percent increase in staffing to create a training float, like the military; require that high-level positions, including the under secretary for political affairs and 75 percent of assistant secretary-level positions be filled by career professionals; and create a ROTC-like program for underrepresented college students interested in a career in the Foreign Service, among other initiatives.

The CFR report is less specific but argues that it would make sense to codify reforms to make the department less subject to the vagaries of a revisionist administration.

AFSA's Position. AFSA is considering whether it makes sense to call for an overhaul of the Foreign Service Act.

On one hand, the act was passed at a time of relatively greater bipartisan consensus in Congress (and in the country, for that matter), especially with regard to the conduct of foreign policy. It was also a time of greater acceptance of the rights of federal labor unions, like AFSA.

In the current atmosphere of hyperpartisanship, even with the current pro-union administration, we might not be able to retain what I would call that high-water mark of accomplishment. That includes main-

taining our ability to retire at 50 with a full pension after 20 years of service.

Both reports cited above note the potential dangers in opening this Pandora's box, with the Harvard report opposing any new legislation that would not retain "what is right" about the current act.

On the other hand, there is much to be said about updating an act that was passed when people still used typewriters. At this sensitive moment in our nation's history concerning social equity and the American workplace—spurred on by the George Floyd murder and the COVID-19 telework revolution—we may not have another such opportunity for largescale change.

A new Foreign Service act may be the vehicle for AFSA, working with department colleagues and employee affinity groups, to effect this change.

Overarching questions could be more directly addressed, such as: What can be done to improve retention of underrepresented and underprivileged FS members? Does the coning system still make sense for today's Foreign Service? Should the employee evaluation report be refocused so it's not just a top-down assessment but includes the input of peers and subordinates? Why do many find the assignments process so

unfair and opaque? Should the mandatory retirement age be increased to 67, in line with the age at which you receive full Social Security benefits?

State Dept Authorization Bill. What gives me some hope that the atmosphere may be improving for a Foreign Service Act overhaul is the May 18 bipartisan passage in the House of Representatives of the first State Department authorization bill in nearly two decades.

The bill contains a number of important provisions. For example, it authorizes a paid student internship program and would reform the assignment restrictions appeals process. It also requires the Secretary of State to submit to Congress a strategy to establish a "training float" to allow for up to 15 percent of department Foreign and Civil Service employees to participate in long-term training at any given time.

That said, as of this writing, the bill has yet to be passed by the Senate. Through its excellent relations with members and staff in both houses, AFSA can attest that there is bipartisan support to improve funding for the department and tackle other major issues.

Please let us know what you think at member@afsa.org. ■



USAID and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

I am thrilled that this *FSJ* edition is again focused on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). It's a complex issue that is too often either ignored or, perhaps even worse, addressed with strong rhetoric combined with one-off actions, only to fade from view.

This time the conversation feels different, and I welcome the agency's new DEI Strategic Plan—though I wish AFSA had been invited to contribute. I'd like to flag a few areas for thought—some a bit outside the “traditional” DEI realm—and I welcome your feedback.

Data. USAID is fantastic at providing accessible, fungible and (pretty) clear data on our projects. But we have very little up-to-date, much less transparent, usable or public data on USAID's workforce.

While respecting privacy and security, USAID should publish employee data including numbers by location, diversity, hiring mechanisms, backstops, promotion trends, ranks and funding streams and budget costs. Data alone won't fix DEI challenges, but it will help us better understand them.

Better data will enable the agency to review current recruitment, onboarding, retention and promotion programs and undertake rigorous DEI barrier analysis with commensurate actions to correct deficiencies. And it would empower employees,

NGOs, universities, employee resource groups, Congress and others to support USAID's own DEI efforts—including accountability—so that challenges aren't ignored or minimized.

Foreign Service Promotion Boards. In 2020, the agency surprised AFSA and many FSOs when it changed from an all-volunteer to an all-appointed model for Foreign Service promotion boards. Further, appointments are now made through a “random selection process” from a subset of eligible FSOs.

AFSA has heard from members concerned that this model would limit diversity on many levels, particularly as it excludes all FS-2s from participation. AFSA put forward several ideas to bring some transparency to the agency's processes, criteria and rationale. The agency did not engage to our satisfaction, and AFSA filed an implementation dispute with the Foreign Service Grievance Board.

As that process proceeds, we have tried to discuss the 2021 board composition, but have been told that the agency considers its bargaining obligations fulfilled.

We are hopeful that the agency will constructively engage to improve the 2022 boards, and particularly DEI components, in a collaborative and transparent manner.

FSO Equity: Recruitment and Salary. I confess I have

much to learn when it comes to how we can effectively apply “equity” at USAID.

The agency has never had a standardized, consistent FS recruitment process, nor do we (yet) maintain a roster of cleared, qualified candidates we can draw on to streamline the hiring process.

Instead, we've seen a series of hiring initiatives and mechanisms that have brought in varying numbers of people in disparate backstops at varying ranks/steps. To be clear: there are many dedicated (and underappreciated) colleagues working hard to recruit, onboard, orient, train and mentor new FSOs.

But the lack of strategic workforce planning and institutionalized career hiring policies yield too many variations on the situation where “FSO A” with a decade or more of experience is hired at an FS-6 one year, while “FSO B” with less experience starts as an FS-5 the next year.

These decisions affect FSOs' financial and professional situations over entire careers, not to mention imperil morale. Chances are that FSOs hired at any grade end up working in stretch positions for several tours, which complicates the situation further. We must do better to strengthen and institutionalize the career Foreign Service at USAID and rationalize our approaches to FS “talent management.”

Career FSOs. For decades, USAID has lacked sufficient numbers of career FSOs to achieve its broad development mandate. In FY 2016, career FSOs made up nearly 20 percent of USAID's workforce—not spectacular, but historically better than FY 2020's 17.5 percent. In addition to quantitative challenges, career FSOs have not as a rule been appointed to senior leadership positions in Washington as often as State counterparts. This matters.

Fortunately, President Joe Biden—on his second day in office no less—issued Executive Order 14003, affirming: “It is the policy of the United States to protect, empower, and rebuild the career federal workforce.” The question now is how Administrator Samantha Power and her team translate this presidential policy at USAID.

I am heartened by—if a little envious—of State's elevation of career FSOs to senior leadership positions, many requiring Senate confirmation. Will USAID follow with FS assistant Administrators? FS chief human capital officer? FS director of acquisition and assistance?

Will the agency take the steps needed to robustly empower and rebuild a career Foreign Service that is diverse, inclusive and equitable? If so, Administrator Power will find no more willing and engaged partner than AFSA. ■

Foreign Service Day
Continued from page 51

Yazdgerdi asked that everyone listening take a moment “to reflect and honor these individuals who lost their lives while serving the American people and defending our interests and values.”

Sec. Blinken and Yazdgerdi both paid tribute to two Foreign Service officers, Nathan Lane of State and Mark Mitchell of USAID, who died in car accidents in 2019 and 2018, respectively. Lane, who joined the State Department in 2000, died while on temporary duty in Poland. Mitchell died in the country of Georgia.

In his tribute to Nathan Lane, Yazdgerdi said that he knew Nathan personally, noting that he was “beloved by colleagues for his kindness, generosity and infectious laughter. I will remember Nathan as someone who had a deep desire to learn new things and make a difference.”

Lane also served in Mexico, Russia, Belarus, Vietnam and Kenya.

Mark Mitchell looked to help others, teaching parenting classes for inmates through the Federal Bureau of Prisons and immersing himself in USAID assignments in Brazil, Djibouti, Afghanistan and Georgia. Including his USAID work, he served the United States for more than 25 years, as a captain in the Army’s intelligence branch, at the Bureau of Prisons and at the Defense Intelligence Agency.

“His spirit of adventure serves as a reminder for all of

us to make the most of our time on this earth,” Yazdgerdi added.

In May, AFSA completed a once-in-a-generation expansion of the memorial plaques, adding 10 new or replaced plaques to make space for the names of fallen members of the Foreign Service. The expansion includes 69 newly identified historical names to provide a chronologically coherent, dignified commemoration of our fallen colleagues. (See the June 2021 *Foreign Service Journal*, p. 47.)

AFSA Hosts Foreign Service Day Events

On the day before Foreign Service Day, AFSA traditionally hosts a number of special programs for FS alumni.

This year, on May 6, AFSA hosted two webinars: a look at AFSA’s work to promote the interests of the Foreign Service on Capitol Hill, with AFSA Director of Congressional Advocacy Kim Greenplate; and a discussion with two successful ambassador podcasters about how they do it.

Greenplate discussed AFSA’s recent advocacy wins as well as AFSA’s goals for the 117th Congress, including, among others, promoting diversity, inclusion and equity in the Foreign Service; restoring the practice of appointing career Senior FSOs to high-level positions; extending paid leave for medical and caregiving purposes to federal employees; and opposing legislation to reduce pensions of retirees from the foreign affairs agencies.



Ambassador (ret.) Pete Romero, host of the *American Diplomat* podcast, spoke with AFSA members during an AFSA Foreign Service Day webinar on May 6.

Ambassador (ret.) Pete Romero, host of the *American Diplomat* podcast, and Ambassador (ret.) Deborah McCarthy, host of *The General and the Ambassador* podcast, discussed the ways podcasts can make a difference in communicating what the Foreign Service is, and what we do on behalf of the American people.

And for those who might like to try podcasting themselves, the ambassadors also talked about how they craft their presentations, identify interesting guests and simplify complicated stories.

AFSA members may view recordings of these webinars at afsa.org/video.

AFSA Social Media Campaign

In connection with Foreign Service Day, AFSA’s outreach team launched a special social media campaign. AFSA asked members to post messages on Twitter and/or Facebook during the week of May 3, expressing why they are #FSProud to be members of the Foreign Service. AFSA asked that posters use the hashtags #FSProud and #FSDay2021 and tag @afsateweets on Twitter and @afsapage on Facebook).

AFSA members responded, generating



Ambassador (ret.) Deborah McCarthy, host of the podcast *The General and the Ambassador*, spoke with AFSA members during an AFSA Foreign Service Day webinar on May 6.

48,500 tweet impressions on Twitter for the week.

“I am #FSProud for 35 years serving the American people in five countries and at the @StateDept. I worked with colleagues in the #NatSec community from a dozen agencies,” tweeted Ambassador (ret.) Greg Delawie.

“Our employers were varied but our commitment to the Constitution was the same. @afsateweets #FSDay2021”

“Today is Foreign Service Day,” tweeted Ambassador (ret.) Bruce Berton. “I was proud to serve my country for 32 years in ten countries as one of America’s diplomats. Foreign Service work often goes unnoticed but is vital to US national security. Proud of my colleagues still serving. #FSProud #FSDay2021.”

“For 22 years, #FSProud—a privilege & joy to serve as a diplomat @StateDept representing the US & working alongside other cultures, countries, traditions & creating a greater understanding among our people #DiplomacyMatters #Diplomacy #ForeignServiceDay #FSDay2021 @afsateweets,” tweeted FSO Chris Teal.

Please keep helping us raise awareness by continuing to use the #FSProud hashtag. ■

AFSA Retention Survey

A Look at Why Some Consider Leaving the Service

In partnership with three Rangel Fellows (Constanza Castro, Caroline Kim and Mojib Ghaznawi) at Harvard's Kennedy School for Public Service, AFSA sponsored a survey on retention, diversity, equity and inclusion in the Foreign Service.

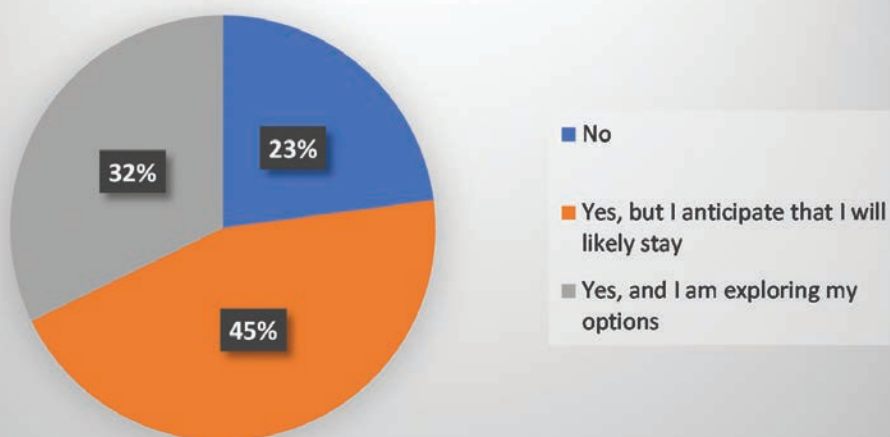
The survey, conducted last December and January by the fellows, was sent to all AFSA members via the Harvard survey platform Qualtrix.

The survey's aim was to identify the primary reasons why members would consider leaving the Foreign Service. Secondly, the survey revealed why members who had left the Service before "normal" retirement chose to depart. With this information, we can pinpoint measures that government agencies and AFSA might take to ensure healthy Foreign Service retention.

The retention survey asked whether members are considering leaving the Foreign Service, and why; what their recommendations are for how the Foreign Service agencies can improve retention; and the areas on which AFSA should focus its advocacy. It also contained demographic questions.

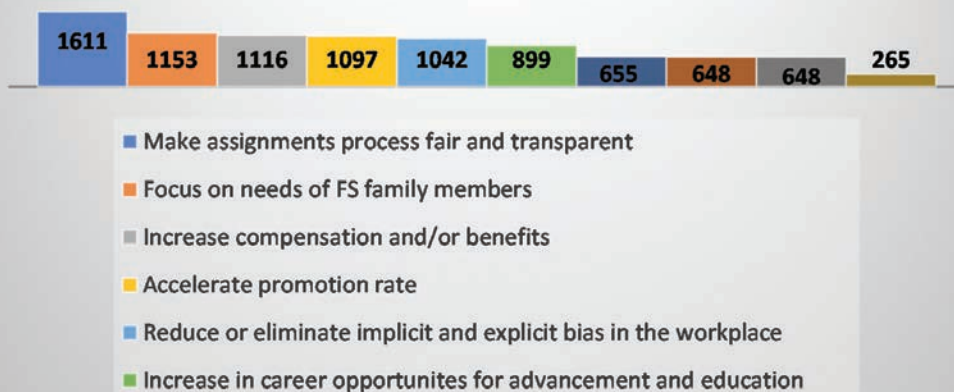
Out of approximately 16,700 AFSA members, 3,338 responded to the

Have you seriously considered leaving the U.S. FS?



More than two-thirds (68 percent) of active-duty respondents reported that they would definitely or probably stay in the Foreign Service, while 952 respondents (32 percent) said they were seriously considering leaving and exploring their options.

What do you think should be the agencies top priorities in promoting FS retention?



Continued on page 56

Retention Survey
Continued from page 55

survey, a robust 20 percent response rate.

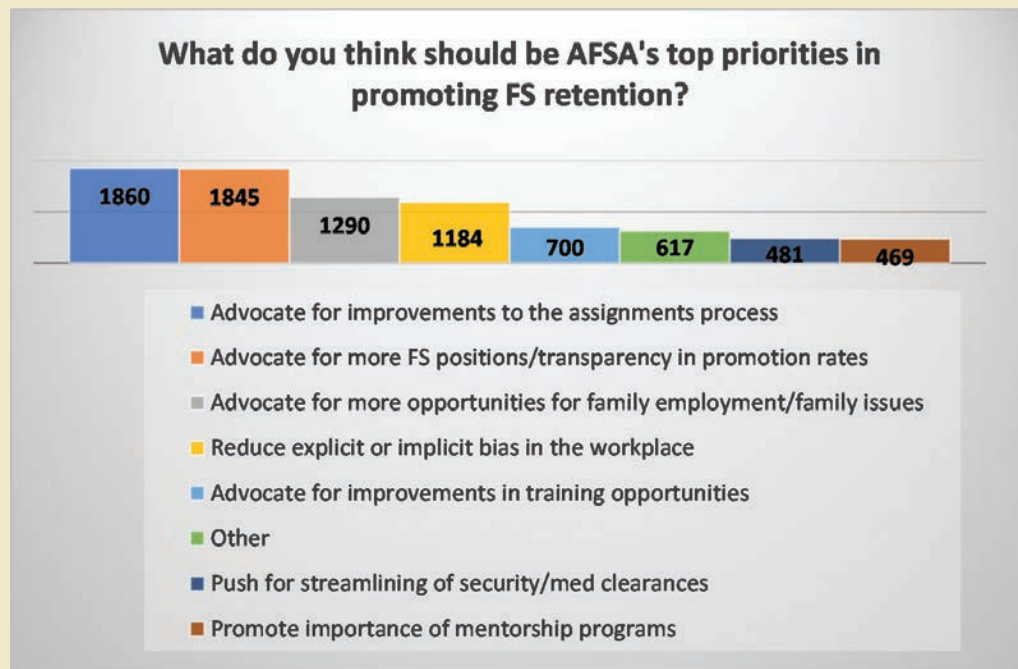
More than two-thirds (68 percent) of the active-duty respondents reported that they would definitely or probably stay in the Foreign Service, while 952 respondents (32 percent) said they were seriously considering leaving and exploring their options.

The reasons people said they might leave—and why they think others might leave—varied depending on demographics. But in aggregate, the top five drivers center on family concerns, assignments, promotions, leadership and bias, in that order.

Black members and American Indian active-duty members mentioned bias as the second-most important driver for why they thought someone would leave the Foreign Service. Bias ranked fourth for Hispanic members.

For Foreign Service members who had made the decision to leave and who had departed the Foreign Service earlier than anticipated, family concerns were cited most frequently as the cause of their departures.

We learned from the 2020 AFSA bias survey (see October 2020 FSJ, p. 68) that there are substantial differences among Foreign Service members in various demographic groups in how they have experienced or have not experienced bias in the workplace. The reten-



tion survey's data appear to confirm these differences.

For specialists, family and promotions tied for top spot, and assignments, leadership, opportunities and compensation followed.

When the subset of respondents who were seriously considering leaving (the 32 percent mentioned above) were asked why, they pointed to leadership, assignments, promotions, family concerns and bias as top reasons. For this group of respondents, leadership was the number-one reason in all demographic subsets.

Note: We believe that the timing of the survey, coming at the end of the last administration, could have skewed the reasons why this group would choose leadership

instead of the more permanent, structural issues identified by the majority of survey respondents. Significantly, for Black FS members who were seriously considering departure, bias was second.

Lastly, when asked to choose the top advocacy priorities for Foreign Service agencies in promoting Foreign Service retention, survey respondents wanted to see the agencies pursue measures to make the assignment process fairer and more transparent, better address the needs of Foreign Service families, increase compensation, accelerate the rate of promotions, combat bias and improve training and professional opportunities.

When all respondents

were asked to rank their preferred AFSA advocacy priorities, they chose assignments, promotions, family issues, bias and training as their top issues.

AFSA used the retention survey's results as well as information obtained through consultations with affinity groups to formulate its recommendations on retention, diversity, equity and inclusion (see article on p. 57). We have shared the recommendations with agency management and with AFSA supporters on Capitol Hill.

For those of you who completed the survey, many thanks. For all our members, please let us know your thoughts at member@afsa.org. ■

AFSA Retention, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Recommendations

In recent months, AFSA invited members to complete both a survey on bias in the workplace and a survey on retention in the Foreign Service.

Using the feedback we received from these two surveys and from an extensive round of consultations with employee affinity and resource groups, AFSA has identified a list of priority advocacy items to promote improved retention, diversity, equity and inclusion in the U.S. Foreign Service.

We chose to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion as retention issues because a lack of attention to these principles corrodes the integrity of the Foreign Service and, eventually, drives individuals to leave prematurely. This vicious cycle ends up disrupting the lives of our Foreign Service families, ultimately damaging the foundations of the institution.

The composition of the list reflects AFSA's unique strengths as a union and professional association. The proposals stem from the responsibilities inherent in our role as the sole bargaining agent for the Foreign Service. As much as possible, we based our recommendations on existing data or made them contingent on the results of ongoing pilot projects. In some instances, our advocacy will be used

to support the initiatives of other groups better placed to execute them.

AFSA recommends that the measures below be taken to arrest the problem of declining retention and to restore and repair morale in the Foreign Service.

A Larger Foreign Service.

AFSA recommends that Foreign Service staffing be increased, that a combined total of up to 1,000 State Department Foreign Service officer and Foreign Service specialist positions be added, as well as 650 additional USAID FSO positions.

We understand some of the position growth would be in support of capacities to address larger personnel numbers. We recommend that the Foreign Service element at AFSA's other constituent agencies—the Department of Commerce, Agriculture, the Animal and Plant Inspection Service and the U.S. Agency for Global Media—should also be enlarged.

A larger Service would mean the United States could better meet 21st century global diplomatic challenges. More positions would add to promotion opportunities at some grades and within larger specialties such as Diplomatic Security and office management specialist; increase diversity; help achieve a more family-

friendly work culture; and realize a training float.

Creation of New Foreign Service Specialties.

Along with a larger Service, AFSA recommends creation of new categories of specialists in fields needed to fill expertise gaps such as cybersecurity and data science. We recommend that hiring for the skills gaps recognize the need for specialized advanced degrees and a high skill level, with entry at classes FS-2 or FS-1.

A More Flexible, Family-Friendly Foreign Service.

Family issues are paramount if retention is to be strengthened.

- Foreign affairs agencies should adopt clear policies in domestic and overseas environments that permit appropriate telework and remote work agreements and streamline the Domestic Employees Teleworking Overseas assignment process.

- Agencies should immediately authorize a modernization of the Foreign Affairs Manual's technology and security policy to better support mobile/remote work, and an improved technology and telework subsidy for all employees to support blended work environments and remote work.

- Agencies should focus on more equitable treatment of tandems in assignments; permanent clearances for family member employees;

and increased fungibility between agency positions (e.g., State economic FSOs working as Economic Growth USAID FSOs or Commerce FSOs and vice versa).

A More Transparent and Streamlined Assignments System.

Respondents to the AFSA bias and retention surveys point to the bidding and assignments process as prone to bias and one of the leading reasons why FS members would seriously consider leaving the Service. AFSA recommends:

- the use of a centralized, algorithmic preference matching system;
- the standardization of all aspects of the assignments process, from interview questions to position descriptions; and
- a much more transparent and independently reviewed assignment preclusion (restriction) decision-making process.

A Less-Biased Employee Evaluation Report and Promotion Process.

EERs, the pace of promotions and the promotion process reliably appear as the top three drivers of discontent in the Foreign Service. In summer 2021, AFSA will negotiate the core precepts with State Department management.

- AFSA will support transition of the current performance pay box on the EER for the SFS to one focused on institution building, including creating an institutional culture that values diversity and inclusion.

Continued on page 60

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AFSA NEWS

NEWS BRIEF

FOREIGN SERVICE RETIREE GROUPS BACK IN ACTION

After more than a yearlong hiatus due to the pandemic, several of the 16 state and regional Foreign Service retiree associations around the country have resumed operations or are planning to do so by the fall.

In May, 48 members of Foreign Affairs Retirees of Northern Virginia visited the Muse Vineyards in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley owned by Ambassador (ret.) Sally Grooms Cowal and her husband, Robert Muse. Participants toured the grounds, sampled the award-winning wines and enjoyed lunch on the large outdoor patio.

Two weeks later, 60 FARNOVA members attended the group's first indoor luncheon since January 2020. Guest speaker Ambassador (ret.) Ronald Neumann, president of the American Academy of Diplomacy and a former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, updated attendees on the situation there.

Retirees interested in joining one of these groups can find contact information at afsa.org/retiree-associations. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, May 19, 2021

Foreign Service Journal: The Governing Board approved the FSJ Editorial Board proposal to offer AFSA members the opportunity to change their subscriptions to digital only and opt out of receiving physical copies of *The Foreign Service Journal*.

New Associate Member: The Governing Board approved the application of a new associate AFSA member. ■

Inside Diplomacy

A Look at the Arctic Region with U.S. Coordinator James DeHart

U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region James DeHart joined AFSA on May 26 for a virtual discussion of current issues in Arctic diplomacy. AFSA President Eric Rubin interviewed DeHart during the hourlong event. DeHart also answered several questions from the audience, which numbered nearly 200 people.

Climate change is having a major impact on the Arctic region, DeHart said, adding that the Arctic is warming three times faster than the

global average. As a result, he said, the Arctic will become a busier place in the coming years. He expects to see more countries involved in resource exploration, and more tourism.

DeHart also said Russia and China are both showing great interest in the Arctic, with Russia building infrastructure and military capability there, and China acquiring mineral licenses to gain a foothold in the region.

The Foreign Service

Journal interviewed DeHart in its May 2021 edition, which focused on Arctic diplomacy.

DeHart is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with 28 years of experience as a U.S. diplomat. With significant experience in regional security, civilian-military cooperation and international negotiations, he holds the rank of Minister



U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region James DeHart.

Counselor and was appointed U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region in 2020.

Inside Diplomacy is a new

virtual series of discussions that explore current national security issues as they relate to foreign policy and the Foreign Service.

Members can view this discussion at afsa.org/video. ■

Book Notes

Tecumseh and the Prophet

FSO (ret.) Peter Cozzens joined AFSA on April 22 to discuss his book, *Tecumseh and the Prophet: The Shawnee Brothers Who Defied a Nation* (Knopf, 2020). This Zoom event drew some 100 people.



Peter Cozzens.

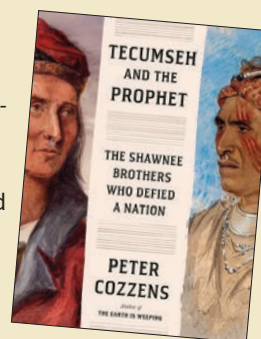
But Cozzens, an international award-winning historian, shows us that while Tecumseh was a brilliant diplomat and war leader—admired by the same white Americans he

opposed—it was Tenskwatawa, called the “Shawnee Prophet,” who created a doctrine of religious and cultural revitalization that unified the disparate tribes of the Old Northwest.

Detailed research into Native American society and customs reveals how both men came to power in differ-

ent but no less important ways. Cozzens takes us to the front lines of the chaos and violence that characterized the young American republic, when settlers spilled across the Appalachians to bloody effect in their haste to exploit lands won from the British in the War of Independence, disregarding their rightful Indian owners.

Tecumseh and the Prophet presents the untold story of the resistance to this threat that was organized by the two most significant siblings in Native American history, whose names, Cozzens helps



us understand, should be writ large in the annals of America.

Peter Cozzens is also the author of the bestsell-

ing, award-winning *The Earth Is Weeping: The Epic Story of the Indian Wars for the American West* (Vintage, 2017). During his Foreign Service career, Cozzens received AFSA's William R. Rivkin award for constructive dissent in 2002.

AFSA members can view a video of the book talk at afsa.org/video. ■

Retention Recommendations
Continued from page 57

• The AFSA bias survey asked respondents to list the priority issues for AFSA advocacy. The top one was gender-neutral, name-free EERs. AFSA should support their use if the results of the remaining years of the Meritorious Service Increase pilot program point to clear benefits from such a step.

Targeted, Early Mentorship. AFSA endorses early mentorship, such as the Thursday Luncheon Group's Perkins Mentorship program. The 2020 Government Accountability Office studies on diversity, equity and inclu-

sion in the State Department found that minority FS officers were disadvantaged when competing for promotion from FS-4 to FS-3. The Perkins Mentorship Program would be open to all FS-4 and FS-3 officers, whether or not they are Pickering or Rangel Fellows.

Leadership Accountability through 360s. AFSA recommends the use of a new 360 proposal, primarily for professional development of Foreign Service leaders.

Twice a year, in October and March, ePerformance or the non-State agency equivalent would ensure that the following question is posed to employees in each supervi-

sory chain: Please agree or disagree with the following statement(s) with regard to your supervisor, using a 1-5 scale: "The employee models the behaviors described in the department's leadership and management principles as defined in 3 FAM 1214."

Although the information is primarily to be used for developmental purposes, if there are repeated red flags, the information could be mentioned in the employee's EER.

Well-Resourced CDIO.

AFSA urges that the chief diversity and inclusion officer be well-resourced and staffed adequately to bring about real

change. This would mean, at a minimum, a viable budget and senior line authority. The CDIO should ensure that existing, effective bureau programs are not diminished in the creation of a common approach across the department.

AFSA appreciates members' thoughtful survey answers, participation in focus groups, and comments sent to us. They have been enlightening and extremely helpful in our effort to recommend changes that will have a lasting, beneficial impact on the Foreign Service. Please continue to let us know your thoughts at member@afsa.org. ■

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2019-2021 AFSA Governing Board Term Report



We are pleased to present the term report for the 2019-2021 AFSA Governing Board.

In 2019, we moved away from the separate printed annual report of past years, opting instead for a Governing Board term report covering the two years of the most recent board. This report gives a view of the activity and accomplishments of our elected officers and vice presidents during their term, as well as highlighting the work of each AFSA department.

—Ásgeir Sigfússon, Executive Director

President's Message

As this board's term comes to an end, we can look back with satisfaction at important accomplishments, both in terms of achieving positive changes that benefited our members and protecting the Foreign Service and our members from threats and hostile challenges.

Our largest successes in the difficult environment of the Trump administration were defensive: we defended and supported members who were forced to testify or give depositions under subpoena in the first impeachment process against President Donald Trump, lobbied and negotiated to get the rules changed to allow us to raise money to support their legal defense, and then raised about \$750,000 in direct donations to ensure that not a single AFSA member was out of pocket a single penny for legal expenses related to impeachment. We also publicly defended our members' courage in service to the Constitution.

Then came COVID-19, and much of the final year of our term was devoted to pushing for additional information and transparency on vaccinations, health resources, authorized and ordered departure, and equity in the vaccine rollout process. We are relieved that we finished this board term with every AFSA member, as well as every American family member overseas and all of our Foreign Service National employees overseas, having had access to one of the approved vaccines.

We did not just play defense, however. Throughout the past two years, we have worked intensively with members

of Congress and their staffs to make certain that our foreign affairs and foreign assistance accounts were adequately funded, despite the previous administration's attempts every year to gut them. After the

November elections, we reached out to build relationships with the new committee chairs in the House of Representatives and the Senate, and with the congressional leadership, to advocate for needed changes to our foundational legislation and for urgent action on diversity, equality of benefits and protection from harm.

We worked rapidly to establish close ties to the new Biden administration after the inauguration, promoting AFSA's priority goals and objectives and seeking to be a partner on efforts to make progress on diversity and inclusion, professional education and training, and reform of parts of our Foreign Service career path. We began the campaign to press for a significant expansion of the Foreign Service in all agencies, a goal that appears to be within reach this year.

Despite the shutdown of AFSA offices for nearly a year and a half due to the pandemic, we maintained member services and outreach at their prepandemic levels, and leveraged the new technologies of telework and virtual public platforms to ensure that we kept our members engaged and informed.





AFSA TERM REPORT

AFSA sought to broaden its ties with the employee affinity groups at State and USAID, as well as with important outside organizations such as the American Academy of Diplomacy, the Council of American Ambassadors, the Association of Black American Ambassadors, DACOR, the National Museum of American Diplomacy and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. In unity there is strength, and as a result of our outreach efforts we are now able to more closely coordinate with all of these groups and organizations.

AFSA also maintained a high public profile, with numerous interviews, television appearances and social media outreach. This has proven to be of enormous help

in getting our message out during the pandemic.

Our member services have not flagged during the shutdown, and we have managed to ramp up representation of our members on matters large and small. *The Foreign Service Journal* has kept up an impressive pace during the pandemic shutdown, with more content for our members and more advertising to pay for it.

AFSA's current governing board will step down in July with gratitude to our members for their ideas and support and with a determination to hand over our list of priorities to the next board with evidence of clear progress on most of them.

—Eric Rubin, AFSA President

Executive Director's Report

It is no exaggeration to say that the term of AFSA's 2019-2021 Governing Board was unlike any other. On March 16, 2020, AFSA closed its offices and directed staff to telework out of an abundance of caution due to COVID-19. Little did we know that our proposed two-week telework pause would eventually become more than 14 months before we could attempt a safe "soft" reopening in early June 2021.

While it has been a challenging time for AFSA staff and the organization, I am pleased to report that we were able to make this transition to telework quickly and (mostly) smoothly. Our staff adapted to the Zoom and Microsoft Teams environments, and mastered the screen share and the virtual conversation environment. We became ever more adept at telling our colleagues "erm, you're muted."

Most importantly, the work of the association continued almost entirely uninterrupted. The only AFSA service that was completely paused during COVID was in-person events. Everything else carried on as scheduled, as you will see in the rest of this report.

During the pandemic we discovered that virtual events had certain advantages we had not previously considered, which brought unexpected gains. We were able to reach more members in more parts of the world than we had ever done previously. We conducted two rounds of global town halls to talk with our members near and far.

We met virtually with members at individual posts when they had questions and concerns they wanted to raise with us. One panel we held with the State Department Bureau of Medical Services to discuss vaccine distribution had more than 950 in attendance, and questions came in from nearly every continent—something we

never could have accomplished at our physical headquarters.

There were challenges, of course. We all missed the helpful in-person interaction we are so used to in the office environment. Ongoing issues with the U.S. Postal Service

made delivery of some invoices and dues payments slow and unreliable. Our ability to enroll new members was somewhat affected by the virtual environment. We are glad to be back in person, if in a limited capacity for now, so that we can work on fixing those problems and continue serving our members.

I have been very encouraged by the members of the 2019-2021 Governing Board and their willingness to entertain and agree to new ideas for the organization. These have ranged from investments in new technology, to a friendlier employee evaluation process, as well as increased telework options and the formal introduction of diversity, equity and inclusion principles in AFSA's hiring practices and internal policies. While our members may not see this work on a daily basis, all of it is important for

**During the pandemic
we discovered that virtual
events had certain advantages
we had not previously considered,
which brought unexpected gains.**



AFSA to have the ability to attract and retain the top-level talent we know our members expect us to employ.

As this term report is published, the AFSA staff is settling into our “soft” summer opening before we do our best to return to pre-COVID normalcy after Labor Day. The working world will be different at AFSA, as it will be most everywhere else. We are looking forward to the new management and organizational challenges posed by that new reality. There is a lot of opportunity to advance new policies and ways of doing business, and we intend to take advantage of it. AFSA will look different as an organization but our priorities remain the same: Taking care of our members and being good stewards of the association’s resources, whether human or capital.



Members of the 2019-2021 AFSA Governing Board at AFSA headquarters on July 15, 2019. From left: Steve Herman, Kristin Michelle Roberts, Jason Singer, Virginia Bennett, Joshua Archibald, Eric Rubin, John Naland, Jay Carreiro, Ken Kero-Mentz, Mary Daly, Tamir Waser and Tom Yazdgerdi.

Finance

The most significant financial development during this board’s tenure was a one-time membership dues increase that took effect on Dec. 31, 2020—in addition to the annual consumer price index increase. The dues increase has generated enough income to expand AFSA’s labor management, membership and advocacy teams.

Despite the volatility experienced globally and in the markets in 2020—largely due to the pandemic—AFSA was in excellent financial health at year end (and continues to be), with the operating reserve fund still at \$4.3 million. Some modest savings were realized from curtailed operational activities due to the pandemic. Investment gains were robust, appreciating 12.6 percent net of all investment-related expenses.

The AFSA scholarship fund, founded in 1924 to help Foreign Service children pay for college, has grown substantially and by the end of 2020 stood at \$11.8 million. In 2020 the fund awarded \$217,000 in need-based financial aid and \$123,000 in merit scholarships. At this point, the fund is self-sustaining.

The Fund for American Diplomacy—whose mission

is to educate the American public about the role of the Foreign Service—stands at \$420,000.

AFSA had gone through major restructuring from 2016 to 2019 as we worked rigorously to find efficiencies in operations. This board approved prudent spending reductions in 2020 and 2021. Recognizing that we will need sufficient resources to meet the challenges facing the Foreign Service, we will continue the effort to create more efficient operations in the years ahead.

In late 2019, the publications team brought on a new advertising and circulation business development manager to take on the advertising portfolio after 16 months without that position at AFSA. During this board’s term, advertising revenue has climbed back up in spite of the pandemic and a struggling economy. Annual ad sales grew by almost 50 percent from 2019 to 2020, and the upward trend was strong in 2021.

With the strong support of AFSA membership, we were able to sustain a professional staff of 34 and a planned \$5.2 million operating budget for calendar year 2019. We continue to maintain AFSA assets, the building and equipment with attention to repairs and prompt maintenance.



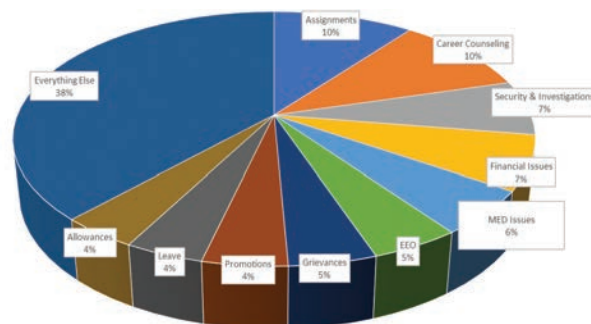
Labor Management

The 10 staff members of the AFSA Labor Management Office provide support to the vice presidents and representatives of the six foreign affairs agencies, as well as to our approximately 16,700 members, on a wide range of issues relating to conditions of employment for members of the Foreign Service.

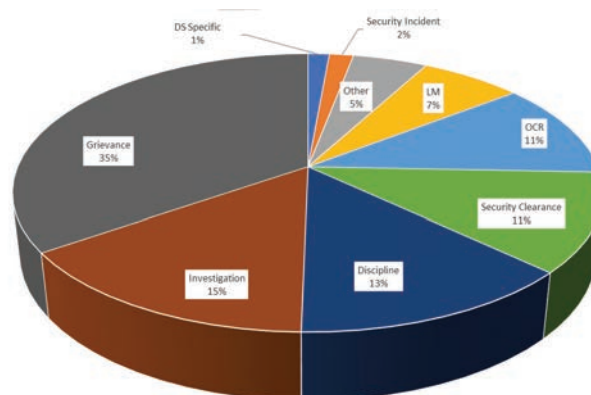
Since the onset of the pandemic, LM has advocated with the department collectively and individually to ensure our members felt safe and secure. We have resolved inquiries relating to global authorized departure, quarantining, telework, Foreign Affairs Counter Threat training and vaccine distribution, including for those moving to a new assignment (PCSing).

One of LM's proudest moments occurred even before the pandemic struck: During the winter of 2019-2020, we supported members called to testify before Congress in connection with the first impeachment of President Trump. Under highly politicized circumstances, LM secured the department's agreement to partially reimburse the legal fees of these members, negotiated with law firms to provide lower-cost or even pro bono service, and made certain that any remaining costs were borne by AFSA's Legal Defense Fund. Not one member called to testify had to pay one cent from their own pocket.

From July 2019 to May 2021, the LM staff responded to approximately 3,200 requests for assistance and helped members with approximately 1,200 individual



Labor Management received 3,200 requests from AFSA members during the 2019-2021 Governing Board term.



Labor Management assisted AFSA members with approximately 1,200 individual cases during the 2019-2021 Governing Board term.

cases. Shown at the top are the top 10 types of LM requests received during this period.

As of this writing, the number of open/abeyance individual LM cases by constituency is as follows: State, 744; USAID, 44; FCS, 13; APHIS, 3; USAGM, 3; FAS, 2.

Advocacy on the Hill

Congressional advocacy continues to be listed as a top AFSA membership benefit in surveys, and the need for strong, focused advocacy on the Hill was underscored by the pandemic during the 2019-2021 AFSA Governing Board.

AFSA advocacy helped successfully ward off proposed cuts to the international affairs budget four years in a row, garnering bipartisan support in Congress for diplomacy and development funding. Emergency funding due to the pandemic—totaling more than \$17 billion—was partially directed to help fill the gap in Con-

sular Affairs funding. AFSA continues to advocate to fill the CA funding gap so long as worldwide travel remains reduced.

Congressional advocacy also focused on pushing for prompt Senate confirmation of nominees and, especially, Foreign Service promotion lists during the board's term. This was an ongoing membership concern in 2020 and into the 117th Congress this year.

AFSA continued its advocacy for creating a field-forward Foreign Service and was able to maintain previously gained funding increases for that purpose over two fiscal years (2020-2021). AFSA successfully inserted



language into the FY 2021 final appropriations package on the need for an increased presence abroad and more midlevel FS positions overseas.

In late 2019, AFSA supported passage of paid parental leave for up to 12 weeks for federal employees and saw this implemented in 2020. When competing for talent with the private sector, policy changes like this aid in retention and boost morale. Proper implementation of paid parental leave for the Foreign Service remains a concern, as AFSA looks to expand paid leave to medical and caregiving purposes as well.

AFSA also worked with the state of Virginia to create an in-state tuition residency exemption for the Foreign

Service—reducing the residency requirement to just 90 days from one year. With this progress, AFSA is now pushing for in-state tuition parity with the military at the federal level via Congress.

Through the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, AFSA was able to expand healthcare benefits for the “unexplained health incidents” cohort in other foreign affairs agencies beyond the State Department.

For the 117th Congress, which began in January 2021, the AFSA Governing Board voted to focus on three broad categories of policy priorities: the health of the Foreign Service as an institution, morale and retention, and parity with the military and other federal employees.

Membership

AFSA traditionally welcomes incoming orientation classes of FSOs from all the foreign affairs agencies, specialists and consular fellows to AFSA headquarters for a luncheon. These luncheons are an effective way to introduce AFSA to new colleagues and share the work we do on behalf of the Foreign Service. They have been vital to AFSA recruitment efforts.

However, once the COVID-19 pandemic struck, onboarding of new classes became entirely virtual. For the first time, A-100 and specialist classes were combined into joint orientation classes and held remotely. While loss of the conviviality of a luncheon was felt, we created a virtual welcome format and met with new classes across the foreign affairs agencies to introduce AFSA. Given the changes and difficulties associated with this new process, we saw a reduction in the join rates and, therefore, a minor decrease in AFSA membership over the past year. In October 2019 AFSA membership was at 16,834 and in April 2021—as of this writing—it was at 16,667. We have since adjusted our recruitment efforts to have a longer fuse, finding opportunities to reach out repeatedly to newer colleagues to highlight AFSA programming and member benefits, and we are confident these new strategies will help recapture the lost recruits.

AFSA continues to develop interesting and relevant programming for our members. While we have always recorded our programming for our worldwide membership to view at their convenience, the shift to virtual programming allowed for a sizable increased participation in live events. On average, AFSA offers two or three programs a month, such as town halls to share up-to-date information on specific topics, panels of experts on retirement benefits or professional issues or featured speakers on current issues.

Over the course of the board's tenure, President Rubin has hosted quarterly webinars with our retiree members to share the work AFSA has been

doing and conducted three sessions with FAST (first-and-second tour) officers. These events have helped to keep our members informed of AFSA's advocacy priorities and to answer questions they have about policies or operations.

While the onset of the pandemic forced the cancellation of Foreign Service Day programming in 2020, this past May, AFSA offered two virtual programs, continued our annual letter to the editor campaign and asked members to participate in a social media campaign to post why they are proud to be members of the Foreign Service working on behalf of the American people, using the hashtag #FSProud.



Hashtag #FSProud.



Outreach

AFSA has continued to expand its outreach efforts. Moving to virtual speaking engagements opened new opportunities for AFSA to engage with new and expanded audiences.

With support from the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, AFSA developed a new outreach campaign titled “U.S. Foreign Service: Our First Line of Defense.” The campaign, launched in 2020, focused on introducing new audiences to the work of the Foreign Service by highlighting the role it plays in America’s national security.

By leveraging virtual programming, AFSA has successfully delivered our content to our members, traditional partners and people not familiar with the work of the Foreign Service. We are also working to increase AFSA’s profile as a subject matter expert by increasing engagement in relevant discussions and strategically partnering with organizations with similar missions.

This year, AFSA developed and launched two speaker series. The first, *Inside Diplomacy*, hosted by the AFSA president, is tailored to connect with a more traditional international affairs audience. Featured speakers have been Liz Schroyer, president and CEO of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, and Jim DeHart, U.S. coordinator for the Arctic region. Our second series, *Diplomats at Work*, aims to introduce new, diverse audiences to the Foreign Service through storytelling. The first event

drew more than 250 participants from around the country, including students, professors and professionals from across different federal agencies.

We have also partnered with the American Diplomat podcast to reach yet another audience— young professionals interested in international affairs and/or a career in the Foreign Service.

While our traditional Speakers Bureau programming—the collaboration with Road Scholar and Smithsonian Associates, for instance—had to be canceled in 2020 and the spring of 2021 due to the pandemic, we are now planning for fall 2021 programs and beyond. We also continue to seek out speaking opportunities; the virtual nature of current engagements has allowed us to match the requests to speakers well, since they are no longer constrained by geography.



U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region Jim DeHart joined AFSA on May 26 for a virtual discussion. It could be watched live from anywhere, including in a moving vehicle.

Professional Policy Issues

AFSA is now considered a thought leader on the role of the U.S. Foreign Service in diplomacy. Our data has been used extensively by media outlets in articles and editorials about the Foreign Service. AFSA has based its advocacy on evidence and data gleaned from member surveys and from various reputable sources. The use of evidence-based decision-making and the heightened reputation of AFSA as a source of reliable information about the Foreign Service have helped raise AFSA’s profile in the foreign affairs community.

During the pandemic, PPI surveyed AFSA members and provided evidence that FS members were overloaded with their work responsibilities and their roles as parents. Many of the comments from members high-

lighted the extra burden that women FS members, in particular, were carrying. The survey also tapped into a wellspring of support for continued flexibility on telework, a topic that had been cursorily explored prior to the pandemic.

This information, along with the concerns expressed by members regarding temporary duty and permanent change of station travel during the pandemic, provided our constituent agencies with valuable insights into priority needs of the FS during the pandemic.

Following the May 2020 murder of George Floyd and the national attention brought to racial injustice, AFSA conducted a workplace bias survey. The results showed stark differences in perception of bias among different demographic groups within the AFSA membership. The



Scholarships, Awards and Plaques

A FSA has made significant strides in improving its scholarships program. In the summer of 2020, we made the decision to take the association's Financial Aid Scholarship Program back in house for an annual savings of \$16,000. This decision has also streamlined the process for applicants by hosting all of AFSA's scholarship applications on one platform. AFSA gives \$355,000 in scholarships annually to children of AFSA members. This total is split between merit

scholarships (\$135,000) and financial aid scholarships (\$220,000). No AFSA membership dues are used in the AFSA scholarship program, which has disbursed more than \$4.3 million to more than 2,300 students in the past 26 years.

The AFSA awards program continues to honor exemplary performance and constructive dissent in the Foreign Service. The 2020 award winners are featured in the December 2020 *FSJ*, but the ceremony did not take place as usual because of the pandemic. AFSA plans to honor both its 2020 and 2021 performance and dissent award recipients in a ceremony this fall.

Retiree Vice President John Naland spearheaded the coordination of a once-in-a-generation expansion of the AFSA memorial plaques in the Department of State's C Street lobby during this board's term. The project added the names of 69 diplomats and consular officers dating back to 1794 whose deaths were unknown to AFSA previously. The expanded plaques also have space for 102 additional names. These renovations were completed in early May in time for Foreign Service Day 2021.



AFSA 2019 award recipients (from left) Laurent Charbonnet, Jonette Vaughan, Michelle Ross, Nora Brito, F. Allen "Tex" Harris, Ambassador (ret.) Herman "Hank" Cohen, Keith Koehler (father of Katherine Elizabeth Koehler, who was unable to attend), Lawrence Fields, Timmy Davis, Moises Mendoza, Christopher Gooch and Anna Boulos at the awards ceremony at the Harry S Truman Building on Oct. 16, 2019.

survey results were then widely shared with stakeholders, including agency management and affinity groups. Both found the results useful in creating recommendations for ways to combat bias in the foreign affairs agencies.

In the winter of 2020-2021, AFSA partnered with three Rangel Fellows at Harvard's Kennedy School to ask members to complete a third survey and participate in focus groups on retention, diversity, equity and inclusion (RDEI). AFSA then used those survey results to formulate its own RDEI recommendations to the FS agencies and to Congress.

Over the board period, PPI offered workshops and panels on various topics, such as how to hire the best candidate for positions and the different paths to Foreign Service area expertise, and held an event in which former Pickering and Rangel Fellows described how they arrived at their Foreign Service success.

PPI organized panels on the Hatch Act, whistleblowing and federal whistleblower protections, and a session that featured two AFSA Constructive Dissent Award winners who spoke about how their dissent improved operations and policy within their agencies.



Legal Defense Fund

This board's tenure saw the greatest necessity and largest use of the Legal Defense Fund in AFSA history. In September 2019—just a few months into this board's term—a whistleblower accused President Donald Trump of “using the power of his office to solicit interference from a foreign country in the 2020 U.S. election.” AFSA immediately prepared to support the Foreign Service officers who would be called to testify in the upcoming impeachment trial by spearheading a campaign to raise funds to cover their legal costs. In just three months, AFSA raised nearly \$750,000 from members and supporters. AFSA assisted 12 members with legal fees, spending roughly \$468,000 of those funds raised.

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. As for the remaining approximately \$300,000, AFSA has invested those funds to ensure our members will be protected in the future when new cases arise.

Cases that receive LDF financial support 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.

Publications/FSJ

In the midst of several major crises for the Foreign Service—and the world—AFSA published 20 editions of *The Foreign Service Journal*, aiming to tell the story of the U.S. Foreign Service and serve as a space for discussion of issues of concern to the foreign affairs community.

The first impeachment of President Trump was challenging for the Foreign Service. The *FSJ* covered that highly political event carefully and in depth, remaining nonpartisan while highlighting the importance of diplomacy and career professionals in managing U.S. foreign policy. How the *FSJ* did this was featured in the November/December 2020 *Signature* magazine, “Staying Diplomatic: *The Foreign Service Journal* During Controversial Times.”

In response to the declaration of a pandemic in March 2020 and the huge U.S. government undertaking to bring Americans home over the summer of 2020, the *FSJ* shifted focus to cover the impact of COVID-19 on the Foreign Service. The July-August 2020 *FSJ* featured articles on public health diplomacy as well as 18 dispatches from the field on how the Foreign Service worked for the American people during the global crisis. The April 2021 edition asked whether diplomacy can be done virtually, exploring both the limitations and the innovations the pandemic disruption caused.

The *FSJ* continues to put a spotlight on issues of rac-



September 2020 *FSJ*

ism, diversity and inclusion in the foreign affairs agencies. We continue to seek out and publish diverse voices to facilitate dialogue, to challenge the status quo and to offer perspectives on what can be done to advance diversity and inclusion (see more than a dozen articles in the September and October editions). One of the most popular articles of 2020 was Senior FSO Julie Chung's “The Making of a Real American Diplomat.” Since

July 2020, every edition has included at least one article relating to the theme of diversity.

Following an extensive search, AFSA signed with a new printer for the *FSJ* in January 2020. The new relationship got an early boost in February 2020 when AFSA President Eric Rubin, *FSJ* Editor Shawn Dorman and Managing Editor Kathryn Owens toured Sheridan's New Hampshire plant, just as the first *FSJ* printing there came off the presses. Not only have quality and service been enhanced with this change, but printing costs were reduced.

In June 2021, *The Foreign Service Journal* won a Gold EXCEL Award in the “Dedicated Issue” category for our September 2020 focus on diversity. In July 2020, the *FSJ* won two TRENDY awards for publishing excellence from Association TRENDS—a silver in the



"Commemoration/Tribute" category for the November 2019 focus on the fall of the Berlin Wall and a bronze in the "Monthly Professional Society" category for its May 2019 focus, "Professional Diplomats: Leadership and Lessons," which featured an interview with Ambassador (ret.) William Burns.

AFSA's bestselling third edition of *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, now in its eighth printing, is still selling well at its tenth anniversary in April 2021. It has been adopted for more than 70 university courses and is available in more than 1,200 libraries worldwide. During just the first quarter of 2021, close to 1,000 books were sold, generating approximately \$10,000 in revenue, which goes to support the Fund for American Diplomacy.

State

Tom Yazdgerdi served as AFSA's State VP for this board term. Soon after the board was inaugurated, the State LM Office completed work on our new office space in the Harry S Truman Building. This new space provides several private offices so that members can comfortably discuss matters in confidentiality.

In March 2020, the Foreign Service Grievance Board dismissed, on jurisdictional and other grounds, the Presidential Rank Award dispute AFSA filed after the department failed to make PRA recommendations to the president for Fiscal Years 2014-2017. Even though the case was dismissed, we believe our dispute pushed the department to resume making PRA recommendations and to complete long overdue updates to the Foreign Affairs Manual and associated Handbooks.

During the pandemic, we successfully pushed the department to onboard Foreign Service orientation classes virtually, to extend the period that free temporary parking was available at the HST Building, and—perhaps most importantly—to provide 20 hours of administrative leave per pay period to employees to care for dependents and for other health and safety reasons related to COVID-19.

AFSA has engaged extensively with many employee affinity groups and employee organizations. We met with members of the Thursday Luncheon Group to discuss

shared priorities for the upcoming year concerning diversity and inclusion initiatives. AFSA met with the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association to discuss specific incidents of harassment of Asian American employees in the department, as well as a new appeals mechanism for, and alternatives to, assignment restrictions. We sent a letter to the State Department supporting the request of glifaa to establish a working group to address challenges faced by LGBTQ+ employees.

With the input of Balancing Act, we have encouraged the department to allow posts more flexibilities on return to/or curtailment from post to mitigate family separations caused by the pandemic. We worked closely with the Special Needs Education Allowance stakeholders group to push MED to complete revisions to the 16 FAM, which will include the first-ever SNEA appeals mechanism. As of this writing, AFSA and the department are at an impasse in regard to a second-level appeal and the composition of

the appeals panel. AFSA is pushing for codification in the FAM that a non-MED individual with the requisite expertise in educational disabilities must be a permanent voting member of the appeal panel. If we cannot resolve our differences via mediation, the Foreign Service Impasse Disputes Panel will have to resolve the matter.

AFSA joined Balancing Act and many others in a joint letter urging the department to continue to ask Congress and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to establish paid parental leave that applies uniformly to birth, nonbirth and adoptive parents. We were thrilled that Congress finally passed this much-needed legislation. AFSA continues to provide support to members of the Cuba/China health incidents cohort and worked with Congress to successfully expand coverage for gaps in medical insurance for affected employees from other foreign affairs agencies, i.e., outside of the State



Labor Management moved to new offices in Main State in Washington, D.C., in 2019. This new space provides several private offices so that members can comfortably discuss matters with confidentiality.



Department (whose employees did receive coverage).

In January 2021, the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board ruled in AFSA's favor in the 2015 and 2016 Meritorious Service Increase disputes. As a result, dozens of our members will receive retroactive MSIs or adjusted annuities. In March 2021 we wrote to the Secretary of State asking the department to voluntarily pay retroactive 2014 MSIs because this was the only cohort of the four cases we filed (2013-2016) that did not receive retroactive MSIs, and they are awaiting a response.

On the legal front, LM assisted about a dozen members charged with security violations when the department retroactively classified emails sent from former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's private server (none of the employees AFSA assisted were found culpable of

the violations). LM also filed a number of implementation disputes, including against the State Department relating to the composition of reconstituted tenure boards and the failure of the department to allow AFSA to participate in meetings with the China/Cuba cohort. Both of these disputes were favorably resolved. We favorably resolved the case of 49 DS special agent candidates who were not paid overtime.

We are currently engaged in negotiations with the department on numerous topics, including the elimination of linked assignments, early bidding on service need differential and historically difficult to staff posts, modifications to the performance management process and finalizing an MSI award program using gender-blind nominations.

Retiree Services

During the 2019-2021 Governing Board term, AFSA's retirement services team substantially expanded AFSA's online, print and electronic guidance for both active-duty and retired members on federal benefits issues and post-retirement activities.

The AFSA website's Retirement Services section at afsa.org/retirement-services features links to nearly 100 resources. These include videos of AFSA federal benefits seminars featuring experts discussing topics such as Medicare Part B, the Thrift Savings Plan and long-term care insurance; AFSA-produced written guidance such as "Twelve Retirement Pitfalls to Avoid" and "AFSA Membership in Retirement: What's In It for You?"; and the latest official guidance from the Department of State on Foreign Service retirement issues.

In addition to online guidance, in the past two years AFSA emailed members bimonthly retirement newsletters, highlighting several federal benefits topics in each one that employees or retirees sometimes overlook—to their financial detriment. AFSA continued to mail retired members the annual AFSA Directory of Retired Members, offering the means to connect annuitants to friends and colleagues, as well as providing two dozen pages of



John Naland, the AFSA Retiree VP, shares tips for retirement planning on Jan. 29, 2020 at AFSA headquarters.

information on Foreign Service retirement issues.

Just as AFSA's Labor Management office helps active-duty employees throughout their careers, AFSA's Retirement Services team assists retirees who encounter difficulties with the government bureaucracy. AFSA Counselor for Retirees Dolores Brown (herself an FS retiree) has excellent working relationships with supervisors in State's Office of Retirement and the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, which she uses to answer members' questions and help resolve problems. In the past few years, she initiated the Next Stage program,

which includes events geared toward post-Foreign Service employment options and activities. Of note is an associated page at afsa.org/teaching-diplomacy, which is a sharing space containing curricula from leading foreign policy institutions.

AFSA Retiree VP John Naland gave several presentations on federal benefits. He also represented AFSA on the Federal-Postal Coalition—a group of 30 organizations including Civil Service unions representing 2.7 million federal employees and 2.6 million federal retirees—which conducts advocacy work on federal-governmentwide benefits issues.



U.S. Agency for International Development

During the 2019-2021 AFSA board tenure, AFSA USAID VP Jason Singer welcomed six new classes of USAID officers, hosted a number of USAID-specific town halls, met with a range of employee resource groups and strengthened coordination and relations with the USAID Alumni Association. AFSA also met with former Administrator Mark Green, former Acting Administrator John Barsa, Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick, Acting Administrator Gloria Steele, Chief of Staff Bill Steiger, Counselor Chris Milligan, Chief Advisor to the Acting Administrator Ann Marie Yas-tishock and multiple members of Congress and their staff.

In the context of USAID's reorganization, AFSA met with bureau and independent office leadership from across the agency. Discussions centered on priorities of both the incoming and previous administrations. We emphasized the need for a larger Foreign Service with better workforce planning and greater diversity—particularly in the senior ranks.

We met biweekly with the Employee-Labor Relations Division of the Human Capital and Talent Management Office, and monthly with both the chief human capital officer and head of the Foreign Service Center, on a range of institutional and member concerns including the desirability of improved customer service. We strengthened relations with the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity and

Staff Care to promote work-life balance for employees and family members. AFSA met repeatedly with HCTM officials responsible for reform of the performance management and promotion systems. We negotiated revisions to nine Automated Directives System chapters, addenda and related documents, also arguing that codifying the chapters as formal agreements between AFSA and the agency was a sound labor-management practice.

Since March 2020, AFSA USAID has been most active in helping the agency and employees manage all manner of workplace challenges connected with the COVID-19 crisis.

AFSA USAID advised and advocated for between 60 and 90 members per month, and for several groups, such as one group of more than 60 members who were concerned by the lack of promotion opportunities and promotion delays, or smaller groups caught up in commissioning delays and confusion over time-in-class extensions. AFSA has filed two implementation disputes against USAID, one charging that heavy reliance on Foreign Service Limited appointments violates the terms of this hiring mechanism as described in the ADS and in an AFSA-USAID memorandum of understanding, and the second charging that the manner in which promotion boards are composed lacks transparency and potentially undercuts diversity.

FS Recognition



On Sept. 13, 2019, AFSA and the Washington Nationals joined up for the fourth annual Foreign Service Night. Pictured on the field at Nationals Stadium (from left) are AFSA President Ambassador Eric Rubin, AFSA Director for PPI Julie Nutter, AFSA State VP Tom Yazdgerdi and his wife Julia Reed, and FSO Kristin Roberts and her son, Elias.

AFSA/CAMERON WOODWORTH

Foreign Commercial Service

AFSA continues to aggressively advocate for the Commercial Service before Congress, rallying stakeholders and leveraging key committee contacts on Capitol Hill. Our efforts, spearheaded by AFSA FCS VP Jay Carreiro, went a long way toward beating back proposed cuts that would have seen significant post closures abroad as well as the closure of domestic offices in several states.

While there's still a long way to go, particularly with locally employed (LE) staff overseas and Export Assistance Center personnel, FCS has increased its officer count to 260 from a record low of 224. However, the Department of Commerce needs to do more. Its current FY 2022 budget request is tepid, at best; and we were



AFSA TERM REPORT

disappointed that the department did not do more to secure supplemental funding under the CARES Act in 2020. US&FCS was the only foreign affairs agency that did not receive supplemental funding in 2020.

AFSA is also in the process of resolving several issues relating to delays in processing the 2018 and 2019 Senior Foreign Service nominations for promotion. To mitigate issues with future promotions, AFSA proposed a new policy to more efficiently vet nominees recommended for promotion to the Senior Foreign Service. The proposed policy clearly delineates the full scope and purpose of the vetting process and the duties and respon-

sibilities of those conducting reviews of the candidates, and it includes reasonable deadlines for completion.

AFSA also introduced a number of midterm bargaining proposals that include revisions to the Assignments and Tours of Duty policy, revisions to the selection board precepts and adjustments to time-in-service limits. Revisiting the composition of the assignments panel is a priority, as is establishing clear recusal rules.

Another bargaining priority is an adjustment to the time-in-service requirement for FO-4 through FO-1 officers. FCS currently has the shortest time-in-service limit by several years compared to State and USAID.

Foreign Agricultural Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

A FSA's Foreign Agricultural Service representative, Mary Parrish, has been busy renegotiating the Washington assignment process, both on an annual basis and to create a more permanent future process. We are also gearing up to negotiate the parties collective bargaining agreement, which FAS has notified us it intends to open up for renegotiation. FAS formally went through a reorganization in November 2019, and AFSA has been establish-

ing channels of work and communication with the newly established FAS Human Capital (formerly serviced by APHIS HR). Finally, AFSA continues to support members as they navigate the complications of the COVID-19 environment.

AFSA's APHIS representative, Russell Duncan, has been working to establish a more regular dialogue to engage management in reviewing key parts of its personnel policies and procedures.

U.S. Agency for Global Media

The small but influential Foreign Service component of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (formerly the Broadcasting Board of Governors) is facing existential challenges. USAGM Representative Steve Herman, VOA's White House bureau chief, speaks for career foreign correspondents of the Voice of America, as well as supervisors and engineers at isolated overseas sites that provide short-wave, mediumwave and FM broadcast transmissions for Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia and Radio Sawa.

When Amanda Bennet was director of VOA she made clear her desire to remove VOA correspondents from the Foreign Service, believing erroneously it denoted State Department influence, or the appearance thereof, over the journalists. There was no opportunity for extensive communications between AFSA and USAGM leadership

during the brief tumultuous tenure in 2020 of Michael Pack as USAGM's CEO, when VOA's editorial firewall was targeted by the political appointees of the previous administration. But USAGM and VOA are now under new management with an acting CEO and, respectively, an acting director.

Since January AFSA has held intermittent discussions with USAGM management to attempt to clarify the broadcasting agency's stance on the future of Foreign Service journalists, both for the VOA correspondents and the USAGM technical staff who serve in some of the most remote locations for any members of the U.S. Foreign Service.

The VOA Foreign Service dates back to when the broadcaster was under the U.S. Information Agency, which was dissolved in 1999 and its broadcasting functions were moved to the newly created BBG. ■

■ **Archie M. Bolster**, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away on Feb. 21 in Arlington, Va.

Born in Ames, Iowa, in 1933 to Horace and Ella Bolster, Mr. Bolster spent his early years in Bozeman, Mont. In 1945 his father was recruited to serve as the first agricultural attaché in Tehran.

The family was later posted to The Hague, where Mr. Bolster attended a local lyceum. He had to quickly learn Dutch as all his courses were in that language. These experiences piqued his interest in international work.

After completing high school in Winchester, Mass., Mr. Bolster entered the University of Virginia and joined its Navy ROTC program. During college, he became fluent in French. In 1955 he graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a bachelor's degree in international relations.

Mr. Bolster then entered active duty in the Navy, serving for three years on the destroyer USS *John R. Pierce*. On discharge as a lieutenant (junior grade) in 1958, he was accepted into Foreign Service training. A former shipmate introduced him to Ann Matthews of Arlington, Va. They married in 1959 and soon left for Phnom Penh.

By 1961, Mr. Bolster had completed Farsi language training at the Foreign Service Institute and was posted to Tabriz as vice consul. He used his language skills to complete detailed reporting on the shah's land reforms, a subject he also covered during his next assignment, to Tehran.

Subsequent postings to Washington involved reporting on political dynamics in Iran, economic training at FSI and analysis of petroleum markets for the Office of Fuels and Energy. In 1972 he earned a master's degree in public policy and administration from the University of Wisconsin.

Mr. Bolster served as executive assistant to Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan in New Delhi from 1972 to 1974, followed by a two-year posting to Tehran.

One of his most satisfying accomplishments was working with the UNHCR, the U.N. Refugee Agency, to set up an asylum program that allowed hundreds of Iraqi Kurdish refugees to relocate to the United States and other countries.

He worked on energy affairs in Washington and then served as consul general in Antwerp from 1978 to 1981. He also held positions in security assistance and sales and aviation negotiations.

Although he retired from the Foreign Service in 1984, his association with State continued for many years, with a consulting assignment in refugee programs, service on an interagency group investigating the Iran-Contra Affair and part-time work in the Freedom of Information section.

He also frequently traveled internationally, and lived in The Hague again while working as a translator for the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal.

A devoted family man, Mr. Bolster possessed an intelligence, gentle demeanor, warm smile and generosity that attracted many lifelong friends.

Mr. Bolster is survived by his wife, Ann; sons Christopher and Matthew; daughter Amy; and eight grandchildren.

■ **Ronald "Ron" D. Clifton**, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on Feb. 13 of natural causes at home in South Daytona, Fla.

Mr. Clifton was born on June 15, 1936, in Oxford, N.C.

After graduating from high school in Richmond, Va., Mr. Clifton entered the United States Marine Corps. He served in

Korea and then became a Marine security guard in Wellington, New Zealand. In the service of his country, he received the National Defense Service Medal and a Good Conduct Medal.

He then earned a bachelor's degree in 1963 and a master's degree in 1965, both in American studies, from Stetson University in DeLand, Fla. He also taught history and economics at DeLand High School.

Mr. Clifton then attended graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, earning a master's degree in 1967 in American civilization. He completed doctoral studies in American civilization there in 1971.

In 1968 Mr. Clifton joined the Foreign Service. He studied Bengali at the Foreign Service Institute before his first overseas assignment, as consul in Calcutta (now Kolkata), India, in 1969. He was then posted to New Delhi in 1971, as first secretary and United States Information Service resident economic specialist.

He had an active professional involvement in American studies, both in the United States and internationally, focusing on broadening ties with American studies associations abroad as well as the institutionalization of American studies programs in foreign universities.

From 1973 to 1975, he was posted in Washington, D.C., as USIA country director for India, Sri Lanka and Nepal, and as economic officer for South Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. He became the American studies adviser and founding director of the American Studies Division at USIA in Washington from 1975 to 1976.

From 1977 to 1981, he served as director of the American Cultural Center in Tunis. He also served as public affairs officer in Dublin from 1981 to 1983;

cultural attaché and director of the American Cultural Center in Brussels until 1987; and cultural attaché and director of the American Cultural Center in London until 1991.

Before retiring from the Foreign Service in 1994, he served as deputy director of the Office of Cultural Centers and Resources in USIA and the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs in Washington, D.C.

A career diplomat, he achieved the rank of Counselor in the U.S. Senior Foreign Service.

Returning to Florida after retirement, Mr. Clifton was appointed by Salzburg Seminar President Olin Robison as director of the American Studies Center at Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg.

Revitalizing the American Studies Program with Salzburg colleagues and its president, he chaired or co-chaired as many as 30 two-week programs and seminars with participants from more than 20 countries under a substantial grant from the U.S. government until 1997. He continued his work at the Salzburg Seminar's yearly American studies programs, planning and chairing numerous seminars until 2019.

At the behest of President Douglas Lee of Stetson University, Mr. Clifton became involved in the university's founding of a new and third campus in Celebration, Fla. From 1997 to 2005, he served as director and associate vice president of the Stetson University Center in Celebration, overseeing the groundbreaking for the physical building and assisting in planning the curriculum. He received the university's prestigious Distinguished Alumni Award in 2018.

Mr. Clifton is survived by his wife of 57 years, Gwili, who traveled all his steps with him; their sons, Ronald Jr. and Daniel; daughter-in-law Mindi; and five

grandchildren: Ryan, Kathleen, Erin, Veronica and Ronald III.

Memorial contributions can be made to scholarship funds of the American Studies Program of the Salzburg Global Seminar and Stetson University.

■ **William "Bill" T. Crocker**, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died peacefully on Feb. 11 in Framingham, Mass., due to COVID-related complications.

Mr. Crocker was born in 1930 in Boston to Rev. John Crocker and Mary Hallowell Crocker. After attending St. Paul's School, he graduated from Harvard College in 1952 and from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in 1954.

In 1955 Mr. Crocker entered the Foreign Service. During a career with the United States Information Agency that spanned more than 30 years, he was posted to Austria (Vienna and Graz), Germany (Bonn and Kiel) and Denmark (Copenhagen), and spent more than 10 years in Japan (Tokyo and Nagoya).

He was tasked with promoting cultural and educational exchanges as the head of various regional cultural centers and as cultural attaché. He became highly proficient in each language.

It was during his posting to Graz that he met and married his wife, Aki Maria. Their daughter was born in Kiel.

After retiring to Washington, D.C., in 1986, Mr. Crocker became a docent at the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (later renamed the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art), where he led tours for many years. He especially enjoyed introducing school children to the wonders and beauty of Asian art.

He also acted as a hospice volunteer at the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing

in Washington, D.C., for more than a decade.

In 2001, following the death of his wife, Mr. Crocker moved to Cambridge, Mass. There he reconnected with old friends and with his large extended family. He played chamber music regularly, attended the Boston Symphony weekly, and went to virtually every opera performed in the Boston area right up until the COVID-19 shutdowns began.

He was a great lover of all classical music, in particular the Germanic repertoire. An avid amateur violist, he searched out and found in each posting abroad local string quartets and chamber ensembles with which to play.

He was also a skilled sailor and spent virtually every summer at North Haven, an island in Maine, with his extended family. There he developed his passion for collecting rocks and driftwood, creating inspirational natural sculptures that he was encouraged to exhibit.

Mr. Crocker's generosity, kindness, curiosity and interest in people, and his great enthusiasm for life, touched many all over the world. The friendships he forged while in the Foreign Service became friendships for life.

Once COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted, half of his ashes will be strewn in Penobscot Bay, Maine, and the other half will be interred with his wife's in Salzburg, Austria.

Mr. Crocker was predeceased in 1998 by his wife, Aki. He is survived by daughter Martina Crocker of Bethesda, Md., his youngest sister Mary Strang of Meeker, Colo., and 17 nieces and nephews.

■ **Samuel Charles Fromowitz**, 78, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on April 7 at his home in Yountville, Calif.

Born on June 10, 1942, in the Bronx, Mr. Fromowitz was the son of career edu-

cators Hy and Rose Fromowitz. He spent summers with his parents and four sisters in Three Arrows, a cooperative community in Putnam Valley, N.Y., swimming, acting, singing and playing baseball.

Mr. Fromowitz attended Columbia University, where he continued his enjoyment of sports (he was a New York Yankees fan for life), theater, and the study of history and politics. One of his favorite professors there encouraged him to join the Foreign Service.

He started his diplomatic career in 1963 at age 21 and met his wife of nearly 57 years, Joan McGraw, during his first assignment, in Washington, D.C. Mr. Fromowitz went on to posts in Paris (1965-1966), Toronto (1966-1968), Belgrade (1969-1971), Moscow (1974-1976) and Athens (1980-1983).

Between foreign assignments, he and his family lived in Arlington, Va. During that time, he was awarded a congressional fellowship and worked for U.S. Representative Rep. John Joseph Cavanaugh III and Senator Gary Hart. He also studied for a year at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at Ft. McNair.

From 1986 to 1990, Mr. Fromowitz was the U.S. consul general in Vancouver, where he won the Meritorious Honor Award for best managed post.

He then returned to Athens (1990-1994), this time as political counselor. Before retiring from the Foreign Service in 1995, he worked for the State Department Board of Examiners.

On retirement, he and his wife, Joan, lived in Vancouver for three years before moving to Yountville. Aside from enjoying wine country, Mr. Fromowitz volunteered with Meals on Wheels and the Napa Red Cross. He was a founding board member of Pathway Home, a residential assistance program for military personnel with PTSD.

Mr. Fromowitz is survived by his wife, Joan (McGraw); son David of Washington, D.C.; daughter Rachel Martin (and her husband, Michael) of Atlanta, Ga.; son Daniel (and his wife, Stacey) of Vancouver, B.C.; and four grandchildren.

■ **Edward W. “Ted” Lollis II**, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away in Knoxville, Tenn., on Dec. 20, 2020.

Born in Indianapolis, Ind., he was the son of Edward and Georgia May Campbell Lollis. A graduate of Howe High School in Indianapolis, he earned a bachelor’s degree in geology from Yale University.

He also studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, the University of Melbourne in Australia on a Fulbright Scholarship, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Foreign Service Institute.

Mr. Lollis returned home from his studies in Australia via an around-the-world route. While in India, he had what he described as “an epiphany ... that I preferred people to rocks”—and after serving in the U.S. Army, he subsequently joined the federal government as a career Foreign Service officer.

As an FSO, Mr. Lollis possessed expertise in the areas of sub-Saharan Africa, development finance, energy policy, economic and commercial affairs, and consular affairs.

His overseas postings included Rwanda, France (the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris), Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria and the United Kingdom; and he had multiple assignments at the State Department in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Lollis helped prepare President Ronald Reagan for the North-South Summit in Cancún, Mexico, and negotiated

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international development strategy for the United Nations (in New York and Geneva).

He retired from the Foreign Service in 1987 after serving as U.S. consul general in Bordeaux, France. After a brief stint as the executive director for the American Committee on the French Revolution, he became an entrepreneur.

He was the owner of National Map Gallery and Travel Center in Union Station, Washington, D.C., and later GeoVisual Business Services, a geographic analysis and consulting business.

With a passion for history, geography and monuments, he was the author of many articles, presentations and publications, including the book *Monumental Beauty: Peace Monuments and Museums Around the World* (Peace Partners International, 2013).

He also contributed to *The Atomic Bomb and American Society: New Perspectives* (University of Tennessee Press, 2009), *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace* (Oxford University Press, 2010) and *International Handbook on Tourism and Peace* (Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education, 2014).

Mr. Lollis is survived by his wife, Schera Chadwick of Knoxville, Tenn.; and his daughter, Cynthia Lollis, and her husband, Alexander Deiss, of Decatur, Ga. His first marriage to Vivian Redding Lollis ended in divorce.

Memorial contributions may be made in his name to the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, American Foreign Service Association, Unitarian Universalist Association or to a charity of your choice.

■ **Charles John Terio III**, 79, a U.S. Marine and husband of retired Foreign Service Officer Anne Terio, died on April 3 in Alexandria, Va.

Mr. Terio was a U.S. Marine and fought in Vietnam; a U.S. Capitol police officer; a federal agent; head of the governor's security in American Samoa; and a security consultant.

He was an active member of the Fraternal Order of Police, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 609 in Alexandria, Va., and Knights of Columbus Council No. 5998 in Alexandria, Va.

Mr. Terio was also an inventor. When he was 44 years old, he designed and patented a vehicle restraining system featuring a gate that can stop a truck loaded with explosives in the event of a terrorist attack.

Mr. Terio accompanied his wife to her assignments in Cairo (1993-1997) and Port-au-Prince (1998-2000). He always tried to be a mentor for the U.S. Marines posted at the American embassies where they were sent.

Mr. Terio is survived by his wife, Anne; son Chris (and his wife, Anne); stepdaughter Marianne Elbertson and stepson Christopher (and his wife, Sang) Moore; and five grandchildren: Reed Anne Elbertson, Caroline Elbertson, Alexander J. Terio, Garrett Moore and Eliza Moore.

Mr. Terio was buried on April 12 at Quantico National Cemetery with full military honors.

■ **Evelyn "Burgess" Venezia**, 87, wife of retired Senior Foreign Service Officer Ronald F. Venezia, died on March 13 in Rockville, Md., of complications from Alzheimer's disease.

Mrs. Venezia was born on Feb. 3, 1934, in Magnolia, S.C., one of three daughters of the late Bratton and Evelyn Williams. She graduated from Clemson High School in 1952 and spent one year at Furman University before marrying the late Rodolfo A. David in 1953.

Together they moved to Guatemala City where her three sons were born. In Guatemala she helped run their business, Fabrica Carolina, a hosiery factory, for almost 14 years.

In 1966 her husband died. After a few years, she met and married Ronald F. Venezia, a career Senior Foreign Service officer with USAID.

Together with her three children, the couple moved to San José, Costa Rica. Mrs. Venezia accompanied her husband on assignments to the Dominican Republic, Honduras and again to Guatemala and Costa Rica before settling in Maryland.

Mrs. Venezia enjoyed playing tennis and was an avid bridge player. She enjoyed cooking and baking, and she loved being a diplomat's wife.

She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Ronald; her three sons, Michael David of Ellicott City, Md., Omar David of Guatemala City, and Bryan David of Tampa, Fla.; sister Vera Tucker of Columbia, S.C.; five grandchildren; and three nieces and seven nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org. ■



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.

In Her Own Words

Negotiating the New START Treaty
 Rose Gottemoeller, Cambria Press, 2021,
 \$39.99/paperback, e-book available,
 244 pages.

REVIEWED BY LAURA KENNEDY

This rare account of a treaty negotiation, told from “start” to ratification, comes from the negotiator herself. Rose Gottemoeller gives us a unique window on the only bilateral U.S.-Russian arms control agreement still in force. Whether one is an arms control specialist, a generalist diplomat or an international relations scholar, *Negotiating the New START Treaty* is an invaluable case study in the art of negotiation with relevance for the years ahead.

The book raises the question as to whether the United States in its current political circumstances should realistically invest much capital in treaties requiring ratification. U.S. presidents increasingly resort to executive agreement rather than pursuing treaties (at last glance, State’s Office of Treaty Affairs lists 37 languishing in the Senate, some for many years).

Gottemoeller’s account of the grueling ratification process is as absorbing as that of the negotiation itself, and showcases the increasing difficulty in gaining Senate advice and consent. In addition to multiple testimonies and meetings on Capitol Hill, a thousand separate questions were answered by the New START team.

The role of various senators is covered—from treaty supporter and “trail boss” Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) to Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), who bargained for a trillion-dollar-plus nuclear modernization and still voted no, and John McCain (R-Ariz.), who reportedly voted against New



START because he was angry over President Obama’s policy on gays in the military.

While *Negotiating the New START Treaty* is the ultimate blow-by-blow account of arms control, it is refreshingly free of

obscure technical detail that could easily turn off the nonspecialist. Gottemoeller, who went on to become under secretary of State for arms control and international security and NATO deputy secretary general, takes pains at every step to sum up the issues and make them accessible to the general reader, who is sure to appreciate both the author’s lucid expository style as well as her glossary of terms.

What makes this story so valuable is the way that this careerlong national security and Russia expert grounds the New START issues in the wider context of recent history and, equally important, links this treaty to future arms control prospects. As is abundantly clear from her writing, Gottemoeller knows her arms control, and she knows how to read her interlocutors—preeminently her Russian counterpart, Ambassador Anatoly Antonov. An often difficult and always shrewd and tough negotiator, he subsequently became a Russian deputy minister of defense and is currently Russia’s ambassador to the United States.

Getting to yes was an extraordinary feat. Gottemoeller describes how these complex talks were compressed to a year (the original START treaty took six years to negotiate) and required both delegations to submit to a punishing work schedule. (At one point, the exhausted Russian delegation simply refused to work until given a break in Moscow, but

a volcanic eruption in Iceland closed European airports, thus forcing them to continue work in Geneva.) Despite the pace, progress was never fast enough for an impatient U.S. National Security Council and White House.

For a Washington insider’s account, this book is almost startlingly free of complaints, snark or self-promotion. (Rarely has diplomacy seen a chief negotiator more willing to give credit to others!) The cast of characters is wide-ranging and includes Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev (with then-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin lurking in the background and nearly blowing up the negotiation at one point).

Yet Gottemoeller doesn’t trade in gossip or dwell on personality quirks of her principals, but focuses instead on their skills and experience. In this regard, her description of the positive roles played by then-Vice President Joe Biden and adviser Brian McKeon is illuminating.

For those interested in diplomacy, the author provides a primer on how to manage a delegation, how to deal with the backbiting from Washington, and how to build political and public support for a treaty. This book makes essential reading for a diplomat—or any budding negotiator.

Gottemoeller’s matter-of-fact style vividly captures the intensity of the New START effort, including low points such as being dressed down by Washington. Yet, she always circles back to her trademark capacity to focus on the positive and the enormous stakes involved in reducing and stabilizing these most existential threats.

Of particular value are the “lessons learned,” in which she lays out what worked, and what didn’t, to sum up her blessedly concise history (in contrast to many diplomatic doorstops,

this book comes in at an economical 244 pages).

As someone who has participated in multilateral arms control negotiations that have dragged on for wearying years, I could not agree more with her conclusion that these issues can rarely be solved by “drive-by” diplomacy; they will require time, resources, high-level attention, and public and political buy-in.

In that regard, the author provides brilliant examples of building constituencies among religious communities, the press, Congress and so on. Foreign policy begins at home, and every diplomat can benefit from this firsthand look at how to build domestic support for diplomacy.

Though some readers may think the topic is dry, this book is, in fact, extremely readable with flashes of humor. Take a laugh-out-loud sidebar on the Obama-Medvedev “summit” in a basement store in Copenhagen, where the two hashed out nuclear arms control with dozens of naked mannequins hastily stashed behind curtains. And watch for a U.S. negotiator’s hilarious rebuttal to Russian claims about converted missile transporters that involved fishing cows out of missile silos.

Since Gottemoeller has compiled a list of historic firsts as a stateswoman, women (and men also) will find her occasional musings on the role of gender in diplomacy of interest. She recalls how she sought to combine (temporary) single-parenting in Geneva with her first arms control stint in 1990, concluding it was an overreach into “superwomanhood.”

As someone who witnessed Soviet and Russian misogyny for years in Moscow, I particularly appreciated how she highlighted the substantial role of women on the U.S. side to encourage her Russian counterparts to acknowledge the talented

but few and marginalized women in their own ranks. Here too, adding to a career filled with international security achievements, Rose Gottemoeller has made a difference.

Gottemoeller’s book is a major contribution to arms control history and to diplomacy, and it is likely to feature in international relations syllabi in the United States—and, I would hope, in Russia and many other countries.

During a 37-year Foreign Service career, Ambassador (ret.) Laura Kennedy served in multiple assignments dealing with Russia, arms control and nonproliferation. At the outset of her career, she served—as did Rose Gottemoeller—as a guide on U.S. official exchange exhibits in the Soviet Union.

The Parable of a Beekeeper

The Ardent Swarm: A Novel
Yamen Manai (translated by Lara Vergnaud), Amazon Crossing, 2021, \$14.95/paperback, e-book available, 204 pages.

REVIEWED BY GORDON GRAY

At the end of my tour as ambassador to Tunisia in July 2012, there was significant progress to report and many opportunities to present in my farewell cable. For one, after widespread popular protests, later recognized as the start of the Arab Spring, had forced President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali into exile in January 2011, Tunisia held its first free and fair elections in October of that year.

Yet my farewell cable also flagged a growing security concern: The rise of violent Salafism (a puritanical branch of

Sunni Islam) and the new government’s apparent inability or unwillingness to address it posed a rising threat to Tunisia and the United States.

There were several warning signs. Salafists targeted the dean of faculty at the University of Manouba (outside the capital), closing the university for nearly two months in the spring of 2012. That June, a Salafist mob defaced art works at an exhibition in La Marsa, an affluent suburb of Tunis.

Novelist Yamen Manai refers to both events in *The Ardent Swarm*, an elegant parable of post-revolution Tunisia told from the perspective of a simple beekeeper named Sidi. (Manai wrote the book in French in 2017, and it was translated into English in 2021.)

Manai prefaces *The Ardent Swarm* with a Quranic verse about bees. Interestingly, as a Turkish journalist has written,

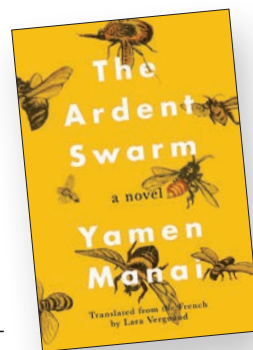
bees are “admired in Islamic culture as a symbol of someone following a mission for the benefit of humanity.”

The book’s title comes from the technique that honey-producing bees deploy to defend their hive against attacking hornets. Indeed, as *The New York Times* explained in an article last year, “bees have

demonstrated a remarkable survival strategy by working as a team to fight back against individual invaders.”

Coincidentally or not, an article in *The Atlantic* in 2013, “How Tunisia Is Turning into a Salafist Battleground,” told of secular students at the University of Manouba who had been inspired to “swarm the parapet and run the Tunisian flag back up the pole” (emphasis added).

The protagonist of *The Ardent Swarm* lives in the remote village of Nawa,



untouched by modernity. Nawa's residents are unaware of the protests that forced out the fictional country's dictator (clearly Ben Ali, but only referred to in the novel as "the Handsome One" to distinguish him from "the Old One," or Habib Bourguiba, whom Ben Ali ousted in the 1987 "medical coup").

They are therefore confused when young, well-dressed, secular campaign workers come to Nawa to seek their electoral support during the run-up to the October 2011 elections. As the author explains, "the villagers were completely discombobulated. Most of them hadn't even chosen their spouses, and now they were meant to choose who would govern them."

Along with the blankets and clothing comes a hive of foreign killer hornets, Manai's metaphor for Salafists. The hornets destroy one of Sidi's hives and threaten the rest.

Soon thereafter, a second group of canvassers, consisting solely of bearded men representing the "Party of God," visits Nawa. They speak stridently in classical Arabic rather than the Tunisian dialect and are dressed "like the Bedouins in medieval Saudi Arabia." These outsiders bring food, clothing and blankets for the villagers, who enthusiastically accept them.

Sidi is the only one in Nawa not caught up in the enthusiasm; to him, the pigeon (the emblem of the Party of God, printed on ballots to assist illiterate voters) looks like "a crow of ill omen."

Along with the blankets and clothing comes a hive of foreign killer hornets, Manai's metaphor for Salafists. The hornets destroy one of Sidi's hives and

threaten the rest. With the help of fellow villagers, Sidi journeys to the capital city to enlist expert advice from a niece whose education he had insisted on when her parents died.

His niece and her husband—loosely modeled after the University of Manouba dean besieged in 2012—provide the knowledge and means for Sidi to kill off the invading hornets. At the book's conclusion, the parable is brought to the fore when Sidi witnesses a Salafist attack on a military patrol. He throws down a hornet nest he had just immobilized, knowing that the liberated and enraged hornets will kill the Salafist terrorists.

Social cohesion, Manai tells us, is required to defeat powerful invaders,

Freedom of speech was a very real accomplishment of the revolution, Manai said, and it "will be our weapon to change the situation" for the better. At the same time, much more must be achieved.

The honeybees have their work cut out for them if they wish to survive, as do citizens in North Africa and the Middle East.

Gordon Gray is the chief operating officer at the Center for American Progress. A retired career Foreign Service officer, he served as U.S. ambassador to Tunisia at the start of the Arab Spring and as deputy assistant secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs.

Murder, He Wrote

Every Hill a Burial Place: The Peace Corps Murder Trial in East Africa

Peter H. Reid, University Press of Kentucky, 2020, \$36.95/hardcover, e-book available, 332 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOHN RATIGAN

In 1966, in a small village in Tanzania, a young American woman died when she fell from a rocky hill where she and her husband of 16 months were picnicking.

Peverly Dennett Kinsey, known to everyone by the descriptive nickname "Peppy," was a Peace Corps upper primary school teacher who had met and married her husband, Bill Kinsey, also a PCV upper primary school teacher, while they were in Peace Corps training at Syracuse University. Peppy had graduated only a few months before from Mount Holyoke College. Bill was older, a 1964 graduate of Washington and Lee University.

At first, Peppy's fall was thought to be a tragic accident, and the Peace Corps

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prepared to return Bill to the United States. But African witnesses nearby reported that the couple had been arguing, then struggling with each other in what looked like a fight.

Shortly thereafter, local Tanzanian authorities arrested Bill Kinsey and charged him with the murder of his wife. The trial would take place in a court room in Mwanza, on the shores of Lake Victoria.

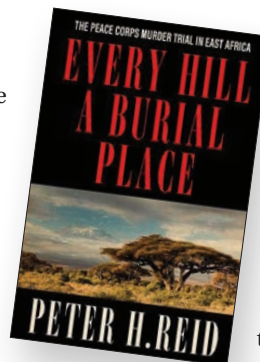
Author Peter Reid tells the story in *Every Hill a Burial Place*. A Peace Corps teacher in Mwanza at the time of the trial and later a public interest lawyer in California, Reid impressively documents the events and the actions of the wide array of players involved, both American and African (all the product of his extensive interviews).

Also critical as source material are the detailed notes Reid's interviewees fortunately kept and Peace Corps documents. His book is both a movie-ready legal thriller and a study of two cultures brought together to decide a single question.

The trial generated challenges well beyond the immediate personal one before Bill Kinsey. President Julius Nyerere had brought his young country of Tanganyika to independence less than five years before. Only two years before, Nyerere had brokered a merger with the offshore island of Zanzibar.

He now faced an unwanted murder trial of an American citizen whose home-state politicians were demanding that President Lyndon Johnson bring Bill Kinsey home by military force.

The Peace Corps itself was less than five years old, already the personal legacy of John F. Kennedy but still getting on its feet. Peace Corps Tanzania director



Paul Sack, a successful real estate developer from San Francisco, was faced with a stressful choice: What were his and his organization's obligations to the deceased Peppy and her bereaved family, and what were their obligations to Bill, suddenly on trial for his life?

In Washington, new Peace Corps director Jack Vaughn had been in the job less than two months; he needed to answer those same questions.

Readers also meet Oxford-trained Byron Georgiadis, the defense lawyer hired from Nairobi to defend Bill; Tanzania police inspector Martin Kifunta; Peace Corps doctor Tom McHugh; senior state prosecutor Ededen Effiwat, a Nigerian lawyer on loan to Tanzania; Yale lawyer Carroll Brewster advising the Kinseys; British judge Harold Platt; and much of the American expatriate community in and around Mwanza at the time.

Peter Reid (full disclosure: we have been friends since Peace Corps days) has done a superb job in laying out this international drama. He is consistently fact-based and judicious in his judgments.

This is not a potboiler or an accusatory effort: It is a fine piece of history of an unlikely event at a fascinating time and place when both the Peace Corps and the Republic of Tanzania were trying to find their way forward.

For more information about the book, go to www.peterreidwriter.com. ■

John R. Ratigan is a retired Foreign Service consular officer. Following service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania, Mr. Ratigan joined the Foreign Service in 1973. During a 24-year career he served in Iran, Singapore, Egypt, Canada and Korea, in addition to assignments in Washington, D.C.

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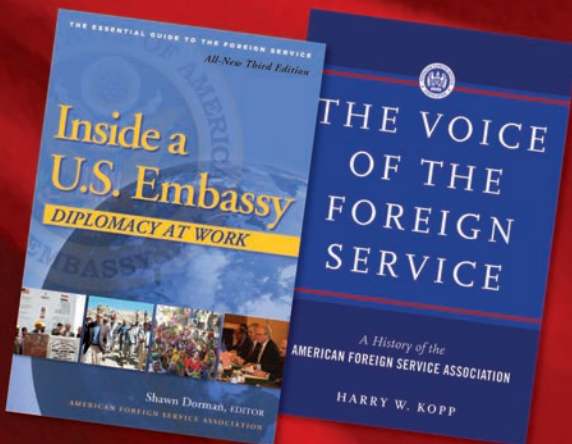
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Going to the Hadhramaut

BY KATE CARR

The Hadhramaut in southern Arabia has a long history. My husband, Dave, and I visited this fabled desert area, then administered by Britain, in October 1966. Dave, who was assigned to Aden, was going to meet businessmen in the ancient cities of the valley.

From antiquity, the Hadhramaut was famous for its spices. Frankincense and myrrh, used in large quantities in pre-Christian religions, grew in South Arabia. However, many of the spices carried along the caravan routes came from the Far East. In Europe, South Arabia was referred to as the Spice Islands because it was thought that all the spices grew there.

Actually, the Hadhramis sailed across the Indian Ocean in small sailboats pushed by the winds that blew east half of the year and west the other half. It was centuries before the European nations learned the secret of this navigation.

Many of the Hadhrami businessmen spent their whole working lives in Indonesia and the Netherlands East Indies. The greatest wish of those that lived abroad was to retire to their beloved homeland, build mansions and be buried in the cemeteries. The dead in these huge cemeteries still outnumber the people living in the cities.



We flew in on a DC-3, one of the small airplanes of Aden Airways. Since we were going over mountains, the propeller plane was tossed all about. We shook our way down to the sandy airfield from which hot air blasts rose.

That first night, we stayed at the guesthouse in Tarim. It was a beautiful old house in a date palm garden. There were lovely flowers and a swimming pool with one tree shading it. We slept in a cupola at the top of the house to catch whatever breeze might blow. The next morning, Dave and I were driven to Seiyun, where he met the Sultan of Kathiri. Kathiri is one of the two major states that make up the Hadhramaut.

Dave spoke to him and other sultans in classical Arabic because they were well educated, and well-educated people conferred formally in that language. Fortunately, he had been trained in Arabic in Beirut.



The high point of the trip was a drive to see Shibam, a city of high brown-and-white skyscrapers that rise before you in the desert. I learned these mud houses reach six to 11 stories, with some as high



COURTESY OF KATE CARR

A watercolor painting of Seiyun, where the author and her FSO husband went for meetings while assigned to Aden, then a British colony.

as 98 feet. The vertical houses have to be constantly maintained by applying new layers of mud.

Built in the 1530s, Shibam is called the oldest skyscraper city in the world, even dubbed “the Manhattan of the Desert” in the 1930s by the noted British explorer Freya Stark. With 500 houses crowded together, more than 7,000 people currently live there.

Here, Dave visited businessmen who lived in the upper stories of their office buildings. I was invited to visit their wives in the harems located on even higher floors. Sitting on cushions, I spoke in colloquial Arabic with women who were fascinated by my Western clothes.

These women all wore beautifully embroidered dresses and had their hair elaborately braided. Low coffee tables and painted cupboards to hold their many dresses were the only furniture. I answered as many questions as I could about the world outside.

In one harem, the women were engaged in staining the hands of a young bride-to-be with henna. I watched in fascination as they cut the thin strips of tape to form the pattern on her hands. They then painted all the uncovered parts with red dye.



Kate Carr and her FSO husband, David, were posted for 18 years in the Middle East. During those years, they explored the countries that are presently in the news. Kate Carr's earlier FSJ articles were “Into the Desert” (about Syria, April 2016) and “The End of the British Empire in Aden” (July/August 2015). David Carr retired from the Foreign Service in 1993, and the couple lives in Centennial, Colorado, near their daughter.



Things are not always peaceful in the Hadhramaut. Eighty years ago, the people were starving because constant warfare between the tribes made it impossible to farm. To combat this, a British official brokered Ingrams' Peace. Between 1934 and 1937, Harold Ingrams, with his wife, Doreen, traveled throughout the Hadhramaut.

He was sent as an adviser to arrange treaties between the many small tribes. He obtained 1,400 signatures to a three-year truce, which was later extended. The peace was wildly popular as conditions had been so grim due to the fighting.

Later, I found out that even in 1966, getting to the Hadhramaut was perilous. While my husband was driven on the frequently mined road to Mukalla to meet the man who had just become Sultan of Qu'aiti, I flew home to Aden.

A month later, on Nov. 22, the son of Amir Mohammed bin Said planted a bomb that blew up the Aden Airways



Shibam, "the Manhattan of the Desert," circa 2008.

plane on which his father was traveling. The prime minister and the 29 other people aboard were killed.



Many changes have occurred in the Hadhramaut since 1966 when Dave and I were in the Aden protectorate. The British

left in late 1967, and the independent protectorates became part of Yemen. (For the most part, Hadhramis consider themselves Hadhramis and not Yemenis, and often do not have Yemeni passports.)

In 2014, civil war began in Yemen. Shiites captured Sana'a, Yemen's capital, from the Sunni government. One hundred thousand people have been killed in Yemen by Saudi bombing, and 85,000 have died in the famine. Although the Hadhramaut has not been bombed, its people have suffered financially.

A major problem for the Hadhramaut is also the maintenance of mud buildings. A tropical cyclone flooded the area in 2008. Four towers were destroyed, and 15 others damaged, in Shibam. Appeals for financial aid have been made to UNESCO, which pledged \$194,000 to help with restoration of the heritage site. The European Union has also been asked for funds.



Despite these and other dangers and depredations, the mud skyscrapers still stand, representing the all-enduring Hadhrami culture. ■



The Hadhramaut in present-day Yemen.



Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio a Trevi (Saints Vincent and Anastasius at Trevi), as it has been known since the 16th century, is a church in Rome adjacent to the famed Trevi Fountain. Rebuilt in the mid-17th century in the Baroque style, the structure's unusual design features a dense grouping of 18 Corinthian columns on two stories. The reconstruction was ordered by Cardinal Mazarin, whose coat of arms and cardinal's hat, supported by angels, are the focus of the travertine façade. The church has the distinction of housing the embalmed hearts of 22 popes from Sixtus V to Leo XIII. This view of the top half of the church, with the buglers silhouetted against the sky, captures the richness of the architecture. ■

Angelica Harrison currently serves as a Diplomatic Security special agent in Washington, D.C. She was in Rome with the Secretary of State's detail when she took this photo. She has also served in Seoul and Dakar. She captures street photography as a hobby, and used an Olympus Pen Mirrorless E-P3 with an Olympus 14-42mm lens for this image.

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