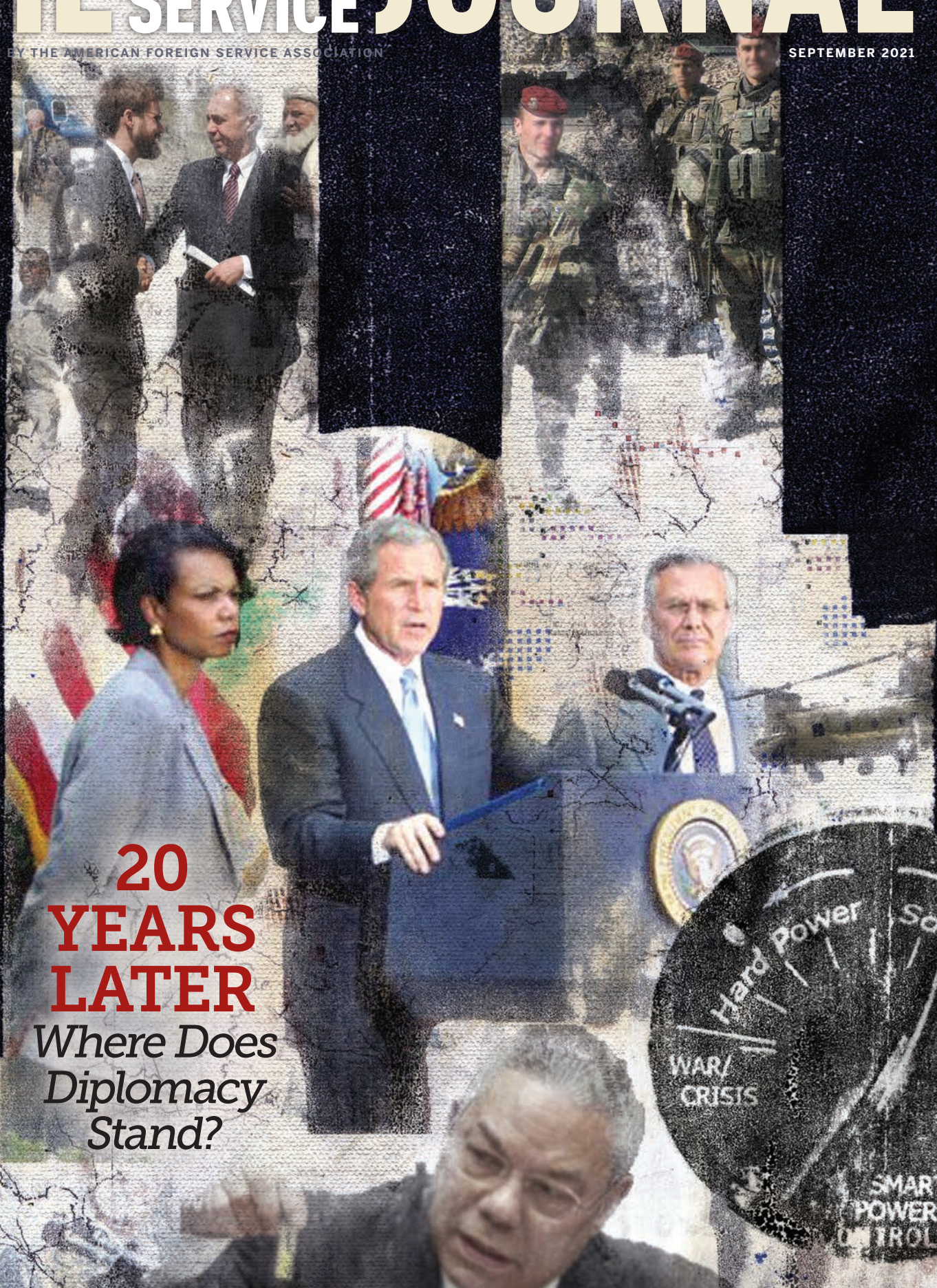


THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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SEPTEMBER 2021



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THE **FOREIGN SERVICE** JOURNAL

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Reform Can't Wait: No Time to Waste

BY ERIC RUBIN

As I write, we are six months into the Biden administration. We are still wrestling with the traumatic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on our world, our country and our profession. There are also some hopeful signs: a developing bipartisan consensus on increased foreign affairs funding, hiring and overseas staffing, as well as on expanded training and professional education, and an overdue return to having senior career officers nominated and confirmed for top-level positions.

Much is not right, however. As of the end of July, only one new ambassador had been confirmed by the Senate since the start of the Biden administration. More than 90 countries have no U.S. ambassador in place.

Dozens of nominations have been placed on hold, primarily by one senator, damaging the national interest. Dozens of jobs have yet to be filled or even have nominees, including a long list of ambassadorships, more than half the assistant secretary of State positions, nearly all of the USAID assistant administrator positions and most of the senior jobs in our other foreign affairs agencies. Both the administration and the Senate

bear responsibility and need to move quickly to break these logjams.

A nominee for under secretary of State for manage-

ment was finally announced at the end of July, six months after the start of the administration. It will likely be months before he is confirmed and can start work. The nominee for Director General of the Foreign Service was selected months ago, but as of this writing has not moved toward confirmation. We stand to lose most of the first year of the administration before the conversation on change and reform can even begin.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 continues to warp and obstruct our ability to accomplish our mission for the American people, and new obstacles—some self-inflicted—keep popping up. From the CDC dog ban—a real crisis for our members with beloved canine companions—to reduced official support for families, tandem couples, singles and others in the Foreign Service family, it keeps getting harder to pursue the challenging career path that our members have chosen.

One-third of them, according to both State Department statistics and a survey we helped sponsor, have considered leaving this year. Thankfully, attrition is nowhere near that level. But numbers like that are a clear warning sign of unhappiness and a perception that the future is not bright for those who stay in the Service. The lack of visible engagement from our top leadership on issues like the dog ban, “unidentified health incidents” (UHI) and Foreign Service reform does not help.

Add capricious and nontransparent security clearance suspensions that continue for years without any semblance of

due process, ongoing challenges such as the UHI that have affected our members in Cuba, China and elsewhere, painfully slow progress on diversity and inclusion, and some of the lowest promotion rates in the modern history of the Service, and we are looking at a recipe for attrition and unhappiness. That is no way to win any kind of “war for talent.”

I believe that this administration, like most of its predecessors, wants to support the career employees who are the backbone of our federal government. Words are not enough, however. We need to begin now on an ambitious and comprehensive effort to fix what is broken, address the causes of low morale and attrition, and create a proud, truly diverse and well-led corps of professionals who are committed to staying on, and who love what they do.

The Foreign Service had some of the highest career satisfaction ratings in the federal government for decades. It no longer does. If we don't identify the reasons, and commit to fixing them, we will see more attrition, more discouragement, and a loss of the talent we need to help our country deal with a very unstable and troubling world.

AFSA is eager to begin serious, in-depth work with senior officials of all of our member agencies on the urgently needed process of reform and modernization. We have no time to lose.

Please share your thoughts and ideas on what such a dialogue should include: member@afsa.org. ■



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

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When Everything Changed

BY SHAWN DORMAN

We turn our attention this month to one of the United States' grimmest anniversaries—Sept. 11, 2001.

Twenty years later, we ask, where does U.S. diplomacy stand?

The answer isn't pretty. In fact, it's rather depressing, and complicated, and very difficult to sum up neatly.

Although this is not a particularly uplifting *FSJ* edition, there is wisdom in the compelling set of articles here, and hopefully we can take away some lessons.

Learning lessons is not a strong suit of the U.S. government, as evidenced by the wars and interventions over the past decades.

As this issue goes to press, the Taliban have overtaken Kabul—and that question is all the more poignant: Where does diplomacy stand today?

We all remember where we were when news came that the first, and then the second, tower had fallen, the Pentagon was hit and United Airlines Flight 93 went down. In this issue, we start there, with a story of survival.

In "Getting Off the X," FSO Nancy Ostrowski gives a very personal account of escaping from the Marriott World Trade Center, a hotel situated between

the twin towers, on 9/11, and how she persevered that day and all the days that followed. She translates that experience

into a go-bag of lessons for how to make it through when catastrophe strikes.

We asked Ambassador Larry Butler to consider the impact of the global war on terror on the practice of diplomacy. He writes that the war fundamentally changed U.S. diplomacy, leading to an overly cautious risk-averse overseas presence in which security and the fight against terrorism pushed other issues aside.

Anthony H. Cordesman picks up the thread in a startling way. In "America and 9/11: The Real-World Impact of Terrorism and Extremism," he argues that 9/11 did not represent a new fundamental threat to U.S. national security; the Afghanistan and Iraq wars were, he continues, less about terrorism, and more faltering efforts to transform the political and economic systems of those countries.

In "The Proper Measure of the Place," veteran FSO Keith Mines reflects on his two tours in Afghanistan (2002 and 2012) and offers his perspective on the U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and the repeating patterns of engagement and abandonment.

In "Intervention: Unlearned Lessons, or the Gripes of a Professional," Ambassador (ret.) Ron Neumann laments the "persistent unwillingness to learn from our own past," and offers four critical lessons to consider.

Closing the focus section are excerpts from the *FSJ* Archive that relate to 9/11 and what followed. Over the past 20 years, we've regularly shined a light on these issues and featured on-the-ground

voices, and it's clear there is no substitute for these primary sources.

Ambassador (ret.) Ted Osius speaks out on "The Remonstrating Official," warning that as democracy is in retreat in parts of the world, diplomats must be prepared to raise tough questions, offer dissenting views and speak truth to power.

And for those who might put themselves on the line by reporting on misconduct or abuse of power, two attorneys—Alain Norman and Raeka Safai—offer notes on "Whistleblower Protections: A Nonpartisan Necessity."

In *FS Heritage*, Ambassador (ret.) Joe Lake and son Michael team up to tell the story of building the U.S.-Mongolia relationship in "Diplomats Make a Difference: The U.S. and Mongolia, 1986-1990."

In *Family Member Matters*, Brianna Hogan writes about "An Old Friend," puzzling over letting go in times of transition.

In a moving extended Reflection, "Right of Boom: A Bomb and a Book," Ambassador (ret.) Steve McFarland explains how the separation between life and death can be paper thin.

In *President's Views*, Ambassador Eric Rubin urges the administration to work with AFSA to begin making needed reforms and presses the administration and Congress to fill ambassadorial and other top positions without further delay.

And to end on a peaceful note, pink flamingos of Kenya await in *Local Lens* from Laura Merz.

Please respond to this edition by writing to journal@afsa.org or going to our LinkedIn page. ■



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.



Arctic Awareness

I'd like to commend AFSA's excellent work in offering insights on the rapidly changing Arctic region and its wide-ranging implications for American diplomacy. I particularly enjoyed reading the "Focus on Arctic Diplomacy" articles in the May issue.

Your contributors, including Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Ambassador (ret.) David Balton and Iceland's Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson, explained well the Arctic Council's critical role in fostering exceptional regional cooperation. At the same time, they appropriately warned of the emerging challenges confronting the Arctic nations, their Indigenous communities and other interested parties, as they must adapt to the new polar environment.

I also enjoyed reading the interview with James P. DeHart, the U.S. coordinator for the Arctic region, and hearing his remarks as the featured speaker for AFSA's Inside Diplomacy webinar in May. He clearly outlined U.S. policy priorities in the Arctic while highlighting U.S. government concerns with the risks posed by growing Russian military activities and Chinese economic involvement in the Arctic.

Finally, I particularly enjoyed Eavan Cully's article, "Setting Up Shop in Nuuk," on reestablishing the U.S. consulate in Greenland after a hiatus of nearly seven decades. Her article offers a practical overview of long-standing U.S. relations with Greenland, which is a part of the Kingdom of Denmark with a certain degree of self-rule.

Anyone planning to visit Greenland will benefit from reading Ms. Cully's informative piece. My spouse and I traveled to Nuuk and other Greenland locations about three years ago to learn about the people, culture and changing physical environment. I wish that Ms. Cully's piece had been available for us to read at the

time. I recommend that it be posted on the website of U.S. Embassy Copenhagen and U.S. Consulate Nuuk to help inform future visitors to Greenland.

Thanks for your good work on increasing awareness of U.S. diplomacy regarding Arctic issues, which is becoming ever more important given expected Arctic trends.

*John C. Baker
Analyst, retired
Alexandria, Virginia*

Arctic Diplomacy on Target

Things really came together when my wife, Diana, and I gave our long-scheduled Great Decisions presentation on the Arctic in mid-May. We could not have anticipated that the current *FSJ* would be featuring the Arctic, or that the webinar with Jim DeHart would occur the day prior to our event!

Coupled with my own Greenland experience, including my visit to NORAD in 2000 (while also working at AFSA) as Danish interpreter for a Greenlandic delegation, AFSA's timely resources enabled us to give our audience a rare insider look at a topic too often overlooked, as Jim said.

Maybe this convergence had something to do with the supermoon? But seriously, thanks to AFSA and the *Journal* for being ahead of the curve, as usual.

*Ward Thompson
FSO, retired
Penn Valley, California*

Inuit Declaration and the Way Forward

I am writing to you regarding the article by David Balton, "Advancing U.S. Diplomacy in the Arctic," in the May *FSJ*.

The concepts of sovereignty, delimitation of marine and terrestrial spaces, navigation law and other aspects of international law do not find, at least for the

moment, an easy interpretation in the Arctic region.

But the Inuit Circumpolar Declaration on Arctic

Sovereignty (later called the "Inuit Declaration"), adopted in 2009 by the Inuit leaders of Greenland, Canada and Alaska, points to the way ahead.

I believe that the road to the legal delimitation of these territories and the best way to consolidate fair, ethical and, at the same time, strong governance in the Arctic region (and contain both Russian and Chinese ambitions there) is to recognize and support the sovereignty of the people who have always lived in the region—namely, Inuit sovereignty.

The United States can play a very important diplomatic card of deterrence toward foreign and non-NATO powers and, at the same time, reaffirm the civil rights of those populations. International laws arising from the rights of natives in the Arctic region could have a greater value and therefore a greater force of law than territorial agreements that only concern border states such as Russia and China. The latter, in fact, do not involve the human dimension, namely the history and culture of the Indigenous people.

It is important to study Inuit culture; methods of approach toward establishing a good and fair U.S. "protectorate" of those populations on a diplomatic level; and agreements, not only commercial but also those aimed at further investigations in the field of legal, juridical, territorial, historical and ethnic issues.

If the U.S. is able to juggle this plurality of aspects well (on the level of rights, on the cultural level, on the commercial level, etc.), I believe it will be able to achieve much.

*Tecla Squillaci
Teacher
Catania, Italy*

Professional Education

I greatly enjoyed and appreciated reading the article “Revitalizing State—Closing the Education Gap” by Ambassadors (ret.) Miller and Pickering and Mr. Beers (May). Their observations and suggestions were spot on, but there is another angle to this issue that the State Department ought to consider.

As we work to improve diversity and inclusion, professional development in the form of formalized education and training would serve to strengthen this effort. It is accepted that expanded efforts in education tend to lead to wider improvements within a community. Professional development does the same within organizations.

Yet it is often pursued haphazardly, and is often the budget line that is the first or most frequent to be cut in hard times. If we, as a department, could be more strategic and farsighted in planning and implementing professional training, it would help to “level the playing field” of opportunity for all current and future Foreign Service officers.

Curt Whittaker

FSO

U.S. Embassy Bratislava

Lessons from Bohlen

Congratulations to the *FSJ* for Ambassador (ret.) Avis Bohlen’s article in the May issue. Readers get a glimpse of the deep impact of Red Scare hysteria on her father, Charles E. “Chip” Bohlen, in March 1953. The excerpt from her biography-in-progress tells a tale of relentless allegations, inflated to a national media event, met by courage and integrity.

There were diplomatic costs. Bohlen’s confirmation dragged on, delaying his arrival in Moscow until a month after Stalin’s death, depriving President Eisenhower the experienced and trusted

observer he wanted in Moscow when a new chapter in U.S.-Soviet relations was opening.

John Foster Dulles was ambivalent about Bohlen in part for his role in “20 years of treason,” the GOP’s label for FDR’s New Deal, and for his determined defense of the truth about the Yalta Conference during the Senate hearings. Behind the scenes stood the junior senator from Wisconsin and his hatchet-man, Scott McLeod, appointed State’s chief of security by the blindsided new president.

McLeod, in his brief tenure, forced the resignation of several hundred officers and staff, accused of a bizarre list of sins—“spies being in short supply,” as Ms. Bohlen notes dryly. She does not belabor recent parallels, but her comment on Senator McCarthy says it all: The case illustrates “how a demagogue can manipulate a backlash from his loyal supporters to intimidate his party into silence.”

Events like the Bohlen hearing are not uncommon in Foreign Service history—albeit in smaller doses. Her narration brings to mind the corruption of mid-19th-century electoral politics, the era of Tammany Hall, Roscoe Conkling and the quadrennial auction of government positions, high, middle and low.

In 1883 Sen. George Pendleton began a step-by-step reform process to professionalize and protect the civil servants, joined four decades later by Congressman John Jacob Rogers’ gift to diplomacy, the 1924 Rogers Act. The process was gradual and bipartisan—it took a while for professionalism to become the norm and patronage the exception.

McLeod’s scythe was a destructive aberration, a long step backward from the kind of bureaucracy worthy of a world power. A wiser Dulles and Secretary Christian Herter grassed things over; and JFK’s New Frontier quickened the intake

of highly qualified appointees to State, USAID and USIA—patronage, without money.

A blip by Reagan’s revolutionaries in 1981 was smoothed over by George H.W. Bush. His staffing plan worked well and began to moderate the horizontal zigzags and the vertical ups-and-downs common to a participatory democracy.

Then, in 2016, overnight, aberrance became the norm and professionalism the enemy. It was a new game: Good government based on experience, consultation and research? A hoax. Dulles’ insistence on “positive loyalty”? A quaint precedent. Elections? Fraudulent. Plugging loop-holes? Nonsense—we need more.

Abroad, where diplomats spend half their lives, the U.S. experiment in democracy, warts and all, has been a global beacon since Emancipation and World War I. Today our friends struggle to explain what has happened, while our enemies stifle their glee. After World War II, Americans pledged “Never again!” Today the same two words sound like a prayer.

During his ordeal, Bohlen was serving as head of AFSA. Since its inception, AFSA has been the first source consulted by Congress when Foreign Service reform is discussed. Might it be time for AFSA to take the lead and begin sustained collective thinking about the state of diplomacy and foreign affairs today?

Minimizing the cyclical zigzags of U.S. foreign policy might be the goal. Decent foreign policy is stable, flexible, long-lasting, consistent and reliable. Our partners want—and need—to rely on us; others may seek to be future partners. Still others need to know we are not afraid to act. The first step today is to shore up, preserve and press forward with our democratic experiment. Our nation must stand tall to work alongside the great powers to manage the harsh realities the world faces.



In his predeparture call on Eisenhower, Bohlen donned his AFSA hat and shifted from the USSR to the future of U.S. diplomacy. He spoke frankly to his old golfing friend, who had insisted on his rapid move to Moscow. He focused on “pervasive fear” and its consequences. As a historic symbol of courage, honesty and integrity, he was throwing down a gauntlet. We would be wise to pick it up.

Richard T. Arndt

FSO, retired

Washington, D.C.

Great Power Competition

Thanks for the excellent articles on great power competition in the June *FSJ*. Emily Goldman’s essay on cyber diplomacy was particularly hard-hitting, clarifying the issues for those of us who are not cyber experts. It really is time for the United States to go on the offensive.

Michael A.G. Michaud

FSO, retired

Lawrence, Kansas

USAGM: Offering a Significant Clarification

Because no debate on the current state of “public diplomacy” can be taken seriously without a clear understanding about how we got where we are, permit me to offer a clarification to a piece titled “U.S. Agency for Global Media” in the July-August *Foreign Service Journal* (p. 72).

The final sentence reads: “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.” This is misleading. It may appear minor, but the implications are significant.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors was established under the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1993. This act expanded and renamed the former Board for International Broadcasting, the independent agency providing oversight of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, by removing the Voice of America and several regional broadcasters from direct U.S. Information Agency authority and placing them together under the new BBG.

The new arrangement placed the new broadcasting agency nominally under USIA; but in practice, with its own powerful constituency on the Hill, the BBG was de facto independent. Though packaged as a compromise, the legislation was in fact the culmination of an extended effort with strong, bipartisan congressional support to separate VOA from the direct control of its longtime parent, USIA.

The Foreign Affairs Reform and

Restructuring Act of 1998 was a very different thing. It provided the statutory basis for the abolition of USIA and merged its elements, along with the BBG, into the State Department. The USIA at that time had already effectively lost control of VOA, which had been under the BBG since the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1993 went into effect.

Unfortunately, there has been a tendency to conflate VOA’s current problems with the abolition of USIA. This view is wrong. As noted above, the two organizations effectively split in 1993, with VOA (unlike USIA) generally pleased with its new status. Accordingly, VOA was not a significant issue in the breakup of USIA later in the decade.

The choice of language in your short piece is yet another example of the failure to understand this not-very-distant and

admittedly convoluted history. I write as a former employee at both BIB and USIA, who was involved in

the lead-up to the 1993 legislation.

Gregory L. Garland

FSO, retired

Arlington, Virginia

Seeking Photos of Embassy Saigon FSOs

I am seeking photos of the FSOs who helped me evacuate the staff of the Chase Manhattan Bank during the fall of Saigon to credit them in my forthcoming book, *Blue Saigon*, to be published by Simon & Schuster next spring.

I was appointed as the manager of the Chase Manhattan Bank’s Saigon branch in April 1975 and tasked with evacuating my employees and their families. I’m particularly interested in photos of Shepard Lowman and Kenneth Moorefield. Without their clandestine program to evacuate Vietnamese civilians, my mission would have failed disastrously.

Others I dealt with extensively were Conrad LaGueux, Lucien Kinsolving (with the ICCS), James Ashida, A. Denny Ellerman, Wolfgang Lehmann and Ambassador Graham Martin. Also, USAID officers Melvyn Chatman and Robert Lanigan. I’d also like photos of Homer Smith and Max Lamont. There was a deputy mission warden named George White (no relation) who helped me, too.

A photo of the inside or outside of the DAO gym where the Evacuation Control Center was located would be icing.

I would greatly appreciate hearing from anyone with access to any of these photos, ideally with attached scans of any of these photos. ■

Ralph White

ralphwhite@yahoo.com

New York, New York



U.S. Donates Vaccines to the World

President Biden announced on June 10 that the United States, in alliance with COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX), would purchase and donate half a billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to 92 low- and middle-income nations around the world. By July donations were being dispatched to many countries, including Haiti, South Africa, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Nepal and Argentina.

“These vaccines will not only save lives and help Nepal emerge from this pandemic, but they will also help to recover economic losses and regain the opportunity to safely visit with our friends, families and neighbors,” U.S. Ambassador to Nepal Randy Berry said at a July 12 arrival ceremony at Tribhuvan International Airport. The United States donated more than 1.5 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to Nepal.

The 500 million vaccine doses are in addition to a \$4 billion pledge by the United States to COVAX for equipment, tests and therapeutics to countries in need.

“The pandemic knows no borders, which makes it essential that we work together to combat the virus on a global basis. Our collaboration on vaccine distribution is essential to recovery everywhere,” MaryKay Carlson, charg   d’affaires at U.S. Embassy Buenos Aires, said as she welcomed the arrival of 3.5 million vaccine donations at Ministro Pistarini International Airport on July 16.

“We are sharing these doses to help people in need and stimulate global economic recovery. The more people who can be vaccinated around the world, the safer we all are, and we are in this together.”



U.S. EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

U.S. Embassy Buenos Aires Charg   d’Affaires MaryKay Carlson and Santiago Cafiero, Argentina’s chief of cabinet, oversee the arrival of 3.5 million vaccines donated by the United States to the Argentine people at Ministro Pistarini International Airport on July 16.



U.S. EMBASSY KATHMANDU

On July 12, an airplane delivered more than 1.5 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine to Nepal, a donation from the United States.

“Unexplained Health Incidents” Crisis Widens

As many as 200 Americans now say they have been affected by possible directed energy attacks, according to a July 20 NBC News report. The mysterious illnesses were first reported in Cuba in 2016.

An unnamed U.S. official told NBC News that “a steady drumbeat of cables has been coming in from overseas posts reporting new incidents—often multiple times each week.”

Almost half of the cases involve CIA agents or their relatives, while 60 were linked to the Department of Defense and 50 to the State Department, NBC News reported, adding that there are possible cases on every continent except Antarctica.

About two dozen U.S. diplomats, intelligence officers and other government officials have reported experiencing

symptoms since late January, according to a July 16 *New Yorker* magazine report.

Symptoms associated with the suspected directed energy attacks include dizziness, loss of balance, headaches, anxiety and cognitive fog.

“In coordination with our interagency partners, we are vigorously investigating reports of possible unexplained health incidents among the U.S. embassy community [in Vienna], and we’re also doing that wherever these incidents are reported,” State Department spokesman Ned Price said during a July 19 press briefing.

Adam Entous, author of the *New Yorker* article about attacks in Vienna, told NPR on July 21 that officials he has spoken with believe that the Russians are behind the attacks. “They believe increasingly that it’s the Russians using some sort of microwave pulse radiation device that’s somehow been miniaturized and is very portable and is not easily detected,” Entous said. “And despite all the searching that they’ve done, they really have not advanced the ball in terms of finding the

device or catching culprits in the act and things like that.”

CIA Director William Burns told NPR on July 22 that he is redoubling the agency’s efforts to determine the cause of the mysterious illnesses. He appointed a veteran of the CIA’s hunt for Osama bin Laden to head a task force looking into the matter.

“We’re throwing the very best we have at this issue, because it is not only a very serious issue for our colleagues, as it is for others across the U.S. government, but it’s a profound obligation, I think, of any leader to take care of your people,” Burns said.

In March, the State Department appointed Ambassador Pamela Spratlen to head a taskforce to investigate the illnesses.

In late July, Congress was working on bills that would improve support and access to care for those affected by the syndrome.



Afghans Who Helped the U.S. Seek Evacuation

Nearly 20,000 Afghans who served as interpreters for the United States during its war in Afghanistan have applied for evacuation, according to a July 16 Agence France-Press report.

The interpreters, who have already applied for special immigrant visas (SIV) under programs established by Congress beginning in 2006 to help Iraqi and Afghan partners, are considered at risk as the United States withdraws from the country and the Taliban seeks revenge against them and their families.

The SIV programs have been mired in bureaucratic opacity and delay for more than a decade. A June report from the Congressional Research Service cites State Department figures showing that through March 2021 almost 100,000 Iraqi

Contemporary Quote

 Now, President Biden has made clear that the United States will lead with diplomacy. And the Department of Defense will be here to provide the resolve and reassurance that America’s diplomats can use to help prevent conflict from breaking out in the first place. As I’ve said before, it’s always better to stamp out an ember than to try to put out a blaze. 

—Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, giving the 40th Fullerton Lecture at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in Singapore, July 27.

and Afghan individuals (two-thirds of them family members) have been issued SIVs abroad, or been adjusted to lawful permanent residence status in the U.S.

On July 23 President Joe Biden authorized up to \$100 million to meet “unexpected urgent” refugee needs for the Afghan interpreters, the Voice of America reported.

As part of a program called Operation Allies Refuge, the administration began flights July 29 to evacuate interpreters and other Afghans who helped the U.S. war effort to an American military base.

The flights are to be coordinated by the State, Defense and Homeland Security departments. FSO Tracey Jacobson, a former ambassador to Kosovo, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, will oversee the State Department effort.

Modernizing the State Department

Experts and former State Department officials told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on State Department and USAID Management, International Operations, and Bilateral International Development on July 20 that State must address long-term workforce and diversity challenges if it wants to improve morale among its rank and file.

In the hearing, “Modernizing the State Department for the 21st Century,” former Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun,

Ambassador (ret.) Marcie Ries and New America CEO Anne-Marie Slaughter discussed ways to improve the department.

Ries, a senior fellow at the Future of Diplomacy Project at Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, described the findings of the center’s November 2020 report, “A U.S. Diplomatic Service for the 21st Century.”

“Our conclusion was that the Foreign Service was facing a crisis that has been developing over multiple years and through successive administrations,” she said. “Specifically, we assessed our career diplomats lacked the support, funding, training, flexibility and leadership development opportunities they needed to be as effective as they should be in policy development at home and in representing and assisting the American people abroad.”

Biegun, the Deputy Secretary from December 2019 to January 2021, testified that midcareer FSOs had raised issues of concern with him, including the pace of rotations, accountability for poorly behaving managers, barriers to diversity, and the challenges of balancing career and family needs. Biegun called for enhanced workforce training, adding that about 15 percent of the department’s workforce should be in training at any one time.

Slaughter called for sweeping changes to the Foreign Service. “A congressionally

mandated overhaul of the Foreign Service could create a new Global Service open to anyone interested in serving the country as an official representative abroad who is willing to sign up for a seven- to 10-year tour, or perhaps a five-year renewable tour, at any stage in their career,” she testified.

State Deals with Massive Passport Backlog

Due to a growing backlog of passport applications, U.S. lawmakers introduced bipartisan legislation in July to require the Biden administration to submit a plan to address the backlog of passport applications at the State Department.

Focused on staffing shortages at State, the Passport Backlog Elimination Act would require the agency to ensure that processing time is six to eight weeks for regular passport applications, and two to three weeks for expedited applications.

The bill was introduced by Representatives Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.), Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) and Tim Burchett (R-Tenn.).

“Caseworkers in my district office are swamped with passport requests and are not receiving timely updates from passport agencies. This is unacceptable,” Burchett said. “East Tennesseans deserve better than this inadequate passport service from the Bureau of Consular Affairs. Congress has no choice but to step in and force the State Department to tell the American people how it plans to fix this mess.”

At a July 14 press briefing, Rachel Arndt, deputy assistant secretary of State for passport services, said that the agency has a backlog of between 1.5 million and 2 million passport applications to process, and wait times can be 18 weeks. Expedited passport applications are taking up to 12 weeks to process.

Arndt said the State Department is bringing additional staff to passport agencies around the country as COVID-19 restrictions ease, but added that it will take time to get back to pre-pandemic levels.

“U.S. citizens who wish to travel overseas this summer and do not cur-

rently have a passport may need to make alternate travel plans,” she said.

Third Gender Option for Passports

Responding to the needs of nonbinary, intersex and gender non-conforming people, the State Department plans to allow passport applicants to select a third gender option. The department said it is working to make this happen as soon as possible.

“With this action, I express our enduring commitment to the LGBTQI+ community today and moving forward,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on June 30, the last day of Pride Month. He added that the United States consulted with other like-minded governments that have already undertaken similar changes.

Meanwhile, the State Department is already allowing people to change their gender between male and female, even if the gender they select doesn’t match the gender on supporting documents such as birth certificates, previous passports or State ID.

Site of the Month: Cyber Attack Predictive Index (cyberheatmap.isi.jhu.edu)

In recent months, the United States and other countries have been hit by a series of cyberattacks, including on a major U.S. pipeline and schools and hospitals. Cybersecurity firms report that they are barely able to keep up with the number of calls from companies looking for help fending off attacks.

In response, a group of faculty and students at Johns Hopkins University has developed the Cyber Attack Predictive Index, an analysis based on common factors compiled from cyberattacks over the past 15 years.

“The site attempts to anticipate and predict where the next major cyber conflict could break out based on existing data from past attacks,” says Anton Dahbura, executive director of the Johns Hopkins Information Security Insti-

tute and co-director of the new Johns Hopkins University Institute for Assured Autonomy.

The highest likelihood of attack, at this writing, is Russia against Ukraine (extremely high). In the “high likelihood” category, the heat index foresees potential attacks against the United States by Russia and China, and attacks by the United States against Russia, China and Iran.



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

FLO Changes Name to GCLO

The Family Liaison Office has changed its name, after more than 40 years, to the Global Community Liaison Office. GCLO says the new name better reflects and includes diverse individuals and family types it serves.

The State Department created FLO in 1978 to advocate for the needs of Foreign Service families as they cope with the challenges of moving and living overseas.

From the beginning, FLO has promoted job opportunities for family members, education counseling, evacuation and personal crisis support, and more. GCLO will continue these services.

In considering a name change, FLO held focus groups with members of the Foreign Service community, engaged the worldwide Community Liaison Office corps and interacted with participants from the various foreign affairs agencies. People noted that the use of “Family” in

FLO’s name might imply that FLO’s services are not for all employees, and that “Community” more accurately reflects the mission of the office. Thus, the new name was born.

Learn more about GCLO at state.gov/gclo.

Cruz Continues Block on Diplomatic Appointments

The Biden administration has come under criticism in recent months for the slow pace of nominations for critical diplomatic positions. But through July, Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) continued to block nearly 60 State Department nominees waiting to be confirmed, according to Democrats and Republicans who spoke with CNN.

Since the end of May, the administration has nominated more individuals for senior positions in the foreign affairs agencies, notably including career FSO John R. Bass as under secretary of State for management. As of the end of July, only one ambassador had been confirmed in 2021.

Cruz has placed holds on the nominations over his opposition to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline being built from Russia to Germany. “I look forward to lifting the holds just as soon as they impose the sanctions on Nord Stream 2 that are required by federal law,” Cruz told CNN. Both the Trump and Biden administrations have declined to impose sanctions on the pipeline.

CNN said lawmakers from both parties have told Cruz that the holds are pointless, as the Biden administration has made clear it won’t change its policy. Construction of the pipeline is almost finished, and sanctions could antagonize Germany.

AFSA’s website features comprehensive and frequently updated lists of

State Celebrates Pride Month

In honor of Pride Month, Secretary of State Antony Blinken took part in a June 21 webinar co-sponsored by the Atlantic Council and glifaa.

Washington Post writer/MSNBC commentator Jonathan Capehart moderated the event, which included questions from FSOs in Malabo and Kathmandu, among other participants.

Secretary Blinken began by giving a shoutout to glifaa for nearly 30 years of advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ+ employees and their families at State and other foreign affairs agencies. He repeatedly emphasized that LGBTQ+ rights cannot be separated from human rights, and noted that just days after taking office, President Joe Biden had issued a memorandum instructing State to ensure it incorporates that principle into all its foreign assistance programs.

The Secretary confirmed that he has authorized all chiefs of mission to fly the Pride Flag at U.S. embassies. He



Raising the Progress Flag on June 25 at the State Department.

also announced that Main State would fly the Progress Flag on June 26-28, and reminded the audience that the department’s Global Equality Fund, a private-public partnership, continues to offer emergency assistance to human rights defenders and human rights programming support to grassroots LGBTQ+ organizations.

At a ceremony on June 25, Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley and glifaa President Jeff Anderson spoke before the Progress Flag was raised over the State Department.

You can view a video of the event or read the transcript at bit.ly/blinken-council.

50 Years Ago

Right On!

With Circular

Airgram 3745,
of August 11,
1971, the three

foreign affairs agencies announced policies designed to offer full equality of treatment to women employees, whether married or single.

There will be no further questioning of women applicants about marital status or intention to marry, and this subject will not be included in performance evaluations.

Women earlier required to resign from the Foreign Service because of marriage will be given opportunities to re-enter. If two Foreign Service employees marry, and both wish to continue working, each may retain regular status, if available for worldwide assignment, and the agencies will make every effort to assign husband and wife to the same post in appropriate positions. Couples will be consulted on alternatives when ideal assignments are not available.

The AFSA Board of Directors congratulates State, AID and USIA on these progressive new policies. We will all watch to make sure they are faithfully implemented in the fine spirit in which they were written. The AFSA Board congratulates Elizabeth J. Harper and her Women's Program Committee, and the Women's Action Organization and its President, Mary Olmsted.

—Editorial, Foreign Service
Journal, September 1971.



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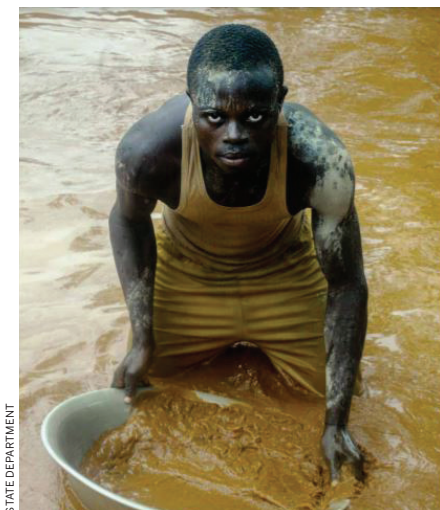
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STATE DEPARTMENT

Cover of the 2021 TIP Report.

TIP Report Cites Systemic Racism

In its 2021 Trafficking in Persons report released on July 1, the State Department argues that systemic racism in the United States and other countries is a driver of human trafficking.

It is the first time that State has connected systemic racism to human trafficking, Reuters reported. The nearly 650-page report tracks trafficking trends in 188 countries, including the United States.

“In many ways, the United States and other governments face human trafficking challenges and trends today that reflect the living legacy of the systemic racism and colonization globalized during the transatlantic slave trade through chattel slavery and regional practices of indigenous dispossession,” the State Department says in the report.

“We must break this inhumane cycle

Time for State to Recognize Subnational Diplomacy

I’m grateful for South Carolina’s leadership in international engagement. American cities and states are increasingly engaging in robust diplomacy with international partners and stakeholders. It’s time that the State Department formally recognizes subnational diplomacy and works to strengthen productive international friendship and cooperation on the city and state level in pursuit of mutual interests. This will not only strengthen the positive and productive relationships our cities and states develop but also serve to reinforce our friendships and potentially temper enmities.

—Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), in a July 20 press release in support of the City and State Diplomacy Act.

HEARD ON THE HILL



JOSH

Broadening Diplomatic Reach

The world has grown smaller and more interconnected than ever before. By improving engagement between our cities and foreign nations, and coordination with the State Department on such engagement, we can bolster our cultural and economic ties and cooperation, share best practices, and broaden our nation’s diplomatic reach.

—Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, in a July 20 press release in support of the City and State Diplomacy Act.

Consulates Help in Florida Disaster

As of this evening we have helped the relatives of those missing in Surfside, from over a dozen countries, get visas to travel to South Florida. Most have either arrived or are now en route. Our embassies and consulates abroad have done a phenomenal job. Thank you.

—Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), in a June 25 tweet after the Champlain Towers South collapse in Surfside, Florida.

of discrimination and injustices if we hope to one day eliminate human trafficking,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken writes in his introduction to the report.

The State Department also focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human trafficking.

“Governments across the world diverted resources toward the pandemic, often at the expense of anti-trafficking

efforts, resulting in decreased protection measures and service provision for victims, reduction of preventative efforts, and hindrances to investigations and prosecutions of traffickers,” the report states. ■

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

The Remonstrating Official

BY TED OSIUS

In the village of Duong Lam near Son Tay, west of Hanoi, is a quiet, terra cotta temple dedicated to a diplomat. A decorated scholar-official, Giang Van Minh served as Vietnam's ambassador to China starting in 1637. He outsmarted China's emperor, ending Vietnam's annual payment of a heavy gold and silver tribute.

For his courage in standing up to the Chinese Goliath, Minh paid the ultimate price. China's emperor took revenge by cutting out Minh's tongue and eviscerating him. The emperor then had the diplomat's body cast in silver and returned to Vietnam. China continues to represent an existential threat to Vietnam, as it has from the country's birth as a nation.

The work of a diplomat can be perilous. But Giang Van Minh's example offers another reminder, as well. Diplomats have a duty to advocate for their country's interests overseas; they also have a second duty, which can be equally perilous: to advocate internally for wise policies and to challenge poor ones. Catastrophe can result when diplomats sidestep that duty or are unable to carry it out because the ruler cuts off dissenting voices.



Ted Osius, a career diplomat with the State Department Foreign Service for 28 years, served as U.S. ambassador to Vietnam from 2014 to 2017.

In October 2021, Rutgers University Press will publish his book, Nothing Is Impossible: America's Reconciliation with Vietnam, with a foreword by John Kerry.

Diplomats also have a second duty, which can be equally perilous: to advocate internally for wise policies and to challenge poor ones.

In November 2016, shortly after Donald Trump's victory in that year's presidential election, I learned about the Confucian concept of the remonstrating official. While struggling with a decision about whether or not to leave government service, I received a message from Dave Shear, my predecessor as ambassador to Vietnam. Dave sent me a photo of a carving from Hanoi's 1,000-year-old Temple of Literature.

The plaque reads: "Virtue and talent are the soul of the state." Vietnamese scholars, like their Chinese counterparts, Dave explained, pursued the Confucian ideal that a loyalty exists that is greater than that to the emperor, and that loyalty requires officials to speak out when the emperor goes too far.

Confucius (551-479 BCE) taught his students to be loyal to the ruler, but also to stand up to the ruler when he (or she) was wrong. In the Confucian system, virtue sometimes required "remonstrance," defined by Merriam-Webster as: (1) an earnest presentation of reasons for opposition or grievance; and (2) an act or instance of remonstrating.

Mencius (372-289 BCE) warned that, by standing up to the ruler, the "remonstrating official" risked death—swift execution or even a slow and painful death.

In one instance, Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty punished Grand Historian Sima Qian for his dissenting views by offering the historian his choice of punishment: death or castration. Qian chose the latter.

Confucian scholar-officials would remonstrate with a ruler to help him become a better ruler, not to overthrow him in favor of another. They corrected the ruler out of a sense of loyalty, because their loyalty was to principles greater even than the person of the emperor (see Anita Andrew and Robert André LaFleur in *Education about Asia*, Fall 2014).

U.S. officials—civilian and military—swear an oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." In our oath, there is no reference to a political party or individual leader. In a democracy, when policies are debated openly, there should be space for "remonstrance."

The Need for Remonstrance

After World War II, the United States became obsessed with communism. In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy announced that he had a list of supposed communists working in the State Department. Theodore H. White describes in his masterful *In Search of History*

(HarperCollins, 1978) what happened to the United States during the next decade, as the Cold War became Americans' focus and McCarthyism had a significant influence on our political culture.

White showed how decimating the team of Foreign Service Asia experts—people who would have known about the history of enmity between Vietnam and China—left the State Department unprepared for the coming conflict in Southeast Asia, and contributed directly to the debacle of our engagement in the Vietnam War. Many of those whose knowledge would have caused them to remonstrate had been removed from office.

In the 1960s and 1970s, as the war in Vietnam dragged on, the United States experienced the disaster that can occur when officials do not know enough to remonstrate or, worse, choose not to do so. In 1995 Robert McNamara admitted that, as U.S. secretary of defense, he had known we were losing the war in Vietnam but did not say so. He publicly expressed his shame over the war's conduct in *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (Vintage Books, 1996) and what many referred to as his "mea culpa" tour.

In a meeting with his former nemesis, General Vo Nguyen Giap, McNamara acknowledged that the United States "gave short shrift to Vietnam's strong nationalist tradition and aspirations," Chester L. Cooper reported in the June 29, 1997, *Washington Post*. McNamara added that Americans "were held in thrall by the Domino Theory and our conviction that Vietnam was a potential



This carving in Hanoi's 1,000-year-old Temple of Literature reads: "Virtue and talent are the soul of the state."

steppingstone for China's thrust into Southeast Asia."

The Pentagon Papers show that McNamara knew as early as 1967 that the war was unwinnable, but he didn't say this publicly. When confronted with this fact later, McNamara at first said that he had kept quiet out of respect for the president he served, Lyndon Johnson.

But even after becoming president of the World Bank and Nixon was in the White House, McNamara stayed quiet, attended Georgetown dinner parties and enjoyed his summers on Martha's Vineyard while Americans and Vietnamese continued to fight and die. His interviews in the 2003 film "Fog of War" suggest that McNamara went to his grave tormented by the choices he had made.

Standing Alone

Under Secretary of State George Ball took a different path. He urged President John F. Kennedy to remember France's defeat at Dien Bien Phu and not to intervene in Vietnam. Then, under President Johnson, he argued against the

1964-1965 bombing of North Vietnam. In February 1965, he wrote a detailed, forceful memorandum (reprinted in *The Pentagon Papers*) to the president analyzing the situation in South Vietnam. He predicted (correctly) that escalating the conflict would be disastrous for the United States.

As a "remonstrating official," Ball stood alone.

Other senior advisers told the president what he wanted to hear. Johnson had concluded, as Stanley Karnow quotes him

in *Vietnam: A History* (Viking Press, 1983): "Losing the Great Society was a terrible thought, but not so terrible as the thought of being responsible for America's losing a war to the Communists."

The other advisers fell in line and agreed with the president that he should double down in Vietnam. Bombing commenced on March 2, 1965. America paid a heavy price for that choice. President Johnson adhered to a domino theory that would not have withstood the scrutiny of people who understood Asia's history. Their voices were not heard because in the zeal to rid the government of communists, McCarthy and his allies drove out people whose expertise in Asia was badly needed.

During President Bill Clinton's administration, as the United States normalized relations with Vietnam, I saw firsthand how the president provided opportunities for debate and the airing of different views on important national security matters. I also saw firsthand during Barack Obama's administration that the president sought out independent views. Presidents Clinton and

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.

Obama were confident enough to hear dissenting views, understanding that by airing those challenges to the consensus, better decisions could be reached.

The opportunity to remonstrate and the act of remonstrating are essential for good policy outcomes. After I left government service in late 2017, I admired the courage—and loyalty—shown by “remonstrating officials” such as Ambassadors Masha Yovanovitch and Bill Taylor, who demonstrated their loyalty to the Constitution. I was particularly moved when talented colleagues I had worked with closely, including George Kent and David Holmes, took huge career and personal risks to honor their oaths and speak truth to power.

Democracy and Decision-making

Today, there is much discussion about the contest between democracy and authoritarianism. Especially after the events of Jan. 6, 2021, Americans are coming to realize how fragile democracy can be. Authoritarian governments have become more efficient at quashing dissent, which can lead to poor decisions for everyone, including authoritarian leaders.

A third of the world's population now lives in countries where democratic governance is declining. According to the University of Gothenburg's Varieties of Democracy indices, liberal democra-

cies have diminished from 41 countries to 32 in the past 10 years, with a global population share of only 14 percent.

In the past 12 months, democratic reversals occurred in Myanmar, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. The United States is withdrawing from Afghanistan, where America's democracy-building exercise met grave challenges. Venezuela is in dire straits. Poland, Hungary, Brazil, Turkey and India are already, or are becoming, electoral autocracies.

Three hundred twenty-three names on the wall at the State Department's C Street entrance attest to the dangers of serving one's country as a diplomat. War, disease, accidents and state-sanctioned reprisals from foreign governments have cut short the lives of U.S. diplomats. While their bodies may not be cast in silver, the brave men and women of the Foreign Service know they face risks and possibly even death when serving overseas.

But as the example of George Ball shows—and as we have seen from the brave “remonstrating officials” of the past few years—dangers can come from one's own government, as well. Those dangers are greatest in an authoritarian system, where the leader purports to know everything and leaves no room for dissent, as Grand Historian Qian learned.

Today, as democracy is in retreat in parts of the world, the remonstrating official is needed more than ever. Where there is still space for challenging conventional wisdom or for alternative policy approaches, the diplomat has an ability to raise tough questions and seek the best possible answers.

Today's diplomats and those of the future must remember that loyalty is needed in the service of democracy and good policy, not to please an emperor. ■



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GETTING OFF THE

In a compelling personal account of the 9/11 attacks, one FSO offers tactics for surviving when catastrophe strikes.

BY NANCY OSTROWSKI

In September 2001 I was an industry economist attending a National Association for Business Economics conference (themed “In a New York Minute”) at the Marriott World Trade Center. The 22-story hotel was situated between the twin towers and was connected to the north tower. My boyfriend and I were also guests of the hotel, having come up from Virginia the weekend prior. We were still in our room on the 18th floor when the first plane struck the building.

The lessons I learned from this experience have served me well in the Foreign Service through subsequent terror attacks, civil unrest and evacuations.

1) HAVE AN EXIT PLAN. Just before my trip to New York, there was a fire in the high-rise condo building where I lived in Alexandria, Virginia. As a result, the first thing I did when check-



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ing into the Marriott was to locate the nearest emergency exits. When I heard the loud rumble of the first plane’s impact, I didn’t have to waste time figuring out where to go, and was able to exit my room immediately and with less panic.

2) LISTEN TO YOUR INSTINCTS. In researching the hotel prior to my trip, I came across an article about the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. That was the first time I had heard of Osama bin Laden. The night of Sept. 10, I was walking



back from dinner with my boyfriend and a colleague from my office. My colleague was saying how happy he was to have come on the trip. I offhandedly commented: “Yes, everything is perfect, although three words come to mind.” I paused dramatically and joked, “Osama bin Laden.” We laughed it off and continued our walk to the hotel.

The next morning, as soon as I heard and felt the rumbling from the plane’s impact, my first thought was that we were

being bombed. My boyfriend and I looked out of the window and saw the large, swirling pieces of debris sailing past. We locked eyes, didn’t say a word and immediately exited the room. I left everything behind: laptop, wallet, phone and even my shoes, thinking: “Get out now, we can always come back for our possessions later.”


Many years later in Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) training, I would hear the need to move quickly away from a danger zone or attack site, referred to as “getting off the X.”

3) BELIEVE YOUR EYES, NOT WHAT PEOPLE TELL YOU. We took the emergency stairs down the 18 flights to the lobby. Surprisingly, there were just a handful of people in the stairwell at this point. Once in the lobby, we heard people saying not to worry, it was just an explosion in the hotel kitchen. I knew from the intense rumbling and from the swirling debris that this could not be the case.

The hotel employees were trying to get us to go back to our rooms and not panic, but I knew something big was afoot. We walked out the front door to another Marriott we had spotted across the street. I used the opportunity to call my father (collect, since we had left our cell phones behind) to say: “You are going to see something on the news, just know that we are OK.”

4) KNOW WHEN TO BREAK THE RULES. In an effort to maintain order, the hotel staff requested that everyone stay in the lobby and not leave the building. However, I felt the need to put more distance between myself and whatever was happening across the street. Usually I am a rule follower extraordinaire—with not even a parking ticket to my name—but this time was different. I tugged on my boyfriend’s arm and ushered him out a back entrance. Almost immediately afterward, the second plane hit. Given the size of the buildings and how close together they were, it was impossible for us to see very far up, so we still didn’t know what was happening. We only pieced it together once we saw some of the wreckage and heard others saying they had seen planes.

5) KNOW WHEN AND WHOM TO ASK FOR HELP. We kept moving south, away from the towers, trying to put as much distance as possible between ourselves and the attack. The news was starting to travel, and people on the street were beginning to panic. I realized that there would be no going back to get our possessions, and that we would need money to get back home. We stopped in a bank to ask about a wire transfer, but they started to shut down almost as soon as we walked in. We left and kept moving farther from the attacks, walking carefully and



Something inside of me
knew that if I allowed
myself to cry, I would never
stop and might not survive.

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/USER8600DD38_38 (BACKGROUND/AKINSHIN (STAIRS))

looking mostly at the street since we were both shoeless. At one point, the smoke got so bad my boyfriend took off his socks, and we used them as makeshift filters. I found a bottle of water on the sidewalk and moistened the socks so that we could breathe better.

We ended up near the Staten Island ferry office, but I was hesitant to go inside any buildings for fear of being trapped in rubble. (By now we knew there were planes involved, and the continuing explosions from the collapse of the buildings made it seem as if the attacks were ongoing and that there could be multiple planes.) For a few moments, I sat on the dock, breathing through the sock with one hand, the other firmly grasping a nearby life preserver. I felt momentarily safer. A man came up and handed my boyfriend an extra pair of sneakers from his gym bag, which he gratefully accepted even though they were several sizes too big. Then the wind shifted, and even with our makeshift filters, we could no longer breathe. We had no choice but to follow the others into the ferry office.

I will never forget walking into the ferry office: It was possibly the most terrifying moment of my life. I was still so afraid of being trapped in a collapsing building, and I couldn't fathom that the air inside a building would be better than outside. As I walked in and saw so much dust swirling in the air around the entrance, I felt a surge of panic and almost broke down crying. Something inside

of me knew that if I allowed myself to cry, I would never stop and might not survive. I pushed down on my rising panic and somehow found the strength to walk in.

The low ceiling of the dimly lit entrance immediately gave way to a spacious, bright interior, and the air was clear. A woman approached me and handed me what I later learned were her friend's shoes. They had been shopping, and her friend had been struck by some falling debris when they stopped in the street to stare at the collapsing buildings. She likely didn't survive. I took the shoes and numbly went into the restroom to remove my shredded pantyhose and wash my feet before putting them on. They were high-heeled evening sandals and, unlike the shoes that had been handed to my boyfriend, were exactly my size. As I put them on, I remember feeling that I was going to make it. I called my father once more, this time arranging for a wire transfer, and then we took the ferry to Staten Island.

6) EXPECT OTHERS TO ACT ERRATICALLY. As the ferry pulled away, I remember looking back incredulously at the black destruction in the distance in the middle of an otherwise beautiful, sunny day. I was still holding the sock, although I didn't need it anymore.

Once on Staten Island, we picked up the wire transfer (via a prearranged password) and started to make a plan to head back to Virginia. I realized my boyfriend was starting to feel the effects

of shock when he asked me if I would like to stop at a salon to get my hair done since we were covered in dust. I looked at him and gently told him we needed to prioritize finding shelter and getting home before worrying about getting cleaned up. We walked across the Bayonne Bridge to New Jersey, the straps from the sandals cutting into the tops of my feet, but it was still better than walking barefoot.

When we arrived on the other side, I felt a surge of hope when I met a group of businessmen traveling in a limo back to D.C. They offered us a ride, and I was thrilled ... until their driver refused to take us. I even offered him the \$1,000 I had just received, but he said he was afraid of getting a ticket because he wasn't licensed to carry more than four passengers. It was now 8 p.m., nearly a full 12 hours later. As it began to get darker, I was accosted by some inebriated individuals, and I worried about how we were going to get through the night, let alone back home. I eventually spotted a police officer, told him that we were survivors from the building, and he arranged for a squad car to take us to a makeshift shelter. My boyfriend called his family in Pennsylvania; and by 1 a.m. we were in their car and headed to safety.

7) BE MINDFUL OF WHAT YOU CARRY WITH YOU, AND WHERE THAT INFORMATION IS BACKED UP. While I don't regret leaving the hotel room as quickly as I did, not even just to reach for my wallet, I do regret what I had brought with me on the trip in the first place. Since I had just been to a friend's wedding in Italy, I had my passport in my purse, as well as my driver's license. I was also in the habit of carrying my Social Security card in my wallet. Losing all three of those documents at once made proving who I was an exceptional challenge once I returned home. In addition to my wallet and ID, I left behind my cell phone, laptop and day planner.

Essentially, all of the contact information I had for everyone in my life was gone (these were the days before cloud backups). As a result, I sadly lost contact with several of my international friends and to this day have not been able to reconnect with some of them.

Today, I keep my Social Security card locked in a safe, and I think very carefully about what I carry with me and where it is backed up. I also keep a "go bag" with cash, flashlight and first aid kit. Contact information is stored on the cloud or backed up across as many systems as possible. Finally, I also make sure to always carry a pair of easy-to-slip-on, comfortable walking shoes, keeping them close at hand.



U.S. NAVY/JIM WATSON

A New York City firefighter looks up at the remnants of the twin towers on Sept. 13, 2001.

8) MOST IMPORTANT: KNOW THAT IT'S NOT OVER WHEN IT'S OVER. Recovery may take a long time, and that's OK. It should be no surprise that I suffered from PTSD for many years after the fact. Loud noises and planes overhead would often send me suddenly to the floor, in a "duck and cover" position. It was two years before I was willing to travel on a plane, visit a high-rise or even just be in a large city. My father, a highly decorated Vietnam combat veteran, was instrumental in my recovery, as was my writing career.

I did things at my own pace, sought counsel when needed and gave myself grace with the healing process. I resumed my travels and have fulfilled my bucket list, visiting 83 countries. I joined USAID in 2010 and served in Moldova, South Sudan (from which I was evacuated in 2013), South Africa and, most recently, at the Pentagon.

Every day of my three-year tour at the Pentagon, I walked by the portraits of those they lost on Sept. 11, 2001—a perpetual reminder of how far I've come and why I serve. ■

The GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR and Diplomatic Practice

The war on terror fundamentally changed U.S. diplomacy, leaving a trail of collateral damage to America's readiness for future challenges.

BY LARRY BUTLER



Ambassador Larry Butler served for 40 years with the State Department, starting in Finland and the People's Republic of Bulgaria during the Cold War and finishing his career in the Greater Middle East with postings in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has a

track record of involvement in peacemaking, including working for President Bill Clinton at the White House for the Northern Irish Good Friday Accords and with Richard Holbrooke in Belgrade for the Dayton Accords. A Balkans expert, he served in Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and as U.S. ambassador to Macedonia (2002-2005). After retiring from the Foreign Service in 2013, he now provides interagency operational expertise to U.S. military organizations from his home bases in Maine and Virginia.

Twenty years ago, jetliners crashing into New York City's twin towers and the Pentagon shocked America out of its post-Cold War complacency, ushering in the global war on terror (GWOT) and a surge in international support for the United States. A senior State Department official, Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Francis X. Taylor, speaking to the American Bar Association in late 2002, answered a question on how long the war on terror would last: "As long as it takes. Years, maybe decades."

Taylor was prescient. This summer's withdrawal of American and NATO forces from Afghanistan after 20 years is a controversial coda to two decades of GWOT-dominated foreign policy that fundamentally changed American diplomatic practice and arguably left a trail of collateral damage to America's standing in the world and readiness for future challenges. In the two decades of the war on terror, we squandered the goodwill America enjoyed in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Although the multilateral diplomacy that had fallen by the wayside with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 came back into currency, the comeback was only partial. Our forays into, first, Afghanistan, then Iraq, came at a huge cost. Our shortcomings and abrupt departure from Afghanistan now will cause foreign decision-makers to reconsider aligning themselves with us again.

Moreover, the emergence of “fortress embassies” in response to Washington’s increasing aversion to physical risk and Diplomatic Security’s expanded influence on policy and overseas operations since 9/11 has left our diplomats physically and psychologically isolated from the societies they have to influence, and playing catch up in public diplomacy.

Today, as we are tested by the People’s Republic of China and its predatory foreign policy, as well as a series of problems that require global solutions supported by a stable, rules-based international order, we are scrambling to recoup.

From Multilateral to Bilateral

In the years between the fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11, the Cold War mentality of reliance on international alliances and “one team, one global fight” morphed into country-specific stovepipes. Per American political scientist Francis Fukuyama, “history ended” in December 1991 with the presumed eternal triumph of liberal democracy. Colleagues may disagree, but the reality I experienced is that many members of the Foreign Service who joined after 1991 came with a different set of expectations for what they were there to do.

This “interwar” decade was a period of euphoric exuberance, the dawn of American hubris, aka Pax Americana. In those 10 years, American embassies and diplomats went from being aligned globally in containing and confronting the USSR to focusing largely on single-country, bilateral diplomatic efforts. This was accompanied by the fragmentation of foreign policy and the growth of single issue / special interest envoys and offices that number around 55 today.

In an example of the absurdity of this period, as deputy chief of mission (DCM) in Copenhagen in 2000 I invested substantial time trying to implement my then-chief of mission’s campaign to reimagine how an embassy does business, protesting the Danish government’s treatment of Scientology and coping with local derision of the annual Human Rights Report blasting Denmark for failing to have a 50-50 gender balance in its parliament. This kind of to-do list was not unique to Denmark.

Whether counting our peace dividend chickens before they

hatched, or blithely expanding NATO (a suddenly obsolete organization in search of a reason to persist) eastward to avoid a political and security vacuum in the former Warsaw Pact space, we were blindsided by the Rwandan genocide, civil war in Somalia, the breakup of Yugoslavia and the rise of global religious extremism. And seeing

how ineffective the United Nations was in responding to international crises—Bosnia being the most extreme—we doubled down on U.S.-led bilateral efforts.

That changed on 9/11. In Copenhagen, I watched the TV in my office in real time as the second aircraft hit the second World Trade Tower in New York. My staff panicked. We closed the embassy early that day. The next day, Danes arrived in growing numbers to light candles and place flowers and teddy bears. The queen presided over a moving memorial service at a local church for us. Until then, American foreign policy had been widely unpopular among ordinary Danes who strongly opposed our many interventions in places such as Vietnam and Central America. In an instant, all was forgotten. The legacy of our Cold War multilateral diplomacy was now paying dividends, with our allies and friends rising to the occasion with words and deeds.

Back to Multilateralism, Sort of

Global wars require partners and alliances. We refocused on reengaging and reenergizing alliances and kludging together coalitions to deal with al-Qaida globally. After a decade-long hiatus, we were all rowing in the same direction. At the same time, however, because the cooperation we sought was strictly, even

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The influence of combatant commanders grew as we fought the war on terror primarily with lethal operations that had little oversight or control by individual chiefs of mission or State.

narrowly, tied to the anti-terror effort, many other issues and concerns fell by the wayside. We also needed diplomats (and an institution) prepared to take physical discomfort and risks in combat zones. Hardly new to us Balkan hands, this was definitely not something most of the Foreign Service had experienced or welcomed.

The speed with which American diplomacy worked at the United Nations for authorities and created a coalition for Afghanistan (the Danes went with us) and then a follow-on NATO mission with partners from as far away as New Zealand and Singapore, was as astonishing as how fast we drove the Taliban out of power. Initially, this was a public diplomacy triumph that reinforced our influence in multilateral institutions. Rinse and repeat with our adventure into Iraq in 2003, with more than 35 nations sending troops (“flags in the sand”) to serve with us, though this latter intervention plus “drone wars” would eventually come at a high cost.

A notable exception to the return to multilateralism was the George W. Bush administration rejection, based on concerns for the erosion of our sovereignty, of the International Criminal Court in 2002 and insistence that our embassies negotiate bilateral deals exempting U.S. military personnel from its jurisdiction (so-called Article 98 agreements). As chief of mission in Macedonia in 2004, I succeeded in cutting an Article 98 deal, but was left with a nagging doubt. Did our rush to demand immunity from our partners undercut our moral authority in emphasizing commitment to international norms, rule of law, human rights and multilateralism?

I found myself hoisted on my own petard in insisting on legal accountability in (North) Macedonia on gross violations of human rights while insisting that we not be held to the same standard. We became infamous for drone strikes, extraordinary rendition, black sites and Guantanamo to the world. And we diplomats had to defend these practices as necessary to win the global war on terror we had declared.

Militarization of Diplomacy— Mars Rising, Venus Falling

With the rise of the Pentagon and the four-star generals dictating foreign policy, the State Department was sidelined. Much ink has been spilled on this that need not be spilled again here, but clearly the late Donald Rumsfeld’s driving President George W. Bush to invade Iraq without a day-after plan stands out. The decision to remove the Taliban from power in Afghanistan was not controversial; but the decision to stay 20 years reflected the Pentagon’s desire not to be seen as losing another war more than anything else.

The influence of combatant commanders (the Special Operations Command and the geographic commands) grew as we fought the war on terror primarily with military operations that had little oversight or control by individual chiefs of mission or State. One ambassador lost his job when he tried to exert control over drone strikes from the country in which he served (on paper) as the president’s personal representative. Around 2010, State’s Office of the Inspector General bowed to the Special Operations Command when it failed to insist that its personnel assigned to an embassy in Southeast Asia submit to the NSDD-38 staffing process (which puts U.S. government personnel under chief-of-mission authority). A recent Congressional Research Service report on State’s personnel challenges highlighted challenges to chief of mission authority as an issue Congress should look at.

Expeditionary Diplomacy

Prior to the global war on terror, unaccompanied tours overseas were rare. Belgrade in 1994 with the Bosnian war raging next door was a downsized, but accompanied, tour. But in the wake of 9/11, “expeditionary diplomacy” came to the fore as the United States serially invaded or caused regime change in the greater Middle East and a growing number of failed states and unaccompanied tours proliferated in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan. Unaccompanied service in a war zone became very controversial during the 2007 surge (AFSA leadership vigorously opposed directed assignments to Iraq at the time). But the Foreign Service then adapted, accepting the new rule that any officer expecting a promotion to more senior ranks had to serve an unaccompanied tour at least once.

Of course, since the Foreign Service personnel pool is more like a puddle, the cost for the Iraq surge was stripping other posts of critical staff. According to a Reuters report, in 2013 more than 1,000 Foreign Service personnel were serving at unaccompanied posts. Today, while Afghanistan and Iraq staffing has shrunk or is shrinking, Pakistan and difficult spots like the Central African

Republic and South Sudan still host employees who serve a year or two in a dangerous location while their families stay stateside.

Whole of Government: Agencies Everywhere!

“Whole of government,” another concept born of 9/11, briefs well, but it is hard to put into practice in the diplomat’s Westphalian world of nation-states and Washington’s federal system. A foreign policy meeting at the White House these days is very likely to have a dozen or more domestic agencies represented, each with its own agenda. I recently reviewed the staffing at several larger embassies in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East as part of prepping the U.S. military to work with our embassies. They were surprised to see how many agencies can be present overseas.

While some agencies have long been part of the Foreign Service family, others are GWOT newcomers, like the many Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice law enforcement entities. These agencies have their own communications channels and legal authorities, and often have many regional responsibilities. And they are a serious problem for the chief of mission, who may not have visibility into, much less control over, their activities.

Diplomatic Security and the Fortress Embassy

When DS Assistant Secretary Taylor explained the global war on terror to the American Bar Association in 2002, after the Taliban had been driven from power in Afghanistan, he said this: “We must also fight terror with every diplomatic, economic, law enforcement and intelligence weapon we have in our arsenal. We are using all these weapons in a coordinated, comprehensive campaign against the terrorist menace.” The fact that GWOT and its whole-of-government approach was articulated by the head of DS should not be lost on anyone. It signaled the ascendance of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, previously focused on protecting embassies and investigating passport/visa fraud, as a policy force at State and ushered in a culture that was inward-looking, preoccupied with security, suspicious of locals and unwilling to take risks.

With GWOT, new terms entered our diplomatic practice lexicon: personal security details (PSDs), bad guys / violent extremist organizations (VEOs), things that blow up (VBIEDs, IEDs, EFPs). Crash-and-bang courses became a part of FACT (Foreign Affairs Counter Threat) pre-deployment to war zones training. DS got funding to build its own counterpart to the Foreign Service Institute on the grounds of a Virginia National Guard base. New embassies were built, often outside city centers, with substantial

Since the Foreign Service personnel pool is more like a puddle, the cost for the Iraq surge was stripping other posts of critical staff.

setbacks, anti-ram barriers, blast-proof walls and layers of local security guards. Diplomats began to operate from fortress chanceries, insulated from the local population, sallying forth only with an RSO-approved security package. American ambassadors, with some exceptions, cannot even drive themselves while in country. The days of informal meetings at cafes and restaurants, or just sauntering among the local people, are rarer than in the past depending on the threat profile of one’s post.

Mission Creep, aka Nation-Building

We Americans are cursed with the belief that our purpose in life is to remake the countries to which we are assigned more like our own. This stems from our post-World War II successes in Germany and Europe at large, Japan and, later, Korea. Once the U.S. military had succeeded in regime change in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, instead of declaring victory and going home, American diplomats went to work on nation-building. In none of the three cited cases did we prepare for this mission; nor did we succeed. In all three, this was mission creep, taken on as a follow-on to consolidate the military’s battlefield successes. And all three cases displayed a failure to take the long view of our core national interests.

Today we are witnessing the lamentations from U.S. diplomats who served in Kabul about how all the good things we did there at great sacrifice of Afghan and American blood, financed with American taxpayer money, are going to be lost with our withdrawal. One should recall that we went to Afghanistan to deal with al-Qaida, not transform the country. The latter is a diplomatic practice that needs to be discontinued.

Similarly, eight years of U.S. military and civilian presence in Iraq with 150,000 troops and, at one point, 25 provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) and a massive USAID effort, left little to brag about. Or take Libya: A well-intentioned effort to avert a massacre of civilians in Benghazi ended up making matters far worse, with a flood of weapons and mercenaries ensconced in Syria and North Africa / Sahel and an American presidential bid derailed by the death of an ambassador.


GWOT's So What?

The most important effect of the 9/11-driven imperative from Washington to take on global terrorism was that we relearned the principal lesson of World War II and the Cold War: Allies matter. The risk today—in a policy context defined by “great power competition” (GPC)—is that we will revert to prioritizing country-specific policies, however well intentioned, without seeing the bigger picture. China sees the big picture. So does the U.S. military’s geographic command structure. One Middle Eastern embassy’s integrated country strategy is no match for Central Command’s theater campaign plan, which sees the region as a whole, not a collection of pieces. And this gives the military the policy high ground.

Second, the hubris of invading Iraq, followed by the well-intentioned but poorly-thought-through intervention in Libya in 2012, badly damaged our international image and led to even more death and destruction than we averted. With international relations, and conflict, conducted at the speed of tweet, public

diplomacy has reemerged (as it was during the Cold War) as our most used, and useful, weapon to combat violent extremist rhetoric. We have to resist the temptation to intervene everywhere, while shifting to a better-coordinated, agile and effective public outreach if we want to prevail.

Third, with GWOT giving way to GPC, American diplomatic practice needs to adopt a more balanced model of multilateral and bilateral foreign policy if it wants to contend with China’s more effective version of “whole of government” diplomacy—namely, the Belt and Road Initiative. Even as we compete and confront China, Iran, North Korea and Russia, we will still have to contend with networks of violent extremist organizations while resisting proliferating demands emanating from American special interest groups for niche policy initiatives that stretch our limited resources and “talent puddle,” diluting a cohesive and coherent diplomatic strategy and practice. An apt adage for this comes to mind: If everything is a priority, then nothing is. ■



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AMERICA AND 9/11

The Real-World Impact of Terrorism and Extremism



In retrospect, 9/11 did not foreshadow the major changes that now drive U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy.

BY ANTHONY H. CORDESMAN



Anthony H. Cordesman is the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. At CSIS, he has been director of the Gulf Net Assessment Project and the Gulf in Transition Study, as well as principal investigator of the CSIS Homeland Defense Project. He served as a consultant to the Departments of State and Defense during the Afghan and Iraq wars. He has had numerous foreign assignments—including posts in Lebanon, Egypt and Iran—and has worked extensively in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. He is the author of more than 50 books, including a four-volume series on the lessons of modern war.

There is no doubt that the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, were one of the most traumatic events in modern U.S. history, and still have a major impact on U.S. perceptions of the risk from terrorism.

At the same time, the United States is today withdrawing from Afghanistan with only limited regard to the consequences, phasing down its small remaining cadre of forces in Iraq and reducing its counterterrorism efforts in most of the rest of the world. The central focus of U.S. strategy has now shifted to competition with China and Russia, adversaries such as North Korea and Iran, and important hostile nonstate actors.

The fear of some form of massive Islamist extremist attacks on the United States and the West has faded, and the focus of U.S. strategy that still deals with terrorism and extremism has shifted to a wide range of relatively small and splintered movements seeking to win power in a number of largely Islamic states.

In fact, from today's vantage point, the events of 9/11, traumatic as they were, amounted to an episode, a "one-off," rather than a new fundamental threat to U.S. national security.

The critical transitions that now affect U.S. national security interests, and the main elements of U.S. strategy, have little to do with terrorism and extremism.

America's "Long Wars" in Perspective

In retrospect, America's "long wars" in Afghanistan and Iraq were never wars against terrorism or extremism, per se. They were instead the result of rather faltering efforts to transform the political and economic system of each country. It is unclear whether letting Afghan factions try to shape a working government or peace after the Taliban was initially defeated would have worked, but it is all too clear from reporting by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, the Lead Inspector General and the World Bank that the U.S. has failed to create a successful, honest or effective Afghan regime and now seems committed to leaving without a credible peace plan.

The U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003 to meet a threat that did not exist and without a plan for what would happen after the fall of Saddam Hussein. As was the case in Afghanistan, it engaged in a haphazard and constantly changing exercise in nation-building. It then left Iraq prematurely in 2011 and seems to be repeating the process there in 2021. It has fought two major wars in Iraq—first against Sunni rebels and then against ISIS—without creating a truly functional Iraqi government and a successful pattern of Iraqi development.

The U.S. fight in Afghanistan against the Taliban has been guerrilla and irregular warfare, rather than counterterrorism. Its fight against Islamic elements in the first war in Iraq was, again, more a war against hostile factions than against terrorism or extremism; and its second war in Iraq was fought against a hard-line Islamic "caliphate" proto state, rather than an extremist or terrorist movement.

Like Vietnam, both were U.S. ground and air wars that attempted with very mixed success to create effective governance and nation-building. They, too, are likely to be seen as expensive failures. While the U.S. has never issued a credible official estimate of the full civil and military costs of both wars, these costs clearly exceeded a total of \$2 trillion dollars—and estimates by Brown University put the cost as high as \$6.4 trillion.

Ironically, as any close reading of the State Department coun-

try reports on terrorism will show, the real U.S. successes in fighting terrorism came from much lower-level efforts to help other countries create effective national counterterrorism forces, and from supporting international agreements and bodies designed to fight terrorism. In fact, diplomacy and more routine efforts at security assistance had far more success than the two vast expenditures on warfighting.

As for the broader patterns in global terrorism since 2001, they have scarcely been dominated by Islamic extremism. They have instead been characterized by state terrorism and the violent repression of legitimate civil unrest on the part of secular regimes such as Syria, China, Iran, North Korea and, now, Myanmar.

Syria is a particularly grim example. While casualty estimates differ, most United Nations and nongovernmental organization estimates of the number of civilians that the Assad regime and its supporters alone have killed, injured or made into refugees since 2011 exceeds the casualty number for all of the world's nonstate extremist or terrorist movements since 2001. The same seems true of nonstate actors who have sought to seize power in various states, most of which have not been hard-core Islamist movements.

Broader Directions in U.S. Strategy

As for the broader directions in strategy and national security efforts, one of the few areas of consensus in a deeply partisan United States is a general agreement that U.S. strategy must shift back toward deterring and competing with secular major powers and "rogue" states. Moreover, though with notably less consensus, the focus on terrorist and extremist threats to the U.S. is largely on domestic and secular movements; and the primary defense against this domestic threat is the FBI and state and local law enforcement—not foreign policy, military action, security assistance or the Department of Homeland Security.

The critical transitions that now affect U.S. national security interests, and the main elements of U.S. strategy, have little to do with terrorism and extremism. As both the Trump and Biden defense budgets and national strategy show, the primary threats the U.S. and its strategic partners now focus on are regimes such as China, Russia, North Korea and Iran.

The optimistic hopes of the 1990s have largely vanished. Russia has not evolved as a democracy or a partner, but has rather become a revived authoritarian challenge led by Vladimir Putin. Progress in nuclear arms control may not have failed but has certainly faltered; and nuclear forces are again making radical improvements, along with the rise of hypersonic and precision conventional strike capability. Russian regular military forces,

mercenaries and “little green men” have been active in Georgia, Ukraine, Syria, Libya and the Mediterranean, and pose a gray zone threat that is real even if it is one of a very different kind.

China’s potential for reform has given way to Xi Jinping and a massive military buildup and efforts to compete on a global level. The South China Sea may have at least partially replaced the Middle East—and certainly any form of terrorism—as the key threat for U.S. strategic and military planning. As the Fiscal Year 2022 defense budget proposal shows all too clearly, the funds for counterterrorism and counterextremism have shrunk to very low levels by defense spending standards, and China and Russia have become the key focus.

As for other powers and threats, North Korea is a nuclear power, and Iran’s nuclear status is unclear. Some 70 years after the Korean War, North Korea is more of a threat than at any time since the cease-fire. Iran has now been hostile for nearly half a century, and the net impact of U.S. security efforts and sanctions has been the continuation of a hard-line regime that has now developed major links to Hezbollah in Lebanon, Assad in Syria and important elements in Iraq and Yemen.

Planning for deterrence and warfighting in these conflicts involves many elements of irregular warfare by state and nonstate actors, but extremist and terrorist groups are comparatively minor players. Moreover, warfighting and deterrence are undergoing radical change in all of the world’s major military powers. Joint all-domain warfare, long-range precision conventional strike capabilities, other forms of precision strike systems and new military efforts in space, cyber and artificial intelligence are all making major changes in the character of military forces.

Irregular and “gray zone” warfare, the role and manipulation of nonstate actors, and civil wars are also significant ongoing threats. In most cases, however, these threats are not dominated by terrorists or extremists. They are dominated by factions and regimes that pursue irregular warfare because it is their best option for competing with the more conventional military resources of larger and more developed powers like the United States. Here, the U.S. also faces threats from nations like China that so far seem to compete more effectively on a civil-military level. Here the U.S. needs to focus more on Sun Tzu than Clausewitz.



In Barwana, Iraq, Marines search a house for insurgents, weapons caches and explosives during a patrol on June 16, 2006.

ROE SEIGLE / WIKIMEDIA

America’s “long wars” in Afghanistan and Iraq were never wars against terrorism or extremism per se.

Hopes for Global Unity

More broadly, the United States must now deal with the near collapse of hopes for the kind of “globalism” that would unite the world and a shift to stable, functional democracies that would mark the “end of history.” Potential models of global unity such as the European Union have not only lost a key country like Britain, but have also seen several Eastern European states shift away from democracy. U.S. efforts to forge a Trans-Pacific Partnership have ended up benefitting China. And, for at least the last four years, the U.S. focus on burden sharing, gaining economic advantage and avoiding issues such as climate change made the country more of a “nationalist” entity than any form of “globalist.”

Efforts such as those of the World Bank to assess the quality of governance, the “Fragile States Index,” the U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights, the U.N. demographic estimates and Human Development Indicators, and Transparency International’s corruption ratings all highlight the growing number of nations that face serious internal divisions, domestic economic challenges and have failed or corrupt governance. Some countries have made real progress, but these indices show that more states have declined in capability than gained. Moreover, the hopes for change triggered by various political upheavals—especially broader upheavals like the “Arab Spring”—have instead led to a world in which many governments pose a broader

One of the ironies of the so-called war on terrorism is that it focused on treating the symptoms of failed or “fragile” states, not the causes of their violence and unrest.

threat to their own people than Islamist extremist and terrorist movements do.

So far, the United States has done little to address these problems and the mix of civil and security challenges that drive them. One of the ironies of the so-called war on terrorism is that it focused on treating the symptoms of failed or “fragile” states, not the causes of their violence and unrest. The U.S. did initially put serious resources into nation-building in Afghanistan and

Iraq, but such efforts faded to minimal levels as military spending dominated. The United States is still a key source of humanitarian aid and seems to have renewed its focus on human rights, but its response to the lasting problems in governance and development remains minimal.

None of this means the United States will not face real threats from terrorism and hard-core extremist movements in the future. An open and democratic society will always be vulnerable in some ways, as recent cyberattacks on U.S. agencies and companies have made all too clear.

In retrospect, however, the trauma of 9/11 was more an incident than a major shift in the threat to the United States, and it was not a harbinger of the major changes that now drive U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy. It also seems all too likely that America’s long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—like the war in Vietnam—will be judged as failed and expensive side shows, gross overcommitments of resources to achieve limited objectives that ended in failure. ■



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The Proper Measure of the Place

REFLECTIONS ON THE AFGHAN MISSION

Drawing from two tours, a decade apart, a veteran diplomat explores the competing visions for Afghanistan.

BY KEITH W. MINES



*Keith W. Mines retired from the State Department Foreign Service in 2019 after a career including tours in Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. He was interim economic counselor in Kabul in 2002 and consul general in Mazar-e Sharif from 2012 to 2013. His book *Why Nation-Building Matters* (University of Nebraska Press, 2020; discount code 6AS20) recounts these experiences, along with seven other conflicts in Colombia, Grenada, El Salvador, Haiti, Somalia, Iraq and Darfur.*

In his account of travels in Afghanistan in 1984 during the civil war against the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul, British travel writer and novelist Jason Elliot describes being “captive of an unexpected light,” entering a world “in some way enchanted, for which we lacked the proper measure.”

“Enchanted” is not a word one often associates with Afghanistan, but most would agree we have never taken the proper measure of the place. It is a land that has captured the heart of many diplomats and soldiers, smitten by the stunning landscapes and fierce determination of a people who have for centuries watched foreigners arrive to great fanfare with their “national interest,” only to leave sooner or later in frustration.

The United States went through this cycle in 1989, when it turned its attention away from Afghanistan after building up the mujahideen resistance to Soviet occupation. As a new cycle of abandonment and self-doubt is upon us, a flood of questions descends, starting with “How did it come to this?”

Kanishka and Arif: A Clash of Visions

Within a month of my arrival in Kabul in the spring of 2002 as interim economic counselor, I met a Pashtun from Paktika province in the Loya Jirga (general assembly). Mohammed Arif was in his early 40s, tall and slender, with hands that evinced a life of farming, fighting and prayer. He still had a crumpled ID card from the fight against the Soviets that described him as a “model jihadi fighter.”



A USAID-funded midwife graduation ceremony in Sheberghan, a city in Jawzjan province of Afghanistan, in December 2012.

the first time in decades, the Afghan nation, represented by 1,700 delegates from every part of the country and every slice of society, came together with vital international support for 10 days to accuse, hope, rant, plan, commiserate and select their new government. With the immediate humanitarian crisis over, Afghans were streaming home from exile. Everyone, it seemed, had something to sell or harvest or build.

Looming over these successes, though, were the seeds of the unraveling. The Taliban was not allowed representation in the Loya Jirga; the Pashtuns were frustrated with their relative lack of power; the

periphery of the country continued to function with near total autonomy; unstructured aid flows led to corruption and distortions in the economy; and the larger conflict between a modern vision and a traditional one was not resolved.

Nation-Builders and Sheriffs: Afghanistan as Partner or Platform?

These competing visions of Afghanistan, we soon learned, would be caught up in an equally fraught contest between two tribes in the United States. On the one side were the nation-builders, who concluded after diverse experiences, most recently in the Balkans, that the only way to guarantee American security interests in a country as shattered as Afghanistan was by reestablishing all the functions of the state while facilitating a process for the Afghan people to cohere around a vision for their nation.

Ambassadors James Dobbins and Ryan Crocker were reflective of this tribe, arguing for a robust peacekeeping mission, a rapid buildup of the security forces and a reset of the moribund economy. The nation-builders were a minority tribe that had no vote and little voice.

The tribe in power was the sheriffs. Their vision was that when America is threatened, the sheriff will put on his badge, pick up his six-shooter and round up a posse. The posse will seek and find the outlaws, kill some, jail others and return home. The late Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was a sheriff by disposition, as was then–Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. This tribe was bolstered politically by campaign rhetoric about not “using the military to escort little girls to school” and by eschewing any cooperation with the United Nations or even other allies.

Arif was open to a relationship with foreigners, but at one point stated clearly that there were limits to what his people would accept, especially if the foreigners sided with the “Panjshiris”—his name for the Northern Alliance. Fighting was clearly always an early option to preserve his vision of a traditionalist Afghanistan.

One evening after the Jirga deliberations, I invited Arif to an embassy photo exhibit on the 9/11 attacks at the National Gallery in Kabul, a way to raise awareness of what brought America to Afghanistan in the first place. My translator at the time provided a stark contrast in the range of Afghan society. Kanishka Bakhshi, a Tajik, spoke fluent English and had been a translator for CNN before coming to work for the embassy.

Kanishka sought an Afghanistan in which his very spirited wife and young daughter would have opportunities for education and a profession. He was comfortable with foreigners and hopeful and bold about the future, and just as willing as Arif to take risks for his vision; several years later he was almost killed in a terrorist attack.

As we encountered the exhibit together, I realized we Americans had inserted ourselves between two worlds: one seeking a progressive modern existence for the country and one determined to impose a narrow version of tradition. And it was a complex struggle, not one that could be comfortably divided between regions or tribes; in many cases it was a raw fight for power. The Taliban would give military expression to the traditionalists, but they were hardly the only ones involved. As the struggle ground on for decades, it came to encompass technocrats vs. warlords, youth vs. elders, the periphery vs. the center, insular Islamist vs. pluralistic multiculturalists, militias vs. the army—and, significantly, the Taliban vs. the flawed democratic state.

The contest played out initially in the Loya Jirga itself. For

The Noh Gumbad Mosque restoration project, shown in April 2013, in Balkh province was funded by the U.S. embassy.

The embassy was at this time building up to receive the dozens of new staff needed to manage U.S. interests. But already our attention was drifting. Like many of my colleagues, I would be in Iraq nine months later.

For a decade the sheriffs and nation-builders vied for primacy in U.S. policy, with Afghanistan at times treated like a partner and at others used as a platform. After the willful neglect of the post-2002 period led to whole swaths of the country falling to Taliban control, the U.S. and NATO adopted more of a nation-building model starting in 2006, with a surge in forces that by 2009 totaled 100,000. Diplomats, agricultural advisers and aid workers conducted their own surge, increasing from 340 in 2008 to more than 1,300 in 2012, many working on provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) across the country with their military and NATO colleagues. PRTs were led by a military contingent providing security and mentoring local security forces while their civilian counterparts carried out development and agricultural assistance, institution building and local engagement, and political and economic reporting.

The Afghans could do little more than hold on to the roller coaster we had strapped them to, realizing that the seat belt did not unbuckle until the end of the ride.

Warlords and Youth: A Decade of Progress

I returned to Afghanistan as consul general in Mazar-e Sharif in the spring of 2012, the peak of “expeditionary diplomacy,” to manage U.S. efforts across the nine provinces of northern Afghanistan. Ambassador Crocker had returned, as well, structuring our presence around four regional consulates in Herat, Mazar, Kandahar and Jalalabad.

Frustrated by the persistent complaint that we had not done enough, we produced a fact sheet on the country’s progress over the last decade: four democratic elections; Afghanistan’s first two appearances in the Olympics in 20 years, with its first two medals ever; telephone use from 1 million to 12 million; a tripling of access to electricity; education from a million boys and zero girls to 5.4 million boys and 3 million girls; and a wheat harvest that went from 2 million to 3.8 million metric tons a year.

It was, by any measure of human progress, extraordinary. And yet it was all very tenuous, and it was matched on the negative side by persistently high levels of violence, a grinding political



KEITH NINES

We Americans had inserted ourselves between two worlds: one seeking a progressive modern existence for the country and one determined to impose a narrow version of tradition.

instability born in large measure of corruption that included high levels of drug trafficking, and structural dependence on outside funding and support. Significantly, the struggle for political primacy between the Pashtuns and Panjshiris, and for cultural primacy between traditionalists and moderns, remained unresolved.

During my travels to each of the nine provinces, I always visited the local university and met with youth, who as part of the Afghan university network came from all over the country, a natural mixing pot of ethnic groups and social classes. The students were bright, hopeful and determined, often traveling at great personal and family cost to attend school. In one encounter we tried to explain the U.S. electoral system, which they found both baffling and encouraging; certainly their much simpler system, they thought, would one day yield a good outcome. Afghans’ determination to pursue an education was not new, but it was something that finally found expression.

We also spent a good deal of time with the power brokers and warlords who had controlled the country for the past decades, generally with ruinous results. In one engagement I spent a day



GETTY IMAGES/NATALIE BEHRING

The 2002 Loya Jirga brought together 1,700 Afghans from all parts of the country for 10 days of deliberation to choose a new government. Inset: Hamid Karzai, at right, was chosen president.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

at the compound of General Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek commander who had led the key forces that collapsed the Taliban in 2001. Dostum retained a brutal but effective control in parts of the north but was convincing in his assertion that the “new AK” (or Kalashnikov) for the Afghan family was the voting card, promising that going forward he would put his efforts into developing an effective electoral strategy, not marshalling fighters.

I mused in a cable about a “post-warlord” society. But, like the Taliban and other ethnic leaders, Dostum had a very difficult time giving up the raw expression of power he had been accustomed to and continued to hold an absolute lock on the Uzbek voting bloc. The youth would have to wait until his generation faded from the scene.

The Kabul Museum and Noh Gumbad

During my first tour, Kanishka and I visited the Kabul Museum, which had suffered the depredations of the Taliban against anything that smacked of religious pluralism or celebrated the country’s multiethnic heritage. The curator had heroically tried to preserve as many of the objects as possible, with boxes full of the crushed pieces of statues and a showcase full of the shredded canvas of paintings. He had built a false wall to hide the films from Afghanistan’s once-active movie industry.

A decade later, one of our quiet projects in the north was the restoration of the Noh Gumbad Mosque, Afghanistan’s oldest religious building, dating to the 9th century CE. It was a beautiful structure, laced with wonderful stonework and a graceful architecture, but what remained was in danger of collapse and it was deteriorating quickly. Our funding, along with other donations, allowed the Aga Khan Foundation to save the mosque and recover this piece of Afghanistan’s heritage.

The contrast between these two experiences hit hard on a soul-crushing day in April 2013, when we received word that Foreign Service Officer Anne Smedinghoff (my former intern) had been killed in Zabul province along with six others while traveling to a school for a book donation. By then cynicism had set in, many expressing doubt that the Afghanistan mission could have ever been worth the life of a young diplomat or soldier. Even our measure of time was affected by pessimism; a decade had somehow become “forever.”

But to many of us on the ground, it was the continuation of the struggle that had been going on for decades, a struggle, as I wrote home at the time, “between two competing models for civilization—one violent, ignorant, depraved; the other enlightened, hopeful, just. Where one kills educators and those who support them, there one will also kill the future; where one destroys millennia-old cultural monuments, there one will also destroy cities.”

By the time I left, five of our PRTs were closed and “transition” was the order of the day. Policymakers had never been honest about the length of time required for political consolidation in a broken state, so the mission—even at a time when casualties were extremely low—was to withdraw, a long process that has now reached its natural conclusion.

I wrote in a 2013 cable of the ambivalence many of us felt: “It is debatable whether Afghanistan will ever be a fully functional, inclusive country; it is simply hard work to pull a medieval country into the modern age. But it is nearly guaranteed to fail without our continued focus and resources.”

The Afghan mission was always cursed with a blinding self-doubt and persistent impatience. As the late Ambassador Lawrence Pezullo told *The New York Times* in 1981: “We’re a developed nation that is accustomed to quick answers because we produce quick answers in almost every other area. But when you throw yourselves into a revolution, there are no quick answers.”

Several thousand diplomats have now served in Afghanistan. For most, the experience will turn bittersweet as it is increasingly difficult to see the future portending anything other than yet another civil war. Few could have done more than they did. But with or without us, the struggle between Afghanistan’s competing visions will go on, and the Afghan people, tenacious to a fault, will continue to fight for the future they believe in. As in so many other parts of the world, on a tightly globalized planet there is no guarantee that we won’t once again be drawn in. If you still have your Dari-language CDs, you might want to hold on to them. ■

INTERVENTION

Unlearned Lessons, or the Gripes of a Professional

The State Department's failure to effectively staff and run interventions requiring close civil-military cooperation in the field has a long history. Four critical lessons can be drawn from the post-9/11 experience.

BY RONALD E. NEUMANN



Now president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, Ronald E. Neumann was a 37-year career FSO who served in Senegal, Iran, Yemen and Iraq. He was ambassador to Algeria, Bahrain and Afghanistan. Before joining the Foreign Service, he was an infantry officer in Vietnam.

Iraq and Afghanistan were the latest in a 170-year history of American and State Department failure to figure out how to staff and run State's part of military interventions. For the curious, I date State's failure from 1848, when the department could not fill the U.S. Army's request to send diplomats to help the Army manage civil affairs in conquered Mexican territory. Providing diplomatic personnel remained a problem in the latter half of the 20th century when every administration since President Harry Truman's had foreign interventions that required diplomatic assistance. Nadia Schadlow has told much of this story in her book, *War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Combat Success into Political Victory* (Georgetown University Press, 2017).

The staffing problem is an example of the persistent unwillingness to learn from our own past. I have lived some of the latest chapters of this story while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The difficulties in staffing interventions are many, but the underlying issue is that every intervention has been treated as a unique occurrence, often better forgotten than studied. Yet with more than 70 years of repeated military interventions requiring close civil-military operations in the field since the close of World War II, it is plainly unreasonable to assume that "never again" is a sufficient response.

The literature on stabilization is now extensive. It is not my purpose to try to summarize it all in a short article. Rather, I would like to reflect on a few large lessons that seem to me critical, drawn primarily from the post-9/11 years but reaching back also to my first experience of war in Vietnam and fairly extensive reading and study over the half-century that I have lived with, watched and sometimes tried to grapple with these issues.

Out of many lessons worth discussing, four stand out to me. One is the lack of tours of duty sufficient to master problems. Second is the confusion of policy with implementation. Third is the intellectual arrogance that Americans bring to critical policy-making. And fourth is the need for the State Department to find a dependable mechanism for surging staff in a crisis.

Tour Lengths: Undermining Effectiveness

The problems of tour lengths bedeviled both the military and the civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan. I arrived in Afghanistan in the summer of 2005. Within months, most of the U.S. Embassy Kabul staff had turned over: It was the equivalent of an institutional frontal lobotomy that was repeated yearly. That this was scarcely a new problem is illustrated by the scathing comment attributed to John Paul Vann, the USAID deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) in Vietnam: that we didn't have 12 years' experience, we had one year's experience 12 times.

Some people do extend or return for additional tours, but the overall result of our practice is that few are knowledgeable or effective until well into their tours, by which time they are starting to think about an onward assignment. In *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), Professor Lise Morjé Howard identifies the lessons that made for effective United Nations missions. One of her fundamental points is the need to develop a "learning culture"—a deep understanding of the political and social factors that need to be taken into account to make progress in complex interventions. Developing such a learning culture takes time. It is not compatible with the rapid replacement of staff. The few who do develop deep knowledge find themselves repeatedly fighting uphill battles to explain, particularly to Washington, how what they have learned needs to be considered in the formulation of new policies.

This problem is exacerbated by the difficulty of using failure as a basis for learning. In the United States, some 30 percent of startups fail within two years, and the rate is higher in the first year. In business, there is a rich body of study about why businesses fail and what can be learned from failure. But in our bureaucratic culture, failure is usually condemned, and failed

projects are abandoned rather than studied to learn how to improve. The fear of failure and the resulting criticism, especially from Congress, leads particularly to two unfortunate results.

One is the adoption of extensive provisions for design and oversight to try to prevent failure, which in turn make it slow and difficult to experiment. Yet when we plunge into chaotic situations, as we did in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is little time to sit back and study issues before making decisions. Something must be done. Decisions must be made, and it is inevitable that some of the decisions will turn out poorly. The need is often for rapid experimentation and adjustment as lessons are learned; but that is not the way we operate. Second, the fear of criticism creates a bureaucratic reflex to defend projects and policies rather than to identify problems and make adjustments.

Confusing Policy with Implementation

These problems are reinforced by our propensity to confuse policy with implementation. Of course, sometimes policy does need changing. But often the policy isn't the problem; it's how we're trying to implement it. Consider a hypothetical example. One could have a policy of using local tribesmen to secure roads. One could pick good leaders, reinforce them when attacked, and the result would be more secure roads and better trust between the tribal leaders and the government that supports them. Or one could find that the leaders were corrupt, money was stolen, and arms were used to repress rivals. Little security would be achieved, and the result would be failure. Yet the policy was the same.

All too often, however, our reaction to failure is to throw out the policy without studying whether the problem lies there, or in implementation. The result is a great deal of wasted time and little learning. One real-world example comes from the late Ambassador Richard Holbrooke's decision to redo the justice program in Afghanistan. Without a doubt, the program had problems. Holbrooke's answer was to stop the program cold so that it could be redesigned. The executing contractor demobilized, let go of staff, got rid of equipment and gave up office space.

It took about a year until USAID, after several efforts, got Holbrooke to approve a new concept and was able to rebid new contracts, one of which was won by the same contractor who had previously demobilized. During that year, nothing was accomplished. I believe that focusing on and fixing specific problems would have been far more effective than the stop-and-start process we followed. This is but a micro example of the cost of not understanding that the hard work is often in policy execution.

All too often, our reaction to failure is to throw out the policy without studying whether the problem lies there, or in implementation.

Sometimes policy does need to change. Getting this right is definitely hindered by an intellectual arrogance that designs foreign policy with no regard for foreigners. The result is a policy that cannot be executed successfully. Two examples across time illustrate the point. The first is from Vietnam, where one U.S. policy decision after another failed because of the inability to understand the local conditions. Speaking of one set of recommendations to Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem, William

Colby, a CIA official who spent 15 years involved with Vietnam, wrote: “We defined the necessary psychological shock in terms totally counter to Diem’s personality and the realities of the Vietnamese power structure and society.”

As Colby ruefully noted: “The conviction [was] widespread among the Americans that the failures of the various American formulas for success in Vietnam could be due only to the unwillingness or inability of the Vietnamese to perceive their validity—indeed, their brilliance—and then apply them as indicated.”

Intellectual Arrogance

Fifty years later, a similar disregard for understanding a foreign leader was evident in one element of President Barack Obama’s decision for how America would manage the Afghan war. One of the goals of the military surge decided on in 2009 was to stabilize important areas of Afghanistan. Washington’s combination of arrogance and ignorance jumped out at me from the strategy memo, attributed to President Obama him-



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self, addressing how to strengthen subnational governance and counter corruption. In considering how to accomplish this with the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, the memo says the work will be done “working with Karzai where we can, working around him when we must.”

This approach was absurdly unrealistic, but it was often followed in the field. Visiting military teams scattered about Afghanistan in 2010, I frequently found Americans depicting the Kabul government as irrelevant to their operations. They had the money and the power in the field, and they would establish the policies they thought best. In many conversations, I tried to point out that this would not work because President Karzai had the ultimate power to hire and fire provincial officials. He would use that power when he felt the foreigners were going too far in undermining him.

Further, Karzai was engaged in a complicated game of political maneuvering to keep various competing Afghan political leaders and tribes under his control and to prevent others from becoming too strong. A local governor might be incredibly corrupt, inefficient or both; but if he was in place for a political purpose Karzai deemed essential, Karzai would retain that official. In this case, as in so many others, Kabul politics trumped policies made in Washington. Today, little remains from an incredible amount of work by military and civilian teams in the districts of Afghanistan.

Clearly, some policymakers have avoided the tendency to conceptualize policy without regard to the ground reality. Former Secretary of State James Baker was noteworthy for his ability to listen to others closely enough to understand how to close a deal. And it is the realistic perception of how to work with foreigners that is one of the strongest attributes of good diplomats, if our leaders will only make use of it.

A Mechanism for Surging Staff

Of the lessons unlearned despite repeated examples, the most glaring involves the State Department’s inability to surge staff, the failure with which this essay began. America’s diplomats are fully deployed. There is no reserve, nor even an excess over positions to allow for much long-term training. Then, when emergencies arise that need large increases in staff in the field, State will have to augment its personnel.

This problem has come up over and over. With the possible exception of President Donald Trump, who added military personnel to existing interventions but didn’t start a new one, every administration since Truman’s has undertaken foreign interventions. The usual conclusion is that we won’t do it again, so we

It is the realistic perception of how to work with foreigners that is one of the strongest attributes of good diplomats, if our leaders will only make use of it.

don’t need to learn anything from the experience or prepare for the next one—and then we do it again.

Even in the overlapping Afghanistan and Iraq wars few lessons were imported from one theater to another. A single example is the history of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). Despite these having begun in Afghanistan several years before PRTs were initially fielded in Iraq, virtually no effort was made to import lessons learned from one war to the other. The initial problems of staffing, organization and support in Iraq were generally treated as new problems with new efforts at solution uninformed by reflection on what had worked or not worked in Afghanistan.

When the Afghan and Iraq staffing surges ended, there was no effort to study either the problems or successes of the efforts to field large numbers of civilians. The so-called 3161 mechanism (named after the section of law that provided the hiring authority) produced some very gifted and talented officers, and some who had to be sent back as unfit. The length of time needed to hire staff varied widely, with some moving quickly to deployment and others waiting months to be hired. There is a certain amount of legend about the causes of problems, but no systematic study has been done to identify ways to improve the process should the need arise again.

State’s one major effort to provide a contingency mechanism, the creation of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), now transformed into the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, has gone through repeated changes of mission and organization without settling on clear goals. The reasons for this are many and outside the focus of this article, but the bottom line is that State still lacks a clear organizational model for how to staff interventions.

The two decades since 9/11 have brought many changes in the world and in the practice of diplomacy. We will manage the challenges of the changes better if we study and learn from the past. Considering the examples above, we have some way to go. ■

9/11, War on Terror, Iraq and Afghanistan

From the FSJ Archive



Outpourings of Sympathy and Support

The outpourings of sympathy, condolence and support were immediate and widespread. The president issued a strong letter and declared a day of mourning during which all flags in the country were flown at half-mast. Countless government officials and Ghanaians

from all walks of life phoned, faxed and mailed in messages of sympathy. The American Chamber of Commerce organized a memorial service at which two local youth groups—a choir and an orchestra—performed.

Although there have been no demonstrations, editorial comment has been universally sympathetic, while urging the United States to temper any tendency to react emotionally, to act multilaterally rather than unilaterally and to avoid actions that could inflame Christian-Muslim tension. Much concern has been expressed about the impact on developing nations' access to credit and development assistance.

—Brooks A. Robinson, FSO, Embassy Accra, in Part I of a compilation, “FSOs and FSNs Recall 9/11,” in the November 2001 FSJ.



Iraq PRTs: Pins on a Map

Bob Pope sums up the Iraq PRT program this way: “The PRT concept is both too early and too late—too early because you can’t do development and institution-building in live-fire zones and too late because, four years into this war, it’s way past the time when we have any hope of winning the hearts and minds of the

Iraqis. They have been disappointed too many times to believe much of what we say. After hundreds of millions, if not billions, spent on a laundry list of projects, most Iraqis still don’t have

potable water, reliable electrical service, operational sewer systems, jobs, a functioning economy or, most important, personal security. Building a few more wells and creating a few more short-term cleanup projects will not impress these people.” ...

Unarmed diplomats flanked by armed personnel on military teams in active combat zones, outside of an embassy structure, in the Iraqi provinces—these may be the faces of the “expeditionary Foreign Service” that is called for by Secretary Rice. But while the Foreign Service is expected to “step up” and serve in Iraq, they should, in turn, be able to expect to be sent only to places where they can actually do their jobs and meet with key interlocutors, where there is a chance that they can play an effective, meaningful role. They should be able to expect that they will not be used simply as “pins on a map” for PowerPoint presentations back in Washington.

—Shawn Dorman, FSJ editor and former FSO, from her article of the same title in the March 2007 FSJ.

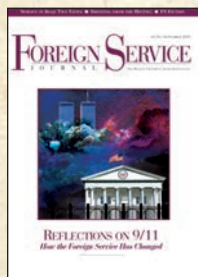


Salvaging the Afghanistan Venture

Afghanistan remains a victim of international intervention that has empowered some of the worst elements of society and trapped its people in a foreign-made political system that ignores their history, tradition and political realities.

While some of this intervention has been well meaning, much of it has been self-serving, reflecting the national ambitions and interests of other countries. Afghanistan was the first victim of Taliban misrule and al-Qaida brutality. It deserves another chance in a new political system mandated by a traditionally organized loya jirga that reflects the nation’s history and reality and is perceived by Afghans as legitimate.

—Edmund McWilliams, FSO (ret.), from his article of the same title in the July-August 2008 FSJ.



Life Choices Shaped by That Day

On Sept. 11, 2001, I was a blond-haired, green-eyed, slightly naïve college student from a small town in southern California who knew very little about Afghanistan and even less about al-Qaida. The events of that day irrevocably altered the shape of my dreams and the course of my life.

I was fortunate enough not to lose any loved ones in the attacks, but the force of the change in my perception of the world blew the doors of my cozy, safe, insular world wide open and brought with it the realization that nothing would ever be the same again. For those of us who became adults post-9/11, our life choices have been indelibly shaped by that day.

I eventually joined the Foreign Service and, when bidding on my second tour, readily volunteered for service in Afghanistan. I will spend the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks posted to Kabul as an assistant information officer in the public affairs section.

The story of Afghanistan over the past few decades has been saturated in blood and punctuated by displacement and destruction. I hope that our work here will ensure that the next chapter is one of hope, reconstruction and reconciliation.

—Erin Rattazzi, FSO, Embassy Kabul, from her note in the compilation, *“The Foreign Service a Decade After 9/11,”* in the September 2011 FSJ.



The Dust of Kandahar

It was the youth of those around us that was so striking. One lieutenant who directed my security on several trips to Kandahar had only recently graduated from West Point. One private seemed so young that I was tempted to ask him: “Do you have a note from your parents giving you permission to participate in this war?”

As the senior civilian representative for the U.S. embassy in southern Afghanistan from August 2012 until August 2013, I covered four provinces with a collective population of more than three million people, scattered over an area the size of Kentucky or South Korea that was mostly desert.

Our efforts at outreach followed in the footsteps of those who preceded us. But now, more than a decade after we had helped Afghans overthrow the Taliban, our task had evolved to paving the way for our own pending departure while dispelling any

sense of “abandonment.” We told our local contacts that it was now time for them to write their own narrative and achieve their nation’s destiny.

Five of us flew up early that morning to meet our civilian colleagues on the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team, discuss education issues with Governor Naseri and visit a local school. ... Anne Smedinghoff was only 25, young for an FSO who was already well into her second overseas assignment.

We talked briefly on the tarmac as we waited for our helicopter against the early morning sun, the sky a perfect blue. This was Anne’s first trip to Kandahar. ... She mentioned that during a recent vacation, she had cycled across Jordan. I also chatted with my translator, Nasemi, who was supporting a large extended family stretching from New York to New Zealand.

Within hours both Anne and Nasemi were dead. Two other civilian State Department employees—Abbasi ... and Kelly Hunt ...—were injured, Kelly critically. Three soldiers walking beside us were also killed that day: Staff Sergeant Christopher Ward ... Sergeant Delfin Santos ... and Corporal Wilbel Robles-Santa. All three were born in 1988. ...

Not a day goes by when I don’t relive what happened on that cloudless morning, recalling every moment as it unfolded, reliving endlessly what might have been. ...

The next day I attended the ramp ceremony for my colleagues, accompanying their remains on the long journey home. We started with five flag-draped aluminum boxes in Kandahar and added four more in Bagram, bringing the American death toll for that day to nine.

Three days later, I returned to Kandahar for the remaining 20 weeks of my tour. But I have never quite left Afghanistan behind, and probably never will.

—Jonathan Addleton, FSO (ret.), from his article of the same title in the October 2015 FSJ.



The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS: A Success Story

Sometimes a truth spoken resonates so organically that it prompts a collective sigh of relief from its listeners—relief that someone has emerged from the crowd to suggest a path forward, allowing us all to shift our footing from collective outrage to collective action. That is the essence of

the story behind U.S. leadership of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

During the first six months of 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq

and Syria ... made a dramatic debut on the world stage by capturing a wide swath of Syria and Iraq. It rolled seemingly without resistance through Fallujah, Raqqa, Tikrit and Mosul, even threatening the gates of Baghdad, before announcing the establishment of a *caliphate* (Islamic state) and declaring Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as *caliph*—the successor to the Prophet Mohammed.

The speed of the advance, the confidence portrayed through their polished media arm, and the stories that emerged about the horrors of life under ISIS and the persecution of innocents shocked and horrified the world. ...

On Sept. 10, 2014, President Obama ... announced “that America will lead a broad coalition to roll back” ISIS. The campaign would seek to “degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy.”

Concluding his address, President Obama said, “This is American leadership at its best: We stand with people who fight for their own freedom, and we rally other nations on behalf of our common security and common humanity.”

—Pamela Quanrud, *FSO (ret.)*, from her article of the same title in the January-February 2018 FSJ.



The Practice of Leadership at Every Level

A huge bang with the weight of a freight train bore through the room, throwing me back. The building swayed; I thought I was going to die. I blacked out for a moment, came to and descended the endless flights of stairs with a colleague. Only when we exited the building did I see what had hap-

pened to the embassy. I realized in an instant that no one was going to take care of me, and I had better get to work. ...

I would like to pass on the following advice for those who may become survivors and helpers in the future.

- Get involved in the community and help to grow teams that learn how to do things together. This will be essential in catastrophes and highly satisfying otherwise.
- Be kind to yourself, and be kind to one another.
- Take care of your people—and take care of yourself, too.
- Allow spouses, family and friends to take care of you.
- Seek professional help to stay resilient.
- To help after a crisis, be clear about your mission and adapt to reality.
- Build a bridge between “we” and “they” to create the trust that will make recovery easier.

- Don’t expect this to end any time soon. Catastrophes breed crises, and some go on for years.
- Find meaning in the event—the “treasures among the ashes.”
- Do not depend on the media or our political leaders to keep the story alive or create change; both have short memories.
- Remember, it will get better.

—Prudence Bushnell, *FSO and U.S. ambassador to Kenya*, from her essay of the same title in the compilation, “Reflections on the U.S. Embassy Bombings in Kenya and Tanzania 20 Years Later,” in the July-August 2018 FSJ.

For further related reading, go to these archive editions at www.afsa.org/fsj-archive:

“Are We Losing the War on Terror?” by Philip C. Wilcox Jr., September 2004

“Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Arab Reaction,” by Khaled Abdulkareem, March 2004

“Reality Check in Iraq,” by David L. Mack, March 2005

“Iraq Service and Beyond,” by Shawn Dorman, March 2006

“The Implications of Iraq and Its Impact on the Region,” by Edward Walker, December 2006

FOCUS on “An Uneasy Partnership: The Foreign Service and the Military,” March 2007

“Remembering USAID’s Role in Afghanistan, 1985-1994,” by Thomas H. Eighmy, December 2007

FOCUS on “Slogan or Substance: The Legacy of Transformational Diplomacy,” January 2009

“Counterterrorism: Some Lessons to Consider,” by Alan Berlind, June 2009

“The Diplomat as Counterinsurgent,” by Kurt Amend, September 2009

“Microdiplomacy in Afghanistan,” by Matthew B. Arnold and Dana D. Deree, January 2011

FOCUS on “Reflections on 9/11—How the Foreign Service Has Changed,” September 2011 ■

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

A Nonpartisan Necessity

As old as the United States itself, whistleblowing has protections worth knowing about.

BY ALAIN NORMAN AND RAEKA SAFAI



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Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he worked at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. GAP-related inquiries may be emailed to info@whistleblower.org or to Alain Norman at alainn@whistleblower.org.



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AFSA in 2010, she was an associate at a Washington firm where she represented Foreign Service employees in administrative, civil and criminal matters.

Whistleblowing—and the need to protect those who report misconduct—is as old as the republic itself. In 1777 the Continental Congress passed the first whistleblower protection act. Even today, members of the Foreign Service and other readers of this journal can benefit from “know your rights” information.

As the Government Accountability Project concisely defines it: “Whistleblowers are those who witness wrongdoing in the workplace and decide to speak up to expose serious violations of public trust.” A seminal example of this was when, during our Revolutionary War, American naval officers reported to the Continental Congress that their superior officer was abusing British prisoners—and Congress acted to protect the men who reported the misconduct.

Further, private citizens have been empowered since the 1863 False Claims Act to bring lawsuits on behalf of the federal government when they believe individuals or companies are defrauding Uncle Sam.

Today, the key law for most federal employees is the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, as amended in 2012 by the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act. Readers of the *FSJ* should also see the Foreign Service Act of 1980, Section 105(b)(2)(A).

Protected acts by employees include not only denouncing gross waste or mismanagement, but also filing a grievance or refusing to carry out an order that would require breaking a law

or regulation. As regards disclosures that involve classified information, employees should be particularly careful to use lawful channels, such as their agency's Office of the Inspector General.

How Protections Work

Three general observations about how whistleblower protections work are worth briefly sketching here:

First, whistleblowers are typically required to exhaust "administrative" options or processes before they can go to court. The State Department's OIG provides this guidance: "Federal employees may make a protected disclosure to the Office of Special Counsel, OIG, or another employee designated by the [agency]." Given that federal employees do not have access to courts except for limited review of administrative decisions, Civil Service employees often must first bring their concerns to the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, while Foreign Service employees can avail themselves of the grievance procedures set forth in 3 FAM 4400.

Second, the complaining individual should not worry about having absolute certainty before raising a concern: They need only have a "reasonable belief" that there has been serious wrongdoing—even if it later emerges that the employee was mistaken.

Third, if somebody alleges they are a victim of retaliation—which might include being given a poor performance evaluation, being overlooked for promotion or being harassed in some fashion—for having reported others' misconduct, such a person simply has the burden of establishing a prima facie case of retaliation to have the burden shifted to the employer to prove the absence of retaliation or retaliatory motive.

In short, although U.S. whistleblower law is complex, it delineates a path for people to follow when they believe that waste, fraud or abuse has happened, and the law seeks to help those who might suffer retaliation for doing their duty by reporting misconduct.

Yet people may wonder whether their agency's OIG (or similar office) can handle their cases discreetly. Certainly, it is natural for anyone who wants to blow the whistle to worry about whether their career will be stymied or ended, even if their allegations prove to be correct.

Where Can You Turn?

Given that it may take time and determination to see a whistleblower disclosure to a successful conclusion—and given that, in the meantime, one risks retaliation and/or career damage—the decision to blow the whistle is a very important and sensitive one. Equally, all of us who work (or have worked) in the U.S. govern-

ment know that our principal duty is to serve the American people by preserving and protecting the Constitution. Our natural inclination is, therefore, to want to fight the good fight, including reporting, and pursuing accountability for, misconduct.

To navigate the decision-making process, Foreign Service employees (and other U.S. government employees) can turn to several resources:

American Foreign Service Association. AFSA offers a strong labor-management team that is available for consultation and assistance, as well as a series of guides offering basic information on a wide variety of subjects that are often matters of concern.

Office of the Inspector General. At the Department of State & USAGM, contact the inspector general at WPEAOmbuds@stateoig.gov.

At USAID, contact the inspector general at oigombud@usaid.gov.

At the Foreign Commercial Service, contact the inspector general at wpo@oig.doc.gov.

At the Foreign Agricultural Service & APHIS, contact the inspector general at OIGWPC@oig.usda.gov.

Public Interest Organizations. GAP's publication, *Truth-Telling in Government—Guide to Whistleblowing for Federal Employees, Contractors, and Grantees*, contains a list of several other public-interest organizations that may be able to offer guidance (see bit.ly/GAP-truth-telling).

GAP, unlike most such organizations, can offer legal representation to whistleblowers—such that attorney-client privileges attach—in proceedings, once potential whistleblowers complete an intake process.

AFSA Teams Up with GAP

In the *Journal's* May 2020 issue, AFSA President Eric Rubin underscored the role of AFSA as a "bulwark" for defending members of the Foreign Service across six agencies, in particular against being silenced or becoming "political pawns." So when the opportunity arose, AFSA and GAP teamed up to offer AFSA members a webinar, and now this short primer, on whistleblowing protection processes.

AFSA recognizes that no matter the administration, misconduct that may prompt whistleblowing is a never-ending challenge. At the same time, although whistleblowing will always require courage and perseverance, resources are available to help you navigate the moral, professional and legal issues that arise.

For more information, see the webinar organized by AFSA and the Government Accountability Project in March, available at bit.ly/AFSA-GAP-webinar. ■



DIPLOMATS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The U.S. and Mongolia 1986-1990

In the 1992 FSJ, Ambassador Joe Lake describes setting up the U.S. embassy in Ulaanbaatar. Today he and his son explore how that relationship was built.

BY JOSEPH E. LAKE
AND MICHAEL ALLEN LAKE



Joseph E. Lake is a retired Foreign Service officer who was ambassador to Mongolia from 1990 to 1993. He later served as ambassador to Albania and deputy assistant Secretary for information management.



Michael Allen Lake is a management consultant based in Washington, D.C. He has supported projects with nine different government agencies including the State Department and the Department of Defense. From 1991 to 1992, he worked at Embassy Ulaanbaatar.

*This article is based on an essay by the authors published in *Socialist and Post-Socialist Mongolia: Nation, Identity, and Culture* (Routledge, 2021).*

This is the story of how the United States—with no significant political or strategic interest in Mongolia, but with the strong personal support of Secretary of State James Baker and commitment by American diplomats—was able to build the foundation for a relationship that helped support Mongolia's transition from the world's second-oldest communist country and first Soviet satellite to an enduring

democratic society and free market economy.

In September 1984 Donald C. Johnson, a political officer in U.S. Embassy Beijing, was received officially by the Mongolian Foreign Ministry, the first U.S. official since Vice President Henry A. Wallace in 1944 to be officially received by the Mongolian government. Yet it was another five years before the first permanently assigned American diplomats finally arrived in Ulaanbaatar. As Kenneth Jarrett, the Mongolian desk officer in 1987, wrote to the authors: "The level of interest was moderate ... but there also was not much objection." The U.S. waited for a signal



COURTESY OF JOE LAKE

The first (nonresident) Ambassador to Mongolia Dick Williams presents his credentials in 1988. Flanking him is Davaagiv, later the second Mongolian ambassador to the U.S., to the left, and Mongolian Chief of Protocol Natsagdorj, right. At back, from left, is Steve Mann and Victoria Nuland, members of the first embassy team. Note: At that time, Mongolians used only one name.

from Mongolia; and Ulaanbaatar, from inside the Moscow orbit, waited for an approach from Washington.

It would take the end of the communist regime in March 1990 and Secretary Baker's personal interest and initiative to change the dynamic. In a decision that surprised everyone at the Department of State, including the assistant secretary for East Asia, Baker decided to visit Mongolia in the summer of 1990. He visited in August and again in 1991, while Washington and the world were focused on the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Now 30 years later, in 2021, Mongolia has held its seventh democratic presidential election and peaceful transfer of power, testimony to the commitment of its people and the value of the U.S.-Mongolia tie. In a previous *FSJ* article, "Frontier Embassy" (December 1992), Joe Lake discussed the challenges of setting up the U.S. embassy in Ulaanbaatar in 1990. Here we focus on some of the important players and early events in building that relationship.

A Look Back

Modern Mongolia was created in 1921 with the support of White Russians, but they were soon ousted by the Mongolian People's Party (renamed the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in 1924) with support from the Red Army. In 1924 the Mongolian People's Republic was proclaimed, and its dual roles as the second communist country in the world and the first of the Soviet satellite states were firmly established.

It is important to recall that despite ruling most of Eurasia in the 13th and 14th centuries, for hundreds of years afterward and until 1921 Mongolia did not exist as a modern nation-state but rather as an outer march of the Chinese empire, but not closely tied to the center. This lack of a democratic tradition, coupled with its 20th-century Marxist-Leninist experience, makes the country's post-1990 success an even greater tribute to the Mongolian people and the new society they created.

Because of its close ties with Mongolia as the second communist country and its strategic importance to them, the Soviet



COURTESY OF JOE LAKE

Joseph E. Lake and his wife, Jo Ann Kessler Lake, leave Beijing on the Mongolian branch of the Trans-Siberian railway for Ulaanbaatar in July 1990.

Union dominated Mongolia. Domestic political decisions in Ulaanbaatar were always made with an eye toward Moscow's interests. In the 1930s Stalin's purges were mirrored in Mongolia with the execution of potential opponents and attacks on non-socialist traditional culture. After 1960 the Soviet Union underwrote the bulk of the country's economic development.

The United States expressed episodic interest in normalizing relations with the Central Asian state, only to be foiled by resistance from U.S. allies in Taipei and foes in Moscow. In the early years of the Cold War, American interest in Mongolia was driven mainly by a desire to improve intelligence collection on the Soviet Union. In the 1960s two Foreign Service officers, J. Stapleton Roy and Curtis Kamman, were assigned to the University of Washington in Seattle to learn Mongolian in anticipation of opening a U.S. embassy.

That effort did not succeed, at least partially due to objections from Chiang Kai-Shek in Taipei, whom the U.S. still recognized as the legitimate leader of China. In 1972 the U.S. undertook another effort, sending FSOs William Brown and Allyn Nathanson to study Mongolian at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom. This initiative failed largely due to the Soviets, who objected and, according to the former first deputy foreign minister of Mongolia, D. Yondon, waylaid a message from Ulaanbaatar to the Mongolian negotiators.

A Foundation of Debt and Foreign Assistance

From the outside, looking at official statistics and figures, the Mongolian economy in the 1980s appeared strong, a model of the benefits of the Soviet-style command economy. Yet there were systematic challenges that the government in Ulaanbaatar remained unable to address. As with many communist economies, Mongolia operated under a five-year plan. However, unlike

most of its fellows in the communist world, 60 percent or more of the investment in those five-year plans was financed through foreign loans (primarily from the USSR and the German Democratic Republic).

Thus Mongolia accrued massive amounts of foreign debt to sustain the image of a successful workers' paradise. In 1990 the Department of State estimated that Soviet aid to Mongolia had totaled \$800 million to \$1 billion annually, an excessive amount when you consider that the entire population of Mongolia numbered only 2 million at the time. By 1987 even the Mongolian leadership had begun to express private reservations that this level

of debt was unsustainable. Even at that unsustainable level it was not possible to meet the demands of a growing and increasingly urbanized population; the country experienced ongoing shortages of foodstuffs, consumer goods and housing.

Though Mongolia had been firmly entrenched in Moscow's orbit since the 1920s, those close ties were now threatening its stability. As internal challenges with infrastructure were coming to a head, the situation was also affected by Mikhail Gorbachev's shake-up of the Soviet Union. Mongolia was now experiencing the ripples of glasnost and perestroika.

Given Moscow's history of opposing Mongolian contact with the United States, it was a shock to the Mongolian leadership when, during a January 1986 visit to Ulaanbaatar, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze raised the question of Mongolia establishing relations with the United States. He said the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had reached the conclusion that opening such a dialogue would be in "our common interests." The Reagan administration was unsure how to proceed; some senior officials were pleased with the change, and others opposed it.

Enter the United States

U.S. interest in Mongolia, meanwhile, was limited at best. Washington's understanding of Mongolia was summed up in a declassified October 1984 CIA analysis: "Mongolia's isolation and the limited Western presence there make it difficult to interpret Mongolian politics." In the mid-1980s, senior officials in the U.S. government began to reach out to Mongolia through the embassy in Tokyo. There is confusion about what happened, and this is the focus of ongoing research by the authors. Mongolian observers speak of an American approach made through the U.S. Interests Section in Havana in January 1986, which the Mongo-

lian Foreign Ministry learned about shortly after Shevardnadze's visit. However, the head of the Havana section at the time, Curtis Kamman (one of the two FSOs dispatched to study Mongolian in the 1960s), remembers the conversation differently.

Regardless of these perceived and actual overtures, Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech in July 1986, in which he said that Moscow was willing to withdraw its troops from Mongolia, was a signal that the USSR's willingness to fully support the Mongolian state was waning. Coupled with Shevardnadze's January comment, leaders in Ulaanbaatar saw that change was coming.

Apparently as a result of back-channel efforts by both sides, the U.S. was sufficiently encouraged to seek negotiations through Ambassador Vernon Walters, the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Walters made the approach in August, but reticence continued among some on the Mongolian side. In the fall of 1986, the new deputy assistant Secretary of State responsible for China and Mongolia, J. Stapleton Roy, the other FSO who had studied Mongolian in the 1960s, arrived in Washington.

As Roy recounts in his unpublished oral history interview for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, he "found ... desultory interest" in Washington for establishing diplomatic relations with Mongolia. Not content with this state of affairs, he "gave the issue top priority" and began working to change the negotiating approach. His initiative coincided with the crumbling of resistance among the old guard in Ulaanbaatar. Negotiations were initiated on Dec. 12, 1986, and culminated in a joint signing ceremony on Jan. 27, 1987, in the Department of State—U.N. Ambassador Nyamdoo signing for Ulaanbaatar and Secretary of State George Shultz signing for Washington.

U.S. Diplomats in Mongolia

When the signing ceremony took place, Joe Lake had just gone to work in the Executive Secretariat of the Office of the Secretary. He attended the ceremony out of curiosity, never realizing the impact Mongolia would have on his future. Three years later he would be the first U.S. ambassador resident in Mongolia.

Even though the U.S. now had a formal relationship with Mongolia, few in Washington were interested in building it. Mongolia had spent 66 years in the Soviet orbit and had almost no understanding of how to work with Washington. This was compounded by the fact that there was no strong driving purpose on the American side; Mongolia did not factor into commercial or business considerations, and the U.S. no longer had a national security intelligence collection interest there. Roy, however, pushed the bureaucracy through the China Mongolia desk to open the small embassy on a shoestring budget.

In the early years of the Cold War, American interest in Mongolia was driven mainly by a desire to improve intelligence collection on the Soviet Union.

In March 1988 FSOs Steve Mann and Victoria Nuland arrived in Ulaanbaatar, and shortly thereafter, U.S. Embassy Ulaanbaatar formally opened its doors. Dick Williams arrived to present his credentials in September, but all three Americans soon departed the country because the department did not believe the new embassy was ready for the harsh Mongolian winter.

In his September 1988 report on presentation of his credentials, Williams stated that key factors would "severely constrain" the Mongolia-U.S. relationship "even if the political atmosphere continues to improve." Embassy Ulaanbaatar was now staffed entirely by local employees. Whether the political atmosphere continued to "improve" or not depends on your perspective, but it certainly changed, wildly and unexpectedly.

In June 1989 two new FSOs, Michael Senko and Ted Nist, arrived and reopened the embassy. In December 1989 the embassy reported on a confluence of events including unexpected pro-democracy, anti-Communist Party mass demonstrations by young Mongolians that would produce a new generation of political leaders. The Mongolian government grappled with both the desires of the demonstrators and a changing geopolitical landscape in their relationship with the Soviet Union. The old regime announced its resignation on March 9, 1990, and Mongolia began its struggle to create a new political and economic future.

A Whole New World

The end of communist rule gave impetus to the relationship with the United States. The beginning of 1989 saw the installation of the administration of President George H.W. Bush, and with it, James A. Baker III became U.S. Secretary of State. Baker's interest in Mongolia, which long predated his appointment as Secretary, became crucial for Ulaanbaatar in garnering both U.S. and international support in the challenging years ahead.

On April 19, 1990, U.S. Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard H. Solomon hosted a private lunch for Mongolian Ambassador Nyamdoo to introduce Joseph E. Lake, the not-yet-announced nominee to be the U.S.'s first resident ambassador to Mongolia. Nyamdoo asked Solomon about a

Though Mongolia had been firmly entrenched in Moscow's orbit since the 1920s, those close ties were now threatening its stability.

possible visit to Mongolia by Secretary of State Baker, based on a previous invitation from the Mongolian government.

On May 1, 1990, Mongolia's First Deputy Prime Minister Byambasuren arrived in Washington, where he met with both Secretary Baker and Vice President Dan Quayle. This was the third meeting between senior U.S. and Mongolian officials in a six-month period—a frequency that would have been unheard of for most countries with such a limited relationship with the United States and simply unimaginable over the previous six decades. The visit was the first public indication that Baker was the driving force on the U.S. side. The extent of the Secretary's interest still had not registered with most elements of the U.S. government, including within the State Department.

A few weeks after the meeting, Baker announced that he would visit Mongolia in the late summer. The immediate result was the acceleration of negotiations for a Peace Corps agreement and the confirmation process for the first resident ambassador. In a telling indication of the department's lackadaisical attitude toward Mongolia, a May 7, 1990, cable announced the nomination of Joseph E. Lake as "Ambassador to Micronesia." Questioned by Embassy Ulaanbaatar, Protocol sent a second, corrected cable. Lake was confirmed on June 22 and arrived in Ulaanbaatar on July 13. On July 20, it was announced that Secretary Baker would be visiting Mongolia on Aug. 2. This was the beginning of the challenge to energize a disinterested Washington bureaucracy. The Mongolians were beginning to get the attention they needed to build a sustained relationship with the United States.

Unfortunately, Baker's visit to Mongolia was cut short. As the Secretary's plane was preparing to land, his party received word that Saddam Hussein had invaded Kuwait. The plane circled while Baker's staff got up to speed on what was happening in the Middle East, leading to a confused reaction on the ground. When it finally landed, both the Mongolian government and the embassy staff received word that the trip would not go exactly as planned.

Secretary Baker would only be able to spend one day in Mongolia. During meetings with President Ochirbat and Minister



COURTESY OF JOE LAKE

The original U.S. embassy in Ulaanbaatar shared a wall with the Palestine Liberation Organization embassy.



of Foreign Affairs Gom-bosuren, Baker expressed hope that Mongolia would have a close relationship with the U.S. as a "third great neighbor" (in addition to the Soviet Union and China). His remarks resonated strongly with the Mongolians, but it would take several more years of diligent diplomatic work to build the relationship.

Since then, the Mongolia-U.S. relationship has grown in many ways. According to the U.S. Census Bureau the number of Mongolians living in the United States has grown from almost around zero in 1990 to an estimated 25,000 in 2017. President George W. Bush visited Mongolia. The Department of Defense supports an annual peacekeeping exercise in Mongolia, and the Mongolian military has participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions. The Mongolian military worked with the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Thanks to the backing and leadership of Secretary of State James Baker, the pioneering officers in Ulaanbaatar contributed to Mongolia's successful effort to build a democratic society and free market economy that has survived for more than 30 years with the support of the people of Mongolia. The success of the ongoing relationship is a testimony to the individual efforts of the many FSOs who worked to make it a reality. ■

New AFSA Board Takes Office

The 2021-2023 AFSA Governing Board took office on July 15 and held its first board meeting on July 21 at AFSA headquarters.

It was the second in-person Governing Board session since the start of the pandemic early last year.

The 2019-2021 Governing Board was able to meet in person on June 16 for its final monthly meeting. The board ratified decisions it had made in videoconferences since March 2020.

AFSA's bylaws require Governing Board decisions to be ratified in person.

The new AFSA Governing Board includes several returning members: President Eric Rubin, State Vice President Tom Yazdgerdi, USAID Vice President Jason Singer, Foreign Commercial Service Vice President Jay Carreiro, Retiree



The 2021-2023 AFSA Governing Board met on July 21 with 10 of 17 members present. From left: John Naland, Christy Machak, Russell Duncan, Jason Singer, Maria Hart, Eric Rubin, Camille Dockery, Tom Yazdgerdi, Jay Carreiro and John O'Keefe.

Vice President John Naland, State Representatives Joshua Archibald and Maria Hart, APHIS Representative Russell Duncan, U.S. Agency for Global Media Representative Steve Herman, and Retiree Representatives Mary Daly and Philip Shull.

New Governing Board members for the 2021-2023

term include Secretary Daniel Crocker, Treasurer John O'Keefe, State Representatives Camille Dockery, Kimberly Harrington, Christy Machak and Tina Wong, and USAID Representative Jolisa Brooks.

Profiles of the members of the 2021-2023 Governing Board begin on p. 58. ■

CALENDAR

Please check www.afsa.org for the most up-to-date information.

September 6
Labor Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

September 9
1-2 p.m.
Webinar: The View
from Washington

September 15
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

September 21
12-1 p.m.
Retirement Planning
Five to 10 Years Out

October 11
Columbus Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

ANNOUNCING THE 2021 AFSA AWARD WINNERS

LIFETIME CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

Ambassador (ret.) John Negroponte

CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT

Anny Vu

William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer

EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

Amanda Jager

Avis Bohlen Award for an Eligible Family Member

Ivana Lawrence

Avis Bohlen Award for an Eligible Family Member

Alisse Sargeant

M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Officer

Bridgette Huerkamp

*Nelson B. Delavan Award for an
Office Management Specialist*

Erika Keunne

Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy

Charlee Doom

Post Representative of the Year Award

Randy Chester

Post Representative of the Year Award

Ambassador (ret.) Thomas Boyatt

*AFSA Achievement and Contributions
to the Association Award*

Look for profiles of all the recipients, and an interview with the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy recipient, in the December issue of The Foreign Service Journal. ■



Revitalizing the Core Precepts

Granted, the “core precepts” that AFSA and department management negotiate every three years are probably not the most exciting thing to write about. But they are incredibly important: they are the main criteria promotion boards use to decide whether a Foreign Service employee is able to serve at the next level.

They are not to be confused with the “procedural precepts,” the detailed instructions to the promotion boards on how to organize themselves and conduct their work. Procedural precepts are negotiated every year, and AFSA has just completed this process, while the core precepts are negotiated every three years.

We are setting our sights on the core precepts, which AFSA will negotiate in the next few months. They will be effective for promotion boards in the 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 evaluation cycles.

What Our Members Say. We know from the results of an AFSA retention survey conducted in the winter of 2020-2021 that employee evaluation reviews (EERs), the slow pace of promotions, and the process in general, are among the top drivers of discontent in the Foreign Service.

The AFSA bias survey, conducted in the summer of 2020, asked respondents to list what advocacy elements AFSA should promote. The largest group recommended

gender-neutral, name-free EERs.

AFSA was able to bring the need to improve State’s institutional culture into negotiations on the procedural precepts this year, securing agreement from the department to support the transition of the current performance pay box on the EER for the Senior Foreign Service to one focused on institution building, including creating culture that values diversity and inclusion.

Negotiating Priorities. As AFSA begins this “core precepts” cycle, we want to reflect on how we can make them more understandable and more clearly tied to what we know from our surveys about our members’ experiences with the EER, the evaluation process and bias in the workplace.

First, AFSA believes we can make the core precepts simpler. There are currently 32 criteria divided among six overall skill sets for senior, midlevel and entry-level employees. Who among us has not tried to shoehorn their workplace accomplishments into this framework so that as many of these criteria as possible are addressed?

Reducing the number of criteria and skill sets would likely lead to a more targeted (and probably more honest) appraisal of employee accomplishment.

Second, to deal more effectively with bullying

Diversity, equity and inclusion need to be emphasized even more than they are now.

behavior attention needs to be paid to peer and subordinate feedback. Too often those who engage in this behavior are not held to account and, as long as they are producing for their bosses, have little to worry about.

AFSA understands that this is no easy task. It will require a major change not only to the EER form but to a department culture that still tolerates an environment that is too quick to turn a blind eye to bullying.

Perhaps a first step would be to find a way to discuss this behavior in the core precepts. Even if it’s not formally part of the EER form, perhaps another mechanism can provide this feedback.

Bottom line is that it is not enough to hear from your boss and your boss’s boss. Promotion boards should also hear what your peers and subordinates have to say. Other government agencies, including the military, use this 360 approach to determine promotability and senior leadership.

Third, diversity, equity and inclusion need to be emphasized even more than they are now. Currently, the core precepts have a section

under “Managerial Skills” that discusses adherence to equal employment opportunity principles, fostering a diverse environment and the like, but only in a very limited, general sense.

Especially for the mid- and senior ranks, perhaps these exhortations can be made more specific so that the current formulation sounds less like a throwaway line. It might make sense to move this criterion to the “Leadership” skill set and/or discuss it in several areas of the precepts, given its importance to the future of the department.

AFSA is encouraged to learn that Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, the new chief diversity and inclusion officer at State, will participate in drafting the core precepts. We plan to coordinate closely with her to make certain DE&I is appropriately reflected.

What Do You Think? AFSA would be grateful to hear your views about what the core precepts should look like. This is especially true as the current leadership of the department is focused on fundamental change to make the department more diverse and family friendly. Please write us at member@afsa.org. ■



The Future of USAID—Three Scenarios

USAID is in a constant state of self-development. Whether it's Transformation with a capital "T," establishing new missions or senior development adviser posts, or onboarding fantastic new FSOs, the one constant is change.

Unfortunately, the one thing that hasn't particularly changed is the size of USAID's career Foreign Service. It's been steady at around 1,700 the past couple of years (and down from previous ones!) even as our global mission and role within the National Security Council continue to expand. Meanwhile, the Civil Service expanded from 1,311 in October 2018 to 1,553 in February 2021.

Many factors contribute to this sad steady-state, though finding anyone who doesn't think USAID needs to hire more career FSOs is difficult.

As we wait for our new leadership ranks—including positions in the new "two deputy administrators" model—to fill, I've been contemplating scenarios for the future.

The first scenario is **"Business as Usual"**—which is not good enough. USAID is still digging out from the 2017 hiring freeze. Even as we onboard dynamic new FSOs, it takes time to build experience and know-how.

In the interim, USAID continues to fill staffing gaps through noncareer hiring workarounds—Foreign Service limited appointments, personal service contracts

and institutional service contracts.

As I've written previously, long-standing ad hoc staffing practices have created a complex mess that speaks poorly of good governance practices and distracts from mission focus. We manage to keep up with attrition of FSOs and muddle along. And yet, we still have an awesome agency, an awesome mission and awesome colleagues.

But in this scenario we remain overstretched, and our field skills and perspectives remain underappreciated. We continue to lose authorities and functions (think Millennium Challenge Corporation, President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Development Credit Authority, Development Finance Corporation, etc.) and likely will lose our regular seat at the National Security Council table in future administrations.

I then dream of an **"Agency Renaissance."** With a highly effective and connected Administrator, the agency embraces the opportunity to rebuild and empower (EmPower?) the Foreign Service, doubling the number of career FSOs through competitive, merit-based intake.

In this scenario, USAID expands its field missions, deploying FSOs to OECD country capitals, multilateral organizations including the United Nations and Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, and to crossover positions at State, Treasury, Commerce and Agriculture, along with details to the Hill.

The administration works with Congress to rebalance career-to-noncareer ratios of employees in Washington, D.C., and FSOs are well integrated into USAID's transition and humanitarian work, serving all along the relief-recovery-reconstruction continuum.

USAID regains authorities and lost functions and takes the lead in preparing a new presidential policy directive on development. We affirm our role at the NSC. Our workforce is primarily career public servants, bolstered by a strong but small cadre of contractors in Washington and incredible Foreign Service National colleagues in the field. We create a "roster" of potential FSO hires that we regularly draw from to maintain if not expand our ranks.

Lastly, I think of the scenario I call **"Well, It Was a Good 60 Years."** We don't seize the current opportunity to strengthen operations and secure resources, and soon budgets begin to tighten. USAID does not receive the necessary bureaucratic authorities or human and financial resources to deliver.

Long-overdue internal reforms are kicked down the road—again. Think-tanks publish papers lamenting the fragmented U.S. foreign assistance landscape and lack of

oversight, occasioned by the paucity of USAID's Foreign Service cadre.

The agency erodes in form, if not name, with functions and people melded in whole or in part into MCC, DFC or State, perhaps creating a "development career track" within State (echoes of AusAID and the U.K.'s Department for International Development).

The history books treat USAID kindly even as Development loses its capital "D" and is permanently replaced by the nebulous and near-sighted "foreign assistance."

Experience and history suggest that any outcome will triangulate among these three (and other!) scenarios. Right now, it's particularly hard to prognosticate.

We have a confirmed Administrator and a flow of political appointees, but not a lot of confirmed leadership. USAID and State are collaborating on their quadrennial Joint Strategic Plan under the rubric of a still-interim National Security Strategy.

Still, as the NSS affirms, "we must also demonstrate clearly to the American people that leading the world isn't an investment we make to feel good about ourselves. It's how we ensure the American people are able to live in peace, security and prosperity. It's in our undeniable self-interest."

And so, I posit, is renewing and revitalizing USAID. ■



The Retiree Agenda for 2021-2023

As you read this, the new AFSA Governing Board that took office in July is already hard at work advancing member interests. During the next two years, here are some of the issues that I will contribute my time and energy to as your retiree vice president:

News You Can Use. I will assist AFSA Counselor for Retirees Dolores Brown in creating additional retiree benefits information for the AFSA website, bimonthly retirement newsletter and annual retiree directory. To keep informed, please watch

for those updates and for announcements of future AFSA webinars on federal benefits.

Member Services. As a former director of the Department of State's Office of Retirement, I will assist AFSA staff in responding to member inquiries regarding retirement benefits. As needed, we will meet with the current leadership of the Office of Retirement and the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services to raise member concerns.

Congressional Advocacy. While we do not anticipate

a push by the White House or Congress to cut federal retirement benefits in the next two years, pressure could build to revise or replace the Foreign Service Act of 1980. If that happens, I will use my knowledge of retirement benefits to help AFSA lobby against harmful changes to the Foreign Service pension system.

Centennial. The new Governing Board will accelerate planning to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1924 founding of the Foreign Service and AFSA. A key objective will be to educate

the American public about the U.S. Foreign Service. We will invite Foreign Service retirees to share their ideas and participate in planning.

Other Duties as Assigned. I will join other Governing Board members in serving on several AFSA committees and in participating in board discussions of critical issues facing the Foreign Service.

Over the next two years, if you have questions, concerns or suggestions on any issue in my portfolio, please contact me at naland@afsa.org. ■

Unexplained Heath Incidents: AFSA Advocates for Members

There is growing concern about "unexplained health incidents" (UHI) that began some five years ago in Havana. New UHIs have been reported at some posts overseas recently, and affected members have continued to reach out to AFSA. We are persisting in our advocacy efforts on behalf of members that began when the first UHIs were reported from Havana and Mission China between 2016 and 2018.

Officials and family members from nearly all the foreign affairs agencies have been affected, including the State Department, the Foreign Commercial Service, the Foreign Agricultural

Service and USAID. There is a robust interagency effort underway to investigate. But with causation not yet established, AFSA's focus has been on ensuring that members receive the best health care and medical treatment available.

AFSA members may recall that when these cases were first reported, we successfully pushed for parity for those "unconfirmed" cases from China with the Cuba cohort. The department agreed to include the China group in Cuba cohort meetings and subsequently deemed them eligible for administrative leave.

Also, in response to AFSA

requests, the department agreed to provide a causation briefing to the Cuba cohort. The China group, however, still awaits such a briefing because, to date, an accountability review board for China has not been convened.

Shortly after UHI events occurred in Cuba, AFSA filed an implementation dispute to allow us to represent our members when the department initially objected to the union's attendance at the Cuba cohort meetings—a settlement was later reached, assuring AFSA's participation.

Since then, AFSA has repeatedly pushed for affected members to be permitted to speak freely in

meetings with the department about their specific health concerns.

In a recent welcome development, the department agreed to this proposed change, and a June 30 meeting with Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Brian McKeon was thus more open and productive. The Deputy Secretary was supportive of our affected members, acknowledging their struggles and the seriousness of their illnesses. He committed to regular future meetings with AFSA.

The department has also already initiated follow-up with AFSA on issues of concern raised at this meeting. ■

FSJ Wins Publication Awards



The Foreign Service Journal won a Gold EXCEL Award for its September 2020 issue addressing race, diversity and inclusion. The magazine won in the category of “Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives: Dedicated Issue.”

The September 2020 edition featured articles such as “Creating a Culture of Inclusion at State” by Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley (now the State Department’s



chief diversity and inclusion officer), “The Making of a Real American Diplomat” by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemispheres Julie



Chung, and “Inclusion Helps Drive Diversity” by Miremba Nantongo, then a deputy assistant secretary of State in the Bureau of Global Talent Management.

The EXCEL Awards are hosted by Association Media & Publishing. Now in their 41st year, the awards recognize excellence and leadership in media for associations.

The Foreign Service Journal was recognized in another contest, as well: the 2021 Tabbie Awards, from TABPI—Trade Association Business Publications International. The *FSJ* earned honorable mentions in the categories of “Best Single Issue” for its November 2020 edition featuring former Secretary of State George Shultz writing on trust, and “COVID-19 Coverage” for its July-August 2020 focus on pandemic diplomacy. ■

Child Tax Credit News

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 expanded the Child Tax Credit but included new and different requirements to qualify for the expanded credit. In addition, ARPA requires the IRS to pay out 50 percent of the expanded portion of the CTC to taxpayers with monthly payments from July 15 through Dec. 31, 2021.

Crucially, however, to be eligible to receive the advance payments of the CTC, taxpayers must have a principal place of abode in the United States (if married/filing jointly, at least one spouse must have a principal place of abode in the United States).

Foreign Service members currently serving overseas likely do not meet these new requirements and so must unenroll for the advance payments.

We understand that unenrolling by the start date of July 15 has proven to be extremely difficult. In some cases, indeed, it has proven impossible for FS members serving overseas

because of the IRS’ required two-level authentication process.

Since the IRS will start paying a portion of the credit in monthly installments on July 15, many overseas FS recipients may find themselves holding funds to which they may not ultimately be entitled. Members may wish to set these funds aside because they will likely be required to pay them back later.

In the meantime, AFSA is actively pursuing measures in Congress to ensure that:

1. There is a path to penalty abatement for FS members who cannot unenroll but receive penalties/interest on their 2021 return due to incorrectly receiving these payments; and
2. The U.S. Foreign Service is included in any exception to the requirement to have a principal place of abode in the United States for the child tax credit in the future.

The AFSA point of contact for this issue is Senior Labor Management Adviser James Yorke at yorkej@state.gov. ■

Meet the 2021-2023 AFSA Governing Board

The American Foreign Service Association is proud to introduce the elected officers and representatives of the 2021-2023 Governing Board. The AFSA Governing Board meets on the third Wednesday of each month from 12 to 1:30 p.m. at AFSA headquarters. AFSA members are welcome to attend any board meetings.



ERIC RUBIN **PRESIDENT**

Eric Rubin is beginning his second term as AFSA president. He served as U.S. ambassador to Bulgaria from 2016 to 2019. Previous positions include deputy chief of mission in Moscow, deputy assistant secretary

for European and Eurasian affairs, consul general in Chiang Mai, executive assistant to the under secretary for political affairs, assistant White House press secretary and National Security Council director for public affairs, and Rusk Fellow at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.

Amb. Rubin joined the Foreign Service in 1985 and holds the rank of Career Minister in the Senior Foreign Service. In 1994 he was a recipient of a group William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by Mid-Level Officers for his work on the Bosnia crisis. Amb. Rubin is a former member of The Foreign Service Journal's Editorial Board and a careerlong AFSA member.



DANIEL CROCKER **SECRETARY**

Daniel Crocker is the chief executive officer of Veracity Worldwide, a boutique advisory firm that helps clients make investment decisions in challenging markets. A retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of Commerce, he has more than 20 years of experience

promoting and defending U.S. economic security through assignments in Washington, Europe and Latin America.

Mr. Crocker's most recent assignment was as deputy assistant secretary for Europe and Eurasia at Commerce. He served on AFSA's Governing Board previously, as vice president for the Foreign Commercial Service, and is currently on the Editorial Board of *The Foreign Service Journal*.

Prior to his diplomatic career, Mr. Crocker worked in engineering management positions at Accel, Sequoia and Benchmark-funded tech startups; in manufacturing; and in oil and gas exploration in the United States and Africa. He holds business, foreign affairs and engineering degrees from MIT, the University of Virginia and Princeton, and he speaks Spanish.



JOHN O'KEEFE **TREASURER**

Ambassador (ret.) John O'Keefe served for 32 years in the Foreign Service, beginning in Moscow as a general services officer. On retirement from the Foreign Service in 2007, he headed the Open

World Leadership Center, a legislative branch agency, for 10 years, then served for two years as counselor to the board of trustees. Amb. O'Keefe expanded the center's programs from Russia and Ukraine to all countries of the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, Turkey and Mongolia. He joined the Wilson Center as a Global Fellow in 2019.

As ambassador to Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2003, he negotiated the treaty allowing coalition forces to establish a base there to support operations in Afghanistan. From 2003 to 2004, he headed the Office of Career Development and from 2004 to 2006 was deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources, serving as acting Director General of the Foreign Service.

Amb. O'Keefe has received the Distinguished Honor Award, the Replogle Award for Management Improvement and, the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, as well as several Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards. The American University of Central Asia awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. He is married to Monica O'Keefe, a retired public diplomacy officer.



THOMAS YAZDGERDI **DEPARTMENT OF STATE** **VICE PRESIDENT**

A member of the Senior Foreign Service, Tom Yazdgerdi served as special envoy for Holocaust issues in the European and Eurasian Bureau at the Department of

State before joining the AFSA Governing Board in 2019.

Mr. Yazdgerdi has served as director of the Office of South Central European Affairs, political counselor at U.S. Embassy Kabul, head of U.S. Consulate Kirkuk and deputy political counselor for Iran affairs at U.S. Embassy Baghdad. He also served as deputy chief of mission and political-economic chief at U.S. Embassy Pristina during the run-up to and aftermath of Kosovo independence.

Other assignments include Panama City, Bratislava, Tirana and Athens, as well as positions in the European Bureau (Czech desk) and the Political-Military Affairs Bureau, and as senior Balkans program officer with the

National Democratic Institute in Washington, D.C.

Before joining the Foreign Service in 1991, Mr. Yazdgerdi worked on Capitol Hill. He has a bachelor's degree in history from Cornell University and a master's degree in Central European history, security studies and American diplomatic history from the Fletcher School at Tufts University.



JASON SINGER
U.S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
VICE PRESIDENT

The son of a USAID Foreign Service officer, Jason Singer is a proud high school graduate of the International School of

Kenya (Go Lions!) with more than 20 years of professional interagency development experience, including 16 years as an FSO with USAID and earlier service with the U.S. Treasury Department and the National Security Council.

He has led USAID teams in a variety of sectors including economic growth; anti-corruption and good governance; immunization and water, sanitation and hygiene; basic education; agribusiness; workforce development; disaster risk reduction; and women's empowerment.

Mr. Singer has tremendous respect for development professionals across all functional and technical areas. He appreciates the importance of intra- and interagency collaboration to strengthen the Foreign Service cadre.

He joined the AFSA Governing Board as USAID VP in 2019.



JAY CARREIRO
FOREIGN COMMERCIAL
SERVICE VICE PRESIDENT

Jay Carreiro is a career Foreign Service officer and a 20-year veteran of the Commerce Department. He joined the Commercial Service in 2009, serving

as special assistant to the deputy assistant secretary for international operations. Prior to his election to the AFSA Governing Board in 2019, he was the director for business liaison and special adviser to the U.S. executive director at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, D.C. He also served in Rio de Janeiro.

Before joining the Commerce Department, Mr. Carreiro served as a judicial law clerk in Trenton, New Jersey. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science and public administration from Rhode Island College, and a Master of Public Administration and Juris Doctor from Rutgers University. He is married with one child and currently resides in Alexandria, Virginia.



JOHN K. NALAND
RETIREE VICE PRESIDENT

John Naland's 29-year Foreign Service career included service in Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico (as principal officer in Matamoros) and Iraq

(as leader of the provincial reconstruction team in Basra). Washington assignments included the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff, the White House Situation Room and the Bureau of Human Resources (as director of the Office of Retirement).

Mr. Naland was AFSA State vice president from 1999 to 2001 and served two terms as AFSA president (2001-2003, 2007-2009). He retired from the Foreign Service in 2015 and is in his third term as AFSA Retiree VP. He is also president of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation and coordinator of the Foreign Affairs Retirees of Northern Virginia.

Mr. Naland is co-author of the fourth edition of *Career Diplomacy: Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service* (Georgetown University Press, forthcoming fall 2021). A former U.S. Army cavalry officer who served in West Germany during the Cold War, he is a graduate of the Army War College. Born in Kansas, he grew up in New Orleans and graduated from Tulane University. He is married and has two daughters.



JOSHUA ARCHIBALD
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

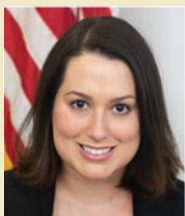
FSO Joshua Archibald is the acting director of the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation's Office of Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism.

He previously served as deputy and director of the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs' Economic Policy and Public Diplomacy office, and from 2016 to 2019 was deputy director of the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement office in San Salvador.

Prior to El Salvador, Mr. Archibald was a special assistant for the under secretary for economic growth, energy, and the environment; the State Department's lead officer on the Committee for Foreign Investment in the United States; and manager of the internal unit in the political-military office of Embassy Baghdad. Other diplomatic assignments include Laos, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Italy.

Born and raised in the Bay Area, Mr. Archibald earned a BA in international economics and German from the University of California, Davis, and an MA from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is married (as part of a "tandem") with three children.

He was first elected to the AFSA Governing Board in 2019.



CAMILLE DOCKERY **STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Camille Dockery is a management-coned Foreign Service officer currently serving as an assignments officer in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Prior to that, she completed a consular tour in

Ciudad Juarez.

Ms. Dockery worked previously in the Bureaus of Intelligence and Research, Global Talent Management and Diplomatic Security. Before joining the Foreign Service, she worked in the office of Congressman Jim Matheson of Utah.

The daughter of a tandem couple (a Diplomatic Security special agent and a Foreign Service officer), Ms. Dockery originally hails from Houston, Texas, but lived abroad as a Foreign Service dependent for most of her childhood. She was a Latin American studies major and history minor at Brigham Young University. Outside the office, Ms. Dockery is an avid reader, cook and moviegoer. She looks forward to exploring Washington, D.C., more during the next two years.



KIMBERLY D. HARRINGTON **STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Kim Harrington is currently director of the Office of Policy Analysis and Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of Energy Resources. In her most recent overseas posting, she served as political and economic coun-

selor at Embassy Kampala, including five months during the COVID-19 pandemic as acting deputy chief of mission. She was deputy economic counselor at Embassy Bogotá from 2014 to 2018 and political-military affairs officer in Jerusalem from 2011 to 2014.

Since joining the Foreign Service in 2002, Ms. Harrington has also served overseas in Manila, Cairo and Tripoli. At the department, she worked as a staff assistant in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. On detail at the Pentagon during the Arab Spring, she worked as an adviser in the Joint Staff's Office of Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) for the Middle East.

Ms. Harrington received a bachelor's degree in international politics from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service and studied abroad at the American University in Cairo. She has a master's degree in national resource strategy from National Defense University. Ms. Harrington and her husband, a USAID Foreign Service officer, have two young children.



MARIA I. HART **STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Maria I. Hart is a Foreign Service specialist, currently serving as a staff assistant in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. She joined the Foreign Service in 2005.

Previously Ms. Hart served overseas as an office management specialist at U.S. Embassies Accra, Tel Aviv, Baghdad, Tashkent, Wellington, Madagascar and, most recently, a two-year stint at U.S. Embassy Kabul.

Before joining the Foreign Service, she began her State Department career as a citizen services specialist in the Office of Children's Issues, where she successfully facilitated the return of more than 50 children wrongfully removed from the United States under the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

She later transferred to the Office of the Inspector General as a management analyst.

Ms. Hart earned a bachelor's degree in communications (film and television studies) from Queens College in Flushing, New York, and a master's degree in news and print journalism from Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia. She did postgraduate work in African studies at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

She joined the AFSA Governing Board in 2020.



CHRISTY MACHAK **STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Christy Machak is deputy director of the Counterterrorism Bureau's Office of Terrorist Screening and Interdiction Programs. Before that, she was political unit chief in The Hague. Previous assign-

ments include political-military officer in Dhaka, Kosovo desk officer, watch officer in the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center, consular officer in Port of Spain and general services officer in Berlin.

Ms. Machak joined the Foreign Service in 2006 as a political-coned officer. She is a Rangel Fellow and a member of the 2014 class of the Program for Emerging Leaders at the Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction at the National Defense University.

Ms. Machak received a bachelor's degree in political science and international studies from Denison University in Granville, Ohio, and a master's degree in security policy from George Washington University. She and her husband, David, have a son and a daughter. They call Ohio home.



TINA WONG **STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Tina Wong currently leads the State Department's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs in advancing U.S. national security through nonproliferation policy, export controls, sanctions and inter-

national cooperation. As a Foreign Service officer, she has served in a wide array of policy roles, including most recently as the adviser on agricultural trade and biotechnology issues in China and the East Asia and Pacific region in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs.

She is also a mentor on diversity and inclusion efforts across the State Department and interagency to increase underrepresented groups in international affairs.

Her overseas tours included Beijing and Mexico City. Her previous domestic assignments also included public diplomacy and policy roles in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Bureau of International Information Programs and Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

From 2019 to 2020, Ms. Wong was president of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association and is currently a core member of the EUR Diversity and Inclusion Committee. She is fluent in Mandarin, Cantonese and Spanish. She received her master's degree from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University and her bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.



RUSSELL DUNCAN **APHIS REPRESENTATIVE**

Russell Duncan is 16-year member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, International Services division. Currently on domestic assignment with APHIS'

Biotechnology Regulatory Services, serving as an adviser on international engagements, he also co-hosts a biweekly call for APHIS FSOs to promote inclusion, employee engagement and professional development within the Foreign Service.

Mr. Duncan began his Foreign Service career as safeguarding officer for APHIS in the Dominican Republic. He then served in Brussels as APHIS attaché to the U.S. Mission to the European Union followed by a tour in Pretoria. Most recently, he served in Lima as area director for the Andean countries.

He received the APHIS Administrator's Award for his work building regional animal health capacity in West Africa, and USDA's Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for his role in opening new markets for U.S. agriculture products in South Africa.

Mr. Duncan was born in Jamaica and grew up in Maryland,

where he now resides with his wife and two children. He holds a bachelor's degree in general biology from Howard University and a master's degree in plant biology from Rutgers University.

He joined the AFSA Governing Board in 2020.



STEVEN L. HERMAN **USAGM REPRESENTATIVE**

Steven L. Herman is the White House bureau chief for the Voice of America. The veteran correspondent has been a member of the Foreign Service since 2007, when he was named VOA's South Asia

bureau chief, based in New Delhi. Subsequent to his India posting, Mr. Herman was Northeast Asia bureau chief, based in Seoul, and then Southeast Asia bureau chief in Bangkok. He returned stateside in 2016 to cover diplomacy at the State Department, before moving to cover the new administration shortly after the inauguration.

Mr. Herman spent 16 years living in Tokyo, working in media, before joining VOA as a staff correspondent. He is also a former news reporter for the Associated Press and began his career in radio and television news in Las Vegas. He is a former president of both the Japan Foreign Correspondents' Club and the Seoul Foreign Correspondents' Club.



MARY DALY **RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE**

Mary Daly is a senior adviser in the Department of State's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs where she works on Holocaust restitution issues. She was a political officer in the Foreign Service for 23 years,

serving as political counselor, speechwriter, policy planner and legislative liaison, among other assignments, before retiring early to care for a family member.

Since retiring, she has directed the Franklin Fellows Program and served as a senior inspector in the Office of the Inspector General and as editor in chief of the department's International Religious Freedom Report, in addition to her work in EUR.

She served as AFSA's director of advocacy and speechwriting from July 2017 to March 2018. In that capacity, she built relationships for AFSA with House and Senate Appropriations and Authorizations Committee members and staff, and helped launch the Friends of the Foreign Service caucus.

This will be her second consecutive term on the AFSA Governing Board.

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AFSA NEWS



PHILIP A. SHULL RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE

Philip A. Shull retired in 2016 after 31 years with the Foreign Agricultural Service. A native of Wooster, Ohio, his interest in food security and international relations was sparked by living as a boy in India, where

he saw severe malnutrition. Mr. Shull's work maximizing exports of U.S. food and agricultural products and promoting global food security included trade negotiations, capacity building, food safety, biotechnology, marketing and promotion, scientific exchange and economic analysis.

His overseas assignments included Korea, Argentina (including Uruguay and Paraguay), Hong Kong, the Philippines and three postings to China. His final position was Minister Counselor for agriculture in Beijing.

Throughout his career, Mr. Shull built coalitions with colleagues in like-minded embassies and host governments to achieve common goals in food security, food safety, agricultural sustainability and rules-based trade. He relished working with colleagues in other sections of the U.S. embassy he served in to promote a broad range of U.S. commercial, technical and public diplomacy outreach.

He joined the AFSA Governing Board in 2019. ■



JOLISA BROOKS USAID REPRESENTATIVE

Jolisa Brooks is a Foreign Service officer serving as climate adviser in the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security's Center for Resilience. She is first vice president of the USAID Harry T. Moore Chapter of Blacks in

Government and chairs the agency's Environmental Equity and Justice Advisory Board.

Ms. Brooks previously served as the Dominican Republic's regional environmental officer and climate integration lead. She is the co-founder of the U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo Council on Equity and Intercultural Affairs. She served in the Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean where she contributed to the Regional Sustainable Development team as a biodiversity and climate adviser.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she worked in the corporate social responsibility sphere. She has worked on foreign policy as a legislative fellow with the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Ms. Brooks is a graduate of Michigan State University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in political theory and science, technology and environmental policy. She also holds a master's degree in environmental science from the Yale School of Environment, where she focused on energy sovereignty. ■

2021 KENNAN AWARD WINNER

Valerie O'Brien

Valerie O'Brien, a public diplomacy–coned Foreign Service officer, is this year's winner of AFSA's George Kennan Writing Award. AFSA President Eric Rubin presented the award at a June 7 ceremony at the National War College in Washington, D.C.

AFSA offers the award each year to Foreign Service graduates of the National War College whose research projects and writing have demonstrated excellence throughout the year.

O'Brien said she is honored to receive the Kennan Award. "We read and discussed some of Kennan's well-known articles and speeches, and I came away with a better understanding of his thinking and how his views evolved during the Cold War," she says. "In some ways, it's still hard to grasp the impact that one person could have in shaping U.S. foreign policy for so many decades."

O'Brien was assigned to the National War College for the past year. Each student chooses a country or region to focus on during their yearlong practicum. By the end of the year, they write an integrated strategy paper on a U.S. national security issue related to that country or region.

O'Brien's paper is titled



2021 Kennan Award winner Valerie O'Brien poses with AFSA President Eric Rubin (right) and Commandant of the War College RDML Cedric E. Pringle at the National War College's award ceremony in Washington, D.C., on June 7.

"A Strategy for the United States to Partner with the United Kingdom in Countering Russian Disinformation."

Describing her paper, O'Brien says, "The main goals of the strategy are to bolster the trans-Atlantic alliance, strengthen social/democratic resilience, and expand our capabilities to detect, deter and disrupt Russian information operations through more robust government and civil society actions."

When researching the topic, she read about many of the tools the State Department, U.K. government, think-tanks and academics already use to expose and counter disinformation.

"I came away with a sense that this is an area in which we should do even more to connect our national security priorities to our domestic defenses, as the two are inextricably linked," she says. "As a public diplomacy officer I know this is an issue my colleagues and I will be grappling with for many years to come."

O'Brien joined the State Department in 2002. She is currently deputy director in the Office of Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. From 2016 to 2020, she served as the U.S. embassy spokesperson in Israel. Prior to that, she served as the public affairs officer at U.S. Embassy Tirana.

From 2010 to 2012, she worked as a press officer in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, preparing daily press guidance and briefing the State Department spokesperson on a wide range of regional issues. Other overseas assignments include Madrid, La Paz and Manila.

Before joining the Foreign Service, she taught Spanish at Georgetown University, where she earned a Ph.D. in Spanish literature. She also earned a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Virginia Commonwealth University. In 2021 she earned a master's degree in national security strategy from the National War College. She is married and has two sons. ■

AFSA SCHOLARSHIPS

Meet the 2021 AFSA Merit Award Winners

Founded in 1926, the AFSA Scholarship Program awarded \$380,000 this year. In need-based Financial Aid Scholarships, \$241,000 was divided among 68 students; and in Merit Awards, 38 students were honored with a total of \$139,000.

AFSA is proud to present the 2021 AFSA Merit Award winners, listed here alphabetically by last name. Winners received \$3,500 each, Honorable Mentions received \$2,000 and Best Essay \$3,500. AFSA thanks all of the judges and donors who made this year's Merit Awards possible.

Academic Merit Scholarship Winners

Sophia Adams-Smith – daughter of Steve (State) and Kelly (State) Adams-Smith, graduated from Washington Liberty High School, Arlington, Virginia. Plans to attend William & Mary St. Andrews Joint Degree Programme to study international relations. Sophia is also the winner of a Community Service Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Emily Rose Allen – daughter of Tyler (State) and Jennifer Allen, graduated from the Frankfurt International School, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Plans to attend James Madison University to study social work. Emily is also the winner of a Community Service Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Samantha Isabelle Brungardt Alvarez – daughter of Maurice (State) and Maria Brungardt, graduated from James W. Robinson Jr. Secondary School, Fairfax, Virginia. Plans to attend the University of Wisconsin–Madison to study neurobiology.

Rachel Burkhalter – daughter of Edward (State) and Susan Burkhalter, graduated from West Springfield High School, Springfield, Virginia. Plans to attend Indiana University to study oboe performance.

Alanna Enkhjin DaRin – daughter of Brian (State) and Tuya (State) DaRin, graduated from Washington Liberty High School, Arlington, Virginia. Plans to attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to study civil and environmental engineering.

Asha Dees – daughter of Learned Dees (State) and Amina Rage, graduated from Bethesda–Chevy Chase High School, Bethesda, Maryland. Plans to attend Dartmouth College to study biomedical engineering. Asha is also the winner of a Community Service Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Abigail Dillard – daughter of Marc (State) and Julia (State) Dillard, graduated from the American International School of Budapest, Hungary. Plans to attend Virginia Tech to study mechanical engineering.

Alexander Y. Edwards – son of Jing (State) and Michael Edwards, graduated from the International School of Geneva, Switzerland. Plans to attend the University of St. Andrews to study medicine.

Emily W. Heimer – daughter of Jonathan Heimer (State) and Hong Wu, graduated from The Hotchkiss School, Lakeville, Connecticut. Plans to attend Columbia University to study drama and theater arts.



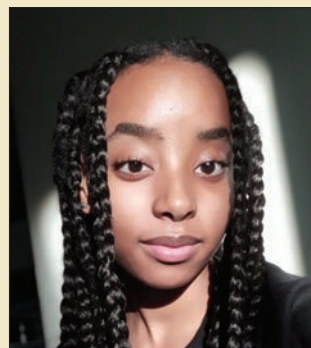
Sophia Adams-Smith



Alanna Enkhjin DaRin



Emily Rose Allen



Asha Dees



Samantha Isabelle Brungardt Alvarez



Abigail Dillard



Rachel Burkhalter



Alexander Y. Edwards



Emily W. Heimer



Shawn Kingman



Leo Horwitz



Raquel Mandojana



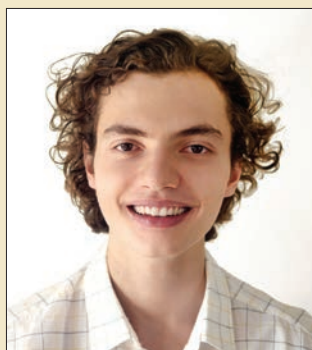
Siri Johnson



Narisara E. Mayer



Fatima Leyla Kane



Matias Meier

Leo Horwitz – son of Jeffrey (State) and Melissa (State) Horwitz, graduated from H-B Woodlawn, Arlington, Virginia. Plans to attend California Polytechnic State University to study computer science.

Siri Johnson – daughter of Bernt (State) and Julie Johnson, graduated from the American Community School of Amman, Jordan. Plans to attend Oxford College at Emory University.

Fatima Leyla Kane – daughter of Hamed (State) and Kristin (State) Kane, graduated from the Carlucci American International School of Lisbon, Portugal. Plans to attend Stanford University and study pre-med.

Shawn Kingman – son of Robert (State) and Amy Kingman, graduated from the Stanford Online High School, Redwood City, California. Plans to attend the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology to study computer science.

Raquel Mandojana – daughter of Marcos (State) and Christine Mandojana, graduated from Ankara Elementary High School, Ankara, Turkey. Plans to attend the College of William & Mary to study international environmental science and policy. Raquel is also the winner of an Art Merit Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Narisara E. Mayer – daughter of Paul (State) and Chanisada Mayer, graduated from McLean High School, McLean, Virginia. Plans to attend Haverford College to study astrophysics.

Matias Meier – son of Gregory Meier (State) and Scarlet Narciso, graduated from the American School of Brasilia, Brazil. Plans to attend Brown University to study history.

Gillian Murphy – daughter of Ambassador Patrick Murphy (State) and Kathleen Norman, graduated from the International School of Phnom Penh,

Cambodia. Plans to attend Columbia University to study political humanities and sustainable development. Gillian is also the winner of an AFSA Art Merit Scholarship.

Parker James Peterson – son of Richard (State) and Laura Peterson, graduated from Stone Bridge High School, Ashburn, Virginia. Plans to attend Brigham Young University.

Abigail H. Quade – daughter of Christopher (State) and Dr. Carol Quade, graduated from the American School in Tokyo, Japan. Plans to attend Carleton College to study history.

Clara Lucia Meyler Rathke – daughter of Jeffrey (State) and Maria (State) Rathke, graduated from Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School, Washington, D.C. Plans to attend the University of Chicago to study Russian/linguistics.

Adam Rizzoli – son of Jennifer (State) and Darren Rizzoli, graduated from James Madison High School, Vienna, Virginia. Plans to attend George Mason University to study government and international politics.

Kai Rowlands – son of Ryan (State) and Stephanie Rowlands, graduated from The International School of Panama, Panama City. Plans to attend Marquette University to study physics and Spanish.

Sophia Marie Shields – daughter of Matthew (State) and Gladys Shields, graduated from the American School of Warsaw, Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland. Plans to attend the University of Virginia to study political philosophy, policy and law.

Phillip Florian Siller – son of Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller (State) and Michael Siller, graduated from the American International School, Vienna, Austria. Plans to attend Oxford University to study chemistry.

Quinton Stevens – son of Kathryn (USAID) and Nicholas Stevens, graduated from Deerfield Academy, Deerfield, Massachusetts. Plans to attend the University of Edinburgh to study international relations.

Riley Stevens – daughter of William (State) and Melica Stevens, graduated from the American International School of Cape Town, South Africa. Plans to attend the University of Oregon to study psychology.

Zamir Ticknor – son of Scott Ticknor (State) and Tasneem Nahar, graduated from George C. Marshall High School, Falls Church, Virginia. Plans to attend Swarthmore College to study peace and conflict studies and economics.

Sophia Urbom – daughter of Scott (State) and Sonia (State) Urbom, graduated from George Mason High School, Falls Church, Virginia. Plans to attend Duke University to study mathematics. Sophia is also the winner of an Art Merit Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Phillip Jackson VanHorn – son of Phillip (State) and Nancy (State) VanHorn, graduated from The Overseas School of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Plans to attend the University of Texas at Austin to enroll in the Plan II Honors Program.

Ellise Waller – daughter of Robert (State) and Staci Waller, graduated from the Rochambeau French International School, Bethesda, Maryland. Plans to attend McGill University to study chemistry.

Dean Waters – son of Edward (State) and Gennie Waters, graduated from Mercersburg Academy, Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Plans to attend the College of William & Mary to study applied mathematics.

Art Merit Scholarship Winner

Kai Friedenberg – son of Joyce Friedenberg (USAID), graduated from Northwood High School, Silver Spring, Maryland. Plans to attend the Berklee College of Music to study music production and engineering.

Art Merit Scholarship Honorable Mentions

Juliet Bel – daughter of Karen (State) and Mark Bel, graduated from St. Stephen's School of Rome, Italy. Plans to attend Nicholls State University to study culinary arts.

Benjamin Cudmore – son of Michael (State) and Heather Wautlet, graduated from McLean High School, McLean, Virginia. Plans to attend University of Richmond to study theater.

Raquel Mandojana – see biography under academic merit.

Sophia Urbom – see biography under academic merit.

Anna Wells – daughter of Mark (State) and Tabitha Wells, graduated from Colegio Gran Bretaña, Bogotá, Colombia. Plans to attend Virginia Commonwealth University to study communication arts.

Community Service Scholarship Winner

Gillian Murphy – see biography under academic merit.

Community Service Scholarship Honorable Mentions

Sophia Adams-Smith – see biography under academic merit.

Emily Allen – see biography under academic merit.

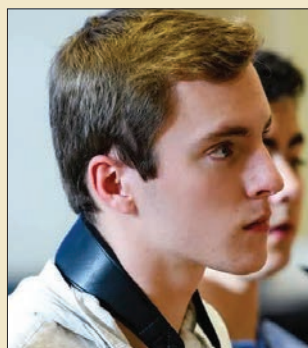
Asha Dees – see biography under academic merit.



Gillian Murphy



Adam Rizzoli



Parker James Peterson



Kai Rowlands



Abigail H. Quade



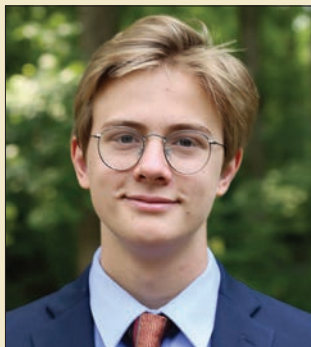
Sophia Marie Shields



Clara Lucia Meyler Rathke



Phillip Florian Siller



Quinton Stevens



Phillip Jackson VanHorn



Juliet Bel



Genene Savall Wedd



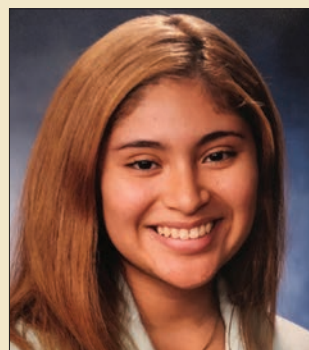
Riley Stevens



Ellise Waller



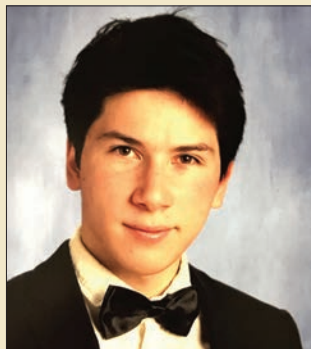
Benjamin Cudmore



Grace A. Villeda



Zamir Ticknor



Dean Waters



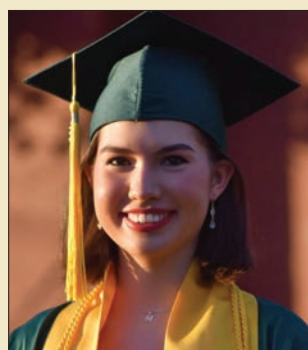
Anna Wells



Sophia Urbom



Kai Friedenber



Mei Victoria Gill

Mei Victoria Gill – daughter of Barry (USAID) and Misa Gill, graduated from the Harare International School, Harare, Zimbabwe. Plans to attend Texas Tech University to study environmental engineering.

Genene Savall Wedd – son of Jonathan Wedd (State) and Alicia Savall, graduated from the International Community School, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Plans to attend the University of Wisconsin–Madison to study investment banking.

Best Essay Scholarship

Grace A. Villeda – daughter of Frank (State) and Karen Villeda, graduated from the International School of Helsinki, Finland. Plans to attend the University of San Diego to study international relations. ■

AFSA Selects High School Essay Contest Winner

Mariam Parray, a sophomore from Pulaski Academy in Little Rock, Arkansas, is the winner of this year's AFSA national high school essay contest.

Parray won with her essay, "Diplomats and Peacebuilders in Tunisia: Paving the Path to Democracy," in which she emphasizes the importance of multifaceted approaches to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy and highlights the critical need to incorporate the voices of marginalized groups into this process.

As the winner of AFSA's essay contest, Ms. Parray was awarded \$2,500. She will also be traveling to Washington, D.C., to meet with a member of the State Department's leadership team and will receive a full-tuition scholarship for an educational voyage with Semester at Sea during college.

This year's runner-up is Harrison McCarty, who is also from Pulaski Academy in Little Rock, Arkansas. He wrote an essay titled "The Planes Are Up: How Operation Uphold Democracy Led to the Successful Restoration of Peace and Democracy in Haiti." As the runner-up, Mr. Harrison, a junior, was awarded \$1,250 and a full-tuition scholarship to attend the International Diplomacy program of the National Student Leadership



COURTESY OF MARIAM PARRAY

AFSA national high school essay contest winner Mariam Parray.



COURTESY OF HARRISON MCCARTY

AFSA national high school essay contest runner-up Harrison McCarty.

Conference this summer. This is the first time the two winning essays came from students at the same school.

Every year, AFSA welcomes essay submissions from students in grades

nine through 12 that address diplomacy, peacebuilding and, most importantly, the U.S. Foreign Service.

This was the contest's 23rd year. Students were prompted to identify and write about a situation in which diplomats worked on a peacebuilding initiative with partners from the country or region in question, with nongovernmental organizations and with other parts of the U.S. government, and then analyze why the endeavor was a success.

This year, AFSA received 357 essay submissions from 42 states and numerous locations abroad. The winners were selected in three randomized and blinded rounds of judging.

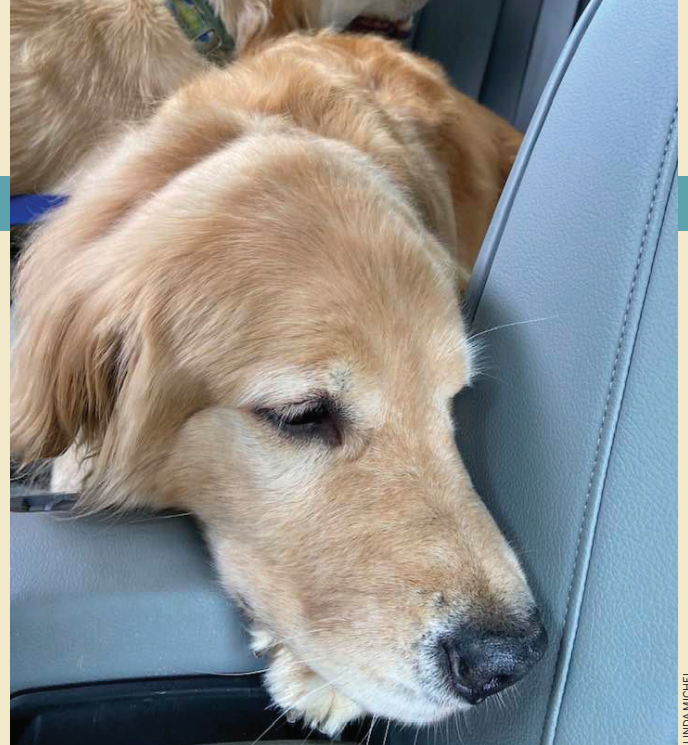
In addition to these two winners, our judges named eight honorable men-

"Diplomats and Peacebuilders in Tunisia: Paving the Path to Democracy" emphasizes the importance of multifaceted approaches to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy.

tions: Louisa Eaton from Wellesley, Massachusetts; Samuel Goldston from Brooklyn, New York; Lucy King from Bainbridge Island, Washington; Haan Jun Lee from Jakarta, Indonesia; Khaled Maalouf from Beirut, Lebanon; Madeleine Shaw from Bloomington, Indiana; Allison Srp from Austin, Minnesota; and Daniel Zhang from Cortland, New York.

AFSA is thrilled to have received so many essay submissions this year and appreciates the continued support of our valued educational partners: the United States Institute of Peace, the National Student Leadership Conference and Semester at Sea.

To learn more about AFSA's essay contest and other educational outreach initiatives, visit afsa.org/students. ■



LINDA MICHEL

AFSA Pushes for Change on CDC Dog Import Restrictions

AFSA continues to receive messages of concern from members about the new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regulations on the import of dogs into the United States.

On July 14 the CDC banned dog imports from 113 high-risk rabies countries for the next year, leaving Foreign Service families scrambling to find ways to bring their pets with them to their next assignments.

For many who are transferring this year, this situation is fraught with anxiety and adds unexpected complications and worry to an already stressful time. We will continue to advocate forcefully to explore every possible avenue so that our members can travel on schedule and be with their beloved animal companions as planned.

We have raised the issue at the highest levels of the State Department. AFSA President Eric Rubin met with Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Brian McKeon on July 9 and urged him to make contact with the CDC to seek an exemption for U.S. government employees returning to the United States on official orders.

On July 20 Ambassador Rubin sent a letter to CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky asking for an exemption until at least Oct. 14 to accommodate the

summer transfer season. We raised the need to expedite requests for import permits when received from government employees traveling on official orders, and the need to make more laboratories available for testing both overseas and in the United States. We also asked the CDC to ensure that airlines and airports are aware of the existing dispensations.

On July 23 AFSA spoke with the acting assistant secretary of the Bureau of Administration to get an update. AFSA learned that for the period after Oct. 14 the department is pressing the CDC to ensure that many more rabies testing sites are available—including at least one in the United States that could be served by State's transport and dispatch system. State is also conveying to the CDC that the certification of many more entry points in the United States (including Dulles) is vital.

In the meantime, AFSA continues to engage with department management. We are assured that:

- The CDC will give priority to import permit applications from people with government travel orders when emailed to CDCanimalimports@cdc.gov;
- State Transportation will give assistance to employees who need help at TransportationQuery@state.gov; and

- State will continue to allow maximum flexibility during this summer transfer season. The dispensation to be able to travel two months on either side of your transfer eligibility date remains in force, so members may have time to meet the CDC requirements before traveling.

AFSA also recognizes the efforts of the Foreign Affairs

Friends of Animals Network on Facebook, whose members have written to their congressional representatives and started a petition to the CDC asking for a general exemption to the new requirements, which, as of Aug. 1, the petition had more than 11,500 signatures. (see change.org/stopCDCdogban). ■

CDC Responds to FS Community

The Foreign Service Journal contacted the CDC about the recent dog import ban. Dr. Emily Pieracci, CDC's zoonoses team lead in the Quarantine and Border Health Services Branch, told us: "The CDC is currently working on a long-term solution to address dog importation challenges in the U.S." In the meantime, she offered several recommendations to ease the permit process.

Permit requirements are evolving; make sure you stay current. The CDC updated its list of approved labs (bit.ly/cdc-rabies-labs) for the required rabies titer test—from only four worldwide to more than 40, a change AFSA had advocated for. The CDC is also adding approved ports of entry.

Plan for unforeseen circumstances. Keep rabies vaccination current and obtain a titer test each year. With these in place, the agency said it can expedite the permit process if authorized departure or other circumstances arise.

Don't adopt pets in the last six months of a tour. "Rescued dogs present the greatest risk of rabies due to their unknown exposure history," Dr. Pieracci said.

AFSA Speaker Series Reaches New Audiences

This year, AFSA's outreach team kicked off two new virtual speaker series: "Inside Diplomacy" and "Diplomats at Work." Both series are intended to help reach AFSA's goal of increasing awareness of and support for the U.S. Foreign Service.

Hosted by the AFSA president, Inside Diplomacy is tailored to connect with a more traditional international affairs audience by exploring current national security issues as they relate to foreign policy and the Foreign Service.

The series is also intended to showcase AFSA as a thought leader and critical resource on the role of the Foreign Service in diplomacy. Featured speakers have included Liz Schraye, president and CEO of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, and Jim DeHart, U.S. coordinator for the Arctic Region.

The second series, Diplomats at Work, is designed to introduce new and diverse audiences to the work of the Foreign Service. The program features active-duty members of the Foreign Service who share their stories of life and work at U.S. posts abroad.

The format is accessible and provides an overview of the type of work the individual is responsible for at a U.S. embassy or consulate, while also highlighting a specific story to help illustrate that work.

To promote this series, AFSA focuses on outreach to colleges and universities around the country, in particular to community colleges. We connect with Diplomats in Residence and local organizations to help get the word out in their respective communities.

To date, both series have been successful, drawing more than 200 participants per event. For "Inside Diplomacy," participation is a good mix of AFSA members and those in the broader international affairs community. For "Diplomats at Work," as planned, the participation is largely external and includes students and professors from around the country, as well as professionals in diverse sectors.

AFSA will host two more events in each of the series through December. Even as things begin to open up and allow for in-person events, these series will remain virtual. Hosting virtual outreach events has enabled us to reach audiences who otherwise wouldn't have access to AFSA events.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention the important role members have played in the promotion of these series by spreading the word of the events among their friends, colleagues and family members. This again confirms that members are one of our most important and effective outreach assets. We encour-

Members are one of our most important and effective outreach assets.

age members to continue the great work in promoting these series, and other outreach efforts.

Finally, as shared in our June update, AFSA has been working diligently to increase our social media presence. If you haven't yet followed us on Twitter (@afsatweets), LinkedIn (American Foreign-Service Association), or Facebook (afsapage), we encourage you to do so. It's a fast and easy way to check

on the latest events, articles or updates, and share with friends.

You can also visit *The Foreign Service Journal's* Facebook (fsjournal) and LinkedIn (The Foreign Service Journal) pages.

As always, if you have any questions about AFSA's outreach program, please contact Strategic Communications and Outreach Manager Nadja Ruzica at ruzica@afsa.org. ■

AFSA STATEMENT ON NEW FEDERAL COVID-19 MEASURE

AFSA welcomes the July 29 Biden administration announcement that all federal employees and contractors are required to either attest to their COVID-19 vaccination status or wear a mask and submit to regular testing in cases where no such attestation is given. This is in response to the rising number of infections worldwide from the now-dominant delta variant.

As AFSA stated in its June 17 message on the significant COVID-19 breakout at our embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, the association is supportive of vaccination measures to ensure the health and safety of the extended FS community.

AFSA fully supports any medical or religious exemptions to vaccine requirements, and has urged the federal government, including leadership at our agencies and embassies, to ensure that anyone falling under such exemptions be protected from any kind of adverse impact.

Remembering Fallen Foreign Service Officers

DACOR honored members of the U.S. Foreign Service in ceremonies at Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, D.C., on May 31, coinciding with Memorial Day observances that day for members of the U.S. military.

DACOR President James Dandridge was joined by Ambassador Kenneth Merten, the deputy assistant secretary of State in the Bureau of Global Talent Management, in laying a wreath at the flagstaff monument to the U.S. Foreign Service in Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

The monument, erected in 1973, is inscribed with the words: "In Remembrance of Their Service to Their Country." The Rev. John J. Hurley Jr. offered the invocation at the ecumenical service sponsored by DACOR and held annually since 1984.

Among State Department officials buried at Rock Creek Cemetery is Wilbur J. Carr (1870-1942). While serving as chief of the Consular Bureau,

Carr worked with President Theodore Roosevelt to pass the Lodge Act of 1906 that ended the patronage system of appointing consuls and created a career path based on merit. As assistant secretary of State from 1924 to 1937, he drafted the Rogers Act of 1924 that united consular and diplomatic services into the Foreign Service.

Buried in the cemetery's DACOR memorial sections are more than 1,100 diplomats and family members.

Founded in 1952, DACOR is a membership organization of foreign affairs professionals rooted in the Foreign Service and based at the historic DACOR Bacon House two blocks west of the White House.

DACOR sponsors foreign affairs workshops for teachers, provide graduate and undergraduate scholarships, operate college mentoring programs and preserve the historic federal mansion. For more information and to join, visit dacorbacon.org. ■



DACOR President James Dandridge (second from left) and Ambassador Kenneth Merten participate in a wreath-laying ceremony May 31 at the flagstaff monument to the Foreign Service in Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, D.C.



AFSA Governing Board Meeting June 16, 2021

Ratifying Previous Votes: The Governing Board, meeting in person for the first time since early in the pandemic, ratified actions taken based on AFSA Governing Board decisions made while meeting virtually at regular meetings from March 2020 to May 2021, and adopted all such decisions as its own.

Budget Process: The Governing Board adopted revisions to the standard operating procedures for AFSA budget preparation and approval.

Scholarship and Awards: The board also approved the dissent and performance award recommendations of the Scholarship and Awards Committee.

Legal Defense Fund: The Governing Board approved \$10,000 to be paid to an AFSA member who has already paid for legal services regarding allegations that the member divulged classified information. The board also approved the disbursement of \$1,750 for legal support for a witness talking with prosecutors in a criminal case, based on the member's testimony in the impeachment process.

Associate Member: The Governing Board approved a new associate member.



AFSA Governing Board Meeting July 21, 2021

Committee Assignments: The Governing Board approved the following committee assignments:

Scholarship Committee: John Naland (chair), Christen Machak, John O'Keefe, Russell Duncan, Camille Dockery.

FSJ Editorial Board liaison: Daniel Crocker.

Membership Committee: Joshua Archibald, Camille Dockery, Jay Carreiro. Chair to be determined by committee members.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Tina Wong (chair), Kimberly Harrington, Maria Hart, Russell Duncan, Thomas Yazdgerdi.

Awards and Plaques Committee: Kimberly Harrington (chair), Christen Machak, John Naland, Maria Hart, Jason Vorderstrasse.

AFSA-PAC: John O'Keefe (chair/treasurer), Daniel Crocker, Virginia Bennett.

Legal Defense Fund Committee: Mary Daly (chair), Joshua Archibald, Tina Wong, Jason Singer, Jay Carreiro.

Centennial Committee: John Naland, John O'Keefe, and additional members, including non-board members and well-known members of the Foreign Service community, to be appointed by the president, with advice from John Naland and John O'Keefe.

Minutes Approval Committee: Daniel Crocker (chair), with two more members still to be appointed. ■

■ **Geraldine “Gerry” Pollack Biller**, 86, wife of retired Foreign Service Officer Joel Biller, died peacefully at home in Mequon, Wis., on May 14.

Ms. Pollack grew up in Whitefish Bay, Wisc. Just a week after receiving her bachelor’s degree in interior design and fine arts at Northwestern University, she married Joel Biller and began 25 years of life around the world. The Billers’ postings included two years in France, three years in the Netherlands and a total of five years in Ecuador, Argentina and Chile.

With each move, Ms. Biller became an active participant in the communities in which she lived. She learned to speak French and Spanish. Trained in the fine arts, she was active in local art circles. In France, she developed an art program at a home for troubled teenagers.

In South America, she served on the boards of whichever local international school her children were attending. In Ecuador she and the musically trained wife of another embassy officer joined to create a program for the Quito Children’s Home for the Blind and Deaf; Ms. Biller developed an art component for the deaf children, and her colleague offered a music component for the blind children.

In Washington, D.C., Ms. Biller pursued artistic studies at the Corcoran School of Art, and managed an exchange program between Georgetown University and the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad in Iran.

After Mr. Biller retired from the Foreign Service, the couple returned to Milwaukee and established their 14th home. Ms. Biller received a master’s degree in fine arts from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and went to work at the Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM) as a curatorial assistant and co-curator of several exhibitions.

In 1995 she conceptualized and curated her own exhibition, “Latin American Women Artists, 1905-1955,” and traveled to Puerto Rico, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil to select works and negotiate loan agreements.

The exhibition was a huge success. MAM adopted it as its chief exhibition of the mid-1990s, and it traveled to museums in Miami, Denver, Phoenix and Washington, D.C. The bilingual catalog, part of which she wrote and all of which she edited, is still a highly regarded research resource.

Ms. Biller undertook public service while in Milwaukee. She volunteered at the old Mount Sinai Hospital and was active in the women’s division of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation. She also served on the board of Congregation Emanu-El B’ne Jeshurun. She was especially devoted to Jewish Family Services and served on the JFS board for many years, including a term as president, leading a \$5.6 million capital campaign to purchase the building that is JFS’s home.

She leaves her husband, Joel; daughter Sydney (partner Hana Mandlikova) and Hana’s twins, Elli and Mark; son Andrew and his wife, Karen Brehm Biller; and son Charles, his wife, Lena Chumachenko, and their son, Jordan.

■ **Frances Wilma Breaux**, 100, a retired diplomatic secretary, died on Feb. 3 at Prompt Succor Nursing Home in Opelousas, La.

On graduation from business school in Texas, Ms. Breaux joined the United States Foreign Service as a secretary to a diplomat. On retirement she worked for Sandoz-Sandoz-Schiff Attorneys at Law and Lou Anna Foods.

She resided at C’est La Vie in Opelousas and Courtyard Manor in Lafayette, La., and was a current resident of Our

Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home. Ms. Breaux loved animals, especially her cat, Minou.

She is survived by her niece, Maeva (Anthony) Vallet of New Roads, La.; a great-niece, Myra (Michael) Ortego of Opelousas; a host of great-great nieces and nephews; and great-great-great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Albert Pierre Breaux and Mary Lucia Hargroder Breaux; a brother, Emery Breaux; and sisters Marie Lillie Harmon, Marguerite Ella Savoy and Iris Mae Lemoine.

■ **Jane Carswell Corrigan**, 89, spouse of the late FSO and former ambassador Robert Foster Corrigan, of Coral Gables, Fla., died on June 20 at Baptist Hospital of Miami after a short illness.

Ms. Carswell was born in Syracuse, N.Y., on Oct. 11, 1931, to Clara Hunt Carswell of Schuylerville, N.Y., and Earl Thomas Carswell of Fort Miller, N.Y.

She grew up in Glens Falls, N.Y., where her father owned and managed Carswell Motors, an International Harvester distributorship. She helped out at the dealership for much of her youth; as a result, she was known for her ability to drive anything on wheels and fix most things mechanical.

A junior prom queen, she graduated from Glens Falls High School in 1949 and then enrolled at Mount Holyoke College. While studying at the University of Geneva during her junior year, Ms. Carswell met her future husband, a Foreign Service officer with the State Department who was stationed in nearby Heidelberg, Germany.

In 1952 she married Robert Foster Corrigan of Cleveland, Ohio, and spent the next 20 years living overseas in Dakar, Santiago, Guatemala City, the Panama Canal Zone, São Paulo and Kigali.

Ms. Corrigan was the consummate hostess, and an elegant, intelligent and beloved partner to her husband as he served in his many posts, which included being deputy chief of protocol in Washington (and attending many state dinners at the White House with President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Mamie Eisenhower) and culminated with his appointment as U.S. ambassador to Rwanda (1971-1973).

Ms. Corrigan raised five children in what were sometimes difficult circumstances that included attempted coups d'état. She once had to talk her way through a curfew checkpoint late at night to get to the hospital to give birth. She was multilingual and attended parent-teacher conferences in Spanish, Portuguese and French.

In 1967, having flown single-engine planes in both Guatemala and Panama, she participated in the U.S. Southern Command's tropic survival training program alongside Special Forces teams preparing for Vietnam deployments. She wrote an article about her experience, which was published in the December 1967 *Foreign Service Journal*.

She also managed the Red Cross volunteer program at Gorgas Hospital in the Canal Zone. In most of the countries where she lived, she traveled to remote areas to visit and encourage religious missionaries. She sent food and supplies to, among others, the Maryknoll sisters and priests who served the poor in remote areas of Guatemala. Her strong Catholic faith was an inspiration to her family and friends.

After her husband's retirement from the State Department in 1973, the family returned to Chevy Chase, Md. While continuing to raise her children, Ms. Corrigan studied to become a registered nurse. For more than two decades

she worked at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, Md., both as a critical care nurse and later as director of quality assurance, and at the Washington Hospice.

Ms. Corrigan was an alumna of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass.; the University of Geneva in Switzerland; and American University in Washington, D.C., where she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing.

A Dame of Malta and a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, she was active in many other religious, civic, nursing and volunteer organizations.

Ms. Corrigan was preceded in death by her husband in 2005, her only sister, Joan Carswell Clarke (Mrs. Vincent Clarke) of Glens Falls, N.Y., and by three babies who died in infancy.

She is survived by five children: Kevin Corrigan of Hedgesville, W. Va., and his wife, Nancy Novotny Corrigan; Mary Annette Corrigan Ogden of Houston, Texas; Martha Jane Allison of Santa Cruz, Calif., and her husband, Michael Allison; Robert Foster Corrigan Jr. of Houston and his wife, Gwendolyn Kilham Corrigan; Susan Corrigan of Coral Gables, Fla.; nine grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

■ **Nancy S. Gordon**, 98, wife of the late FSO and former Ambassador Robert C.F. Gordon, died on April 2 in Charlottesville, Va.

Ms. Gordon was born in Knoxville, Tenn., on July 20, 1922, and lived there until she graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1944. On graduating, she was selected for a Rockefeller internship with the National Institute of Public Affairs in Washington, D.C., and later worked for the Alabama Legislative Reference Service in Montgomery, Ala.

She attended the University of California-Berkeley, where she received a master's degree in political science in 1948. There she met Mr. Gordon, and the couple married in 1949.

During their Foreign Service career, the Gordons were posted to Baghdad, Khartoum, Dar es Salaam, Rome, Port Louis—where Mr. Gordon was U.S. ambassador from 1980 to 1983—and Florence, where Mr. Gordon was consul general.

One of many career highlights was meeting Lady Bird Johnson in Florence, where she rented a villa for a summer. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

In 1996 the Gordons moved to Montana to live near family. After Mr. Gordon's death in 2001, Ms. Gordon returned to Florence to be with family and friends, and then moved to Charlottesville, Va.

Ms. Gordon is survived by two daughters, Laura Giannozzi and Moffie Funk; four grandchildren, Sara, Stefano, Robert and Laura; and two great-grandchildren, Amelie and Rowan.

■ **Curtis F. Jones**, 99, a retired Foreign Service officer who lived in the Carol Woods Retirement Community in Chapel Hill, N.C., passed away on June 5.

Mr. Jones was born in Bangor, Maine, on Oct. 25, 1921. He graduated from Bangor High in 1939, and attended Bowdoin College, graduating early in 1942 to join the U.S. Army.

During World War II, he was posted to several different locations, including the University of Pennsylvania for Arabic-language study, but served his last and longest assignment as an air traffic controller on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific. He was honorably discharged as a sergeant in 1945.

After the war, he joined the State

Department as a Foreign Service officer. He was sent back to Penn for further Arabic study before being assigned in 1946 to Beirut, his first overseas post and, in 1971, his last.

Mr. Jones also served in Ethiopia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Oman and Syria. He spent a year at the U.S. Naval War College, also earning his master's degree from The George Washington University.

Mr. Jones' final assignment was as director of the Office of Research and Intelligence for the Near East and South Asia.

After retiring in 1976, Mr. Jones moved to Chapel Hill, N.C., in 1977. He was active in the Rotary Club for several decades, played tennis until he was 92 and was a lifelong birder, arborist and gardener.

Most of his retirement years were spent writing (his articles were published both locally and nationally), speaking and teaching (e.g., at the Triangle Institute for Security Studies), drawing on his direct experience in the Middle East. He published two books, *Divide and Perish: The Geopolitics of the Middle East* (2011) and *The Wars of the Middle Eastern Succession: 1914-2016* (2018) and was working on a third.

Mr. Jones was preceded in death by his wife, Elizabeth "Betty" Swann Jones; his parents, Ernest F. and Florence (née Carll) Jones; and his brother, Sherwood Jones.

He is survived by his three children, Dr. Curtis Thompson Jones (Jan), Dr. Steven Swann Jones (Roselyn) and Dr. Leslie Sargent Jones (Jeffrey); five grandchildren, Leila Dean, Geoffrey Jones, Trent Jones, Tyler Jones and Destry Jones; three great-grandchildren, Sophia Dean, Gordon Dean and Dillon Jones; his sister, Faith Middleton; and the beloved partner of his last years, Eleanor Gates Kinnaird.

■ **Samuel Karp**, 100, a retired Foreign Service officer, died at his home in Walnut Creek, Calif., on June 28.

Mr. Karp was born in Philadelphia and graduated from public school in 1939. He worked for a short time with the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps in a civilian capacity. In 1942 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was assigned to the 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, seeing military service in North Africa and Italy.

In September 1945, immediately following his honorable discharge from the Army, Mr. Karp joined the Foreign Service while in Italy and was assigned as a clerk to the political adviser's office at Fifth Army Headquarters in Caserta. This was followed by assignments in the consulate general in Salonika and then the embassy in Athens as a code clerk.

In Athens, Mr. Karp met his future wife, Rachel Keil, also a member of the Foreign Service. Ms. Keil had previously served with the U.S. Auxiliary Army Corps. Foreign Service regulations at the time required Ms. Keil to resign from the Foreign Service when she married. They wed in the United States on July 5, 1949.

The Karp's first assignments were Budapest and then London, where their son Daniel was born. Their daughter Susan Diane was born while they were in Washington, D.C., and Larry Samuel was born during their next post in Montreal, where Mr. Karp was appointed vice consul. Marylou was born four years later in Jamaica.

Subsequently, the family served in Ciudad Juarez, La Paz, Managua, Hong Kong, Mexico City, London and Washington, D.C.

After their retirement in 1978, the Karp's lived briefly in Alexandria, Va., and then spent the next 27 years in San Marcos, Calif. They moved to Walnut Creek in 2005. Ms. Karp died in 2017.

Mr. Karp is survived by four children, nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

■ **Penelope "Penne" Babcock Laingen**, 89, wife of the late Ambassador Bruce Laingen, died peacefully at her son's home in Marshall, Va., on April 3.

Ms. Babcock was born in Ann Arbor, Mich., the daughter of Frederick and Margaret Babcock. The family moved to Chevy Chase, Md., where she attended Bethesda Chevy Chase High School before graduating with a degree in English from The George Washington University. While at GWU, she was active in the Pi Beta Phi sorority.

She was a case file typist for the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover before marrying FSO Bruce Laingen at All Saints Church in Chevy Chase in 1957. She spent the next 30 years supporting him in his Foreign Service career. Together, they served overseas in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Malta, settling in Bethesda during their stateside assignments.

While on these foreign tours, Ms. Laingen created and supported numerous cultural exchange programs and efforts to empower and train women. She was also an outspoken advocate for pay and recognition for Foreign Service spouses as they accompany their partners overseas.

In 1979 her husband was sent unaccompanied to be chargé d'affaires in Iran, where, in November of that year, he was taken hostage along with 51 other staff and held for 444 days. During that national crisis, Ms. Laingen led the other families in their resolute determination to bring their loved ones home.

She hung a bright yellow ribbon around the large oak tree at their home in Bethesda after remembering the song "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree," made popular by Tony Orlando.

The ribbon campaign was soon picked up around the country as the most popular symbol of unity and hope for the safe return of the hostages.

It was so successful that the original ribbon is housed in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, and the concept is now a common part of numerous other causes. She also created the Family Liaison Action Group to better direct and organize the families' response.

Following the hostage crisis, Ms. Laingen focused on writing, history and genealogy, authoring "My Favorite Forebearers," a detailed history of her ancestors, as well as numerous newsletters, editorials and articles, up until the time of her passing.

Throughout her life, she maintained her passions for music and art, playing the piano and composing many pieces for friends and family. Her artwork hangs prominently in her family's homes and was auctioned for charity in Malta. One piece, a scene of Afghanistan, "Kabul High Rise," was selected for the cover of the February 1975 *Foreign Service Journal*.

She remained active in Pi Beta Phi, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Association of American Foreign Service Wives (now Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide) and her high school reunion committee, among others.

Ms. Laingen raised and guided a loving family in some of the most inhospitable places in the world, while socializing with and advising ambassadors, senators, presidents and first ladies. She will be remembered as setting an amazing example of love, sacrifice, courage and humility to those who knew her.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 62 years, Bruce Laingen, and sister Peggy Davis. She leaves three sons,

William, Charles and James; daughters-in-law Mary Kay, Laura and Hope; 10 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; and her brother, James.

■ **Robert Bernard Nolan**, 69, a retired FSO and former ambassador, passed away peacefully at his home in Reston, Va., on June 9, with his family by his side. He had experienced the sudden onset of an extremely rare form of cancer, chronic neutrophilic leukemia.

Mr. Nolan was born in Philadelphia on Jan. 3, 1952, to Bernard Nolan and Mary Connolly Nolan, who had both emigrated from Ireland as young children in the 1920s. He received his education from La Salle College High School and Villanova University, where he graduated summa cum laude and as the top student in his class in 1974.

He met his wife, Nancy Wilson Nolan, at Villanova, and celebrated 46 years of marriage to her the day before his passing.

Mr. Nolan came from a Foreign Service family and was introduced early on to overseas life accompanying his parents on assignments to Kenya, Sierra Leone, Cyprus and Yemen. His mother also worked at the State Department's passport agency in Philadelphia for many years.

After graduate studies at The George Washington University, Mr. Nolan joined the Foreign Service in 1976, along with his younger brother, Steve. They were the first siblings to enter the Foreign Service in the same A-100 class.

Another first came years later when the brothers were posted as ambassadors in Southern Africa at the same time. In total, Mr. Nolan's family has proudly served the department for more than 100 years.

Mr. Nolan was known as a caring and compassionate leader with a calm hand

and warm smile. His first overseas assignment was as the general services officer in Guinea. Over the course of his career, he was posted to Madagascar, Finland, Cuba, Mexico and Lesotho. In Monterrey, Mexico, he served as U.S. consul general.

His last assignment abroad was as U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. His domestic assignments included service as executive director of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, director of the Office of Career Development and Assignments, and director of the Office of Performance Evaluation.

Even after formally retiring, Amb. Nolan continued to serve on special assignments and projects until mid-2020. He was well known throughout the department for his wisdom, kindness and generous mentorship of Foreign Service and Civil Service colleagues.

Over the course of his distinguished career, Amb. Nolan imparted his love of international affairs to family members and many friends, hosting them for extended stays abroad, some for the first time in their lives. He was a lifelong member of the American Foreign Service Association.

He served his community through volunteer work at Saint Thomas à Becket Catholic Church, volunteer work at the Catholic churches he attended while living abroad and through leadership positions in his neighborhood association in Reston, Va. Amb. Nolan cherished a broad assortment of family pets over the years, but particularly loved his three collies.

Amb. Nolan's family and faith were the most important aspects of his life.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy, and their three children, Meghan Killiany (Steven), Ryan Nolan and Colleen Akpati (Olisa); six grandchildren: Kaitlyn, Emma and Abigail Killiany; and Evelyn, Elise

and Joseph Akpati; and a brother, Ambassador (Ret.) Steve Nolan (Judy).

In accordance with his wishes, memorial donations may be made in his name to the Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org).

■ **Larry L. Palmer**, 71, a retired FSO and former ambassador, passed away in Washington, D.C., on April 21.

Born in Augusta, Ga., on July 13, 1949, to Rev. Roosevelt V. and Gladys Young Palmer, Mr. Palmer was the youngest of four children. He received his primary and secondary education in Augusta, graduating as valedictorian of the class of 1966 from T. W. Josey High School, after which he earned a bachelor's degree from Emory University in 1970.

The following year he joined the Peace Corps and served as a volunteer in Liberia, teaching high school while working toward a master's degree in education with an emphasis in African history from Texas Southern University, which he completed in 1973.

He earned a Doctor of Education degree with a concentration in higher education administration and African studies at Indiana University in 1978. He then taught at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., from 1978 to 1981.

Three years into a university teaching career, Mr. Palmer decided that he wanted to "see the world." He then passed the Foreign Service exam and left academia to join the U.S. Foreign Service in 1982.

His first overseas assignment was as vice consul in the Dominican Republic (1982-1984). Next, he served as personnel officer in Uruguay, with concurrent responsibility for Paraguay (1984-1986).

Returning stateside, he served as staff assistant to the assistant secretary of State for African affairs from 1986 to 1987, fol-

lowed by a tour in West Africa as counselor for administration in Sierra Leone from 1987 to 1989.

In 1989, Mr. Palmer became a Pearson Fellow, serving as assistant to the president of the University of Texas, El Paso, Diana Natalicio, with the tasks of promoting the North American Free Trade Agreement, creating faculty and student exchange opportunities in universities throughout Mexico, and serving as university consultant for international affairs.

After two years as a fellow, he served as personnel officer in South Korea from 1991 to 1994, then returned to the Dominican Republic as counselor for administration (1994-1998).

Returning to the Washington, D.C., area from 1998 to 1999, Mr. Palmer was delighted to be a member of the Department of State's Senior Seminar and was honored to become president of his seminar class. Family members recall that he thoroughly enjoyed that year of learning about the lesser-known interests and capabilities of our government.

After the Senior Seminar, he was assigned as deputy chief of mission in Ecuador, where for two years of his three-year tour he served as chargé d'affaires, remaining until July 2002.

In September 2002 he was appointed U.S. ambassador to Honduras, where he is well remembered for increasing local participation in the annual July 4 celebration from 200 people, usually invited for an indoor cocktail, to around 3,000 people treated to an outside full-blown fiesta featuring three types of musical bands and enough food for guests to "carry some home" by his third and final year in 2005.

On leaving Honduras, Amb. Palmer served as president of the Inter-American Foundation, an independent agency of

the State Department, until he was again called into service as U.S. ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, a position from which he retired from the Foreign Service in 2016.

After a brief period of retirement, Amb. Palmer joined Howard University as ambassador in residence. He had come full circle—once again flourishing in the university campus environment he loved. He held this position until his passing.

In the end, Larry L. Palmer will be remembered for being a variety of things to a variety of people: ambassador, teacher, mentor, husband, father, baseball coach, friend. Family members and friends recall that he took on each role with the same blend of dogged determination and swashbuckling flair with which he approached life, in the words of his favorite karaoke song, "My Way."

Ambassador Palmer is survived by his wife of 46 years, Lucille Saundle Palmer; his son, Vincent (wife, Heydi); two grandchildren; his brother, Charles, and sisters, Marylou and Seygbo; and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins.

■ **George Edward Shepard Jr.**, 81, a former Foreign Service officer with USAID, passed away at his home in Chapel Hill, N.C., on March 1, after courageously fighting a relentless, long-term vascular illness.

Mr. Shepard was born on Oct. 3, 1939, to George E. Shepard Sr. (Bo) and Mary Lou Huffman of Chapel Hill.

In 1964 he earned his undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina and, in 1966, an MBA from The George Washington University.

In October 1967, he was hired by USAID as a refugee adviser and served in the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969.

During 18 months in Pleiku Province in the Central Highlands he worked as a civilian with the indigenous Montagnards—allies of the United States in the war against North Vietnam. His last assignment was as an adviser to the deputy district chief.

His time in Vietnam—and his work as a refugee adviser—had a tremendous impact on his life. He was one of only five recipients of a medal for the development of minority ethnic groups from the Republic of Vietnam.

Later, when the Montagnards began entering the United States as refugees in the 1980s, he became involved with the resettlement process, once again making lifelong friends.

Subsequently, Mr. Shepard had a varied and interesting career, ending with 10 years as an economic developer in the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

Friends and colleagues remember him for his generosity and inimitable good-humored fellowship.

Mr. Shepard is survived by his wife, Sharon Sullivan Mújica, also of Chapel Hill; two sons, Erik (and his wife, Laura) of North Carolina, and Adam (and his wife, Ivana) of California; a nephew, Reid Chisholm; stepchildren Marco and Samantha Marquez of California, and Jeff and Tanya Keenan of New Jersey; step-grandchildren Elle and Sofia; and cat Bela.

Donations may be made in his memory to the Montagnard American Organization, 611 Summit Avenue #10, Greensboro NC 27405.

■ **Dan A. Zachary**, 97, a retired Foreign Service officer, died in Bethesda, Md., on March 26.

Mr. Zachary was a native of Chicago and graduated from Northwestern University. He received a master's degree in

European history from Harvard University, as well as a master's degree from Stanford University. He also attended the Sorbonne University and was a graduate of the Air War College in Montgomery, Ala.

At the start of World War II, Mr. Zachary, then 18, worked at a Martin Marietta aircraft plant. He then enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving on a destroyer escort, the USS *Le Hardy*, convoying troop and cargo vessels in the western Pacific. With the end of hostilities, his ship participated in the surrender ceremonies on Wake Island and was decommissioned, after which he served at the Naval Air Station in Pearl Harbor.

In 1953 Mr. Zachary began his Foreign Service career and was assigned to Munich as a consular officer. Postings in Copenhagen and Paris as an economic-commercial officer followed. He later had three assignments in African affairs, in Ethiopia, Congo and the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs.

The nexus of Mr. Zachary's career was Greece. Following Greek-language and area training at the Foreign Service Institute (1960-1961), he had three different assignments in economic, commercial and political affairs in Athens and Thessaloniki.

After the Greek military junta took over in 1967 and began using Greek intelligence services to harass Greek democratic leaders, Mr. Zachary created the primary link to bolster these leaders. In his last assignment, he served as consul general in Thessaloniki from 1977 to 1981.

Following his retirement, Mr. Zachary was employed by the Foreign Service Board of Examiners and covered Greek affairs in the Bureau of Intelligence and in special task forces, including one formed during the Cyprus crisis. He also

served as an escort for international visitors abroad under the Arts America program. He later served in State's Freedom of Information Unit.

Mr. Zachary's years of retirement were full of adventure. He was an expert scuba diver, exploring the Aegean and the Red Sea, and bicycled extensively. Well into his 80s, he could be found on the bicycle trails of Mississippi and Arizona, as well as in the Washington, D.C., area.

He was also an accomplished linguist, fluent in Greek, French and German. He loved contemporary American culture and was an avid jazz fan. Possessing a great and often irreverent sense of humor, he particularly enjoyed comic book characters such as Bugs Bunny and the bumbling octogenarian, Mr. Magoo.

Mr. Zachary was a member of DACOR, the American Foreign Service Association, the Modern Greek Studies Association, the Society for the Protection of the Greek Heritage, River Road Unitarian Church and the Destroyer Escort Association.

His marriage to Carol Wenzel Zachary ended in divorce.

Survivors include his companion for many years, Anne Overlin Severy; two children, Pamela Jean Zachary and Dan William Zachary; and one granddaughter, Alica Janine Zachary-Erickson. ■



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.

Orchestrating the Symphony

Exercise of Power: American Failures, Successes, and a New Path Forward in the Post-Cold War World

Robert M. Gates, Knopf, 2020, \$29.95/hardcover, e-book available, 464 pages.

REVIEWED BY ALEXIS LUDWIG

Few public officials alive today, current or former, are better qualified to critique the exercise of U.S. national power than Robert Gates, a former Secretary of Defense under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, CIA Director and Deputy National Security Adviser under President George H.W. Bush, a former National Security Council staffer under four different presidents, and a career CIA officer and commissioned officer of the U.S. Air Force, among other roles.

Gates has played the Washington power game at every level—from the top of the political appointee heap to career junior officer—and has a doctorate in Russian history from Georgetown University to buttress his credentials as veteran practitioner. He is, indeed, well equipped to write a book titled *Exercise of Power*—a fact the author makes sure to highlight at the outset.

His chosen subtitle, *American Failures, Successes, and a New Path Forward in the Post-Cold War World*, hints at an important subtheme—namely, that since 1989, things have gone wrong for the United States at least as often as they have gone right. As Gates notes in his prologue, “There have been U.S. suc-

cesses in the international arena in the past quarter-century, but the overall trend for us has been negative, despite our braggadocio.”

Beyond DIME

He begins with an overview of what he calls the Symphony of Power, the ways in which the various instruments of power are coordinated or “orchestrated” in the conduct of national security strategy—or ought to be. In this, he moves beyond the classic Department of Defense “DIME” model (Diplomacy, Military, Economic and Information) to include other instruments of power of increasing relevance in the 21st century. Among these: cyber capabilities, intel-

ligence, science and technology, alliances, nationalism, and even culture and ideology.

Gates raises familiar themes, particularly the United States’ overreliance on the military instrument and the Department of Defense, as well as the related underfunding of its civilian counterparts, including and especially diplomacy.

The State Department receives

ambivalent treatment from Gates. He praises Foreign Service and Civil Service officers as often impressive on the individual level, but laments the lumbering inefficiency of State’s bureaucracy. He believes that the department should theoretically serve as central coordinator of national security strategy but, absent serious investment and reform to correct its structural shortcomings, should be cut out of the process altogether, if necessary.

In a theme he returns to repeatedly throughout, Gates is thoroughly baffled

by the fact that the country that created Madison Avenue can do such a poor job of selling itself to the outside world. He attributes this to an inexplicable unwillingness to showcase the good work the United States does internationally, from helping reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa to leading the international community’s emergency response to the devastating 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia.

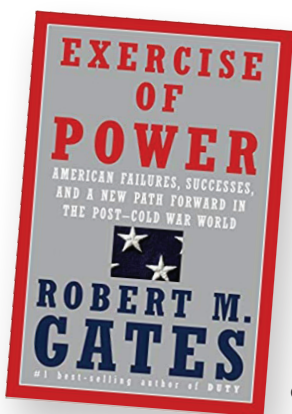
Because the success of national strategy ultimately turns on the strategist’s “orchestration” of instruments, Gates’ brief discussion of “wise and courageous leadership” as a discrete component of national power bears special mention. He singles out four modern presidents for their wisdom and courage in maintaining strategic discipline against contrary pressures, and for ensuring that appropriate means are provided in pursuit of realistic political ends: Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

The others, not so much. Gates pulls few punches: “I believe post-Cold War presidents at key moments have made unwise decisions and then aggravated the consequences by failing to strengthen and use all the instruments of power in implementing those decisions.”

Gates spends the bulk of his book conducting (if you’ll pardon the diplomatic cliché) a tour d’horizon of the principal challenges and problems faced by the United States since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Let’s take a few highlights.

Principal Challenges

First, Iran. Gates conveys the historical depth and complexity of the challenge posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has resisted successful resolution in the face of repeatedly shift-



ing U.S. approaches—including President Barack Obama’s Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the engagement side and President Donald Trump’s maximum pressure campaign on the other. Yet he still faults the United States for being “too restrained for too long in using non-military instruments of power” to better the odds of achieving our goals.

Next, the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. While distinctly different in Gates’ view, both suffer from a similar original sin, which might be characterized in general terms as the United States biting off more than it can chew. In the

military to carry out the task; and the failure to recognize and then remedy the weakness of our nonmilitary instruments of power that were so essential to even attempting such an effort.”

While he may spend more time on U.S. failures, Gates is also dutiful in portraying some signal successes. Colombia is a notable one, with lessons learned for possible future U.S. ventures in helping rescue teetering states from the brink. He identifies six key conditions on which strategic success will depend. Among these: the presence of a strong, courageous and competent local counterpart; the existence of at least minimally func-

His chosen subtitle hints at an important subtheme—namely, that since 1989, things have gone wrong for the United States at least as often as they have gone right.

case of Afghanistan, Gates describes the ways in which the initial decisive military success gave way to stalemate and then failure when the strategic goals were changed to include the essentially unachievable: building a democracy from scratch in a place that had never had it and using a U.S. military designed for waging war, not for doing post-conflict reconstruction.

As for Iraq, in contrast to Bush 41’s limited political aim in the first Gulf War—to push Iraq out of Kuwait—and his disciplined decision to stop once that aim was achieved, George W. Bush reached problematically for the stars from the start. Says Gates: “My focus here ... is on President Bush’s decision to build a better, democratic Iraq after overthrowing Saddam Hussein; the failure to recognize the magnitude of that challenge; the overreliance on the

tioning local institutions; bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress; and, critically, a strictly circumscribed U.S. supporting role. Where and when these conditions do not hold, Gates advises, we had best go back to the drawing board.

Another is the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), President George W. Bush’s successful strategic initiative to confront the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa. PEPFAR, says Gates, “was bold and practical.” Its evident success “improved the lives of tens of millions in Africa, won America friends and admirers among ordinary people as well as elites and governments.” Such success, says Gates, should serve as a model for the future use of nonmilitary instruments in pursuit of U.S. national interests.

Russia and China get special billing, of course, as top-tier strategic challenges for the United States. In the light

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of his academic background in Russian history, Gates’ summary of events from the disintegration of the Soviet Union to the consolidation of President Vladimir Putin’s hold on power is a compact tour de force.

He hedges somewhat in assessing whether U.S. policy toward Russia—from the accelerated push for NATO enlargement to insufficiently robust or timely economic assistance—might have contributed to the fraught tensions in bilateral relations today, or whether these are the inevitable by-product of a Russia frustrated by its diminished geopolitical status and seeking to “assert its rightful role in the world on its own terms.”

China’s fall from the grace of high expectations for democratic convergence to the cold-eyed realpolitik of the great power competition underway today has been even more dramatic, in Gates’ view. Here, while emphasizing the high stakes, he strikes a pragmatic, even tone: “China’s rise does not require America’s decline. Whether the United States descends depends far less on what happens in Beijing than on what happens in Washington.”

A Pitch for Realism

More hopefully, he adds: “The most likely future is one of long-term competition and rivalry, waged primarily through nonmilitary instruments of power.” And finally, and more critically: “As we look to the future, perhaps the most important nonmilitary instrument of power is a long-range strategy for waging this competition. The Chinese have one. The United States does not.”

Beyond acknowledging that those exercising power (including U.S. presidents) often have less of it in fact than perceived, Gates sharply criticizes the excess of strategic ambition and

the absence of strategic realism of U.S. political leaders, that is, their failure to link realistic ends with viable means. Fortunately, however, he mostly stops short of petulant “I told you so” finger-pointing or “it’s because they didn’t listen to me” fuming.

This is because Gates, better than most observers, understands that some strategic problems have no solution—or at least no realistic solution—at all, and that just because the approach that was tried fails doesn’t mean another approach would have succeeded. In the opening segment of his chapter on Georgia, Libya, Syria and Ukraine, for example, Gates quotes a former Obama NSC official to the effect that, however dramatically different our respective approaches have been, intervening in and occupying Iraq, intervening in but not occupying Libya, and neither intervening in nor occupying Syria, were each decidedly similar in being “costly disasters.”

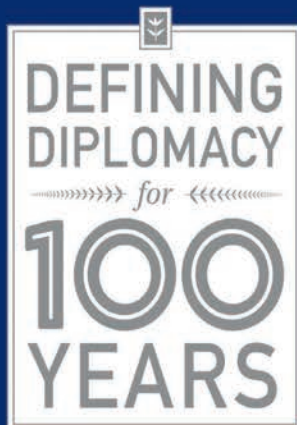
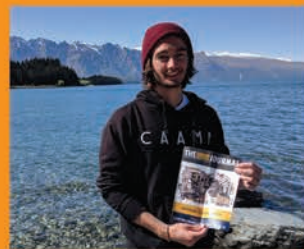
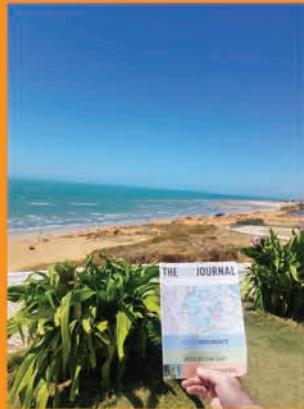
All told, Gates’ book is an excellent primer for the reader interested in current geopolitical events, the student of international relations and the practitioner of national security strategy. It is a clear-eyed look at lessons learned, and a pragmatic appraisal of how the United States might choose to apply these lessons to improve its performance in “orchestrating the symphony of power” in pursuit of U.S. national interests in the future. ■

Alexis Ludwig is currently on the faculty of the National War College. From 2018 to 2020, he served as deputy permanent representative at the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States. He joined the Foreign Service in 1994 and has spent most of his career in overseas missions in the Western Hemisphere and East Asia.

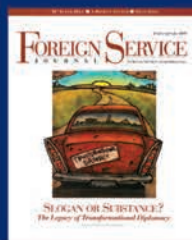
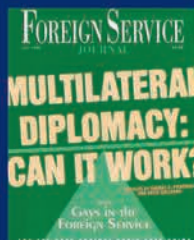
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An Old Friend

BY BRIANNA HOGAN



Subject: Hello from Singapore!

Dear Hong Kong,

Hey! Long time no talk. I just wanted to reach out, see how you were all doing. I've been so busy with school and whatnot. Moving is always so difficult. But Singapore is a lot like Hong Kong! I'm sure I'll like it here.



Should I be writing this message? I don't know. What time is it? Oh, it's late. What's the date? Oh. It's been almost two years since I was in Hong Kong. What was my dream about last night? Oh, I know! Let me write it down:

We were at that one place where the streetlights dimly lit the winding roads for us and it was raining.

I don't even remember the details. Delete that.

I'm still getting used to Singapore. I tried to adopt some slang. Like saying "can" instead of "OK." I can't bring myself to say other Singaporean slang words, though, like "sia" or "lah." I'm not sure why. It feels like if I did, I'd be appropriating them in some way. Maybe it's because I'm an "ang moh." That's more slang. It means foreigner—I think. I'm not sure.



On the plane ride here, was I naive for thinking we'd stay friends? No, I was just holding out hope, I think. Have I had a friendship last before? Wow, I don't think so. Probably the life of every Foreign Service brat.

When you deal with so much adversity, you begin to create subconscious mannerisms to deal with the change. Mine is burning bridges. Humans bask on the notion of being secure. We weren't made to enjoy change. We're usually scared of it—scared of the unknown. But change is inevitable, especially in my world.

Because of adversity, I hugged loneliness. Its skin was cold, its breaths were short and tremulous, and its nails dug into my flesh. Its embrace was hardly an imitation of warm-blooded humans. But being lonely meant not having to lose anyone, so I held on tight.

Wait, no, delete those two paragraphs. Too poetic. What time is it now?

I saw those pictures you posted. You guys look great! Who are the new people? Are they new students? The other day I saw your name pop up on my phone. Thanks for wishing me a happy birthday!



Did I reply to that? Gosh, I am so bad at replying. Is it rude if I reply now? No, I'm acknowledging it in this email—that's good enough. Right? Wait, how many times have they texted me? I'm so tired.

I'm doing great, by the way! I've been super busy (hence the lack of replies!). You know, moving is always so difficult. I've done it eight times and it only seems to get harder. But Singapore only gets better by the day. You promised me that I would love it here.

You were totally right. It only took a few months.

I think I missed your special day. So sorry. I wasn't on my phone all week. Still getting adjusted to the schedule here! I hope you had a great birthday. I wish I was there to celebrate with you!



What did they write again? "Happy birthday! Miss you! How are you?" That's sweet.

*Happy birthday! Miss you! How are you?
Happy birthday! Miss you! How are you?
Happy birthday! Miss you! How are you?
They've probably given up on me by now.*



I promised I would make a schedule to keep in touch. I never did. Do they remember me making the promise? I don't mean to ignore them, but it just makes it easier—just forget they ever existed.

I was going to see you last year. But the Hong Kong protests were happening. Then I booked my ticket for April. But then COVID-19 happened. Hopefully, I can go back sometime again, but who knows?

I haven't heard much from you lately. Hope you're doing all right.

Anyway, let me know when you're free to call or something? Miss you!



This time I beat them to it. This time I won't get hurt. This time I will be ready. This time I won't be tethered to an old home.

I wonder though, was it easy letting me go? It wasn't for me. I wonder if their eyes were swollen, head was pounding, or if they also slept on a pillow that was damp from all the tears. I hope they'll still see my face in places we used to go to. Even if the lights are dim.

I'm sorry, Hong Kong.

Yours truly,
Singapore ■



Brianna Hogan is a college student in the United States who comes from a multicultural background with Thai and American parents. She has lived in seven countries so far. She wrote this piece, a reflection on her transition from Hong Kong to Singapore, as a high school senior at the Singapore American School.

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Right of Boom: A Bomb and a Book

BY STEPHEN G. MCFARLAND

In U.S. military jargon, “right of boom” is the period that immediately follows—i.e., “to the right of”—an explosion or an attack. Pithy and colorful, it conveys sensory overload and rupture: the dilation of time, narrowed vision, dialed-down hearing, and the rebooting of the brain. “Right of boom” moments, in both natural disasters and acts of violence, shape the lives of people in that subset of the Foreign Service and foreign affairs agencies who work in the gritty borderlands of foreign policy and national security.

To work in this area requires resilience. It starts with mental and emotional agility: One moment you check an area for threats; the next, you’re trying to empathize with someone on the humanitarian to war criminal continuum. One day you drive into an exchange of fire with the gods of war rolling dice; that evening, you’re home with your family. Asleep that night, your mind becomes a gonzo film director and replays the ordeal for the first time.

Camaraderie, family and a sense of purpose help you learn to navigate this uncertain terrain. Our security training is tactical and practical: the ins and outs of avoiding, mitigating or defeating threats. But even if you dodge a bullet and enjoy that fleeting rush, you must think through who else got shot and why.

That’s how I came to value self-reflection and perspective as much as varying my routes or going to the range.

Ironically, a book I never read shaped my search for meaning in wartime: *501 Spanish Verbs*. Seeing a copy of it in 2019 at a hostel lobby in Lima inspired me to write this piece. I was there as a Georgetown graduate student to meet with former combatants and to seek lessons from the war against Sendero Luminoso, the “Shining Path,” the fundamentalist Maoist insurgency that I had reported on from Peru as a younger Foreign Service political officer. This sighting took me back to an early lesson on working in the world of political violence and “right of boom.”



It was afternoon in Cuzco, some 11,000 feet up in the Peruvian Andes, in the summer of 1986. At the time, the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas were seeking to overthrow the state through terrorist bombings and assassinations. As the political officer who covered the growing insurgency, and the plummeting state of human rights, I traveled widely in the conflict zones—not just to report on the attacks, but also to examine why seemingly normal people would join the guerrillas to kill soldiers, police officers and fellow villagers, and why the security forces would use sum-

mary executions and torture against civilians as well as rebels.

At night we often heard the bombs and gunfire; Sendero Luminoso’s targets made clear that Americans were enemies. When we learned Sendero had just bombed the tourist train in Cuzco, killing seven persons including an American tourist, I rushed off to learn more.

As I left, the embassy gave me an additional task. Like many Foreign Service officers, I had been a consular officer during my first tour. This day in Cuzco I found myself back in the heart of consular work, assisting American citizens overseas. In this particular case, I needed to obtain the police report on the American whom Sendero had just killed.

It was sunny, but the warmest part of the day had passed, and the increasing chill and the high altitude produced a melancholy effect. I had on a coat and tie—officials in the Andes appreciate formality—but I also wore a mountaineering jacket on top, both for the cold and to better conceal my weapon. The police station was a rundown building with dilapidated furniture and mismatched file cabinets. I identified myself and met the policeman assigned to the case.

He sat in front of a manual typewriter, using his forefingers to produce the documentation of the American’s death that would allow the transfer of his body from the morgue to the capital, and then onward to his home. Poke-poke-poke, place of death. Poke-poke-poke, time of death. Poke-poke-poke, cause of death.

The explosive velocity of dynamite exceeds several thousand meters per sec-



Stephen G. McFarland (@AmbMcFarland; mcfarlandsg@gmail.com) was ambassador to Guatemala from 2008 to 2011. A career Foreign Service officer (1976-2014), he served in wartime Peru, El Salvador, Iraq (in a Marine regiment) and Afghanistan. He first heard bombs go off as a Foreign Service child during the 1964 attack against Embassy Nicosia. He earned a master’s degree in security studies at Georgetown University in 2020.

ond. Mining is common in the Andes, and so is dynamite; Sendero made improvised bombs its weapon of choice. Usually Sendero sought not just to kill, but to obliterate. For this attack, a Sendero member had packed metal objects into the bomb to produce shrapnel to kill even more people. Placed at random into the train's overhead luggage rack, it was low-tech but cruelly effective.

The policeman finished entering the victim's information, a black-and-white explanation that said everything about the moment of death and nothing about why. A solitary fly buzzed in the thin air.

The policeman finally asked me to look through the American's personal effects bundled in a shredded and bloodied sleeping bag, and to decide what to keep and what to discard. I set aside the American's passport and items of possible value, and then anything not soaked in blood.

Eventually I came to some books, and I spotted *501 Spanish Verbs*. It was a staple of young American travelers in Latin America. Shrapnel had lacerated the front cover, and blood had soaked into the paper; in a cruel irony, it now spoke to what Clausewitz termed "the grammar of war." I picked the book up and began to turn the pages.

We identify blood with life. Blood, like life, can transform itself, and it has a variety of visages and colors. This blood was dull and dark, with hints of carmine where drops not fully coagulated had broken open. Soon enough I would learn more about blood's range of color, and the disjointed smells and sounds of its shedding. This blood had its own color; distant now from the furor, confusion and distorted sensory systems of war, it was a fellow American's tragic death embedded in furrows traced by shrapnel.

As I turned the pages, the shrapnel indentations that stabbed the book



COURTESY OF STEPHEN MCFARLAND

(Above) In April 1987 the author visits a bridge blown up by the guerrillas in central Peru. (Right) In Colombia in 2016 as a USAID justice project head, the author rides a mule to visit communities in areas with large guerrilla and narcotics trafficker presence.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN MCFARLAND

changed. They were initially sharp and probably still deadly, but became fewer and finer: destruction's undeciphered cuneiform. There was gradually less blood. I kept turning the pages, the signs of violence receding. Eventually I arrived at a page where there was only a faint puncture and a pinprick of blood. Then, a page with only a faint indentation—and then I turned that page, and the subsequent pages had no sign of blood nor shrapnel.



A turn of a page separated death from life. An image of hope, perhaps, but also of safety's ephemeral nature. I held close that insight (or was it a prayer?) during subsequent years in the insurgencies in Peru, El Salvador, Iraq, Afghanistan and Colombia, as I sought to balance my duties with safety, fatalistic acceptance with free will. During periods of gunfire and mortar fire, or the quiet times when someone may be targeting you, sometimes the memory of that page suggested that all periods of violence come to an end—that even after

a tragedy, when colleagues and contacts are killed, we can keep going.

When I authorized deadly force—thankfully unused—or I traveled to or sent people out to dangerous areas, it reminded me of my own responsibility, since the separation between life and death is paper thin and depends partially on a dice roll. The self-reflection that my handling of that American's belongings engendered was, in retrospect, an essential tool to stay focused and to lead in subsequent assignments.

I put the book in the discard pile, and back at the hotel I scrubbed the blood off my hands. I took the death certificate to the embassy, and the American's body returned home. I ramped up my reporting on the war.

After many years, I still recall vividly sorting through that American victim's personal effects and turning the pages of that blood-soaked book. If that experience has a lesson, I believe it is that after you enter the "right of boom" world, you can't go back—but sometimes you get to turn the page forward. ■

BY LAURA MERZ ■
LAKE ELMENTEITA, KENYA



Lake Elmenteita in the Great Rift Valley of central Kenya is known to be the sometimes-home to a migrating flock of flamingos. Restless from recent COVID-19 lockdowns and hoping to see a few hundred birds, my friends and I set out for an overnight trip from Nairobi in April.

As we exited the highway and saw the whole rim of the lake was colored pink, we realized we were coming upon something truly spectacular: It was estimated that a million or more flamingos were on the lake that weekend. We stood mesmerized for hours as the flamboyance of flamingos swelled and shifted around us in the shallow alkaline lake, with small groups of birds taking flight through the mist and the cacophony of their calls immersing us fully in the dream-like scene. ■

Laura Merz, a Foreign Service spouse in Nairobi, joined the FS community in 2013. After her husband's unaccompanied tour in Kabul, the couple served in Frankfurt. She is currently working as a freelance photographer, raising funds for nature conservation through the sale of her art. Her work is heavily influenced by the colors and textures of the natural world. This image was captured with a Canon 5DMiii and 70-200 F2.8 IS iii lens.

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