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The End of an Era: What Lies Ahead?

BY ERIC RUBIN

The end to America's 20-year war in Afghanistan brought a wave of emotion, sadness and anxiety to thousands of our colleagues, both active-duty and retired—those who served there, those who worked on Afghanistan policy and assistance, and those who participated in the whole-of-government effort to protect our country from another 9/11.

I am writing this only days after the end of our diplomatic and military presence in Afghanistan, in the wake of the tragic deaths of 13 U.S. service members and more than 170 Afghans outside the gates of Kabul airport. Most of the 13 were too young to remember 9/11 or the reasons our country went to war in Afghanistan and then committed to a massive civilian reconstruction effort.

They were doing their duty to help others escape from a dangerous and unstable situation, risking their lives in service to others and to their country. There is no greater sacrifice. We honor them, and offer our heartfelt condolences to their families, fellow service members and friends.

In many respects, this tragic moment is a turning point for our country, our role in the world and our Foreign Service. It

concludes both the massive focus on post-9/11 counter-terrorism that, while essential, changed and altered so much of our engagement

and diplomatic outreach across the globe. It brings a coda to the immediate post-Cold War period, 30 years in which our country has lost sole superpower status but has not yet found or defined its role in the new multipolar world.

The era of “expeditionary diplomacy” and the idea that we were “the world’s indispensable nation” changed our foreign policy and, by extension, our Foreign Service. In the case of our Service, many of the changes had unpredicted but indisputably negative effects.

For the first time since the Vietnam War, a substantial portion of our colleagues have served overseas in unaccompanied danger posts, some for years at a time.

Extensive exposure to the U.S. military in combat conditions led to a slow militarization of Foreign Service culture, with less room for constructive debate and dissent in policy recommendations.

When I joined in 1985, I would have been laughed at if I called my office director, deputy assistant secretary or deputy chief of mission “ma’am” or “sir.” Titles were reserved for only the most senior officials, and everyone else was on a first-name basis. A small thing, perhaps, but one that reflects broader cultural change.

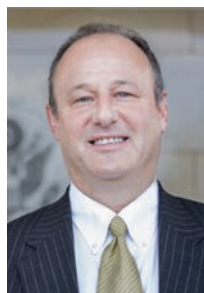
We have also become a less family-friendly and tandem-friendly Service, and this has helped fuel our ongoing loss of talented colleagues who can’t make the career work for their spouses and families in the modern world.

And we have become a much more domestic Service, with the highest proportion of our colleagues serving in the U.S. since the creation of the modern Foreign Service—a trend greatly accelerated by our drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Almost none of those positions has been given back to the embassies and consulates from which they were initially taken as part of the so-called Iraq (and Afghanistan) tax.

Our country no longer has the world’s leading diplomatic and foreign assistance presence, which it had from 1945 until recently. This shift portends a more contested and dangerous diplomatic landscape ahead. We cannot keep doing more with less, and we cannot get the job done properly for the American people and their elected leaders if we don’t have the people, positions, training and support we need to get it done.

In parts of the world, we have been understaffing our embassies and consulates for the past 30 years. We are spending about half, in real-dollar terms, on diplomacy and foreign assistance compared to 1989. That kind of cut has consequences that cannot be denied or swept under the rug any longer.

Our country needs strong diplomacy and strong foreign assistance to maintain, redefine and focus our efforts on the world stage. With the right resources, our Foreign Service is ready to do its part to help our country navigate this painful and challenging turning point. ■



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

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Combating Climate Change on the Ground

BY SHAWN DORMAN

As I write just before we go to press in mid-September, it's difficult to turn attention away from the Afghanistan situation, from the nearly 130,000 who were evacuated from Kabul and our colleagues who managed that evacuation and continue to work 24/7 through the task force and embassies in the region to bring more people out. We cannot turn away from those who remain in Afghanistan.

In his column, AFSA President Eric Rubin looks at the end of the 20-year war and ponders what lies ahead.

Our cover story marks the 10-year anniversary of the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. While debates rage on about how and whether the U.S. should engage in conflict prevention and stabilization efforts, CSO Acting Assistant Secretary Robert Faucher and CSO staffer John Mongan lay out the evolution of this small bureau and offer insights and recommendations for the way ahead.

This month's focus on climate change diplomacy was planned ages ago. Climate change remains one of the planet's biggest crises and perhaps the greatest challenge of our time. We explore what role U.S. diplomats and development professionals can play in combating climate change and

mitigating its impact. This is an ongoing story, and in a future edition we hope to pass along positive news from Glasgow



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

COP 26, which begins Oct. 31.

Our focus here is primarily on incorporating engagement at the local level and the need for the U.S. to lead by example on climate change. FSO Holly Kirking Loomis, who led the U.S. climate delegation to COP 25 in 2019, brings climate leadership messaging and action home to the United States in "To Lead Abroad, We Must Deliver at Home." It's a great case study in the practice of subnational diplomacy.

Professor Theresa Sabonis-Helf picks up on that theme in her look at "The Paris Accord: An Experiment in Polyilateralism." The way that the 2015 agreement creates new roles for nonstate actors may be a significant element in its success.

In "Tackling the Climate Crisis from the Inside," Stephanie Christel Meredith from State's Greening Diplomacy Initiative in the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions shows how embassies are serving as "strategic platforms to demonstrate climate solutions and leadership overseas."

Also from GDI, Mary Tran introduces State's air quality monitoring program, DOSAir, launched in 2015 as a partnership with the EPA. Data from equipment at dozens of posts is available to the FS community and the public through the app ZephAir, facilitating bilateral engagement on many levels.

In "Building a Foundation for Successful Green Diplomacy," FSO Ken Meyer presents a case study in successful environmental stewardship from Tri-Mission Italy. And in "Climate Change: It's Personal," USAID FSO Kovia Gratzon-Erskine shows how climate change realities affect

individuals and communities, and offers ideas for coping. Last, a selection from the FSJ Archive dates back to the 1970s—"the decade of the environment."

The Speaking Out, "Knowledge Management @ State," comes from the inaugural cohort of the Secretary's Leadership Seminar at Harvard Business School Executive Education Program: Yomaris Macdonald, Lourdes Cue, Timothy Haynes, Jennifer Smith and Benjamin Tietz. Preserving institutional knowledge when employees transfer or leave is a perpetual problem. They advocate for a cultural shift from "need to know" to "responsibility to share."

In the Feature, "Flying with Fido," FS family member Melissa Mathews writes about the turmoil caused by the so-called dog ban that began this past summer.

In FS Heritage, FSO Jay Raman tells the story of "The Man Who Crossed the Seas: Charles Lindbergh's Goodwill Tour, 1927-1928." And the Reflection by FSO (ret.) Dane Smith Jr. recalls crossing paths with Sadiq al-Mahdi in Sudan in the 1980s and again two decades later.

This month the Foreign Service mourns the loss of a giant of the Service. FSO Joel Ehrendreich contributes an Appreciation honoring "An Indomitable Spirit: Johnny Young, 1940-2021."

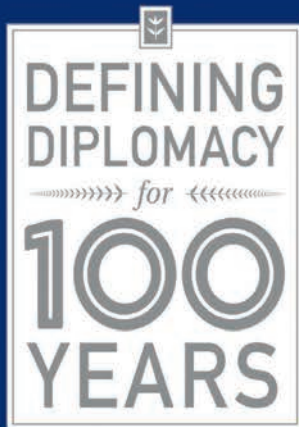
Outgoing Associate Editor Cameron Woodworth offers a parting shot from Cocora Valley, Colombia (Local Lens). We will miss him, and wish him and his wife, USAID attorney Monica Smith, a wonderful new cycling life in Spain. We welcome Julia Wohlers as the new associate editor.

As always, write to us at journal@afsa.org. ■

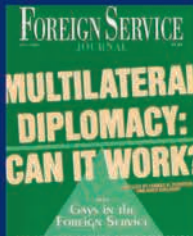
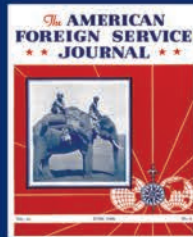
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Kabul, Tehran: The Helplessness We All Felt

Regarding Ambassador Eric Rubin's Aug. 17 statement on events in Afghanistan, I remember my fate-filled year in Kabul (1978-1979) and the abduction and murder of our ambassador Adolph "Spike" Dubs on Valentine's Day 1979.

I remember the helplessness we all felt at the embassy, and I remember the helplessness that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and others in Washington felt in not being able to convince Afghan police and political leaders to wait and negotiate with the hostage-takers.

We all felt naked, exposed and at the mercy of the Marxist regime under Nur Muhammad Taraki that did not seem to be in control of events—and wasn't.

Now, decades later, thanks to the investigative research of Canadian war correspondent Arthur Kent, we know that the Soviets played a much bigger role in the ambassador's abduction and murder (see *Murder in Room 117: Solving the Cold Case That Led to America's Longest War*, Skywriter Communications, 2021).

Diplomatic and military hubris, coupled with White House hubris about the power and influence of the U.S. overseas, has, once again, been exposed, as it was after our diplomats were seized at the embassy in Tehran (where I had also served) on Nov. 4, 1979.

President Jimmy Carter was exposed as helpless, though Ambassador William Sullivan had warned that allowing the shah to enter the U.S. for whatever reason would precipitate uncontrollable events that would endanger the lives of our diplomats.

Here we are again, almost 20 years after President George W. Bush ordered troops into Afghanistan to capture Osama bin Laden. That mission failed; bin Laden

survived for 10 more years presumably under the protection and tolerance of the Pakistan army and government.

Now we are faced with another failed mission after thousands of American and Afghan lives have been lost and the once-vanquished Taliban are back in control in Kabul. In any future dealings with Taliban leaders, we will negotiate from a much weaker position.

Bruce K. Byers
FSO, retired
Reston, Virginia



Counter the Tendency to Retreat

Major congratulations to the *FSJ* for the magnificent September issue featuring, in particular, four articles inspired by Afghanistan (bolstered by selections from earlier *FSJ* editions).

The articles by retired Ambassador Larry Butler and by well-known professor Anthony Cordesman succinctly describe U.S. misadventures mainly in the larger Middle East going back to the "End of History" after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

In the next two articles FSO Keith Mines cites specific, on-the-spot experiences of U.S. mismanagement in Afghanistan and Ambassador Ron Neumann, president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, presents four incisive and valuable lessons Americans should learn from.

Even a cursory glance at recent university and think-tank publications today indicates a natural but unfortunate movement once again toward American retreat from the world. And this does not just derive from the "MAGA" illusion that

opposes necessary domestic improvements at home to those of American policies abroad.

Having entered my 90th year on this earth, I cringe as I recall the panic that grew after American isolation from the world following World War I as we became aware of the threats rising from World War II—until

Pearl Harbor rescued us from the menace of hostile powers conquering the developed world on our eastern and western frontiers.

This tendency to retreat must be countered. And the Foreign Service, with its ongoing experience dealing directly in the field with foreign governments and cultures, is best equipped to lead the effort. Our clear message must be the overwhelming importance of *being there*.

We must explain the need for ongoing, widespread presence among our allies as among our potential opponents or failing states if we are to notice and prepare for problems abroad that easily spread to hurt us. But this effort must be led by diplomats, not the U.S. military, unless and until military involvement proves necessary.

A recent op-ed in *The International New York Times* made the interesting suggestion that some of our woes derive from the constantly growing U.S. military budgets that have created the immense military hammer that leads policymakers to the easy conclusion that every international threat looks like a nail.

The suggestion was that some of that budget be devoted to other U.S. agencies abroad for this work. And, of course, who better than the State Department?

I urge my serving and recently retired Foreign Service colleagues to put their

minds and pens to this important message. Otherwise, I shall have to try to prepare a less informed one myself.

George B. Lambrakis
FSO (ret.)
Paris, France

Focus on Diversity at State

A year ago, your commitment to publishing a running series of articles on race at the State Department was absolutely central to galvanizing broader awareness of the scale of racism in the building, and when leadership was failing to deal with its own backsliding and the national mood in the wake of George Floyd's murder.

This year's July-August edition on diversity and inclusion was a helpful distillation of where things stand now, and provides valuable perspectives on how the department can continue to move forward on race, inclusion and diversity.

Congratulations for your sustained focus and advocacy.

P. Michael McKinley
Ambassador, retired
Washington, D.C.

Big and Little Power Politics

The June Reflection by Jonathan Rickert, "The Mouse That Roared," is a nice illustration of big and little power politics and sensitivities.

How natural it is that many of our international friends must feel those resentments. And no wonder that we feel the lack of gratitude for all we do. But that's why we employ diplomats, isn't it?

The story describes a phenomenon

that many a Foreign Service officer must experience for basic training. The author handled it more graciously and deftly than I ever would have, had I been in his shoes.

Scott R. Schoenfeld
Lawyer, retired
Washington, D.C.

Monitoring Ambassadors

I read with interest Ed Peck's June Speaking Out column ("The Case Against Political Ambassadors"). I am a long-ago-retired FSO who served as ambassador to Luxembourg. My appointment as the first nonpolitical appointee to that country in 20 years was the result of the Luxembourg prime minister's specific request to the Secretary of State that a career diplomat be appointed.

Ambassador Peck has made a strong case against the appointment of political ambassadors, but I have long been convinced that political ambassadors will always be with us. Some 25 years ago I wrote an article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, "If Ambassadors Perform Poorly, Who'll Tell the President?"

My argument was that since political ambassadors are a fact of life, why not at least have a system for monitoring their performance. My main points were these:

1. Devise a method for replacing ambassadors who are not performing well—whether career or noncareer—to make American embassies more effective.

2. Though the State Department inspector general's office reports on the performance of ambassadors, my impression is that while reports critical



of noncareer chiefs of mission may reach the level of the Secretary of State, they rarely, if ever, find their way to the president. Is the Secretary going to tell the president that a close friend or important supporter should be removed?

3. Presidents have no way of knowing in advance whether the individuals they wish to appoint as ambassadors will do a good job, and the Senate is rarely willing to withhold its consent even if there is concern about the nominee's qualifications.

4. Presidents could monitor the performance of their personal representatives by appointing their own inspectors, who would report only on chiefs of mission, career and noncareer, and only to the president.

They could collect information from a wide variety of sources, including the State IG but also through random visits. An alert visitor can learn a surprising amount about an ambassador's reputation in a few days on the ground. Then the president would know when an ambassador was a liability.

The country is well served by the vast majority of its ambassadors. But, as in any other field, there are a few who should not be where they are. In a high-level position in Washington, that fact would soon become obvious. In a foreign capital, far away from daily contact with other officials and the press, that is often not the case. There is a way for presidents to find out about such cases—if they care.

James G. Lowenstein
Ambassador, retired
Washington, D.C.



A Project That Challenges Our Thinking

John Fer's "How the 1619 Project Can Help Public Diplomacy" (May *FSJ*) shows how the project challenges our thinking and portrays Americans tackling our most painful issues.

Henry Louis Gates Jr. says that only 4 percent (388,000) of the millions who left Africa in chains came to the U.S., yet we discuss slavery—which existed everywhere but Australia—more than anyone. Still, the 1619 Project lacks balance, sources, footnotes or bibliography, so is not a history text.

The project gets a lot wrong. It omits mention of the first Africans in America and their heroism. Angolan-born free-man Juan Garrido arrived in Santo Domingo in 1502. He fought for Spain in Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico and came (with Ponce De Leon) to Florida in 1513 and 1521, later even sailing the Pacific.

The first Black enslaved persons in the future 13 colonies came not in 1619, but with the Spanish in 1526 to found San Miguel de Gualdape, in present-day South Carolina. They bravely started America's first rebellion by enslaved persons. Despite their hard work, the settlement failed. To avoid a return to Santo Domingo, some may have escaped into the woods, perhaps forming the first free Black community in America.

Another, an enslaved North African named Estevanico, went with the Narvaez expedition, which shipwrecked in 1527 on Florida's west coast. Four hundred set off to walk or sail in small boats to Mexico; Estevanico often went on ahead, as he later related to Native Americans.

Eight years later, just he and three Spaniards lived to see Mexico City. In 1539, the viceroy of New Spain sent Estevanico to search for the Cities of Cibola;

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he died in New Mexico, a year before Coronado arrived.

In 1564, France's Fort Caroline in Florida had a free Black community, most escaped from the Spanish. Some 1,565 Black people helped found

St. Augustine, America's oldest city. In 1606, the first African American baby on record was born there, to slaves Agustin and Francisca, and baptized. And there are more.

Thus, Black people were here well before 1619 and doing heroic deeds.

Even then, the project only mentions the ships' arrival in Jamestown, but is silent on the amazing tale of how the enslaved persons got aboard and all they achieved in Jamestown.

In 1619, two British and Dutch privateers had intercepted a Spanish slave ship from Angola to Mexico. The ship, with only half the Africans still alive, was bound for Veracruz, where the slaves might survive a year or two in the mines. For the 60 Africans who disembarked at Jamestown, this was their lucky day.

We know little of what became of them, but they likely didn't stay enslaved. A March 1620 census records 15 African men and 17 women in Jamestown. Slavery wasn't legally recognized there until 1661, and the 1619 Project should have said so.

For example, one probable passenger, Antonio (a Spanish name), renamed himself Anthony Johnson, got married, had kids, owned a plantation, later bought African slaves and sued a white neighbor in court.



Lastly, of note to the Foreign Service, Black indentured servants and free-men came from England to Virginia between 1620 and 1640. In the 1630s, one of them, John Punch, married a white woman, likely a fellow indentured servant, in America's first interracial marriage. He likely prospered. One-sixth of marriages today cross racial or ethnic lines.

Punch's descendants include the State Department's own Ralph Bunche (the first African American to win a Nobel Prize) and another Nobel honoree, Barack Obama (through his mother, Ann Dunham). ■

*Bob Fretz
FSO, retired
Edmonds, Washington*



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RESPONSE TO SEPTEMBER FOCUS “9/11, TWENTY YEARS LATER”

Emir Abd el-Kader and Exemplary Muslim Fighters for Justice

BY GEORGE ALDRIDGE

I am writing in response to your September focus with some thoughts on terrorism and Islam.

Terrorism doesn't differentiate.

Everyone is a target. The Nov. 9, 2005, hotel bombings in Amman were indiscriminate terror attacks that followed the horrors of 9/11. Ironically, among the innocent victims was famed Arab American movie director Moustapha al-Akkad, who was in the process of producing a film on Saladin, the 12th-century leader of the Muslim military campaign against the Crusader states in the Levant.

Akkad proposed Saladin as a model for young Middle Easterners, specifically Muslims, to emulate when resisting oppression and injustice, rather than Osama bin Laden or Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi—the suspected mastermind of the bombing that killed Akkad and his daughter Rima.

Renowned for his eight “Halloween” movies, Akkad sought to make American moviegoers aware of the many heroic figures among Muslims who fought high-mindedly for freedom and justice. One such hero, Omar al-Mukhtar, valiantly resisted the Italian fascist takeover of Libya for nearly 20 years before being

captured on Sept. 11, 1931, and then hanged several days later.

In his biopic of Omar al-Mukhtar, “Lion of the Desert,” Akkad showed that fighting foreign occupation does not mean resorting to wholesale violence, that one can fight nobly. Even his Italian adversaries would acknowledge that Omar el-Mukhtar had fought honorably.

Algeria's Abd el-Kader

Arguably, the freedom fighter we can best cite as an example to Muslims is another North African: Algerian national hero Emir Abd el-Kader el-Jezairi, who opposed the French colonization of his country for 15 years (1832-1847) before surrendering, and being imprisoned in France and subsequently exiled to Turkey and Syria.

In biographer John Kiser's estimation, Emir Abd el-Kader exhibited “true jihad” by fighting the French without resorting to fanaticism and terrorism (*Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader*, Monkfish Book Publishing,

2008). The emir epitomizes the noble Muslim warrior-philosopher who is true to the virtues of his faith while respecting the religious convictions and beliefs of others.

In the words of Jordan's Prince Hassan: “Abd el-Kader's jihad provides Muslims with a much-needed antidote to the toxic false jihads of today dominated by anger, violence and politics.”

The emir's displays of conscience, courage, chivalry and compassion toward his French adversaries won him acclaim, even in the United States. In our country, there are numerous cities and towns named after places in the Middle East (Palestine and Tunis, Texas; Bethlehem and Nazareth, Pennsylvania; Carthage, Tennessee; Carmel, California; Damascus and Bethesda, Maryland; and 47 towns named Lebanon!), but there is only one locality named after a person from the Middle East: Elkader, Iowa.

The founders of this small town in northeast Iowa on the Turkey River, Timothy Davis, John Thompson and Chester Sage, named their community Elkader in 1848 after learning about the exploits of Emir Abd el-Kader in opposing the French. They simply admired him. Today, Elkader is home to the Abd el-Kader Education Project and fittingly hosts an annual conference on religious tolerance and coexistence.



Among his nine overseas assignments as an FSO, George Aldridge served in four Muslim-majority countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan and Lebanon) and in two countries with significant Muslim populations (Ethiopia and Kenya). Before Muslim and Arab audiences, he often sought to allay misconceptions of American society, especially in the aftermath of 9/11, by citing the contributions of Arab Americans such as Dr. Michael DeBakey, Ralph Nader, Helen Thomas, Danny Thomas and Philip Habib to America.



JAN BAPTIST HUYSMANS

(Above) In this 1861 oil painting, Algerian leader the Emir Abd el-Kader protects the Christians from Druze fighters in Damascus in 1860. (Inset) Portrait of Abd el-Kader, 1852.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES

Not only was el-Kader admired by the fine folks of northeastern Iowa, he also had a fan in President Abraham Lincoln for the courage he displayed during the 1860 Druze-Maronite sectarian war, which had spread from Mount Lebanon into Syria. El-Kader's defense of the 20,000 Syrian and Lebanese Christians living in Damascus in early July 1860 also won him the affection and admiration of Napoleon III, Pope Pius IX and Queen Victoria.

In addition to providing safe haven on his compound to hundreds of Arab Christians and other religious minorities, foreigners and diplomats, the emir and his sons bravely confronted the Druze fighters as they threatened a massacre of Damascus' Christian community. The emir insisted that armed jihad is to be used only when resisting aggression and never against noncombatants. Incredibly, the Druze fighters backed off. (According to the British consul to Ottoman Syria, Charles Henry Churchill: "Abd el-Kader alone stood between the living and the dead.")

Other Heroic Muslim Figures

Emir Abd el-Kader is just one of several truly heroic Muslim figures we can point to when discussing jihad with Muslims. Another is Moroccan Sultan Mohamed the Fifth, who defied Vichy demands that he discriminate against his 250,000 Jewish subjects, asserting instead that Jewish Moroccans were as precious to him as their Muslim compatriots.

They were all Moroccans, and no distinction would be made among Moroccans, whatever their confession. To underscore his refusal to sign and implement anti-Jewish decrees sought by the Vichy and Nazis, Sultan Mohamed defiantly invited Morocco's rabbis to join him on Throne Day 1941 as a sign of solidarity.

A heroic Syrian nationalist who was imprisoned, nearly executed and eventually exiled for opposing the French mandate and colonial takeover of Syria in the 1920s, Haj Fadel Aboud al-Hassan is revered by Armenians and Arabs for his actions to protect and provide sustenance to hundreds of thousands of Armenian refugees driven to his village of Deir ez-Zour in eastern Syria during

the 1915 Armenian genocide.

Instead of complying with Ottoman demands that the Armenian refugees be killed or left for dead, Haj Fadel Aboud al-Hassan, as mayor of Deir ez-Zour, organized relief efforts to ensure that they received food and shelter; and he guaranteed their security.

Yet another, Tunisian leader Moncef Bey (Muhammad VII al-Munsif), held fast against anti-Jewish legislation demanded by the Vichy Italian occupiers and Nazis in 1942. At his induction as sultan on June 19, he brazenly invited Jewish Tunisian dignitaries, announcing: "You are my brothers, equal to the Muslims."

He repeatedly renounced and opposed attempts to oppress native and expatriate Jews living in Tunisia. Tunisia's 100,000-member Jewish community subsequently hailed him as "Protector of the Jews."

The late Moustapha al-Akkad's quest should also be ours. It is in our country's interest to hail the courage and resolve of these genuine Muslim heroes as we seek to persuade young Middle Eastern men and women to pursue justice in a just manner. ■

Evacuation Amid Chaos as Taliban Takes Control

On Aug. 15, the U.S. flag was taken down and U.S. Embassy Kabul shuttered after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled and his government collapsed as the Taliban moved into the city, and a chaotic evacuation of Americans and Afghan allies gained new momentum.

In fighting from early July through mid-August the Taliban rapidly took control of most of the country, culminating in the fall of Kabul.

Remaining U.S. embassy staff, including the ambassador, relocated to the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, where several thousand U.S. troops were brought back to establish a perimeter to allow continued evacuation processing and flights out for Americans and international and Afghan allies.

The airport compound, with checkpoints toward entrances controlled by the Taliban, was besieged for weeks by tens of thousands of Afghans and other country nationals desperately seeking to leave the country, including interpreters and others who worked with Western governments and agencies and fear reprisals.

Efforts to get an extension from the Taliban on the Aug. 31 deadline for evacuation set by President Biden in April—including CIA Director Williams Burns' Aug. 23 meeting with Taliban leader Abdul Ghani Baradar in Kabul—proved fruitless.

On Aug. 26, a suicide bombing claimed by a branch of ISIS called Islamic State Khorasan killed 13 U.S. troops and more than 170 Afghans, and wounded hundreds more.

The Biden administration came under fire over the rapid collapse of



U.S. AIR FORCE/MASTER SGT. DONALD R. ALLEN

The U.S. Air Force loads passengers aboard a C-17 Globemaster III in support of the Afghanistan evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Kabul, Aug. 24.

Afghan defense forces, the disorderly departure and the large number of U.S. citizens and Afghan allies—at risk from the Taliban—left behind.

“Four presidents share responsibility for the missteps in Afghanistan that accumulated over two decades. But only President Joe Biden will be the face of the war’s chaotic, violent conclusion,” the Associated Press wrote in an Aug. 16 news analysis.

Biden, addressing the American people on Aug. 16, defended his position: “Here’s what I believe to my core: It is wrong to order American troops to step up when Afghanistan’s own armed forces would not. How many more generations of America’s daughters and sons would you have me send to fight Afghanistan’s civil war? I will not repeat the mistakes we made in the past.”

There is plenty of blame to go around. There is little doubt that “Who lost Afghanistan?” will be the subject of debate in the coming months and years.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Aug. 19 that a July 13 dissent cable—signed by 23 U.S. Embassy Kabul staff-

ers—warned that a pullout could lead to rapid territorial gains of the Taliban and the collapse of the Afghan army, and offered recommendations to speed up an evacuation.

As the U.S. was warning of new terrorist threats outside the airport ahead of the Aug. 31 deadline, urging people to stay away, it was also beginning to send military and civilian staff out.

Some two dozen other countries had also evacuated their own nationals, as well as Afghans who had assisted in their work. The State Department reported Aug. 29 that it had successfully evacuated “the majority” of its local staff and their immediate families.

The United States evacuated more than 123,000 people out of Afghanistan in recent weeks. Approximately 6,000 of them were U.S. citizens.

More than 23,000 Afghans deemed to be “at risk” have been relocated to the United States, State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters on Sept. 1.

“Everybody who lived it is haunted by the choices we had to make and by the people we were not able to help,”

a State Department official told *The Wall Street Journal*.

The last military cargo aircraft departed the airport on Aug. 30. Secretary Antony Blinken said State had suspended its diplomatic presence in Kabul and that operations would continue from Qatar.

“A new chapter of America’s engagement with Afghanistan has begun,” the Secretary said. “It’s one in which we will lead with our diplomacy. The military mission is over.”

Afghanistan: Chronicling a Drawn-Out Debacle

On Aug. 17, SIGAR, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, released “What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction.” The latest in its “Lessons Learned” series, this new report is a devastating indictment of the Afghanistan effort.

The U.S. Congress established SIGAR in 2008 to provide independent, objective oversight of Afghanistan relief and reconstruction projects, for which approximately \$144.98 billion has been appropriated since 2002. (Military spending was another approximately \$800 billion.)

“If the goal was to rebuild and leave behind a country that could sustain itself and pose little threat to U.S. national security interests, the overall picture in Afghanistan is bleak,” SIGAR states.

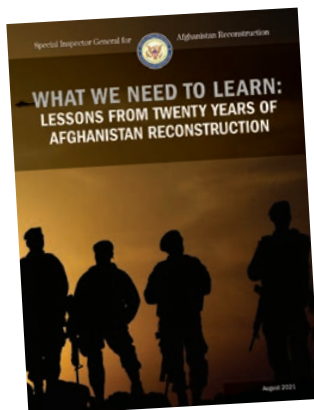
Despite gains in life expectancy, child mortality, GDP per capita, literacy rates, and more, SIGAR concludes this progress was neither commensurate with the U.S. investment nor sustainable after a U.S. drawdown.

The 140-page report delves into the reasons for this harsh judgment in seven chapters on the issues of strategy and

Contemporary Quote

“What is happening is a terrible tragedy, but the blame cannot be laid at any one door. The Biden administration’s short timetable for withdrawal, tied to the 20th anniversary of 9/11, and in the middle of the fighting season, was a mistake. But the situation on the ground is the result of two decades of miscalculations and failed policies pursued by three prior U.S. administrations and of the failure of Afghanistan’s leaders to govern for the good of their people.”

—Ambassador (ret.) P. Michael McKinley,
“We All Lost Afghanistan,” *foreignaffairs.com*, Aug. 16.



its ownership, timelines, sustainability, personnel policy, insecurity, and monitoring and evaluation.

Among the most striking observations is the extent of U.S. lack of understanding

of Afghanistan and its people, including what SIGAR describes as “a willful disregard for information that may have been available.”

In addition to audits and inspections, SIGAR relied on interviews with relevant personnel at every level, conducted under conditions of anonymity, to assemble the “Lessons Learned” reports, which were launched in 2014.

In August 2016, *The Washington Post* began seeking those interview records under the Freedom of Information Act, ultimately suing for their release.

The interviews were featured in a Dec. 9, 2019, exposé by *Post* reporter Craig Whitlock, “At War with the Truth,” charging senior U.S. officials with deliberately lying to the American people for 18 years

and implying that SIGAR whitewashed the critiques.

Whitlock’s book, *The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War*, based on the SIGAR interviews as well as former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s memos pertaining to Afghanistan, was released by Simon & Schuster on Aug. 31 (see review, p. 76).

State Has No Answers for “Unexplained Health Incidents”

Diplomats are becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of answers for the mysterious health incidents—the so-called “Havana Syndrome”—that have affected hundreds of U.S. officials overseas and in the Washington, D.C., area, CNN reported on Aug. 2.

They’re also concerned by the State Department’s “tepid response,” according to CNN: “Of particular concern is a lack of information from leadership, including what some say has been a hands-off approach from Secretary of State Tony Blinken.”

Media have already reported that a couple of dozen U.S. officials in Vienna, and at least two in Berlin, have been affected by what the State Department calls “Unexplained Health Incidents.”

UHI victims have suffered symptoms ranging from nausea and severe headaches to ear pain, insomnia and fatigue. The incidents were first reported in Havana, Cuba, in 2016.

Some diplomats are choosing against taking jobs in posts where UHIs have been reported, CNN says. “For the most part we don’t know anything other than what is in the press,” one FSO told CNN. “It is difficult for people to make informed decisions about where to serve.”

On Aug. 24, Vice President Kamala Harris’ flight from Singapore to Vietnam was delayed for three hours after U.S. Embassy Hanoi reported that two U.S. personnel in Hanoi had experienced UHI-related symptoms, the *Daily Mail* reported.

“After careful assessment, the decision was made to continue with the Vice President’s trip,” the U.S. embassy said in its statement. The affected personnel were to be medevacked the following weekend.

In March, Secretary of State Antony Blinken appointed Ambassador Pamela Spratlen to serve as senior adviser to the Health Incident Response Task Force, which was established in 2018. The

HIRTF is the coordinating body for the interagency response to the incidents.

CIA Director William Burns, a former top diplomat, has made the issue a priority, speaking publicly in June about renewed efforts to “get to the bottom of this,” NPR reported.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Aug. 18 that U.S. diplomats said victims in European countries have included officials “working on Russian-related issues such as gas exports, cybersecurity and political interference.”

On Aug. 3 Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) introduced legislation—the Directed Energy Threat Emergency Response Act—to reform the U.S. government’s investigation and response to UHIs.

The legislation would require the president to appoint a senior national security official to coordinate the government’s response. The bill would also create workforce guidance to increase awareness of these attacks and improve reporting methods and would provide \$30 million to improve access to health-care for victims.

“The injuries that many victims of

probable directed energy attacks have endured are significant and life-altering. I have talked with many of these victims about the debilitating symptoms they have experienced,” said Collins. “While they are focusing on their health, they should not have to battle the bureaucracy in order to receive the support they deserve.”

Senators Bob Menendez (D-N.J., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee), Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) are original cosponsors of the bill.

Climate Change: “Code Red”

The United Nations released a report on climate change on Aug. 9 that U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres describes as a “code red for humanity.”

The report, issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—a scientific body convened by the U.N.—argues that climate change is widespread, rapid and intensifying, and that some climate trends are now irreversible. For example, it says continued sea-level rise is “irreversible” for centuries, if not millennia.

Site of the Month: Expats Blog (www.expatsblog.com)

Want to learn more about your next post? Expats Blog is a handpicked directory featuring more than 3,200 blogs from around the world. The goal of the website is to bring expats together.

Blogs are organized by country, and almost every nation is represented. Select a country, and you can drill down to towns and cities within that country. For example, Spain has

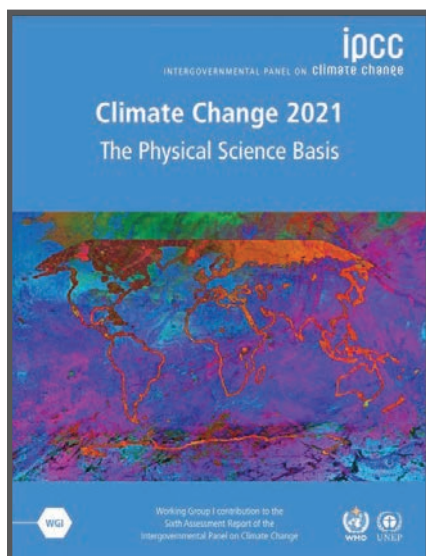
151 blogs, 30 of which are in Madrid and 13 in Barcelona.

Expats Blog’s researchers travel the globe looking for stories to interest their fellow expatriates.

Not content to just bring you the latest news, the Expat Blog team also scours the internet for the best expat blogs for its annual awards. If you have a blog covering your latest post, you just might want to enter.



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



“The evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk,” Guterres said.

The IPCC report, at more than 3,000 pages, was compiled by 234 authors, who reviewed more than 14,000 studies from around the globe.

The world already has warmed by 1.1 degrees Celsius since the start of the 19th century, *The New York Times* reported in an article summarizing the report’s findings.

“The internationally agreed threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius is perilously close,” Guterres said. “We are at imminent risk of hitting 1.5 degrees in the near term. The only way to prevent exceeding this threshold is by urgently stepping up our efforts and pursuing the most ambitious path.”

The report’s authors say there is still time to limit climate change, if societies make strong and sustained cutbacks in carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, responding to the report, said: “It is essential that all countries—in particular the major economies—do their part during this critical decade of the 2020s to put the world on a trajectory to keep a 1.5 degrees Celsius limit on warming within reach.

“This is why the United States has committed to a 50-52 percent reduction

in emissions from 2005 levels in 2030 and is marshaling the entire federal government to tackle the climate crisis,” he added.

U.S. climate envoy John Kerry, a former Secretary of State, tweeted: “These extreme events will only become more drastic in the future—this is why we cannot wait. Now is the time for action, and Glasgow must be a turning point in this crisis.”

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference is scheduled to take place Oct. 31-Nov. 12 in that city.

Jonathan Pershing, the State Department’s deputy special envoy for climate change, said the IPCC report gives leaders some clarity about what kinds of efforts are required to tackle climate change.

“And we have in the Glasgow meeting an opportunity to bring countries together, a strong lead on behalf of the UK to drive that outcome, and I think a collective will as evidenced by the major economies in the G20 to move to that outcome,” he added.

U.S. Lays Off Local Staff in Russia

Meeting a final Aug. 1 deadline set by the Kremlin, the United States laid off 182 local staff and more than 100 contractors working for its diplomatic mission in Russia on July 30.

The Russian decision to ban almost all non-American staff at U.S. diplomatic missions came in response to the U.S. expulsion of some Russian diplomats, the Associated Press reported. Only a few local employees are exempt from the ban, including security guards who work outside the gates of the U.S. compounds.

In a July 30 statement, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said: “These unfor-

tunate measures will severely impact the U.S. mission to Russia’s operations, potentially including the safety of our personnel as well as our ability to engage in diplomacy with the Russian government.

“Although we regret the actions of the Russian government forcing a reduction in our services and operations, the United States will follow through on our commitments while continuing to pursue a predictable and stable relationship with Russia,” he added.

After the ban was announced, U.S. Embassy Moscow suspended most consular services. They are still providing American citizen services, prioritizing emergency cases, and processing a mini-

mal number of immigrant visas.

Scott Rauland, who served at U.S. Consulate General Yekaterinburg, told *Foreign Policy* that Russia’s move was a massive blow to U.S. diplomacy in Russia. “At the very least Russia has succeeded in hobbling our entire diplomatic infrastructure there for the short term,” he said. “For those consulates, it could take years to get them back and fully functional again.”

U.S. Consulate General St. Petersburg has been closed since March 2018, as ordered by the Russian government. All operations at Consulates Yekaterinburg and Vladivostok are suspended indefinitely.

CRS Reviews State Department Personnel Issues

The Congressional Research Service has issued a 37-page report highlighting a series of State Department personnel issues it recommends for consideration by the 117th Congress.

The report, “State Department Personnel: Background and Selected Issues for the 117th Congress,” notes that the Biden administration has indicated its commitment “to revitalizing the foreign policy workforce.”

The report highlights the history of congressional involvement overseeing the Foreign Service, reviews State Department staffing levels and highlights options Congress might pursue to improve staffing.

The report outlines options Congress could pursue to improve training for State

Department personnel, including hiring enough new Foreign Service officers—at least 2,000—to create a “training float” of 15 percent above the level required to staff all State positions, or passing laws instituting training requirements for FSOs.

The CRS report also reviews ambassadorial vacancies and suggests options Congress could pursue to increase the speed at which ambassadors are approved, such as reducing the number of positions for which the Senate is required to provide advice and consent.

At the same time, however, the report notes that “some may caution Congress against taking such steps” and recommend that the Senate “should closely guard its current prerogatives” outlined in the Constitution.

The report is available at bit.ly/crs-state-report.

NMAD Introduces Historical Diplomacy Simulation Program

The National Museum of American Diplomacy launched its Historical Diplomacy Simulation Program in June. The three new simulations offer educators the opportunity to bring the work of U.S. diplomats into the classroom.

The Historical Diplomacy Simulation is a joint project with the Una Chapman Cox Foundation’s initiative on American Diplomacy and the Foreign Service. The program was developed along with partners National History Day and George Mason University’s Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media.

The program offers three simulations:

- The Barbary Pirates Hostage Crisis: Negotiating Tribute and Trade
- The Spanish and American Conflict of 1898: Treaties and Self-Determination
- The Suez Canal Crisis: National Sovereignty vs. International Access to Waterways

NMAD also offers several hypothetical diplomacy simulations, on topics such as international wildlife trafficking, peacebuilding, crisis in the oceans and border security.

The simulations are available at <https://diplomacy.state.gov/discover-diplomacy/simulations>.



National Museum
of American Diplomacy



AFSPA

afspa.org/aip

Clements Worldwide

clements.com/MissionsAbroad

Falcons Landing

FalconsLanding.org

Federal Employee Defense Services

fedsprotection.com

Promax Property Management

Promaxmanagement.com

Property Specialists, Inc.

propertyspecialistsinc.com

Richey Property Management

richeypm.com

Senior Living Foundation

slfoundation.org

Starr Wright USA

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WJD Management

wjdpdm.com

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50 Years Ago

Diplomacy in a Yemeni Jail

The last thing I expected to happen, when considering whether to embark on that combination of excitement and frustration known as a diplomatic career, was that one of the most interesting portions of it would be spent inside a jail in Yemen. Neither had I realized, when studying international law in preparation for taking the Foreign Service examination, that the recognized right of the foreign consul to visit an imprisoned countryman would be extended in this instance to a duty to share his confinement.

But there I was on April 26, 1967, sharing a cell with Steven Liapis and Harold Hartman. They were employees of the U.S. Agency for International Development mission, headquartered in Taiz, Yemen. ...

Liapis and Hartman were under investigation by the Government of the Yemen Arab Republic on a charge of launching a bazooka attack against an Egyptian ammunition dump with the object of blowing up the town of Taiz and ultimately of subverting the Yemeni Government. The penalty for this offense, if guilt were proved, would be death. This would leave Liapis and Hartman the choice, under time-honored Yemeni tradition, of choosing a firing squad or—as a more manly course—of decapitation with an Islamic sword. ...

The charge was preposterous, of course, but in the era of national sovereignty dominion there was little that the United States could do except patiently, and with forbearance, attempt, on a variety of fronts, to secure Liapis' and Hartman's release.

—FSO Roscoe S. Suddarth, from his first-person account of a dramatic and unusual incident in the October 1971 FSJ.



Combating Antisemitism at State

In a July 28 letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, more than 70 State Department and USAID employees called for the removal of Fritz Berggren, an FSO they accuse of “spewing hate speech directed against Jews” on his website.

The letter was organized by members of the new Jewish Americans and Friends in Foreign Affairs employee affinity group, *Foreign Policy* reported on Aug. 31.

Blinken, in an Aug. 9 letter in response, wrote: “I want to assure you that the Department treats reports of alleged misconduct with the utmost seriousness.” He said that he could not comment on specific cases “for privacy reasons,” but emphasized that employees who engage in discriminatory behavior can face disciplinary action “up to and including separation when warranted.”

In an Aug. 31 post, Berggren welcomed readers of the *Foreign Policy* article, including Jewish people, to his website, and expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to try to convert his visitors to Christianity.

State has sought to address issues of antisemitism in the department in recent months. In July, a swastika was found carved into an elevator in the Harry S Truman Building.

On July 30, President Joe Biden named a new special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, Emory University Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt, and elevated the position to the rank of ambassador. The position requires Senate confirmation, which was pending as of early September.

On Aug. 4, the department held a virtual town hall, “Together We Stand Against Anti-Semitism.” ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Cameron Woodworth, Susan Maitra and Shawn Dorman.

Six Countries Cited in Atrocities Report

The State Department called out six countries—China, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria and South Sudan—in its 2021 Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities report, sent to Congress on July 12.

The report cites China’s “crimes against humanity” against the predominantly Muslim Uyghur population, including imprisonment, torture and forced sterilization. It also highlights acts of ethnic cleansing in Western Tigray, Ethiopia, as well as brutal killings and arbitrary detentions in Myanmar.

Congress passed the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act

in 2018. In addition to the annual report, the law directs the State Department to provide additional training to FSOs assigned to countries experiencing or at risk of mass atrocities.

“We’ll use all of the tools at our disposal—including diplomacy, foreign assistance, investigations and fact-finding missions, financial tools and engagements, reports like this one, which raise awareness and allow us to generate coordinated international pressure in response—in a whole-of-government approach to preventing and mitigating atrocities around the globe,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on presenting the report.

Knowledge Management @ State: *It's not the technology. It's the people.*

BY YOMARIS MACDONALD, LOURDES CUE, TIMOTHY HAYNES,
JENNIFER L. SMITH AND BENJAMIN A. TIETZ

How common is this story? You arrive at a new post or walk into a new job, only to find yourself reinventing the wheel day in and day out because you have no handover notes, two shoeboxes full of business cards and no record of your predecessor's activities and experiences.

This affects all of us—whether Foreign Service, Civil Service or locally employed staff. One colleague arriving at a high-threat post experienced this knowledge vacuum in dramatic fashion, because it directly contributed to a delay in the recovery of hundreds of thousands of dollars of sensitive equipment that could have endangered the lives of U.S. citizens. Our estimate is that at least \$10-20 million is wasted each year in time and resources, not to mention lost productivity, during transitions.

On an individual level, State Department employees must feel a bit like Sisyphus—diligently advancing their knowledge and skills in an assignment, only to have the boulder roll back downhill when they move to a new assignment and start all over again with no transfer notes, contacts or knowledge to build on.

Indeed, our organization struggles to

preserve the institutional knowledge lost when employees transfer, retire or separate from the department. What to do?

As part of the inaugural cohort of the Secretary's Leadership Seminar at Harvard Business School, we were tasked with finding knowledge management solutions for transferring officers. Initially, some in our group were dismayed. Did we just get tasked with fixing handover notes? In 2020, with all the challenges facing our institution, were we really still talking about Fourth of July contact lists?

Knowledge management—or KM—informs decision-making and enables the seamless transfer of knowledge from one person to the next in a timely and accessible manner. It affects everything we do, from our relationships on the Hill to how effectively we improve the diversity of our workforce. Imagine a world where officers arrive at a new assignment and can immediately “get to work” on behalf of the American people.

Effective knowledge management across our entire organization—literally, across the world—is a monumental task, but it is not a new problem. In 2007 the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Transformational Diplomacy recognized the centrality of knowledge to State's mis-

sion and recommended the department “undertake an aggressive plan to become a world-class knowledge management organization.”

In 2021 we are still working toward that goal. It is tempting to fall back on the idea that technology is the problem. However, knowledge management is about behavior.

Change the Culture

We need to change our culture from one that is about “need to know” to a mindset that is about “responsibility to share.” Instead of rushing to reinvent the wheel in each new position, let us take the time to preserve and build on colleagues' past efforts. Without a doubt, part of our work requires sensitivity to classified, personally identifiable information and otherwise sensitive information, but this has nothing to do with our overall culture of silos and information hoarding.

As transferring officers, we simply do not prioritize fostering the continuity of plans and projects and, most importantly, the continuity of relationships. The 2015 Forrester study of the problem concluded that transforming KM behavior requires two key drivers: leadership and technology.

Our team argues that we have all the tools: It's not about technology, and the pandemic showed that in the alacrity with which we embraced new technologies we thought were out of reach.

We believe it's about leadership: To achieve effective knowledge man-

The authors are Team 3 of the Secretary's Leadership Seminar inaugural cohort in the Harvard Business School Executive Education Program, a pilot to develop a diverse group of leaders to address enterprisewide challenges at State: Lourdes Cue, deputy director (GTM's Strategic Communications Unit); Timothy Haynes, economic officer (U.S. Embassy Paris); Yomaris Macdonald, deputy consul general (U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo); Jennifer L. Smith, overseas section chief (PRM's office of Admissions); and Benjamin A. Tietz, post management officer (EUR-IO).

agement in the department we need to change the narrative, the incentives and the strategy. First, we need to appeal to the values and mission of the department as part of our communications effort: KM is about the success of our mission.

We start to do this by creating awareness of the importance of KM among all department staff. We need to be more proactive about promoting existing IT platforms where officers can go to find and access common KM tools and guidance. We need to identify senior-level champions to create momentum behind communicating such a culture change. This visibility is needed to ensure buy-in from every bureau and post.

We need to incentivize all staff on KM. If officers, and supervisors, know they will be evaluated on their KM performance, they will see it as a higher priority, and it will counterbalance the culture many have noted at State—one of competing instead of collaborating and building on our predecessors' efforts.

In addition, as job descriptions are updated, we must make KM a basic responsibility for all officers, especially office management specialists. As one stakeholder we interviewed told us: "If it's not in anyone's job description, it's not anyone's job."

A Steering Committee

We need champions. We need leadership. The department must establish a Knowledge Management Steering Committee consisting of senior representatives from various bureaus and posts, representing both the business and the management sides of the enterprise, who can collectively make recommendations, not just for their own shops but for the good of the whole service.

The steering committee would be a deliberative body, convened by the

Deputy Secretary for Resources and Management or the under secretary for management, and would consist of major stakeholders from across the department, including the bureaus of Information Resources Management, Global Talent Management, Administration, the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions, and the Foreign Service Institute, as well as regional and functional bureaus.

The steering committee would be the conduit for developing the policies and processes that can catalyze organizational cultural change. Its approach would be agile and iterative. We recommend that committee efforts begin with a baseline assessment of the department's capabilities, benchmarking against comparables and industry leaders. The Knowledge Leadership Division (KLD) in IRM has already launched such an effort and could complete it and report back.

Armed with this information, the steering committee would be well placed to make some important organizational decisions about how to best leverage the expertise and skills of those currently charged with the department's KM responsibilities—the chief knowledge officer (CKO), a role ascribed in the Foreign Affairs Manual to the deputy chief information officer, and KLD.

We also need knowledge management representatives at each bureau and post. These individuals would act as champions, working closely with bureau and post leadership and with a steering committee to hold employees and offices accountable in implementing the common KM tools and standards.

The Knowledge Leadership Division is currently buried far down in the organization and does not directly report to the Chief Knowledge Officer. Fourteen years ago, the Secretary's Advisory Committee

on Transformational Diplomacy recommended that the CKO report directly to the Deputy Secretary or the under secretary for management. Implementing that would be a good start.

On the policy front, the steering committee would also update the FAM or the Foreign Affairs Handbook to codify language that better reflects the critical role of knowledge to the department's mission and enshrine KM principles that would help create the shared understanding of KM that is currently lacking. The steering committee would look for systemic and structural solutions, even as the implementing bureaus and offices look for simple ones.

A revamped, rebranded Office of Knowledge Leadership would start small, with products that are already familiar to the organization. For example, we would recommend producing a series of handover note "templates" that could be deployed overseas and domestically, available on Infolink, and then evaluating user adoption.

ICA in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the office that promotes leadership, management and innovation excellence across the bureau's global operations, already has customizable templates available.

"User adoption" is itself a process. It took nothing short of a pandemic for employees to adopt a platform as straightforward as Microsoft Teams. The exponential increase in use was driven by the urgent need for virtual collaboration. Strengthening our policies and processes now will help lay the foundation for future seismic events and easy adoption of disruptive technology.

User adoption requires user-focused design, which can then generate feedback that informs systems decisions. Creating innovative new products that are accepted by the organization requires sig-

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nificant engagement between designers, programmers and users. GTM's Talent-Map and IRM's eDiplomacy are initiatives that have put the user at the center of design efforts. We need more.

Addressing the Problem

To begin this process for a product that benefits transferring officers, we recommend starting with something familiar

that begins a conversation and creates a feedback loop. Creation of a suite of transfer-note templates would immediately start to inform what knowledge is important to capture in a personnel transfer.

Storing those documents in the cloud would provide information that the Knowledge Leadership Division could then leverage to begin basic machine learning to automatically produce a package of transfer information that is then curated by the employee, for their successor.

To take this to the next level, we recommend that the department tailor existing software, including Microsoft Teams and Salesforce's CRM, and introduce machine learning capabilities that would tag, compile and expedite the produc-

tion of these packages for our transferring officers. It is one more step toward a "world-class knowledge management organization."

This is an old problem for the department, and fixing it should be a top priority. We believe very little needs to be spent to fix the problem. We have all the tools at our disposal now to make for smooth and seamless transitions. Implementing even some of the recommendations will improve performance and morale, particularly in hardship posts that suffer from frequent rotations.

Further, our menu of solutions does not just address knowledge management for transferring officers. It is a step toward addressing the department's broader KM problems. ■



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On CSO's 10-Year Anniversary Stabilization Operations in Perspective

**State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations
has amassed the experience and expertise to lead on
stabilization and resilience policy.**

BY ROBERT J. FAUCHER AND JOHN H. MONGAN



**Stabilization/
Conflict Adviser
Aneliese Bernard
meets with
refugees from
unstable regions
of Nigeria in the
Diffa Region of
Niger in 2018.**

A persistent and repeated failure across history has been the failure to understand that the preservation of peace requires active planning, the expenditure of resources and sacrifice, just as war does.

—Donald Kagan, *On the Origins of War*

The recent events in Afghanistan remind us that we must continue to learn lessons about conflict. This fall marks the 10-year anniversary in November of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO).

It is incumbent upon people who call themselves experts in “conflict prevention and stabilization” to exercise a certain humility and reflection at this time, yet also important to recognize CSO as the embodiment of one of the “Forever War’s” most important lessons for State—that conflict prevention and stabilization is a field of diplomatic expertise akin to trade or arms control, and the department needs an institutional home for that expertise to prevent and respond to current and future conflict.

Building on an organization formed specifically in response to events in Iraq and Afghanistan, CSO has evolved over the past decade from what originally was envisioned as a “whole-of-government czar for Reconstruction and Stabilization” into a functional bureau within State’s J family of civilian security offices and bureaus. Now more like “Diplomatic Special Forces” than an expeditionary civilian “surge,” CSO supports other department entities in formulating and implementing stabilization policy. CSO’s core capabilities—and policymakers’ needs—have remained constant: deep analysis of conflict’s drivers; rigorous planning of the U.S. approach to conflict; and agile deployment of conflict-expert diplomats where needed.

In the future, the U.S. government—and CSO, in particular—must continue to evolve and innovate to meet increasingly complex violence and conflict around the world. Rather than an overhaul, CSO should continue to deepen its core capabilities, adding further nuance in the following ways:

- 1) *Refining U.S. conflict analysis and policy*—keeping ahead of new factors affecting conflict, like pandemics and climate change;
- 2) *Reforming risk management*—getting back into the field to find and engage new local partners;
- 3) *Enhancing mediation and negotiation support*—assisting parties who often do not know what they do not know about making peace; and
- 4) *Investing in data and technology*—learning to value gaming as the private sector and military do.

From Reconstruction and Stabilization to Conflict Stabilization

Throughout the 1990s, national security professionals debated what was needed to adapt to increasingly frequent “complex operations” as experienced in Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda and the Balkans. The post-9/11 military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq revealed that civilian agencies lacked capabilities for reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) operations, generally understood as “nation-building.” These efforts were envisioned as highly technocratic and multisectoral, akin to U.S. postwar efforts in Germany and Japan—heavy on assistance programming and building state capacity.

It was in this atmosphere in 2004 that then-Senators Joseph Biden and Richard Lugar proposed the Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act. That legislation aimed “to provide for the continued development, as a core mission of [State and USAID], of an effective expert civilian response capability to carry out reconstruction and stabilization operations in a country or region that is at risk of, in, or is in transition from, conflict or civil strife.”

Soon after the legislation was proposed, Secretary of State Colin Powell created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). In 2005,



Health and Human Services Civilian Response Corps member Jean Pierre DeBarros, at right, discusses plans with NATO colleagues from the U.K. and Italy during a NATO exercise in Germany in 2009.

the George W. Bush administration followed up with National Security Presidential Directive-44, giving State specific guidance to “prepare for, plan, and conduct [reconstruction and stabilization] operations.” After several years of S/CRS initiatives to test these concepts, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton turned S/CRS into the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) in 2011, refining its task to “serve as the institutional locus for policy and operational solutions for crisis, conflict and instability.”

The change from S/CRS to CSO was both intellectual and bureaucratic. Intellectually, by 2011 conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq had undercut the technocratic assumptions behind “reconstruction and stabilization,” leading to the removal of “reconstruction” as overly ambitious. Organizationally, CSO would no longer aspire to be a “whole-of-government czar.” Instead, it would be a department functional bureau focused on conflict.

Although State decided CSO would be its locus for stabilization, no one formally defined stabilization for the U.S. government until 2018, when Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Secretary of Defense James Mattis and USAID Administrator Mark Green agreed on the Stabilization Assistance Review that defined stabilization as: “a political endeavor involving an integrated

civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence. Transitional in nature, stabilization may include efforts to establish civil security, provide access to dispute resolution, deliver targeted basic services, and establish a foundation for the return of displaced people and longer-term development.”

The 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review correctly placed the onus for stabilization policy on the State Department, reflecting the lesson that while the Defense Department and USAID play essential roles in stabilization, they cannot succeed if State does not succeed in the diplomatic realm—first, in building an international consensus around a conflict; and second, in promoting the political reforms and reconciliation needed for more stable and resilient societies to grow. The Stabilization Assistance Review enshrined the resulting division of labor among the “three Ds”—which later received congressional endorsement in the bipartisan 2020 Global Fragility Act. State was clearly given the lead for stabilization and resilience policy.

Deployable Diplomats: “Expeditionary” or “Special Operations”?

Accompanying this institutional evolution was refinement of the tools to have at hand. The Biden-Lugar Act called for a Civilian Response Corps of 250 full-time active, rapid-deployment officers; 2,000 standby volunteers recruited among existing U.S. government employees; and 2,000 reserve personnel drawn from key nonfederal skill sets such as municipal administration. Unfortunately, in 2005 S/CRS received only 15 temporary Foreign and Civil Service billets to build a prototype Active Response Corps.

Despite the ARC’s small size, by 2008 its successful performance in places like Darfur and Kosovo—and domestic agencies’ struggles to staff “surges” in Iraq and Afghanistan—prompted Congress to pass the Biden-Lugar Act and appropriate funds for establishment of the Civilian Response Corps, drawn from the departments of State, Treasury, Justice, Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and USAID—providing all the skill sets needed to run a city or small country. In four short years under Coordinator John Herbst, the corps made notable contributions to U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and South Sudan.

The Civilian Response Corps also revealed numerous conceptual flaws. Its reserve wing never came to be, because Congress would not enact the kinds of employment protections military reservists enjoy. The standby corps learned there really are not loads of civil servants who can be spared from their day jobs in



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John H. Mongan joined the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, later CSO, in 2005 and has served in a variety of leadership roles in the bureau, including in field operations in Afghanistan and in support of the Syrian opposition in Turkey.

A former Foreign Service officer, he served tours in Albania, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

the United States. The active division was full of highly skilled technocrats for “reconstruction,” but actual missions required diplomatic and planning skill sets for “stabilization.”

CSO’s first assistant secretary, Rick Barton, envisioned CSO field operations less as “expeditionary surges” of personnel and more like small, civilian “special operations” teams—not unlike his previous brainchild, USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives, which “provides fast, flexible, short-term assistance to take advantage of windows of opportunity to build democracy and peace.”

The big difference under Assistant Secretary Barton was that CSO’s officers were *diplomats first, program managers second*. CSO’s programs gave deployed officers venues to engage people on behalf of the United States. CSO staff designed and conducted activities alongside implementing partners and beneficiaries, while sending back political analysis to Washington.

CSO’s unique approach made notable contributions to U.S. policy in Honduras, Nigeria, Kenya and Burma. Most significantly, it was the keystone of U.S. support to the Syrian opposition from 2012 to 2015. But the fallout from Benghazi in 2012 squelched further department interest in potentially high-risk missions, and a new under secretary, Sarah Sewall, valued CSO’s analytic capabilities more than its field work.

Since 2015, CSO’s overseas work has tended to involve individual stabilization advisers providing conflict-specific expertise to support select embassies. Recent high-impact deployments include working in Kyiv alongside conflict monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; securing defections from ISIS–West Africa in Niger; researching the dynamics of hybrid and nonstate armed groups in Libya, Yemen and Iraq; and increasing compliance with Colombia’s peace accord.

Pioneering Analysis and Planning

Early on, S/CRS embraced one of the first lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan: Stabilization requires a degree of planning far more rigorous than normally required in diplomacy—both to define policy goals clearly and to know whether they are being achieved.

In addition to deployment of a cohort of stabilization advisers, S/CRS pioneered methods of facilitated, qualitative conflict analysis and planning designed to get all the players around a table agreed on a common understanding of, and approach to, the conflict at hand. S/CRS’ Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework chalked up successes once its use was tied to posts’ ability to receive more than \$400 million in Section 1207 funding for stabilization programs from the Defense Department.

Between 2008 and 2011, S/CRS’ analysis and planning capability made important contributions to the Afghan counterin-



Stabilization Adviser Amy Truesdell, at top, works with other international observers to track risks of violence during Kenyan elections in 2013.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

surgency campaign’s design, monitoring and evaluation process with S/CRS planners deployed in Washington, Kabul and the field. Overall, the tug between planning and field work peaked and troughed throughout CSO’s history. For example, Barton deemphasized planning as a service for CSO “clients,” but internalized its value for designing CSO’s operations.

Assistant Secretary Barton also recognized the role data analysis could play in both anticipating conflict and evaluating the effectiveness of U.S. responses. He stood up CSO’s first advanced analytics unit, which today is its own office, running the Instability Monitoring and Analysis Platform—IMAP, which any State officer can access from their desktop. IMAP puts CSO at the cutting edge of the department’s use of data analytics. Among its top priorities is adjusting the data proxies used by IMAP to better capture climate change’s impact on violence and improve its predictive capacity.

Today, CSO elevates data in both planning and operations. It facilitates strategic planning and interagency coordination, often serving as a translator across the 3D community. It provides niche field interventions on targeted issues such as atrocity early warning, network analysis of hybrid and nonstate armed groups, reintegration of ex-combatants and advancement of peace processes and cease-fires.

The Future of Stabilization: Foresight, Agility and Rigor

Just as the international understanding of conflict prevention and stabilization evolved in the past 10 years, so must we continue to evolve for the next decade.

Refining U.S. Conflict Analysis and Policy. In his memoir, *Foreign Service*, Ambassador James Dobbins vividly illustrated policymakers’ disinterest in insights from conflicts like Haiti and the Balkans when discussing Afghanistan in the critical months after 9/11, when key decisions were made that would shape the ultimate outcome of the venture. CSO’s analysis and planning



Stabilization Adviser Marty Regan, top left, meets with civil society leaders to discuss a CSO-funded program involving community-level social cohesion programs aimed at vulnerable youth in Bangui, Central African Republic, in April 2016.

the United Nations and other international organizations and partners, CSO is adding staff and training to meet increasing demand for technical support for mediation services and peace process negotiations.

capability cannot compel good policy, but at least policymakers today have access to a one-stop shop of institutional knowledge that did not exist in 2001.

The Biden administration has particularly stressed the need to address climate change as a driver of conflict and state fragility. Conflict prevention and climate change share the same unfortunate problem: The human brain is not well programmed to tackle either, and we have too few bridges between the politics and the science. We respond to the crisis in front of us, but our tendency with longer-term complex challenges is to revert to equally unwarranted optimism or fatalism.

The nexus between climate and conflict is real: Of the 20 countries the International Committee of the Red Cross considers most vulnerable to climate change, 12 are already experiencing armed conflicts. Resource disputes that once could be managed now goad people to take up arms. Attempts to mitigate and adapt to climate change likely will spur their own conflicts, as new energy economies and environmental effects create new winners and losers.

Reforming Risk Management. Some of S/CRS' and CSO's best work over the years involved small diplomatic teams far afield, often with military partners as in provincial reconstruction teams, but the post-Benghazi political environment reinforced a risk-averse department culture. CSO is addressing the resulting atrophy. It is forming a Rapid Response Team to reestablish a "special operations" deployment capacity. It is also rebuilding its capacity for joint civilian-military deployments to get CSO's trained conflict operators beyond the embassy walls, where they need to be to influence local populations and convey insights to policymakers.

Enhancing Mediation and Negotiation Support. Multilateral mediation and negotiation, especially at the grassroots and involving nonstate groups, is very different from bilateral or multilateral exchanges between sovereign governments. Following

Investing in Data and Technology. While IMAP is now available on every State desktop, this is just the start of data-analytic support to diplomacy. CSO regularly runs simulations of negotiations and peace processes, "war-gaming" potential scenarios to help policymakers guide their talks. As artificial intelligence's capabilities grow, AI-enabled gaming and modeling likely will prove even more valuable tools. Policymakers will be able to mix and match offers, trade-offs and partners to see what outcomes are desirable and achievable. CSO is investing in technology and data analytics specialists and funding new or expanded public datasets to ensure the United States can take advantage of the latest tools for diplomacy.

Many of the lessons learned by S/CRS and CSO are now enshrined in law and policy. CSO is State's lead for implementing the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018, and the bureau co-leads implementation of the 2019 Global Fragility Act and the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review with the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance. These are significant prevention policy initiatives. The GFA mandates that the executive branch develop 10-year plans for identified countries and calls for negotiating compacts with their governments to condition further assistance. The Elie Wiesel Act requires assessments and prevention plans for the 30 highest-risk countries. These efforts require stabilization advisers with highly developed expertise and data-analytic backgrounds, who can lead planning and evaluation of policy and programs in both Washington and challenging field locations.

Afghanistan will not be America's last stability challenge. CSO, and its mandate, do not just reflect the lessons that thousands of U.S. personnel sweated and bled for in Afghanistan—they memorialize them. Having developed and refined these capabilities through years of trial and error, it is now up to policymakers to use them effectively. ■



To Lead Abroad, We Must Deliver at Home

U.S. climate leadership hinges on sustained domestic policies that deliver concrete results.

BY HOLLY KIRKING LOOMIS

Climate change is accelerating extinctions across planet Earth and reshaping our modern human way of life. While our economic heft and technological prowess uniquely position the United States to take a leadership role in addressing climate change, our influence abroad and ability to persuade skeptical allies will ultimately depend on the actions we take at home, especially after changes in U.S. commitments to the Paris Agreement and Kyoto Protocol. To enhance trust with international partners and successfully persuade foreign leaders (and their domestic constituencies) to take on ambitious but costly commitments, we need to demonstrate an abiding U.S. commitment and implement consistent domestic policies to achieving these goals at home. We need to connect our international and domestic climate change initiatives.

As a third-generation Wisconsin farmer who wore cowboy

boots and loved classic country music, my grandfather often said: “Money cannot buy clean air and water, and Mother Nature is not making new land.” I grew up amid idyllic rural Wisconsin pastures, woods, wetlands and contoured croplands along the upper Mississippi River’s driftless region, a slice of hilly and ancient land not glaciated during the last ice age. Like mine, many American communities possess a deeply rooted love of the land and the nature that enriches it.

Americans are concerned and active at the local, state and regional level in protecting and sustaining the life-giving beauty of their natural surroundings, including the occupations and sports supported by the natural environment. They are debating and forging durable local policies to address environmental issues; and their struggles, energy and insights should inform our international policy. Moreover, their stories can bring a new and compelling element to U.S. climate diplomacy.

Addressing climate change must become a shared goal among urban, suburban and rural communities, between blue and red America, if we are to achieve ambitious and sustained U.S. global leadership for the next four, eight or 80 years.



Holly Kirking Loomis is a Foreign Service officer. Currently in São Paulo, she previously served as deputy director and acting office director of the State Department Climate Change Office from 2017 to 2020 and led the U.S. climate delegation to COP 25 in Madrid, Spain, in 2019.

The Importance of Domestic Buy-In

Our foreign policy is strongest when it reflects our heterogeneity as a country while also garnering buy-in from diverse groups. In formulating and articulating our international climate policy,

The knowledge that vulnerable people are disproportionately affected by environmental decisions is critical.

we should take lessons from post-Cold War globalization and economic liberalization. In that process inequality between developed and developing countries decreased, but inequality within developed countries increased. While globalization generated unprecedented material wealth, the unanticipated environmental, economic and cultural externalities of liberal trade policy—such as the loss of manufacturing jobs and the viability of the family farm—brought unanticipated and profound change to the culture and landscape of those areas, and subsequent generations are often worse off than previous generations. For example, transformational U.S. government moves toward cleaner energy sources will be accompanied by significant, and potentially volatile, trade-offs.

Internationally, the knowledge that vulnerable people are disproportionately affected by environmental decisions is critical, and we often focus on the binary “developed” versus “developing” country distinction. But the reality is that within developed countries, disparities are also often quite pronounced. West Virginia, USA; Taiyuan, China; and Katowice, Poland, must all grapple with the displacement of coal industry workers. If the United States and other countries can manage to move from reliance on fossil fuels while supporting and transitioning sizable sections of the American population, the new world system we are building will have more legitimacy.

We need to act fast. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s sobering August report on global warming, the next decade is critical for humanity to avoid the worst climate change scenarios. However, we remain divided over the words we

use to describe environmental issues. In rural Wisconsin, where I come from, we have traditionally grown gardens for food. We raised local, free-range animals and relished a closeness to nature long before the slow food movement and REI. Some folks recoil at words like “environmental justice” or “climate crisis,” but this should not be taken as a rejection of the underlying notion that poor communities and communities of color in the United States

are inordinately affected by the effects of climate change or that we need to do more to protect nature and help people recover from the effects of natural disasters and extreme weather.

No matter what words we use to describe the phenomenon, climate change affects every American. Our fates are tied together. Our government should work to bring together diverse domestic environmental stakeholders in the same way the Obama administration forged the Paris Agreement among as diverse countries as Germany, Saudi Arabia, China and the Marshall Islands.

Speaking in concrete ways helps people from different groups identify with each other and find common ground. Based

on what I see in my home community in Monroe County and elsewhere in Wisconsin, I am optimistic that we are moving toward a collective awareness of the problem. Our democratic system, community by community, will help us learn how to talk about the problem without retreating to political corners.

Practical, Community-Centered Solutions

As an invited observer to the Monroe County Climate Change Task Force meetings over several months, I have been inspired by the group’s focus on practical solutions to real-world problems. With my ear trained by hundreds of hours negotiating multilateral texts, I could hear the community searching for its own vocabulary to address the natural phenomenon that everyone observed. This experience solidified for me that we can resolve disagreements by listening carefully to community member interests on issues ranging from establishing stream bank monitoring systems and evaluating county culverts and bridges for vulnerabilities to



COURTESY OF HOLLY KIRKING LOOMIS

U.S. Head of Delegation Ambassador Marcia Bernicat (now acting assistant secretary for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), at left, and the author enjoy a light moment at COP 25 in Madrid in December 2019.



Former U.S. Lead Negotiator Kim Carnahan (in pink) and the author brief House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her 14-member congressional delegation at COP 25 in Madrid.

contemplating how national and state funds could benefit local mitigation and adaptation efforts.

In the last decade, western Wisconsin experienced two 100-year floods, and 2010-2019 was the wettest decade in the state's history. With support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Monroe County is offering a voluntary buy-out option for land-owners located in increasingly vulnerable flood plains. The community is doing the best it can to reduce its environmental footprint while providing for the immediate needs of its people. At a recent meeting, 40 community members discussed the construction status of a new nursing home to house the county's elderly, many of whom are also among the most vulnerable to climate change effects. While the county aspired to enhancing energy efficient infrastructure, building to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards would require time and financial resources that are in short supply.

Monroe County is a leader in renewable energy, and it is common to see horse-drawn Amish buggies, Subarus and John Deere corn combines driving past massive wind turbines that surround the ridgetop headquarters of the Organic Valley Cooperative. Aspen Institute's Nils Christoffersen has noted the similarities among racially diverse, marginalized communities facing climate change: "Biden's Racial Equity Executive Order acknowledges people living in rural areas as being part of an 'underserved' geographic community requiring special consideration. ... It's time to reconsider dated stereotypes regarding which communities are leading the environmental movement and start imagining what could be accomplished if our policy-

makers tap into the ingenuity of rural Americans surviving on the front lines of climate catastrophe."

Monroe County is just one of many rural American communities grappling with shrinking tax bases as they deal with complex water, energy and internet infrastructure issues and needs that often inordinately affect communities of color and low-income communities of all races. The area where my parents live does not have affordable access to broadband. Some major cellular carriers do not offer coverage in the outskirts of Sparta, the Monroe County seat. Educational opportunities and health care access have not kept pace with more prosperous cities. Current efforts to extend connectivity to rural areas help community leaders and citizens alike, which in turn enhance their ability to make climate-smart decisions at the local level.

At the Wisconsin Climate Change Task Force chaired by Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, leaders of agriculture, indigenous groups, urban environmental activists, businesspeople and scientists met in what 20th-century American political scientist John Dewey would have characterized as "deliberative, discursive and participatory democracy." In December 2020, after 10 months of consultations and deliberations, the task force released its report, including policy recommendations across nine sectors for state and local community decision-makers. Wisconsin business representatives on the task force supported Wisconsin's commitment to achieve 100 percent carbon-free energy generation by 2050.

One third-generation farmer on the task force said that this forum connected him with urban Milwaukee communities affected by tree loss, park shortages and water quality issues.

Beyond local governments, we can better learn from and showcase transformational nongovernmental voices.

The farmer said that the state's indigenous communities shared his deep spiritual connection with the land. People sharing different perspectives resulted in a co-owned set of recommendations. Wisconsin leaders recognize the interrelationships among programs and citizens who interact with nature differently but with a common concern for conservation, whether businesspeople, environmental justice advocates, hunters, snowmobilers, fishermen, cross-country skiers, activists, farmers or bird watchers.

Incorporating American Stories into Climate Diplomacy

There is a unique opportunity to share the successes and lessons learned from local deliberations in our international climate change work, not only to honor our own most innovative and climate-vulnerable citizens but also to highlight similarities with our allies around the globe.

The 2021 Truman Report on Transforming the State Department makes a strong case for creation of an Office of State and Local Diplomacy to foster a more just, equitable and innovative institution. As the report notes: "Expanding the diplomatic toolbox to include state and local diplomacy adds an untapped dimension to U.S. foreign policy. ... Mayors and governors are first responders to national security priorities like climate change [and others]." If integrated into our foreign policy structure, these representative offices, this subnational diplomacy, could help us to tell more stories like the Monroe County and Wisconsin Climate Change Task Forces.

Beyond local governments, we can better learn from and showcase transformational nongovernmental voices like Kathy Egland, chairwoman of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Committee. After leading local rebuilding efforts in Gulfport, Louisiana, following Hurricane Katrina and a successful grassroots effort to address the environmental effects of a failing coal plant less than five miles from her home, Egland has chaired the ECJ committee since its establishment in 2010. A recognized international leader in climate change and social justice, she also led the broader U.S. Climate Action Network to the Conference of the Parties 25 in Madrid.

In Wisconsin, outdoor enthusiast groups such as Ducks Unlimited continue to work to preserve wetlands. This group is made up of hunters and other traditional outdoorsmen who hope their children and grandchildren will have the opportunity to experience the outdoors the way they have. In a promising step toward incorporating diverse rural views and interests into the national conversation on environment and climate change policy, the White House appointed Catherine Coleman Flowers, founder of the U.S. Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice, to the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

We have made good progress toward rebuilding international trust. The international community welcomed President Joe Biden's day-one move to rejoin the Paris Agreement, and our commitment to cut emissions in half by 2030. The focal point of climate diplomacy is shifting from multilateral talks to capitals, as our embassies and

consulates encourage societies to reduce emissions and transparently share results. By incorporating the storytelling power of our diverse citizens into our messaging, we reconnect with the diverse U.S. communities at the front lines in combating climate change at home. Our international climate policy is most persuasive and enduring when we forge the support of a bipartisan, diverse group of Americans, achieve results and sustain our commitments beyond the next few years. ■



At right, Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, who headed the Wisconsin Climate Change Task Force, and the author at the U.S. delegation room for the COP 25 in Madrid in 2019.

COURTESY OF HOLLY KIRKING LOOMIS



The Paris Accord: An Experiment in Polylateralism

**The structure of the 2015 accord is unique,
and may be a decisive factor in its effectiveness
in combating climate change.**

BY THERESA SABONIS-HELF



Although the *impact* of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement on the progress of combating climate change is rightly the focus of most analysis, and remains to be seen, the *structure* of the treaty is noteworthy in that it reflects the likely future of treaty-making in a posthegemonic world. The treaty is founded on the diplomatic pillar of a bottom-up approach; the legal pillar of combining hard law (on mandatory transparency) and soft law (on enforcement via naming-and-shaming); and the economic pillar of engaging corporate strategies and consumer preferences, as authors Rafael Leal-Arcas and Antonio Morelli have observed (see Resources, p. 38).



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Such an approach to multilateralism offers an answer to the question of how to shape internationally important behavior in a world in which power is increasingly dispersed, both among and within states. It resolves key failures in previous attempts at climate treaties. It also serves as a landmark of “polylateralism,” the practice of creating new roles for nonstate actors in the implementation of a treaty among sovereigns.

The Paris Accord and Its Predecessors

The U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed in 1992 and adopted in 1994. The UNFCCC Treaty, of which the United States has been a member since ratification, defines the problem of climate change. This treaty established reporting mechanisms, expert panels to review and advance understanding of climate change (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC) and a responsibility to meet regularly in Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to establish mechanisms to contain climate change.

The first major attempt to bring the treaty to life was at COP 3, which took place in 1997 and produced the Kyoto Protocol. It eventually failed in its effort to create an international architecture for controlling emissions. Although President Bill Clinton

Nations Unies

Conférence sur les Changements Climatiques 2015

COP21/CMP11

Paris France



ARNAUD BOUSSOU

Celebrating adoption of the Paris Agreement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties 21 of Dec. 12, 2015, in Paris. From right to left: French President Francois Hollande, French Foreign Minister and President of COP 21 Laurent Fabius, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and Executive Secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change Christiana Figueres.

signed the Kyoto Protocol in December 1997, he never submitted it to a skeptical Congress, and President George W. Bush acted rapidly after his inauguration to withdraw the U.S. signature.

Critics of the Kyoto Protocol faulted the nontransparent way in which targets for developed countries (Annex I signatories) had been negotiated, the lack of obligations on the part of the developing world (Annex II signatories) and the complex “flexible mechanisms” that proved difficult to monitor and measure. When Russia became the final signatory needed to bring the agreement into force in February 2005, critics noted that it had ridden a tide of anti-Americanism. Although flawed and without the United States, the protocol was extended past its 2012 expiration, while COPs struggled toward next steps.

Kyoto’s eventual replacement was the Paris Agreement, adopted at COP 21 in 2015, which is structured very differently. It expresses the overall goal of keeping the global temperature rise at less than 2 degrees Celsius (ideally 1.5 degrees Celsius) above preindustrial levels. Instead of identifying targets to be met by member nations, the treaty leaves this decision to the nations themselves. Member states are required to submit Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) every five years, and commit to increasing the ambition of their goals over time.

INDCs are made available in a public registry maintained by the UNFCCC Secretariat. The commitments made, as well as the success of implementation, are subject to publicly available peer

review. A periodic synthesis report shows whether the pledges made are sufficient to achieve the Paris Agreement goal. No punishment is specified for states that fail to implement their INDCs. The accord has been described as simultaneously legally binding and voluntary—a balance of hard and soft law.

The level of autonomy accorded to states was important to U.S. negotiators. Hoping to avoid the challenge faced by the Clinton administration, U.S. negotiators had worked to shape the accord so that it would not necessarily require Senate ratification. The Obama administration argued that all the legally binding aspects of the agreement (largely reporting requirements) were already covered by the founding UNFCCC treaty, while the INDCs were self-designed and nonbinding.

Breaking a Climate of Deadlock

Although it remains to be seen if the Paris Agreement can effectively reduce emissions, it is nonetheless regarded as a rare success among climate negotiations in sustaining engagement of the parties. Climate negotiations have traditionally been fraught. Deadlock-producing disputes turn on complex technical issues, stark equity issues and problems with uncertainty. For example, upper atmosphere pollutants such as greenhouse gases (GHGs) can persist for centuries, so simply reducing emissions proves insufficient to repair the damage already done. This creates a dispute about how to compare the “differentiated responsibili-

ties” of a traditional polluter, such as the United States, which currently produces about 15 percent of daily global emissions (but has been emitting for centuries) to those of China, which is a relative newcomer to high GHG levels but is currently producing 30 percent of daily global emissions.

This challenge is compounded by the centrality of fossil fuels to industrialization. Industrializing countries are eager to catch up economically, and they lack confidence that it is possible to “rise” without emissions rising as well. There is fear that lack of access to funding for electricity development will condemn poor countries to darkness. The centrality of energy to the global economy is troubling for all states: The IPCC estimates that 55 percent of global GHG emissions are directly connected to energy use, so how to maintain—much less expand—standards of living in a GHG-constrained environment is a grave concern.

An even broader equity issue bedeviled the negotiations of every COP: The very fact that 197 countries had signed the UNFCCC meant that all would be included in the negotiations, even though the volume of emissions, the effect of climate change and the capacity of states varied dramatically among countries. Negotiations involving more than 190 countries on a scientifically complex, economically challenging issue led to prioritization problems: OPEC nations, for example, wanted to ensure that they would be assisted if a transition away from fossil fuels dramatically reduced their national wealth. Nations with skeptical populations wanted more research to prove origins of the problem. Agricultural nations wanted to ensure that they received appropriate credit for carbon-sequestering crops. Small island nations sought assurances that their populations would be accepted as refugees if their homelands became uninhabitable. In short, the issues were so many and varied that even good-faith negotiators could not agree on priorities.

Annex II (developing) countries had no obligation to reduce emissions under the early treaties. The Group of 77, fearful that pressure might grow in the future on developing countries to curb emissions and thereby potentially limit their own growth, compelled removal from the Kyoto Protocol of an article that detailed how a non-Annex I country might take on a voluntary commitment. (Argentina attempted to take on a commitment but was unable to do so; and Kazakhstan, which tried to gain membership in Annex I, struggled from COP 4 to COP 7 to achieve that laudable goal.)

Eager to find a way to move forward, the Obama administration concluded that, although meetings involving all the parties were essential, setting the table bilaterally would increase the prospects for success. Since China and the United States were

The accord has been described as simultaneously legally binding and voluntary—a balance of hard and soft law.

the top emitters, the administration sought bilateral agreement. China, although it had long considered climate change a developed world problem, had begun to shift its narrative in 2009, when it promised at the COP 15 to reduce the energy intensity of its economy and expand the use of nonfossil fuels. According to scholar Miranda Schreurs, this shift likely reflected China’s struggles with air quality, its dramatic increase in energy imports and its rising per-capita energy consumption.

Xi Jinping proved a willing partner with Obama, and in November 2014 they released a “U.S.-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change and Energy Cooperation.” The announcement explicitly embraced the idea of INDCs and sketched out what would be included in the U.S. and the China plans. The promised actions were criticized for their modest ambition, but the model of stating intended contributions was brought to Paris with the full endorsement of the top two emitters, paving the way for a breakthrough.

This effort was further amplified by the European Union. Long a supporter of binding international commitments, the E.U. announced its ambitious new 2030 emissions reduction target just prior to the 2014 U.S.-China summit. Attempting to set an example, the E.U. announced ambitious targets of 40 percent GHG reductions by 2030, combined with a 27 percent increase in renewable energy and a 27 percent increase in energy efficiency of GDP. Their specification of a target together with renewable and efficiency contributions were mirrored in China’s announcement. Since China, the United States and the European Union constitute the top emitters (accounting for 54 percent of global emissions according to the Environmental Protection Agency), a climate strategy supported by these three solidified Paris’ new direction.

Polylaternalism: Enter the Nonstate Actors

The 2015 Paris negotiations, like all the COPs before them, attracted participation from interested nonstate actors. The Paris Agreement structure, however, was the first to create an explicit role for them. The treaty was signed and ratified by sovereign states, but Article 6.4 calls for signatories to encourage public and private entities. Nonstate actors have no obligation under

By connecting investors, state and local government, industry and activists, the Paris Agreement attempts to engender the innovation required to pursue its transformative goals.

the treaty to report to the UNFCCC, but they may make use of the “Non-state Actor Zone for Climate Actions” registry, posting their own intended commitments for review and critique. The NAZCA registry currently boasts 19,690 “actors,” of which 2,148 are American—including 16 states, 246 cities, 832 companies and 854 organizations, each of which has committed to specific GHG reduction strategies and targets.

RESOURCES

Global Climate Action NAZCA Registry

Rafael Leal-Arcas and Antonio Morelli, “The Resilience of the Paris Agreement: Negotiating and Implementing the Climate Regime,” *Georgetown Environmental Law Review*, 2018, Vol. 31, Issue 1

Miranda A. Schreurs, “The Paris Climate Agreement and the Three Largest Emitters: China, the United States, and the European Union,” *Politics and Governance*, 2016, Vol. 4, Issue 3

U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat, “Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement: Synthesis report by the secretariat,” Feb. 26, 2021

United Nations, “Paris Agreement,” 2015, English text

The promotion and mutual review of targets, policies and strategies has enabled nonstate actors to organize in new ways. Although COP 23 (2017) occurred after the United States had begun the process of withdrawing from the treaty, a U.S. team under the banner of “We Are Still In” attended the conference representing 20 states, 110 U.S. cities and more than 1,400 businesses. This group also began releasing an annual report, “America’s Pledge,” which quantified the impact of U.S. nonfederal actors working toward the Paris accord goals. “We Are Still In” continued to attend subsequent COPs, growing in size. As the Biden administration returned the U.S. to the Paris accord, the group renamed itself “America Is All In” and helped shape (and then endorsed) the April 2021 new U.S. INDC commitment to reduce emissions by 50-52 percent (from 2005 levels) by 2030.

This movement highlighted what the drafters of the Paris Agreement had intended to be an important aspect of the treaty. With no sanctions identified, the accord relies on the “soft law” approach of “naming and shaming” signatories who either adopt modest goals in their INDCs or fail to achieve the results promised. It was hoped that mobilizing “nonparty stakeholders” from civil society, state and local government, and industry could help lead governments toward more ambitious goals while simultaneously demonstrating how to implement change.

Another example of nonparty stakeholder leadership comes from two organizations closely associated with the Paris conference: Mission Innovation and the Breakthrough Energy Coalition. The former is an intergovernmental and public-private platform that involves 23 U.S. states and seeks to connect global research and development to accelerate clean energy innovation. The latter is a multibillion-dollar venture capital program, led by notables in the U.S. high-tech sector, which seeks to provide flexible early-stage investment for promising technologies in next-generation energy development. Both organizations support the Paris accord, and both explain their work in terms of accelerating progress toward its goals.

By connecting investors, state and local government, industry and activists, the Paris Agreement attempts to engender the innovation required to pursue its transformative goals. Organizing states and nonstate actors toward cooperative problem-solving is an approach the United Nations used to good effect in the Millennium Development Goals. Implementation of this kind of hybrid multilateralism in a treaty focused on climate change is simultaneously a recognition of the limits of state power in addressing the issue and an effort to embrace the dynamism of nonstate actors who may pursue solutions with more creativity. ■



Tackling the Climate Crisis from the Inside

The State Department is using its embassies and consulates as strategic platforms to demonstrate climate solutions and leadership overseas.

BY STEPHANIE CHRISTEL MEREDITH



Just one week after entering office, President Joe Biden signed Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, placing the climate crisis “at the center of United States foreign policy and national security.” The president appointed former Secretary of State John Kerry as his Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, returned the United States to the Paris Agreement, and hosted a Leaders Summit on Climate on Earth Day, April 22.



Stephanie Christel Meredith is an eco-management analyst with the Department of State’s Greening Diplomacy Initiative in the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions. She joined the department in 2018 as a Presidential Management Fellow, and has served with State’s Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and the Department of Defense.

To increase climate resilience and sustainability in our operations, the State Department’s 12-year-old Greening Diplomacy Initiative (GDI), managed by the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions (M/SS), embarked on a new burst of planning and activity to help meet the White House’s ambitious goals to further reduce our environmental footprint and improve our climate resilience. The department aims to support eco-diplomacy efforts by leveraging our worldwide talent, facilities and operations to advance the conservation of natural resources and highlight U.S. environmental, technological and policy successes. Some of the goals will focus on implementing the White House orders, including transitioning State Department facilities worldwide to carbon pollution-free electricity, zero-emission vehicle acquisition and a net-zero emission building portfolio.

With more than 22,000 real property assets, 90,000 personnel and a fleet of 14,000 vehicles worldwide, the Department of State has a unique opportunity to lead by example in the fight against climate change. Our embassies and consulates act as strategic platforms to demonstrate climate solutions and lead-

Since 2009, Green Teams have logged more than 300 success stories as a testament to their ongoing efforts.

ership overseas. By taking advantage of this opportunity, we demonstrate the importance and impact of climate mitigation and adaptation. Perhaps no other foreign policy issue lends itself so readily to integrating policy and operational practice.

As has been the case to date, our success will depend critically on the 120 “Green Teams” in the field championing sustainable operations at posts around the world. Partnering with other countries and leveraging U.S. expertise in environmental technology and sustainable solutions will also be essential. The work will require mobilization across the department’s functional and regional bureaus, as well as support from dozens of internal and external experts, senior department officials and interagency partners. Reframing climate resilience—i.e., anticipating and preparing for increasingly hazardous climate conditions—to be a top priority across our management platform and shifting our operations to meet climate change mitigation goals will be a decadeslong process.

A New Working Group

To meet White House goals and ensure a coordinated approach, State assembled a new Climate and Sustainability Working Group to identify the best path forward. Established in March, the group contains representatives from more than a dozen offices across multiple bureaus, including the bureaus of Administration, Overseas Buildings Operations, Information Resource Management and Diplomatic Security, as well as the six regional bureaus.

Each year, climate resilience and sustainability goals and milestones will be articulated through two main plans. The Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan will identify how the State Department is adapting to the effects of climate change around the world and protecting its investments. The 2021 plan, the first since 2014, identifies five priority adaptation actions to improve our overall climate resilience. Over the next year, State will enhance resilience by improving the mobility of our workforce and services; assessing our emergency preparedness for climate-related disasters; building out the capacity to make

data-informed decisions and assessments of our overseas climate vulnerabilities; evaluating our supply chains for climate-related vulnerabilities; and working with host governments to improve local infrastructure.

The Sustainability Plan spells out the department’s mitigation goals and the actions being taken to meet them. State has published sustainability plans annually since 2010; however, our overseas operations have not previously been measured in a systematic way or had goals applied to them, in part due to the nature of operating in hundreds of different countries with varying policies, conditions and infrastructure. Moving forward, the department will set an ambitious agenda for meeting White House goals on energy, water, waste, buildings, fleet and procurement, including developing baselines for our overseas operations.

Together, these actions will help us not only to improve the safety and security of our personnel, operations and facilities, but also to protect the investments of the American taxpayer, especially at overseas diplomatic posts.

Building on Experience

To be successful, the department must develop a climate-literate workforce, one that possesses foundational knowledge of climate change and an understanding of how everyday actions affect and are affected by climate change.

We are not starting from scratch. For more than a decade, the GDI has provided sustainability guidance and led departmentwide efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, implement energy and water efficiency, waste reduction technologies and programs, and engage with host nations and the private sector on sustainability. Spearheaded by committed and knowledgeable Foreign Service officers and specialists, eligible family members (EFMs) and locally employed (LE) staff, the “Green Teams” at embassies and consulates around the world volunteer their time to create specific eco-diplomacy and sustainability goals to align with their location’s particular needs, making our diplomatic posts exemplars for sustainable and resilient operations.

Since 2009, Green Teams have logged more than 300 success stories as a testament to their ongoing efforts. In Cape Town, a team helped drive a conservation campaign that successfully reduced their water consumption by 70 percent during a yearslong drought. The Bangkok Green Team instituted a “Turn It Off” campaign that reduced their embassy’s electricity usage by 13 percent over a three-month period. Green Teams are also responsible for implementing more than 30 Resilience Innova-



U.S. EMBASSY BANGKOK

Ambassadors, diplomatic officials and Bangkok Governor Sukhumbhand Paribatra, eighth from left, pose on stage with joined hands at the launching of the Eco-Capitals Forum in 2016.

tion Grant projects over the last three years, supported by the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. In Panama City, the embassy used the grant to install a rainwater harvesting system to reduce their daily water consumption by 4 percent.

These projects helped to enhance readiness and adapt to local climate effects on operations. Green Teams, and senior-level support for their efforts, will continue to be a key component in identifying regionally and locally important mitigation and adaptation activities to drive and amplify action.

Engaging International Partners

With more than 85 percent of GHG emissions coming from outside the United States, engagement with our international partners is vital. Limiting the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius requires every country to commit to ambitious action, especially national governments, whose operations often have the largest workforce, fleet and real property footprint in a given country.

Through the Greening Government Initiative, a new program launched this year and led jointly by the U.S. and Canada, the State Department will support White House efforts to create a

community of practice aiming to green national governments' operations. This initiative will enable countries worldwide to broadly share lessons learned, promote innovation and, where relevant and possible, set common goals to support the work underway by countries to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement.

We will also work with diplomatic partners to advance the Eco-Capitals Forum, an avenue for diplomatic missions to support the sustainability goals of host and local governments. These forums leverage the vast footprint of the diplomatic community to share best practices, create markets for sustainable products and services, and promote cooperation on a local level. In 2018, the D.C. Eco-Capitals Forum worked with the private sector to collect individual embassies' energy demands to create a new solar project in the region. By creating a joint project, embassies were able to access renewable electricity at lower costs. The project advances sustainability goals of the District of Columbia and participating foreign nations, and serves as a model that can be replicated in other countries.

Working with the interagency will be a key component of ensuring the State Department is maximizing the full breadth of

We will also work with diplomatic partners to advance the Eco-Capitals Forum, an avenue for diplomatic missions to support the sustainability goals of host and local governments.

experience from around the federal government. Partnering with the Department of Energy, the General Services Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency and other departments will help ensure we are modernizing our operations and implementing best practices to meet our goals.

Cooperation and coordination will be especially important with the Department of Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development to mirror efforts in all our international work and take advantage of economies of scale where possible. Leveraging the best available scientific support from NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will also help us integrate the most advanced climate data into our decision-making processes.

Achievements and Challenges

The State Department is on its way to meeting some of the sustainability goals and priorities of the new administration. Since 2008, State has reduced GHG emissions in its U.S.-based operations by more than 46 percent, and more than 35 percent of our domestic electricity needs now come from renewable energy, thanks to an offsite wind farm in New Jersey. Overseas, more than 50 U.S. embassies and consulates are U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified, and more than 40 have renewable energy installations on site. Six domestic buildings and 98 diplomatic posts have integrated MeterNet, the State Department's smart metering system, to track real-time data on energy demand and identify energy conservation measures. The department is also partnering with universities under the Embassy 2050 initiative to identify and evaluate emerging technologies, innovations and best practices to respond to long-term drivers of change.

There are also considerable challenges. Capturing relevant environmental data and developing the data infrastructure to baseline and set goals will be a complex undertaking. But as Janice deGarmo, director of M/SS, observes: "The importance of data cannot be understated for helping the department prioritize where to expend its limited human capital and financial resources to get the biggest climate impact." In recognition of the importance of the issue, the Center for Analytics in M/SS will focus on data as one of its strategic themes in the department's Enterprise Data Strategy.

While State ranks number one among federal agencies for domestic renewable energy use and has significantly reduced water consumption, according to the department's annual sustainability scorecard produced by the Office of Management and Budget, we lag behind federal domestic goals in energy intensity, sustainable buildings and fleet management. Overseas, host-government or local regulations, and the lack of availability of environmentally friendly products and services, make full implementation difficult.

To address some of these challenges, State is investing in new technologies. In 2021 the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations rolled out EnergyCAP, an automated system to capture utility bill data, a process which had previously been done manually. This new system, currently integrating data from 180 posts worldwide, will help us develop baseline energy and water usage and costs, evaluate and prioritize locations for conservation projects, and track progress of conservation efforts.

As guests in nearly 200 countries, the State Department must act to both reduce our impact on the climate and address climate resilience. In some locations, we may have to enhance preparedness for increased wildfires or drought, and in others adopt measures to tackle heavy rain and flooding. The critical nature of our operations means that we need to identify and prepare for the whole gamut of climate impacts around the world and ensure we are mitigating the risks associated with those vulnerabilities.

The United States strives to demonstrate leadership and innovation globally. As we look to the future, the State Department and the federal government are integral to meeting our climate objectives, both at the policy and operational level. All our employees—Foreign Service, Civil Service, LE staff, EFMs and contractors—will need to act together. Policy and management, both in Washington and at all our diplomatic posts, must work toward a common goal and with a common voice to ensure that we are tackling the climate crisis effectively. ■



Tracking Air Quality: Data for Our Community and Beyond

**State's air quality monitoring program facilitates
engagement with host governments and civil
society around the world.**

BY MARY TRAN



Air pollution is an increasing global health threat. From wildfires across Australia and the western United States to the new visibility of the Himalayas in South Asia during the pandemic, 2020 featured drastic changes in air pollution around the world. Long-term exposure to air pollution can cause decreased lung function, lower lung capacity and development of diseases like asthma and bronchitis. More than 80 percent of U.S. embassies and

consulates are in areas that exceed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) annual air quality standard for fine particles. Since 2008, the Department of State has sought to provide better ground-level data to inform the Foreign Service community, U.S. citizens abroad and the communities where they serve.

The World Health Organization and other international bodies, along with research institutions and the international media, have addressed and reported extensively on air quality. Despite the breadth and significance of the issue and growing interest in it, reliable ground-based data does not exist in many parts of the world. Recognizing this need, in 2008, U.S. Embassy Beijing installed an EPA-approved air quality monitor that provided data to U.S. personnel and citizens to reduce health risks and bolster the public's understanding of air pollution. Other U.S. diplomatic posts in Mission China and Mission India followed suit, and all continue to provide publicly available air quality data hourly.

To help fill in data gaps elsewhere and ensure a coordinated departmentwide approach, the Greening Diplomacy Initiative (GDI) in the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions partnered with the EPA in 2015 to launch an air quality moni-



Mary Tran is an IT project management consultant specializing in agile transformation, organizational development and communication. She joined the Greening Diplomacy Initiative in the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions in 2019 to spearhead the development of the air quality mobile application, ZephAir, and support the Department of State's Air Quality Monitoring Program, DOSAir.



U.S. EMBASSY BISHKEK

U.S. Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Donald Lu looks at Embassy Bishkek's Air Quality Monitor in 2019.

toring program called DOSAir. With the installation of ground-based monitors approved for regulatory use in the United States, DOSAir provides reliable, transparent data to mission personnel and the general public.

A Welcome Initiative

Since the launch of the DOSAir program in 2015 by then-Secretary of State John Kerry and former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, State has expanded its own network of reference-grade air quality monitors to almost 80 embassies and consulates. The monitors are made in the United States, and installed and maintained by a small American company. The technical requirements and data are all transparent and available to the public.

Because the program is transparent and underpinned both by American manufacturing and decades of EPA expertise, it has spurred productive partnerships with other countries. Marcia Bernicat, U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh from 2015 to 2018, witnessed this. “The really excellent news is, yes, overwhelmingly governments welcome our [air quality] initiative,” she said at GDI’s 10th anniversary celebration in 2020. “They trust our equipment and data.”

Countries in South and Central Asia experience some of the worst air quality in the world. The 2020 State of Global Air ranked India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the top 10 countries for population-weighted annual average fine particulate exposures in 2019. The report also found air pollution was the second leading risk factor for premature death in Bangladesh in 2019, an issue well known to our embassy staff and families in Dhaka. In

2016, Ambassador Bernicat and her team oversaw the installation of an air quality monitor and encouraged their partners to use and share the data.

Ambassador Alice Wells, a former senior official in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), served throughout the region and knew the importance of coordinated action. She launched an initiative to install EPA-approved monitors at all SCA posts in 2018 through SCA’s Council on Air Quality, which continues to engage with U.S. personnel and families on the topic. Wells learned that overseas personnel and their families wanted a mobile app with automated alerts to help them make decisions, such as when to jog, whether to cancel outdoor activities or whether to wear a mask. This was the genesis for the initial development of ZephAir, the department’s first air quality mobile application.

To make the data more accessible, GDI developed ZephAir with support from State’s Air Pollution Working Group and SCA. The name ZephAir is inspired by the Greek word *zephyros*, or “west wind.” Air quality data is now at everyone’s fingertips. ZephAir displays the EPA Air Quality Index (AQI) from the department’s monitors and from reference monitors run by some other countries. Features include the display of real-time data, 24-hour air quality trends and the daily AQI for the previous week. Users can save locations to easily track air quality in their cities of interest. They can also enable push notifications to receive alerts when AQI levels change and recommendations on how to reduce exposure to high air pollution levels and health risks.

Posts use the data to educate the public on the effects of air pollution and build demand for cleaner air.

Actionable Data

"It's been incredible to see how important that actionable data is. It helps equip our officers, families and partners with information that helps them protect their health," Ambassador Wells said in a 2020 GDI interview.

While the primary purpose of DOSAir is to provide air quality information to our people overseas, the monitors are also effective tools for addressing air pollution broadly, including engaging with host governments and civil society. Posts use the data to educate the public on the effects of air pollution and build demand for cleaner air. The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs uses the monitors in its air quality programming, which aims to increase local capacity to manage air quality and address air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

GDI also received support and input into app development from the Air Quality Fellows program. The program, managed by GDI, enables U.S. air quality experts, paired with embassies and consulates, to volunteer their time to facilitate research, engage with host countries and support embassies in managing air quality concerns. The fellows also provide a platform to demonstrate American solutions to air quality challenges to other countries.

"The Department of State continues to look for these opportunities to meet multiple needs with one program," said Janice deGarmo, director of the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions. "By providing our personnel and their families with reliable data, we are able to respond to their needs. By making the data public, we are showcasing American solutions while also supporting countries in understanding the scope of the problem and how they can fix it over the long term."

GDI will continue to develop additional features over the next year, and will incorporate additional non-U.S. government monitors, low-cost sensor data and forecasting capability from NASA in future iterations. Download ZephAir today, and visit state.gov/eco-diplomacy to learn more. ■

ATTENTION: PARENT CARE SURVEY

Are you an active duty U.S. military or Foreign Service member who has provided unpaid help to a parent in the past year?

This help might have included managing finances, coordinating services or providing emotional support to meet your parent's needs.

You may be eligible to participate in an online survey for a doctoral dissertation on U.S. Government personnel caring for parents from a distance. Participation is voluntary and anonymous.

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Student Investigator:
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Building a Foundation for Successful Green Diplomacy

Taking practical action to improve the Tri-Mission's environmental footprint in Rome is smart diplomacy.

BY KENNETH L. MEYER

President Joe Biden has made tackling the climate crisis a national security priority, and Tri-Mission Italy has stepped up to do its part. Multilateral engagement through our three missions in Rome (U.S. Embassy Rome, U.S. Embassy to the Holy See and U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies) is critical in fighting for a cleaner environment with a better future; however, these are longer-term actions that could take years to bear fruit. To help ensure success in the shorter term that can bolster our diplomatic engagement, Tri-Mission Italy's management section has made environmental stewardship an important component of how we approach facilities management.



Kenneth L. Meyer is a Foreign Service officer currently assigned as a management officer to the Tri-Mission in Rome, Italy. He previously served in Cambodia, China, the Czech Republic, Iraq, Japan, Slovakia and the United States. He attended the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and has published previously on climate change and national security.

We have taken pragmatic action to improve our environmental footprint in Rome, demonstrating to the Italians that we are serious about tackling the climate crisis. We are taking these steps right in their front yard, so to speak; and in the process, we are building a foundation for successful green diplomacy.

Simple Concepts and Complex Projects

To begin with, our main office buildings on our Rome campus are LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified. This means we have complied with all environmental laws and regulations; occupancy, area and size ratios; and additional precertification requirements; and we share appropriate data on our energy efficiency and water usage. Achieving this on our historic campus, with buildings dating to the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, demonstrates our commitment and leadership in energy and environmental design.

To reduce waste and increase recycling, the Tri-Mission became one of the first large-scale organizations in Rome to implement a waste-recycling program in collaboration with City Hall Waste Management. Monitored results show we are recycling 80 percent of our trash, and the city government estimates that



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/TRI-MISSION ITALY

A Tri-Mission Italy facility maintenance van is charged at one of the mission's four electric-car charging stations in Rome.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/TRI-MISSION ITALY

This “green” parking lot made of grass and pavers helps to disperse heat and facilitates rainwater management during storm events.

90 percent of our recycling material is reusable. As a result of our recycling success, we ultimately constructed a one-stop repository center on our Rome campus. The city was impressed with our center and assigned a specialty recycling subsidiary to work with the U.S. to manage the program moving forward.

Tri-Mission Rome has for several years been converting interior and exterior lighting systems to LED technology. Sixty percent of our functional space and 80 percent of our residences are now so equipped. The LED bulbs themselves cost more than regular incandescent bulbs, but due to increased life and lower energy consumption—LED consumption is 30-40 percent less than fluorescent bulbs—the long-term result is significant utilities savings.

In a complex project that reduces both fuel consumption and water runoff, we redesigned our deteriorating asphalt parking lot (approximately 100 parking spaces) to include permeable paving under the parking spots, and installed electric charging stations for our new hybrid, government-owned vehicles. Asphalt and concrete are materials that absorb and retain heat and contribute to “urban heat islands,” increasing energy costs (e.g., for air conditioning), air-pollution levels and heat-related illness and mortality.

Our green parking lot provides onsite stormwater management by allowing infiltration of runoff into the ground during storm events, thus greatly reducing runoff volume and rate, eliminating it entirely from small storm events and capturing up to 80 percent of runoff from larger events. The charging stations will significantly reduce reliance on fossil fuels for our official vehicles.

One usually does not think of an elevator renovation as a way to reduce power consumption, but that is exactly what we did at the Tri-Mission. We replaced our chancery elevators, installed in the early 1990s and experiencing seriously degraded performance. The new elevators use an energy-efficient traction system, reducing power demand by 50 percent, and are equipped with a regenerative drive that recovers the elevators’ braking energy (otherwise dissipated as heat on the electrical resistances). After converting the recovered energy to electric energy, the regenerative drive sends it back to the building electrical system to be used on other applications, consequently reducing elevator electric consumption by 20 percent. It seems complex, but the principles are really quite simple. Technology is enabling us to do incredible things with the right engineering.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/TRI-MISSION ITALY

Residential solar panels in Rome result in significant savings on natural gas.

Reducing Waste

We further applied new technology and engineering to two of our chief-of-mission (COM) residences. After a major chiller failure at our U.S. Mission to the United Nations COM residence, we installed new natural gas-fired chillers that have an engine that spins the compressor to produce chilled water. One of the main advantages of this technology is that waste heat from the chiller's operations can be recovered and used to produce domestic hot water. This greatly reduces the energy needed to perform this task separately, and it has lowered our utility bills for the property. At our historic Embassy Rome COM residence, we installed solar panels to heat the water for the swimming pool and to



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/TRI-MISSION ITALY

The Tri-Mission Italy was one of the first large-scale organizations in Rome to implement a waste-recycling program in collaboration with City Hall Waste Management.

provide hot water to the locker room. Use of the solar panels has led to savings of approximately 60 percent on natural gas bills for the residence.

We also utilized solar technology at one of our government-owned apartment buildings, where we replaced outdated boilers with two small condensing boilers that integrate the heating energy produced by newly installed solar panels. In sunny Rome, the solar panels significantly reduce CO₂ in the production of hot water. In addition, we redesigned the system to separate domestic hot water from the heating system, which eliminates the need for the heating boilers to run year-round and increases the system's overall efficiency. We also replaced the primary and secondary pumps with more efficient inverter pumps. The entire boiler room is controlled by an automated management system that adjusts the heating-system supply temperature according to the outside temperature to save natural gas and avoid occupant discomfort during hotter days.

Since the Tri-Mission official campus is located inside Rome's historic district, it is difficult to install onsite renewable energy technology such as solar panels. We thus decided to buy renewable energy from an offsite provider through renewable energy certificates. This service, which we document through guarantee-of-origin certificates from the provider, contributes to annual carbon offsetting of about 3,000,000 kg (3,000 tons) of CO₂—approximately equivalent to the amount of energy consumed annually by 360 homes in the United States.

Tri-Mission Italy's management section continually seeks to make processes and facilities "greener." This year the department recognized our achievements with the Greening Diplomacy Initiative Award for Excellence in Team Sustainability Performance. We hope that our efforts can serve as an example to others of pragmatic actions in the here and now to tackle the climate crisis. ■



Climate Change: It's Personal

**As climate change boosts the frequency
and severity of natural disasters,
diplomats will increasingly find
themselves dealing with the fallout.**

BY KOVIA GRATZON-ERSKINE



I am no stranger to fire. I have been posted overseas driving past burning buildings during riots or through roadblocks with stacks of burning tires and rock-throwing protesters. What I had never experienced until the fall of 2020 was an out-of-control forest fire, sweeping through a drought-ridden valley, taking out homes and old growth forest, and threatening the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands.

At 3 a.m. irksome chirps from my cell phone woke me. The alert: "Phase 2: Be ready. Stand by for evacuation orders." Not wanting to wake my parents whom I was visiting in

Oregon, I quietly began packing what I considered most crucial: grandma's writings and instruments, family photographs, papers from my dad's adoption, my passport, electronics, some clothes and creative projects. I filled gallon jugs of water and stashed away Clif bars, trail mix and Gatorade.

At 5 a.m. the sound of clanking metal and heavy tires sent me out to the usually quiet rural road. There, recreational vehicles and trucks full of livestock, tools, tractors and anything else that could fit barreled through the dark morning. These people reacting to "Phase 1: Leave now" lived a mere 20 minutes away. I woke my parents. "Time to pack," I said. "Take what you can't imagine losing."

By 8 a.m. the kitchen table had turned into evacuation staging. I grabbed pillows and blankets. Barely a week out of surgery, my mother could hardly get out of bed. While she packed one small bag, I collapsed her walker, bed bolsters, shower chair, makeshift toilet, medicines and ice machine. My dad packed his CBD products for arthritis and SSRIs for depression and anxiety. "How long are we going to be gone?" He wanted to gauge how much dog and cat food to bring. "Is that right?" he asked, pointing to the clock. It said 8:30, but outside it was dark as night.

At 9 a.m. the sky was red. I rushed outside to look for fire. The smoke made me cough, and I ran back in. "Time to go. Dad, get the animals; I'll get Mom." White ash fell as I packed



Kovia Gratzon-Erskine joined the Foreign Service in 2007 and currently manages monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and organizational development at USAID/Guatemala. Her previous postings as a public health specialist include

Antananarivo and Port-au-Prince; she also rendered support from Washington, D.C., to Monrovia, Freetown and Conakry during an Ebola outbreak and served in Moldova as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer. In 2016 she became a resilience trainer through the State Department's Center of Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience.

Her Speaking Out column, "Compassion Fatigue in the Foreign Service," was published in the March 2019 FSJ.

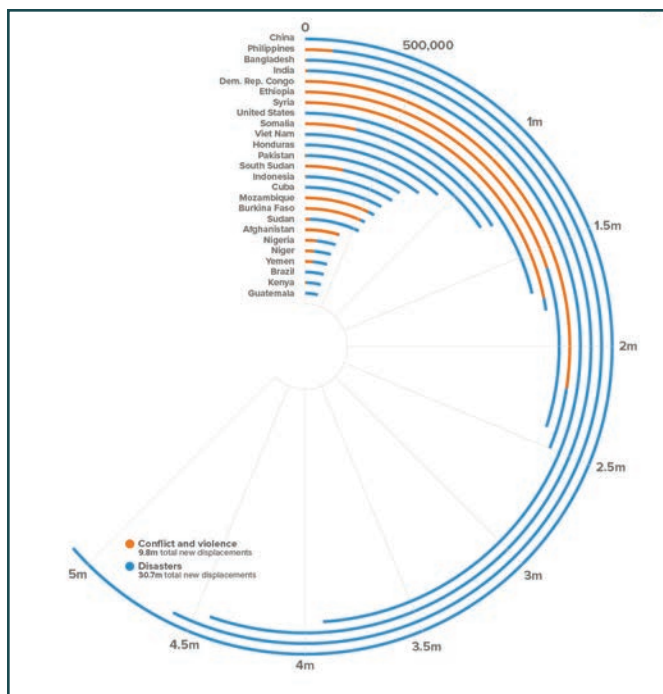


Figure 1. Twenty-five countries and territories with most new displacements in 2020.

the car, stuffing my parents in among our belongings. We headed out of town away from the fire, up the hill and out of the smoke-filled valley.



Climate change is personal, but it is also communal. The year 2020 rivaled 2016 as the world's hottest recorded year. The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters recorded 389 climate-related events, resulting in more than 15,000 deaths and 98.4 million affected, according to U.N. Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (undrr.org). Climate change has been proven to make some hazards, such as wildfires, in certain regions more frequent and intense. Although not all weather-related disasters are a result of larger trends, the last two decades have seen a dramatic rise in disasters, including events linked to climate change.

In rural Oregon, we had an alert system. The public

could view maps on air quality, flame coverage and burn damage. My family had a car and money to take us to safety. Thousands of volunteers collected clothes and toiletries, medicine and pet supplies for families that had lost nearly everything. The government and private sector opened hotel rooms and fairgrounds, providing safe havens for those displaced by the wildfire.

This is not the case for the 30.7 million people newly displaced as a result of natural disasters in 2020 (see figure 1). Natural disasters in the form of fire, drought, flood, earthquake, mudslides and other weather events affect the availability of clean water, food, livelihood options and shelter, forcing people to leave their homes (see figure 2).

In practical terms, this means there will be increased need for humanitarian assistance, development assistance and climate change diplomacy to support governments in promoting recovery, mitigating and adapting to climate change, establishing warning systems and developing emergency protocols. It means doing what we can to promote disaster risk reduction (remember: Oct. 13 is International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction).

In Guatemala, where I live now, the risks of natural disaster are plentiful. The country is ringed with gorgeous volcanoes, and tropical storms regularly roll in from two coasts, pouring down on communities that constantly manage the extremes

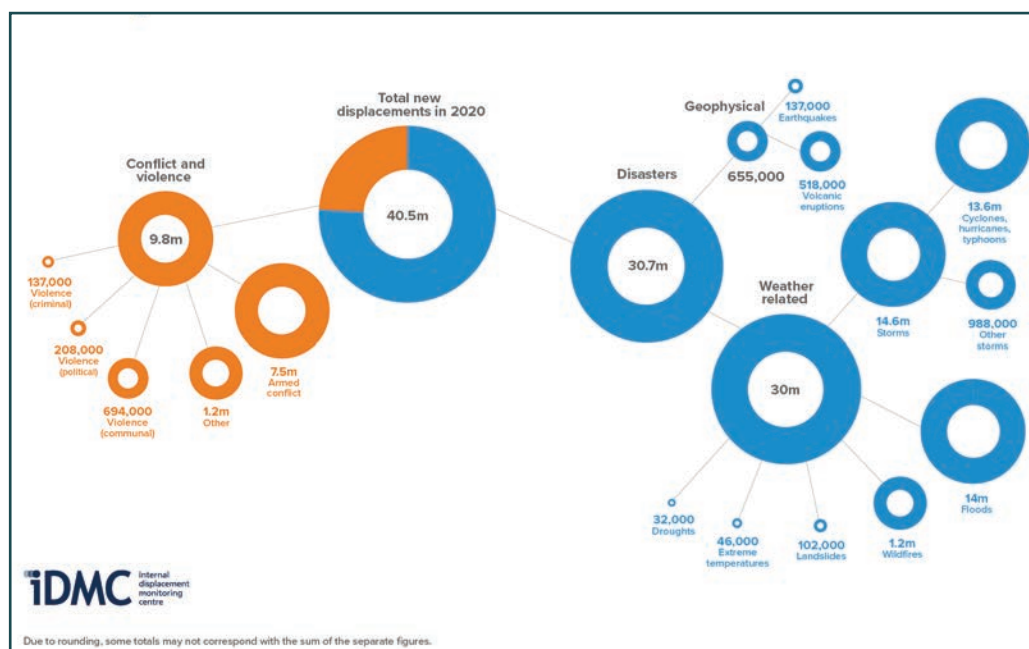


Figure 2. New displacements in 2020: breakdown for conflict and disasters.

of both drought and flood. This is a place where people brace through storms and listen to deep thunderous grumbles from nearby mountains in what are either resilient or adaptive behaviors. Those, however, who lose homes, land, crops and livelihoods are environmentally displaced, seeking refuge and a future for themselves and their loved ones.



More and more people around the globe are experiencing “solastalgia,” defined as the distress caused by environmental change. I would include myself. The distress can come in many ways: depression and anxiety over personally experiencing or lamenting certain changes, strong emotions over observing and working with and for populations directly affected by climate change, or disappointment over policy or programs that seem to take too long to make a real difference.

As climate change boosts the frequency and severity of natural disasters, more diplomats and development workers

30.7 million people were newly displaced as a result of natural disasters in 2020.

will find themselves unexpectedly part of a nation and living among communities grappling with recovery and, later, how to “fix” the issue. Helping people survive and helping governments and communities respond and build can lead to traumatic consequences not only for the people directly affected but also for those who support diplomacy and humanitarian and development assistance work. I have experienced nightmares, apathy, helplessness and hopelessness, depression and anxiety, even panic.

Well known among trauma and disaster professionals are three factors that increase the risk of experiencing traumatic consequences: duration, severity and meaning.

1. *Duration*: working long hours for extended periods of time without stopping to eat, exercise, play, pray, socialize or otherwise recharge;

2. *Severity*: being exposed constantly to death/dying, poverty, suffering, abuse and any horrific scene; and

3. *Meaning*: connecting personally with the situation, being consumed by thoughts (“If I stop, someone will die or get hurt”).

I have found this to be true each time I dealt with a disaster on the job. Now I know that, I must consider my work habits and work environment (see sidebar).

The reality is that climate change—which includes assisting with disaster recovery, rebuilding communities and resolving policy issues to help the millions of environmentally displaced persons in this world—is a long-term, complex issue that requires solutions beyond the work of one person.

My Oregon wildfire trauma was short-lived. The situation couldn’t get more personal and meaningful. But my childhood home is still standing, and my parents are safe. For millions, this is not the case; and for diplomats and development workers, more and more will be faced personally or professionally with climate change and environmentally displaced persons. It will take not only a special kind of climate change diplomacy and post-disaster development expertise, but exceptional self-awareness and management skills to keep our staff healthy and safe, especially when things get hot. ■

Checklist: When Things Get Hot at Work

Self

How’s my nervous system?

- Jumpy, irritable, sad vs. calm, grounded, content

How do I spend my day?

- Mostly at work or working vs. carving out time to do healthy and satisfying activities

How am I sleeping?

- Can’t fall asleep, can’t get out of bed, nightmares, tossing and turning vs. sleeping like a log

Others

Who can be an accountability buddy?

- Someone who can check in with me about quitting time, working after hours
- Someone who can encourage me to take a break, have fun, seek support

Agency

How can I take advantage and promote the use of agency policies and programs?

- Call Staff Care Center hotline 24/7
- Utilize available sick or annual leave
- Negotiate work schedule and plan with supervisors to promote work-life balance

Diplomacy and the Environment

From the FSJ Archive



Decade of the Environment

Many battles have been waged domestically between the polluters and the new federal control agency set up on Dec. 2, 1970—the Environmental Protection Agency. Additional laws have been passed, and enforced or tested in the courts. ...

Overseas the United States assumed an early leadership starting in 1971 as its fledgling EPA began to meet, plan, negotiate and swap information with dozens of other countries just waking up to the eco-peril. Only Sweden (in 1967) had already formed a national EPA. This country and Great Britain set theirs up in 1970. As of now there are approximately 50 federal pollution agencies to be found on the five continents. Also, a clutch of multinational organizations are busily establishing pollutant measurement criteria and control guidelines among their members.

The magnificent results of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972 are still felt. That autumn the U.N. General Assembly formed another specialized agency and named it the United National Environmental Program. Headquartered in Nairobi, UNEP is largely an environmental monitoring activity, but it can and does focus world attention on major pollution problems.

—Fitzhugh Green, former associate administrator of the EPA, from his article of the same title in the May 1978 FSJ.

When Environment and Diplomacy Clash

The fate of Carter's proposed yearlong study of global resource trends through the year 2000 illustrates the bureaucratic problems involved. Carter proposed the study to reassess U.S. foreign policy in terms of issues such as population and the environment. But the State Department was reluctant to get involved; apparently, no one at Foggy Bottom felt qualified to handle these issues. ...

Some critics outside the government are challenging the moral arrogance they believe underlies these attempts to tie environmental strings on foreign policy. New York University's Walter sees it as a "neo-imperialist view" and claims—along with most diplomats and economists—that environmental controls are an economic decision each country has to make based on a rough trade-off between pollution and economic growth.

This view is disputed by most development experts and nearly all environmentalists. They point to mounting evidence that poverty can't be eradicated in the third world without treating the ecological damage that accompanies and aggravates this poverty.

—Elizabeth Sullivan, reprinted from *The Inner Dependent* (UNA-USA, March 1978) in the May 1978 FSJ.



The FSO Meets Eco Catastrophe

When population growth overwhelms environmental resources and a country does not have the capacity to deal with the resulting stress, intrastate conflicts result. ... Scarcity acts mainly by triggering social effects—such as poverty and migration—that analysts often interpret as a conflict's immediate causes.

immediate causes.

While developed countries may have the skills and resources to deal with environmental problems, most of the developing world does not. If societies cannot adjust to environmental problems, the resulting scarcity of renewable resources will contribute to impoverishment, migrations, sharper distinctions among racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups, and to greater potential for collective violence among these groups.

—Al Perez, FSO, from his article of the same title in the March 1998 FSJ.



A Call to Action

Climate change is no longer just an environmental issue, but one of the greatest economic, political and security challenges of the 21st century. And it will be one of the most complicated and compelling diplomatic challenges as well. Increasingly, climate change is becoming a matter of life

and death—not just for animals and plants, but for people; and not some time in this century, but today. ...

Preparing for and adapting to a changing climate will be one of the central tasks of international relations for the rest of this century.

Twenty years ago, in an historic act of foresight, two United

Nations agencies—the World Meteorological Organization and the U.N. Environment Program—created the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. A scientific intergovernmental body, the IPCC has delivered increasingly clear and forceful reports about the growing threat of climate change. The now-authoritative science underscores the urgent and overdue need to act. ... This action must take at least three forms: negotiation, investment and adaptation—negotiation to reduce global emissions, investment to bring about a complete transformation of the world's energy systems, and country-by-country adaptation to the inevitable effects of climate change.

—Timothy Wirth, former member of Congress (House and Senate) and under secretary of State for global affairs, from his article of the same title in the February 2008 FSJ.

The Arctic Bellwether

The projected climate changes in the Arctic present challenges with no parallel in human experience to date. They are likely to cause substantial dislocation and expose vulnerabilities among the residents. Further, because these changes are directly linked to global processes such as a rise in the sea level, the availability of new sea routes and the opening of new natural resources, the effects promise to be equally profound around the globe. ...

One major factor that must be taken into account is the asymmetry between the time scale in which the climate system reacts to increases in greenhouse gases and the time scale to recover from such increases. Recovery takes roughly 10 times longer than it took to increase global greenhouse gas concentrations in the first place.

—Robert W. Corell, global change program director for H. John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics, and the Environment, from his article of the same title in the February 2008 FSJ.



Climate Change Negotiations Lessons from Montreal

A number of factors were critical to the success of the Montreal Protocol. Important among them was the leadership role played by the United States from the beginning, well before the start of negotiations on the protocol. The United States was among the first

to recognize the threat posed by CFCs, and took early action, along with some of the Nordic states, to ban their use in most aerosols. ...

The negotiators of the Montreal Protocol, like those now seeking agreement on how to meet the challenge of global warming, faced formidable difficulties in dealing with a problem whose effects, while perhaps tolerable in the short run, were likely to be

catastrophic over the long term in a “business as usual” scenario. Moreover, as with climate change, they had to deal with skepticism about the science involved.

—Richard J. Smith, FSO (ret.), from his article of the same title in the December 2010 FSJ.



An Existential Threat That Demands Greater FS Engagement

Climate change is one of the gravest dangers facing the world today, with profound implications for the future of all humanity. ... These issues will long remain central to U.S. security and economic interests and will likewise remain of great interest to our partners around the world. We ignore them at our peril. ...

Climate change is much more than an environmental issue. It is fundamentally about how our economies are powered. ... In essence, international climate negotiations have been a “design and build” process, restructuring 21st-century economies so that we can move beyond fossil fuel-based development to low-carbon or zero-carbon development. No one country can solve the global challenge that is climate change, but the United States has an outsized role in finding a solution, both substantively and symbolically. Much of the world looks to the United States for leadership, not simply because of our political, military and economic might, but because of the historic responsibility we have as the largest historic emitter of greenhouse gases. ...

For more than 25 years, climate change negotiators across the globe have worked to bridge deep divides among virtually all of the world's countries to reach consensus decisions with far-reaching implications for how economies are structured and how we will maintain a habitable planet.

—Tim Lattimer, FSO, from his article of the same title in the July-August 2017 FSJ.

It's Not Just about Paris: International Climate Action Today

Although the Paris Agreement has drawn the lion's share of recent international climate headlines, it is far from the only forum in which Americans can, and do, address climate issues. A glorious profusion of state, non-state and hybrid entities in the United States and elsewhere is demonstrating impressive ingenuity in relevant policy and technology.

—Karen Florini, former deputy special envoy for climate change at the State Department (2015-2017), and Professor Ann Florini, from their article of the same title in the July-August 2017 FSJ. ■

Flying with Fido

Taking your family pet home just got a lot harder. Here is what you need to know.

BY MELISSA MATHEWS



GALIA HEIDEMANN

When the Heidemann family moved to the Philippines in the summer of 2019, they settled in with their family: four sons and a 10-pound terrier mix named Winston. “He’s been a stabilizing force for our children during the transitions of Foreign Service life,” says mom Galia.

When the pandemic hit, the children endured grueling lockdowns. It was traumatic, says Galia, but Winston “was an emotional support for our entire home.”

Now, Winston’s future is uncertain. Like many Foreign Service families, the Heidemanns are scrambling to figure out

what to do after the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention implemented a ban on dogs coming into the United States. That could force some hard choices.

The policy, announced June 14, effectively bans the import of dogs from more than 100 countries the CDC identifies as high risk for rabies. That means dogs at many posts may not have an easy time getting home. The policy went into effect in July, and a partial grace period ends in October. The CDC subsequently announced a limited permit program with stringent requirements that many say are difficult or impossible to fulfill.

Winston, a terrier mix, was a perfect gentleman during months of pandemic lockdowns in the Philippines. But a dog import ban from the CDC has the Heidemann family worried about how he’ll get home.

Struggles with the Permit Process

When the CDC announced the ban, most Americans hardly noticed. But for military personnel, diplomats and private U.S. citizens who live abroad with their pets, the announcement hit home.



FS family member Melissa Mathews is a communications consultant and former journalist, currently posted to U.S. Embassy Amman. Her family includes three human children, a diplo-dog, Evie, and a Jordanian cat, Olive.

In most cases, the CDC's permit program requires a rabies titer test, performed within a year of travel. Initially, the CDC approved only four labs globally for the test.

Kateri Clement was working in Liberia for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a U.S. foreign aid agency, but left post early with her dogs, Togo and Lawali, to beat the ban. In parts of Africa, commercial shippers do not permit the transport of fresh blood required for the titer test, she says. The only way to get it to the nearest approved lab is to hand-carry it—and pay thousands in travel and lab costs. “This would be an incredible burden for people like me who live in lesser developed countries,” she says. “It is next to impossible for anyone serving in West Africa to comply with the new rules.”

After advocacy from AFSA and an outcry from those affected, CDC approved more labs, but not enough to address the limitations of many posts.

A retired Foreign Service officer doing an assignment in Central Asia brought her labradoodle along, a decision she now regrets. “With this kind of treatment from the government, I certainly will not be interested in filling future staffing gaps,” she says.

Confusion at the Airlines

The CDC initially said all dogs with a permit had to arrive through only one port of entry: JFK Airport in New York. The Fly

America Act, combined with limited flight options during the pandemic, left many without a route into JFK. The CDC has since added a few additional ports of entry. Notably, Dulles Airport in Washington is not on the list. Some airlines, such as American, announced that they would stop flying pets to the U.S. at all—whether or not they were covered by the ban; other global airlines canceled tickets and pet reservations.

A family retiring from military service tried to get two cats out of Germany. “The ban applies to dogs and doesn’t apply to Germany ... but it’s easier for the airlines to apply a blanket ban on all pets headed to the United States,” says the retiring U.S. Army colonel. Instead of shipping the cats economically as accompanied baggage, the family had to pivot to more expensive cargo. “What should cost us \$300 will now cost us upward of \$5,000. Happy retirement to us, I guess.”

Making Hard-to-Fill Posts Harder to Fill

After a year and a half of COVID-19 stressors, some U.S. government personnel say navigating the CDC ban may be their breaking point. One Foreign Service specialist in a high differential post says she has already curtailed. She won’t be the only one letting the ban influence where she is willing to serve.

“Long term, this policy will require that I avoid bidding on positions among the 113 countries covered by this ban,” says



A line of dogs at Kuwait International Airport get ready to fly to the United States on July 12 ahead of the CDC ban. Since 2015, the nonprofit group Wings of Love Kuwait has been rescuing abandoned dogs from Kuwait and bringing them to Maryland for adoption.



The author's dog, Evie, snuggles on embassy-provided furniture (below) and conducts doggie diplomacy at a school in Saudi Arabia, where many children aren't familiar with how to interact with dogs as pets.



an officer moving to North Africa. His family made the difficult decision to leave their dog behind in the United States for now "because of the uncertainty the CDC has created for us."

"Going into bidding season, the ban is certainly making my family rethink our plans to serve again overseas," says a Foreign Service officer currently in the Middle East. "We've done nothing but hardship tours my entire career. I'm not sure that's feasible anymore."

The CDC Responds

Dr. Emily Pieracci, zoonoses team lead in the CDC's Quarantine and Border Health Services Branch, says the agency is working on a longer-term solution. But in the meantime, she adds: "We have worked diligently to identify a temporary course of action that will simultaneously reduce the risk of importing a rabid dog, protect the health and safety of animals during and after travel, and allow USG personnel who are serving our country overseas to import their dogs into the United States."

The CDC's Federal Register notice, posted in July, cites three incidents of rabies-positive dogs imported by rescue groups over six years, and a more recent uptick in problematic import paperwork. While personal pets were not involved in the rabies



COURTESY HEATHER HARPER-TROJE

Firu has lived with Heather Harper-Troje and family in Honduras and Costa Rica. Now 12, he is semiretired in Miami.

cases, Dr. Pieracci suggests there have been cases of suspicious or incomplete paperwork with government personnel. She did not provide specifics.

The agency says overseas Americans should maintain up-to-date vaccines and titer tests annually to speed the permit process in the event of an evacuation or medical emergency. "CDC works with DOS and DOD when these kinds of emergencies arise and will handle these situations on a case-by-case basis," a spokesman says. At this writing, however, there is no expedited permit process available on the CDC website, nor any appeals process if a permit or entry is denied. Under the policy, the airline—not the pet owner—must take possession of dogs denied entry and quickly deport them.

The Foreign Affairs Community Pushes Back

AFSA says it recognizes the high value its members place on serving alongside their pets. "We have engaged with the CDC director to find ways to make certain these new regulations can be realistically complied with," says AFSA President Eric Rubin. "We have met with some success ... but a general exemption for government employees on official travel orders, at least until after the transfer season, makes the most sense."

Heather Harper-Troje is part of a grassroots movement to raise awareness of the impacts of the ban. She and others organized—in particular, through the Facebook group Foreign Affairs Friends of Animals Network—and launched a petition that garnered more than 10,000 signatures in just over a week. They also organized outreach to legislators on Capitol Hill and earned media coverage. "If there's anything we've all learned from the Foreign Service life, it's that we're stronger together," she says.

Many in the foreign affairs community say their pets are full-fledged members of the family, and without being confident about getting dogs home from certain posts, they may be unwilling to serve there. With bidding season underway, this should be an urgent concern for the State Department and other agencies, as well. ■

An Indomitable Spirit

Johnny Young 1940–2021

BY JOEL EHRENDREICH

Johnny Young was the ambassador when I arrived for my first tour in Lome, Togo. That he would, during that tour, save my career when it could have been over so quickly is another story. Suffice it to say that the way he risked his reputation to save mine—when he didn't have to—was the true definition of mercy, which Johnny's life personified.

Indeed, for all who knew Johnny, we remember him first not for his exceptional career accomplishments; we recall his humanity, his dignity, his love for people of all nations and backgrounds, and the lasting impression he made

on everyone. Together with his loving partner of more than 50 years, Angie, Johnny ran embassies that welcomed not just the employee, but the whole community.



I recall the large Thanksgiving party the Youngs threw in Lome, where our two pre-K children dressed up as turkeys for the play. A few nights later, it became clear how much of an impression Johnny and Angie's warmth made on our 3-year-old son, Cooper. As we read *Chicken Little* to him before bed, at the point where Henny Penny says, "We must go tell the king!" Cooper corrected my wife: "No, mommy, we must tell the ambassador!"

Fast forward from that little boy to today. A couple of days after Johnny passed, Cooper joined a dinner with us and another Foreign Service couple who had never met the Youngs. He described Johnny and Angie like this: "After I graduated from college and moved here to start my career, Johnny and Angie heard I was in town and insisted on having me and my girlfriend, now wife, over for dinner. Why they felt they should open their home to children of people they worked with 20 years earlier amazed me. But I tell you what I remember most, is that when I was there, in their presence, there was an aura about them that you could just feel.



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

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



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Johnny Young in 2014, 10 years after he retired from the Foreign Service.

Only one other time have I experienced such an aura when I was around someone, and that was when we got to meet the Dalai Lama in India. Johnny was just that powerful a force.”



Johnny Young’s autobiography is titled *From the Projects to the Palace: A Diplomat’s Unlikely Journey from the Bottom to the Top*. His journey was most unlikely, indeed. If Vegas odds-makers were to have looked at Johnny when he was growing up in an impoverished Black family in Georgia in the 1940s, they would have given him a zero percent chance of becoming a Career Ambassador. “We had nothing,” Johnny says in the book. “We were as poor as one can be. ... We had difficulty with the Ku Klux Klan, and they would come to our street and absolutely terrorize us. I remember my mother would hold us close

to her and with her hand over our mouths so that we wouldn’t make a sound.” (The mother referred to in this quote was his aunt, who raised him after his biological mother died of heart problems when he was but 1.) And in 1940 the United States was still more than two decades away from having its first African American ambassador.

It wouldn’t have just been gamblers who dismissed his chances for success. Johnny moved to the housing projects of Philadelphia at age 11. His attempt to enroll at the nearby, all-white Catholic school was rejected. “No, we don’t want *them* here,” the priest said, awakening Johnny for the first time to the savagery of racism. Despite eventual academic success, and ambitions of attending college, when he asked his high school counselor what he should do after graduation, he was told to “take a job in carpentry or something”—because “no college in its right mind will take a look at you.”

Johnny struggled to find meaningful employment: “I began to realize that I’d be called in for jobs, and the minute I walked in the door I knew that it was because of my color that I wasn’t going to get the job.” He eventually earned a certificate in accounting from Temple University and, later, a bachelor of arts magna cum laude; and he worked as a junior accountant for the city of Philadelphia. But it was a trip to Beirut as a delegate for the YMCA in 1965 that would change his life, exposing him to different cultures and convincing him to pursue a career in international affairs.



Johnny discovered the Foreign Service and passed the exam in 1967. Still, the odds were stacked against him. “You have to keep in mind that when I came in in ’67, you could count on one hand—not even two—the number of Black officers in the Service,” Johnny would recount.

Characteristically, Johnny’s diplomatic career started humbly. Johnny and his lifelong love, Angie, were newlyweds when they boarded a steamer for a two-week voyage to their first post, Madagascar. During that first tour, when a diplomatic pouch he was the non-pro courier for temporarily went missing, Johnny thought: “Oh my God, this is the end of my career. It hasn’t even gotten off the ground yet.” Colleagues helped recover the pouch, and stuck out their necks to make sure he wasn’t made a scapegoat. It was an incident that would shape him, and he endeavored to return the favor throughout his career.

His next assignment was in Guinea, where he was caught up in the attempted coup against President Sekou Toure's regime. Taken at gunpoint from his apartment and put in jail, he endured pressure to sign a forced confession. It wasn't until the U.S. government threatened to end food aid to Guinea that he was released.

He advanced to midlevel assignments primarily in the administrative—as it was called at the time—cone, including Nairobi, Doha, Bridgetown, Amman and The Hague, in addition to tours in Washington.

In 1989 he was confirmed as U.S. ambassador to Sierra Leone. He would go on to be a four-time ambassador, also serving as the U.S. president's representative in Togo, Bahrain and Slovenia. In 2004, he was awarded the rank of Career Ambassador.



Johnny Young's prowess as a diplomat was recognized by peers and made him a role model for those who served under him. As his deputy chief of mission in Lome, Terry McCulley, recalls: "Johnny was beloved for his kindness, gentle manner and good humor, but he was also a fierce defender of American values. Togo's President, Gnassingbe Eyadema, had been in effective power since 1963, and his security forces had pushed back brutally on efforts to open Togo's political space, including firing on unarmed demonstrators and disappearing political opponents. Johnny was fearless in calling this out and firm in his private discussions with senior Togolese officials."

"Eyadema was not used to this kind of pushback from American diplomats," McCulley continued, "and during a meeting in his natal village of Pya with Ambassador Young and the visiting Africa Bureau principal deputy assistant secretary (as DCM, I was the notetaker), Eyadema asked for a private session with the Washington visitor. The PDAS told us immediately afterward that Eyadema had complained bitterly about Johnny's actions and asked that Washington direct him to moderate his behavior. To his credit, the PDAS told the Togolese leader that Johnny was doing his job as the president's personal representative and had Washington's full support."

Dean Haas was DCM in Ljubljana for much of Johnny's final ambassadorship. "My memories of Johnny are all about his warmth, his friendliness and his ability to connect. He taught me and others how to get to the next level in getting to know people and showing you care. What I noticed after a few weeks in Ljubljana was how in touch he was with the staff—he knew about the lives of the people who worked for him, making no distinction between the American and Slovenian staff. Johnny is a leader I

Johnny ran embassies that welcomed not just the employee, but the whole community.

always recall when engaged now in coaching and mentoring. His legacy is a legion of people who have basked in his glow, learned from his experience, and tried to model his humanity and faith in his people."

One of his co-pioneers in the Foreign Service, Aurelia Brazeal, described Johnny's professionalism this way: "Johnny had an unerring way of focusing attention onto the crux of issues and, because of his intellect and forceful but unpretentious personality, getting consensus in most cases. A consummate host, as a diplomat he placed the foreign official (or whoever the visitor was) at the center of his attention, frequently compelling more revelations. He listened and crafted questions based on what was being revealed, thus learning substantially more from even a casual interaction."



After retiring from the Foreign Service, Johnny relished the time with his children, David and Michelle, and his grandson, Phoenix. He stayed busy, becoming a private consultant, contractor and lecturer. He was appointed executive director of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2004, a position he held until just before his death.

But more than the numerous, odds-defying accomplishments, it was Johnny's effusive happiness that endeared people to him most. Johnny would always say that despite the many challenges he faced growing up, he grew up happy. His humility, his grace, the joy he spread, his determination to pay it back and pay it forward—that is what defined him to the people he met. His partnership with his beloved Angelina reinforced all these qualities, and our thoughts go with her as she endures the loss of the love of her life.



Goodbye, ambassador, Mr. Career Ambassador. Goodbye, mentor. Goodbye, role model. Goodbye, friend. Goodbye to that special aura that was an inspiration to literally thousands around the world. I'd close by saying rest in peace, but you always seemed at peace; indeed, you were the source of peace. Instead, I'll say thank you. The world is a better place with the energy you brought it.

Goodbye, Johnny. ■

The Man Who Crossed the Seas

Charles Lindbergh's Goodwill Tour, 1927-1928

A complicated and controversial public figure, Charles Lindbergh was also one of the first cultural ambassadors for the United States, as seen in his ambitious Latin America journey.

BY JAY RAMAN



Jay Raman is the director of the Office of International Media Engagement in the Bureau of Global Public Affairs. Joining the Foreign Service in 2002, he previously served as the cultural affairs officer in Bogotá, Colombia. He inherited a lifelong

fascination for civil aviation from his father. Note: All unattributed quotations in this essay are from New York Times articles published during Lindbergh's tour.

Few Americans have left as complicated and confounding a legacy as Charles Lindbergh. He was the hero of his age but tarnished his reputation with his outspoken isolationist, racist and anti-Semitic views in the leadup to World War II. Today, he is remembered as much for his discredited politics as his daring aviation skills.

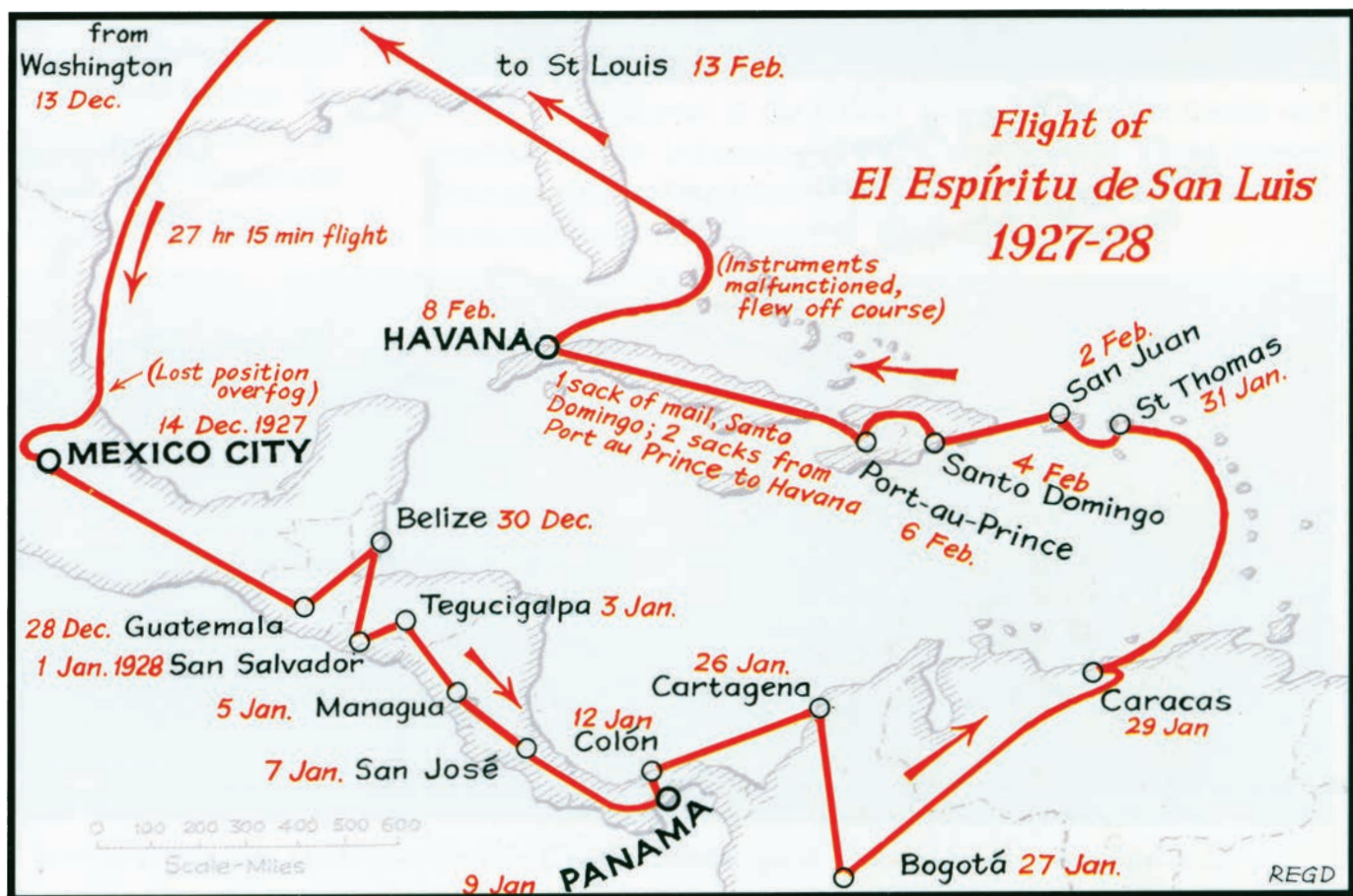
But for all his flaws, Lindbergh was undeniably a pioneer, and not just in the cockpit. He was a conservationist, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and an inventor.

He was also one of our nation's first cultural ambassadors.

The Goodwill Tour

The first three decades of the 20th century saw U.S. soldiers and ships deploy to Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Venezuela and most of Central America. This was a direct result of President Theodore Roosevelt's 1904 corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, which declared that the United States had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of its southern neighbors.

By 1927 the Roosevelt Corollary had run its course and the United States was eager to recalibrate its relationship with Latin America. In this context, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Dwight Morrow hit on the idea of inviting Lindbergh on a "Goodwill



Tour,” starting in Mexico City and continuing around the Caribbean Basin.

That May, the 25-year-old Lindbergh completed his famous solo flight across the Atlantic, departing New York a humble airmail pilot and arriving in Paris a global superstar. He was suddenly the most famous and admired man in the world, and when he agreed to Ambassador Morrow’s request, it must have seemed like a gift from the heavens to U.S. policymakers.

For Lindbergh, the Goodwill Tour was a chance to use his celebrity for good. In a preview of his trip for *The New York Times*, he wrote, “Although my primary interest is to visit the country as an aviator, I also hope that the flight will show the way in which aviation brings the peoples of the world together in better understanding of each other.” In that respect, Lindbergh’s trip had all the hallmarks of a modern-day cultural exchange, with his airplane providing both the ends and the means to foster people-to-people relations.

The God of Wind

The trip got off to a bumpy start. On Dec. 13, Lindbergh took off from Washington, D.C., in the *Spirit of St. Louis* and headed southwest following landmarks and railroad tracks. He eventually became lost over Mexico, which lacked the visual markers common in the United States. He finally spotted a hotel sign in

On his 9,500-mile tour, Charles Lindbergh flew from Washington, D.C., to Mexico, Guatemala, British Honduras, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba.

Toluca and reoriented himself, touching down in Mexico City 27 1/4 hours after departure. It was the first nonstop flight between the two capital cities.

Lindbergh was greeted by an enormous crowd including Mexican President Plutarco Elías Calles, who declared a national holiday and ordered businesses to close. Lindbergh visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and attended a session of the Mexican Congress. He was celebrated at every occasion and took dignitaries on demonstration flights. More important, Lindbergh was introduced to Anne Morrow, the ambassador’s youngest daughter. The two were smitten and would marry in 1929.

Spending a total of two weeks in Mexico, Lindbergh was met with enthusiasm on both sides of the border that reached a fever pitch. On Christmas Day, the *Times* published a letter to the editor suggesting that Lindbergh might be the reincarnation of Quetzalcoatl, the Aztec god of wind. “May not this young man uplift the thought and crystallize the sentiment of Mexico?” the author asked rhetorically.

Clearly, the Goodwill Tour was working.



RAND McNALLY AND COMPANY

On Dec. 12, 1927, the day before taking off on his Goodwill Tour, Charles Lindbergh looks over railroad maps for navigation over land during his flight.

The Basis of Good Relations

Departing Mexico a hero, Lindbergh spent the next month hopscotching down the spine of Central America. The *Times* provided glowing coverage throughout, with correspondents filing anxious reports from every destination, supplemented by dispatches from Lindbergh himself.

Lindbergh was impressed by the sights along the way. As F. Robert van der Linden of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum notes: “All along his trip, Lindbergh was stunned by the natural beauty of the region and keenly aware of how undeveloped the transportation networks were—ideal territory for aviation, which could fly over the natural barriers of geography.” Lindbergh was also touched by the kindness he received, noting at one point that “the hospitable people of Guatemala are making it very hard for me to keep my visit here down to the two days which the schedule allows.”

The reserved Lindbergh was pressed into action as a citizen diplomat. Nicaragua was engulfed in a civil war and occupied by U.S. Marines, forcing Lindbergh to adjust his flight path to avoid conflict areas. But the members of Nicaragua’s rival political

For Lindbergh, the Goodwill Tour was a chance to use his celebrity for good.

parties set aside their differences to attend a ball in Lindbergh’s honor. Lindbergh saw this—perhaps too optimistically—as “the best evidence that Nicaragua welcomes American aid in terminating the disorders which have recently disturbed Nicaragua.”

Throughout his trip, Lindbergh was an advocate for air travel. In one of his reports, he wrote, “I hope that commercial aviation will soon be able to help to provide rapid and safe communication for transport and travel, which is the basis of good relations.” From Costa Rica, he wrote, “My flights in this part of the world have indicated that aviation is one of the best available means of transportation and, in addition, that it is peculiarly adapted to Central America. Trips of days, if not of weeks, by the present means can be shortened to hours.”

Lindbergh spent more than two weeks in Panama, recovering

from his rigors of the past month. His agenda was the subject of media speculation, and his American hosts in the Panama Canal Zone went to great lengths to shield him from the spotlight, saying that he “is very nervous and ‘may crack under the strain’ of social activity.”

When asked about Lindbergh’s hunting exploits, a companion cheekily responded, “He shot at a couple of wild pigeons on the wing, but missed them. So far he has not killed anything but time.” *Spirit* also received some much-needed attention, getting a complete overhaul by mechanics.

Rested and refreshed, Lindbergh lifted off from the isthmus on Jan. 26, 1928, and headed 400 miles east-northeast across the Caribbean Sea to Cartagena, his first destination in South America.

Pilots Will Come

Modern-day Colombia would not be possible without the airplane, for its mountains and jungles make transportation exquisitely difficult for the uninitiated. In April 1536, Spanish conquistador Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada left coastal Santa Marta for the interior with 800 soldiers. When he arrived at the future site of Bogotá a year later, only 162 were left. For the next four centuries, travel from the coast to the highlands required days of exhausting travel by riverboat and rutted tracks. Many places were completely isolated. Even today, terrestrial travel between large cities is often impractical, if not impossible.

The first few efforts at fixed-wing flight were a failure, but Colombians pressed on. As one hopeful enthusiast wrote, “Pilots will come. The devices will be among the best known today. We predict true triumphs and magnificent results for the one who comes to bring us that little bit of civilization.”

American pilot George Schmitt is credited with bringing aviation to Colombia in 1912, making it as far as Medellín. The Andes proved a formidable barrier, however, and it would be another six years before the first plane came to Bogotá.

Airplanes of that era were not equipped for high-altitude conditions, leaving pilots exposed to the elements. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s 1939 memoir, *Wind, Sand and Stars*, recounts the experience of pilots flying early mail planes through similar mountain passes in Argentina and Chile, where “blustering gusts sweep through the narrow walls of their rocky corridors and force the pilot to a sort of hand-to-hand combat.”

Despite the risks, Colombians were quick to embrace the new technology. Colombia’s first airline, Sociedad Colombo-Alemana de Transportes Aéreos (SCADTA), was founded in 1919, and within a few years it was already traveling to Venezuela and the United States. SCADTA eventually merged with another com-

Lindbergh’s trip had all the hallmarks of a modern-day cultural exchange, with his airplane providing both the ends and the means to foster people-to-people relations.

pany to become Avianca, which is considered the second-oldest continually operating airline in the world (after KLM).

By the middle of the century, domestic routes stretched from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts into the mountainous interior and south to the Amazon. Air travel had accomplished what nothing else could: It made Colombia whole.

My Motor Does Not Fail

Lindbergh was supposed to fly straight to Venezuela, but at the last minute he decided to include Colombia in his itinerary. Working on short notice, a contingent of officials, including the American consul, gathered in Cartagena to await his arrival. The crowd grew steadily over the course of the day, and by the time the plane came into view, it had broken through the police cordon and swamped the landing grounds. Lindbergh had to circle the field four times to clear enough space to land.

When he touched down, Lindbergh was mobbed by well-wishers, “necessitating his rescue by numbers of his compatriots, who bore him to the reception stand.” On the way into town, “the procession passed through the principal streets en route, gaining in volume at each block until it developed into the largest assembly ever witnessed in Cartagena. Upon arrival at the Cartagena Club champagne was partaken of,” though presumably not by Lindbergh, who was known for his temperance.

Lindbergh spent one night there hosted by an American official of the Andean National Corporation, a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company. The inevitable banquet and ball included renditions of “Lucky Lindy” and “Lindy”—two of the hundreds of songs about Lindbergh that were copyrighted between 1927 and 1929.

As was his custom, Lindbergh had nothing but praise for the city and its people, saying, “Cartagena, seen from the air, is the most beautiful city of all those ... so far visited.” As he readied for departure, the reporter asked if Lindbergh was concerned about the surrounding mountains and fog. “My motor does not fail,” was Lindbergh’s retort.

With that, Lindbergh climbed back into *Spirit* and set off for Bogotá.



Flags from the countries Lindbergh visited, on the hull of his plane.

"No other plane had ever crossed the ranges to the valley in which the Colombian capital lies, and Lindbergh was on time."

A Hearty and Enthusiastic Reception

Unlike Cartagena, Colombia's capital was fully prepared for Lindbergh's arrival. The American legation, under the direction of Minister Samuel Piles, worked feverishly with the Colombian government to arrange a proper welcome.

Lindbergh navigated his way from Cartagena by following the San Jorge River and then connecting with the Nechí and Cauca Rivers, which took him to the town of Puerto Berrio. From there, he ascended high into the Andes, working his way through a pass at 9,800 feet. He dropped out of the clouds at 2 p.m., making several turns over the city before touching down at Madrid Field an hour later.

The Associated Press reported that Lindbergh "came from Cartagena, about 425 miles away, over high mountains enshrouded in clouds, past dangerous ravines, and through unknown country—one of the most daring flights he has yet

made on his present tour. No other plane had ever crossed the ranges to the valley in which the Colombian capital lies, and Lindbergh was on time."

On landing, the plane was swamped by a crowd of 15,000 and Lindbergh "seemed almost in danger of his life from the enthusiastic welcome." A detachment from the aviation school rushed in to protect *Spirit*. After stepping down from the cockpit, Lindbergh "was greeting with a kiss on the cheek by Señorita Olga Noguera Davila, pretty queen of the student body delegated for this duty." Not to be outdone, the "feminine contingent of the American colony" presented him with a feather, pearl and gold locket to take home to his mother.

As Lindbergh wrote in one of his dispatches, "The welcome by the people of Colombia at the Madrid Aviation Field might well be compared to that at Paris in May. It took nearly an hour, because of the enthusiasm of the people, to get to the aviation school building." He then went a step further by saying, "I have never received a more hearty and enthusiastic reception in either America or Europe than the one today at Bogota."

From the airfield, Lindbergh made the 20-mile trip into town "over a smooth road comparable to our own in the United States," accompanied by Minister Piles and Colombian Foreign Minister Carlos Uribe. At the entrance to the city, the motorcade

was joined by a mounted escort. They were also followed by hundreds of private cars, prompting one reporter to remark, “If any automobile in Bogota was not in the parade it must have been in the machine shop.”

Flowers and streamers poured down as Lindbergh waved politely from the back of the open car. A correspondent estimated that 100,000 people lined the streets to welcome Lindbergh to Bogotá. If accurate, that would have been almost half the city’s population.

The parade finally arrived at the American legation building at 6 p.m., where Lindbergh and Piles appeared on the balcony. Lindbergh gamely headed out to tea, followed by a late-night reception at the Anglo-American club.

Meanwhile, a colorful crowd lingered hoping for one last glimpse of their hero. As a reporter described it, “They were of all classes. Sandal-clad or barefoot Indian men and women of the country districts touched elbows with Bogota’s ‘nicest people’—a strange picture in contrasts, illuminated by many searchlights flooding the neighborhood of the legation.”

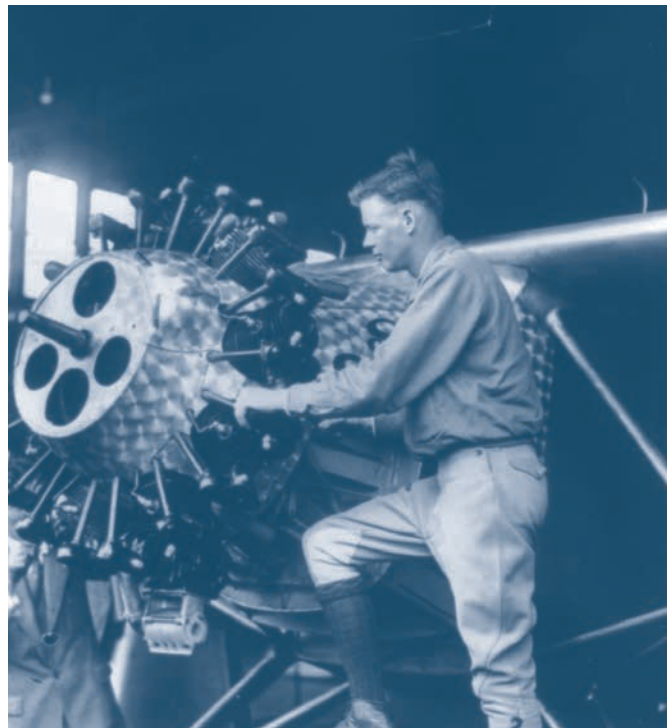
The Lone Eagle

After a late breakfast and a meeting with reporters and fellow aviators, Lindbergh paid a courtesy call on Colombian President Miguel Abadía Méndez. The president presented Lindbergh with the Cross of Boyacá—the country’s highest military distinction, which had been awarded just nine times before and never to an American.

Lindbergh then went back to the airfield to inspect his plane, which had been topped off with gasoline and oil provided by the Colombian government. In the evening, Lindbergh attended a banquet at the legation for 600 guests. He was continuously called out to the balcony “to acknowledge, with the ‘Lindbergh smile’ very much in evidence, the prolonged cheers of the Colombians.” The banquet was followed by a ball at the Jockey Club, where Lindbergh was “serenaded until midnight.”

The next day, Lindbergh was up at the crack of dawn. After a final breakfast at the legation, he headed back to Madrid Field to ready the plane for departure. As the *Times* reported, “There he was surrounded by a hundred or more cheering Colombians, many of whom were in evening attire, having attended the dance given in his honor last night. High officials were on hand to bid him farewell and to express the wish that he would visit the city again for a more extended trip.

“*The Spirit of St. Louis* responded quickly to the turn of the propeller and rose gracefully from the field under the touch of her distinguished pilot. A few minutes later a silver speck high in the



Charles Lindbergh works on the engine of the *Spirit of St. Louis* in 1927.

sky completely disappeared beyond the mountains and the ‘Lone Eagle’ was winging his way to another city that eagerly awaited his presence.”

When approached by a reporter at the scene, President Abadía Méndez offered a final tribute: “If Horace eulogized the man who crossed the seas, what can be said of the man who crosses the seas in the air?”

Postscript

Lindbergh’s journey from Bogotá to Maracay, Venezuela, would pioneer yet another route. The trip took 11 hours and required Lindbergh to fight his way back to land after being swept off course due to wind and fog. Despite the difficulty, “the supreme audacity which is Colonel Lindbergh’s birthright carried him through to another aeronautical triumph.”

He would go on to visit Caracas by car before flying to the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba. The last leg of the journey was direct from Havana to St. Louis.

Two months to the day after setting out, the Goodwill Tour had reached its end. When asked about future plans, Lindbergh said simply, “I have none beyond getting a good night’s rest and making my air mail flight next week.” ■

CONGRATULATIONS

to this year's AFSA award recipients



Amb. (ret.) John Negroponte

2021 Recipient of AFSA's Award for
**Lifetime Contributions
to American Diplomacy**



Anny Vu

2021 Recipient of AFSA's
**William R. Rivkin Award
for Constructive Dissent**

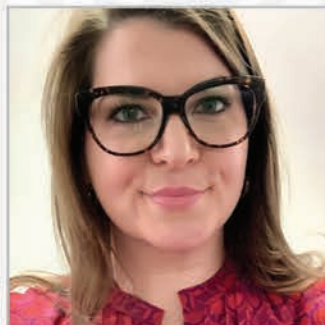
AWARDS FOR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE



Amb. (ret.) Thomas Boyatt
Achievement & Contributions to AFSA Award



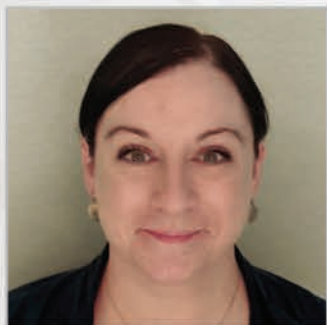
Randy Chester
Post Representative of the Year Award



Charlee Doom
Post Representative of the Year Award



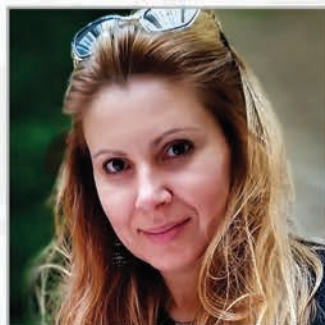
Bridgette R. Huerkamp
Nelson B. Delavan Award



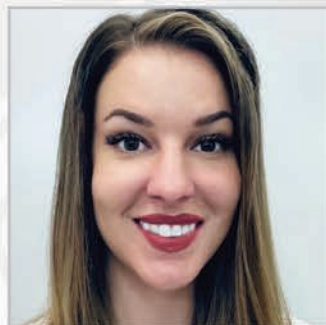
Amanda Jager
Avis Bohlen Award



Erika Kuenne
Mark Palmer Award



Ivana Lawrence
Avis Bohlen Award



Alisse Sargeant
M. Juanita Guess Award



More information on AFSA's awards program
is available at www.afsa.org/awards.



AFSA Statement on Afghanistan

The end to America's 20-year war in Afghanistan brings a wave of emotion to thousands of our Foreign Service colleagues, both active-duty and retired: those who served there, those who worked on Afghanistan policy and assistance, and those who participated in the whole-of-government effort to protect our country from another 9/11.

AFSA wants to recognize the work of our members, our colleagues and friends who dedicated years of their professional lives to America's effort in Afghanistan.

It is equally important to recognize that, while our diplomats are no longer physically in the country, they continue working to bring to safety the small number of remaining American citizens who wish to leave.

They have worked tirelessly to evacuate our fellow



A photo board with photos of Anne Smedinghoff, a Foreign Service officer killed in Afghanistan, stands in front of the AFSA memorial plaques in the Harry S Truman Building on the day of her wake, April 16, 2013.

Americans and Afghan allies who were in danger. Our diplomats will now focus their efforts, along with our friends and allies around the world,

on keeping the Taliban to the promises they made.

We lost treasured Foreign Service and Foreign Service National colleagues and remember with deep respect and appreciation the several thousand U.S. service members who lost their lives and many more who came home grievously injured, physically and emotionally.

We will never forget the dedication and service of the members of the Foreign Service, Afghan and third-country colleagues. We will not forget our three Foreign Service colleagues who gave their lives while serving in Afghanistan, whose names are carved into AFSA's memorial walls at State: Anne Smedinghoff, Ragaei Abdelfattah and Steven Thomas Stefani. And we will never forget the sacrifice of the more than 2,000 U.S. service members who gave their lives in Afghanistan. ■

CALENDAR

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

October 4
AFSA welcomes members of the 208th A-100 and 162nd Specialist classes

October 11
Columbus Day: AFSA offices closed

October 13
12:15-1 p.m.
AFSA Meets with Job Search Program participants

October 19
4-6 p.m.
AFSA Virtual Awards Ceremony

October 20
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

November 4
12-1 p.m.
Webinar: 2022 FEHB Insurance and Benefits, including Medicare coordination

November 8 – December 13
Federal Health Benefits Open Season

November 11
Veterans Day: AFSA offices closed

November 17
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

November 25-26
Thanksgiving Holiday: AFSA offices closed

Help for Former Mission Afghanistan Local Staff

Donate to the FSN Emergency Relief Fund

AFSA has received multiple inquiries from members asking how they can assist our former Locally Employed staff (still known as FSNs) in Afghanistan. The following is information from the State Department on the Foreign Service National Emergency Relief Fund and how members can contribute.

Please note that LE staff in other countries and private-sector employees can contribute, as well. All contributions to the fund are tax-deductible.

Online. Secure online electronic dona-

tions can be made directly from your bank account or by credit/debit card via pay.gov. When there, search for "State Department" and then select "Global Financial Services."

Checks. Please send checks to the State Department's Gift Fund Coordinator, M/EDCS, Room 1821, 2201 C Street NW, Washington DC 20520. Make checks payable to the U.S. Department of State, designation for the FSN Emergency Relief Fund.

Continued on page 71



Assignment Restrictions: Hoping for Real Change

In September 2017, *The Foreign Service Journal* featured an article about assignment restrictions, suggesting they may disproportionately affect Asian American Foreign Service employees.

Co-authored by former Asian American Foreign Affairs Association presidents, that article ended on a positive note, reporting that advocacy by AAFAA and AFSA had compelled the department to propose new regulations.

The proposed regulations were subject to negotiation with AFSA, and we successfully added provisions that gave employees access to the factual grounds for their assignment restrictions and permitted them to challenge the initial decision and request review by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security director.

Since then, however, the situation does not appear to have improved.

During the last four years, AFSA has assisted dozens of affected employees in filing requests for reconsideration of their assignment restrictions; and complaints about the process, including the lack of an independent appeals mechanism and the disproportionate impact on Asian American employees, have continued.

We have also seen restrictions expand to countries, including long-term allies, that historically have not presented significant security

concerns. Indeed, the number of assignment restrictions appears to have grown, and the appeals process still lacks transparency and credibility.

AFSA Actions. To get at this problem, AFSA has had a long-standing request with DS to provide data regarding the nature and types of assignment restrictions so that we can ascertain whether there is a disparate impact on particular groups. In a June 2020 letter to the department, we specifically asked for this information, but have yet to receive a response that adequately addresses our concerns.

AFSA President Eric Rubin and I raised the issue with then-Deputy Secretary Stephen Biegun at two meetings in 2020. In response, Biegun established the Assignment Restrictions Task Force, headed by a senior DS official, to look into whether the program was functioning fairly and transparently.

With the new administration, Eric and I also met twice with Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Brian McKeon, who informed us that the ARTF was engaged in a wholesale audit of every current assignment restriction. The results, we were told, would form the basis of a new policy.

New Policy on the Way.

We have learned that the department, which is still at work on the audit as of this writing, will announce the new

policy as early as this fall.

AFSA maintains that any policy change should reflect a more transparent, objective and fair approach. Because every Foreign Service employee undergoes a rigorous vetting process before joining the department, we continue to reject adjudicative decisions that subject individuals to generalized assumptions of security vulnerability.

The guardedly hopeful news is that in recent months we have seen a significant increase in favorable appeals decisions removing restrictions. For example, in mid-August an employee shared that DS had notified him of a restriction removal despite his not having filed an appeal.

Strong Feeling from the Hill. This issue has also received attention in Congress, including by Rep. Andy Kim (D-Calif.), son of Korean immigrants and a former State Department employee.

Rep. Kim said in an interview in May that he left the department after receiving notice that he was barred from working on any issues related to Korea—even though he had never expressed an interest in such issues—and suspected it was because of his last name.

Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) called the current assignment restrictions program “offensive and disrespectful” at a June hearing with Secretary Antony Blinken.

AFSA, in consultation with AAFAA, has been working with Rep. Lieu’s office, providing analysis and input into proposed legislation concerning assignment restrictions.

This legislation, while similar to language in the recent State Department authorization bill, seeks to create an independent assignment restrictions panel and, more significantly, mandates provision of data by the department to Congress on an annual basis to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the program.

AFSA has strongly endorsed this legislation and hopes that by the time of this column’s publication, it will have been introduced and garnered bipartisan support.

We acknowledge that there may be times when it is appropriate to apply an assignment restriction. But it must be done only in the most compelling circumstances, must be transparently and fairly reasoned and must allow for an independent and timely appeals process. The sad fact is that this is not the case at present.

AFSA will follow up and keep our membership informed. In the meantime, please let us know what you think at member@afsa.org. ■



Empowering USAID

There's no way around it. As of this writing, we're more than seven months into the new term, and I'm very concerned by the lack of action, much less articulation, of how this administration will strengthen USAID.

Administrators and administrations enter with a list of "critical initiatives" and "presidential priorities" that seldom involve internal reforms or bolstering human resources management.

So I was elated that one of President Joe Biden's stated priorities is, in fact, to "protect, empower, and rebuild the career federal workforce." But as of this writing, I have not seen, much less heard, agency leadership commit to material action to this end.

In my March column, I praised President Biden's Jan. 22 executive order on protecting the federal workforce and the related Office of Personnel Management guidance on implementation. The White House also issued a Feb. 4 presidential action memorandum on *Revitalizing America's Foreign Policy and National Security Workforce, Institutions, and Partnerships*.

The president's FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification for OPM calls for agencies and unions to sit down together and reset labor relations.

Although these are White House and presidential commitments, I have yet to read of career USAID FSOs

nominated to senior Washington positions—but who knows USAID's challenges best and brings field expertise? I haven't met any career FSOs elevated to front office senior advisory or deputy chief of staff roles to inform our front office on the FS field perspective and operational context.

AFSA hasn't been invited to discuss any long-overdue strategic workforce plan to build USAID back better. Nor has leadership openly committed to tackling the well-known, long-standing HR challenges that leave our career FSOs overstretched, under-resourced and, in Washington, underrepresented—most of the USAID workforce in the United States is noncareer.

Would we recommend this model to any partner? Is this what the administration wants in its lead development agency? In a national security institution?

So, what might be done? Here are just three quick but high-profile steps agency leadership could take now to demonstrate alignment with the president's policies, even as longer-term plans are developed:

First, the Administrator should host a town hall and issue agency communications that: articulate her vision for USAID; actively embrace the president's policy guidance on empowering career employees; and set out a framework,

metrics, timeline and budget to rebuild USAID's career cadre while reducing USAID's dependence on noncareer mechanisms.

This framework should be developed in conjunction with AFSA and the American Federation of Government Employees, and fully socialized with Congress.

Second, the administration should name—or nominate, as needed—current and retired USAID career FSOs for senior USAID positions, including the chief human capital officer.

My State Department colleagues have seen career FSOs named to several assistant secretary positions, the Director General of the Foreign Service (who concurrently serves as State's director of human resources) and the under secretary for management, among others. Retired State career FSOs have been named to other under secretary positions.

Why is this important? Presumably because of respect for the tradecraft, experience and professionalism these public servants bring to managing a foreign affairs agency. Yet as of this writing, USAID has zero career FSOs named to any Senate-confirmed position.

Third, there needs to be a sea change in AFSA-agency engagement, what OPM refers to as a "reset." The agency, unlike State, approaches AFSA as an

adversary. Instead, AFSA should be welcomed as a partner in addressing agency challenges, and a helpful interlocutor in representing employee perspectives, concerns and ideas.

Member matters should be taken seriously, and engagement, respect and trust should characterize the AFSA-management relationship. We may not always agree, but the agency should respond to AFSA expeditiously, transparently and in the spirit put forth by President Biden. Ignoring or dismissing AFSA and member concerns should be a thing of the past—but it will take active USAID leadership to set an example of accountability.

I hope that by the time this is published, I will be proven wrong, and we will be well on our way to a USAID renaissance. Yet we know that in the realm of development, the rhetoric-to-reality (RtoR™) ratio is high, even when intentions are good.

"Best practices" in textbooks are often not good practices in the field. And the overused mantra, that "our employees are our most important resource," does not translate into higher morale and employee engagement.

In the case of the president's repeated pledge to reinvigorate and rebuild the career federal workforce, I hope that his USAID leaders hear his message loud and clear—and act. ■

AFSA Survey Results

Members Suggest Priorities for AFSA Programming

In July, with the start of the 2021-2023 AFSA Governing Board, we surveyed members to determine what you value in AFSA programming and what program topics AFSA should address in the next two years. Our 1,300 survey responses came from both active-duty and retired members. Thanks to all of you who shared your ideas and preferences.

We asked you to tell us what type of programming is most useful to you and which topics you would like to see AFSA include in our future programming. We also asked two open-ended questions: one on themes you would like to see in future *FSJ* issues, and a last question asking for final comments.

The main findings of the survey contained some surprises. AFSA's retirement-oriented events (both benefits and finances in retirement and professional life after retirement) captured the top spot as the most popular category of programming for all members taken as a whole.

Programs outlining AFSA's advocacy work, such as town halls and retiree "The View from Washington" webinars, were the second most popular category.

For third place, active-duty members chose career development programs, while retired members preferred events on diplomatic issues and practice.

Retirement. AFSA currently offers programs for members on federal retirement benefits and preparing for retirement. Because of the high degree of member interest in retirement-centered programming, AFSA will look for ways to enhance the current popular offerings. Our retirement team will send out a more detailed survey this fall and conduct further canvassing and on-the-spot surveys to gauge your reactions to the programming.

Advocacy. AFSA members clearly value frequent updates on AFSA advocacy—both multiple-choice and written responses to survey questions bore this out. As part of its regular programming, AFSA is planning a series of town halls and at least one retiree webinar this fall.

In addition, due to the interest members have shown in frequent updates, AFSA will launch a quarterly Advocacy Update newsletter starting in the fall. The newsletter will be more detailed than our usual messages and will include updates on our congressional advocacy as well as our advocacy with Foreign Service agencies.

Career Development. Career development captured third place among active-duty members. Several of the respondents to the open-ended questions suggested that AFSA create more events (and more *Journal* articles)

centered on real-life diplomatic, development and commercial success stories, particularly from non-ambassador Foreign Service members.

We hear you, and we will brainstorm the best way to showcase the valuable work of your Foreign Service colleagues and to choose a format that allows for strong interaction with speakers.

Future Program Topics.

Among active-duty members, retention/attrition/morale was the number-one topic preferred for future programming; retirement issues were choices two and three, with assignments and leadership accountability rounding out the top five.

Retirees preferred substantive issues in diplomacy, finances and professional life in retirement, books by Foreign Service authors and retention/attrition/morale, in that order.

When we break down demographic categories, some differences in priorities emerge. Foreign Service specialists want to see programming on State employee evaluation reports (EERs), for example. Non-white and female respondents chose diversity, equity and inclusion as one of their top five topics. Self-described Pickering, Rangel and Payne Fellows prioritized leadership accountability above all other topics.

Retention/Attrition/

Morale. You told us you want more programming on retention, attrition and morale. We hear you. In addition to surveys, AFSA will create more opportunities for you to give us feedback, including virtual structured conversations—direct conversations with the AFSA president and your agency vice president about your Foreign Service careers and lives.

This member feedback is important in informing our advocacy and policy priorities. We will also look for more opportunities to engage with members from USAID, the Foreign Commercial Service, the Foreign Agriculture Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

Several members wrote to advocate for singles in the Foreign Service, and a few wrote about the special challenges for Foreign Service spouses who are military members. We will approach our advocacy with these issues in mind.

Assignments. Active-duty survey respondents prioritized morale and retirement, and followed those choices with the topic of assignments. From our previous bias survey responses, we learned that the lack of transparency in the assignments process was a principal concern of many members. AFSA will host a

session on “Demystifying the DCM/Principal Officer Assignment Process” in the late fall/early winter of 2021-2022 and will brainstorm other possible programs that address this concern.

Specialist EERs. Due to the desire for more specialist programming, and given the priority specialists gave to EERs, AFSA will plan for a specialist EER event in early spring next year, timed to be as useful as possible for EER season.

Leadership Accountability. In response to member interest, AFSA will hold a panel on successful examples of leadership accountability, especially leadership accountability in the field. In accordance with survey feedback, we will emphasize stories of leadership accountability from Senior and

non-Senior Foreign Service members, from various agencies and from a range of cones and specialties.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Women and people of color prioritized diversity, equity and inclusion when choosing their preferred topics. AFSA conducted a bias survey last summer and released AFSA's diversity, equity and inclusion advocacy measures last fall. The good news is that many exciting new steps have been taken to reduce bias in the Foreign Service workplace, and we will be sure to include a progress report in our December Advocacy Update.

AFSA welcomes recommendations for speakers at our planned events. Please contact Julie Nutter at nutter@afsa.org with your ideas. ■

NEWS BRIEF

State Department Increases Professional Liability Insurance Reimbursement

AFSA is pleased to inform members that the State Department has agreed to increase its professional liability insurance (PLI) reimbursement amount from \$175 to \$250, or 50 percent of the premium, whichever is less.

This great news comes after AFSA urged department management to match the reimbursement amount USAID offers to its employees.

AFSA has long encouraged members to sign up for PLI to ensure coverage in the event they are sued, are proposed for disciplinary action for acts or omissions arising out of the scope of their duties, or are the subject of a congressional inquiry.

PLI is particularly important for those in specific positions such as ambassadors, deputy chiefs of mission, managers, supervisors, law enforcement officers, contract officers and consular officers, among others.

AFSA provides a nonexhaustive list of PLI providers at afsa.org/insurance-plans.

Visit afsa.org/professional-liability-insurance-reimbursement to read more about PLI and for agency-specific information on how to request reimbursement. ■

*Help for Former Mission
Afghanistan Local Staff
Continued from p. 67*

Payroll Deductions. Department of State, LE staff and overseas American employees of other federal agencies on the State Department payroll can make contributions by payroll deduction. All submissions need to be performed by email to payhelp@state.gov.

Include your name, address and last four digits of your Social Security

number along with the following statement: “I intend to make a gift in the amount of \$_____ as a contribution to the FSN Emergency Relief Fund. I request the Department of State to deduct from each of my bi-monthly salary payment(s) \$X.XX for X pay periods, until the total gift amount has been deducted.”

If the contribution is a one-time deduction, indicate one “1” pay period in your

request to make it clear that this is a one-time deduction. Payroll Customer Support will provide a response email that can be used for tax purposes.

Cash: Cash contributions in dollars or local currency can be made through the embassy/consulate cashier or at the State Department Federal Credit Union.

In the Washington area, donors can drop foreign cur-

rency in collection boxes in the Employee Service Center or the SDFCU branch at Main State or other branches. The SDFCU has partnered with the department and covers the cost of converting the donated currency to U.S. dollars.

Thank you to all our members who have been so willing to help. Your support is invaluable to those who have sacrificed so much. ■

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AFSA NEWS

AFSA Welcomes New Staff Members



Executive Assistant Amber Dukes.



Membership Operations
Coordinator Erin Oliver.

AFSA is excited to introduce two new staff members: Amber Dukes, executive assistant to AFSA President Eric Rubin, and Erin Oliver, our new membership operations coordinator.

Amber comes to us from the Brigham Young University Army ROTC program, where she served as program manager. There, she was responsible for financial and human resource management, as well as strengthening the relationship between the university and the Army.

Raised in Arizona, Amber holds a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University, where she majored in international relations with an emphasis on European politics. She was an intern in the consular affairs section of U.S. Consulate General Milan.

Amber has a passion for finding innovative solutions and traveling to new locations. She also enjoys scuba

diving, luge, walking her two dogs and renovating homes.

Erin, who hails from Seattle, Washington, is excited to help AFSA's Foreign Service members across the globe.

She graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science with a concentration in international strategy and diplomacy and a minor in Middle East studies from Brigham Young University. She previously studied political systems and religion as a research assistant in the Middle East, and interned for Atlas Corps in Washington, D.C.

Erin lives in Washington, D.C., and loves playing tennis. Her favorite places to travel are Rome, Italy, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. She looks forward to traveling again after the pandemic to visit family and friends living abroad.

Welcome aboard, Amber and Erin! ■

Diplomats at Work Event

Working in the Arctic: A U.S. Diplomat's Experience

In June 2020, American diplomats reopened the U.S. consulate in Nuuk, Greenland, 67 years after it was closed. With the Arctic emerging as a geopolitical hot spot, strengthening the U.S. presence there is a foreign policy priority.

On July 15, AFSA's Diplomats at Work program hosted Eavan Cully, the public affairs officer at U.S. Consulate Nuuk, in an online event attended by 160 people. She discussed her experience working to reopen a long-shuttered consulate in a city that is becoming a center for Arctic issues.

Cully discussed what life and work in Greenland are like for a young American diplomat. She shared pictures of her journeys around the island, including a nine-day hike on the Arctic Circle Trail. She also fielded questions from the audience.

Cully joined the Foreign Service in 2015 and has served in Vancouver and Beijing, and in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in Washington, D.C. She arrived in Nuuk in July 2020. Much of her first year involved traveling the country and building up relationships with residents.

"Greenland's wonderful. It's an amazing place," she said. "As an American, if you've ever flown to Europe, you've probably flown over

Greenland, and maybe on a clear day you've been able to see some of the ice. But to actually land here is a completely different experience."

A part of the Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland has a population of 56,000 across an island about twice the size of Alaska, she said. Nuuk has 19,000 residents. "It feels like a mini-European city, just with smaller amounts of everything," she added.

Greenland has four high schools, one in each of the largest towns on the island. Children from smaller settlements must move to one of the towns to go to high school (each of which has dormitories), she said. Greenland's one university graduates fewer than 100 students per year.

Fishing represents about a third of the island's economy and about 95 percent of its exports, she added.

While the major language is Danish, about 40 percent of the population speaks Greenlandic, with English coming in a distant third, Cully said. She spends much of her time promoting English language and exchange programs.

Cully discussed the relationship between the consulate and the U.S. embassy in Denmark and the history of U.S. diplomatic involvement in Greenland. The original consulate in Nuuk opened



Public Affairs Officer Eavan Cully joined AFSA from Greenland on July 15 for a discussion of working in the Arctic.

SCREEN CAPTURE

in 1940 before closing in 1953, she said, adding that employees back then bought the consulate building from the Sears Roebuck catalog and built it themselves.

While that building still stands, the new consulate is in a different building. The consulate has three Foreign Service officers (two from State and one from USAID) and three local staffers.

Cully called it a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to open a consulate, even amid a pandemic. Fortunately, she said, very few people in Greenland have fallen ill with COVID-19.

Diplomats at Work is a new virtual series aimed at introducing audiences to the Foreign Service through storytelling. AFSA hosts mem-

bers of the Foreign Service to share their stories of life and work in the Foreign Service.

The audience for the series is university and community college students from around the country as well as professionals in various industries who are interested in learning more about the Foreign Service.

We are planning a full and exciting fall program and will share details soon. If you are not yet on our distribution list, please email events@afsa.org. Don't forget to look for us on Twitter and Facebook for the latest FSJ articles and events!

A recording of the event is available at youtube.com/AFSAtube. We encourage you to share the link with people who might be interested! ■

Payroll Issues: An Update

AFSA knows that many members have been negatively affected by the new American Payroll system.

On Aug. 4 AFSA staff received a briefing from senior management at the State Department's Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS). They confirmed that the current payroll problems are the direct result of the introduction of the new system.

They shared that the previous system was more than 40 years old and that there was no doubt that it needed

to be replaced. We acknowledged that information but pointed to the large number of emails we have received from members over the past several months on this issue.

Although the problems are not yet fully solved, we were reassured that CGFS is doing all it can to ensure that operations are back to normal within the next couple of months.

CGFS management explained that their rectification efforts are directed to two fronts: entitlements, which include pay, allow-

ances, advances and so on; and retroactives, which involve missing back pay and unpaid allowances.

The aim has been to ensure that entitlements get turned on, which was a focus in Pay Period 15, and that the retroactives are corrected by Pay Period 17. Actual disbursements, however, may take a little longer, given the task's magnitude.

With regard to the PayHelp turnaround time for inquiries and assistance requests, CGFS explained that with the current volume of calls and emails, it does in fact take at least 15 days to ensure that any answer

provided is correct.

AFSA urged CGFS to devote all available resources to getting the system back on track as soon as possible. CGFS stated that they are well aware of the implications for both morale and pocket-books, and assured us that they are dedicated to rectifying any and all errors as soon as they can.

If you are not receiving the response you need from CGFS even after the 15-day wait, please let us know at member@afsa.org. If you have a "no pay" issue, i.e., you did not receive any salary, please contact us immediately. ■

Update Your Information for the 2022 AFSA Directory of Retired Members

It's that time of the year when we ask retiree members to make sure AFSA has your most up-to-date contact information—including address, telephone and email address—for inclusion in the 2022 AFSA Retiree Directory.

If you have moved or changed any of your contact information in the last year, please email us at member@afsa.org. If you have not, there is no need to act.

The deadline for all changes for the 2022 Retiree Directory is Nov. 2, 2021.

Please note that if you have previously requested your name *not* be included in the directory, we have that information recorded and will ensure that it is not.

Further, if you have previously told us that you do *not* wish to receive a copy of the directory, we have that information recorded, as well.

For new requests, please email AFSA at member@afsa.org. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting Aug. 18, 2021

After in-person Governing Board meetings in June and July, the board met by videoconference on Aug. 18 due to concerns over the COVID-19 delta variant. Any decisions by the Governing Board made virtually must ultimately be passed when the board meets again in person, according to AFSA bylaws.

Legislative Priorities: The Governing Board approved the inclusion of Senate Bill 2590 in the list of AFSA's 117th Congress policy priorities. If passed, the bill would designate a senior official on the National Security Council to serve as the anomalous health incidents interagency coordinator to coordinate the U.S. government's investigation of, and response to, anomalous health incidents that have affected U.S. diplomats and officials in Cuba, China, Austria, Vietnam and other locations. ■

AFSA Annual Audit

For the 12th straight year, AFSA received the highest possible commendation in its annual audit: a clean, unmodified opinion.

The accounting firm CliftonLarsonAllen LLP found no deficiencies in AFSA's 2020 financial reporting and operations. The AFSA Governing Board received the official report at its August meeting.

Special attention to financial management and related governance procedures began more than a decade ago and has yielded genuine progress, which was recognized by the auditing firm in their report. AFSA's good resource stewardship has provided an opportunity to deepen services, professionalize operations and better advance strategic goals.

Said AFSA Executive Director Ásgeir Sigfússon: "I appreciate the strong endorsement of AFSA's financial and accounting practices by the experts at CLA. Even during the challenges of a pandemic, the AFSA professional staff delivered a strong performance while safeguarding transparency and internal controls in our finances. We look forward to building on this strong support." ■

Foreign Service Know-How

For years, the *FSJ* has periodically published "FS Know-How" columns featuring information, advice and experiences that are specific to life in the Foreign Service.

We are pleased to present an archive of more than 30 of these columns in one central location, at afsa.org/fsj-archives-fs-know-how.

There you'll find columns ranging from "Retirement Planning 101" and "10 Things I Wish I Had Known: Confessions of a Recent Retiree" to "Going Home: How to Buy a House for Home Leave and R&R".

The webpage also features a step-by-step guide for Foreign Service spouses looking to go back to work, tips for packing out, a tech guide to Foreign Service life and much more. ■



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Understanding America's War

The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War

Craig Whitlock, Simon & Schuster, 2021, \$30/hardcover, e-book available, 368 pages.

REVIEWED BY EDMUND MCWILLIAMS

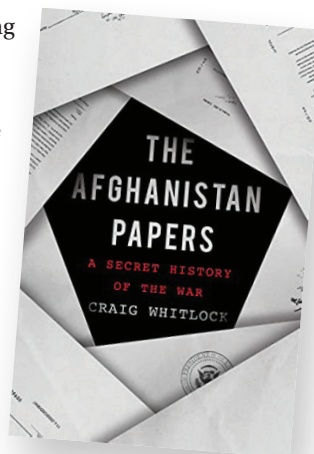
Craig Whitlock's *The Afghanistan Papers* is a timely, dispassionate contribution to our understanding of America's nearly 20-year engagement in Afghanistan, a failed adventure that cost thousands of American and NATO partner lives. As this chronicle makes clear, the cost for Afghans was much higher.

Some of the more than one trillion dollars expended in the course of the war clearly benefited the Afghan people, fostering much improved health care, infrastructure development and educational opportunity, especially for girls. But vast sums were wasted on failed efforts to build Afghan security forces and in extraordinary corruption perpetrated by self-serving Afghans and U.S. and other contractors. Moreover, the U.S. intelligence and military penchant for bribing brutal warlords inevitably destabilized Afghan governance and programs aimed at controlling illicit opium production.

The special value of the book lies in its extensive reliance on documents compiled by the U.S. government, which *The Washington Post* obtained through the Freedom of Information Act over a three-year period. These include U.S. military and State Department interviews and notes and, most important, reports and interviews by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. The Foreign Affairs Oral History Program

is notably useful in capturing State Department officials' candid comments. These documents, particularly the SIGAR reports, are a treasure trove for historians, which are yet to be fully exploited. Links to the interview transcripts can be found online at <https://bit.ly/wpost-afghanpapers>.

Like the "Pentagon Papers," the documents assembled by the *Post* and digested and summarized by Whitlock, offer a devastating record of mendacity perpetrated by senior military, intelligence and State Department officials whose public claims of progress in the war enabled



meeting with his generals, Trump had called the engagement in Afghanistan "a loser war."

Trump privately told his generals that, unlike Obama, he would be more secretive, explaining: "We will not talk about numbers of troops or our plans for further military activities." As Whitlock observes, this secrecy was intended to keep the Taliban guessing but also

would "leave Americans in the dark."

The reports and interviews also reveal the appalling ignorance with which senior U.S. military and intelligence officials approached social, cultural and historical realities in Afghanistan.

The book is especially powerful as it contrasts public statements and testimony by senior officials with often contemporaneous private or classified commentary.

successive administrations to avoid any public reckoning for their failed policies. The book is especially powerful as it contrasts public statements and testimony by senior officials with often contemporaneous private or classified commentary.

The book also documents dishonesty by Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump. One of the typical examples is provided by President Trump. On Aug. 21, 2017, he announced: "Our troops will fight to win. From now on, victory will have a clear definition." One month earlier,

This misunderstanding of Afghanistan hobbled U.S. strategy from the beginning. At the December 2001 Bonn conference, the United States, with concurrence of international partners, designed a strong center-led Afghan government.

This was completely contrary to successful governance in Afghanistan whose multitude of ethnic and tribal groups have historically preferred significant regional autonomy. The late King Zahir Shah (1933-1973) ruled as a benevolent but distant monarch during Afghanistan's golden period. Soviet efforts to build a strong centralized government model failed under

Presidents Hafizullah Amin, Babrak Karmal and Mohammad Najibullah.

Ultimately, Whitlock does not presume to offer any definitive, or new analysis for America's failure in Afghanistan. He does, however, suggest possible analytical avenues for historians: Should the United States have sought to engage the Taliban much earlier, possibly when it had maximum leverage in 2002? Should the United States have recognized warnings by experts (including President Hamid Karzai) that U.S. military tactics and reliance on partnerships with hated warlords were alienating the Afghan people? Should the U.S. have devised a strategy to end crucial support for the Taliban from Pakistan?

Future analysts will need to delve more deeply into Afghanistan's recent history to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of this tragic misadventure. What was the impact of U.S. support for the most radical Mujahideen parties in the struggle against the Soviet occupation? What was the cost of the U.S. policy decision to ignore developments in Afghanistan following the Soviet withdrawal? Should the March 2020 agreement with the Taliban have included a peace accord with the Ghani government as a sine qua non for a U.S. troop withdrawal?

The Afghanistan Papers is an essential resource for anyone seeking to understand the past two decades of the failed U.S. effort to bring peace and democracy to this critical part of the world.

Edmund McWilliams is a retired senior Foreign Service officer who served as deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassy Kabul (1986-1988) and as special envoy to Afghanistan, based in Pakistan (1988-1989). He also reported on developments in Afghanistan from U.S. Embassy Dushanbe (1992-1994).

The Consequences of a Digital Age

Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence

Kate Crawford, Yale University Press, 2021, \$28/hardcover, e-book available, 336 pages.

REVIEWED BY VIVIAN S. WALKER

Kate Crawford's *Atlas of AI* is a powerful manifesto against the abuse of political and economic influence in the emerging technology sector. From lithium mines to Amazon warehouses, from biased audience profiling to opaque government-sponsored data collection, Crawford provides a sobering overview of the social costs of machine learning applications. At times in this provocative and intelligent volume, it seems that Crawford is inspired by the muse of Karl Marx, exposing the exploitative, elitist power structures that shape the digital age.

As a recent report from the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence indicates, the so-called AI revolution has significant consequences for national security, economic stability and social welfare. Much remains to be done to manage AI's power and potential, as well as its destabilizing limitations, at home and abroad. The *Atlas of AI* offers a distinctive and timely perspective on these limitations, revealing the corruption inherent in the political and economic forces that govern the technology industry.

Part of the difficulty in addressing the AI challenge lies in defining it. Setting aside its algorithmic aspects, Crawford frames AI as a shifting, multilayered landscape of physical, economic, political and social relationships. Though the "atlas"

Pull Up a Chair...

and get ready to spend some quality time with our November issue.

- "In Their Own Words" highlights books by FS authors. This year your colleagues wrote novels, academic tomes, children's books and more.

- "Of Related Interest" surveys recent books related to diplomacy.

- The cover story celebrates the 60th anniversary of USAID.

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The so-called artificial intelligence revolution has significant consequences for national security, economic stability and social welfare.

analogy doesn't survive the first chapter, Crawford nevertheless makes a convincing case for understanding artificial intelligence as an "extractive industry" that depends on "exploiting energy and mineral resources from the planet and data at scale."

In this respect, *Atlas of AI* is well worth the read. Chapter by chapter, Crawford delivers a stunning critique of artificial intelligence institutions and practices, unveiling it as a "massive industrial formation" built on environmental degradation, unfair labor practices, intrusive data collection, unrestricted government surveillance activities and technology-sector profit margins.

Beginning with a focus on the extraction of rare earth minerals, water, coal and oil that fuel the technology sector's energy intensive infrastructure, Crawford details the environmental costs of such practices. She then turns to the exploitation of the vast labor force that produces these elements, from miners to the shadow workforce of technology company employees.

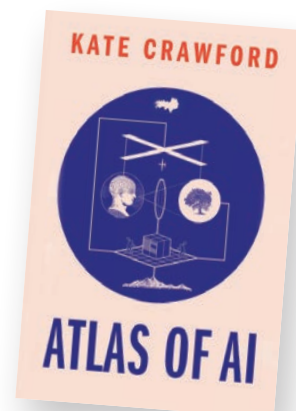
In her narrative, unrestricted physical extraction and exploitation of the labor force are mirrored in unregulated data collection and manipulation. From images of people on the street, to personal photos posted online and the scraping of online conversations,

Crawford tracks the unconstrained compilation of massive amounts of personal information and how this input is used to develop vast facial recognition databases and speech-based algorithms.

That this personal information is collected and used without prior knowledge and consent is bad enough. Worse yet, as Crawford notes, this data is employed to build predictive and interpretive models of human behavior that are not based on systematic and responsible methods of data acquisition. The resultant classification systems reinforce harmful biases and stereotypes, and perpetuate patterns of political discrimination and socioeconomic exclusion.

These models of classification become, in Crawford's view, part of a "far-ranging and centralizing normative logic that is used to determine how the world should be seen and evaluated." Otherwise known as "affect detection," this process draws on unfounded and often controversial notions about the way in which people express emotion to create a codified, machine learnable and trackable system of identification that strips individuals of their identity and culture.

Beyond the risks inherent in the erasure of individuality and exploitation of personal information, this data collection process can become a dangerous tool when deployed at the intersection



of technology and governance. Here, Crawford explores the role of tech companies in supporting government surveillance activities and the unregulated confluence of commercial and military data collection initiatives.

The result, Crawford warns, is a “profound and rapid expansion of surveillance and a blurring between private contractors, law enforcement and the tech sector,” which in turn places political power in an unholy cabal of “capital, policing and militarization.” Dire stuff indeed.

So, what are we to do? Here’s where *Atlas of AI* falls short. Crawford skillfully raises some truly important questions about the morality, ideology and politics of the digital age. But, like Marx, who was better on the ills of capitalism than its alternatives, she offers little more than what she describes as a “people’s AI” that is “reoriented toward justice and equality rather than industrial extraction and discrimination.”

A “reckoning” of the political, economic and social forces that drive the technology sector is certainly overdue, but Crawford is hard-pressed to tell us what that might look like. ■

Vivian S. Walker is the executive director of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. A retired Foreign Service officer, she serves as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University’s Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and a faculty fellow at USC’s Center on Public Diplomacy. Previously, she taught at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, the National War College in Washington, D.C., and the National Defense College of the United Arab Emirates. She is a member of the FSJ Editorial Board.



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Sadiq al-Mahdi: A Recollection

BY DANE F. SMITH JR.

Sadiq al-Mahdi loomed large over Sudan from the mid-1960s until his recent death at 84 in the United Arab Emirates, where he was being treated for COVID-19. Great grandson of Muhammad Ahmed—the Mahdi who led the first Islamic revolt against British colonialism in the 19th century—he was an attractive figure for international leaders. With degrees in politics from Oxford, Sadiq was well spoken in both English and Arabic. Tall, powerfully built and athletic, he was a compelling personality.

In 1966, at the age of 35, Sadiq became prime minister. His Umma Party was the political vehicle for the Ansar, the Sufi collective linked by allegiance to the Mahdi. His term lasted less than a year before defections in his own party led to his ouster.

Twenty years later, after a public uprising resulted in the overthrow of military dictator Jaafar Nimeiry (1969-1985), the Umma Party won fair elections in 1986, when Sadiq again became prime minister. There were high expectations that he would end the civil war in the South, which had rekindled in 1983, and bring about economic reforms to put Sudan on the road to prosperity. He did neither.

Spending his time in political maneuvering, Sadiq sought to arrive at coordinated positions supported by the opposi-

tion Democratic Unionist Party, led by Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani and his brother-in-law Hassan al-Turabi, chief of the National Islamic Front. He feared that decisive action to end *shar'ia* (Islamic law) imposed by Nimeiri in 1983—an essential step to negotiating peace with John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army—would lead to another ouster.

The “Father of Talk”

Nevertheless, the period of his rule was one of free-wheeling democracy—with freedom of the press, no political prisoners and vigorous political debate. It was a pleasant and stimulating time to work in Sudan. Sadiq's dithering, however, gave time for Turabi to plot with elements of the army to overthrow his regime, which occurred at the end of June 1989, just 10 days before my assignment ended as deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassy Khartoum. Sadiq was imprisoned along with other political leaders but soon released, and continued to lead the greatly weakened Umma Party under Omar Hassan al-Bashir's autocratic government.

During the 1986-1989 period, I had several meetings with Sadiq, sometimes accompanying Ambassador Norman Anderson and other times on my own as chargé d'affaires. I vividly remember one particular meeting. I had received

an instruction from Washington to meet urgently with the prime minister to inform him that the U.S. government was “outraged” about statements that he had recently made supporting positions taken by Libya's Muamar al-Qadhafi.

Always cordial, Sadiq took my démarche in stride without becoming angry, although he vigorously disputed the U.S. position. There was room for plenty of back-and-forth. Sadiq had the impressive habit of explaining his position by enunciating an eight- or 10-point plan precisely and without notes.

The problem was that his plans never seemed to get enacted. A popular nickname for him was Abu Kalaam, “father of talk.” In the embassy, we sometimes said that Sadiq made decisions, but no conveyor belt was ever created to implement them.

In 2011, more than two decades later, I returned to Sudan as senior adviser to the U.S. government on Darfur. I was astonished to find that beneath the surface of the widely detested Bashir regime, party politics were little changed from the 1980s. Sadiq, Mirghani and Turabi were still running their political movements more than 20 years later. Mirghani's party had even joined the regime.

An Enduring Commitment to Democracy

During that time, I met Sadiq several times at his home in Omdurman, sometimes attended by his daughter Mariam, who has inherited his leadership of the Umma Party and is now Sudan's



Dane F. Smith Jr. is a retired FSO who served as deputy chief of mission in Khartoum (1986-1989), as U.S. ambassador to Guinea (1990-1993) and as U.S. ambassador to Senegal (1996-1999), among other assignments. He is now executive director of the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudans (AFRECS).



Former Prime Minister of Sudan and leader of the Umma Party, Sadiq al-Mahdi, addressing the annual Sudan & South Sudan Conference in Hermannsburg, Germany, in June 2015.

foreign minister. He welcomed me and responded readily to my questions about national leadership, conflict in Sudan (including in Darfur) and Sudan's role in the region. His mind was sharp. He was vigorous and still playing tennis. I

both, but he is rarely heard from. The overthrow of Bashir in 2019 and the creation of an interim regime, headed by a military sovereignty council and a civilian prime minister, has brought new leaders to the fore in place of the

considered him a friend and enjoyed that special hospitality for which the Sudanese are famous.

Sadiq's death comes during a period of transformation in Sudan. Turabi died in 2016. Mirghani survives them

Nile Valley tribes (e.g., Ja'iliin, Shaigiya and Danagla) that have dominated the politics of Sudan since independence in 1956.

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok is from Kordofan; Sovereignty Council Deputy Chair Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) is from Darfur; and Gen. Shams al-Din Khabbashi of the sovereignty council is from southern Kordofan. Whatever happens during this fragile transition, the vast diversity of Sudan is much more likely to be represented at the political table than in the past.

Sadiq will be remembered fondly by many, not because of his flawed political leadership of his country, but for his enduring commitment to democracy. ■

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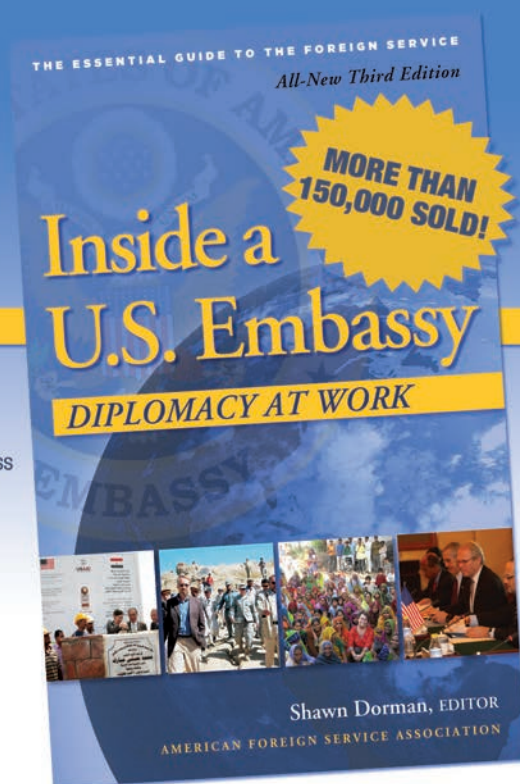
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Cameron Woodworth is associate editor of The Foreign Service Journal. His wife, Monica Smith, is a Senior Foreign Service officer with USAID. They just finished an assignment in Bogotá. He shot this picture with his Android phone.

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