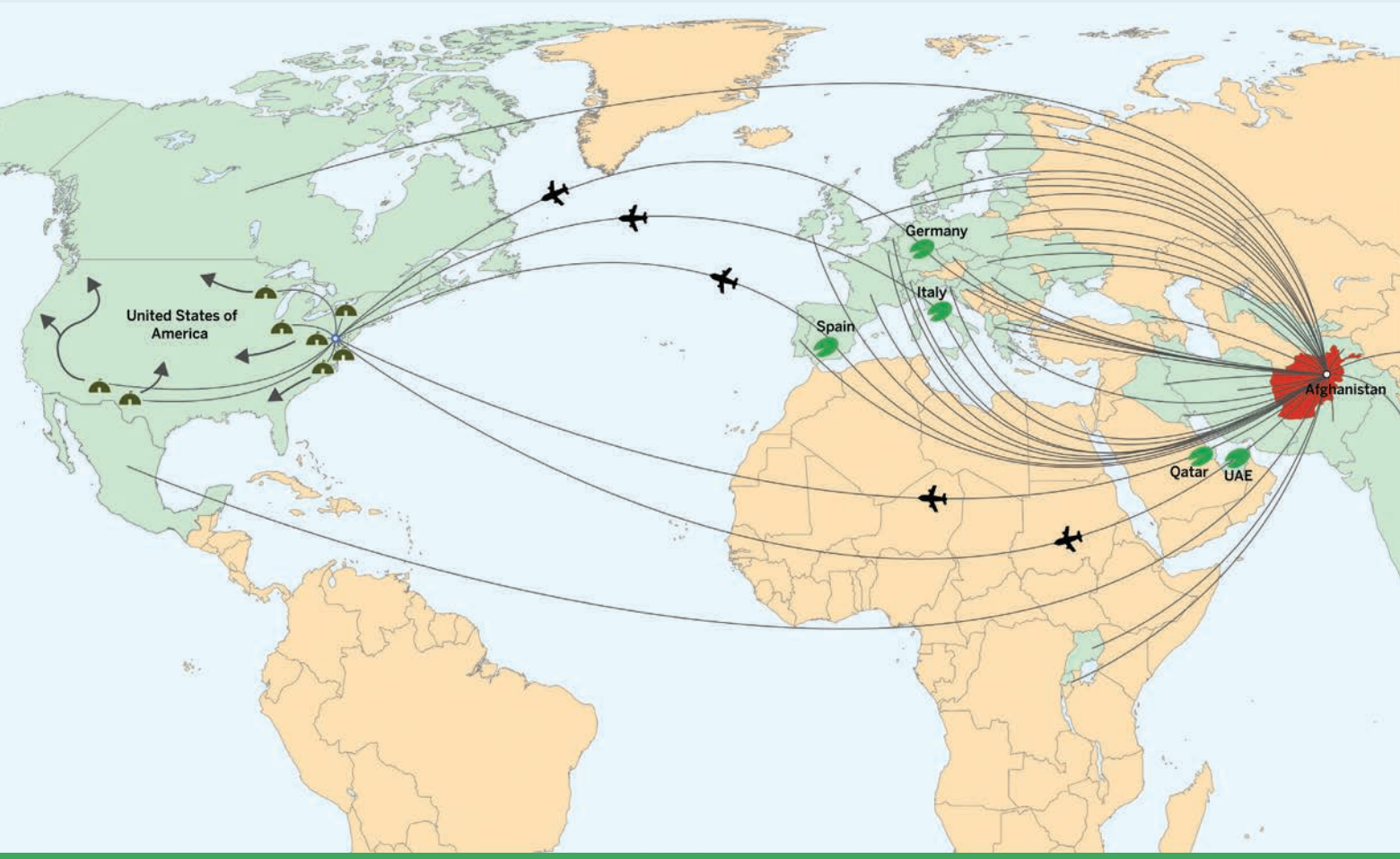
THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2022



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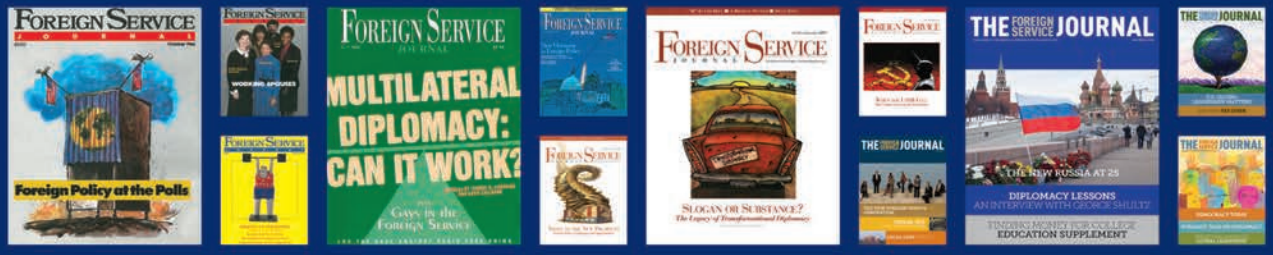

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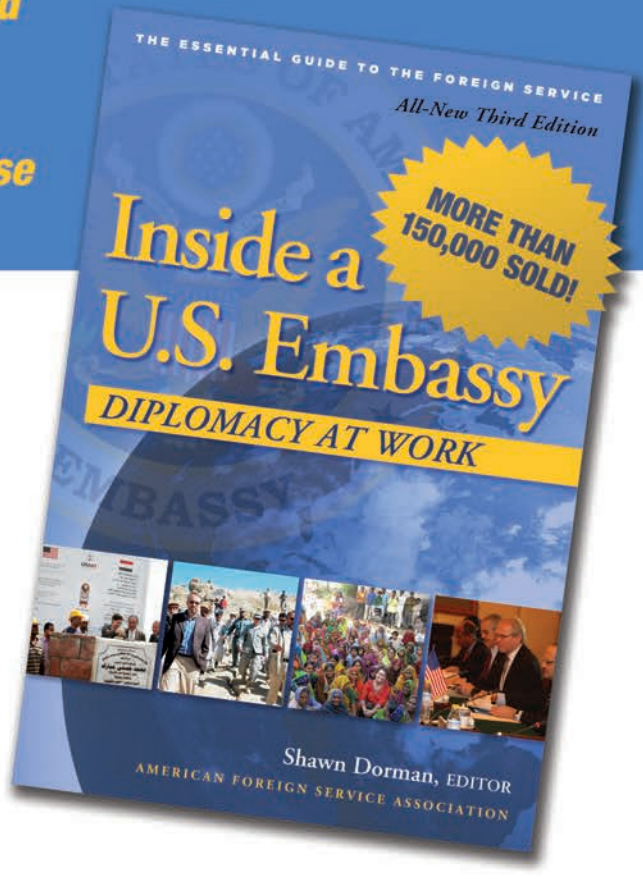

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On the Cover—The cover map aims to show the flow of Afghan evacuees from Kabul to the landing points and onward processing locations worldwide, to eventual resettlement in the United States. Map by Chad Blevins/*FSJ*.

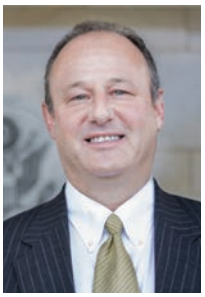
Those Who Forget History ...

BY ERIC RUBIN

The final U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan last August was an excruciating moment: for our country, for our military, for the Foreign Service and for the Afghan people. It brought to an end 20 years of struggle, sacrifice and, ultimately, failure. Thousands of our Foreign Service colleagues either served in Afghanistan or worked on Afghanistan issues and programs. Combined with the several thousand who served in Iraq during the same two decades, at least a quarter of our colleagues took part in these wars and nation-building efforts. That experience marked them, and it changed our Service and our lives in fundamental ways.

There are several inquiries underway into the circumstances of our last months in Afghanistan. Both the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction and the Department of State have commissioned reviews of what happened, what went wrong and what lessons can be learned. Those efforts focus, however, on the withdrawal itself. To date, there has been no comprehensive historical review of America's 20 years in Afghanistan—nor has there been such a review of the same 20 years of U.S. intervention in Iraq. We need both.

AFSA does not take positions on policy matters or politics, and as an active-duty member of the Foreign Service, I do not either. It is not political, however, to ask that we step back and assess this painful and ultimately unsuccessful chapter in our history, the diplomatic and foreign assistance angles as well as the military side.



We cannot succeed if we fail to study and understand what went wrong.

This is our chapter of American history as well. It deserves a thorough, non-partisan and unstinting review. Our country undertook such an effort in the 1970s after our bloody failure in Southeast Asia. The past 20 years deserve no less serious attention.

The women and men of the U.S. Foreign Service can and should be proud of their contributions to the effort to make the world safer after 9/11. Our colleagues sacrificed in many ways. Some gave their lives, a small number in comparison to the grievous losses of our military, but terribly painful nonetheless. Most served apart from their families, friends and regular lives, almost always under dangerous conditions and at times in truly frightening circumstances.

They did so because service to our nation is who we are and what we are about, because we answer the call to serve where needed, and because they hoped to make a bad situation better.

Many came home with PTSD and other lasting effects that initially were met with skepticism, indifference and neglect. Some still carry psychological and physical wounds to this day. All deserve not only our deep thanks and respect, but also our support and understanding.

The courage, skill and outright heroism of our colleagues who volunteered to assist with the final evacuation from Afghanistan deserve our highest respect and gratitude. Together with their brave colleagues from the U.S. military and intelligence community, they pulled off the greatest human airlift in history: more than 120,000 people rescued in about 10 days. Many of them witnessed scenes of tragedy and desperation that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

The United States failed to save all the Afghan allies whose service to our country and theirs put their lives in jeopardy. This job is not yet finished, and we must continue to insist that the United States work to get to safety the rest of those who helped us. We must, not only as a matter of humanity and honor, but because this crisis will be remembered by others whose help we may need in other places in the future.

In this and future issues of the *FSJ*, we are publishing firsthand accounts of the evacuation from colleagues who were there. As our country seeks to find its footing and secure its leadership role in the current unstable world, we cannot succeed if we fail to study and understand what went wrong, in Afghanistan as well as Iraq. We must also consider the ways the experience of the past 20 years changed and challenged the Foreign Service.

Will the right lessons be learned? I sincerely hope so. ■

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

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

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

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Postmaster: Send address changes to
AFSA, Attn: Address Change
2101 E Street NW
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Evacuating and Resettling Afghan Allies

BY SHAWN DORMAN

This special edition of the *FSJ* shines a bright light on the Afghanistan evacuation of 2021, through the eyes of the U.S. Foreign Service members who were there alongside the U.S. military and other agencies. In December 2021 we put out a call for essays about working this emergency, to which more than two dozen people responded. We are so grateful to them for their contributions.

How can the words "disaster," "tragedy" and "apocalyptic" be uttered in the same breath as "inspiring," "compassionate" and "professional"? Because, simply put, that is how it was. The pain and heartbreak all around, and the bravery and dedication of FS colleagues, are palpable. The story of the evacuation, the plight of Afghan allies, the trauma and the continuing crisis must not be forgotten: It is not over.

Authors of the essays in the compilation, "Operation Allies Refuge: The FS View from the Front Lines," paint the global picture (in words and photos) of the journey that the Afghan allies took: from Kabul to the "lily pad" countries (such as Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Germany and Italy), to the United States through Dulles and Philadelphia airports, and on to military bases ("safe havens") across the country to continue resettlement processing. From there, they travel on to communities nationwide.

To add a global perspective, we worked with geographer Chad Blevins to create a world map illustrating the 2021 evacuation, based on research and input from those involved. We know of no other like it.

We also hear from an Afghan interpreter who worked for the U.S. government for more than a decade. Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi made it out with his family and has a new home in Colorado. But even this "best-case" scenario is so difficult one must wonder how others will fare, those who don't have Siddiqi's connections or English-language competence.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken has pledged to evaluate the evacuation, aiming for lessons to be learned. And he's put resources and personnel toward this effort. In his President's Views column, Eric Rubin urges "a thorough, nonpartisan and unstinting review" of the evacuation and of the 20 years of war that led up to it.

As a follow-on to the interview with the Secretary in the January-February *FSJ*, we were able to pose questions to Policy Planning Director Salman Ahmed for more specifics about the Secretary's initiatives—in particular, the new Policy Ideas Channel and the Dissent Channel revitalization. See the S/P director's responses in "Challenging Groupthink, Injecting New Ideas—Exploring the Secretary's Modernization Agenda." It is welcome news that they plan to bring back the Open Forum this year.

Speaking of getting input from employees … we bring you an FS Know-How from a group of entry-level FSOs in Pakistan on how to work with them to build the next generation of successful diplomats. FSOs M.J. Crawford and Keome Rowe lead the way.

In the Feature, FSO Sarah Wardell tells us how working a State consular affairs job remotely from a rural Oregon town created opportunities to both put consular skills to use to help the community and raise awareness of the Foreign Service among Americans who might not otherwise hear about it.

The Speaking Out from FSO (ret.) Gerald Loftus and FSO Stuart Denyer presents an intriguing suggestion, asking whether it might well be "Time to Bring Back Legations Headed by Diplomatic Agents."

And in a surprising, fun feature from Ambassador (ret.) Tibor Nagy, he pitches the value of summer camp as a "stable anchor" for Foreign Service kids living a mobile life.

In the Reflection, one month ahead of the 50th anniversary of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (next month's cover story), Marc Gilkey takes us back to his APHIS assignment to Kabul, 2005. The Local Lens from Carole Fenton is a beautiful, haunting photo from Georgia.

Not to be missed is a strong rebuttal from Jon LeChevet in Letters-Plus to Jim Schumaker's January-February piece, "Before Havana Syndrome, There Was Moscow Signal." Responses to that article continue to come in, and we look forward to publishing more next month.

Please do continue to write us at journal@afsa.org.

Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

Manage Risk

George Krol's "Practical Lessons for Today's Foreign Service" (December 2021) is a splendid piece. The lessons he draws from his early tour remain valid. They underscore the importance of reporting that draws on broad understanding of the society, which can only be done by getting away from the desk.

This, in turn, underlines the importance of managing risk but not being imprisoned by it—something that Secretary Blinken says is important, but about which the State Department has done little. The American Academy of Diplomacy's effort to rewrite accountability review legislation is part of this effort, which would benefit from more robust State support.

I hope the Foreign Service Institute will make reading and, more importantly, discussing Ambassador Krol's article a regular part of A-100 training.

Ronald E. Neumann
Ambassador, retired
President, American Academy of Diplomacy
Washington, D.C.

Language Lessons

Regarding George Krol's excellent practical lessons, I have a minor bone to pick with the first one ("Use the Language").

I was in Helsinki when he was in Leningrad. Due to the usual security problems with our mission to the USSR, we (well, my superb office management specialist, the late Sally Snow) typed every classified message, which the officers in Leningrad had written out in longhand on yellow legal pads. I occasionally lent a hand in deciphering their scribblings.

But over in the consular section, we had a native Estonian speaker: Elokai Ojamaa. In 1990-1991, she was the go-to contact for Estonian independence movement representatives who could easily get to Helsinki. One of their motivations, and complaints, was that the Leningrad consulate officers who visited Tallinn insisted on speaking their hard-learned Russian, which the Estonians found insulting.

When I was with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (then the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe) human rights observer mission to Kosovo in 1993, the ethnic Albanian Kosovars did not want to talk to me in my Bulgarian-accented Serbian, but would engage when I trotted out my rusty German and Italian.

I would add that when I was in (now North) Macedonia, one of our American staffers (of Serbian origin) insisted on speaking her native language to our locally employed staff, which they, too, found insulting. Her excuse was that when Macedonia was part of the former Yugoslavia, the natives had to learn Serbo-Croatian. In two cases, the offended parties also spoke excellent English; in the Kosovo case, it was about resisting Serbian oppression.

A little cultural awareness, along with adroit use of our language skills, goes a long way.

Larry Butler
Ambassador, retired
Thomaston, Maine, and Reston, Virginia

Distinguish Between Chinese and the PRC

Asian American colleagues have privately expressed concern at the subtitle "Countering Chinese Aggression in International Organizations" in the article on the 2021 William R. Rivkin Awardee Anny Vu and at use of the phrase "counter Chinese efforts to undermine democratic values" in a separate article featuring the 2021 Mark Palmer Award recipient, both in the December 2021 *FSJ*.

To colleagues who shared their view with me, I heard you. As one of the current State AFSA representatives, I believe the words of our publication, the *FSJ*, matter, and we need to be precise when sharing these stories with our community and beyond.

As an Asian American FSO, I, too, found use of the terms "Chinese aggression" and "Chinese efforts" confusing and misplaced because they conflate Chinese ethnicity and the Chinese diaspora with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

While the first article does clearly focus on the award recipient's work to influence and advance U.S. interests and confront PRC tactics, the subtitle sets up the reader to think the aggression occurring in the multilateral space stems from or could be linked with any individual of ethnic Chinese origin or a member of the Chinese diaspora of any nationality.

This appears to be inconsistent with the Biden administration's commitment to advancing the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.

At the same time, there is now departmentwide guidance on the use of PRC nomenclature, thanks to the tireless work of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs China desk, the EAP Diversity and Inclusion Council, and the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association.

To increase awareness across the field and throughout our Foreign Service community, I will work with the drafters of the guidance to showcase the historic work of my colleagues in an upcoming edition of the *Journal*. And I am pleased that the *FSJ* will follow the new guidance on PRC nomenclature.

Tina Wong
FSO
Washington, D.C.

Failure of Leadership

John Negroponte once told me that the higher up you get, the less tolerance you'll find for mistakes over very small things. I remembered this little chunk of wisdom when reading Marc Grossman's appreciation of Colin Powell ("Lessons in Leadership," January-February 2022).

The lessons in leadership Grossman cites mostly consist of an astute massaging of the fragile egos of the many legends-in-their-own-minds with whom we in the Foreign Service spend so much of our time dealing.

Grossman justly notes Powell's failure in swallowing his misgivings over Iraq to play the "good soldier" for Bush and Cheney in their disastrous rush to war in 2003, but seems to regard it as a minor peccadillo compared to his virtues.

Powell certainly did nice things for the Foreign and Civil Services and paid more attention to the institution of the State Department than do most Secretaries. But his failure to understand the pivotal position he occupied as perhaps the only person who might have stayed Bush's hand in Iraq strikes me as the ultimate failure of leadership when it was most needed.

Edward H. Vazquez
Minister Counselor, retired
Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey

Resilience and Balance

In revisiting "How the Transition Center Expands Inclusion" (July/August 2021) by Maryum Saifee, I found one passage especially relevant as the new year rolls in: "As Foreign Service officers, we are hardwired to put our personal lives on the back burner to serve the broader mission. However, this isn't sustainable and ultimately leads to burnout."

In the spirit of reversing that culture, I offer a few strategies I have found helpful in maintaining well-being.

Gratitude. This may sound cliché, but expressing gratitude does lift spirits. A large body of research shows contemplating reasons to be grateful boosts overall well-being. Simply thinking of "three things in life that you are grateful for" can improve mood.

Kindness. Research shows performing acts of kindness, helping others, improves the well-being of the actor in measurable ways. This could be simply helping a colleague meet a deadline, or a neighbor hang a picture, or even a stranger with luggage.

The next time you see a colleague unceremoniously struggling with a late-night international negotiation, bring them a cup of tea. Better yet, buy your GSO lunch.

Job crafting. Creating the job you want, seeking out challenges, growing and using your strengths at work are all correlated with greater well-being and engagement, according to a large body of research. Job crafting is essentially changing your work to make it more engaging and meaningful.

This can take many forms, including, "*task crafting*, which involves altering the type, scope, sequence and number of tasks that make up your job," according to Jane Dutton and Amy Wrzesniewski writing for *Harvard Business Review*.

This may prove complicated for FSOs but is by no means out of reach. What projects would you like to take on next year? Think of ways you can alter aspects of your work and have an open conversation with your leadership.

Intrinsic motivation. Finding intrinsic motivation at work is associated with greater engagement and well-being. Defined as "behaviors that are performed for their inherent interest and enjoyment of the activity itself" by Marie Dacey et al., intrinsic motivation leads us to strive toward a personal goal, whether that is baking the perfect loaf of sourdough or balancing on a slackline.

Though none of these techniques alone can transform a truly untenable situation, they might just give enough of a return to shake us out of cynicism and negativity.

Zed Tarar
FSO
U.S. Embassy London

Move Away from Risk Avoidance

In "Changing a Risk-Averse Paradigm at High-Threat Posts Abroad" (Notes to the New Administration, March 2021), Greg Starr and Ronald E. Neumann

propose a practical solution to a very serious problem.

I fervently hope that the State Department is, indeed, moving away from risk avoidance to risk management. I retired from the Foreign Service in 2009 because my parents needed me to be around (they died in 2009 and 2012 at 89 and 92), but I was also disgusted with the risk avoidance strategy in Afghanistan (and other places, but I had chosen Afghanistan for my "expeditionary diplomacy" tour).

Luckily, I was stationed most of the time in Kunduz with the Germans, and their rules were less onerous than those emanating from the U.S. embassy in Kabul, so I was able to at least sort of do my job.

I would not have been able to do anything of much use had I been stationed in Kabul, and I found out the hard way that if I really wanted to do things, I needed to ask forgiveness rather than permission—like my predecessor did, as permission was never granted!

Trudie E. Thompson
FSO, retired
Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Share your thoughts about this month's issue.

Submit letters to the editor: journal@afsa.org

RESPONSE TO JANUARY-FEBRUARY FEATURE, "BEFORE HAVANA SYNDROME, THERE WAS MOSCOW SIGNAL"

Regarding Moscow Signal

BY JON LECHEVET

Jim Schumaker's article concerning Havana syndrome and a possible linkage to the Moscow microwaves of the Cold War period in the January-February edition of the *Journal* is a tantalizing piece. Its thrust is to link the two phenomena and to infer that microwaves have caused medically significant damage to embassy personnel.

I was directly involved with the Moscow microwaves during my career with State and subsequent tours with agencies in the intelligence community (IC) and have a much different perspective. My training and passion concern science and reason, not politics, so I have a different analysis than Jim does. I base my conclusions on facts and evidence, not speculation or uncorroborated reporting.

The Department of State investigated and documented the Moscow Unidentified Technical Signals (MUTS) from 1973 until the signal disappeared (by 1992). I was personally responsible for this mission from 1977 to 1980 and can state with certainty that the intensity of the impinging signals were kept at or below a level of 10 microwatts per square centimeter during this time. This level was agreed to by the Soviets because it was their maximum exposure level for incidental, non-ionizing radiation, and deliberately exposing embassy personnel to levels above their own safe level was not in their best interest.

Whenever we detected a level above this trigger point (it did happen, but only by a factor of two or three, at most, and for short periods), the Soviets were informed of our displeasure and the possible negative impact of keeping a higher-than-agreed-to level. In all cases, the level promptly fell.

The level in the working spaces of the embassy was further reduced by a factor of 10 to 100 as a consequence of the shielding effect of the building itself. The level fell further in 1976 with the addition of copper screening over the windows, resulting in only about 1 percent of the impinging radiation reaching the office areas. People working on the higher floors of the embassy were exposed to a level of about 0.1 microwatts per square centimeter, and there was a much lower level of exposure in the residential sections of the building and the lower floors.

Put in Perspective

To put this in perspective, a person standing three feet from a Wi-Fi router could be exposed to a radiation level of 0.9 microwatts per square centimeter. A person using a cell phone could have the central portion of the brain exposed to a level of over 1,000 microwatts per square centimeter. Each of these is well in excess of the levels experienced by a person working in the secure section of Embassy Moscow, but we seem to accept this exposure with little, if any, fear. Today, a person walking around lower Manhattan would be exposed to a higher radiation level from cell phone towers, microcells, communication links and other radiators than the people who worked in Embassy Moscow.

Further, there is overwhelming evidence that the purpose of the MUTS was to disrupt potential interception of sensitive microwave communications by covert signal intelligence operations that the Soviets surmised were operating within the embassy. This was the conclusion of the IC and was supported by all members save one agency.

This particular agency had a vested interest in portraying the MUTS as some form of spy beam, antipersonnel assault or mind control experiment to put pressure on State to force the Soviets to shut down the MUTS operation. Whenever the opportunity arose, this agency campaigned to portray State as an agency that was not serious about security. The infighting, lack of information sharing and backstabbing concerning the

Jon LeChevet retired as a Senior Foreign Service officer in 2005 after a 21-year career. His overseas tours were in Moscow (with Jim Schumaker) and Nairobi, and he held several senior management positions within the Diplomatic Security Service. He has a Ph.D. in physics.

microwaves and security of the Moscow embassy that went on within our government during this period was intense, and prevented a unified and effective response to the real technical espionage being conducted by the Soviets.

Serious Investigation Warranted

The evidence for Havana syndrome is sufficient to warrant serious scientific investigation even though there has never been any evidence of a directed energy attack despite five years of searching by State, the IC and others. The closest evidence is a secondhand report that an untrained person using an unreliable and inappropriate detector may have found high levels of microwaves at one of the residences overseas.

The National Academy of Sciences, given its limited and managed access to information, rightfully concluded that microwaves were the most likely explanation for the phenomenon, but not that microwaves were the cause of the medical problems. There may be a national security reason for attributing the medical problems to a directed energy attack by Russia, China, Cuba or whatever nation has made our current enemies list, but this should not be at the expense of those who may be suffering from a real medical problem.

The Moscow microwave affair was grossly mishandled by State, and we seem to be blundering down the same path with Havana syndrome. If there is a valid cause(s) for the syndrome, it is not a foregone conclusion that it is microwaves or a directed energy attack. State should fully disclose whatever information it has to a respected scientific investigation that has free rein to investigate any and all possible causes. What is done with the results of the investigation is another matter. ■

Confirmations Move Forward at Last

Shortly after our last confirmations update went to print in December, the Senate logjam broke, and dozens of nominees were confirmed for both senior positions at the foreign affairs agencies and ambassadorships. The pre-holiday confirmation marathon was expected and welcomed.

To further ensure progress through the backlog, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) cut a deal with Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) in mid-December to hold a vote in January on Nord Stream 2 sanctions in exchange for Cruz lifting his hold on 32 ambassador nominees.

Ultimately, the Senate voted 55-44 to defeat Cruz's legislation on Jan. 13, but the agreement between the two senators hinged on Schumer holding a vote on the bill, not on its passage.

Among those confirmed in December were 21 career members of the Foreign Service for ambassadorships, as well as career FSOs John Bass to be under secretary of State for management and Michele Sison to be assistant secretary of State for international organization affairs.

In addition, 20 political appointees were confirmed for various roles, including ambassadors to Japan, Spain, Poland, France and the European Union.

The Senate began the new year by swiftly confirming political appointee Anne Witkowsky for the role of assistant secretary of State for conflict and stabilization operations.

At the time of this writing in mid-January, nine senior positions at the Department of State have nominees who have yet to be confirmed. In addition, four positions do not yet have a nominee, including the crucial position of Inspector General.

At USAID, six nominees remain unconfirmed and only one position lacks a nominee. The director general of the Foreign Commercial Service has yet to be confirmed, as has the nominee for CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

AFSA is currently tracking 68 ambassador vacancies across the globe, only 23 of which have a nominee. Members can follow AFSA's ambassador tracker for real-time updates at afsa.org/ambassadorlist.

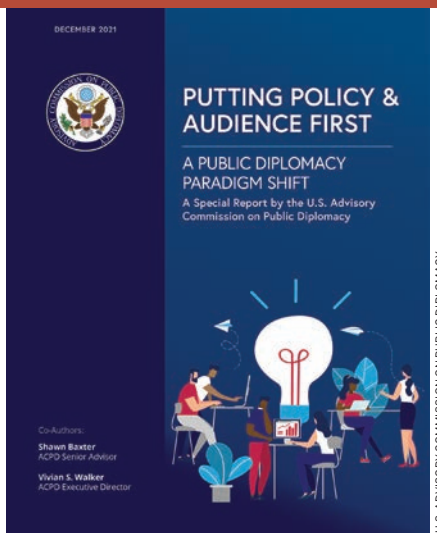
Within the State Department, two new positions have been created—that do not require Senate confirmation—to advance human rights work in Afghanistan. On Dec. 29, Secretary of State Antony Blinken appointed Rina Amiri as special envoy for Afghan women, girls and human rights, and Stephenie Foster as senior adviser for women's and girls' issues within the coordinator for Afghan relocation efforts (CARE) team.

A Shift in PD Field Practices

On Dec. 30, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy issued a special report on the Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative: "Putting Audience and Policy First: A Public Diplomacy Paradigm Shift." The ACPD is a bipartisan panel Congress created in 1948 to formulate, assess and recommend policies and programs to carry out the public diplomacy (PD) functions vested in U.S. government entities.

The PD staffing initiative is one of the most important transformations in public diplomacy operations overseas since the merger of the U.S. Information Agency into the Department of State in 1999, and by April 2021 some 49 U.S. missions had implemented it.

"What is transformative about the PDSI," says ACPD Executive Director Vivian Walker, "is that, instead of fitting people to existing programs, the PDSI fits programs to people, prioritizing audience identification rather than program selection."



U.S. ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In addition to launching a major revision of the position descriptions for locally employed public diplomacy staff, the PDSI includes a significant restructuring of embassy PD sections. It replaces traditional cultural and press functions with performance clusters focused on audience engagement as well as strategic content and resource coordination.

ACPD researchers conducted interviews with more than 100 PD and human resources professionals within the State Department from May to July 2021, two-thirds of whom were serving at missions that had implemented the initiative.

In addition, Walker and ACPD Senior Adviser Shawn Baxter conducted 24 focus group discussions with 10 missions and three consulates that had agreed to provide input. These missions represented each of the five regional bureaus in which posts had implemented the initiative.

One of the study's most important findings is how little is known about the PDSI's strategic intent, let alone its impacts, outside the world of PD practitioners. The ACPD hopes its report will help fill this knowledge gap and illuminate the PDSI's transformative potential among stakeholders in the Department of State, as well as in the academic and policy communities.

FSOs Demand Equitable Health Care at Post

A Dec. 15, 2021, memo to then–acting Under Secretary for Management Carol Perez—signed by more than 200 Foreign Service officers—calls for equal access to reproductive health services when at post overseas and asks that this right be guaranteed in the Foreign Affairs Manual.

The memo, titled "On Our Own: Diplomats Deserve Equal Access to Reproductive Health Services," which draws on the personal experiences of dozens of FSOs, says female employees and family members are routinely denied access to full reproductive health care at post, citing inconsistent availability of family planning services (including abortion services and rape kits), and lack of access to trained professionals such as obstetrician-gynecologists, among other shortcomings.

When faced with reproductive health emergencies, the memo states, diplomats serving around the world have been directed by the medical unit at post "to independently access dangerous local options. [Patients] accessed their lifesaving reproductive health services alone, paid for it themselves and still report trauma to this day. … Some nearly died, many had long-lasting injuries, while others took on serious financial burdens to access the necessary care."

The full memo can be read at bit.ly/HealthAtPost.

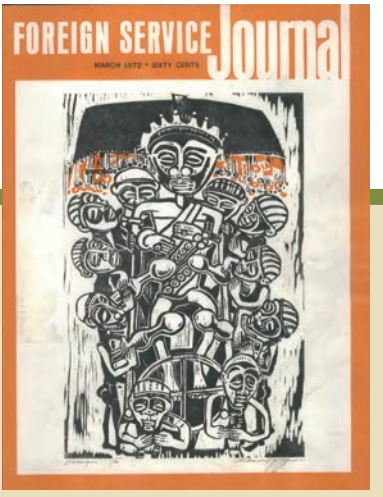
U.S., NATO Negotiations with Russia over Ukraine

Despite a flurry of high-level diplomacy between trans-Atlantic allies and Russia to defuse the Ukraine crisis, three rounds of talks held in Geneva, Brussels and Vienna in January ended with no significant breakthroughs.

Officials in Washington are also sounding the alarm over intelligence suggesting Russia may be planning a provocation in Ukraine as a pretext for war.

Russia's military buildup on Ukraine's border numbered close to 100,000 troops.

Earlier this year, NATO allies unanimously rejected Russia's calls for a new security arrangement that would bar the alliance from expanding to new members eastward and engaging in military activity in eastern Europe.



50 Years Ago

Participation

With the implementation of Executive Order 11636 [establishing employee-management relations in the U.S. Foreign Service] during the next several months, management paternalism over employment policies and professional practices in the foreign affairs agencies will have come to the end of its agony. The problem of determining what the employees want and really need will henceforth belong to their elected representatives. The monkey will be on AFSA's back, and we welcome the challenge.

It would be unfortunate, however, if the paternalism of management were to be replaced by the paternalism of an eleven-member AFSA Board. True, the Board is elected, and is broadly representative of the different interest groups in the Foreign Service. But a working system will have to be organized to keep the Board plugged into the mainstream of AFSA membership thinking at all times. In addition, the co-determination of employee-management relations can be meaningful only as part of a dynamic process that is operative at all levels where employees and managers relate to and rub against each other on a daily basis. If the majority of problems cannot be settled at the same level they occur, then the system is deficient.

The name of the game has become "participation."

When AFSA becomes the exclusive representative of all [FS] employees, the participation committees in Washington will have to negotiate problems, policies and grievances with their respective managements. It can only work if the people concerned take the time and exert the effort to keep the initiative from drifting backward toward that old-fashioned paternalism. Join and support your AFSA Chapters or participation committees. Make them work for you.

—Editorial, March 1972 FSJ

Contemporary Quote

"Yes, they [Russia] are preparing for military conflict, but I think the preference at this point is to go down the diplomatic track. The steps that they've taken over the past several months, from the Kremlin's perspective, have been efforts to compel the United States to engage seriously on what they say their primary concerns are, which is basically the disposition of NATO forces in Europe and the expansion over the past 30 years.

Something I think we need to give serious consideration to is something that I would call a moratorium on the further expansion of NATO eastward for a defined period, say 20 to 25 years. The period is not set in stone, that's a matter of negotiation; but the idea here is to have a period long enough so the Russians can say that we have met our major security concern … [and by] the same token we haven't compromised our view that the door to NATO is still open."

—Thomas Graham, former FSO and former senior director for Russia at the National Security Council, speaking on Fareed Zakaria's "GPS" on CNN, Jan. 16.

In response, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told TASS news agency on Jan. 13 that there was "a dead end or difference of approaches."

Initiatives to ease the tension between Cold War foes have proven unsuccessful. President Joe Biden and President Vladimir Putin spoke twice in December 2021, calls during which Biden warned that Washington could impose new sanctions against Moscow if it takes further military action against Ukraine. Putin responded that such a U.S. move could lead to a complete rupture of ties between the nations.

Tensions, however, have been high for the past year. In the latest saga of an ongoing diplomatic expulsion spat, Russia ordered U.S. embassy staff who had been in Moscow for more than three years to fly home by Jan. 31, a retaliatory move for a U.S. decision to limit the terms of Russian diplomats.

In early February, Deputy Chief of Mission Bart Gorman was declared persona non grata and directed to leave Russia by Feb. 14 with his family. This appears to be in retaliation for the U.S. decision to expel the Russian deputy chief of mission from Washington, D.C. Staffing at U.S. Embassy Moscow has been reduced from nearly 1,200 in 2017 to 120.

Havana Syndrome Aid on the Way

The Fiscal Year 2022 defense appropriations bill President Joe Biden signed into law on Dec. 27 includes (among many other provisions) $30 million in assistance for victims of the anomalous health incidents known as Havana syndrome.

As the November 2021 edition of Talking Points reported, more than 200 U.S. officials around the world have reported symptoms of the mysterious illness, which many believe to be caused by directed energy.

On Jan. 20, U.S. media outlets reported that, according to an unnamed official briefed on the matter, the CIA has assessed it is unlikely that Havana syndrome symptoms are the result of a global campaign by a hostile foreign

Expo 2020 Dubai: A Youth Ambassador's Perspective

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden and her colleagues visit the USA Pavilion on Nov. 9, 2021. From left to right: Dr. Muhannad Salhi, Ryan Ramsey, USA Pavilion Deputy Commissioner General Matthew Asada, Dr. Carla Hayden, Roswell Encina and Youth Ambassador Caitlyn Phung. Inset: The USA Pavilion.

After a one-year COVID delay, Expo 2020 Dubai opened its doors on Oct. 1, 2021, and the USA Pavilion unveiled its exhibit celebrating the American dream of freedom, opportunity and innovation, titled "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of the Future."

Expo 2020 is the first world's fair to take place in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia regions. With world-class architecture (including the world's largest 360-degree projectable dome), dozens of performance venues, hundreds of food, beverage and retail options, and a pavilion for each of the 192 participating countries, the United Arab Emirates welcomed the world to experience the power of its theme: "Connecting Minds and Creating the Future."

A hallmark of the USA Pavilion is the flagship Youth Ambassador Program, a long-running and central element of U.S. participation in world's fairs. Serving as the first point of contact for guests, the 75 young ambassadors at Expo 2020 represent 46 U.S. states and territories (including D.C. and Puerto Rico) and 81 higher education institutions.

The youth ambassadors are the faces of America and offer an authentic experience of U.S. diversity with their varied backgrounds, experiences and skill sets, including the ability to speak and sign 25 languages.

It's been both a formative and unique experience to engage with the visitors as a representative of the U.S. alongside my cohort of personable and accomplished youth ambassadors.

Above all, I've learned the importance of people-to-people connections in public diplomacy—whether it's communicating with a Slovenian guest through a translation app, trading pins with staff members from other country pavilions, explaining the lunar touchstone to a visitor's Russian grandparents via FaceTime, sharing pizza with Egyptians while standing in line for a Nancy Ajram concert or contributing to a Kazakh teenager's collection of signatures from every pavilion.

That's why I've grown to love what expos are all about: experiencing the world and its people all in one place, as preconceived notions of other nationalities, language barriers and politics go out the door.

I hope that you will get a chance to visit Expo before it closes on March 31, 2022—either in person or in the virtual environment online. You can find that and more at www.usapavilion.org.

—Caitlyn Phung, Expo 2020 Youth Ambassador

power targeting U.S. personnel. However, this leaves open the possibility that a foreign power could be responsible for "several dozen" cases that cannot be attributed to medical conditions or other factors, the official said.

In a letter sent to all State Department employees later that day, Secretary Blinken acknowledged the intelligence community's interim assessment and added: "These findings do not call into question the fact that our colleagues are reporting real experiences and are suffering real symptoms. We are going to continue to bring all of our resources to bear in learning more about these incidents, and there will be additional reports to follow."

USAID Launches New Vaccine Initiative

In the September 2021 edition of Talking Points, we reported on the Biden administration's efforts to get COVID-19 vaccine shots into the arms of everyone, everywhere. As of Jan. 11, the U.S. government had donated 373 million vaccine doses to more than 110 countries—nearly a third of the administration's 1.2-billion-dose target by the end of 2022.

To accelerate progress toward that goal, on Dec. 6 USAID Administrator Samantha Power unveiled a new whole-of-government effort, the Initiative for Global Vaccine Access (Global VAX), during a meeting of international development partners she had convened to discuss the next phase of actions to combat the pandemic.

Global VAX concentrates on identifying and overcoming access barriers, giving priority to scaling up support to countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It calls on all countries to enhance access to global COVID-19 vaccines, identify local barriers to vaccination and move more swiftly to overcome them in real time, leveraging existing development and public health platforms.

This $400 million initiative, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, comes on top of the $1.3 billion the federal government has already spent for vaccine readiness. The funds fall into three categories: $315 million to support

Site of the Month: Foreign Service Blogs (afsa.org/foreign-service-blogs)

Whether you're researching an upcoming post, looking for tips from more seasoned colleagues or simply curious about the escapades of Foreign Service members, AFSA's Foreign Service Blogs page offers a wealth of first-person insights and experiences.

This extensive collection of links is intended to highlight and share the creative talents in our diplomatic and development community.

For members of the Foreign Service, the websites allow readers to peer into the lives of colleagues who may share similar experiences or learn about entirely different ones.

For those outside the Foreign Service, browsing the FS blogosphere offers an invaluable window into the lives of officers, specialists and family members, including many that discuss the complex entry process for joining the Foreign Service.

Some readers also use these blogs to investigate a prospective career path or to prepare themselves for what lies ahead. Students, FS candidates and the general public can all find something of interest here.

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

vaccine delivery and get shots in arms in low- and middle-income countries; $10 million to support in-country vaccine manufacturing; and $75 million for additional support for USAID's Rapid Response Surge Support program, which delivers life-saving resources to COVID-19 hot spots or areas experiencing surges in cases.

Read the Global VAX fact sheet at bit.ly/GlobalVax to learn more.

Boycotting Beijing

On Dec. 6, the White House announced that while U.S. athletes would still compete, Washington would not "send any diplomatic or official representation to the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games, given the PRC's ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang and other human rights abuses."

The United Kingdom, Canada and Australia soon joined in, while Japan said it would also withhold high-level government officials but planned to send Olympic officials as well as athletes.

Ironically, as *Time* magazine reminds us, China joined in the last time the U.S. boycotted the Olympic Games. Both nations withdrew entirely from the 1980 Moscow Games, along with 63 other countries and territories, to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Beijing even sent 18 athletes to the Liberty Bell Classic in Philadelphia, which was billed as the alternative to the main event in Moscow.

This time around, however, with the athletic shoe on the other foot, Beijing reacted furiously. A foreign ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, accused Washington of "hyping a 'diplomatic boycott'" without even being invited to the games.

"I want to stress that the Winter Olympic Games is not a stage for political posturing and manipulation," Zhao said. "It is a grave travesty of the spirit of the Olympic charter, a blatant political provocation and a serious affront to the 1.4 billion Chinese people."

Afghan Evacuee Children in Limbo

Roughly 1,200 minors who were evacuated from Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover arrived in the U.S. without family members, CBS reports. Their uncertain legal status prompted U.S. authorities to send them to government shelters and adds a new layer of complexity to the humanitarian and logistical challenges of resettlement.

The majority of children who arrived unaccompanied do have a parent or guardian in the U.S. to serve as a sponsor. But hundreds of others—those who were orphaned or whose parents remain in Afghanistan—face legal limbo.

According to NPR, some are already in the care of local foster care families, and others remain in the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is required to house them until suitable sponsors are found or the minors turn 18.

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, one of only two U.S. resettlement agencies that serve unaccompanied refugee minors, has launched advocacy efforts centered on convincing Congress to designate these children as unaccompanied refugee minors. This would allow them to access

legal relief or to stay in their current refugee minor program until they're adults, in an effort to minimize the upheaval caused by program transfers.

Voices from Afghanistan: A Sampling of Podcasts

Capturing local voices is crucial to understanding what happened in Afghanistan and what the country's future might hold. To help readers access these stories, we've compiled a sampling of podcast episodes that feature Afghan interlocutors sharing their lived experiences.

The American Diplomat podcast, hosted by Amb. (ret.) Pete Romero and Laura Bennett, offers four episodes that aired between July and October 2021 focusing on Afghan stories. One shares a conversation with "HT," a former interpreter for U.S. forces whose family members have been killed as a result of his affiliation with the U.S., while other episodes trace the journey of Toobah, a former USAID employee, whose life is under threat by the Taliban because of her work helping women find jobs. Listen at amdipstories.org.

On episode seven of The Negotiators podcast, former Afghan official Fawzia Koofi, who sat across from Taliban negotiators throughout the talks in Doha, Qatar, provides her perspective on why Afghanistan fell so quickly, the future of the country and what the failed talks reveal about the Taliban's mindset. Listen at foreignpolicy.com/podcasts/negotiators.

The Daily, a podcast from *The New York Times*, offers episodes highlighting the challenges faced by Afghan society before, during and after the U.S. presence in the country. An interview with former Afghan Brigadier General Khoshal Sadat discusses the factors that ultimately drove the Afghan military to lay down their arms. A separate two-part interview tells the story of a teenager whose family tried to force her to marry a member of the Taliban.

Listen at nyti.ms/3FXeYyP. ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Julia Wohlers and Steve Honley.

Time to Bring Back Legations Headed by Diplomatic Agents?

BY GERALD LOFTUS AND STUART DENYER

Readers of the amusingly satiric stories of mid-20th-century English writers Evelyn Waugh and Lawrence Durrell would recognize diplomatic missions called legations, and they wouldn't associate "diplomatic agents" with security. The terms are redolent of top-hatted diplomats in capital cities of the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, that era was their swan song.

By the 1960s—for the United States, the last American legations in Budapest and Sofia were elevated to embassy status in 1966—"legation" had become an antiquated term. After President John F. Kennedy's "diplomatic universality" policy resulted in the establishment of dozens of full embassies in newly independent African nations, those American legations in Eastern European communist capitals truly seemed like holdovers from the past.

And yet, our question: Is it time to bring back legations? Likewise, "diplomatic agencies," which indicated an additional diplomatic as opposed to purely consular function at American consulates and consulates general? Would a legation offer an alternative in future situations—North Korea, Taliban Afghanistan come to mind—where the U.S. would want to establish more than an "interests section" housed within a foreign embassy, but less than full embassy status with an ambassador? What would this type of diplomatic representation mean in practice?

There are still hints of the previous ubiquitous nature of legations—for example, "ALUSNA," or American Legation United States Naval Attaché. Though it was originally used as a cable address, American naval attachés in U.S. embassies throughout the world continue to hold this title despite the fact that the last legations closed their doors (or rather, were renamed "embassy") more than a half-century ago.

Many of America's founders were ministers of legations: Benjamin Franklin was the very first (to France, succeeded by Thomas Jefferson), and John Adams was the first American minister to the former mother country, Great Britain. Even the Chevy Chase section of Washington, D.C., has a Legation Street.

What Is a Legation?

What is (or was) a legation? A better start might be to ask what an embassy is, because in its original sense, an "embassy" was a temporary mission. A king would send a noble to represent him on "an embassy" to another monarch, "ambassador extraordinary" connoting a special mission. His "embassy" might last months, and he'd hopefully return with a promise of trade, or a treaty. It wasn't until the Renaissance that resident ambassadors ("ordinary") began to appear, but the high cost of their upkeep encouraged some nations to appoint ministers, who headed legations.

The diplomatic pecking order in European capitals gave precedence to ambassadors from other monarchies. Just as the United States was slow to provide its diplomats with uniforms commensurate with those of foreign diplomats (and eliminated them entirely in 1937), it chose not to name its top diplomats "ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary." At its outset, diplomats of the American republic were literally alone among representatives of kingdoms, and so America's default chief of mission was a minister—of a legation.

The State Department's Ralph Bunche Library map collection, especially the series "Diplomatic and Consular Offices" (later "Foreign Service Posts"), shows the evolution between 1888, when U.S. legations were the norm, to 1903, when

Gerald Loftus, a retired State Department Foreign Service officer who lives in Brussels, was resident director of the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies from 2010 to 2014. He is the author of Lions at the Legation & Other Tales: Two Centuries of American Diplomatic Life in Tangier *(Tangier Legation/Foundation Jardin Majorelle, 2018) and several* Foreign Service Journal *articles.*

Stuart Denyer served 10 years in the Civil Service before joining the Foreign Service. Assignments in Washington have included the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the Operations Center, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the Foreign Service Institute and as a Powell Fellow. He has served overseas as vice consul in Lusaka, public affairs officer in Djibouti and consul in Algiers. He is currently the consul in Ljubljana.

TANGIER AMERICAN LEGATION INSTITUTE FOR MOROCCAN STUDIES

The American legation's iconic "Arab Pavilion" building in Tangier, Morocco, from the 1930s. Inset: A standard legation seal, or "vignette."

entries for "embassies" take the lead in the map key. [These two maps can be seen on the March *FSJ* featured content page: afsa.org/bring-back-legations.] Writes the Office of the Historian: "The United States only sent and received Ministers prior to 1893. Until 1893, the United States was not considered a major power, therefore the highest-ranking diplomatic representatives that it sent or received were Ministers of one sort or another."

An 1893 news clipping datelined Paris and titled "France Returns the Compliment" recounts how the French parliament was pleased to reciprocate the U.S. elevation of its legation in Paris with a similar designation of its Washington, D.C., legation as an embassy.

If an embassy was originally a sort of exceptional "TDY" or "temporary duty assignment," to use current State Department jargon, a legation was a permanent diplomatic mission, a brick-and-mortar representation of a country in a foreign capital. The State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations maintains the Secretary of State's "Register of Culturally Significant Property," and it includes two American legation buildings that remain U.S. government property to this day. The Old American Legation in Seoul, South Korea, serves as a guest house on the grounds of the American ambassador's residence.

The Tangier American Legation is another matter, serving as a museum, cultural and conference center, and research library. As the first American diplomatic property, gifted to the United States by the sultan of Morocco in 1821, it is the only U.S. National Historic Landmark in a foreign country. And online, it has a monopoly on the "legation" URL: www.legation.org.

But if readers in the U.S. want to see a legation without leaving the country, they can visit the French Legation Museum in Austin, once home to the French mission to the short-lived Republic of Texas (built in 1841). In Washington, D.C., several venerable buildings on Embassy Row (for example, the Embassy of Luxembourg) were once legations when their countries hosted American legations.

An Idea Whose Time Has Come, Again?

The embassy-legation equation was an indication of the relative ranking of sending and receiving countries (and of reciprocity, i.e., minister for minister, ambassador for ambassador). But while they existed, legations also afforded flexibility to American presidents and Secretaries of State in terms of assignments for senior diplomats. Though ministers were appointed with the consent of the United States Senate, sometimes assignments slipped through.

John Carter Vincent, a senior China expert under a cloud because of the Cold War anti-communist hysteria and therefore unlikely to receive Senate confirmation, could be assigned as the "diplomatic agent with rank of minister" at the U.S. Legation in Tangier, the longtime diplomatic capital of Morocco. At the time of his appointment in 1951, *The New York Times* wrote: "For his new post in Tangier, Mr. Vincent will not require Senate approval." This might also have been possible because of the assignment's somewhat unique status (Tangier was still the consortium-ruled International Zone, but Vincent was also accredited to the French Protectorate).

The tool kit available to American administrations in the past was much more varied than the current "ambassador or bust" approach. At various points, for example, the Tangier American Legation changed status over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Depending on the vagaries of colonial rule or whether the U.S. and a protectorate power were allies (in the case of the U.S. joining with France in World War I), nomenclature for the American representation in Tangier went from consulate to consulate general to legation to diplomatic agency, and, finally,

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

when Morocco regained independence in 1956, an embassy was opened in its capital, Rabat.

Fast forward to the 21st century and the challenges to American diplomatic representation. Month after month of senatorial holds on presidential nominations for coveted ambassadorial appointments can certainly discourage career officers, but the phenomenon might also encourage political donors to look for other rewards. If the United States decided to reestablish legations and diplomatic agencies in certain circumstances, the pull of a mere (and let's face it, "foreign" sounding) "minister" rank as opposed to the lifetime "ambassador" honorific might further discourage those seeking political appointments.

In the interim, as dozens of countries wait for the senatorial logjam to break and finally receive their American ambassadors, aren't Foreign Service deputy chiefs of mission and other chargés d'affaires in effect serving as "ministers" in de facto "legations"?

But rather than this back-door approach to embassies without ambassadors, why not entertain the notion of a fully constituted mission called a legation or a diplomatic agency? In some future scenario, we could imagine a modus vivendi with the regime in North Korea, where a settlement on the nuclear issue could result in an exchange of ministers at their countries' respective legations.

Likewise, after many issues are resolved, and if the Taliban prove their bona fides as a government, the United States might entertain sending a small team under the aegis of a minister or a diplomatic agent, perhaps to a legation building that—unlike its sprawling evacuated embassy chancery—wouldn't be associated with what would be seen by many Afghans and Americans as its recent pro-consular past.

The United States conducted its first century of diplomacy without embassies or ambassadors. Perhaps we can consider a place for legations, diplomatic agents and ministers once again.

COVER STORY

A Q&A WITH

POLICY PLANNING DIRECTOR SALMAN AHMED

Challenging Groupthink, Injecting New Ideas—Exploring the Secretary's Modernization Agenda

Salman Ahmed is the director of the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff. Prior to his appointment on Jan. 20, 2021, he was a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where he led a bipartisan task force dedicated to making U.S. foreign policy work better for the middle class. He also oversaw the review of the national security and foreign policy agencies for the Biden-Harris Transition Team. He served in the Obama-Biden administration as special assistant to the president and senior director for strategic planning at the National Security Council and as chief of staff of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. Before joining the government, he served for almost 15 years with the United Nations and taught at Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced in October a major reform and modernization plan that included steps to increase debate and new thinking at the State Department, among many other initiatives. As the Secretary's brain trust, the Policy Planning Staff has been deeply involved in crafting and implementing the plan.

In the January-February Journal*, we interviewed the Secretary about his plans. To continue the conversation about the reform efforts, we are delighted to offer this Q&A with Director of the Policy Planning Staff Salman Ahmed to dig deeper into the specifics of the new Policy Ideas Channel and revitalization of the Dissent Channel.*

—Shawn Dorman, Editor

***FSJ:* What led to creation of the Policy Ideas Channel? How will it work?**

Director Ahmed: When the Secretary asked me to lead his Policy Planning Staff, he made clear the most important role we could play would be to challenge groupthink and inject new perspective and ideas from within and outside the State Department. The concept of a Policy Ideas Channel was his—he saw it as the natural counterpart to the Dissent Channel. Just as dissent makes our institution stronger, so does a culture that welcomes, promotes and pursues good ideas regardless of where they come from or from whom. The hard truth is that bureaucracy doesn't always elevate those ideas, and at times suffocates them. Our aim was not to circumvent the rigor and debate of our policymaking processes, but to make sure we did not deprive ourselves of fresh thinking at a moment that demands us to think and work in new ways.

We consulted widely across the department in setting up the channel, drawing on lessons learned from existing initiatives like the Bureau of Global Talent Management's Innovation Portal and past efforts like the Sounding Board, and making sure that use of the channel is considered and disciplined. Submitters must include explanations of how they've pushed their policy idea with their leadership chain and relevant bureaus and offices, the nature of the feedback they received and obstacles they faced, as well as why they decided to use the channel.

After receiving an idea, my colleagues in S/P will do a careful assessment, including by engaging with relevant bureaus and offices, who will have a chance to provide reactions and input.

Leadership will review the submissions and ask relevant bureaus and offices to act on the most promising initiatives. Like with the Dissent Channel, authors can choose to have their identity protected, and we will ensure no employee suffers any retribution for having the courage to put their idea forward.

***FSJ:* What, if any, plans are there to revive the Open Forum?**

Director Ahmed: We plan to relaunch the Open Forum in 2022 as another venue to enrich the intellectual life of the department, bring diverse perspectives to bear on our work, and stretch our collective imagination about over-the-horizon challenges and opportunities for American diplomacy. The Open Forum was created in 1967 during the intense policy debates around the Vietnam War to promote discourse and debate. It has taken many forms over the years, and we will endeavor to ensure it is relevant and responsive to the consequential choices and challenges before us.

***FSJ:* What wasn't working with the Dissent Channel that led to the recent emphasis on "revitalizing" it?**

Director Ahmed: The Dissent Channel serves an essential function. It enables employees to convey policy disagreements directly to the attention of the Secretary and his leadership team. But the Dissent Channel is about more than just employees using the channel and their substantive disagreements—it is also about the department's leadership, who have a responsibility to seriously weigh dissents, respond to them in a timely fashion, protect the confidentiality of the authors and ensure there will be no retribution against them. The Dissent Channel, therefore, is a two-way street. Dissent should be welcomed and protected. And dissenting views should be conveyed internally through the channel.

Our goal is to reinforce this sense of confidence in the Dissent Channel and demonstrate that when employees and leadership each live up to their end of the bargain, it can make a real difference. At every opportunity, the Secretary has made clear he believes dissent is patriotic and makes our institution stronger. He personally reviews each dissent and reply, and asks for updates on follow-through actions when we've committed to take them.

Part of the revitalization effort is about doing a better job explaining to the State Department and USAID community how and when to use the Dissent Channel, and how to appropriately support and protect those who do. We are grateful to AFSA and President Eric Rubin for their leadership and partnership in this endeavor and to President Rubin for emphasizing the importance of "constructive internal dissent."

The Secretary has also made clear that dissenting views should not be reserved for the Dissent Channel alone. Constructive, respectful disagreement should be part of the work we're all doing, every day. I know the Secretary looks to everyone to weigh in when they disagree with a decision or want to propose an alternative approach—during meetings, in policy memos and at other moments in our everyday work. And he's said to his leadership team and to chiefs of mission that he expects them to create a culture where dissenting voices are heard and valued.

***FSJ:* Can you give any examples of recent policy ideas or dissent messages that have led to policy changes?**

Director Ahmed: We've received more than a dozen dissent messages over the past year that recommend significant policy changes. At a minimum, each recommendation received a full hearing. In some cases, they helped to provide further confidence to move ahead on policy changes already being contemplated. In others, they prompted a second look at the policy, even if not ultimately leading to the change recommended. In others, leadership did not agree with the recommended action, because they had a different perspective and broader considerations to weigh, which was conveyed in the response.

In the case of the Policy Ideas Channel, it's too early to expect concrete changes to have arisen as a result of the more than 10 submissions received in the first 30 days alone. We're still engaging with the drafters on a number of these and look forward to receiving more submissions in the weeks and months ahead.

***FSJ:* S/P is closely involved in the Secretary's broader modernization agenda. Beyond the Policy Ideas Channel, how else will that agenda promote innovation within the department?**

Director Ahmed: I would encourage all your readers, if they have not done so already, to watch or read the Secretary's October speech at FSI on modernizing American diplomacy. One of the pillars of the Secretary's modernization agenda involves elevating new voices and fostering a climate of initiative and innovation. This includes launching the Policy Ideas Channel, revitalizing the Dissent Channel and reviving the Open Forum.

Beyond these specific initiatives, we're looking at creating a culture of innovation across the department. This includes prioritizing collaboration across regional and functional lines to ensure we can harness the combined strength of the entire department to make progress on the challenges that matter most, because the reality is that many of the issues that are now among the most central to our national security—from climate to economics to technology—are functional issues that have not historically had primacy in our

bilateral relationships. We need to think about new ways of elevating the focus on functional issues within the department, including the ways we incentivize people to work on those issues and how we integrate functional expertise at our posts overseas.

We likewise need to do more to integrate bilateral, regional and multilateral diplomacy. And we need better mechanisms to pull the department together, so that regional, functional, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy can be combined to greatest effect. That will be especially important when it comes to strategic competition with China. That's why the Secretary asked Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman to lead a cross-department structure on China to ensure a more comprehensive approach with all stakeholders at the table.

We must also become an institution that does a better job of capturing lessons from our work. That's why the Secretary asked Career Ambassador Dan Smith to lead an After Action Review of the department's efforts in implementing the end of the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan.

We're also committed to providing our team with the latest technology and tools so they can collaborate more effectively and securely and have better access to data. And we intend to work with Congress to update our risk management practices so our team in the field can get out more to conduct the kind of on-the-ground, in-person diplomacy that is essential to advance U.S. goals. This is often where the most innovation happens. Finally, we need to look at workforce reforms that help incentivize initiative and innovation.

The Secretary has been clear the agenda he laid out in October is the floor, not the ceiling, of our ambitions. We have a window before us to make historic, lasting change. And we are determined to seize it, with the partnership and support of the entire department.

FSJ: **When you were outside government you wrote a series of reports on "foreign policy for the middle class." One year into the administration, how has that vision translated into practice? What is the department's role?**

Director Ahmed: President Biden and Secretary Blinken have said our foreign policy must deliver for Americans at home. On one level, that certainly includes the important work the State Department has always done—and must continue to do—to promote our alliances; protect Americans from terrorism, proliferation and armed conflict; and preserve access to the key arteries of global commerce. This is not a prescription for retrenchment, isolationism or unilateralism. Strong and confident American leadership abroad, working in lockstep with our allies and partners, is essential to advance the well-being of the American people at home. At the same time, if we're not disciplined about understanding which conflicts or crises around the world are truly integral to U.S. security and prosperity, we can end up in situations of U.S. overreach or overextension that ultimately don't produce benefits—and may entail costs—at home and come at the expense of focus on other issues that are arguably more important to Americans' well-being.

Beyond these specific initiatives, we're looking at creating a culture of innovation across the department.
—Salman Ahmed

So, at its core, a foreign policy for the middle class implies a fundamental reorientation of our diplomacy to focus more on the global issues that have the most direct impact on Americans' livelihoods and well-being, including addressing the climate crisis and helping American businesses and workers thrive in the green economy; protecting critical infrastructure, data and supply chains; promoting U.S. technological leadership; pushing back on coercive economic practices that disadvantage U.S. workers and businesses; and anticipating and heading off global developments that could precipitate catastrophic shocks to the U.S. economy. And there is nothing more urgent or important right now to Americans' well-being than our work to end the COVID-19 pandemic around the world.

Not by coincidence, these are the issues that underpin the Secretary's modernization effort, including our work to build our capacity and expertise in cyber security and emerging technologies, climate, global health, economics and multilateral diplomacy. And it's why the Secretary is committed to enhancing our domestic travel and engagement. We need to get beyond the Beltway and engage more regularly with governors, mayors, community leaders, small and medium-sized business owners and local unions, among others, to ensure their lived experiences inform our sense of the national economic interests we are advancing abroad.

In terms of how a foreign policy for the middle class plays out in practice, you've seen this in new initiatives like the U.S.-E.U. Trade and Technology Council, which provides us a dedicated forum to shape the most important rules, norms and standards on trade and technology, so that American workers and businesses can compete in the 21st-century digital economy on a fair, level playing field. You've seen it in our work to bring together well over 100 countries to secure a global minimum tax to end the race to the bottom on corporate tax rates. And it's reflected in U.S. leadership on climate and COVID-19.

FOCUS ON AFGHANISTAN EVACUATION

Operation Allies Refuge

The FS View from the Front Lines

The U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the evacuation, relocation and resettlement of allies is a defining moment in U.S. foreign policy. The events continue to elicit a great deal of commentary in the United States and elsewhere, much of it delivered without an appreciation of what was taking place on the ground.

We knew that members of the U.S. Foreign Service stood up to assist in the critical hour and played a vital role in evacuating more than 120,000 people from Afghanistan in the largest air evacuation ever and in an ongoing resettlement effort of unprecedented scale.

In early December, we invited members to share their experience working on any aspect of this crisis, including the successes as well as the adversity and tragedy. We received more than two dozen responses. We are so grateful to the authors for writing about their challenging, heart-wrenching work. They served on the task force in Washington, at the airport in Kabul, at the "lily pads" and other landing spots for evacuation flights, at the U.S. receiving airports (Dulles and Philadelphia), and at the U.S. military bases across the United States (the "safe havens") housing the Afghan guests until they are resettled in American communities where they can start to build new lives.

Their essays—organized by the staging of the overall evacuation and resettlement effort—offer a unique inside look at the still-unfolding events. We also hear from an Afghan interpreter who describes his family's journey from Kabul to Colorado in an article that follows the compilation.

Each of these individuals has written in a personal capacity, and the views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. government.

—Shawn Dorman, Editor

WASHINGTON, D.C.

A Race Against the Clock

Elizabeth Rood

As the deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan approached in the summer of 2021, urgency increased for bringing to safety thousands of Afghan citizens who were at risk because of their work for or on behalf of the U.S. diplomatic and military mission over the past 20 years. The Biden administration faced a backlog of more than 17,000 Special Immigrant Visa applications, each representing lives to be saved.

On July 19, as districts across Afghanistan were falling to the Taliban's military advance, we—the original Afghanistan Coordination Task Force—started our race against the clock. Led by Ambassador Tracey Jacobson and under the auspices of the State Department Executive Secretariat Operation Center's Crisis Management and Strategy Office (S/ES-O), our "Operation Allies Refuge" team included members from the Department of State's bureaus of South and Central Asian Affairs; Consular Affairs; Population, Refugees, and Migration; Administration; Global Public Affairs; Diplomatic Security; and the Center for Analytics. The team was joined by interagency partners from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service, NORTHCOM, CENTCOM, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the U.S. Public Health Service. Our tightly focused mission was to manifest SIV applicants and holders on charter flights and bring them to the United States for resettlement.

Reaching back to our home bureaus and agencies, the task force catalyzed innovations that will have lasting impact on how the State Department does business. We created a custom-built software application—"Hummingbird"—for gathering data about applicants, communicating with them, manifesting them for flights and tracking their progress from predeparture to resettlement.

To overcome limitations on U.S. Embassy Kabul consular services, we collaborated with Consular Affairs and CBP to use the first "foil-less" visas, allowing SIV applicants to be admitted as lawful permanent residents without a physical visa. We worked with Embassy Kabul to streamline panel medical exams and COVID-19 testing for a 24-hour turnaround. We implemented a brand-new legislative waiver of panel medical exams, allowing SIV applicants to fulfill this requirement upon arrival when exams were impossible.

The first SIV flight departed Kabul on July 29, only 10 days after ACTF's formation; nine more flights followed by Aug. 15. Because we had the right team, an inspiring leader and a clear mission, we solved problems.

We worked with Embassy Kabul and Embassy Doha to surmount the obstacles our travelers faced along their journeys. Overcoming legal and bureaucratic challenges, we organized the transportation, reception and temporary residence of SIV applicants and their families at Fort Lee in Virginia, where they were adjusted to Special Immigrant status. Our PRM partners brought in the International Organization for Migration and resettlement agencies to counsel the arriving immigrants, connect them with resettlement benefits and transport them to their final destinations.

By Aug. 15, we had transported 1,962 Special Immigrants to the United States from Afghanistan. Having doubled the speed of our operations, we were on course to accelerate our tempo to two flights a day when the Taliban reached the gates of Kabul. Soon the Afghan government collapsed, U.S. forces deployed to secure and take control of Hamid Karzai International Airport, and the historic noncombatant evacuation operation began.

The original ACTF, which already contained the interagency components needed, became the launching pad for the immensely larger evacuation task force. We devoted ourselves with even greater energy to the crisis, forming the core of the new task force's units. The technological tools, operating procedures and interagency relationships we created blazed the trail for the expanded enterprise that, by the end of the evacuation on Aug. 31, had moved more than 120,000 U.S. citizens, Afghans and third-country nationals to safety.

Elizabeth Rood is a Senior Foreign Service officer currently assigned as a faculty adviser to the U.S. Army War College. She served multiple tours in Afghanistan and was the deputy director of the original Afghanistan Coordination Task Force.

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

The Apocalyptic Airport Scene

James P. DeHart

In Kabul, our challenge was getting the people we wanted into the airport. The scenes at the gates were apocalyptic. Getting to the front of the crowd, close enough to grab the attention of our Marines, took a full day of shoving through a mosh pit of roaming Taliban while gunfire rang overhead. The lucky few who made it arrived sunburned, bleeding, often in tears. Random young men who got inside were often tossed right back out. Our Marines hadn't signed up for this sort of crowd control, but they adjusted to the task, as Marines always do.

A few meters back, our consular officers conducted a more thorough screening of the new arrivals and decided who could proceed to the C-17s. I was in awe of their stamina and their courage, working side by side with the Marines in this hellscape with so little between them and the suicide bombers we all knew might come soon.

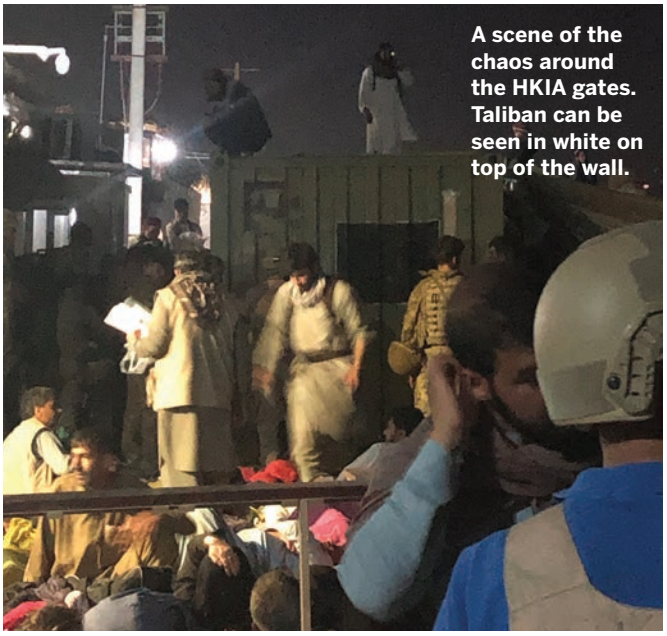
There wasn't much shelter from the sun, just whatever garbage people could string between the concrete barriers. Never had I seen so much plastic: water bottles by the millions, trampled and smooshed into one gigantic carpet.

The Marines had a whiteboard on which they scribbled the latest numbers at the airport. Our population was swelling uncontrollably. So we pushed hard for every seat on every outbound flight to be filled. I didn't care who got on which plane, where they flew or how they landed. Those were other people's problems. Let them sort it out elsewhere.

Calls and emails poured in. People didn't understand why we couldn't provide simple directions to at-risk Afghans on where to enter the airport. They couldn't imagine what the gates were like—how dangerous it was for the people there and how catastrophic it would be for all of us if a gate was overrun.

We couldn't bring in thousands of our citizens or embassy employees through the mobs, so we came up with alternatives. We organized careful movements to lesser-known gates and made sure we knew exactly who was showing up when. We kept them out of sight of the crowds and avoided creating any new mosh pits. Our Afghan employees did some impressive self-organizing and helped us help them. Through these orderly operations, we evacuated many thousands.

CHAD BLEVINS/FSJ



A scene of the chaos around the HKIA gates. Taliban can be seen in white on top of the wall.

JAMES DEHART

***Note*: This map is intended to show the movement of Afghan evacuees across the globe in the immediate aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Destination Countries refer to countries that accepted any number of Afghan evacuees, and in which evacuees physically arrived in 2021. Data was compiled from numerous sources to generate a map that is illustrative but not necessarily definitive. Every effort has been made to obtain accurate information.**

Conditions at Hamid Karzai International Airport during the evacuation in August 2021.

JAMES DEHART

JAMES DEHART

The flight out of Kabul at the end of the evacuation.

It was both the best and the worst thing I'd experienced in my career. The worst for obvious reasons, and the best because of my colleagues. It's amazing what smart people can do when all the normal constraints are removed.

We improvised, and so did the Afghans. My former Afghan political adviser took his family and waded far down a sewage canal to enter at Abbey Gate, where our Marines pulled him in. Soon after, ISIS attacked us there. Thirteen U.S. service members were killed, along with many Afghans. It was just devastating, not least for our consular officers who had worked side by side with some of the same Marines.

We hunkered down for a while and then everyone said they wanted to get back out there. They wanted to get back to work. It was so humbling. Again, I was in awe.

When it was over and I was back in Washington, they asked me to lead the Afghanistan Task Force. Suddenly I cared who had gotten on which plane, where they had flown, and how they had landed. I was "elsewhere" now, and I had to help sort it out.

James P. DeHart, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister Counselor, is the U.S. coordinator for the Arctic region at the State Department. He has also served as senior adviser for security negotiations and agreements, as assistant chief of mission in Kabul and as deputy chief of mission in Oslo, among many other assignments. He is a former chair of the FSJ Editorial Board. In August 2021, he went to Kabul as deputy for the evacuation and later directed the Afghanistan Task Force in Washington.

MED Docs Offer Support Through Chaos

Bob Y. Shim

In the dawn hours, I arrived in Kabul on a C-17 with a Department of Defense medical team. My first impression was how quiet and serene everything seemed.

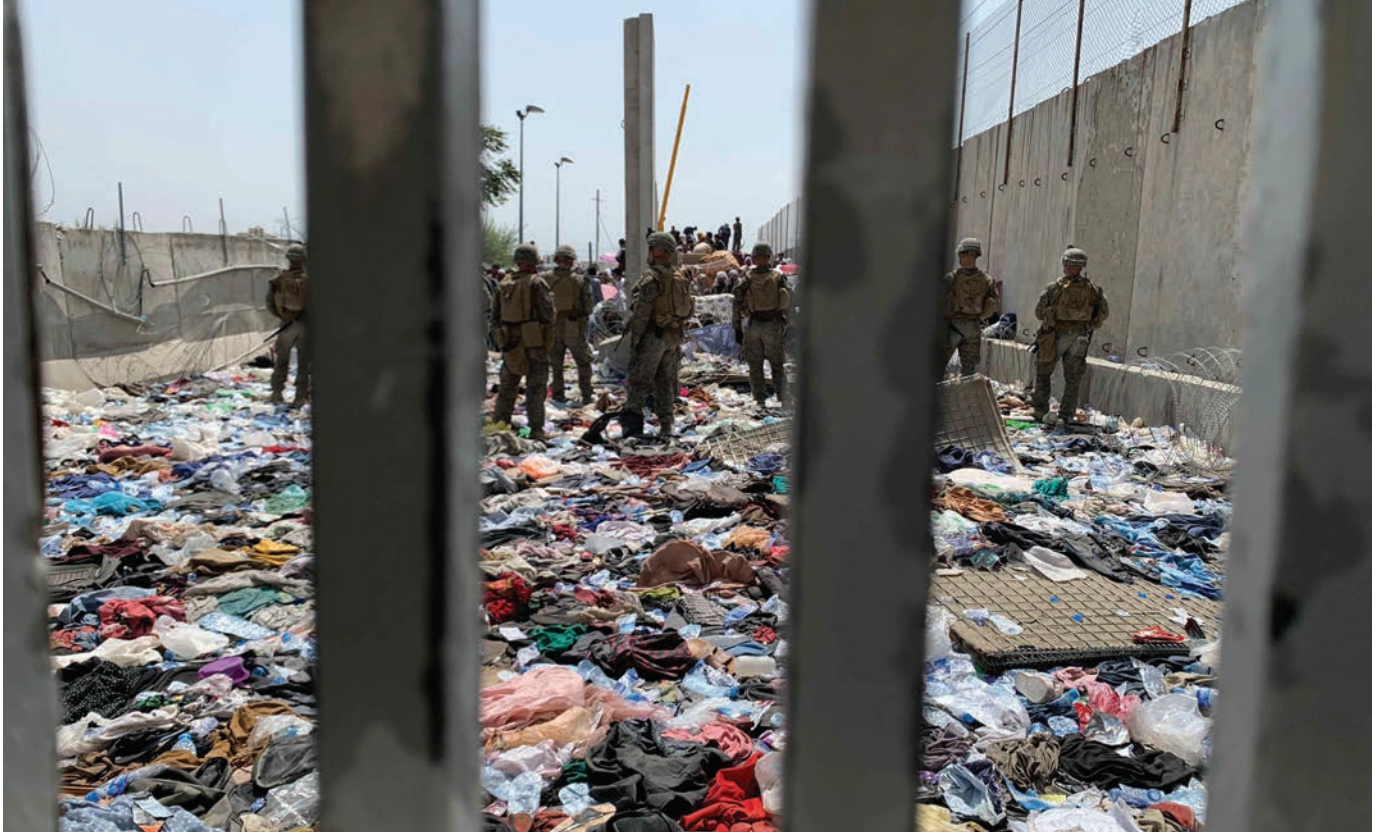
This illusion was shattered by the flood of scenes I witnessed during an initial tour of the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) perimeter with Ambassador Ross Wilson—thousands of people standing shoulder-to-shoulder, knee-deep in the sewage canal outside Abbey Gate, waiting for the slightest opening to enter; the road outside East Gate also knee-deep with hastily discarded clothing, children's toys and other personal belongings; Marine medics treating the injured and those who passed out after days of standing outside in the heat; and the periodic bursts of gunfire and flashbangs in the distance.

Similar scenes played out daily for our small team from State's Bureau of Medical Services (MED)—me and two medical providers—deployed to render assistance to our State Department colleagues. We quickly realized the extreme limitations of what the three of us with our portable kits could do in this austere setting, but we dove in, caring for Embassy Kabul personnel who were working around the clock.

We set up a small makeshift health unit at the Joint Command Center and supported consular teams on excursions to the gates to screen potential visa recipients. Looking back, providing care for the State Department staff—even when reduced

BOB SHIM

At Hamid Karzai International Airport, Ambassador Ross L. Wilson talks with the Marines at the gates.



BOB SHIM

At Hamid Karzai International Airport, a view through the East Gate where belongings were discarded.

to treating minor injuries and intestinal upset—helped alleviate stress and increase morale in intangible ways and support the overall mission.

Though we had initially anticipated some sort of humanitarian component to our mission, our resources were very limited. As it happened, the impact of our support to State personnel was much more significant than anything we could have remotely achieved attempting to provide care for evacuees.

Some memories from the chaos I will not soon forget. The first is assisting a Kabul Health Unit locally employed staff doctor and his family who were stuck outside the airport gates. After they had been unable to find a way into the airport for days and had been held for hours by the Taliban following the bombing, we helped them board an evacuation flight only two days before the operation concluded.

COURTESY OF BOB SHIM

The MED team deployed to Kabul for the evacuations. From left to right: a U.S. consular officer; Christopher Casey (MP, U.S. Embassy Bishkek); Karl Field (MP, MED Foreign Programs); Bob Shim (RMO, U.S. Embassy Riyadh).

I met this family again at the Doha evacuation center to see them onward to Dulles International Airport, where they were connected with MED's principal deputy chief medical officer, Dr. Rick Otto, who guided them to their destination in California. They were also gifted travel money personally from our regional medical manager. I have never been so proud to be a part of the MED family.

I also recall one moment during an interaction between a consular officer and an evacuee when the officer broke down in tears at the plight of many Afghan families having to be separated. My deep respect goes to these brave officers who served tirelessly at the HKIA perimeter gates under impossibly stressful conditions to process potential evacuees. They did so with the utmost compassion, care and professionalism. These heroes of this unprecedented operation must not be overlooked.

Many have asked about my brief deployment to Kabul during the evacuations, and the most fitting description of the experience is that it was chaotic, surreal, tragic and inspiring—all at the same time. Nevertheless, the single, enduring memory will be the people—both Afghans and non-Afghans—who gave the best of themselves on both sides of the perimeter walls at HKIA during those heart-wrenching weeks in August.

Bob Y. Shim, M.D., is a State Department regional medical officer currently serving his first tour in Riyadh. He was temporarily deployed by the Bureau of Medical Services (MED) to Kabul in August 2021 to provide medical support for State Department personnel during the evacuations at Hamid Karzai International Airport.

CONN SCHRAEDER

Consular team leaders Jayne Howell (at left) and Jean Akers (at right) at Hamid Karzai International Airport early on the morning of Aug. 30, 2021.

And Then, We Went Back to Work

Jayne Howell

I've served in Afghanistan twice. First, in the heady, optimism-filled days of 2004 when we moved easily around Kabul in thin-skinned vehicles, our body armor growing dusty as we were welcomed into Afghan homes and weddings as liberators and partners. I toured tiled mosques and reopened museums. I got to know Afghan families over fragrant platters of *qabuli palau* and cups of green tea with sugared almonds. I attended Sufi concerts in antique rose gardens, learned to bargain for rugs on Chicken Street. I toured the ancient citadel of Ghazni, walked in the footsteps of Rumi in his birthplace of Balkh, and hiked along the base of the bombed-out Buddhas in Bamiyan. As an observer in the 2004 election, I cried as euphoric women cast votes, many of them literally shaking with the weight and privilege of having a voice.

I returned to a very different Afghanistan in 2011. Our military presence and civilian surge were at their peak, and so, too, the insurgency and violence. The ambassador began our country team meeting each week by reading the names of military servicemen and women who had been killed since the last meeting. In 52 of those meetings, only one passed without that terrible marker. For each one of those names, there were hundreds of Afghans who also lost their lives, and we held space for them all.

When Kabul fell and the department was seeking volunteers to assist with an evacuation, I went. I thought I could contribute; but, maybe selfishly, I also wanted to be there knowing no more American names would have to be read, no more ramp ceremonies honoring the fallen, no more young lives would be lost so far from home. Only that wasn't the way it happened.

On Aug. 26, just before our shift change at 6 p.m., I walked out of a planning meeting into the normally bustling Joint Operations Command Center we shared with the Marine Corps leadership. I expected to hear the usual hum as colleagues greeted each other, exchanged notes on the day's events and maybe even joked a little. Instead, I opened the door into a stony, deafening silence.

My colleague was waiting for me—"A bomb, Jayne, at Abbey Gate," she said. In that silent JOCC, surrounded by the Marines desperately waiting to learn the fate of their comrades, we waited. And when the news came—13 Americans lost, and hundreds of our Afghan partners killed and injured—it was so much more horrific than I could have imagined.

We were so close, so very close to No More Names.

Instead, it was one of the deadliest days for America in the 20 years of conflict. And then, just a few moments later, a Marine quietly asked me if the consular officers were ready to go back to work. I consulted our Diplomatic Security colleagues, and then I asked for volunteers. I didn't see a single person without a hand up. And so, we went back to work.

The following day, we all lined up on the tarmac for the ramp ceremony to bear witness as our fallen colleagues boarded their final flight home, their hero flight. I will never forget what it felt like to stand there in the midday Kabul sun, hands clasped and shoul-

BOB SHIM

Touring the perimeter of the airport with the U.S. Embassy Kabul consul general, August 2021.

BOB SHIM

Near the gates at Hamid Karzai International Airport consular officers conduct interviews with Afghans seeking to leave, a difficult and often heart-wrenching task.

der-to-shoulder with my State Department colleagues and military brethren for that awful, beautiful, heartbreaking ceremony.

Time stopped as their coffins, one by one, passed us slowly on the shoulders of their friends and comrades. The last ramp ceremony in Kabul. And then, forever changed, we went back to work.

Jayne Howell is the consul general and country consular coordinator in Ankara. She previously served as the consular section chief in Kabul, Accra and Harare. Domestically, she has worked in the Bureau of Consular Affairs as the deputy executive director, the supervisory regional consular officer and as the inaugural director of 1CA, the bureau's leadership and management excellence program.

BOB SHIM

A consular officer reviews documents at HKIA, August 2021.

Consular Officers on the Line in Kabul

Jean Akers

I left Kabul on Aug. 30, 2021, alongside 20 other U.S. diplomats and 300 Marines jammed into a C-17. Two hours earlier, I had crouched under a desk as C-RAMs intercepted incoming rocket fire. Now, as we lifted off, I was sleep-deprived, emotionally raw and tremendously proud of all we had accomplished. I lamented that we couldn't do more. I still do.

For 11 days and nights in late August, I helped lead the consular team on the ground. Our team's primary role was to determine whether people who made it to Hamid Karzai International Airport met the criteria—as defined by the White House and State Department leadership—for evacuation on a U.S. flight. We didn't have access to systems or databases, but we did have the good judgment and decision-making skills consular officers exercise every day around the world.

Each shift change, either I or my co–team leader briefed the team before they headed out for 12 hours to interview prospective evacuees in the heat or the dark, wearing full PPE, accompanied by heavily armed security personnel and Marines. We repeated certain phrases each time: "We trust your judgment. We support you. Ask for help when you need it." And always: "Remember: every life matters." Thinking of the thousands massed outside the airport led to despair. We stayed grounded by focusing on each individual.

From the command center, we passed information to our officers on specific cases we were tracking—such as unaccompanied minors, infants with medical needs or other especially vulnerable Afghans—and updated senior leadership on progress or roadblocks. Every couple of hours we checked "the board" for the latest evacuation numbers to update the task force.

We collaborated with military partners to solve all manner of problems: everything from "How do we get more Americans out?" to "How did this random plane from country X just land without anyone knowing?" Calls, texts and emails from NGOs, congressional staffers, colleagues, friends and total strangers poured in, begging for help for this person or that group. Sometimes our team could help get someone onto the compound; other times they made it through on their own. Each success warranted a high five, or a "yay, team!" on our group chat. Other times, we couldn't make it happen. Each of those still haunts me.

The night of the Abbey Gate bombing, we hunkered down. I texted the team: "Tell your family you're safe." Some of them

thanked me, later—in the shock of the moment, they hadn't thought to reassure loved ones. A senior military officer addressed his team at the command center; his words gave me strength. "This is a tragedy," he said, and paused. "We do need to mourn, and that time will come. But how we honor them *right now* is by carrying out our mission."

Two hours after the bombing, flight operations resumed. We went back to work.

Jean Akers is the consular section chief in Montreal. She has previously served overseas in Kabul, Phnom Penh and Curacao, and in Washington, D.C., in the Bureau of Consular Affairs Executive Office, at the Foreign Service Institute, in Consular Affairs' 1CA and as a career development and assignments officer in the Bureau of Global Talent Management.

The Last Consular Officers at the Gate

Arleen Grace R. Genuino

Kabul. Time's up. After arriving at post end of July began a rapid succession of deadlines that passed, and all of us at the embassy had to quickly shift and move on from one to the next. Overlap with my predecessor ended. Time's up.

About four days after that, we were in the midst of hurried final destruction sessions, shredding or destroying anything with contacts or our personal names or the embassy printed on it (yes, it felt just like that opening scene of Embassy Saigon in "Argo"). Time's up.

A day and a half later, we boarded helicopters fully armored, saw the embassy for the last time and headed for Hamid Karzai International Airport. Time's up again.

Days took on a strange routine as we trudged all over that garbage-strewn airport. The security situation was tenuous those first days at HKIA. Afghans breaching the airport's security perimeters prompted our tense sheltering in place.

Despite those moments, many of us were determined to stay until our embassy's locally employed staff and their families could depart, and passed up leadership's offers to evacuate further to safety. Thank God for our military!

With security improved, dozens of us began 12-hour day and night shifts to screen Afghans desperately trying to evacuate at HKIA's entry points. Everyone dusted off their consular titles. Consular reinforcements also arrived from other posts and from

ARLEEN GRACE R. GENUINO

The last flag standing. The United States was the last coalition partner to leave the Hamid Karzai International Airport in August 2021.

ARLEEN GRACE R. GENUINO

Exhausted Department of State personnel and U.S. Marines begin their ride home via Kuwait City on a C-17 on Aug. 30, 2021.

Washington, D.C. I split my time on shift between screening Afghans and working on protection issues. We got strangely used to hearing and seeing tracer fire light up the night sky.

The suicide attack at Abbey Gate on Aug. 26 that claimed so many U.S. and Afghan lives reminded us how real the danger

remained. I thought of my father who worked as a U.S. government third-country national in Vietnam during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Now, here I was, his daughter, carrying on a similar service legacy more than 50 years later.

Our time on the ground was limited; the end date would shift but was nearing. So many people were still outside the gates desperately hoping to get inside. Feelings of powerlessness grew among us as more gates closed for security reasons. Friends, colleagues and strangers with any distant Afghanistan nexus found us via email and pleaded for help getting in, and we tried desperately to offer what little help we could when possible while still working our shifts.

A small group of us were asked to be the last consular officers on the ground and to push through to fill the last flights with little sleep on Aug. 29 and 30. Sheltering because of one last rocket attack on the airport a few hours before boarding our own outbound C-17 was a surreal ending to our time at HKIA.

Foreign Service and Civil Service officers worked alongside our military to look out for the most vulnerable in the airport crowds. That fact is sorely overlooked by media coverage. Our military were handed children at the gates by their parents in hopes of saving them. Foreign Service and Civil Service officers had the more onerous and longer-term task that continues even now to attempt reunification of these youngest evacuees, first at HKIA or at a subsequent processing point outside Afghanistan. The United States has taken in approximately 1,300 Afghan unaccompanied minors since August.

Our time at HKIA may have finished, but our evacuation efforts did not end on Aug. 30. Many HKIA alumni and additional department staff continue today to serve valiantly at our Doha lily pad in Qatar, in both temporary duty assignments and as part of our evolving Afghanistan Affairs Unit presence post. The State Department deserves due recognition for the heroism displayed by its own ranks.

FSO Arleen Grace R. Genuino served as refugee coordinator at U.S. Embassy Kabul through the August 2021 evacuation and at Hamid Karzai International Airport, and subsequently as part of the forthcoming Afghanistan presence post and at Camp As Sayliyah in Doha.

U.S. AIR FORCE

On Aug. 15, 2021, one of the first flights of Afghan evacuees arrived at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. This iconic photo shows the Air Force C-17, with a rated capacity of 250, packed with no fewer than 823 people.

LILY PADS

The Evacuation Is On

DOHA, QATAR

Mark Padgett

"We have a C-17 inbound in 30 minutes with approximately 400 Afghan nationals that rushed the plane in Kabul. Intentions unknown. Hijacking possible." My jaw dropped. It was around 2:30 a.m. on Aug. 15 when an Air Force officer had tapped my shoulder, asking, "Are you State?" and said I had a phone call from Brigadier General Gerald Donohue, the 379th Wing Commander at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

The night had begun innocuously enough when our economic officer, Nikhil Lakhanpal, and I volunteered to relieve some co-workers who had been at the air base the previous day

shepherding embassy employees and third-country national contractors out of Kabul through Qatar.

I had only been in Doha for a little over a week and wanted to do my part. We expected a boring night of verifying manifests, checking Excel spreadsheets and greeting weary colleagues. The first sign of things to come was when a plane landed around 2 a.m. that, disconcertingly, had an Afghan family of six among the contractors and staff.

BOB SHIM

Evacuees finally board a flight out of Kabul.

For about 15 minutes, Nikhil and I scrambled, reaching out to Ops, Consular Affairs in Washington and anyone who could help figure out what to do about this family—these initial six evacuees, the harbingers for the more than 123,000 people who would follow in the coming weeks.

Heart-wrenchingly, they immediately asked to go back to Afghanistan because they were worried about parents and siblings who had been separated at a Taliban checkpoint. After explaining that that was impossible, we managed to get them some cots and settled them in a tent near the in-processing terminal by the tarmac. Just as I was starting to feel like I had things under control, I got that tap on the shoulder.

They say that in crisis, things become a blur; but it's the opposite. I learned from combat experiences in Iraq that things slow down, and the brain becomes transfixed, like tunnel vision. I remember what happened next with absolute clarity. I called the chief of mission to tell him about the inbound flight, and suggested to the military that they wait and see what the passengers' intentions were before rushing to conclusions.

Sure enough, once it landed, the C-17 was half-filled with women and children. A few had luggage; most had nothing. One man was wearing only one shoe. A pregnant woman's water broke. The looks of terror and exhaustion in their faces were visceral. We greeted them as best we could, emptying out a large bay that quickly filled up, and handing out MREs (meals, ready-to-eat) and water amid the crush and smells of hundreds of people packed together. By 5 a.m., the scorching 120-degree, 100 percent humidity Qatari heat loomed. Because the bay couldn't fit everyone, we decided to have a dozen transport buses come down to the tarmac and loaded them up. It wasn't comfortable, but at least there was air conditioning.

I did a rough count and estimated there were around 640 people. A colonel told me I was crazy—"C-17s can only hold 250 people max." Turns out we both were wrong; there were actually 823 passengers (as captured in the infamous photo of the packed cargo hold, page 37). By 6 a.m., embassy leadership had arrived, and Nikhil and I were able to step back, shaken.

But the respite was brief. For the next 17 days, I would be co–site lead at nearby Camp As Sayliyah, where at any moment 8,000 evacuees were housed in facilities built to accommodate 2,500. But that is a whole different story, with its own heart-breaking and uplifting moments that will both haunt me and fill me with pride for the rest of my life.

Mark Padgett is the political-military officer at U.S. Embassy Doha. Prior State Department assignments include Iraq, Mexico and Venezuela, as well as Washington, D.C. He was an Army officer with tours in Iraq and Afghanistan before joining the Foreign Service in 2013.

In Limbo in Abu Dhabi

EMIRATI HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE CENTER, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Cynthia Segura

"And how many bags do you have?" I asked the patriarch of a family of nine. The translator conveyed the answer: "One." I handed him the luggage tag and wished them a safe trip. Silently I hoped that their one suitcase contained nine jackets for their arrival in Philadelphia. Like so many of the families fleeing Afghanistan, they barely escaped with the clothes on their back. These were the lucky ones, traveling to a new life in the United States.

In October I had the opportunity to work in Abu Dhabi at the Emirati Humanitarian Assistance Center, or EHC. The experience provided me insight into the plight of the Afghan people and the complexities of the largest airlift in history.

The EHC's role is unique in the Afghanistan evacuation in that evacuees are not hosted at a U.S. military base nor under the care and control of the U.S. government; they are guests of the Emirati government and housed in apartment buildings with all their basic needs provided. They are not allowed to leave, except for medical care, until they depart for relocation. Some evacuees have been there for more than 75 days, and counting. Some have a clear path to the United States; but for many, the onward path is less certain.

In my three weeks there, we processed nearly a thousand evacuees for travel to the United States. As one of the final steps in their journey, we verified their identity, measles vaccination status and negative COVID-19 test, and ensured that no minors were left behind. Every person boarding that plane felt like a huge victory, the culmination of a massive interagency support effort plucking them out of Afghanistan to the relative safety of the United States.

For every person who made it onto a plane, approximately 10 others have no clear way out and no mechanism to stay. While many of these evacuees are legitimately fleeing religious persecution, without a visa in hand they are unable to travel to the United States or any other country. The concept of asylum does not exist in UAE law, nor does the UAE recognize those escaping war or persecution as refugees.

There are many logistical challenges with processing some of these people. Many arrive with no national identity card nor any way to verify who they are. Things we take for granted, such as birth dates and last names, are more fluid in Afghanistan. Should we take on the risk of welcoming these evacuees? If we do, what are their chances of assimilating? What will happen to them if there is no path out?

In parallel, humanitarian organizations continue to bring more refugees into UAE through privately funded flights, and the population of souls in limbo continues to grow. What becomes clear to me in my short time is that though we have left Afghanistan, our complex entanglement endures.

Cynthia Segura is the information systems officer at U.S. Embassy London. She has served in Sydney, Beirut, Athens and Madrid. Prior to joining the Service in 2010, she taught technical writing at the University of New Mexico and worked in IT support for the Global Seismic Network.

Attention to Mental Health Aftereffects

KUWAIT CITY, KUWAIT

Karen Travers

In late August and early September, I watched along with the rest of the world as the U.S. performed the monumental task of the Afghanistan evacuation. I would have gone to Afghanistan if asked, but mental health care is better provided on the tail end of any crisis, when the adrenaline has stopped flowing and people have a chance to sit and reflect on what they have just experienced.

The second week of September I traveled to Embassy Kuwait to help manage the potential mental health sequelae of the mission staff who had been involved in housing, feeding, clothing and caring for more than 5,000 Afghans and nearly 1,000 Americans and third-country nationals transiting through Kuwait. Because the Kuwaiti government only allowed evacuees to stay for 14 days, the Embassy Kuwait team and their Department of Defense partners had two weeks of incredibly intense around-the-clock activity, which ended abruptly when the last evacuee boarded a plane on day 14.

By the time I arrived, the evacuees were gone, and leadership's focus shifted to managing the potential aftereffects on the embassy staff. I spent a week in Kuwait, and while my door was open to anyone who might need to talk about the experience, the most important work happened behind the scenes.

As I usually do during a regional visit, I scheduled "consultations" with most of the section heads, as well as the front office, so that I could understand how their folks were doing post-evacuation. To a person, the section heads were incredibly proud of the work their teams had done and the positive impact they had had on the lives of the Afghans. Each leader did a fantastic job of taking care of staff and was able to tell me who had fared well and who might need a little more attention.

What surprised me most about the hour I spent with each was how therapeutic that time was for the senior FSOs themselves. They had stepped up in a crisis and performed exceptionally well. They had all thrown themselves into the situation and successfully guided their teams through the evacuation. All knew their sections had made a huge difference.

Few of the embassy leaders, however, recognized that they themselves might need some mental health counseling—or at minimum, a chance to talk about what *they* had experienced and what had bothered them over the previous two weeks. In essence, my one-hour visit with each was a mini mental health house call.

I asked questions that all mental health providers ask: How were *they* were doing? Were they sleeping? Eating? Engaging in self-care? I encouraged each to model a healthy work-life balance in the aftermath of the evacuation.

We often talk about second- and third-order effects of decisions made by those in the chain of command. In this case, I had the distinct pleasure of caring for the second- and third-order FSOs—the leaders who cared for their people, who cared for the evacuees.

I'm not sure any of these embassy team leaders recognized that they had participated in a mental health appointment—I hope I was far more subtle than that. But, by leveraging the

typical consultation and bringing my expertise to their offices, I provided the supportive therapy that each needed in a confidential, comfortable environment.

Karen Travers, M.D., is a psychiatrist and regional medical officer based in Amman. Prior to joining the Foreign Service in May 2020, she had more than 13 years of experience working with the Air Force. In 2013 she was chosen to stand up the Air Force telepsychiatry program as a contractor and worked in that position for the next six years. She will transfer to Embassy Jakarta in the fall of 2022.

From Al Udeid Air Base to Kentucky

AL UDEID AIR BASE, QATAR

Marjon Kamrani

In mid-August, around 1 a.m., I met an Afghan evacuee for the first time, standing outside a former U.S. military installation in Doha, probably the hottest place on earth at the time. I had volunteered to relieve my beleaguered U.S. Embassy Doha colleagues, many of whom had spent several sleepless nights assisting U.S. contractors as they pit-stopped in Doha on their way out of Kabul. I expected to spend a day or so with some tired Americans, help procure food, hopefully inspire a laugh and get folks to their families.

That all changed when I arrived at Al Udeid Air Base with the embassy Treasury Department attaché, who had responded to the same volunteer request. On arrival, we received word that a few hundred Afghans had unexpectedly landed the night before. Our recently closed Army installation down the road would suffice for their stay, so we headed there. We prepared for what we thought would be around 600 evacuees. There were more, around 8,000 at one point. There are many I will never forget—the pregnant Afghan air force pilot, the 5-year-old unaccompanied minor, the man carrying a suitcase full of his diplomas but nothing else.

Over about a month, save a day or two here or there, I learned nearly every nook and cranny at the base. I worked closely with my political-military colleague, who had arrived in Doha for his assignment only one week prior to the evacuation. We did what midlevel State department officers could in an environment with little guidance, no computers and only a few other State Department staff (until thick-skinned and gold-hearted TDY [temporary duty] colleagues showed up).

We handed out water with our fearless military colleagues, tried to relieve scared Americans, organized legal permanent resident families and visa holders who could fly immediately to the United States, and calmed traumatized people who had left family behind. We talked evacuees down from walking off the base, a sure way to upset the host government. State and Army colleagues spent nights huddled together making plans for the following days—plans that would unfold in messy and confusing ways—but we managed to move hundreds of evacuees off the base almost daily. We also spent time commiserating, bragging about how much weight we lost (at least five pounds on average) and who had found the cleanest bathroom available.

I left the effort in early September. Efforts continue but not nearly to the same degree, and now it's more orderly. At least a hundred evacuees have my phone number. I could always change my number, or not respond to the texts.

It's still hard. That's what I hear from one young Afghan evacuee who helped me with translation. He's a former NGO human rights worker now in Bowling Green, Kentucky, a one-hour drive from my hometown, Nashville, where he spent Thanksgiving with my family. He's there with around 200 other Afghan evacuees. He just received his Social Security card, and he's thinking of applying to Western Kentucky University. He translates for other Afghans and helps them navigate a system that he's also learning to navigate.

MARJON KAMRANI

Representatives from State, the U.S. Army and the United Nations' International Organization for Migration huddle together to discuss the next day's evacuation efforts at HKIA, August 2021.

The children in Bowling Green just enrolled in school, but there is little by way of an immigrant community to support the new arrivals. I hear one family has already experienced a nearly fatal gas leak in their run-down apartment. Their hard part isn't over. Their happy ending is hopefully unfolding. It's complicated, tragic,

MARJON KAMRANI

An Afghan evacuee (far left) and the author (to his immediate left) celebrate Thanksgiving with her family in Nashville, Tennessee.

inspiring all at once. I'm forever part of it. I'm proud of that. I'm not erasing those phone numbers.

Marjon Kamrani is a U.S. Foreign Service political officer serving in Qatar. She has served in Ho Chi Minh City, Dubai and The Hague. Her family evacuated from Iran during the Iranian Revolution.

The Sheer Humanity of It All

AL UDEID AIR BASE, QATAR

David Lawler

When I first stepped into the WRM, the reality of what we were trying to accomplish hit me hard. This is what evacuating tens of thousands of people from Afghanistan feels like, and it's oppressive.

The WRM, or War Ready Materials, is a warehouse on the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar where evacuees were held pending an onward flight. The key term is "warehouse." The WRM was never designed to hold people; it was designed to shield military equipment from the punishing Qatari sun. That means it's just a hollow shell of a building with no overhead fans, no running water and, most importantly for Qatar in August, no air conditioning.

I wasn't there from the beginning, though, when extreme conditions in the warehouse were making headlines around the world. By the time I arrived, the military had already begun cutting holes in the walls to connect industrial-sized A/C units. But still, the building is so massive that if you stood 30 feet away from one of the new vents, you felt no cooling breeze. You only felt the hot, stagnant air and ubiquitous dust.

Now take those life-sapping conditions and add a few thousand people. It was physically uncomfortable. It was mentally exhausting. It was overwhelming in so many ways.

But on the other side of that discomfort was the pure humanity of it all. Hundreds of U.S. military personnel were volunteering on their days off to work in the WRM handing out food, water and clothing to the evacuees, or just kicking a ball around with a group of kids.

Colleagues from State and USAID worked to solve problems where we could, whether it was the old man who simply wanted a clean shirt, or the worried husband wanting to know if his wife had given birth yet and if the baby was healthy. There weren't many other ways we could help, but we tried.

Then there were the evacuees themselves. They had risked their lives to flee Afghanistan and were facing an uncertain future. They had just lost everything, literally everything. And yet a short man in his mid-30s approached me one day to ask if I needed help. Me?! I was the one who got to slink back to a five-star hotel in Doha every night and stand under the shower for 20 minutes. How could he possibly be so selfless? But that's who they were. The equanimity they showed in the face of such a hopeless situation was humbling.

There was the bodybuilder who was an absolute beast of a man. He made jewelry back home and cried when he told me about his children. There was the young woman whose family lives in Woodbridge, Virginia, so close to me. I still regret not giving her my number so she could let me know they made it home.

And then there was the famous Afghan singer who was now an evacuee like everyone else. One evening he co-opted our ad hoc PA system to sing songs and raise spirits, and in a small piece of magic, there was dancing.

I could not begin to understand what had just happened to all these people. But the patience and grace shown by the Afghans who made it through the WRM will forever make them, at least in my mind, the best ambassadors of the Afghan people.

David Lawler is a Foreign Service officer currently serving as a watch officer in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. His prior postings were to Ciudad Juarez, Hong Kong and FSI, where he taught consular policy. In August 2021, he went to Qatar on temporary duty as a consular officer to help identify U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents and U.S. visa holders for priority evacuation to the United States.

Inside the Holding Facility

ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Ravi Kaneriya

"Yet love can move people to act in unexpected ways and move them to overcome the most daunting obstacles with startling heroism," wrote the Afghan author Khaled Hosseini in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

I couldn't help but reflect on this quote when I thought about my early experiences at Abu Dhabi International Airport, working on the front lines, processing the very first flight of Afghan evacuees who arrived in the United Arab Emirates after fleeing Afghanistan. I was struck by the spirit of the Afghans I met, who, facing harrowing experiences and overwhelming obstacles, managed to arrive in the UAE, exhausted and anxious about the future, and yet composed and polite despite everything they had been through.

I saw children, some crying, but also some smiling and curious as I met them—reminding me of the innocence of children, unaware of the dangers they had fled or the uncertain future before them. And I was also struck by the love, commitment, courage and sheer determination of parents, who had overcome impossible odds to bring their entire family, sometimes up to a dozen children, through the collapse of a country and in search of a better life.

Later, working with our control room, I received the information of thousands of Afghan evacuees at a UAE holding facility, awaiting a coveted flight to the U.S. As I read their submissions one by one, I came to learn so much about the stories of individual people—the Afghan comedian and talk show host, senior Afghan military leaders, human rights activists, civil servants, teachers, athletes, entrepreneurs and people of every background, socioeconomic class and life experience.

I couldn't help but feel that inside that UAE holding facility, there were so many talented, driven and decent people who wanted to be part of American society and had so much to offer. It's true that not everyone in that camp followed the normal procedures for immigrating to the U.S., but the circumstances of their departures from Afghanistan were hardly normal.

As Khaled Hosseini wrote in his other book *The Kite Runner*: "It may be unfair, but what happens in a few days, sometimes even in a single day, can change the course of a whole lifetime." There are future American scientists, businesspeople, lawmakers, artists and even diplomats inside that holding facility in the UAE right now, if only we are ready to act with compassion, flexibility and pragmatism to embrace the huddled masses there, yearning to breathe free.

Ravi Kaneriya is a public diplomacy officer, serving his first tour as a vice consul in Abu Dhabi, where he focuses on Iranian immigrant visas and supports the Afghanistan Task Force.

Vetting Evacuees and Addressing Burnout

AL UDEID AIR BASE, QATAR

Paul S. Dever

Early in the "Kabul Situation," I volunteered to go to the Afghan capital to assist in the embassy shutdown and evacuation. I had served before at the embassy (2006-2007, and again 2014-2016) and was familiar with the mission and staff. For operational reasons, however, I was detoured to Doha, to assist in evacuee processing. I arrived there on Sept. 24 and began work the same day.

Initially, I was assigned to the Al Udeid Air Base hangars where evacuees were being processed, where I liaised with agents from the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Patrol, the Transportation Security Administration and the FBI to ensure citizenship verification, and proper vetting and classifications for the manifests.

I joined the throngs of people, seeking out American citizens to ensure that they were processed expeditiously and to explain how delays could occur if they stayed with their "blended" families. I left the choice entirely up to them; after all, family is family. I ensured that the Afghan evacuees were properly informed and could make their best decisions. Identifying at-risk persons, due to single parentage or disabilities, I facilitated their integration and feeding to ensure their stays were as comfortable as possible.

I soon transferred to the management team in the personnel center provided to State by DoD at the airport. I took on more responsibility, continuing the interagency collaboration in seeking data points for the four-times-daily "lily pad" reports required by the White House and others. Identifying a need to have "eyes on" non-base personnel at all times, I liaised with the flight teams to ensure an orderly procession of passengers headed onward to Europe or the U.S.

The display of compassion and safety were recognized and appreciated by both passengers and team members. I also worked with the IT team at Embassy Doha to provide greater infrastructure and equipment to ameliorate data collection and transfer.

Recognizing that burnout could become a problem, I volunteered to provide relief trips to other staff to ensure they got proper midshift rest and sustenance. Whether by transporting people to food and food to people, or ensuring people rotated through the air-conditioned office with refreshments, I ensured a lifeline that managed to keep teams fed, rested and ready to work.

Paul Dever is the senior general services officer in Riyadh. Since joining the Foreign Service in 2002, he has served in Manila, Kabul, Baghdad, Bogotá, Suva and Pretoria. His public service began in 1987 as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mauritania.

BORDER/TRANSIT COUNTRIES

Little Afghan Refugee

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

Azam Abidov

A little Afghan refugee
Sleeps
in the very crowded plane

She knows nothing about
where they are heading
It does not matter:
Her mother is with her.

She is not afraid anymore
of the AKs or war
That made her heart hard
Very hard.

Still there is a tiny place in it
For love and light.

The little Afghan angel
Sleeps in the very crowded
Military plane.

The only thing she sees
in her dream is—
Air.

Azam Abidov is an information assistant at U.S. Embassy Tashkent. The first Uzbek participant of the Iowa International Writing Program, he is the author of more than 10 poetry and translation books.

UKTIRBEK TADJIMOV

Sandra Jacobs (center) with members of U.S. Embassy Tashkent's "Team Termez" at the airport in Termez, Uzbekistan.

A Last Heroic Act by Afghan Pilots

TERMEZ, UZBEKISTAN

Sandra Jacobs

In the chaos of Aug. 15, approximately 500 U.S.-trained Afghan pilots and other personnel fled over the northern border into Termez, Uzbekistan, aboard 46 Afghan military airplanes and helicopters. For the Afghans, this was one last act in service of their partnership with the United States: They left their families behind to prevent the aircraft from falling into Taliban hands.

Their arrival kicked off an intensive, monthlong diplomatic process that led to securing non-refoulement commitments from the Government of Uzbekistan, ensuring safe lodging in a temporary residential camp, making contact with the pilots and other personnel, collecting biometric data for the entire group and, ultimately, manifesting and checking in our Afghan allies on three charter airplanes out of Uzbekistan.

As a part of the embassy's interagency team led by Political-Economic Chief Matt Habinowski, I joined my U.S. diplomatic and military colleagues in Termez for an intense final push to relocate these vulnerable allies to a safe location. From the check-in at the camp to a final wave as they boarded the charter Uzbekistan Airways flight to the United Arab Emirates, our Afghan allies demonstrated courage, dedication and commitment to service.

One pilot had a bullet lodged in his back. Another suffered a back injury when he was forced to eject from his A-29 Super Tucano. Among this crowd of Afghan men, our embassy team took special care of one former Afghan military officer who had escaped with his wife and three small children. Their presence was a heart-

SANDRA JACOBS

Afghan pilots await departure from residential camp in Termez, Uzbekistan, August 2021.

wrenching reminder to the other men of the families they were forced to leave behind as they followed orders to evacuate the aircraft out of Afghanistan on Aug. 15. Our embassy team worried that the family's presence might tempt others to give up on relocation and return to Afghanistan, but in the end every man boarded the plane—retaining hopes of eventually being reunited with family and building a better life in the United States.

This autumn's events join a few extraordinary moments in my Foreign Service career, when I was truly overwhelmed by the commitment to service demonstrated by my colleagues. All of us from Embassy Tashkent's "Team Termez" felt a powerful connection to similar efforts happening in other countries bordering Afghanistan, at "lily pads" in Northeast Asia and Europe, and at Afghan reception centers in Dulles and beyond.

MATT HABINOWSKI

"Team Termez" checks in Afghan Air Force for relocation flight out of Uzbekistan.

Coming together to execute such a complicated, politically sensitive operation demonstrated the creativity and determination of those in service to the U.S. government. For all of us, it was a huge relief to learn the group had finally landed in the United States. We remain hopeful their families will find a way to join them in the very near future.

Sandra Jacobs is the deputy political-economic chief at U.S. Embassy Tashkent. She has previously served in Mumbai, Dushanbe, Tallinn and Washington, D.C.

Saving Afghan Pilots' Families

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

Alexis Sullivan

It was the most momentous call of my career. Who else could we get out? I knew there was a safe way to get people to Kabul airport, but could they get there in time?

So while our primary responsibility in Tashkent remained responding to Americans and other priority groups transiting Uzbekistan, as acting deputy chief of mission I asked our country team who else on our collective radar remained in Kabul for whom we should make a referral in the U.S. national interest.

After a drop by and a few failed calls because I forgot the right way to dial the Defense Switch Network, the right people put me in touch with the right person at the right time. Turns out, there were brave Afghan airmen and women along with their families who had stayed behind in Kabul so other members of the unit could save the lethal equipment—and the well-trained operators—from falling into the hands of the Taliban or even worse.

But when I had picked up the phone, I had no sense of what was at stake. There were just two packets of details and faces of an airman's family members, sent out-of-protocol amid a sea of increasingly desperate and out-of-protocol emails that would only increase as the days went on.

My question to start was: "Are there more such families in Kabul?"

"Yes."

"Wait, there's still high-ranking airmen left in Kabul?"

"Absolutely."

They were heroes who stayed behind on the tarmac in Kabul with the hopes of rescues for the rest of the unit and all the families, but also to lead the group to safety in the middle of the night and provide instructions. The families knew their loved ones were doing one last mission for their country and their people. On that call, our small team realized we could give them a fighting chance in Kabul.

UKTIRBEK TAD JIMOV

Afghan Air Force evacuees wave farewell to Embassy Tashkent staff at Termez Airport, Uzbekistan, in August 2021.

But there was a problem. We couldn't just send a group of document packets by email down to Kabul and say, "Here's a bunch of folks to rescue; good luck with that." So I said to the colonel, my rank equivalent in the DoD: "We're going to have to rank order them."

Silence.

Me again, informed by my two tours in State Ops and countless hours working task forces: "Kabul needs to be spoon-fed; we have to rank order these packets so they know who to go for first."

"Yes, OK."

Temperature check to my team, who had stayed in the room with me without asking, only because they knew they should. We all agreed.

"OK," I said to the team. "Who's out first?"

With clear eyes and a full heart knowing the importance of getting this right for the U.S. government and the lives of this particularly in-danger group, I am proud that our efforts saved Afghan heroes who have been mentors and role models to hundreds of Afghan and U.S. airmen in the last 20 years. I hope to be able to shake their hands one day and see how all the babies in photos from the email packets continue smiling as they grow up in peace.

Alexis Sullivan, the counselor for public affairs at U.S. Embassy Tashkent, was acting deputy chief of mission there during the Afghanistan evacuation. She has served in Sri Lanka, Russia, Pakistan and Costa Rica, and had several tours in Washington, D.C., including as watch officer and senior watch officer in the State Department Operations Center. The views expressed are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State.

U.S. LANDING POINTS/ PHILADELPHIA & DULLES

Bravery in the Face of Tragedy

DULLES EXPO CENTER, VIRGINIA

Mike Junge

In one capacity or another as a contracting officer, I was with the USAID/Afghanistan mission for 4 1/2 years (2006-2010). When the call came for volunteers, which just so happened to coincide with my leave in the United States, there was no question that I would step up.

I take away many impressions, but first and foremost is the resilience of the Afghan people. Bone-weary and facing an unknown future, and with great stress written on their faces, they were also quick to smile and give a heartfelt thank you for even the smallest of gestures (e.g., a candy or toy for their children, an offer to carry their bags, assistance in directing them to the correct location).

My other impression is just the massive scale of the operation at the Dulles International Airport location. Every time I arrived at the "Dulles Center" (the special section at Dulles airport), it was impressive to see the complicated logistical aspects of the operation. As an outsider looking in, you would never know of the logistics in moving so many people, particularly during a pandemic. But it was highly complex, because essentially overnight, the U.S. government set up brand-new airlines with all the complications of passport control, COVID-19 testing, ticketing

and baggage handling. For most of us, it was a career in which we had no prior experience.

During my time volunteering at the center, there were stories of great tragedy and lives uprooted, but equally there was example after example of resilience and a determination to put forward a brave face—which I can only imagine took incredible resolve. I am honored to have been able to volunteer. To the Afghans we were able to resettle, I wish you great success in your new country. Yet, we also need to remember that our job is not done; hundreds more in Afghanistan still need our assistance.

Mike Junge is a supervisory contracting officer for USAID/Peru.

A Dulles Landing and a New Wristband

DULLES EXPO CENTER, VIRGINIA

Danielle Spinard

I volunteered at the Dulles Expo Center as part of an amazing team helping to "intake" hundreds of Afghan refugees. Of the many, many Afghans we processed, one stands out for me.

I remember clearly the exhausted face of a mother traveling alone with her two children. On their arms were stacked different colored wristbands. They held out their arms while we cut the old ones off and then added a new one. The wristbands were a sign of each transition and "check-in" this family had made on their way out of Afghanistan.

I tried to make this wristband different, so I scribbled a happy face on the kids' bracelets. In my feeble attempt to humanize this process, I looked up at the mother again, and through the cover of face masks, we smiled at each other. I saw tears. As a mother of two young children, I can attest to the challenge of traveling with small human beings—the constant demand for attention, snacks, the bathroom.

But I have never had to flee a country with just the clothes on my back and with children in tow. I have been tired but not so exhausted that the mere act of holding up an arm for another identity tag would set off tears. I wanted to tell her: "It's all right now. You're safe. Everything will be OK." But, of course, I couldn't. I couldn't even tell her where they were going next. I didn't know.

I wanted to ask her about how she came to sit before me, what her background was, her story. Getting to know the people we work with is a vital part of our jobs as USAID officers. It sensitizes us to their struggles, helps us shape programs to meet their needs, and places a human face amid budgets and bureaucracy. It wasn't the time or place to ask such questions. The line was long behind her, and she was eager to move on.

We finished the intake process, and the mother and her children moved on to the next step in their journey. I hope this phase of their transition is going well, and they are settling into their new home, here in our country.

Danielle Spinard is a Foreign Service officer with USAID who served as a volunteer at the intake center in Dulles, Virginia, during August 2021. During her career, she has served in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Colombia and Washington, D.C. She is currently posted in Lima as the regional migration and health office director.

U.S. SAFE HAVENS

Calling All Americans: Welcome the New Arrivals

VARIOUS U.S. BASES

Kathleen M. Corey

Afghan women with veiled faces trying to keep sand from their eyes during a windstorm at Fort Bliss. Laughing children playing a game of pick-up soccer with Marines at Quantico. Afghan men at Fort Pickett asking if their wives will have to work to make ends meet and, if so, who will take care of the children. Young women at Camp Atterbury worried about how they will support themselves in the United States.

These are images I will carry with me for a long time. After eight weeks at these bases implementing a cultural orientation program designed by the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration–funded Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange, I have many lasting memories of my time at the "safe havens" around the United States.

Some of my most difficult moments came when Afghans approached me after cultural orientation classes. A veiled woman with tear-filled eyes showed me pictures of her badly beaten father, mother and brother in their coffins, killed by the Taliban. A man showed me a photo of a beautiful little girl, his niece, killed in the airport bombing. Grown men wept as they told of family members still in Afghanistan, fearful of Taliban reprisals.

As a retired Foreign Service officer, I know that interagency

cooperation can fall victim to competing priorities. Not so at the safe havens. All of us, from numerous federal agencies, huddled together, often in a big tent, worked long hours, sometimes seven days a week, to provide the guests with adequate and culturally appropriate care. Sleeping quarters—huge tents and barracks—were kept cool and then, as the months went by, warm.

Halal food was prepared, and makeshift mosques were created. Resettlement information, legal advice, and English and cultural orientation classes were offered. There were recreational activities: movies for children; yoga classes for women; chess, volleyball and cricket for men. At Afghan music events, separate groups of men and women danced their hearts out.

More than 40 percent of arriving Afghans are children, and it was always a joy to see their happy, playful faces. Their drawings of the U.S. flag surrounded by hearts were on display in classrooms, and wherever we went, we were greeted by their bright smiles, fist bumps and "Hello! What you name?" A new generation of Americans, full of hope for the future.

In the 1980s, I worked for nine years in Southeast Asian refugee camps in another PRM-funded program. The contrast between then and now is striking. Then, well-staffed resettlement agencies had time to prepare for the newcomers. Today, after years of sharp reductions in refugee admissions and at a time of shortages in affordable housing, severely understaffed resettlement agencies have very little time to prepare for the sudden arrival of tens of thousands of Afghans.

And just when resettlement agencies were beginning to rebuild under a revitalized global U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, they face the daunting task of resettling thousands of additional Afghans, anxious to find work so they can send money back to relatives who remain behind in a country on the brink of economic collapse.

There remains much to be done to help these future Americans successfully adjust to their new lives. As three resettlement agency CEOs put it in a *Washington Post* op-ed, "This is an all-hands-on-deck moment for refugee resettlement in this country."

When refugees fled Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, our government and the American people did the right thing, warmly welcoming them into homes and communities across the country. It is my fervent hope that we will continue working with the same generosity and sense of responsibility in support of our Afghan allies.

Kathleen M. Corey, a reemployed annuitant on loan to the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration from the Foreign Service Institute's Leadership and Management School, worked at "safe haven" bases during Operation Allies Welcome. In the 1980s, she worked in Southeast Asian refugee camps with a PRM-funded English-as-a-second-language / cultural orientation program for U.S.-bound refugees. The views expressed are the author's and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.

Building Safe Havens for Allies

DULLES, FORT DIX, FORT PICKETT

John Wecker

I watched the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban in August with a broken heart. It unfolded as I was taking the Foreign Service Institute's two-month job search program, preparing to retire following a 30-year career as a Foreign Service officer and three tours in Afghanistan. When I saw the department's call for volunteers to respond to the crisis, I, along with 25 colleagues in the retirement course, immediately signed up, choosing to spend the last five weeks of our course time helping our Afghan friends wherever and however we could.

My first volunteer assignment was to Dulles International Airport, helping to set up a facility for relocated Afghans entering the country. We were in a rush to secure everything from space to food, to information, so we could be prepared to welcome Afghan families to our country. Large groups of new arrivals poured off the buses from the airport into our makeshift facilities, all after fleeing for their lives from the chaos and danger in their home country.

JOHN WECKER

A women's cricket match at Fort Pickett in Virginia.

After five days at Dulles, I was asked if I could go to Fort Dix in New Jersey, to help establish that safe haven facility. I drove up the next day, hoping my travel authorization and laptop would somehow catch up to me (they did).

The next weeks were a blur of 14- to 18-hour days as the military scrambled to turn barracks and empty fields into housing for up to 12,000 Afghans, with all the life support services that entailed, and we on the civilian side scrambled to bring all the necessary arms of the interagency and NGO communities together to welcome, process and eventually move the Afghans from the safe havens on to their new lives in America. "Building the plane while flying" became our catch phrase.

After a month at Fort Dix, and approaching my official retirement date, PRM asked if I would be interested in continuing this work as a reemployed annuitant. Of course I said yes, and after a few weeks of HR processing, I moved down to Fort Pickett to lead the State Department effort there. By this point, the "landing pads" had evolved from panic-tinged startups to functioning machines; the plane was built, although it still required constant improvements, and we had moved on to a new phase—caring for the thousands of Afghans on U.S. military bases and moving them along to their new homes and lives in America.

At both Fort Dix and Fort Pickett, I've found just walking around the villages on base talking to people, getting stomped at chess, sharing a cup of tea or horsing around with the many children has been a blast. We've had free rein to come up with morale, welfare and recreation (MRW) activities, alongside our NGO partners. At Pickett the State/USAID/Peace Corps/AmeriCorps team has conducted cricket, soccer and volleyball tournaments (men's and women's); computer and ESL classes; basketball camp; Bollywood movie nights; a very popular women's center with everything from teas, sewing, computer and cultural orientation classes; and even a skateboard camp with the help of a talented young woman skateboarder from Kabul.

This work has been tremendously challenging, both emotionally and physically, but also the most fun I have ever had as a diplomat. I look forward to helping this most deserving community of friends as I move into (actual) retirement.

John Wecker is a retired Foreign Service officer with more than 30 years of service. His career included postings in Jamaica, Malaysia, Japan (two tours), Lebanon and Afghanistan (three tours), with domestic postings in the bureaus of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Economic and Business Affairs, and Energy Resources, and as special assistant to the under secretary for global affairs. He is currently working with the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration as a reemployed annuitant at Fort Pickett in Virginia. The views expressed are the author's and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.

JOHN WECKER

Afghan evacuees stroll at Fort Dix in New Jersey.

Domestic Diplomacy for Resettlement Efforts in Virginia

FORT PICKETT, VIRGINIA

Baxter Hunt

I was part of a group of 19 State Department and USAID staff working at Fort Pickett, an Army National Guard training facility in southern Virginia that was one of eight military bases around the country housing Afghan evacuees. The first group of Afghans was bused from the Dulles Expo Center to Fort Pickett on Aug. 28, and by the end of September we were hosting 6,000 evacuees.

Several of us on the State/USAID team had served in Afghanistan, and all of us were gratified to be able to assist locally employed staff colleagues—100 of whom wound up at Fort Pickett—and other Afghan partners in their time of need. We worked with our colleagues from the Department of Defense and other agencies to set up, in a matter of days, housing, medical care, life support and resettlement processing for our Afghan guests.

In addition to our support to the evac-

JOHN WECKER

Evacuees arrive at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey.

uees, we devoted significant time to building goodwill with the local community in and around Blackstone, Virginia. Two days after the first Afghan guests arrived at Fort Pickett, the mayor of Blackstone, also the owner of the local newspaper, paid an unofficial visit to the base and published a series of photos and a story raising concerns about how the influx of Afghans would affect his town of 3,300 people.

We quickly arranged the first of a series of meetings with the mayor and assured him that the Afghans did not pose a threat to the town's safety, health or public resources. Ultimately, the mayor proved to be an ally, pushing back on wild rumors and helping us reassure congressional delegation (CODEL) visitors.

While basic medical care at Fort Pickett was provided through a contract with SOS International, Afghan evacuees with emergency needs had to go to small local hospitals that were already over-run with COVID patients. Twelve babies were born to our evacuees during that first month, and local hospitals raised the alarm over capacity issues with Virginia's Department of Health.

We were able to provide daily statistical updates to show that the volume of Afghan patients was not out of control. We also brokered an agreement between SOS International and a local Walmart pharmacy that allowed Walmart to fill essential medical prescriptions for our Afghan guests, which avoided adding to the number of hospital visits.

Local residents were deeply divided in their attitudes about the Afghans. Some saw them as a threat, and when they encountered an Afghan off the base—and many Afghan Americans, interpreters and others showed up in Blackstone—they often went on social media to report an "escapee." But many local residents opened their hearts and wallets in support of the evacuees. In addition to generous individual donations, a local church allowed members of Team Rubicon, a military veterans nongovernmental organization that was a vital conduit for receiving and distributing donations, to sleep at the church for weeks on end.

I am hugely proud of our team's support to our Afghan partners, and it was good to see how well our diplomatic skills transferred to working with a domestic audience in southern Virginia.

Baxter Hunt, who served as State Department lead at Fort Pickett in Virginia, is associate dean of the School of Professional and Area Studies at the Foreign Service Institute. He is a member of the Senior Foreign Service and served two tours at U.S. Embassy Kabul.

A POLAD's Perspective

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, NEW JERSEY

Holly Peirce

I found myself as the sole State Department foreign policy adviser (POLAD) at the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command in mid-July when the crisis planning began for Operation Allies Refuge. The senior Department of Homeland Security representative and I explained the intricacies of visas/parole and DHS/DoS authorities to USNORTHCOM planners. As I kept the State POLAD network and Bureau of Political and Military Affairs informed, I shared and "interpreted" State reporting, which was fed into the overall planning process. It felt like a State Department integrated country strategy on steroids, with dozens of complex multiagency taskers.

As the evacuation operation progressed, the decrease in classification level from SECRET to For Official Use Only / Sensitive But Unclassified greatly facilitated virtual, interagency communication and after-hours coverage. Given the uniqueness of the mission, the USNORTHCOM liaison officers at the Afghanistan Coordination Task Force, the Unified Coordination Group and I answered what seemed like never-ending requests for information from planners.

What started as highly complex planning under State Department direction for a limited number of Special Immigrant Visa applicants at Fort Lee, quickly morphed into a historic evacuation as the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan, and DHS became the lead federal agency.

So-called lily pads were established overseas to temporarily house evacuated Afghans. Meanwhile, State and Defense worked to overcome early systems integration challenges to track arriving passengers. USNORTHCOM, originally tasked to house 20,000 Afghan evacuees, was quickly responsible for 50,000. Housing turned into wraparound services for our guests, and capacity grew closer to 65,000 across eight DoD task forces, known as safe havens. Impressively, planning for resettlement of evacuees started before operations had even stabilized, as DoD supported DHS' overall effort. And, of course, there is a DoD plan for everything—including a nascent USNORTHCOM plan for gender advisory support to the lead federal agency in such missions.

Given the accelerated pace of evacuation, USNORTHCOM's Women, Peace and Security team did not initially have biodata to review sex and gender disaggregated data. But that did not stop us from drafting an initial concept of operations to protect vulnerable populations. Across the DoD there is an emerging cadre of Joint Staff–trained professionals working on gender issues (including this deputy POLAD). For the first time, USNORTHCOM piloted voluntary gender advisory support by DoD personnel to all eight Operation Allies Welcome task forces (along with interpretation support).

The USNORTHCOM lead team provided onsite expertise on integrating gender-based considerations into DoD support to the welcome effort. Some safe havens, such as Task Force Liberty at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, where I had the honor of serving, formed interagency female engagement and community outreach teams (FETs) to ensure equal access to information and services and protection of vulnerable populations—be it ensuring equal access to winter clothes, appropriate maternity care and nutrition, or English classes and education on U.S. cultural norms and expectations.

I feel privileged to have participated in this onsite implementation firsthand after working on Operation Allies Welcome at the headquarters level for months. Both DHS and the interagency now recognize the value of gender advisory support and have requested its continuation for current operations. DHS also included a gender advisory role in the Gender and Vulnerable Population Protection Standard Operating Procedures. On Dec. 29, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the appointment of two senior officials at the State Department focused on supporting the civil and human rights of Afghan women and girls—both those remaining in Afghanistan and resettling in the United States.

With these initiatives, we now have the opportunity to translate informal feedback from those on the ground into formal and more permanent lessons learned across the interagency. This will help us to operationalize interagency gender support for future domestic and overseas humanitarian assistance responses, so that it is routinely incorporated into guidance for defense planning and deployments.

Holly Peirce, a State Department management officer, is currently the J5 (Policy, Plans and Strategy) deputy foreign policy adviser (POLAD) at NORAD and USNORTHCOM. In addition to defense of the homelands and theater security cooperation with Canada, Mexico and the Bahamas, USNORTHCOM provides defense support of civil authorities via the lead federal agency in most disasters—such as hurricanes, fires, COVID-19 vaccination, COVID-19 medical and Southwest border operations. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect official policy or position of the Department of Defense, Department of State, or the U.S. government.

"Beautifully Human" Work

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, NEW JERSEY

Rick Matton

Beautifully human are the two words that come to mind when thinking about how to describe the resettlement efforts that were ongoing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL) when I arrived in November 2021. At the time, there were more than 12,000 Afghan guests temporarily residing on this large military base. To support them, an interagency task force comprising more than 25 federal agencies and NGOs had been established in August to perform a mission that was unprecedented in our nation's history.

I joined the task force as part of a small State Department team sent to assist with the resettlement of these guests. On arriving, I was placed on a smaller team whose stated mission was to assist the hundreds of locally engaged (LE) staff, who had previously worked at U.S. Embassy Kabul, get in-processed to the base and then resettled into communities across the United States as quickly as possible.

Our smaller team's actual mission, however, turned out to be far larger in scope. While we certainly kept the LE staff as our number-one priority, our small team's office also became a respite for many other Afghan guests to come in and just be able to speak to someone about their specific case. Yes, there were frequent town hall meetings in which information was given out about the resettlement process, but often our guests craved one-on-one attention from someone who cared about their situation and would provide some comfort simply by listening to their concerns.

One instance of such comfort and care was truly "beautifully human." At the end of a busy day spent largely providing case updates to our LE staff colleagues, a young woman walked into our office looking distraught. She sat down at our desk, and the first thing she said was: "I want to go back to Afghanistan." She then immediately broke down in tears. As she began to tell her story, it became evident that her husband was emotionally abusing her.

I watched as my two female colleagues assured her that we would take care of her by moving her to a different village on the base, away from her abusive husband. At the same time, this young woman was very concerned about keeping the matter discreet on the base. My colleagues provided her assurance that her privacy would be respected.

After a very emotional hour, the young woman wanted to remain in our office to allow the redness and tears in her eyes to subside before going to her new housing assignment. Finally, she was ready to face the world again; my colleagues had done such an amazing job comforting her that the young woman no longer wanted to return to Afghanistan. Instead, she decided the best thing for her to do would be to contact a close friend in New York City and start her new life there.

The empathy and genuine compassion my colleagues showed this young Afghan woman was just one example of the work going on here at JBMDL. I am proud to be part of the interagency team undertaking such an enormous effort to bring peace and comfort to the lives of more than 120,000 Afghans who are resettling in the United States.

Rick Matton is a Foreign Service officer with the State Department and retired Air Force officer, who currently serves as the general services officer at U.S. Consulate General Guayaquil. In November, he deployed in support of Operation Allies Welcome to Fort Dix, New Jersey, where he integrated with the Joint Task Force to assist in expediting the safe departure and resettlement of the 12,000 Afghan new arrivals there.

MINAL AMIN

Afghan women learn about American currency during a financial literacy lesson taught by USAID FSO Minal Amin.

The Desire to Help Was Contagious

FORT BLISS, NEW MEXICO

Minal Amin

I watched as events unfolded on Aug. 15, 2021, stunned and in a state of disbelief by what was transpiring in Afghanistan. The United States was less than a month away from the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, and the Taliban was again taking control of a nation that the U.S. government had actively supported throughout two decades.

When USAID presented the Afghanistan-related detail opportunity, I immediately knew this was a unique moment that I couldn't pass up. I knew very little about the assignment, but that didn't matter. I knew nothing about the location to which I would eventually be assigned; that, too, didn't matter. Paramount was the opportunity to help those who had lost everything and support them in rebuilding their lives in a new country—a country I call home.

MINAL AMIN

A session on résumé writing and employment opportunities is conducted in the Women's Tent at Fort Bliss.

I was assigned to the Department of State team at Doña Ana village at Fort Bliss in New Mexico. This location is described as the most austere of the eight military installations where Afghan guests reside. By many accounts, it is indeed quite austere.

My first week there revealed, however, just how impressive the operation is. The U.S. Army stood up the "village" in a matter of three or four days. A range of essential services are provided to our Afghan guests including nutritious and plentiful meals throughout the day; good quality medical care, including mental health services; educational opportunities for both children and adults (of the eight bases, Doña Ana has the only established informal school); a play area for kids; a dedicated Women's Tent; sporting events; and more.

During my one-month stint with Team Fort Bliss, I was fortunate to work on a diverse range of priorities, well beyond my role as a medical and community health liaison. I collaborated with interagency colleagues and partner organizations to address the more immediate needs and concerns of our guests, actively advocated for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services, produced informational materials, helped empower Afghan women and girls, taught financial literary classes, organized conversational English classes for adult learners and supported ongoing case management.

On one occasion, I met a guest whose spouse was struggling with multiple health conditions, including hearing loss. Her hearing aid had been lost in the chaos of the airlift from Kabul. They had been referred to the local hospital in El Paso, Texas, and had seen an audiologist. Since insurance didn't cover the cost of a hearing device, however, nothing could be done to help her.

I decided to source a hearing amplifier from a local retailer, hoping it could help in some way. Within minutes of putting on the device, the woman began shedding tears of joy. This was the first time in months that she could clearly hear her 5-year-old son. I, too, was ecstatic that something seemingly small would be so meaningful to her. In fact, nearly everyone on the State team spent their own money for the benefit of others. The desire to help was contagious.

I was awestruck and humbled by the unwavering resilience of the Afghans with whom I interacted. Their collective optimism was a force multiplier. I witnessed the extraordinary commitment, dedication and passion of my fellow colleagues from across the U.S. government, who worked diligently and tirelessly each day to serve those in need and never lost sight of our primary mission and goals.

Strong teamwork shaped our common vision, and the welfare of our Afghan guests was at the forefront of our daily actions. I am very grateful to USAID, and in particular the USAID/Zambia mission, for affording me this remarkable, unrivaled experience and the opportunity to serve.

Minal Amin is a career USAID Foreign Service health officer currently serving as the HIV and tuberculosis division chief at USAID/Zambia. She has been a USAID FSO for nearly six years and previously served in Nigeria. She served as a medical and community health liaison for Operation Allies Welcome at Fort Bliss in New Mexico.

Temporary Duty in Edinburgh

CAMP ATTERBURY, INDIANA

John Underriner

In August, when the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration asked if I would be willing to travel on a temporary duty assignment (TDY) to Edinburgh and lead a team in support of Operation Allies Refuge (later changed to Operation Allies Welcome), I jumped at the chance. I've served three Foreign Service tours with PRM and have found it to be the most rewarding work in my diplomatic career. So, within a few days I was on a plane bound for Edinburgh … Indiana, home to Camp Atterbury, an Indiana National Guard training post.

As the eighth and final U.S. "safe haven" opened to accept Afghan evacuees, Camp Atterbury began receiving its first arrivals at the end of August, a few days before I arrived. A week later, we had welcomed more than 6,600 Afghan guests—more than doubling the population of our host town. Many of our guests arrived with little more than the clothes on their back (or got separated from their meager possessions en route), and 40 percent were under the age of 15.

Although the Department of Homeland Security had the overall lead for Operation Allies Welcome, our 13-member State/USAID team soon became a center of activity. We were out there interacting daily (and nightly) with the guests; we led on protection issues; we processed independent departures (those who chose to leave before being assigned to a resettlement agency); we chaired strategic communications groups; and we organized social and educational events from movie nights to chai chats. Our workspace became the unofficial meet-up area whenever anyone needed help. And our team excelled in initiative, creativity and determination.

Fortuitously, the team that PRM had cobbled together for Camp Atterbury possessed nearly the exact skill set the situation demanded: My deputy (who took over as team lead after my departure) was a seasoned USAID officer serving as deputy mission director overseas. We had military veterans, logistics and management experts, data analytics gurus, and people with Federal Emergency Management Agency and International Organization for Migration experience, as well as immigration, refugee and humanitarian assistance backgrounds—all of which came in handy as we worked with the Department of Homeland Security, military and medical colleagues, as well as nearly 100 PRM-funded staff from the International Rescue Committee, IOM and Catholic charities.

It was a great, mutually supportive and proactive team that worked long hours, seven days a week and got a lot done to support our Afghan guests and prepare them for resettlement and their new lives in the United States.

We also benefited from excellent DHS and military leadership and coordination at Atterbury. Nobody does logistics like the U.S. military, and they handled the enormous task of preparing for, welcoming, housing and feeding nearly 7,000 newcomers on short notice—with typical efficiency and can-do spirit.

But what will stay with me more than anything from this experience is the remarkable support we received from the local community and, indeed, the entire state of Indiana. "Hoosier Hospitality" is a real thing. From the start, donations of everything, from clothing to baby formula, poured in. After an early visit to Atterbury, Governor Eric Holcomb expressed strong public support for the mission (countering some initial, understandable trepidation in some quarters) and opened up four Indiana National Guard armories to accept donations; they soon filled up. Numerous volunteers from the area helped, from setting up cultural orientation sessions to organizing sports activities, to distributing donations.

A couple of examples typified this phenomenon. One day, a U-Haul truck pulled up to the front gate of Camp Atterbury filled with donated items. As the guard inspected the large quantity of diapers, baby formula, clothes and other items inside, he asked if the impressive load was a combined contribution from a church or local organization. "No," the driver said matter-of-factly. "This is from my family." All for people that woman will never meet and who will never know the generosity of one Indiana family.

Another donation came from the family of Marine Corps Corporal Humberto Sanchez, one of the 13 service members killed in the suicide attack at the Kabul airport during the evacuation. Cpl. Sanchez was from a town a couple of hours away from Camp Atterbury, and his parents said they chose to honor his memory by collecting donations for the Afghans he died trying to help.

A TDY to Edinburgh that took place entirely within the United States ended up being one of the most challenging and rewarding assignments of my Foreign Service career.

John Underriner is a Senior Foreign Service officer currently serving on the State Department Board of Examiners. He previously served three tours (Bangkok, Baghdad and Washington, D.C.) with the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, which organized and led the Operation Allies Refuge/Welcome effort for State. In September and October 2021, he was the initial team lead for the safe haven at Camp Atterbury, an Indiana National Guard facility.

FINAL STOP: U.S. COMMUNITIES

Global Network Helping Locally Employed Staff to Safety

Lana Surface and Michelle Kevern

August 2021. Silence. The WhatsApp group of Americans and former locally employed (LE) staff who had worked in the Kabul public affairs section (PAS) in 2019 and 2020 was rarely quiet. Created during the pandemic, it was meant to provide connection during a year of isolation as officers and family member employees from Kabul, and around the world, found themselves back in Washington, D.C., and when many of our LE colleagues were also arriving in the U.S. on their Special Immigrant Visas. But as we watched the news of Herat and Kandahar falling, our group was silent. We had no words of comfort for our Afghan friends; we had no words of comfort for ourselves.

Once evacuation was announced, the shared silence quickly turned into shared action. While our Afghan LE colleagues in Washington provided updates from contacts in Kabul, American officers and family members mobilized former public affairs staff. Within days, the group grew to 43 U.S. direct-hire members who worked in Kabul between 2017 and 2021. Recognizing that those currently assigned to Kabul had matters on the ground to focus on, our PAS group launched a grassroots effort to track LE staff and their families through the stages of evacuation and begin preparations for their arrival in the U.S., all while submitting hundreds of referrals for grantees, Lincoln Learning Center staff, U.S. government programs alumni, and so on.

Because chaos surrounded Hamid Karzai International Airport, former PAS LE staff suggested the State Department make a video cautioning Afghans not to go to the airport without receiving direct communication for evacuation. Soon, in conjunction with Global Public Affairs, former PAS officers were drafting a script and LE staff were translating. While officers joined task forces and headed to overseas lily pads and domestic bases, the PAS group established an informal network across evacuation points to track PAS LE staff (and four protocol LE staff), pass along messages of encouragement, and provide welfare checks, including getting medical attention for the wife of a colleague giving birth at Ramstein Air Base. The PAS team maximized our good offices to expand the information flow beyond those who served in Kabul, to include A-100 classmates and friends across the department.

With more than 30 PAS Afghan staff and their families evacuating to the United States, tracking our team along their journey and trying to prepare for their arrival was no small feat. In addition to collecting donated items, we recognized the importance of economically empowering our colleagues as they settled in the U.S. One PAS family member turned her garage into a staging area for donations, while others supported our fundraising effort, resulting in more than $22,000 raised to purchase gift cards for each of our LE staff as they exited the transit bases.

Now that our LE colleagues have arrived in the United States, the PAS group has shifted focus to support them in reviewing résumés and cover letters, searching for jobs and housing, finding furniture and winter clothing, and including our Afghan friends in family meals for the holidays.

Those who served in Afghanistan or volunteered to assist with the evacuation efforts will not soon forget how they felt during the evacuation of our Afghan allies. Our feelings are complicated and difficult to express.

For the Kabul PAS officers and family members who came together, however, united by shared sense of duty toward our Afghan staff, the hope and connection we felt as we worked to support our Afghan colleagues will not be forgotten. Many of us never served together, others haven't seen each other in years, but the effects of our shared grassroots effort will be long-lasting.

Lana Surface is a first-tour Foreign Service officer, currently serving at U.S. Embassy Cairo. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she served in public affairs positions in Kabul and Muscat as an eligible family member.

Michelle Kevern joined the Foreign Service in 2010 and is currently serving as spokesperson at U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur. She served as deputy spokesperson in Kabul from 2018 to 2019.

Settling Newly Arrived Families

MARYLAND

Bill Grant

Once a week, I lug overstuffed couches and cabinets that used to grace suburban homes into apartments in Riverdale and Landover, Maryland. My wife and I volunteer with Homes Not Borders, a small nongovernmental organization whose niche is to collect furniture donations and then set up apartments in the Washington, D.C., area for newly arriving Afghans, including Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients.

MARY KNIGHT

The Homes Not Borders team conducts a move for an Afghan family in January 2022.

Besides used furniture, Homes Not Borders provides new beds and bedding, outfits bathrooms and kitchens, and offers final touches such as artwork and toys for kids, so the apartments look like welcoming homes when we are done.

The apartments are in sprawling but pleasant complexes that are home to many refugees, Afghans and others. We don't meet the families whose apartments we set up, but other Afghans already living there sometimes give us when we're done working home-cooked lunches, which we devour.

To donate furniture and purchase items on the Amazon wish list, visit homesnotborders.org/donate-items.

Bill Grant retired from the Foreign Service in 2020. He served as chargé d'affaires in Qatar, deputy chief of mission in Lebanon, Israel and Malta, and head of two U.S. regional offices in Iraq. He lives in Washington, D.C.

DACOR Assists New Arrivals

Paul Denig

In response to the collapse of the Afghan government and the ensuing exodus from Afghanistan, a member of DACOR, an organization of foreign affairs professionals, suggested to me that DACOR as an organization should try to assist the Afghan new arrivals in their resettlement in the United States. Our executive committee approved the idea unanimously. While not excluding the possibility of assistance to other Afghans, the focus of the assistance was to be our Afghan colleagues, the locally employed (LE) staff or Foreign Service Nationals who had worked for the U.S. government.

Subsequent efforts on my part to obtain a list of these Afghan colleagues from the Department of State were not fruitful, likely because of privacy concerns on the part of the department. I got no return calls from an officially recognized resettlement agency in our region, but did manage to reach another: the Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area.

This resulted in an invitation for DACOR members to participate in their "Afghan Allies Job Fair" at the Sterling-Dulles DoubleTree Hotel on Nov. 17. This event brought together Afghan refugees from Maryland and Virginia and employers with concrete job offers. Our dozen DACOR volunteers provided advice on résumés and interviewing, suggestions on organizations to contact for employment, and explanations of regional services such as public transportation.

While for Afghan refugees, in general, housing is the most urgent need, the LE staff and FSNs had already managed to arrange that. We were very impressed with the English language ability of our Afghan colleagues and with their professional focus on getting employment to support themselves and their families. We were very gratified by this opportunity to help them, and we even had fun in our interactions.

In the event's aftermath, we continued to provide advice by email, some of us donated funds to a nonprofit providing halal Thanksgiving dinners to Afghan new arrivals, others helped serve meals hosted by local NGOs, and a few team members even invited families to their homes for a halal meal. We plan to continue looking for opportunities for DACOR to assist our Afghan colleagues as an organization while encouraging our members to engage in individual actions of support. ■

A retired public diplomacy FSO who served in Europe and Africa, Paul Denig currently works as a reemployed annuitant on the Bureau of Administration's declassification effort for historic State Department documents. He completed his term as president of DACOR in May and continues to serve as a DACOR governor.

FOCUS ON AFGHANISTAN EVACUATION

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/MOJO

An Afghan Interpreter's Journey to the U.S.

Look inside the evacuation through the eyes of an Afghan ally who worked for the United States for more than a decade but still hasn't received his Special Immigrant Visa.

BY AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

I'm very pleased and honored to share my story. It's not only a story about me; it's the story of thousands of men and women who worked with the U.S. government in Afghanistan, in many different fields, supporting the mission in Afghanistan.

My full name is Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi, and I started working with the U.S. government in 2003. My first job was as a cashier for the Army Air Force Exchange Service, which was the PX in Bagram. I was very young, just out of high school. It was an opportunity to see what it was like to work with internationals and with the military. That's where I decided, "This is where I would like to work." The same year, I was hired as an interpreter for the U.S. armed forces.

Since I was able to speak Farsi and Pashto, I was sent to Khost province where I worked with interrogation departments. I was also in Bagram [Parwan province], back and forth working with intelligence. Then I worked as an interpreter in Paktika province. It was a very remote place on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and we were patrolling the border. It was not an easy place to work, but we were helping communities with medical campaigns, providing jobs and opportunities to work and keeping people away from joining the insurgency. At a very young age, that gave me a lot of hope that we were on the right path.

We were ambushed, we were attacked, we were doing a lot of overnight missions. It was not easy. It strengthened my resolve to work with my American colleagues to help the Afghan people.

In 2005, I started working with the civil affairs unit in Zabul province. We would go out, help communities with humanitarian assistance, provide them with clean water, support for education, women's empowerment, girls to be allowed to go to school. In 2008, I joined the United Nations where I worked on the political process of elections as a political assistant, helping women's empowerment, community empowerment, strengthening local governance.

At the end of 2008, I became the political assistant for the U.S. provincial reconstruction team in Panjshir province. We had one mission: the people of Afghanistan, and empowering them, making a system for Afghans to be able to independently run their country.

Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi, who worked with the U.S. government in Afghanistan for more than a decade, arrived in Philadelphia with his family on Sept. 5, 2021, as an evacuee. He currently lives in Colorado. He told his story to Editor Shawn Dorman in a lengthy interview on Jan. 10, 2022. Here is an excerpted version of his responses.

At the end of 2009, the U.S. mission in Afghanistan decided that it was time to do the handover. The transition was supposed to happen from U.S. forces to the Afghan government, whether it was security, development or budgeting. They believed there was enough capacity within the Afghan government to run their own government and to be able to prioritize their needs and their people's needs.

Panjshir was the first province to be declared as fully transitioned to the Afghan government. Then I moved to Kabul and joined the U.S. embassy, as an executive office protocol assistant working with the schedules of the ambassador.

COURTESY OF AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi (at left) with Bagram base commander (center) and PRT Director Williams Martin in Panjshir province, 2010.

COURTESY OF AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

General David Petraeus (at left) walking with interpreter Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi and the governor of Panjshir province, 2010.

I started working for the U.S. government in 2003. Working for two years would allow you to get your Special Immigrant Visa [SIV] and move to the United States. I applied for an SIV in 2006. I never got it. I did not know a U.S. general to write a letter on my behalf. All the way to 2013 I tried. I put my life at risk. I put my kids' lives at risk. I was working with the U.S. openly. I was accused of spying for the U.S. government. The visa was delayed and delayed, as I waited for my chance to move to the United States to start my life there.

And then in 2019, with the help of the embassy, my SIV was back on track. Homeland Security approved it, but then it was put on hold for further administrative processing.

It was still refused as of Aug. 15 [2021], when the Afghan government collapsed.

So I started contacting people. I said: "I worked for you guys for more than 10 years. I worked with your intelligence, your embassy, your army. Do you want me to get killed? Just Google my name. Hundreds of photos come up of me with ambassadors,

U.S. ARMY

Captain Scott Henkel (at center) and Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi (at left) talking with a village elder in Mizan District of Zabul province, 2006.

with NATO leaders. You are putting my life at risk. You cannot leave me like this."

My military friends were contacting U.S. Congress people, saying, "You cannot leave that guy behind." It didn't work.

Finally, on Aug. 22, a Special Forces unit that I worked with in 2006 contacted me through WhatsApp, and told their people inside the airport to go get me. They told me to go to a different gate.

There was a huge human sewage canal. They told me, "You have to go through this sewage canal."

It was 9 o'clock in the evening. I gave my phone to an American Marine on the other side of the sewage canal, and I begged him, "Please, take my phone. Talk to this unit. He is your superior."

So after a lot of talking, he took my phone. After 40 minutes, he came back and said, "Where's your family?"

I said, "They are 200 meters away from here. Thousands of people are stuck over there."

He said, "Go get your family."

I have a 9-year-old daughter, an 8-year-old son, a 4-year-old daughter and an 18-month-old daughter. Pushing them through the crowd, my 9-year-old was crying. She said, "Dad, people are pushing and my chest is hurting."

COURTESY OF AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

Crowds of Afghans trying to flee Kabul gathered outside the gates of Hamid Karzai International Airport, August 2021.

I did not want one day to be blamed by my kids, have them say: "Dad, you worked with the U.S. government, and now we're being killed here. We can't go to school here."

I had to wade through that sewage canal—it was two meters high—carrying my kids on my shoulder, handing them one by one to the U.S. Army on the other side, then going back for the next one. I gave my third kid, my fourth kid, then I had to get my wife to jump into that sewage canal, walk through it all the way. The soldier pulled her up, and then I pulled myself out. We went to the line, they searched us, and they let us in.

We stayed at the airport that night. In the morning, we hopped on an Army airplane.

We ended up in Qatar. There, my kids were in a very bad situation. With all the other Afghans, with 10,000 people, the 18-month-old had heatstroke. After four days, a lot of back and forth, they put us on a plane. We didn't know where we were going. During the seven-hour flight, we were squished in. The kids were on my lap, on their mom's legs. We finally made it … to Sicily, Italy.

It was another huge garage. Thousands of people were there, and we were left for days. I was helping people with food distri-

I had contacts in the United States; imagine the situation for people who do not have any contacts.

bution, translating in the clinic. After almost eight days, still my name had not shown up on the list. People who came with no documents, their names came on the list. I asked why, and they told me, "Homeland Security hasn't approved you yet, so you have to wait."

After eight days, I got approved. I made it to the airport in Philadelphia on Sept. 5 with my family.

We came in, we got the two-year stamp for humanitarian parole. We were moved to Fort Dix military base in New Jersey to complete the medical exam; I expected to be there for months. But a veteran in Colorado (who I had worked with in 2006-2007), his family and the community there said: "We won't leave you there."

AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

Son of Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi resting in transit to the U.S., at Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily, on Aug. 28, 2021.

AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

Daughter of Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, Aug. 25, 2021.

Congressman Joe Neguse, Congressman Jason Crow, the family of veteran Captain Scott Henkel, [town councilwoman] Heidi Henkel and the family, they all helped, and they pulled me out of there. They raised funding. They found me a house, and they brought me here to Colorado.

COURTESY OF AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

Siddiqi family at the Hamid Karzai International Airport, August 2021.

Yet if you go online to where you can search for the status of your visa case, my SIV is still refused. Now I'm here with a parole visa that ends in two years.

I left everything in Afghanistan. I only had one backpack when I came here.

On Sept. 15 of this year, they went and blew up my house in Panjshir because I was working with the U.S. government. Imagine if I was there, if I was not able to get out, still waiting for my SIV. What would have happened?

I have so many awards, from the Secretary of State and from many ambassadors. The Meritorious Honor Award. The Extra Mile Award for working extra hours for the 4th of July, for the U.S. presidential visit of Barack Obama to Afghanistan, for visits of senators to Afghanistan. For 20 years, two decades of war, work, dedication, honesty, everything, they deny my SIV. That hurts a lot.

I'm trying to apply for my green card, and my lawyer says I have all the documents, but my SIV case still says refused. I do not know how to get it reviewed and change the status so I can apply for my green card. I need that for work. I'm looking for a job.

Evacuation itself was a nightmare, honestly.

It was a veteran unit that got me out. The captain, his family, they were always in contact with me, asking: "Are you safe?" I was moving from one location to another so as to not be caught. They were in touch with me every day saying: "Hang on, we are working to get you out."

I was very much welcomed in a nice way in Colorado. Captain Henkel and Heidi Henkel, the local city councilwoman, they made it home for us. We lost a lot, but the family and Broomfield community embraced us and took us in like their own. And 60 or 70 people are volunteering to help us any way they can. They're visiting our house. They're bringing their kids and making play dates with my kids. They're helping financially, with housing, household items and many other things.

AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi with three of his children at Fort Dix, New Jersey, Sept. 5, 2021.

I was in such a difficult position, but I had contacts in the United States; imagine the situation for people who do not have any contacts. Imagine people who work as an interpreter in the worst conditions in a war zone. And now they're not able to make it here and are under threat of death every day in Kabul.

People who were involved in diplomatic missions are still stuck in Afghanistan. There is no hope for them. They are just moving from one place to another. And I don't know how long they will be able to skip around like that. If this darkened regime gets recognized, I'm telling you, they will slaughter every one of those who worked for the U.S. government.

As for what the U.S. government can do now, there are a lot of ways. The unit that is working on SIVs, they might need to get practical, find people who understand the Afghan people—a unit from the State Department, the military, Homeland Security and dedicated Afghans who have experience verifying documents.

Bring the heroes, the allies, to the U.S. I want the civil servant readers to realize that there is a lot of pain behind this history that I cannot explain here. By rejecting SIVs, you put a lot of lives in danger. Let's fulfill the commitments to bringing our allies to the U.S., so they will not be victims of their jobs. Most of them were faithfully working side by side with U.S. soldiers, with U.S. government employees, and they deserve to be alive.

That's one responsibility for the U.S., but the other responsibility is helping Afghans *within* the U.S. The resettlement agencies need to employ people who understand the culture of Afghanistan and have an understanding of how the evacuation happened, and should differentiate between illegal immigration and evacuation.

Not everybody who made it here is from the capital, Kabul. There are people from very remote parts of Afghanistan who have never been to the cities. They may ask stupid questions. They may ask questions again and again, and we have to have people in charge who have the capacity to understand that. Many refugees are not feeling welcomed.

Let's work with the resettlement agencies to be more proactive, more responsive, more helpful. We as evacuees left everything behind. There should be a strong program to resettle Afghans, to help them to find places to live, jobs, a new sense of belonging.

This is not a story of just one family. It is the tragedy of all those who left Afghanistan, their homes, their savings, even their families.

Evacuation happened. But what happens after evacuation? ■

AHMAD KHALID SIDDIQI

Siddiqi children head out to play at Fort Dix, New Jersey, Sept. 6, 2021.

FEATURE

Consular Skills Put to Use in Rural America

Working remotely in the United States offers opportunities to help U.S. communities and raise public awareness about diplomacy and the Foreign Service.

BY SARAH WARDWELL

Last summer I lay awake at night with the windows open, my cell phone next to my bed, go-bags packed next to the front door and our car ready with emergency supplies. We came to rural southern Oregon to the town of Ashland, where my husband grew up, while on authorized departure in March 2020 because of COVID-19. I had switched into a remote work agreement after a few months, staying in the idyllic mountains and seemingly safe from the pandemic, and working on communicating about leadership and management for the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

What we weren't safe from in Ashland was natural disasters. At one point we were surrounded by three wildfires, and a fire ripped through our town after jumping across the freeway. My nerves were already a little fried after leaving the Dominican Republic in 72 hours, having friends oversee the packout while sending little text updates or short video chats—just trying to remember what we'd left in each room and hoping not too much would be lost in the packout was really stressful. On top of that, starting a new job virtually and being several months into the pandemic, I felt like we were stuck in fight-or-flight mode.

Thankfully, the fall brought rain and the fire danger seemed to subside. Then one day neighbors plastered our mailboxes with

Sarah Wardwell is a Foreign Service officer currently serving on a remote work assignment with the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of 1CA. She has previously served in Jakarta and Santo Domingo.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The aftermath of the Almeda fire as seen from Coleman Creek, Oregon, in September 2020.

I'm regularly asked to explain what the State Department does and, of course, fielding questions about consular services.

a call for an outdoor, physically distanced community meeting. I attended, notebook in hand. What I heard was a community grappling with how to better communicate during emergencies. I immediately realized that my experience overseas, as a consular officer, working with NGOs and in the Peace Corps could help here.

I'm sharing this story because it exemplifies how Foreign Service consular skills can be useful at home in U.S. communities.

Putting Consular Skills to Work at Home

Fires are going to be a part of life for this mountain community, which is mostly supported by a volunteer fire department and a fire department coming from the main town, more than 20 minutes away up narrow, windy mountain roads. I suggested we set up a system like the citizen liaison volunteer networks that consular sections coordinate overseas. The community was thankful for a suggestion that was low-cost and could be set up easily using my expertise.

We got right to work. During the meeting, I had sent around a sign-up sheet to establish a working group. We began holding biweekly virtual meetings on weekends to discuss how to set up the program. I used the project management tools offered by 1CA, the office where I manage communications for my day job. Community members were so impressed with these tools and being able to directly reap the benefits of their tax dollars.

With the help of a local internet service provider, the Greensprings Internet Co-Op, we began testing out radios as a means to contact each other in the event of an emergency. This community faces unique communication challenges: Some people live completely off-grid with no phones; others have no cell phone reception due to their location. Many are older and simply don't keep their cell phones near them or look for alerts. Radios were a simple solution, as they often are when we're overseas. We found funding from a local community organization to cover the costs of setting up the radio network and to provide radios to interested individuals who couldn't afford to purchase their own. The system is now up and running for its first fire season, a true trial by fire!

The new radio network can help residents cope with the dangers of fire season for many years after I've left the mountain, protecting homes and businesses, and providing an income source

I suggested we set up a system like the citizen liaison volunteer networks that consular sections coordinate overseas.

for the radio technicians: It was an effective domestic application of my consular skills.

But it also accomplished something more. Most of the community where I'm living has never heard of the State Department or the U.S. Foreign Service. When I tell people what I do for a living, it is often confused with the "Forest Service" or the "Oregon Department of State." When a little girl at my son's two-room schoolhouse told me she wanted to be president one day, I told her about my work in the executive branch—that brought her closer to D.C. than she or her family had ever been. I've also been able to attend academic presentations for graduates of the local university and mentor students who are interested in joining the Foreign Service, all of which leads to a diversity of ideas in Foreign Service.

Shopping at the local co-op, supporting local agriculture and businesses, is good for my local community and an extended benefit of my assignment here. I'm also exposed to different ideas by working in southern Oregon as opposed to D.C. I listen to a different set of ideas and concerns from my neighbors, often on topics of foreign policy. I practice my diplomacy skills constantly, because I'm regularly asked to explain what the State Department does and, of course, fielding questions about consular services.

Among other benefits of working remotely from Oregon for the State Department are expanding Americans' awareness and understanding of the Foreign Service, helping create new pipelines of interested candidates, supporting the FS family of the officer, and making for easy access to colleagues working around the world in different time zones. As a March 2021 report from the Truman Center pointed out, the State Department can and should do more to broaden engagement across America because of these benefits.

A Valuable Program

I'm grateful that I can do my job remotely, that the department created this opportunity and that it took the leap to trial remote work agreements; and I sincerely hope that the program continues. My experiences have shown that remote work can be extremely beneficial for our team. One of my colleagues is working remotely from Southeast Asia; with my location in Oregon, we are in closer time zones. Being on Pacific Standard Time, I also help to extend the workday, closing out tasks that were started earlier in the day by other team members, and I've been able to facilitate events from Porto Alegre, Brazil, to Accra, Ghana.

COURTESY OF SARAH WARDWELL

Sarah Wardwell (front right) with the Greensprings Emergency Network (GEN) during their first radio training, July 2021.

Remote work has also been a true gift for my family, one for which I am forever grateful. I've met former Foreign Service officers from the Pacific Northwest who resigned because they needed some time back here, and the department couldn't offer this before. Remote work is also a retention tool. During this pandemic, it has been especially necessary to rely on family and neighbors to help us out. And in case you're wondering, while we are thrilled to be living back on the West Coast, we're already dreaming of where we want to go on our next overseas assignment.

For those of us who are from towns far away from Washington, D.C., remote work back home can be a meaningful, productive way to continue to serve while building bridges to local communities and building morale for Foreign Service members and our families. ■

INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION

Ideas from the Entry-Level Group at Mission Pakistan

Early-career officers offer suggestions for engaging and preparing future American diplomats.

BY M.J. CRAWFORD AND KEOME ROWE

With so many world events shaping our personal and professional lives—from global pandemics to climate change—investing in the next generation of diplomats has never been more important. Happily, despite the challenges, professional development for early-career generalists and specialists is still an option during a global pandemic—missions only need to get creative and stay focused.

Here we offer our thoughts and suggestions for engaging and preparing America's next generation of diplomats based on our recent experience as co-chairs of Mission Pakistan's First, Second and Third Tour [FAST+] Officers' Group—which includes more than 30 Foreign Service generalists and specialists from several U.S. government agencies at Embassy Islamabad and consulates in Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar.

While many of the concerns of early-career officers will be the same at any post, other concerns may be particular to the post. For instance, at Mission Pakistan, a particular concern centers on the fact that assignments for entry-level officers last only one year, shortening the necessary time it takes to develop relationships that could produce long-term mentors.

As a response, the mission established a formal mentoring program pairing entry- and mid-level officers with volunteer mentors across the embassy and consulates. Seasoned Foreign Service employees residing on the embassy and consulate compounds also serve as informal mentors to early-career employees by making themselves available to discuss career advice, pro-

M.J. Crawford is a political officer at U.S. Embassy Islamabad. She was previously posted to Moldova and Russia and served on voluntary temporary duty assignments to Afghanistan and eastern Ukraine. She joined the State Department in 2016 as a Charles B. Rangel Fellow and is originally from Flint, Michigan.

Keome Rowe is a public diplomacy officer at U.S. Consulate Karachi. He previously served as a press officer at U.S. Embassy Islamabad and a consular officer and staff assistant at U.S. Embassy Beijing. He joined the State Department in 2016 as a Charles B. Rangel Fellow and is originally from Plano, Texas.

COURTESY OF KEOME ROWE

A handful of entry-level employees serving at Embassy Islamabad enjoy an outdoor gathering at the chargé d'affaires' residence. Chargé d'Affaires Angela Aggeler hosted the event for entry-level officers and senior mission employees who participated in programming for entry-level generalists and specialists.

vide EER feedback and host dinners at their residences.

Forge and Maintain a Working Relationship with the Front Office

As officers advance in their careers, their day-to-day work often involves back-to-back meetings, overseeing numerous clearances and approvals, and making critical decisions affecting the mission. We found that regular monthly meetings with the front office opened and sustained a direct channel for communication. The meetings were a mechanism for us to voice the opinions and concerns of the early-career officers we represented, brainstorm activities, and learn more about the attitudes and sentiments of the broader mission community.

For example, while many entry-level generalists and specialists are well compensated with danger and hardship pay for serving in Pakistan, many were concerned that security and pandemic-related restrictions on travel and building people-to-people ties hampered them from developing the full range of experience and skills essential to their cone or specialty.

Ask What FAST+ Officers Need ...

We surveyed Mission Pakistan's early-career officers to understand which professional development opportunities they were most interested in. At least 81 percent of respondents wanted to participate in training and workshops; 72 percent wanted to focus on leadership; and 36 percent wanted to improve their public speaking skills.

The data also revealed that early-career officers were eager to have exposure to and increased understanding of what other agencies were doing in Pakistan. As one anonymous respondent put it: "Although we all push toward the same objectives, in theory [State] and [non-State] people are pretty clueless about what each other does."

Survey respondents also sought opportunities to socialize and get to know one another. This is a tricky balance during a pandemic, but with creativity we made it happen, and so can you. Outdoor activities such as hiking or enjoying an outside, socially distanced wine tasting can bring entry-level officers together and offer an opportunity to get to know mission leadership in a more relaxed environment.

... Deliver What They Want

When some Mission Pakistan FAST+ officers initially felt disconnected from the larger mission goals and objectives, the front office supported a two-day Mission Pakistan conference to give officers a bird's-eye view of Pakistan's political and societal landscape. Chargé d'Affaires Angela P. Aggeler, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Richard Snelsire and senior Mission Pakistan leaders from various sections and agencies presented on important topics, helping FAST+ officers understand how their work fit into the larger picture of executing mission goals and objectives.

During the two-day conference, early-career officers gained public speaking experience by moderating panels featuring mid- and senior-level State officers, as well as seasoned representatives from various U.S. government agencies. Because the event was virtual, all 30 FAST+ officers from Embassy Islamabad and Mission Pakistan's three consulates participated. In the end, FAST+

In addition to offering training and opportunities for FAST+ officers, it is also vital to get to know who they are as people.

officers felt empowered and included, while senior leaders were able to share their goals, knowledge and advice. This was a successful outcome that would not have been possible without a front office that valued mentorship and championed FAST+ activities and concerns.

Supervisors: Check in Regularly

Early-career Foreign Service generalists and specialists are becoming increasingly diverse, representing a mosaic of our American society. Supervisors should do more than manage people and paper: They should get to know where their employees new to the Foreign Service are from and the communities they represent.

Living and working overseas during your first couple of tours can be challenging, especially when things back home are difficult. Protests, police brutality, mass shootings and natural disasters in the United States were just a few of the concerns keeping early-career officers awake at night—on top of the stress of the pandemic, as well as operating amid a challenging security situation, and the pressure of working in a fast-paced environment.

COURTESY OF KEOME ROWE

Entry-level program co-leaders M.J. Crawford (at left) and Keome Rowe (at right) with Mission Pakistan Chargé d'Affaires Angela Aggeler.

To help officers handle such stress and pressure, a FAST+ specialist working as a social worker in Embassy Islamabad's health unit held a workshop for fellow FAST+ officers that taught useful techniques for personal well-being at a high-stress post. Supervisors, as well as others in the embassy community, can play a key role in checking in with early-career officers and helping create an environment where they can thrive.

Holding a virtual town hall exclusively for early-career generalists and specialists is an excellent way to provide a comfortable and safe space to share their concerns and thoughts directly with mission leadership. After the police killing of George Floyd in May 2020, which sparked outrage, sadness and protests throughout the United States and across the world, many early-career officers on their first few tours overseas were frustrated and anxious, being thousands of miles away. Many felt a profound sense of helplessness.

Mission Pakistan's then–chargé d'affaires, Paul Jones, held a virtual town hall during this time, encouraging a safe dialogue where officers shared powerful personal experiences of racism and xenophobia both in America and at post. After the town hall, the exchange continued as officers shared articles among one another and the chargé to understand better the roots of racism and xenophobia in America.

The process strengthened community ties and FAST+ officers' relationship to mission leadership. Sharing each other's vastly different experiences in the Foreign Service brought out empathy among colleagues and highlighted that there is no one-size-fits-all experience as an American diplomat.

Invest in America's Diplomats

In co-leading Mission Pakistan's FAST+ group during the pandemic, we developed many lessons learned, which we hope will be useful to other posts grappling with the challenges of operating in a pandemic and in difficult environments around the world.

Despite the growing demands that global events place on our work, it is vital to invest in the next generation of America's diplomats now. In addition to offering training and opportunities for FAST+ officers, it is also vital to get to know who they are as people. Not only are they the future of the Foreign Service, but they represent the future of America as a nation. ■

In-State College Tuition for FS Families

An AFSA-supported provision for Foreign Service families was included in the National Defense Authorization Act that President Biden signed into law on Dec. 27, 2021. The new law will make it easier for families to qualify for in-state college tuition and thereby save some AFSA members more than $100,000 per child over a four-year undergraduate education.

The law mandates that state-supported colleges grant the in-state tuition rate to Foreign Service members, their spouses and dependents in their state of domicile. It does so by adding Foreign Service families to the long-standing federal law mandating in-state tuition for members of the armed forces and their families whose domicile or permanent duty station is the state to which they are applying for public college admission.

The new provision does not take effect until the first period of college enrollment that begins after July 1, 2024, because some state legislatures only meet every two years and may need to amend state law for compliance.

Until then, families with strong ties to a particular state can continue to ask for the in-state tuition rate. If denied, please email member@afsa.org so AFSA can contact the admissions office. Because some state-supported colleges, such as those in the University of California system, have usually rejected requests for in-state tuition from FS members, AFSA advocated for the new federal law mandating a nationwide policy.

As 2024 nears, Foreign Service families interested in qualifying for in-state tuition should review their proofs of domicile and take steps to strengthen them by documenting past and continuing ties to a state. Past ties include longtime physical presence.

There is no required list to prove continuing ties, but they can include absentee voting, maintaining a driver's license, paying nonresident state income tax (when required), owning real estate, reflecting that state in your will, visiting the state when on leave, and listing the state on your Official Form-126 Foreign Service Residency and Dependency Report as your state of legal residence.

The passage of the in-state tuition provision benefiting the Foreign Service was the result of AFSA's work with bipartisan supporters in the Senate and House to achieve greater parity for our members with the military. Without AFSA's strong advocacy, this improvement would not have made it into law. ■

CALENDAR

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

March 14
Deadline: AFSA Scholarship Applications

March 16
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

March 30
AFSA Book Notes: *Lessons from the Edge* by Marie Yovanovitch

April 4
Deadline: 2022 High School Essay Contest

April 18
Federal and State Taxes Due
AFSA Tax Guide: afsa.org/taxguide

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

May 5
AFSA Foreign Service Day Events

May 6
Foreign Service Day

Payroll Problems: An Update

Since the State Department's Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services switched to an automated payroll system in February 2021, AFSA has received hundreds of emails from members sharing their payroll horror stories.

These include missing or incorrect differential and allowances, incorrect pay amounts, leave issues and thrift savings plan contribution issues. Statements of earnings and leave have also frequently been wrong. You've expressed your frustration and asked what the State Department is doing to fix the problem.

AFSA has raised your concerns repeatedly to the very top of the State Department. AFSA President Eric Rubin discussed the issue with Secretary of State Antony Blinken, with Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Brian McKeon and with Under Secretary for Management John Bass, and has written a letter of concern directly to the Secretary as well. State VP Tom Yazdgerdi raises the issue weekly with Global Talent Management staff and in biweekly meetings with the GTM front office. We have passed all individual complaints we receive directly to CGFS leadership for action.

Continued on page 75

Contact: YazdgerdiTK@state.gov | (202) 647-8160

Reforming the Assignments Process

The bidding process is often said to be one of the most stressful aspects of Foreign Service life. In an effort to bolster employee confidence in the integrity and transparency of assignments selection, I'd like to explore how this process can be improved, including for senior leadership positions.

Rationalizing the Bidding Process: iMatch. Because there is so much variability, uncertainty and inconsistency in the bidding process, many bidders come away feeling that they have not been treated fairly. To make the process more rational, the Bureau of Global Talent Management and the Office of Career Development and Assignments instituted a pilot program called iMatch for midlevel office management specialists and information management specialists for the 2022 assignments season. This program is based on an algorithm used to match medical residents with hospitals (see 21 State 80846).

An AFSA State representative (who is an OMS and iMatch bidder) and I met with CDA in November to learn about the pilot. CDA noted that where a match was possible, bureaus matched their positions with bidders 86 percent of the time in the first round. Of the jobs that matched, 84 percent of bidders and 90 percent of bureaus got their first or second choice.

CDA and our State rep related some problems: the department's information security rules did not allow taking full advantage of the iMatch software or communicating with TalentMAP or the CLC. Additionally, iMatch's algorithm works better with larger cohorts, making it less effective with fewer than 50 bidders. Seventh-floor "plum" jobs were excluded from the list because of longstanding special staffing privileges. All in all, 95 percent of bidders who submitted 10 bids in the first round matched with one of their choices. CDA is concurrently canvassing bidder and bureau participant views on the pilot.

AFSA supports a more transparent and equitable bidding process and appreciates the department's initiative. But we will need further data and feedback to give a definitive opinion on the utility of iMatch, including whether it makes sense to extend it to more bidders for the 2023 assignments process.

Bidding Reform in EAP. For the 2022 assignment season, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs stated its intent to bring greater transparency and diversity to what many see as an insular and male-heavy bureau.

EAP had three main reforms: references would only be considered through the 360CLC system; bidders would submit a personal narrative in lieu of first-round interviews and lobbying; and a pilot program created for all FS-03 EAP positions would utilize a centralized bidding process (see 21 State 86784).

EAP has said that after the bidding cycle, it will send out a cable to assess the success of these reforms, particularly the pilot. AFSA asked if the bureau had considered gender-neutral language for future changes and EAP responded that it wanted first to know more about GTM's experiment with gender neutral language on MSIs. (Note: AFSA is currently working with GTM's Office of Performance Evaluation to see what effect gender-neutral MSIs have had on diversity and will provide an update.)

D Committee and DCM/PO Committee. Reform of these two key committees, which decide on chiefs of mission and deputy assistant secretaries and deputy chiefs of mission and principal officers, respectively, would be welcome as well.

There is too little information about how these committees operate. Which bureaus and individuals are represented on them? Are decisions made by consensus or by majority vote? Are certain individuals and bureaus, especially regional ones, given more weight than others? What information is considered in making decisions and are there rules about what may be presented for review?

In discussing these questions with senior officers, some of whom have successfully gone through the D Committee process, I found that they are as mystified as the rest of us. I myself have gone through both committees—one successfully, the other not—and still have no clear idea of what happened and why.

Of course, committee deliberations need to be shielded from complete transparency to allow for an honest and open debate about the suitability of candidates. But the department could better explain and define the purpose and membership of these committees and the process by which they choose some of our most senior leaders.

Instituting more transparent procedures could also encourage more and improved communication between regional bureaus and prospective candidates; doing so would likely have a beneficial effect on the department's diversity objectives as well. The department's chief diversity and inclusion officer, Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, now sits on both committees, which is a step in the right direction. But more needs to be done.

Please let us know what you think about these issues at member@afsa.org.

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

365 Days of Reality vs First "100 Days" Recommendations

As I write this, we've reached the one-year mark for the Biden-Harris administration—one quarter of the term! This milestone prompts me to reflect on AFSA's "First 100 Days" recommendations to USAID's new leadership and assess where we are.

While I recognize that the Administrator wasn't confirmed until April 28, 2021, these recommendations were meant to send strong signals, boost employee morale and reinforce the administration's focus on the career federal workforce. So, where are we?

1. Announce an agencywide initiative to review and reform the program budget / operating expense budget division.

No action, which is unfortunate given USAID's perennial focus on transparency. Most of USAID's challenges are linked to budget bifurcation and OE shortages. There is still time to undertake this long-overdue review.

2. Announce commitment to a major FS hiring push that reflects a strategic workforce planning process and, in working with Congress, a regular FS hiring calendar.

President Biden has been clear: "It is the policy of the United States to protect, empower and rebuild the career federal workforce." Administrator Power's Nov. 4, 2021, Georgetown speech also acknowledged that "over several years, USAID's workforce has been sorely depleted, and our current numbers of Civil Service and Foreign Service staff are well short of our needs," and therefore, "we will seek to increase our career workforce over the next four years."

But I am not aware of any multiyear strategic workforce plan. If there is one, AFSA welcomes the opportunity to be part of discussions.

3. Name a Senior Foreign Service officer to head Human Capital and Talent Management. Announce plans to return the director of the Office of Acquisition and Assistance position to the career FS.

As of this writing, the acting chief human capital officer is a career senior FSO; AFSA hopes the agency will make this situation permanent. The Administrator has also created and named a political appointee to a new position, "Assistant to the Administrator for HCTM," which sits between the CHCO and the Administrator. Career employees have expressed concern at the optics of "politicizing" this role, given the previous administration's efforts to create a "Schedule F" category of public servant.

4. Allocate a material number of Assistant Administrator positions to career FSOs to reinvigorate USAID's field focus. This emulates Secretary Blinken's commitment to place career FS employees in senior positions.

Per AFSA's "Senior Official Appointments" tracker (bit.ly/senior-appointments), two FSOs have been named to the 18 "senior official" positions at USAID—about 11 percent. At State, some 13 out of 39 (33 percent) are career FSOs. USAID must do better.

5. Reinstate the practice of designating a career FSO Deputy Assistant Administrator as the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator. They are "first among equals" and the first in line to serve as acting Assistant Administrator, as needed.

This recommendation has not been adopted; decisions across bureaus appear ad hoc.

6. Formally create a Foreign Service deputy chief of staff position to support and inform the work of the administratively determined COS and others.

AFSA has explained to agency leadership the value and optics of such a position for a foreign affairs agency. Unfortunately, USAID has not adopted this, yet did create the political Assistant to the Administrator for HCTM role.

7. Put Foreign Service Limited appointments on hold pending a comprehensive third-party strategic workforce review.

FSL appointments continue (no, they are still not hired through USAJobs.gov) in a process usually serving as a workaround to caps on career employee hiring and OE budget limitations.

8. Announce the schedule to publish the agency's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (the draft strategy is "in review" at OMB).

The Administrator signed the employee-developed strategy in her first week, and diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility is now an agency centerpiece. Unfortunately, USAID still has no public data on its 1,100 personal service contractors or numerous institutional service contractors. And, as of this writing, the Foreign Service data in USAID's official tables (bit.ly/workforce-data) is riddled with errors. Again, we must do better.

9. Update the framework agreement between USAID and AFSA (last updated in 2009).

We now have plans to begin talks, and I'm hopeful we can negotiate a strong, clear agreement that bolsters the president's vocal support for strong unions.

10. Establish a standing meeting between the front office and AFSA.

AFSA now has regular engagement with the Deputy Administrator for management and resources. While we may disagree at times, we share the goal of strengthening USAID as an institution. That said, we must see dialogue translate into positive action.

My rough (but generous) assessment is that the agency has addressed 3.5 out of the 10 recommendations, for a score of 35 percent. Here's hoping for more progress during year two. ■

Major Advocacy Milestones Achieved

At the end of 2021, AFSA celebrated the fact that several of our 117th Congress policy priorities became law.

Passage of the Foreign Service Families Act (FSFA, S. 1550) and the Department of State Authorization Act (DSAA, H.R. 1157), and the resulting positive effects on FS life, are already reverberating throughout our community.

These two bills, contained in the Fiscal Year 2022's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), achieve many goals that have been a part of AFSA's legislative agenda for years, if not decades.

The Foreign Service Families Act achieves more for Foreign Service parity with the U.S. military than any effort in recent memory. AFSA hopes it will set a precedent for further parity provisions to become law.

The Department of State Authorization Act is the first comprehensive reauthorization bill in almost 20 years. We hope this passage marks the beginning of annual authorization approvals.

Both bills first emerged in the 116th Congress and were crafted with bipartisan support. When they were reintroduced in the 117th Congress, provisions were added to the Foreign Service Families Act that aimed to accomplish even more to achieve parity with the military.

Neither bill was passed by itself under regular order. Instead, AFSA took the initiative to get them attached to a must-pass piece of legislation: the NDAA. We calmed concerns about provisions in the bills from members of Congress, committee staff within the bills' jurisdiction and outside stakeholder groups to help get them signed into law within the year.

As you may recall, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) became law in 2003, granting members of the Armed Forces reprieve from monetary penalties when given military orders to serve elsewhere and affording them other significant financial benefits.

The Foreign Service has had no equivalent civil relief until now. The FS Families Act allows members under diplomatic orders to serve overseas the ability to break residential, vehicle or cell phone contracts without penalty.

The bill also ensures the in-state tuition rate in one's state of domicile at public institutions of higher education for Foreign Service members, their spouses and dependents (effective in 2024). No FS family will be left "stateless" due to their lack of physical presence in a state when looking to reap a benefit nearly every other U.S. resident receives in at least one state.

Passage of the Foreign Service Families Act (FSFA, S. 1550) and the Department of State Authorization Act (DSAA, H.R. 1157), and the resulting positive effects on FS life, are already reverberating throughout our community.

The DSAA contains several personnel-related changes of priority for AFSA. For example, those who are subject to an assignment restriction are afforded the same appeals rights as those with suspended security clearances, and cases must be settled within 60 days with a list of reporting requirements explaining the need for that assignment restriction.

The bill also calls for a study on FS overseas allowances and what financial factors incentivize bidding on specific posts, alongside a comparison to military pay.

AFSA looks to expand on our recent policy gains in future advocacy, noting key provisions either left out or goals only partially accomplished through the FY22 NDAA. For example:

- AFSA would like to see the remaining SCRA provisions extended to the Foreign Service.
- AFSA would like to see the Accountability in Assignment Restrictions Act (H.R. 5275) signed into law, thereby removing decision-making from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and establishing an independent appeals process for assignment restrictions.
- AFSA would like to see a formalized paid student internship program with housing assistance created for all foreign affairs agencies.
- AFSA would like to see the two-thirds cap on overseas comparability pay (OCP) relative to the Washington, D.C., locality rate lifted and the third tranche implemented, which would achieve parity with the intelligence community on this important element of base pay. It is our hope that the new study on allowances as incentives at posts and the differences in pay between the Foreign Service and the military, which is stipulated in the DSAA, will emphasize the need for the final tranche of OCP.

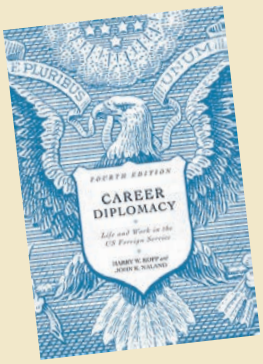
This list only scratches the surface of how we can expand on what the Foreign Service gained with passage of the Foreign Service Families Act and the Department of State Authorization Act. AFSA remains vigilant for future opportunities to build on our progress.

Book Notes

Career Diplomacy

Authors Harry Kopp and John Naland.

Authors Harry Kopp and John Naland joined AFSA via Zoom on Dec. 9 to discuss their book, *Career Diplomacy: Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service* (Georgetown University Press, 2021). Now in its fourth edition, this popular book offers a candid, in-depth look at the Foreign Service as an institution, a profession and a career.



In the new edition, the authors have added more information about how the profession functions and how it has evolved since the third edition was published in 2017.

"It's been five years [since the last edition]," Naland explained, "and it's amazing how many procedures have changed for hiring, promotion and assignment. The budget numbers, staffing numbers and factoids needed significant updating."

New in this edition is a chapter on diversity and inclusion, including statistics from a 2019 report from the Government Accountability Office. Interviews with current and retired members of the Foreign Service were also updated. In light of ongoing security concerns such as the pandemic and anomalous health incidents, the chapter on danger and duty was expanded to characterize the Foreign Service career as one that is often called on to run toward danger.

Harry Kopp, a former FSO, serves on the FSJ Editorial Board and is AFSA's unofficial historian. He is the author of two additional books on diplomacy: *Commercial Diplomacy and the National Interest* (American Academy of Diplomacy, 2004), and *The Voice of the Foreign Service: A History of the American Foreign Service Association* (AFSA / Foreign Service Books, 2015).

John Naland retired from the Foreign Service in 2015 after a 29-year career. He is currently AFSA's Retiree Vice President and has had more than 100 articles and essays published in the *FSJ*.

View the entire book talk at youtube.com/AFSAtube.

AFSA Governing Board Meeting, Dec. 8, 2021

The board met at AFSA headquarters on Dec. 8, the first in-person meeting since July 2021.

Memorial Plaques: The Governing Board agreed to include one new name on the Virtual AFSA Memorial Plaque. The board further approved the Awards and Plaques Committee's recommendation that AFSA seek State Department approval to place a new plaque in the C Street lobby of Main State honoring all those serving overseas during COVID-19, including any Foreign Service members who died after contracting the disease overseas.

New Award: The board approved the establishment of a Foreign Service Champions award to recognize an organization, a member of Congress, a military official or another influential noncareer member of the foreign affairs community who has demonstrably championed the Foreign Service's role in U.S. foreign policy and has had an enduring, positive impact on both the Service and the diplomatic profession.

Associate Members: The board approved the application of one new associate member.

Resignation: The board accepted the resignation of Jolisa Brooks as USAID representative due to personal reasons.

Ratification of Virtual Votes: In accordance with AFSA bylaws, the board ratified in-person the decisions made during virtual meetings, and actions taken in reliance thereon, held between August 2021 and December 2021.

Calling All FS Bloggers!

The AFSA website features links to dozens of active blogs created by members of the Foreign Service community, and we want to ensure that all FS bloggers who would like to be listed on this popular page have the chance to join.

The FS Blogs list, found at afsa.org/foreign-service-blogs, ranks consistently among the top 10 most popular pages on the AFSA website and is also linked as "suggested reading" by the State Department's hiring site, careers.state.gov. Joining the AFSA list offers another way to generate traffic for your blog and introduce your content to active-duty, retired and prospective Foreign Service members as well as to the public at large.

If you have a blog to add to the list, please contact FSblogs@afsa.org with the website URL, the agency you're associated with, and a brief summary of the nature of the content you publish.

Annenberg Award Honors Diplomats Who Helped Evacuate Allies from Afghanistan (2021) and Vietnam (1975)

On Nov. 9, 2021, the American Academy of Diplomacy presented its annual Walter and Leonore Annenberg Award for Excellence in Diplomacy during a luncheon at the DACOR Bacon House.

This recognition of exemplary contributions to the field of American diplomacy was presented to all U.S. government personnel engaged in the August 2021 Afghanistan evacuation, and to Foreign Service and Civil Service personnel who contributed to the evacuation of Vietnam in 1975.

PHOTOS FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DIPLOMACY/JENIFER MORRIS

Ambassador Ross Wilson (at left) and Ambassador (ret.) Ronald Neumann.

Ambassador Ross Wilson, who was serving as chargé d'affaires at Embassy Kabul at the time of the evacuation, accepted the award on behalf of all who served during the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The Vietnam evacuation award was accepted by Ambassador (ret.) Parker Borg, Ambassador (ret.) Craig Johnstone and retired Foreign Service Officer Lionel Rosenblatt on behalf of all personnel who engaged in the effort.

Ambassador (ret.) Ronald Neumann, president of the academy, presented the awards, reading from the full citations, excerpted here:

"Today, we focus on the extraordinary bravery, commitment and dedication to the service of our country in Afghanistan of American diplomats and military personnel during the tumultuous days of evacuation last summer. Our women and men, and representatives from dozens of other countries and organizations, affected the air evacuation from Afghanistan of U.S. nationals and staff, their allied and other foreign counterparts, Afghans at risk, and family members—124,000 people in all, the largest such evacuation in history. …

"Dangerous, chaotic circumstances and competing demands weighed on all those involved at the Kabul airport. U.S. troops and diplomats mourned the loss of 13 American Marines, soldier and sailor, as well as over 200 Afghans, in the suicide attack carried out by ISIS on August 26.

"Embassy personnel and many military colleagues deployed to help carry out this massive evacuation, fielded thousands of pleas for help, and sought to accomplish as much as possible for as many as possible safely and securely. …

"They answered the call of duty. Their professionalism, dedication, courage, and creativity in the face of a very dangerous and rapidly evolving situation will serve as an inspiration to future generations of those who voluntarily serve America abroad. …

"On April 30, 1975, barely 46 years ago, the People's Army of Viet Nam captured Saigon, bringing an end to the South Vietnamese government and terminating America's two-decade long involvement in the country. …

The Walter and Leonore Annenberg Award for Excellence in Diplomacy was presented to U.S. personnel who engaged in evacuation efforts 46 years apart.

"Thanks to the bravery and determination of a small group of Foreign Service officers, including Lionel Rosenblatt, Craig Johnstone and Parker Borg, who are here today, the first Vietnamese were rescued.

"Rosenblatt, Johnstone and Borg operated without official sanction and often in the face of opposition. Other Foreign Service and Civil Service personnel took the initiative to begin planning in Washington without official blessing or orders and putting their careers at risk. Over time, what these individuals began … developed into a massive undertaking. Thousands of others, employees of the United States government and their families and members of Viet Nam's government and military establishments were evacuated.

"We remember those in government and military service, who made it possible for the United States to discharge a debt of honor."

The awards luncheon was attended by 120 people, including AFSA President Eric Rubin, as well as Barbara Stephenson, a former president of AFSA, and Ambassador (ret.) Tom Pickering.

Past recipients of the Annenberg award include Ambassador (ret.) John Negroponte, former Secretary of State James Baker III and Ambassador William Burns, director of the CIA and former deputy secretary of State.

AFSA Honors 2021 Sinclaire Language Award Recipients

Proficiency in foreign languages is a vital skill for members of the U.S. Foreign Service, not only for professional development but also for personal security and success at post.

Each year since 1982, AFSA has recognized the outstanding accomplishments of FS members in the study and use of difficult languages through the Matilda W. Sinclaire Awards program. AFSA established this program upon a generous bequest from former Foreign Service Officer Matilda W. Sinclaire, who sought "to promote and reward superior achievement by career officers of the Foreign Service … while studying one of the Category III or IV languages under the auspices of the Foreign Service Institute."

Any career or career-conditional member of the Foreign Service from the Department of State, USAID, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Agency for Global Media or Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is eligible for the award.

Recipients are selected by a committee comprising the dean (or designee) of the FSI School of Language Studies and the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee. Each winner receives $1,500 and a certificate of recognition. For 2021, AFSA received 19 nominations.

This year's recipients demonstrated dedication to and extraordinary skills in their chosen language through their engagement in a variety of in-language activities in and out of the classroom to improve fluency.

We are pleased to announce the 2021 Sinclaire Award recipients:

- **Maria Davydenko**: Arabic
- **Lindsay Coffey**: Arabic MSA + Moroccan Variant
- **Kristin Foote**: Korean
- **Sylvia Stankova-Loomis**: Hebrew
- **Jarek Taylor Buss**: Albanian
- **Hiram Rios Hernandez**: Burmese
- **Matthew O'Connor**: Korean
- **Ryan Peterson**: Cambodian/Khmer
- **Benjamin James Turman**: Urdu
- **Colette Clark**: Farsi

For more information on the Sinclaire Awards, contact AFSA Awards Coordinator Theo Horn at horn@afsa.org or visit afsa.org/sinclaire. Nominations for the 2022 Sinclaire Awards are now being accepted; the deadline is Aug. 31.

AFSA H.S. Essay Contest

AFSA is now accepting applications for its national high school essay contest.

Eligibility. Students whose parents are not in the Foreign Service are eligible to participate if they are in grades nine through 12 in any of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories, or if they are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents attending high school overseas.

Previous first-place winners and immediate relatives of directors or staff of AFSA, the U.S. Institute of Peace, Semester at Sea and National Student Leadership Conference are not eligible.

Prizes. $2,500 to the writer of the winning essay, and a trip to the nation's capital for the winning writer and his or her parents, and an educational voyage courtesy of Semester at Sea.

The runner-up receives $1,250 and full tuition to attend a summer session of National Student Leadership Conference's International Diplomacy program. Due to COVID-19, some prizes may not be claimable immediately.

The application deadline is April 4, 2022. Learn more at afsa.org/essay-contest.

Apply for AFSA College Scholarships

Applications are now open for nearly $370,000 in college aid to children of AFSA members.

Financial Aid. In 2022, AFSA will award $230,000 in need-based financial aid to incoming or current college undergraduates. Last year, 69 students were awarded scholarships ranging between $2,000 and $6,000.

Merit Aid. In 2022, AFSA will award $152,000 in merit aid to high school seniors. Last year, 173 students applied and 38 received grants. Most scholarships amount to $3,500 and will be given in four categories: academic merit, art merit, community service and best essay.

Due to difficulties surrounding COVID-19, AFSA will not require students to have taken either the SAT or ACT test.

The AFSA Scholarship Program is made possible through generous donations from our partners at BlueCross BlueShield, DACOR and numerous donations from individuals. No AFSA membership dues are used in the AFSA Scholarship Program.

The application deadline is midnight on March 14, 2022. For full details, visit afsa.org/scholar.

AFSA Outreach: Looking Back and Planning Ahead

Last year was one of robust programming and growth for AFSA outreach.

We've increased AFSA's presence on social media, connected with new audiences throughout the country, devised new ways to tell the story of the Foreign Service, and maintained our outreach relationships with the Road Scholar and Chautauqua programs.

In fact, in feedback surveys after the Chautauqua program in October, participants gave it the highest-recorded score of any Road Scholar program hosted at the New York institution. Credit goes to the AFSA member speakers who participated.

Launched in 2021, AFSA's two virtual speaker series—Inside Diplomacy and Diplomats at Work—have reached thousands of viewers.

Inside Diplomacy, geared toward a globally engaged audience, features experts discussing current policy issues as they relate to the Foreign Service. Last year, guests included USAID Administrator Samantha Power and U.S. Global Leadership Coalition President Liz Schrayer.

Diplomats at Work introduces new, younger audiences to the FS and features active-duty members sharing the work they do. The videos from both series are available at afsa.org/video.

Through these programs, AFSA reached students from 122 different colleges and universities across 35 states. We created an outreach newsletter to share our news and programs with this audience.

Also in 2021, our partnership with "The American Diplomat" podcast, (amdipstories.org) yielded 12 episodes featuring AFSA members. Guests included six active-duty and two retired members who spoke on topics relating to their life and work in the Foreign Service. Several authors were also among the guests. AFSA will continue to support the podcast in 2022 as an official sponsor.

Our 2022 outreach efforts are now underway, centering on the new campaign "Why I Serve." We are planning more virtual and in-person events, podcast episodes, social media campaigns and opportunities to engage with new and diverse audiences.

We are also continuing our partnership with the Uma Chapman Cox Foundation to support our outreach and education programs.

Thank you to AFSA members who have participated in these program. To join the outreach speaker roster, please contact Nadja Ruzica at ruzica@afsa.org or fill out the form at afsa.org/speakers-bureau.

Payroll Problems
Continued from page 67

We have made it clear to department leadership, in no uncertain terms, that people are angry that their employer cannot manage the basic duty of paying them correctly and on time.

We have also expressed our determination to pursue all necessary measures to ensure that affected employees receive interest on all back pay, and we had an initial consultation with a private attorney to explore whether it is possible to obtain damages from the department to make employees and retirees whole for the injury they have suffered. We intend to request that the Office of the Inspector General thoroughly investigate this disaster so that there can be accountability.

AFSA continues to do everything we can to push the department to solve this problem, to provide relief for our members, and to ensure a problem of this magnitude never happens again.

Please continue to share your stories with us at member@afsa.org.

AFSA Webinar: Reviewing Your Retirement Plan

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/BRO VECTOR

In the first webinar of 2022 from AFSA's federal benefits series, held on Jan. 11, Retiree Vice President John Naland guided retired AFSA members through a range of issues that affect retirement planning.

Topics covered included: how to review and update your annuity records, how to keep beneficiary designations current, what your survivor needs to know, the importance of monitoring your Thrift Savings Plan, when to take Social Security early, whether to sign up for Medicare Part B, federal reemployment rules, and other pertinent issues.

Naland also encouraged retirees to maintain their AFSA membership to stay informed and connected, and to contribute to and benefit from AFSA's advocacy efforts.

Members can view a recording of the video at afsa.org/videos, or visit AFSA's one-stop shop for retirement at afsa.org/retirement-services, which offers extensive resources for retirees.

FROM REFUGEE TO CAMPER TO DIPLOMAT

Why Summer Camp for FS Kids

Summer camp can offer a stable anchor in the FS child's ever-changing world.

BY TIBOR NAGY

I was delighted to learn that *The Foreign Service Journal* was planning a special summer camp supplement because watching our own children grow up overseas, and having myself spent many years in camping, I have long considered a camp experience an important option for Foreign Service families.

First, a bit of background on how much my own camp experiences have meant in my life. Coming to Washington, D.C., as a political refugee from Hungary in 1957, my family not only did not speak English, but we were also penniless. That summer, our Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) sponsor very graciously paid for me to spend six weeks at Camp Soles, in the spectacular Laurel Highlands of Western Pennsylvania, where I not only learned English, but also social and cultural skills that greatly contributed to my becoming "American" and did wonders for my self-confidence. I returned to the camp each summer, progressing through the stages of camper, counselor and senior staff member until I graduated from college (for which my camp employment helped pay).

Along the way I learned skills in a variety of sports and other activities and gained an appreciation for nature. But, most importantly, I developed leadership and "people" skills and built lifelong friendships that endure to this day. In some of my current speeches, I mention that in my last job as assistant secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs, I had to supervise 48 ambassadors with high levels of self-confidence, but that was nowhere near as difficult as having to manage a group of college-age, but still maturing, counselors!

Strangers in Their Own Land

FS kids are not penniless refugees who need to learn English, but their childhood journeys present challenges similar to my own, and they can equally benefit from a summer camp experience. We all know that uprooting and moving locations every few years generates a long list of stresses—especially for our children, who must first leave behind the familiar and their network of friends, and then start over again with a new locale, a new culture and new people.

The employee enters a known environment from day one, and an accompanying spouse or partner will have a sponsor to help navigate the new terrain, but for the child, everything is unfamiliar. What a summer camp can offer in such an ever-changing world is a familiar anchor from year to year as the child grows—same locale, a known routine, a set of skills that can be expanded each

Tibor Nagy retired from the U.S. Foreign Service in 2003 after a long career, which included 22 years in Africa at eight postings, with two ambassadorships and three stints as deputy chief of mission. He returned to the State Department as assistant secretary for Africa in 2018 and re-retired in 2021. In between, he served as vice provost for international affairs at Texas Tech University. He continues to teach for Texas Tech, write regular op-ed pieces and lecture on foreign policy. His book (co-authored with Ambassador Greg Engle), Managing Overseas Operations: Kiss Your Latte Goodbye*, won the 2014 Paris Book Festival award for nonfiction.*

COURTESY OF TIBOR NAGY

Counselor Tibor Nagy (on horseback) teaching riding at Camp Soles in 1971.

year and, most importantly, a set of friends who can reconnect the instant they see each other.

FS parents may understand the special challenges facing Third Culture Kids—a group that includes all expatriate children. But there is a parallel process that also affects their sense of identity, which parents and extended family members may not be so sensitive to: namely, the rapid cultural changes in the United States related to fashion, music, slang, what's in/out, etc.

While FS kids may return "home" periodically on home leave or R&R, grandma and grandpa may not be the best ones to help them catch up with changes to Americana since their last visit. Here again, summer camp can play a useful role by providing our TCKs with a "safe space" where they feel comfortable being updated about life in America by trusted friends.

Beyond describing how summer camps can mitigate some of the special challenges FS kids face, I'd like to offer a brief overview of America's current camp scene and how interested parents can find an appropriate camp.

Types of Camps

Today's parents have an incredible variety of choices among camps, including whether they are co-ed, or gender specific, age grouped, etc. These include:

- Day Camps: with a full range of activities but no overnight stay.
- Traditional Camps: periods of one

or multiple weeks with a wide range of activities, providing opportunities to explore new or developing interests.

• Sports Camps: specializing in just about every sport imaginable, plus skills such as horseback riding.

• Religious Camps: religiously affiliated or denomination-specific.

• Camps affiliated with well-known organizations: scouting, YMCA, etc.

• Arts Camps: drama, music, cooking, film, etc.

• Education Camps: STEM, debate, reading, writing, math, poetry, computer skills, robotics and A/I, etc.

• Special Needs Camps: kids with diabetes, the visually or hearing impaired and those with other disabilities, children who are mourning, etc.

Positive Outcomes

I briefly mentioned how my camp experience helped develop my own life skills, but here is a general list of the types of attributes camps can develop/strengthen:

• A sense of belonging to a community with lifelong friendships.

• The importance of teamwork.

• Positive competition.

• Independence without rebellion.

• Healthy resilience from setbacks.

• A connection with nature and a sense of serenity and mindfulness.

• Expanding comfort zones by learning new skills in safe surroundings.

• Increasing self-esteem through self-reliance.

• Supporting a healthy lifestyle through activities, good nutrition and a "screen free" environment (except for science/computer camps).

• Developing imaginations through a variety of organized and unstructured activities.

Things to Consider

Costs. In general, parents can expect to pay between $300 and $1,000 per week for a traditional overnight camp. Specialized camp costs may be higher, depending on staffing, needs, etc.

When Are Kids Ready? With some camps, age 7 would be the youngest age, but 8 is more common. From my experience as a counselor and staff member, the greatest determining factor is when kids *want* to go. Forced attendance usually

ends in drama and an early departure.

Transition to Staff. For traditional overnight camps, 16 is the usual age limit for campers. From that point, they would move up to counselor in training (CIT) and counselor. Salaries today are quite competitive, and it's a super job while attending college—especially since camps cover room and board over the summer on top of a salary.

Accreditation. Accreditation by the American Camp Association signifies that the camp's operations have been thoroughly peer-reviewed, including such critical elements as adequacy of staff training, the quality of the facility, staff emergency preparedness, etc. An ACA review is at least as thorough as an Office of the Inspector General post inspection. Check out www.acacamps.org.

How to Find a Camp? Today, an internet search can take you to any and every accredited camp. The choices can be overwhelming, but here are a few helpful sites:

- https://www.find.acacamps.org/
- https://www.campchannel.com/
- https://www.camppage.com/

My wife, Jane, and I wish we had taken the advice I present above and sent our kids to camp for a portion of each summer. Between my in-laws' farm in Texas and visiting the part of my family who never left Hungary, our summers whizzed by during the more than 20 years we served in Africa. Looking back, we have no doubt that our kids would have had a much easier readjustment to being in the United States if they had had the stable anchor that summer camps can provide.

We are not repeating that mistake with our grandkids and have already started one on her camping adventure. She was absolutely delighted with her first summer at camp and will be joined by the others in 2022. While our grandkids are not all posted overseas as our kids were, gathering at camp each summer will allow the cousins to develop lifelong relationships much stronger than what would come from occasional family gatherings.

I recommend that every Foreign Service family with kids consider a U.S. summer camp as a highly positive tool to help their children develop and nurture essential life skills, self-confidence, lifelong friendships and a sense of being "American."

Barry Fore Copenhaver, 81, a retired Foreign Service specialist, passed away peacefully on April 19, 2021.

Mr. Copenhaver was born on April 4, 1940, in Corpus Christi, Texas, and graduated from Cuero High School in 1958. He was a member of the 1957 district championship football team and the 1958 baseball national championship team, which saw him inducted into his high school's hall of fame in 2014.

After earning a scholarship as a walk-on to the 1958 football season at Texas A&I University (now Texas A&M–Kingsley), Mr. Copenhaver completed a bachelor's degree in education. He was inducted into the Texas A&I Hall of Fame in 1984 for his personal contributions to the football program and again in 2009 for being a member of the 1959 national championship team.

Mr. Copenhaver married Judy Jacob on Nov. 24, 1965, at the First Presbyterian Church in Cuero, Texas. The couple enjoyed 50 years of marriage before her passing in 2015.

From 1963 to 1974, Mr. Copenhaver coached football throughout South Texas. In 1974 he was recruited by the University of Monterrey TEC in Mexico to be the offensive coordinator. He was hired as the head coach the following year, leading the Borregos Salvajes to five national championships (in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1982 and 1983).

For his work as head coach, Mr. Copenhaver was inducted into the TEC Hall of Fame in 2001 and, in 2015, to Mexico's national hall of fame.

In 1986 Mr. Copenhaver retired from coaching and joined the U.S. Foreign Service, where his service and dedication to his country were recognized with several awards over the course of his career.

Mr. Copenhaver was a general services officer who managed embassy operations in the toughest environments. He and his wife, Judy, an office management specialist who worked for several ambassadors, served in Panama, Germany, Pakistan (twice), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mexico, Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo during more than 20 years of government service. They were evacuated from wartorn Monrovia at the height of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Mr. Copenhaver retired from the Foreign Service in September 2005.

Friends and family members recall his uncanny ability to reach people with his positivity and will miss him greatly.

Mr. Copenhaver was preceded in death by his wife of 50 years, Judy Jacob Copenhaver. He is survived by his three children: Leah Lynne Copenhaver; Scott Wade Copenhaver (and his wife, Ineke, and their sons, Carson, Justin and Max); and Jill Copenhaver Trevino (and her husband, Lonnie, and their daughter, Maya).

Ben Fairfax, 78, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on March 28, 2021, in Vienna, Va.

From 1964 to 1969, Mr. Fairfax served in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam. He joined the Foreign Service as an economic-coned officer in 1978 and served in France, the former Yugoslavia, Russia, Costa Rica and South Korea.

He retired as a member of the Senior Foreign Service in 2007.

Mr. Fairfax enjoyed traveling and speaking foreign languages.

He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Rosalind, and two daughters, Luisa and Lydia.

Judith Anne Futch, 77, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Nov. 29, 2021, at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, N.C.

She was born on Jan. 14, 1944, in Burgaw, N.C., to Kenneth Culbreth Futch Sr. and Elizabeth Carswell Futch. A valedictorian and National Merit Scholarship winner from Burgaw High School, Ms. Futch received a bachelor's degree in political science from Duke University and a law degree from Yale University.

She began her career in government with the Internal Revenue Service, working with the Price Commission. She then served as a staff member for the subcommittee on constitutional rights, chaired by Senator Sam Ervin Jr.

Ms. Futch then joined the U.S. Information Agency and served as an embassy liaison officer in Madrid, New Delhi, Seoul and Rome.

As a Foreign Service officer, she assisted with logistics for the Olympic Games in Turin in 2006 and Vancouver in 2010. Her international travels enabled her to visit 112 foreign countries over the course of a public service career that spanned 35 years.

On retirement, she and her husband, Gallius E. Matheny, moved to Ashland, Va. In addition to traveling, attending the theater and playing bridge, gardening became her new passion. She was president of two gardening clubs and gave lectures and demonstrations on bonsai and ikebana flower arrangements.

Ms. Futch was preceded in death by her husband, Gallius E. Matheny; her parents; and her sister, Ellen F. Rusnak.

She is survived by her brother, Kenneth C. Futch Jr. (and his wife, Linda); sister Libby F. Rooks (and her husband, Charles); stepdaughter Allison Matheny; step-grandsons Cameron Green and Owen Green; nieces and nephews: Stephanie R. Hudson (and her husband, Bill), Stephen Rusnak, Caitlin R. Jepsen (and her husband, Phil), Kenneth Futch III, Karen F. Campbell (and her hus-

band, Michael), Jeffrey C. Rooks (and his wife, Ginny) and Sabra R. Permar (and her husband, Chip); and many great-nieces and great-nephews.

William "John" Hussey, 42, a Foreign Service officer, passed away suddenly on Nov. 15, 2021, at the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville, Va.

He was born in Frankfurt, Germany, on Jan. 29, 1979, to Bettye Hook Hussey and the late Col. William Van Hussey.

Mr. Hussey graduated from Texas State University and obtained the rank of major during his service in the U.S. Army. He worked as a special operations civil affairs officer and a doctrine writer in Abu Dhabi.

After leaving the military, he joined the Department of State as a Foreign Service officer and served in Manila, Maputo and Washington, D.C., and was recently stationed at Embassy Baku. He studied Spanish, German, Russian and a bit of Kiswahili.

Mr. Hussey is remembered by family and friends for his quick wit, infectious smile and love of wearing flip-flops even in the winter. He was known for his marvelous cooking, his loyal friendship and his love for his family. Whether enjoying the beach, scuba diving, snowboarding or camping, he always had a kind word and a story to tell.

He is survived by his wife, Jean, and two sons, Joshua and Jacob. He is also survived by his mother, Bettye Hook Hussey, of Harrisonburg, Va.; his sister, Alisabeth Gheen and her husband, Will, of Harrisonburg; three nieces, Ryleigh, Charlotte and Addison Gheen; father- and mother-in-law, Michael and Darla Donnenwirth of Bucyrus, Ohio; and his faithful dog, Paddy, as well as many cousins and a multitude of friends.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation at specialops.org.

Michelle Lynne "Miki" Jones, 60, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away on Nov. 28, 2021, with her two children by her side.

Ms. Jones was born on Jan. 25, 1961, in Port Huron, Mich., to Janet and Harry Jones. She graduated from Marysville High School in 1979 and earned an associate degree from St. Clair County Community College, a bachelor's from Eastern Michigan University, a master's from Acadia University and a Ph.D. from the University of Alberta in 1992.

She worked as an English professor at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, for 10 years before relocating to Estonia, where she was a Fulbright Senior Scholar from 1997 to 1998.

Ms. Jones then joined the U.S. Foreign Service, with tours in Poland, Bangladesh, Trinidad, Canada and Afghanistan. She spoke Polish, Spanish and Dari.

Ms. Jones served as diplomat-in-residence at the Ford School of the University of Michigan from 2013 to 2014 and later worked at the State Department in Washington, D.C.

She was a lifelong Tigers fan and feminist with a love of good coffee, herb gardens, classical music, English literature and her rescue dog, Lucy.

Ms. Jones was preceded in death by her father, Harry Jones, in 1992, and her sister, Kim Madis, in 2015.

She is survived by her son, Anthony Jones Kerr; her daughter, Robin Jones Kerr; her mother, Janet Jones; five siblings: Karri (and her husband, Brian) Dimick, Wendi (and her husband, Dave) Hickman, Timothy (and his wife, Elizabeth) Jones, Kristi (and her husband, Cory) Allers and Kip (and his wife, Kallen) Jones; a brother-in-law, Kenneth Madis; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Charles Stuart "Stu" Kennedy Jr., 94, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away peacefully on Jan. 2.

Mr. Kennedy, known all his life as Stu, was born in Chicago, Ill., in 1928. After graduating from Kent Preparatory School in 1946, he attended Williams College, where he received his bachelor's degree in history in 1950.

On graduation, he entered the U.S. Air Force intelligence branch. During the Korean War, he was assigned to "listen in on" Soviet MiG pilots flying on behalf of North Korea and found it a great way to learn Russian swear words. Following his military service, he earned a master's degree in history from Boston University, where he met his future wife, Ellen Fox, now deceased.

In 1955 he joined the U.S. Foreign Service. Over the course of 30 years, his postings in seven countries across three continents included serving as consul general in Saigon during the Vietnam War, in Athens and Seoul, and as principal officer in Naples. He retired with the rank of Minister Counselor in 1986.

But "retirement" led him to a second 35-year career, during which he founded and developed the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (adst.org/oral-history). As part of the program, Mr. Kennedy personally interviewed 1,266 retired American diplomats, working steadily until the spring of 2021.

The resulting archive, one of the world's premier collections of diplomatic history, now holds more than 2,500 interviews and is a vital resource for journalists, historians, students and others.

In recognition of his important oral

history work capturing the legacy of modern U.S. diplomacy, Mr. Kennedy received the Foreign Service Cup, the Cyrus R. Vance Award for Advancing Knowledge of American Diplomacy, the Forrest C. Pogue Award from the Mid-Atlantic Region Oral History Association, and a special citation from the American Academy of Diplomacy.

In 2011, former Secretary of State George Shultz commended the ADST program with the following words: "The efforts of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program are integral to safekeeping our nation's history, documenting the vast variety of settings in which our diplomacy takes place, identifying work that has succeeded, and studying the causes of less successful results. I applaud you for engaging in the vital task of transmitting this learning to others so that the future can learn from the past."

In 2014, Mr. Kennedy received the American Foreign Service Association's Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy in recognition of his distinguished career. His interview in the September 2014 *FSJ* can be read at bit.ly/KennedyInterview.

While Mr. Kennedy took his work and duty to country seriously, he always found the humor in any situation. An avid reader (and author of three books on diplomacy), he was most content with a cat on his lap, a book off the shelf and a friendly conversation on the horizon. He will be missed, but his legacy lives on in diplomatic work and the history he has both made and captured.

Mr. Kennedy was preceded in death by his wife, Ellen Fox. He is survived by his three children: Heather Kennedy of Seattle, Wash., Victoria Deveraux of Arlington, Va., and Charles Kennedy III of Pasadena, Calif., along with seven grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

In lieu of flowers, the family would welcome donations at adst.org/donation-page to support the work of ADST that he cared so much about.

Carol Joan Mills, 83, a retired Foreign Service secretary, died on Dec. 7, 2021, at the Elks Home Noble Senior Living Community in Bedford, Va.

Ms. Mills was born on Sept. 9, 1938, in Keyser, W.Va. She graduated from Keyser High School in 1956 and earned an associate degree in the arts from Potomac State College in 1958.

She began her career as a secretary at a law office in Keyser that year and also served with Brethren Volunteer Services in Washington, D.C.

As a secretary for USAID during the 1960s, she was posted in Thailand and Laos. She then transitioned to the State Department, serving as secretary to ambassadors all over the world. Her career included tours in Nicaragua, Hungary, South Korea and Australia. She also worked in Grenada and Mongolia on temporary duty assignments.

Ms. Mills grew up in the Church of the Brethren, and she credited her youth group with inspiring her relationship with the Lord, as well as instilling in her the principles that she kept throughout her life.

She loved cats, reading, travel and time with her nieces and nephews, to whom she was affectionately known as Aunt Butchie.

In retirement, she enjoyed taking cruises to different countries and staying in touch with friends, both in her hometown and throughout the world.

Ms. Mills was preceded in death by her parents, Delbert Elwood Mills and Genevieve Shoemaker Mills, and her three sisters, Charlotte Mills Wilmoth, Jeanie Mills Graham and Delberta Mills Daveler, and their spouses.

She is survived by seven nephews and nieces: Richard Lee Wilmoth, Thomas Craig Wilmoth, Mark Stephen Graham, Stephanie Graham Sorensen, Jonathan Mills Graham, Elizabeth Kristin Graham and Matthew Christopher Graham, and their families.

Margery Gruen Myers, 78, wife of the late Foreign Service Officer Robert P. Myers Jr., died of colon cancer at her home in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 29, 2021.

The only child of two economists, Ms. Myers was born and grew up in Washington, D.C. After attending Alice Deal Junior High and Sidwell Friends School, she graduated from Harvard-Radcliffe College in 1965 and the Georgetown University School of Medicine in 1970.

Dr. Myers was an accomplished physician, an expert horticulturist and an extraordinary chef, with an adventurous spirit and an insatiable curiosity. Before her senior year in college, she embarked on a four-month trip around the world. Traveling alone, she visited the Philippines, India and Syria, among other countries.

Along the way, she met a dashing Foreign Service officer, Robert Myers, whom she married in 1966. During their 39 years of marriage, they shared many adventures, living in Laos, Spain and Northern Ireland as they raised their three boys.

One of the few women in her medical school class, Dr. Myers refused to choose between family and career; she embraced both. Her first two sons, Robert and Michael, were born while she was in medical school—and she still graduated on time with her class.

Her third son, Chris, was born on an American military base in Thailand while

her husband was posted in Vietnam. She diagnosed him with meningitis and flew with him back to the U.S. for emergency care. Two years later, she was in Laos when the Pathet Lao took control of the country, and she hustled her three kids into a propeller plane as soldiers descended.

Medicine was her true calling. An "old-fashioned" doctor in the best sense of the word, she made house calls and believed in spending time listening carefully to her patients. No matter where she practiced—from hospitals in less-developed countries to inner city clinics and the prestigious Walter Reed Army Medical Center—she brought the same dedication to her craft and devotion to all her patients. Long after she retired, she remained a fierce patient advocate.

But for all her accomplishments, Dr. Myers may be best known for her genuine kindness and her fabulous sense of style. She remembered birthdays, gave thoughtful presents and checked up on people.

An active member of All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., she enjoyed many hours working in the church garden. She shared her love of gardening and nature with her eight grandchildren, whom she adored.

Dr. Myers found and created beauty wherever she went, family members recall. "I've lived a beautiful life," she said on the day she died.

She was predeceased by her husband, Robert, in 2005. Survivors include her three sons: Robert Myers III of Washington, D.C., Michael Myers of Worcester, Mass., and Chris Myers Asch of Hallowell, Maine; and eight beloved grandchildren: Matthew, Damon, Pearce, Miriam, Robin, John, Isla and Aaron.

Joseph Presel, 79, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 19, 2021, of a heart attack.

A native of Rhode Island, Mr. Presel joined the Foreign Service in 1963 on graduation from Harvard College. In a career spanning four decades, he specialized in Russian affairs and worked extensively in multilateral diplomacy and political-military affairs.

Early in his career, he escorted several major American performing arts groups—Duke Ellington and his orchestra, the Alvin Ailey Dance Company and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, among others—on extended performance tours of the Soviet Union. He then continued his studies at St. Antony's College, Oxford University.

Mr. Presel served in Ankara, Paris, Moscow, Belgrade (as deputy chief of mission) and twice on the U.S. arms control delegation in Vienna, the second time as deputy U.S. representative.

His Washington service included two assignments to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, as well as tours in the European, Political-Military Affairs, International Organizations, and Intelligence and Research bureaus. He also had several assignments in the offices of Department of State principals.

In 1993 he became deputy to the coordinator of U.S. assistance to the newly independent states (NIS) and coordinator for NIS regional affairs. Two years later, he was named special negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh with the rank of ambassador.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton appointed him ambassador to the Republic of Uzbekistan, a position he occupied until October 2000. His last tour in the Foreign Service was as a professor at the United States Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

After retiring from the Foreign Service in 2003, Ambassador Presel worked in the private sector and at the Central Intelligence Agency, taught Russian history at the university level and served on several boards of directors.

In recent years, he had divided his time between Washington, D.C., and Paris.

He is survived by his wife, Claire-Lise Junod Presel, of Washington, D.C., and Geneva, Switzerland.

Frances Helen Scott, 80, the wife of retired Foreign Service Officer and Ambassador Gerald Wesley Scott, died unexpectedly of heart failure on Nov. 6, 2021, in Richmond, Va.

Ms. Scott was born in Bournemouth, England, on Nov. 16, 1940. Her parents were Lieutenant and Mrs. Alan Tacon Gardner-Brown. Her father, the descendent of a line of Anglican priests, was serving in the Royal Marines. Her mother, Mary Beatrice O'Donovan, was the daughter of a Harley Street specialist and sometime Conservative Member of Parliament.

Given the exigencies of World War II, Ms. Scott and her twin sister, Margaret Mary, were sent to boarding school at the age of 4.

Later Ms. Scott lived on Malta for two years, attending school with the Madams of the Sacred Heart while her father was posted to the Panama Canal Zone, then completed her ordinary education at Farnborough Hill Convent College in Hampshire.

She then gained a nursing qualification at the Royal Homeopathic Hospital and trained as a midwife at the Simpson Maternity Hospital in Edinburgh.

Reading of the devastation of the Nigerian civil war, Ms. Scott joined Save the Children and was sent to Nigeria, and then to Yemen.

She met Gerald Scott, a career Foreign Service officer, at the end of 1974 in Hue,

Vietnam, where she was working with the orphanages, and he was serving as vice consul. They married after their evacuation and the fall of Vietnam in 1975.

The Scotts served overseas in Washington, D.C., and in Italy, New York City, Swaziland, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Kenya and The Gambia, where he was ambassador from 1995 to 1998.

They were also posted to the Naval War College and again at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations for 15 years after 9/11. Throughout that period, Ambassador Scott was asked annually to be the senior adviser on African affairs on the U.S. delegation to the General Assembly.

Ms. Scott was mother to three children (one son died in childhood) and was an exemplary diplomat's wife. She regularly worked with local charities, especially those dealing with sick and disabled children, and she volunteered to teach English in local schools.

After Amb. Scott's retirement, the couple were both accepted into the Order of Malta, of which Ms. Scott was a Dame of Grace and Devotion. She participated as a nurse on 13 Malta pilgrimages to Lourdes and volunteered a week's service for seven years with Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes, helping to staff the shrine during the pilgrimage season.

Ms. Scott was a member of the Colony Club in New York and of the Woman's Club in Richmond.

She is survived by her husband and their two sons, Charles and Michael; by her twin sister, Margaret, of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire; and by her brothers, Matthew and Richard.

JoAnne Shankle, 89, wife of the late Foreign Service Officer and former AFSA President Arthur Perry Shankle, died on Oct. 24, 2021.

Ms. Shankle was born in Fort Worth, Texas, on Sept. 15, 1932, the daughter of a police officer.

She met and married her husband, and they embarked on a lifetime of adventure and travel to many countries including Ecuador, Spain, Chile, Bolivia, Mexico and the Bahamas, where Mr. Shankle was the deputy chief of mission.

On returning to the United States, the couple made their home in Bethesda, Md. Ms. Shankle worked as an educator all over the world and as a successful real estate agent in the D.C. metro area.

After her husband's death, she retired to their home on the Chesapeake Bay in Mathews County, Va., with dear friends and her dog, Chessie. She lived a life of love, enthusiasm and joy, and loved her family and friends fiercely.

Ms. Shankle was preceded in death by her husband, Arthur Perry Shankle Jr.; her son, Joe Shankle; and her sister, Paula Karnopp.

She is survived by her daughter, Susan Gordon (and her husband, Michael); her son, Steven Shankle (and his wife, Marianne Acuna); her daughter-in-law, Meredith Shankle; and grandchildren Danny, Emily, Casey, Perry, Anne, Caleb, Olivia, Lainey, Flor and Steven.

Keith L. Silver, 52, a Foreign Service officer, passed away on Nov. 29, 2021, in Salem, Mass., after a battle with cancer.

Born on Feb. 8, 1969, in Chelmsford, Mass., Mr. Silver graduated summa cum laude from New England College and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Panama before earning his master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in 1995.

He joined the Foreign Commercial Service with the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2000. Overseas assignments included Buenos Aires (2001-2004), St. Petersburg (2005-2009), Madrid (2012-2017) and Athens (2017-2021). He also served at the U.S. Export Assistance Center in Miami, Fla.

A valued member of the Foreign Service community and a respected leader, Mr. Silver worked on several high-profile visits while serving abroad, including that of President Barack Obama to Madrid; Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to Thessaloniki; and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Athens.

He played an integral part in organizing the participation of the U.S. as the "honored country" at the weeklong Thessaloniki International Fair in 2018, for which he and his staff received the International Trade Administration's distinguished bronze award.

Mr. Silver worked tirelessly to bring numerous international investors to the United States, and to create American jobs by improving and growing trade relations between the U.S. and the countries in which he served.

Mr. Silver deeply valued his Foreign Service career and appreciated learning about the countries and regions in which he was posted. He especially enjoyed traveling with his wife and daughter, trying different cuisines and practicing the languages he learned.

Remembered as kind, friendly and welcoming, he enjoyed old and new friendships, great conversations and good wine.

Mr. Silver is survived by his wife, Margarita Gokun Silver, and his daughter, Eliana Silver. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to the Be The Match Foundation at BeTheMatch.org.

Kenneth N. Skoug Jr., 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Dec. 5, 2021, at his home in Harleysville, Pa.

Mr. Skoug was born in Fargo, N.D., in 1931. An accomplished collegiate run-

ner, he earned a bachelor's degree from Columbia College, New York City, in 1953 and a master's degree and doctorate from The George Washington University.

He also attended the then Georgetown Institute of Language and Linguistics from 1955 to 1956 and the National War College between 1973 and 1974.

After completing service in the U.S. Army, Mr. Skoug married the love of his life, Martha Reed, in 1958. Together, they raised two children while traveling the world.

His Foreign Service career, which lasted from 1957 to 1990, included assignments in Germany, Mexico, the former Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Venezuela (twice), as well as four tours at the Department of State in Washington, D.C.

Some of the highlights of his career include serving in Prague during the Warsaw Pact invasion of the country in 1968; traveling the world as a Foreign Service inspector; working as economic-commercial counselor in Moscow; negotiating the release of political prisoners with Fidel Castro while director of the Cuban affairs office; and establishing personal relations between Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez and President George H.W. Bush.

His final and most prestigious position was that of deputy chief of mission in Caracas during a period of political unrest.

Mr. Skoug published two books: *The United States and Cuba Under Reagan and Shultz: A Foreign Service Officer Reports* (Praeger, 1996) and *Czechoslovakia's Lost Fight for Freedom, 1967-1969: An American Embassy Perspective* (Praeger, 1999).

He received two Presidential Meritorious Service awards and a personal commendation from Secretary of State George Shultz for helping to negotiate a migration agreement with Cuba in 1984.

After retirement, Mr. Skoug and Martha, his beloved wife of 50 years, resided in Virginia, where they enjoyed hosting their two children's families. After Martha's death, he moved to Harleysville to be near his daughter, Reed, and her husband, Michael.

In 2020 he appeared in an episode of the Discovery Channel program, "Expedition Unknown," with his son and grandson to remember Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 2501, an unsolved airplane crash that had taken his father's life in 1950.

A devoted family man all his life, Mr. Skoug also loved dogs, nature, gardening and all manner of competitive games, particularly baseball. He promoted charitable contributions for the humane treatment of all sentient beings—in particular, the Humane Farming Association and Animal Welfare Institute.

He is survived by his two children, Reed and Kenneth, and their spouses, Michael and Becky, as well as five grandchildren, Curtis, Kenneth, Cecilia, Evangeline and Meganne.

Michael B. Smith, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer, died of pneumonia in Aldie, Va., on Nov. 8, 2021.

Mr. Smith, whose father ran a construction business, was born in Marblehead, Mass., on June 16, 1936. He learned to sail as a child, continuing a tradition of local seafaring his family traced back to 1640. As an adult, he sailed on the Chesapeake Bay in his 34-foot sloop, sometimes with a foreign guest on board with whom he talked trade business.

He studied Scandinavian affairs and international government at Harvard University, where he graduated in 1958. The Foreign Service initially rejected his application for a job, deeming him medically unqualified because his spleen had been removed when he was a child due to a blood condition.

His mother, outraged, protested in a letter to Secretary of State Christian A. Herter, noting that her son had played football and lacrosse at Harvard. A few months later, the State Department accepted him.

His first overseas assignment was in 1960 to Tehran, one of the largest U.S. missions in the world at the time, where his duties included running the commissary and helping to install an elaborate Lionel model train set that a visitor had given to the shah's infant.

He then held junior posts in Chad and France prior to an unusual assignment to the White House Office of Presidential Correspondence, where he helped answer letters Americans had written to President Richard Nixon. He joined a team negotiating textile-trade agreements in the mid-1970s and soon became chief textile negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Mr. Smith went on to lead trade delegations for more than a decade, including as deputy U.S. trade representative, with the rank of ambassador, in both the Carter and Reagan administrations. Known for his blunt, hard-nosed approach, he was the nation's point man in global talks aimed at reducing or eliminating tariffs, opening markets and extending trade rules to services and intellectual property.

Ambassador Smith was also among the leaders in the 1979 Tokyo Round of multilateral trade negotiations that cut tariffs and slowed the growth of other trade barriers on a range of goods in 102 countries.

At the negotiating table, he often faced counterparts who refused to make concessions. One of his tricks was to pull out his airline ticket and muse about the possibility of catching an earlier flight home.

The key to pulling off this ploy, former colleagues said, was that the other side knew that Ambassador Smith really was willing to walk away rather than accept a bad deal.

Mr. Smith met Deborah Wince in 1986 when she was working at the White House and sought his backing for changes in an agreement with Japan. When she arrived at his office, she recalled, he said, "You have three minutes. What do you want?" They married in 1988.

After leaving government service the same year, Amb. Smith formed Rockmere Associates, a consultancy that gave advice to companies trying to break into protected foreign markets. He ran it until he was in his mid-70s.

Amb. Smith is survived by his wife of 33 years, Deborah, along with two children from his first marriage, Eric Smith of Overland Park, Kan., and Leslie Rosen of Nahant, Mass.; two sons from his second marriage, Devereux Smith of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and Christian Smith of Washington; eight grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Geoffrey Ernest Wolfe, 80, a retired Foreign Service officer and the spouse of Ambassador (ret.) Sandra Louise Vogelgesang, died peacefully surrounded by his family on Oct. 27, 2021, in Bethesda, Md.

He was born on Jan. 11, 1941, in Washington, D.C., to Joseph Ernest Wolfe and Edna Othelia Wolfe.

Mr. Wolfe graduated from Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, Md., in 1959. He earned a bachelor's degree in international affairs from American University in 1963, and a master's in political science from Columbia University in New York in 1978.

His first foray into international affairs took place at the Department of Agriculture, where he worked for the Foreign Agricultural Service from 1966 to 1969.

Mr. Wolfe's 30-year Foreign Service career began in 1969. His primary focus was on economic issues, with a geographic emphasis on the Soviet Union. He was fluent in Russian, thanks to training at the Army Language School in Monterey, Calif.

His first posting in the Foreign Service was Vietnam. Thereafter, he worked in the Soviet Union, Washington, D.C., and Canada. While he was in Washington, his work ranged from an assignment to the Environmental Protection Agency to negotiations on nuclear issues in the nations of the former USSR.

At Embassy Ottawa, Mr. Wolfe served in the political section while his wife, Sandra Louise Vogelgesang, also a career FSO, served as economic minister-counselor. He later accompanied her to Nepal during her tenure as ambassador, from 1994 to 1997. While there, the family traveled extensively in Asia, as well as Australia and New Zealand.

After retiring from the Foreign Service, Mr. Wolfe was active in the Bethesda, Md., community. He was particularly involved with the Boy Scouts, serving as a scoutmaster for Troop 1434.

Mr. Wolfe was also involved in local politics, serving as precinct chair for the Democratic party. He maintained an impressive array of tools and lumber, which he used to create some of the furniture for the family home, and he loved showing his children how to make things with their hands.

He and his wife continued to enjoy traveling after both retired from the Foreign Service, seeking out places they had not explored during their careers and returning to past homes, such as Vietnam, to see what had changed. Destinations ranged from Western Europe and South America to South Africa, China and Japan.

Mr. Wolfe is survived by his wife, Sandra Louise Vogelgesang, and their two children, Christopher Glenn Wolfe (and wife Kim and granddaughter Summer) and Carolyn Louise Wolfe (and husband Satchel Kornfeld). He is also survived by his brother, Bertram Wolfe, of Kensington, Md., and his three children, Demian, Candice and Timothy, and their respective spouses and children.

Arthur Hamilton Woodruff, 92, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, passed away on June 14, 2021, in Nokomis, Fla.

After graduating from Harvard University in 1950, Mr. Woodruff enlisted in the Marines and was awarded a Purple Heart for his service in Korea.

He joined the Foreign Service in 1954. His career included postings to Morocco, the Congo, London, NATO headquarters in Brussels, the Canadian War College and the United Nations in New York.

He was appointed U.S. ambassador to the Central African Republic in 1981, serving there until 1983. He retired in 1988.

Ambassador Woodruff also served on the editorial board of *The Foreign Service Journal* from 1962 to 1963.

He was an avid reader of history and a devoted fan of the Boston Red Sox.

Amb. Woodruff is survived by his wife, Jean, and his children, William, Lauren, Alexandra and Wells.

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

Thicker Than Oil

Vision or Mirage:
Saudi Arabia at the Crossroads
David H. Rundell, I.B. Tauris, 2021, $17.95/ paperback, e-book available, 432 pages.

Reviewed by Steven Alan Honley

To riff on its title, this book is both a vision and a mirage. On the plus side, it is the best one-volume history of a country I've read in a long time, masterfully explaining how Saudi Arabia has enjoyed so many years of stability, how it has become less stable over the years and what to look for in the future.

That comes as no surprise considering its author, retired Foreign Service Officer David H. Rundell, has deep, if not unmatched, expertise. He spent more than half of his 30-year diplomatic career in the country, working at the embassy in Riyadh and at the consulates in Jeddah and Dhahran as chargé d'affaires, deputy chief of mission, political counselor, economic counselor, commercial counselor and commercial attaché.

Just in case that weren't enough to establish his regional bona fides, his other overseas assignments included Bahrain, Syria, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Now based in Dubai and London, he travels regularly to Saudi Arabia and is a partner in the consulting firm Arabia Analytica.

Rundell structures his book around an existential gamble. Vision 2030, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's blueprint for his country's future, is the most radical set of economic and social reforms seen there for half a century. "How it will affect the long-established balance between tradition and change that has kept Saudi Arabia stable is the principal theme of this book. Will the current reforms prove to be a successful vision or a deceptive mirage? This is the broad question I seek to answer."

Of course, one must first know Saudi history to appreciate the roots of the current challenges and the necessity for wholesale restructuring. Here, Rundell excels. He begins with several brisk but thorough chapters documenting how the House of Saud came to unify and rule one of the few countries Europeans never colonized.

Next, he discusses how each Saudi monarch has managed (or mismanaged) his succession, sought to balance stakeholders and governed. And he concludes the book with a detailed discussion of the Vision 2030 plan and its prospects.

Inevitably, there is a certain amount of repetition along the way as Rundell tacks back and forth between themes, requiring him to cite some developments again and again in various contexts. However, I found those periodic reminders helpful, not tedious, for the most part.

What I *did* find tedious was the poor copyediting and proofreading of the manuscript. On far too many pages there are sentences that either lack punctuation or have superfluous commas inserted, apparently at random. Every reference to former President Barack Obama (even in the index) misspells his first name as "Barak." And Rundell cites an Eisenhower administration arms deal but says it occurred in 1952, when Harry Truman was still president.

While those shortcomings do not shake my faith that the author knows what he's talking about, they are distractions. My real problem with *Vision or Mirage* is its analysis. To his credit, Rundell discusses the negative aspects of Saudi society and, in particular, the character of MBS, as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is known.

In Chapter 6, for example, he notes: "Both Saudi officials and foreign businessmen complain of being summoned on short notice to late-night meetings and then kept waiting five hours for the crown prince to turn up, whereupon he asks good questions, sometimes talks more than listens, and leaves after 45 minutes." Yet he also praises MBS for being "ambitious, focused, forceful, charismatic, disciplined, and decisive."

While Rundell is careful to note the potential for disaster, overall, he comes across as a cheerleader for Vision 2030 and the regime.

It is certainly plausible that both assessments of his leadership style are equally valid. But while Rundell is careful to note the potential for disaster, overall, he comes across as a cheerleader for Vision 2030 and the regime.

Rundell opens his book in November 2017, when hundreds of Saudi princes and businessmen were taken to Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton Hotel, which became what he wryly calls "the world's first five-star

prison." There they were held for weeks or months until they signed over assets, resigned positions and pledged their loyalty to MBS.

In the process, at least one detainee died, and dozens of others alleged mistreatment bordering on torture during interrogations. Yet Rundell seems to regard the episode as a regrettable but necessary signal to the monarchy's opponents that times were changing—and even says it succeeded.

Similarly, he condemns the brutal murder in October 2018 of *Washington Post* contributing columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the hands of Saudi government agents inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. But Rundell believes the motive was not Khashoggi's very public attacks on the regime or his contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood, but ingratitude. For while he and his family had long benefited from their royal ties, Khashoggi had publicly denounced his benefactors as corrupt and unfit to rule. And that constituted treason in their eyes.

In a triumph of understatement, Rundell observes: "Such reasoning may justify kidnapping or killing in Riyadh but, like public beheadings, it flies in the face of acceptable Western norms." He makes the point even clearer in his concluding admonition: "It [the West] cannot ignore the assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, the detention of political activists or the war in Yemen—yet it should not let these events overshadow the genuine improvements taking place."

Whether Vision 2030 has actually produced "genuine improvements" worth such trade-offs, or is a mirage, Rundell need not worry. In fact, the West *has* largely ignored those developments, at least publicly.

While President Joe Biden has refused to meet or even speak with MBS, he dispatched National Security Adviser Jake Sherman to Riyadh to do so last September—just before the third anniversary of Khashoggi's murder. And we continue to support Saudi Arabia's brutal proxy war against Iran in Yemen, albeit with less zeal than the previous administration showed.

Vision or Mirage has much to offer readers, but they should take its conclusions with several heaps of salt—or sand.

Steven Alan Honley, a State Department Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997, went on to serve as editor-in-chief of The Foreign Service Journal *from 2001 to 2014. He is the author of* Future Forward: FSI at 70—A History of the Foreign Service Institute *(Arlington Hall Press, 2017).*

Navigating a Major Transition

Three Days at Camp David: How a Secret Meeting in 1971 Transformed the Global Economy
Jeffrey E. Garten, HarperCollins, 2021, $29.99/hardcover, e-book available, 435 pages.

Reviewed by Harry Kopp

Jeffrey Garten served in government in Democratic and Republican administrations, under presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter and Clinton. He was a successful investment banker on Wall Street. He was dean, and now is dean emeritus, of the Yale School of Management. He is the on-camera second banana to his spouse, cooking star Ina Garten, which makes him very likely the best-fed man in America. He has more than enough laurels to rest on, but to his credit and our gain, he has gone to work and given us this terrific book.

Three Days at Camp David covers the 1971 U.S. decision, thrashed out over an August weekend, to break its international obligations and free the dollar from its link to gold. But this is no treatise on monetary policy. Garten was not present (he joined the administration only in 1973), but he has interviewed every living major participant and read deeply in the public record. His account of how the weekend played out is vivid and immediate: the reader feels the interplay of character, calculation, policy and ambition at the top of the Richard M. Nixon administration.

The economics are taken care of in two brisk and deft opening chapters. The wartime Bretton Woods agreements of 1944 had as their linchpin a U.S. pledge to exchange gold for dollars on demand at a price of $35.00 an ounce. Other countries tied their currencies to the U.S. dollar at a fixed rate, which could be changed only under extraordinary circumstances.

This rigid system provided the stability needed for postwar recovery, but as the world's economies changed and diverged, it became increasingly unworkable. By 1971, the global supply of dollars far exceeded what the U.S. could redeem for gold. As redemptions rose and the gold reserve dwindled, Treasury officials saw the threat of a market panic, and President Nixon saw a threat to his reelection.

Determined to act, Nixon ordered his economic advisers to Camp David the weekend of Aug. 13-15. Garten sketches the principals: President Nixon; Treasury Secretary John B. Connally Jr. and his undersecretary, Paul A. Volcker Jr.; Arthur F. Burns, chair of the Federal Reserve; George P. Shultz, director of the Office of Management and Budget; and Nixon's assistant for international economic policy, Peter G. Peterson.

Garten describes this group as "a team of men with diverse backgrounds and economic philosophies," but "diverse" is stretching a point. Except

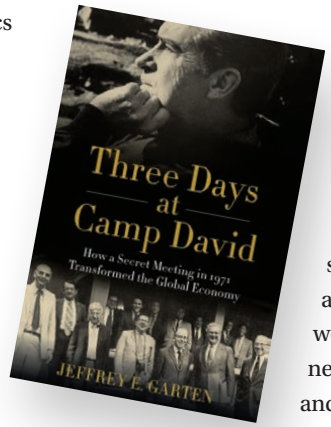
for Connally, a three-term governor of Texas, and Nixon himself, they were all nonpolitical people, highly educated, deeply experienced, middle-aged (Burns at 67 was the eldest by nine years), male and white. Readers are free to speculate how the dynamics of the weekend, and the decisions ultimately taken, might have differed if the group had been diverse in the current meaning of the word.

Connally in Garten's phrase was "hyper-articulate," able to "ingest massive amounts of information, synthesize it, and recall it." He was then a Democrat (he switched parties in 1973), but his talent, political savvy, outspoken nationalism and what Henry Kissinger called his "swaggering self-assurance" won Nixon over. He was very much in charge during the weekend.

The president scheduled a speech to the nation for Sunday evening, a deadline that would speed the Camp David debates and ensure that Connally could force agreement. Discussions were serious and disagreements were sharp, but such animosities as emerged were based on policy, not personality. (George Shultz, for example, "egged on Nixon's growing hostility toward Burns, telling the president, 'Arthur has a way of holding the money supply hostage to [fiscal] policy.'") Without computers, the principals often had to send out for data, like cramming students sending out for pizza.

The policy process was top-down. The day before the Camp David meeting, Connally and Nixon had agreed on a set of policies that Volcker had developed over the past two years. Connally bullied it through essentially intact, but with few details—a map with destinations but no routes. The U.S. would stop selling gold until negotiations could reset the gold price and the exchange-rate matrix; in the interim, an import surcharge, set somewhat arbitrarily at 10 percent, would be imposed to give negotiators leverage. Wages and prices were to be frozen in place, also "temporarily." Tax incentives would go to U.S. businesses only—for example, excise tax relief for U.S. cars, but not for imports. As the package came together, the State Department was not consulted.

In 1971 the United States was both smart and lucky.



Nixon's Sunday night speech began with a defense of the strongest peacetime government intervention in the economy since the New Deal. It concluded, however, with a paean to what Garten calls "the core Republican philosophy of individual responsibility, individual initiative, and the need to reduce government involvement in everyday life."

The president knew his audience. "In the days after the speech," Garten writes, "the reaction in the United States was, with a few exceptions, wildly supportive." *The New York Times* praised Nixon's "boldness," and Democrats, who controlled both houses of Congress, could only complain that Nixon stole their ideas and took the credit. Stocks rose in New York and fell in Europe and Japan.

By December, Connally and Volcker had negotiated a realignment of exchange rates, and U.S. lifted the import surcharge. But the Camp David program soon eroded and then collapsed. By 1976, the U.S. followed its trading partners and let the dollar float, ending any connection between the dollar and gold.

The program did not last, but it was not a failure. It was, says Garten, "part of a fundamental transition that the United States had to make" from postwar domination to "a new environment where power and responsibility among the allies had to be readjusted."

In 1971 the U.S. was both smart and lucky. The Camp David program hit what it did not aim at: the effort to preserve fixed exchange rates ended with floating rates that strengthened policy flexibility; unilateral U.S. action led to greater international coordination; and an attempt to devalue the dollar ended with the dollar as dominant as ever in international trade and finance. Wage and price controls, however, had no such redeeming outcome. Inflation was already rising when President Gerald Ford ended controls in 1974; it then surged and would remain strong for a decade.

Writing at the end of 2020, Garten says the United States is "again in a major transition," away from globalization and toward "rebuilding the engines of growth and the social safety net." Like the shock of Nixon's unilateral actions, the "even bigger shock" of the Trump administration's disdain for international cooperation "creates an opportunity … to pick up the pieces and establish a new set of global arrangements to deal with the formidable agenda ahead."

Let's hope we are smart and lucky again. ■

Harry W. Kopp is a former Foreign Service officer. He is a frequent contributor to The Foreign Service Journal *and a member of its editorial board.*

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Winter in Kabul, 2005

BY MARC GILKEY

COURTESY OF MARC GILKEY

The ever-present mountains of Afghanistan, the Hindu Kush, is a great watershed that supplies rivers that can serve as hubs of agricultural production and economic growth in the country. But a lack of modern farming methods, including irrigation development, and dependence on erratic weather patterns, have made farming difficult and limited output to a fraction of its potential.

I arrived in Bangkok in August 2021 and was in quarantine for two weeks when the events at the Kabul airport unfolded. Sitting in a hotel room and feeling quite helpless, I reflected on my year in Afghanistan—a lifetime ago, it seemed.

I also thought about the work done around the world by the United States Department of Agriculture, which President Abraham Lincoln described as "The People's Department" at its creation in 1862.

With USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, I have enjoyed an abundance of experiences and opportunities, and as I consider the numerous chapters, none have been more memorable than the time I spent in Afghanistan.

❄

During the winter of 2004, USDA was instructed by then-President George W. Bush to place agricultural advisers in the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan, so that expertise from the department could be applied to meet technical needs for the reconstruction of Afghanistan's agricultural sector.

As a platform for reconstruction efforts, the PRTs were an alternative model that combined both security and reconstruction. USDA technical expertise would be strategically placed in the PRTs throughout Afghanistan.

A call for volunteers was sent throughout USDA, and I could not resist this challenging opportunity. Before long, on New Year's Day 2005, I was on a plane to Kabul. After an emergency stop in Azerbaijan, we touched down at Kabul International Airport, which would later be called the Hamid Karzai International Airport and, most recently, was the backdrop for great sadness and desperation.

❄

Winter in Kabul is cold, crisp and quiet, at least it was in January 2005. On the ground, USDA had 10 volunteers from an array of agencies: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Food Safety Inspection Service, Farm Service Agency, Food and Nutrition Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Our lifeline in Washington, D.C., was Otto Gonzalez of the Foreign Agriculture Service; without the support of his team, we would have been rudderless.

My job seemed simple. As the USDA provincial reconstruction team coordinator, I would have the luxury of staying in Kabul in a warm "hooch"—basically a modified shipping container—and developing strategies to advance the rebuilding of the agricultural sector.

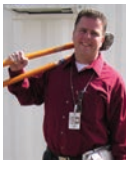
The reality was a bit different: I was to be behind the scenes and do everything possible to clear the path for my colleagues who were sent to the front lines in Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Helmand, Parwan and beyond.

Working in Kabul at the embassy also gave USDA a seat on the country team, which enabled critical coordination with both the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The importance of diplomacy and development in strengthening the agricultural sector in Afghanistan cannot be emphasized enough.

❄

For the first six months of 2005, the atmosphere was quite permissible for movement within Kabul and back and forth among the numerous PRTs, as well. I visited the Ministry of Agriculture regularly and even had a satellite office there. The goal was to help build the ability of the Afghan central government to support and provide services to the agricultural sector.

The aim was to implement a national



Marc Gilkey is a Senior Foreign Service officer who has served with the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) for more than 25 years. He is currently posted in Bangkok, where he serves as the regional manager for South Asia. He has served previously in Afghanistan, Mexico, India, Belgium and Colombia, in addition to assignments in Washington, D.C., with USAID. He is a Navy veteran.

strategic plan that addressed broad areas of need in the agricultural sector. Many hoped to create export markets for specialty products—pomegranates, grapes, raisins and a plethora of dried fruit products—all of which were meant to be an alternative to poppy production.

Looking for and evaluating alternative livelihoods for Afghan farmers and villagers, I was repeatedly forced to acknowledge the stark realities of everyday life in Afghanistan. Electricity and running water were sporadic, and necessary supplies were difficult, if not impossible, to access. Seeds, root stock, fertilizers and animal vaccines were needed to revitalize the agriculture sector.

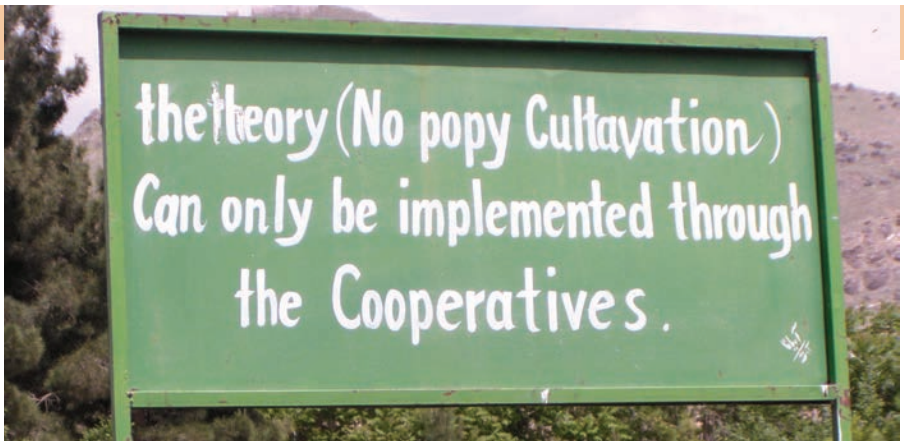
❄

The arrival of summer brought several bombings of internet cafés in Kabul and a very quick tightening of security. Visits to the ministry became more complicated, though more important than ever.

Amazing work at the PRTs continued: reforestation, soil conservation, poultry production, microloans, irrigation, animal vaccinations and plant protection. This team really showed what USDA could deliver.

At meetings, a State colleague would introduce me as the "secret weapon," always clarifying that USDA was neither secret nor a weapon, but a known entity—think Green Revolution and Food for Peace—that was welcome at official and rural doorsteps around the world. It was a time of great hope in Afghanistan.

As the year continued, I received my onward assignment to Mexico. I left Kabul in late 2005 with a feeling of confidence that a better day would dawn. My counterparts at the Ministry of Agriculture and the farmers I had met were all eager to embrace change, and our interventions were making a difference.



COURTESY OF MARC GILKEY

Cooperatives have a vital role in any effort to move away from poppy cultivation toward more diversified and productive agriculture in Afghanistan. They are the transmission belt for the specialized training USDA delivered in areas such as fertilizer management, animal husbandry, and plant and animal disease control to Kabul University's colleges of agriculture and veterinary science around the country.

COURTESY OF MARC GILKEY

The author (front right) shares extension materials for improving crop protection and production with Afghan farmers, experts and officials at Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

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One night, after I returned to Washington in December 2005 to get my car for the drive to Mexico City, my boss called me. "We need you to pick something up at Dulles airport for an event at the Embassy of Afghanistan," he said. The menu for the planned event featured Afghan pomegranates and grapes, which required a special-use permit with the condition of 100 percent inspection and safeguarding.

This meant I would drive my Ford Escort to Dulles, retrieve the small shipment from a Customs and Border Protection officer, inspect it thoroughly for bugs and diseases and, finally, drop it off at the embassy.

Naively, I wore a suit, thinking I would be invited into the embassy event. I went to the back entrance as instructed and delivered the produce to the American staff, who took the package and barely acknowledged me. As I returned to the parking lot, I saw the Afghan drivers and guards. Placing my right hand over my heart, I nodded to them.

Instantly they smiled and returned the gesture. We drank hot *kahwah* (tea) out in the parking lot, and I regretted not keeping one pomegranate for further inspection. Loosening my tie, I could hear the distant chatter of the party and realized I was exactly where I belonged, where it was cold, crisp and quiet.

❄

In the years since, as the U.S. intervention ground on under the banner of constantly changing goals and priorities, I have often been asked by people who never touched Afghanistan if I wasted my time there.

Rather than respond with a yes or no, I would describe my experiences sharing knowledge and working with the Afghan people: giving lectures at the university, providing veterinary publications to aspiring veterinary students, planting trees, growing asparagus and drinking hundreds of cups of tea. ■

BY CAROLE FENTON ■ SIGHNAGHI, GEORGIA

We had been experiencing wonderful weather during our trip to Georgia in late September 2021. When we reached the Kakheti wine region, however, our day in the distinctive town of Sighnaghi became picturesque in a different way—with fog and mist creating an unexpectedly scenic backdrop. As we hiked uphill in the drizzle to visit a winery, we passed a villager headed the opposite way. This "slice of local life" warmed me even more than the delicious, mellow wines we tasted a few minutes later. ■

Please submit your favorite, recent photograph to be considered for Local Lens. Images must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi at 8" x 10", or 1 MB or larger) and must not be in print elsewhere. Include a short description of the scene/event, as well as your name, brief biodata and the type of camera used. Send to **locallens@afsa.org**.

Carole Fenton is a Foreign Service family member. She and her FSO husband, Tom, are posted in Bangkok. Their previous posts include Budapest and Khartoum. She took this photo with an Apple iPhone 6SE.

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