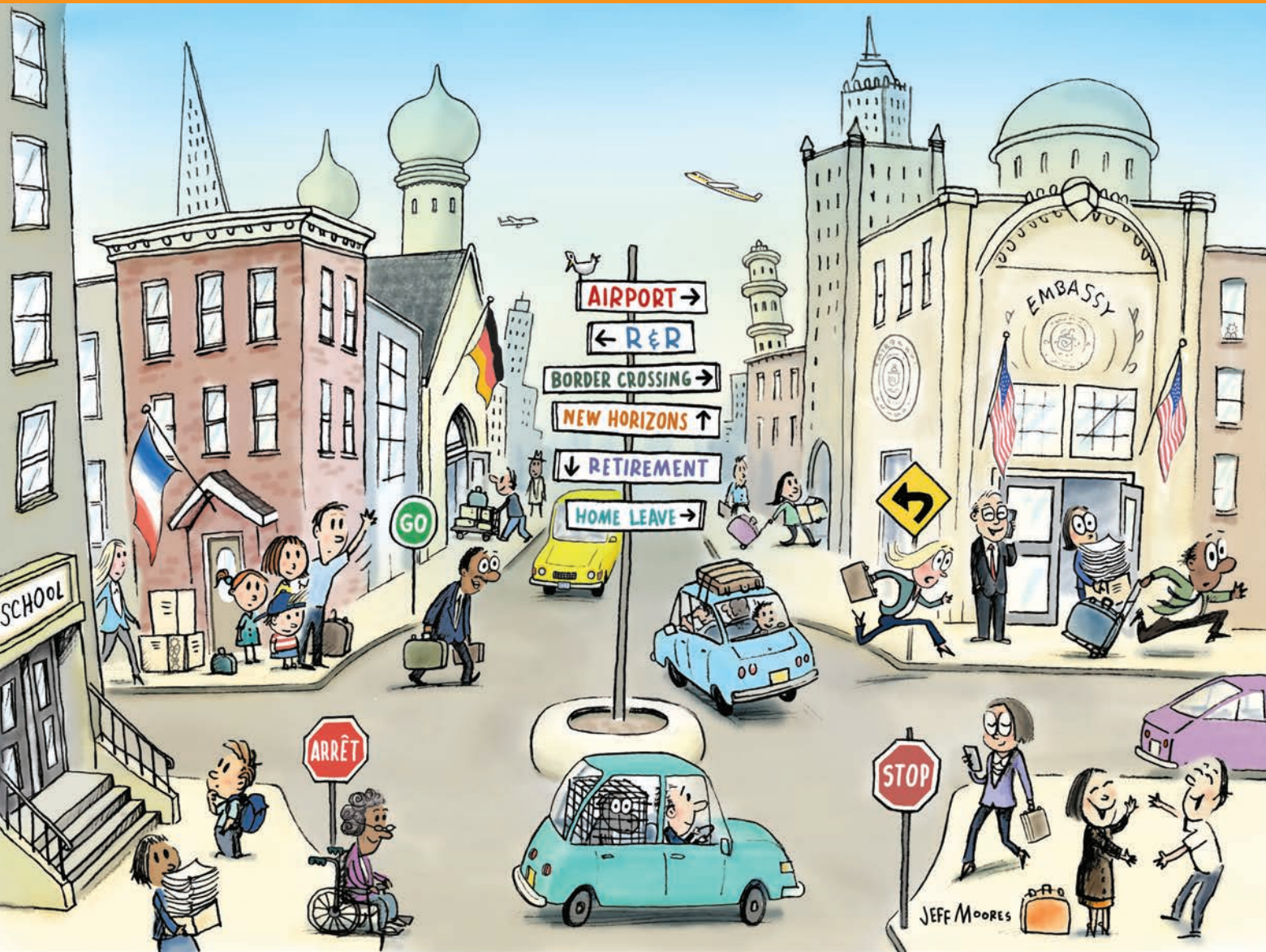


# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

JULY-AUGUST 2022



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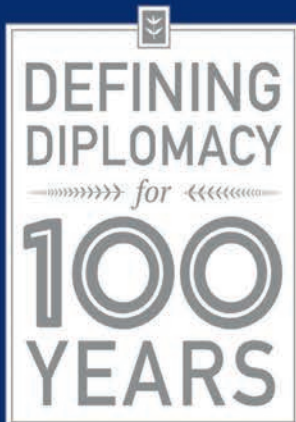
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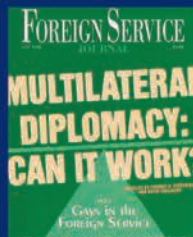
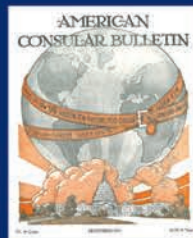
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# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

July-August 2022 Volume 99, No. 6



## Cover Story

22

### U.S.-China Relations at 50: Learning Lessons and Moving Ahead

A half-century of experience points to the need for stronger measures to address future challenges.

By Robert S. Wang



## Appreciation

52

### Remembering Madeleine Albright, 1937-2022

Memories and tributes from a few of those who worked with this champion of diplomacy and democracy.



## Focus on Foreign Service Transitions

30

### Just Another Glamorous Move

Relocating around the world every couple of years is the "good news" and "bad news" of the Foreign Service career.

By Deborah Derrick

40

### The Complex Challenge of Transporting Pets

A nail-biter pet shipping experience is an increasingly common part of Foreign Service life. Here are some tips on the process.

By Melissa Mathews

33

### FS Singles: How We See Things

Single people over the age of 18 are a growing demographic, but that isn't the only reason State should be more mindful of its single employees.

By Naureen Nalia

44

### What to Expect When You're ... Evacuating

Nobody wants to do it. But there's a good chance it'll happen to you. Here's what you need to know.

By Donna Scaramastra Gorman

36

### Supporting Families and Third-Culture Kids Through FS Transitions

There is no one-size-fits-all in a Foreign Service transition.

By Wyokemia Joyner and Sarah Genton

49

### And Now for Something Completely Different ...

Foreign Service transitions can involve more than moving from post to post or evacuating. And there are lessons in that, too.

By Daniel Crocker

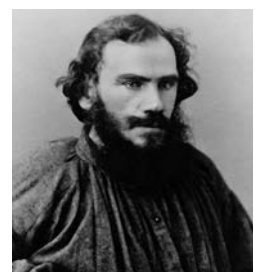
## Feature

58

### Diplomacy, the Third Strand of War and Peace

In Tolstoy's great work, today's diplomats can learn a lot about how a brilliant writer once viewed their profession and how many people still regard it.

By Fletcher M. Burton





# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

## Perspectives

7

### President's Views

Women's Reproductive Health  
Must Be a Priority

*By Eric Rubin*

9

### Letter from the Editor

Speaking of Transitions

*By Shawn Dorman*

20

### Speaking Out

Serbia and Russia and the Coming  
Balkan Storm

*By Denis Rajic and  
Marko Attila Hoare*

88

### Reflections

Pearl Buck's Rehabilitation in China

*By Beatrice Camp*

90

### Local Lens

Namangan, Uzbekistan

*By James Talalay*



## Departments

- 10 Letters
- 12 Letters-Plus
- 15 Talking Points
- 74 In Memory
- 79 Books

## Marketplace

- 81 Lodging & Extended Stay
- 82 Real Estate
- 86 Classifieds
- 87 Index to Advertisers

## AFSA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

- 63 Foreign Service Day Remembrances and Activities
- 64 State VP Voice—Time for an Office of Conflict Resolution
- 65 USAID VP Voice—Rebuilding for the Long Term
- 66 Retiree VP Voice—Threats to Retirement Benefits
- 67 AFSA's Kennan Award Gets a Makeover
- 67 Foreign Service Day Resolution Approved
- 69 AFSA Governing Board Meeting, May 18, 2022
- 70 AFSA Welcomes Newest FS Members
- 71 Overtime and Comp Time Overseas:  
A Q&A with AFSA's James Yorke
- 73 Concerns Regarding the OIG Report on  
FSSB Public Members



63

On the Cover—Illustration by Jeff Moores.



# Women's Reproductive Health Must Be a Priority

BY ERIC RUBIN

I have written and spoken many times about a growing sense that obstacles, hardships and challenges are increasingly making it hard for many of our dedicated and talented colleagues to stay in the Service and continue serving our country as our first line of defense at home and abroad.

It has never been easy to serve, and the Foreign Service has never asked that it be so. In fact, what we hear more and more from our members is their hope that they will be allowed to take on more sensible, pragmatic risk in their efforts to serve effectively and to accomplish the mission they have undertaken for our country.

Our colleagues must know that someone has their backs when they are serving overseas in difficult and sometimes dangerous assignments and that someone understands what it is like to deal with the challenges of service. That “someone” has to be the U.S. government agencies that employ members of the Foreign Service: their leadership and our fellow employees who provide support and protection.

So it was with great concern and, frankly, sadness that *The Foreign Service Journal* published a Speaking Out column in May by an active-duty member representing more than

200 Foreign Service officers who signed a letter calling on the State Department to provide equal access to essential women's

reproductive health services overseas.

The letter and column detail examples of failures of the State Department to assist employees facing medical emergencies, from someone “suffering a nearly fatal ectopic pregnancy” to another “suffering a miscarriage at one of the most polluted posts in the world.” Another FSO, serving in a country where abortion is illegal, was “referred by the Medical Unit to illegal local providers.”

The authors say that State's Bureau of Medical Services “actively and repeatedly forced patients into impossible decisions and significant financial burden, and put them in life-threatening situations.” They state: “Diplomats representing America in countries across the world are denied access to the same services that are legal and readily available in the country we represent and are told, ‘You are on your own.’ We will no longer stand for this.”

It was also very worrying that the 200-plus members who signed the letter to State's leadership did not receive even a courtesy response for more than four months—in fact, not until we sent an advance copy to State MED and published the column.

AFSA does not get involved in political issues. We recognize that our agencies are bound by the restrictions of the Hyde Amendment (barring the use of federal funds to pay for abortion, except under certain circumstances) and other legislation on the books. We expect, however, that our agencies will do their utmost

within the law to support, protect and care for colleagues who face health problems and dangers.

State MED has promised an expeditious review of the situation and improvements in areas that can be addressed within the law. That is good, but overdue. When more than 200 colleagues write to our agencies' leadership expressing anguish and concern and asking for a change in the way they are treated, clearly there is a problem that must be addressed.

FS members posted to developed countries with excellent health care can turn to local resources for care, while members serving in countries without adequate medical services cannot. They all need to know that our government has their backs and will help them get the care they need.

Money cannot be an excuse. Women's health is a human right and a Foreign Service right. “In the Biden-Harris administration, the empowerment and protection of women and girls, including promoting their sexual and reproductive health and rights, is a central part of U.S. foreign policy and national security,” U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement during the administration's first week in office in 2021.

We expect the Biden administration to follow its public commitments and the law, and to take care of our colleagues who are putting their lives and health on the line in service to our country. ■



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



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# Speaking of Transitions

BY SHAWN DORMAN

**M**oons ago, in the late 1990s, I stayed at post through an ordered departure out of Indonesia when the Suharto regime was about to tumble. Most of us didn't know who was "essential" until the day of the evacuation. My husband and 2-year-old were probably in more danger heading out to the military airport in the middle of the night (after embassy transport did not show up) than I was staying put.

While that evacuation was a "success," it was also chaotic and messy. It seemed like *The First Evacuation Ever*. That's one kind of transition.

But let's face it, in the Foreign Service you are *always* "in transition"—moving to a new post, bidding on your next post, getting ready to leave your current post or even faced with a sudden departure. Or maybe you are transitioning out of the Foreign Service, choosing where to live and what to do next. This double issue of the *Journal* is about all of them.

Say you're heading out to a new country, as you do every few years. Those permanent change of station moves, as FS spouse Deborah Derrick tells us in "Just Another Glamorous Move," are both the good and the bad of

FS life. New places, new adventures—hurrah. FS toddlers crying and vomiting their way across the world on packed

airplanes—not as much fun.

Or maybe you're on your own, flying solo. It may be grand, until you land at an embassy community all about families, and everyone assumes you're the one who doesn't need vacation at vacation time. In "FS Singles: How We See Things," FSO Naureen Nalia introduces us to the new employee organization, Singles at State, established in 2021 to raise awareness and advocate for this growing demographic.

For those with kids, transitions can be tough in other ways. Wyokemia Joyner and Sarah Genton of FSI's Transition Center discuss resources for "Supporting Families and Third-Culture Kids Through FS Transitions."

What about the FS pets 40 percent of you have? Managing their mobile lifestyles is no picnic. In "The Complex Challenge of Transporting Pets," FS spouse Melissa Mathews walks us through the current realities and hopeful news for new legislation.

And then there are the evacuations. Reporting to the Ops Center those many years ago for my next assignment, I was asked for my impressions of the Jakarta evacuation and told that somewhere in the State Department, someone (maybe in some tiny basement office?) was working on lessons learned. Yet people *still* say every evacuation feels like the first ever, maybe because each one is different.

For those of you who will face an evacuation of some kind—which is most

of you—we have excellent tips. In "What to Expect When You're ... Evacuating," Donna Scaramastra Gorman, a veteran of evacuations, tells us what we need to know about preparing for a possible sudden departure.

Turning to transitions into and out of the Foreign Service, we hear about FSO (ret.) Dan Crocker's journey in "And Now for Something Completely Different ..."

Our cover story is a must-read on "U.S.-China Relations at 50: Learning Lessons and Moving Ahead" by FSO (ret.) Robert Wang.

In the Speaking Out, "Serbia and Russia and the Coming Balkan Storm," FSO Denis Rajic and Professor Marko Attila Hoare urge the U.S. to reengage in the region to offset the instability Russia created.

In the Appreciation, "Remembering Madeleine Albright," we hear from a few of those who worked with this trailblazing diplomat. In a Feature piece, "Diplomacy, the Third Strand of *War and Peace*," FSO (ret.) Fletcher Burton offers a literary treat.

Eric Rubin's President's Views column builds on the demand from more than 200 FS members that "Women's Reproductive Health Must Be a Priority."

FSO (ret.) Bea Camp reflects on "Pearl Buck's Rehabilitation in China," and in the Local Lens, FS spouse and photographer James Talalay introduces us to non in Namangan, Uzbekistan.

We await your responses to this edition. Write to us at [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org). And may all your transitions this summer be smooth. ■



*Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.*



## Thoughts on Foreign Service “Reform”

Apparently, little has changed in the Foreign Service in the two decades since I retired, given the episodic calls for, and promises of, “reform.” This has always meant aping the intellectual fashion of the moment.

Instead, I offer several simple suggestions for improvement in the Foreign Service’s personnel system, in the hope that interest in actual, impactful reform is real this time.

Begin by considering the triple task of the Foreign Service. First, represent the United States overseas in a way that will make what we do and want both comprehensible and, to the degree that others’ national aims coincide, attractive. Second, explain to U.S. decision-makers how they should help make the first possible to achieve our country’s national goals. Third, serve the needs of American travelers abroad and intending travelers to the U.S.

To accomplish these, mastery of foreign languages and cultures is essential. To that end, a Foreign Service officer should be assigned to no more than two areas of the world, and to two linguistic-cultural groups over a career.

And, to be fair, such a career must include an equal number of hardship and nonhardship posts, unless the officer specifically waives this requirement at the beginning of each onward assignment process.

Such area and language specialization would enhance officer effectiveness; and recognition of such effectiveness would improve job satisfaction. Both morale and service prestige would grow as a result.

The foregoing requires changes in the Foreign Service personnel system. The current pastiche of favoritism, cor-

ridor reputation, cronyism, favor-trading and snap judgment with a veneer of professional qualifications must go.

“Career counselors” should be replaced by algorithms and, with few exceptions, a blind assignment system that responds to the two strictures of area expertise and fair balance of hardship and nonhardship postings. Dakar, Yaoundé and Paris are Francophone capitals, but they are not the same.

The Foreign Service should also insist on being a *foreign* service. Washington assignments should be limited to one in three, at most, with strict limits on consecutive state-side assignments save for specific and limited training. Those wishing to continue serving stateside should transfer to the Civil Service.

More consideration should also be given to Foreign Service spouses and families. From making sure a family incoming to post is greeted with proper temporary accommodation—including a full refrigerator—and sufficient help with settling in, to offering employment to those spouses who wish it and full integration into the mission community, making an FS member’s family feel welcome will help that employee concentrate on duties sooner and better.

These tweaks wouldn’t be costly and would offer great benefits. But they will be difficult to implement because they fly in the face of tradition and threaten those who trade on petty power for their own benefit, while arguing even to themselves that they are doing what is right for the good of the Service.

Experience and perennial morale problems have shown they are wrong. Time for new approaches, if “reform” is a serious goal.

*Morgan Liddick*

*FSO, retired*

*Sparks, Nevada*

## Space Diplomacy

Our team at Duke University’s Rethinking Diplomacy project thanks David Epstein for his outstanding article, “Boosting Space Diplomacy at State,” in the May *FSJ*.

The Rethinking Diplomacy program began in 2020 as an effort to broaden and extend the reach of diplomacy to deal with global issues, including outer space. Climate change, migration, health, the Arctic, the oceans, food security and energy transformation are among the other areas we are exploring.

In March we created a new Space Lab at Duke for a multidisciplinary approach to reach solutions for a “secure and sustainable future of humanity in space.” We hope, also, to encourage efforts to deal with the concerns Epstein presents.

Our aim is to develop Foreign Service competency in science and technology as a true partner with diplomacy. To that end, we have urged reestablishment of the science officer cone and a full career track in the Foreign Service for these officers, among other improvements.

Moreover, through a further advance that we call “anticipatory diplomacy,” we advocate an improved process for reaching into the future beyond the present crisis management approach. We want to foresee coming global issues



with better precision and shape them before they reach a crisis stage.

We welcome anyone interested in our work to link to <https://igs.duke.edu/series/rethinking-diplomacy>. For anyone interested in following up with us, please contact me at [william.r.pearson@duke.edu](mailto:william.r.pearson@duke.edu).

*W. Robert Pearson*

*Ambassador, retired*

*Pittsboro, North Carolina ■*

#### CORRECTIONS

- In the June Letters-Plus, "No One Was Listening ...?!" by Desaix (Terry) Myers, the third and fourth paragraphs were inadvertently transposed.

The error has been corrected in the online FSJ, which you will find at <https://bit.ly/FSJ-Myers>.

- The deck in Roy Glover's June article, "A Foreign Service Career: Blindness Didn't Stop Me," says Glover was the "first blind FSO at State." Glover was the first blind FSO, but it was USIA he joined in 1983, not State.



**Share your thoughts about this month's issue.**

**Submit letters to the editor:**  
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## RESPONSE TO APRIL FOCUS ON NEW CORE PRECEPTS

## DEIA and the New Precepts

BY ALEX KARAGIANNIS

The April *FSJ* has wonderful articles. Thank you. Kudos to the Bureau of Global Talent Management and the Office of Performance Evaluation for updating and streamlining the core precepts, making them clearer and easier to understand and implement. The 2015 performance evaluation reforms were planned for more consequential future changes by 2022, and it is heartening to see this progress.

Bravo, the new precepts are a significant achievement. Naturally, this cannot be the end of the story. Regrettably, many employees still struggle to fully under-

More important, such an approach helps employees focus on what matters most: collaborating, mentoring, coaching and empowering each other in ways that enhance personal, team and corporate development and goal achievement. More than changes in precepts, a true performance management revolution requires both the department and employees to change their mindset and outlook—a behavioral paradigm shift, not just an organizational exercise.

The State Department has taken good steps with this reform; more is needed to join the ranks of cutting-edge enterprises. Having senior leaders champion reforms

### The State Department has taken good steps with this reform; more is needed to join the ranks of cutting-edge enterprises.

stand and apply the precepts, too often thinking of the competencies as silos and using linear thinking rather than integrating them. Too often employees focus on tasks, activities and outputs rather than goals, results and outcomes. It is not proficiency in knowledge, skills or competencies but effectiveness in achieving results in people, policy and programs that makes an employee competitive for promotion.



*Alex Karagiannis is a retired Foreign Service officer. His last assignments were in the Bureau of Human Resources, since rebranded as the Bureau of Global Talent Management.*

and model behavior can make a huge difference.

A key field where more progress is needed is in diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility (DEIA). The new precepts put DEIA at the center. AFSA VP Tom Yazdgerdi's April column on data for DEIA provides a very good wrap-up and suggests more forward movement is in store. More and better data will help, but additional studies treading the same ground on barriers not by themselves provide breakthroughs.

The Government Accountability Office, Deloitte and the department all examined the issue; none came up with actionable plans, and all called for more



studies. Perhaps the newest GAO and internal study will be better. Identifying and rooting out both systemic issues and microaggressions is a long-haul proposition that needs sustained 7th-floor commitment, energy and hands-on application.

There are no easy fixes. Numerous academic and consultancy studies have determined that most DEIA programs fail to meet their stated objectives. Poor design and execution are part of the problem. More specifically, too many pay insufficient attention to cultural transformation; they focus on changing individuals rather than the organization as a whole.

And they too often pigeon-hole employees into groups, obscuring the considerable differences within and among groups and even individuals' own sense of identity within different groups in the context of the multiple environments and group dynamics in which they operate at any time.

Having DEIA as a stand-alone competency rightly accentuates its importance and charges all employees to advance those goals. But it could inadvertently create a problematic twist, given the considerable overlap between the DEIA and leadership competencies regarding core functions in the real world. In employee evaluation reports (EERs), employees, raters and reviewers will naturally seek to highlight DEIA. But selection boards—not raters and

reviewers—determine which employees are promotable, and no single factor is determinative.

Rather it is a cumulative, comparative and competitive assessment by boards when identifying, across all competencies, who has best integrated and achieved results that matter and who projects as having the greater capacity to take on additional responsibilities in the future. Whether in initial hiring, assignments, tenure or promotion, decisions are collective ones where decision-makers look across the whole spectrum of challenges and accomplishments.

More broadly, for a successful DEIA program, identifying and eliminating barriers is only an initial step. Providing incentives for better DEIA action is an

intermediate step. When employees (top to bottom) see and act on DEIA as an intrinsic value, irrespective of recognition in assignment, promotion or award, then true progress can result.

These department reforms are a welcome step in that direction. Systemic change will come in the EER system when the department moves away from skill-based competencies, a dated and passive approach that refers to an employee's current state. Instead, cutting-edge organizations have shifted to an approach centered on a capability model that integrates and highlights adapting and flexing—to create, innovate, lead and manage change under increased levels of complexity.

In such models, raters and review-

ers put themselves in a decision-making (rather than “assessment”) mode and support their conclusions. It is less about telling a story and more about presenting a compelling case. Raters and reviewers will ask themselves different questions: Would they recruit and hire this person again? Would they recommend that others work for this person? Would they promote, now, this person to a position of greater authority and responsibility? The answers, of course, rest on honest, forward-looking conversations with candidates, as well as future-based projections for candidates' professional development.

Such an approach is at the center of a state-of-the-art performance management system. GTM's reforms are on the road there. ■

## RESPONSE TO APRIL SPEAKING OUT, “NO ONE WAS LISTENING: RUSSIA, 1992”

# Unavoidable Chaos, Not “Shock Therapy”

BY JAMES NORRIS

was USAID mission director in Moscow between 1992 and 1996 and, based on that experience, find questionable a number of Kristin Loken's comments in her April Speaking Out column about U.S. policies and programs in Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Loken's most grievous error is stating that the United States imposed a program of economic “shock therapy” with the intent of “moving Russia from a communist dictatorship to a free-market democracy, overnight.”

The reality was that the Soviet economy was a dysfunctional shell toward the end, with perhaps 50 percent of it running on a black market. There was no shock therapy. There was unavoidable chaos. With the dissolution of the USSR, the Russian economy was not transitioning, it was collapsing. And neither the

U.S. nor Russia's reformers could possibly control the collapse.

While there were U.S. consultants who recommended programs of managed rapid economic reform in some other East bloc countries (Poland being one), at no time did the USAID mission in Moscow receive any guidance from Washington supporting “shock therapy.” And while there certainly were officials in Washington who naively thought U.S. assistance to Russia would be a quick in-and-out affair, the USAID mission never thought so; and, overall, the program focused on longer-term systemic reform.

The only way the chaos of the



*James Norris joined USAID in 1965. He served overseas as an economist in Tunisia, Indonesia and Egypt; in Washington as counselor to the agency and deputy assistant administrator for the Asia Near East Bureau; and as mission director in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Russia. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1996 with the rank of Career Minister.*





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economic collapse could have been mitigated would have been if the West had mounted a program comparable to the Marshall Plan to Western Europe after World War II. It would have necessitated something of the magnitude of \$30 billion a year for several years—10 times the peak annual flow of Western assistance to Russia.

This was not going to happen. The only alternative was to help the Russian reformers put in place the new systems, policies and institutions required and support the implementation of those programs—such as the privatization of small and mid-sized businesses—to address the chaotic collapse of the Soviet system.

As a related point, Loken's comment on cooperatives—"We might get better outcomes by pushing for a more gradual move from Russian communism to American-style free-market capitalism, maybe using a middle step of cooperatives. Every time I mentioned this idea, I was shut down immediately"—is particularly ill-founded. Cooperatives are not a midpoint between communism and capitalism. They are, in fact, more difficult to establish than a private sector.

Loken also states: "Humanitarian assistance just to help the Russian people get through the transition without starving to death would only be available as long as Russia complied with 'shock therapy.'" This is at complete variance with any communication I had with Washington. There was never any suggestion that the continuation of U.S. assistance was dependent on Russia complying with any shock therapy.

I have no idea what her comment—"We had our boot to their neck when they were down"—is based on. There were certainly no plans or actions associated with the U.S. assistance program

that could be so characterized.

She also states: "My experience during this time was that no one on the U.S. side was listening. We had won the Cold War, so there was no need to listen."

While I was in Moscow, we had a very collaborative working relationship with the Russian government, in general, and with the key Russian reformers, in particular.

The Russians, in fact, were the ones initiating the reform efforts and sought our support in the areas in which they felt it would be most useful. We certainly suggested areas where we might be helpful, but it was the Russians who were calling the shots.

Loken further states: "What we did in Russia in the early 1990s was attempt to transplant neoliberal ideology, an idealized version of American democracy and free-market economy, into Russia." This is at great variance from reality.

What we tried to do was help Russian entities—whether political parties or committees in the Duma or apartment associations or municipal finance departments or journalists—understand how they might better accomplish their objectives. For example, we did not seek to guide political parties in regard to their objectives, but rather in how to go about organizing themselves and communicating their programs.

And, finally, her comment that "we were not supposed to be wandering around Moscow at all, and definitely not alone (although for a USAID person that didn't seem to be enforced as effectively)" is a complete mystery to me. I never heard anyone in the embassy say such a thing. There was, of course, common sense guidance to not be out alone at two in the morning, but the reality was that people were encouraged to interact with Russian society. ■



Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink in Washington on May 20.

## U.S. Embassy Kyiv Reopens

The American embassy in the Ukrainian capital reopened on May 18 with a small contingent of U.S. diplomats. Secretary of State Antony Blinken confirmed in a press release that day following the flag-raising ceremony at the embassy.

Three months after closing its doors in advance of the invasion by Russian forces, the embassy officially resumed operations. American lawmakers from both parties, as well as Ukrainian leaders, had called for such a move in the weeks prior to the reopening, when other countries began to reopen their missions.

But the Biden administration expressed concern over ongoing security risks. Although Russian ground troops left the Kyiv area during the first week of April, Reuters reported, threats persist; the embassy's flag-raising ceremony was delayed by an hour due to an air raid warning.

In his statement, Sec. Blinken addressed these concerns: "We have put forward additional measures to increase

the safety of our colleagues who are returning to Kyiv and have enhanced our security measures and protocols."

According to Politico, U.S. Marines are not present at the embassy, and the compound is guarded by Diplomatic Security personnel and Ukrainian national guard and police forces. General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced in May that plans to deploy U.S. forces into Ukraine to protect the U.S. embassy in Kyiv are "underway at a relatively low level." Consular services are not



The American flag was once again raised at Embassy Kyiv on May 18.

available, and the embassy is functioning in a limited capacity.

Embassy Kyiv also has a chief of mission for the first time since 2019. Hours after the embassy reopened, career FSO Bridget Brink was unanimously confirmed by the Senate as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine.

Brink, who most recently served as ambassador to Slovakia, was nominated by President Biden on April 25 and appeared on May 10 before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which swiftly advanced her nomination. She arrived in Kyiv on May 29.

## A New DG and More ...

On May 31, Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, a career FSO, was sworn in by Secretary of State Antony Blinken as Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent, replacing Carol Z. Perez. The nomination of Bernicat, a member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister Counselor, was confirmed by the Senate on May 26.

On June 1, Secretary Blinken announced that Ambassador Mike Hammer will replace David Satterfield as the special envoy for the Horn of Africa. Amb. Hammer is currently serving as ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Outside the few who fill congressionally mandated positions, the special envoy position does not require Senate confirmation.

The Senate has confirmed eight other ambassadors and senior officials at the foreign affairs agencies since our last update in the April FSJ.

On that list are career FSOs as ambassador to Ukraine and to Yemen; a political appointee as ambassador to the United Kingdom; career FSOs to be the Director General of the Foreign Commercial Service and director of the Office of Foreign





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Marcia Bernicat is sworn in as Director General May 31.

Missions; a career Civil Service member to be assistant secretary of State for international security and nonproliferation; and three political appointees (special envoy for anti-Semitism, head of the sanctions office, and the assistant secretary for arms control, verification and compliance).

Currently, four senior positions at the Department of State have nominees who have yet to be confirmed. In addition, two positions do not yet have a nominee, including the position of under secretary of State for public affairs and public diplomacy. There still is no nominee for State inspector general.

At USAID, three nominees remain unconfirmed, and two positions lack a nominee (one nomination was withdrawn in early April). The CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media has yet to be confirmed.

AFSA is currently tracking 56 ambassador vacancies across the globe, 31 of which have a nominee. Nominations that have been announced since our last update include 16 career Foreign Service members (Fiji, Uruguay, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, North Macedonia, Slovakia, Mali, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, Nicaragua, Qatar, Nepal, Thailand, Zambia and Ukraine) and five political appointees (Morocco, Hungary, ASEAN, the Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago).

In addition, career FSO Geoffrey Pyatt was nominated to be assistant secretary for energy resources.

Members can follow AFSA's ambassador tracker for real-time updates at [afsa.org/ambassadorlist](https://afsa.org/ambassadorlist).

## Second Global COVID-19 Summit Held

**B**uilding on the pandemic response goals laid out at the first Global COVID-19 Summit in 2021, officials from the United States as well as Belize, Germany, Indonesia and Senegal co-hosted the second Global COVID-19 Summit on May 12.

The event, which was held virtually, reviewed current collective efforts and called on nongovernmental organizations, world leaders, members of civil society and the private sector to “make new commitments” to vaccination, testing and preparedness programs.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken offered opening remarks at the session “Advancing Health Security, Preventing Health Crises,” in which he discussed three areas where countries can work together to prepare for and prevent the next pandemic.

Sustained funding for global health, strengthened collective capacity to detect and respond to health emergencies and modernized global health architecture, the Secretary said, will ensure a future response that is “swifter, better coordinated and more equitable with more countries represented across decision-making and execution.”

USAID announced an additional \$200 million commitment toward instituting a new pandemic preparedness and global health security fund at the World Bank. Sustained, collaborative approaches to both immediate and long-term impacts of the pandemic were a focus.

## Russian Diplomat Resigns in Protest

**B**oris Bondarev, a veteran Russian diplomat assigned to the United Nations in Geneva, resigned on May 23 before disseminating a letter of harsh

criticism of the Russian invasion of Ukraine to about 40 foreign colleagues, the Associated Press reported.

“It is intolerable what my government is doing now,” Bondarev told the AP. “As a civil servant, I have to carry a share of responsibility for that. And I don’t want to do that.”

The resignation comes at a time when Russian President Vladimir Putin’s government is suppressing expressions of dissent with increasing force.

In his letter, Bondarev wrote: “Today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not about diplomacy. It is all about war-mongering, lies and hatred. It serves the interests of the few, the very few people thus contributing to further isolation and degradation of my country. Russia no longer has allies, and there is no one to blame but its reckless and ill-conceived policy.”

In an interview with *The New York Times*, Bondarev offered that while he believed he was in the minority of Russian diplomats opposing the war, he was not alone. At the time of this writing, Russian officials had not issued a response to the statement.

## State’s Retention Unit Seeks Employee Input

**I**n an effort to develop the State Department’s first comprehensive retention plan, the Bureau of Global Talent Management’s Retention Unit—announced by Secretary Blinken in his October modernization speech and rolled out in early 2022—is asking for help to determine why employees stay or leave.

In a May 17 email to personnel, the unit outlined its goal of gathering both qualitative and quantitative data to better understand how to retain staff and improve the employee experience.

## Contemporary Quote

“What we’re trying to do is make people risk aware and not risk averse, because this is a risky business that we’re in. That’s not to say people should be gambling with their lives, but they should take smart risks. That’s a cultural change that we’re going to keep working on.”

—Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Brian McKeon, in a May 3 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on State Department authorization.

To that end, GTM has revamped its voluntary exit survey for departing employees, whether they are resigning or retiring, and encourages current employees to submit emails with inquiries or issues to [GTMRetentionUnit@state.gov](mailto:GTMRetentionUnit@state.gov).

The unit also plans to launch a departmentwide “employee experience stay survey” this fall to learn more about the factors that drive continued employment.

According to GTM, overall attrition in both the Foreign Service and Civil Service is low compared with industry standards and other federal agencies. However, the May 17 message said: “We must continually adapt and innovate. The goal is to foster a culture where you feel valued and have a sense of belonging—not just in your role and on your team, but in the larger organization.”

The retention strategy currently in development is a key component of the Secretary’s Modernization Agenda announced on Oct. 27, 2021.

The Retention Unit says it has been working with GTM, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, other federal agencies and private sector experts to determine what data the department already has, what it means and what data remain to be captured. This baseline information, the unit says, will be shared with employees in the coming months.

## No Good News from Afghanistan

Despite early promises from the Taliban to respect women’s rights, since returning to power in August 2021 the regime has announced a series of edicts further restricting the activities of women and girls.

On May 7, the Taliban’s hardline, reclusive leader Hibaitullah Akhunzada issued a decree requiring women to be completely covered when in public, with only their eyes visible. He suggested women shouldn’t leave their homes at all unless necessary and outlined punishments for male relatives of women who violate the code.

The Taliban’s Ministry of Vice and Virtue went a step further on May 19, specifically ordering female TV news anchors to cover their faces while on the air, which triggered a large social media response. In an act of solidarity, many male colleagues at prominent Afghan news outlets chose to don face masks while broadcasting for the following week and launched the social media hashtag #FreeHerFace.

In March, Akhunzada issued a decision that girls should not be allowed to go to school after completing the sixth grade, asserting that allowing older girls to continue their education contravened Islamic principles.

Afghan civil society leaders, however, say Akhunzada is not well educated in the



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tenets of the Islamic faith and has instead taken tribal village traditions, where girls often marry at puberty and rarely leave their homes, and labeled them religious requirements.

In late May, as Afghans continued to grapple with food shortages that left half the population facing acute hunger and a worsening economic crisis, the country was also rocked by a series of explosions. Blasts in Kabul and in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif resulted in at least 12 deaths and dozens of injuries, NBC reported. The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Mazar-e-Sharif attack.



TOLOnews broadcaster Tahmina Usmani shared a photo in May showcasing her male colleagues' solidarity in the wake of the Taliban's edict ordering female TV news anchors to cover their faces while on air.

As conditions deteriorated within Afghanistan, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

issued a new report to two congressional committees in May concluding that the collapse of the country and its takeover by the Taliban are direct consequences of decisions made by two successive U.S. presidents.

The report states: "SIGAR found that the single most important factor in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces' collapse in August 2021 was the U.S. decision to withdraw military forces and contractors from Afghanistan through signing the U.S.-Taliban agreement in February 2020 under the Trump administration, followed by President Biden's withdrawal announcement in April 2021."

According to SIGAR, these events destroyed the morale of ANDSF, which had long relied on the U.S. military presence to protect against large-scale losses and as a means of holding the Afghan government responsible for paying their salaries.

The report notes that the ANDSF lost a key advantage in keeping the Taliban at bay when, as a result of the U.S. agreement with the regime, Afghan forces were obligated to limit airstrikes.

Compounding the ANDSF's woes: it was designed by the U.S. as a mirror of American forces, which created long-term ANDSF over-reliance on capabilities borrowed from U.S. troops.

## 50 Years Ago

### Man's World, Woman's Place?

**Y**ou are a rare man indeed if you have even noticed how few women enter your conference rooms, except to take notes or serve coffee.

Bad news! A "movement" is invading the sanctum sanctorum. ... Women of the Foreign Service—whether secretaries, staff personnel, or officers—are making it clear that they will not let what one FSO calls "the last bastion of male elitism" stand unchallenged. ...

But ... not enough and not fast enough. The role of women in the Foreign Service remains minimal. ... The percentage of female FSOs has actually *decreased*. In 1957, women constituted 8.9 percent of the FSO corps. By 1972, there were only 152 women among 3086 men. Less than five percent! Virginia Slims notwithstanding, who has "come a long way, baby?"

... The answer lies apparently in those few but significant changes that have occurred and which are just beginning to make an impact. ... The Board of Examiners cannot ask a woman candidate whether she isn't really plotting marriage after a short fling abroad at Uncle Sam's expense. Largely because of the well-publicized Alison Palmer case, the machismo factor cannot bar women from assignment to any post.

... There is still much to be done. How better to "tell America's story abroad" than by showing that women can speak for America, too? Ms. Secretary of State?! Official and popular detractors notwithstanding, why not? We could and have done a lot worse.

—Excerpted from an article of the same name by former Foreign Service Information Officer Sandy Vogelgesang in the August 1972 FSJ.



## Site of the Month: *Consolation Prize* ([consolationprize.rrchnm.org](https://consolationprize.rrchnm.org))

In 1792 the U.S. Congress authorized the creation of the consular service and began sending consuls to cities far and wide to serve the interests of Americans abroad. Consolation Prize is a podcast dedicated to telling the stories of these consuls and connecting their stories to the broader context of the history, international politics and conflict through which they lived.



In conversations with consular service historians (yes, they exist), academics, authors and others over two seasons of episodes, host Abby

Mullen covers little-known stories of American consuls abroad, including their involvement in everything from disease quarantines and shipwrecks to discovering new animal species and negotiating customs with the Ottoman Empire.

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

Other factors also played a role in the ANDSF's collapse. SIGAR found that no single country or agency had ownership of the ANDSF development mission. "The constant personnel turnover impeded continuity and institutional memory," the report states. "The result was an uncoordinated approach that plagued the entire mission."

The State Department and USAID declined to comment on the report.

## Putting the "A" in DEIA at State

As the State Department reimagines the future of work for both domestic and overseas employees in the context of its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Brian McKeon says accessibility must be at the core of any changes.

A hybrid work environment is one step toward offering flexibility to eligible employees. "It's clear that we are not going back to the status quo ante of Feb-

ruary 2020, where most people come into the department every day," McKeon told Federal News Network in May.

Depending on employees' jobs and functions—and their need to access classified material—some may benefit from telework opportunities, he said. To evaluate this option, the State Department has developed a mobility assessment tool: a questionnaire that examines every position according to mission and function and calculates a "maximum telework eligibility score."

Another critical component of the department's accessibility plan is the Access Center, a 2,400-square-foot hub that provides assistive technology to employees with disabilities. The largest of its kind in the federal government, the center was opened by GTM in December 2020 in Columbia Plaza.

The center offers everything from ergonomic computer mice and keyboards to screen magnifiers, assistive listening devices and deaf-to-hearing communication systems.

The State Department estimates that at least 17 percent of its Civil Service workforce has at least one disability.

The department is also working to ensure there's at least one residence at every overseas post that's equipped for someone with a disability and has been going through a decades-long process of upgrading facilities.

## Promotion Panels Under Scrutiny

The State Department's Office of the Inspector General found that more than a half-dozen friends and relatives of department officials were placed on promotion panels despite not meeting requirements, Politico reported on May 25.

The OIG report, which was leaked to the news outlet, also noted inconsistencies in how people were chosen and weak oversight of contracts involved.

Prompted by a 2020 whistleblower's complaint, the probe found that "GTM's Office of Performance Evaluation did not demonstrate that it considered all Foreign Affairs Manual criteria when recruiting and selecting FSSB public members" and that "family members of Department employees, including GTM/PE employees, received public member contracts to serve on FSSBs or related boards ... every year from 2014 to 2021."

The report noted that public members of the promotion boards, which convene for between four and eight weeks during the summer, are paid for their time; some earned between \$20,000 and \$30,000 in 2019 and 2020.

The report offered 13 recommendations for improvement, all of which the State Department accepted in its response. ■

*This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Julia Wohlers and Hannah McDaniel.*



# Serbia and Russia and the Coming Balkan Storm

BY DENIS RAJIC AND MARKO ATTILA HOARE

**T**he cordon of police was heavy on Njegosvoj Street in Belgrade on Nov. 9, 2021. Protesters from Serbia's liberal-oriented political spectrum had gathered, and they had a simple request: Remove the mural to the convicted war criminal Ratko Mladic, which was prominently placed in the street. Minister of the Interior Aleksandar Vulin, a close confidant of President Aleksandar Vucic, was there in person, not only to ensure the protection of the mural but to lay flowers before this altar of Great Serbian genocidal extremism.

The present crisis is the culmination of a long historical drama that has the potential to spark a new Balkan war and seriously derail the integration of the Western Balkan states into the European Union and NATO. In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing crimes against the civilian population in that country, the danger of a Russia-sanctioned incursion into the Western Balkans remains acute as the Russian

**We can no longer afford to sit by and watch this growing challenge by Russia and Serbia to the security of NATO and the E.U.**

military machine is bogged down in the Ukrainian steppes.

Russia has for centuries sought to expand its influence into the Balkans while coopting Balkan states as clients and assuming a right to interfere in their internal affairs. In Serbia, Russia regularly sought to promote leaders and factions that would do its bidding while counter-ing, marginalizing or removing those that would not. Conversely, Serbian leaders have sought Russia's assistance against both domestic and foreign enemies.

## The Russia-Serbia Tie

This Russo-Serbian relationship has frequently been destructive for Serbia and the Balkans and for international peace, particularly in 1914, when it con-

tributed to plunging Europe into World War I. That war wiped out a large part of Serbia's population and very nearly ended its independent national existence.

Josip Broz Tito, probably the most powerful modern leader ever to rule from a city in the Balkans outside Istanbul, succeeded by maintaining his independence from Moscow, which famously excommunicated his regime in 1948. Yet since Putin took power in 1999, Russia has sought to use Serbia as a pawn to disrupt the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Balkans.

Russia has been an active supporter of Serbian revisionism in Kosovo and regionally. It has worked on multiple fronts, but primarily economic and military, to boost the Vucic regime's standing in the region. On the economic front, Russian firms are active in the banking, energy and now the defense sectors in Serbia.

On the military front, Russia has sold to Serbia or, in some instances, donated weapons systems that have started to alter the delicate balance of power established following the Yugoslav wars. Russia has donated or sold to Serbia



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*Marko Attila Hoare is an associate professor and head of research for the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology. Born in London and educated at the University of Cambridge and Yale University, he is the author of four books on the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina and is currently completing work on a history of modern Serbia.*

the advanced MiG 29, new T-72 tanks and BRDM-2 armored vehicles. Further, working with the relevant Serbian ministries, Russia has opened up a Russian-Serbian Humanitarian Center in Nis; though it is touted as a nonprofit organization, its military capabilities are clear.

In addition, the two countries have participated in joint military activities with Belarus called the Slavic Brotherhood. It is telling that during the recent border dispute with Kosovo, the Russian ambassador and military attaché were seen at a Serbian military base while Serbian armored vehicles and planes were moved to Kosovo's border areas. This is a clear indication of how the Kremlin leadership wishes to test NATO and E.U. resolve in the heart of Europe.

## A Set Pattern

Russia's actions follow a set pattern: the promotion of instability beyond its borders in order to occupy Western and NATO resources in areas that the West deems a low priority within its overall strategic goals. The Balkans are a convenient area for crisis-manufacturing by Russia, which has used numerous methods formulated in the Kremlin kitchen to keep NATO and the West strategically tied.

For example, by keeping Kosovo as an issue of contention Russia wishes to drive a wedge within the E.U. and tie Serbia more closely to Moscow. The Serbian push for the creation of the Union of Serb Municipalities within Kosovo, like the dangerous precedent of territorial swaps, is meant to create lasting instability and bring into question the principles of sovereignty and multiethnicity in societies.

These strategies were active in North Macedonia, where Russia attempted to influence the 2020 NATO referendum,

stirring sectarian tensions with rumored plots of the country's dissolution.

In Montenegro, too, Russia actively worked with elements from Serbia to bring about a coup and has, with the support of Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church, sought to raise ethnic tensions to undermine Montenegrin statehood and national identity.

Yet the weakest link in Balkan equilibrium is Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Russia has worked with local Serbian nationalist leaders to undermine 26 years of attempted stabilization and reform.

With Serbia, Russia has given support to the efforts of the Milorad Dodik regime in Republika Srpska to undermine Bosnian state institutions, bringing the country the closest it has been to another war since 1995. These actions by Serbian nationalists challenge the ability of NATO and the E.U. to bring stability and prosperity to their immediate neighborhood.

With the recent events in Ukraine, Dodik has come out in support of Russian actions while at the same time severely testing the established pro-Western political consensus that existed in Bosnian state-level institutions. In a call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Dodik spoke of activating an established plan discussed during his prior visit to Russia and subsequent meeting with President Putin. With the growing Russian frustration in Ukraine, this could mean a potential widening of Russian military action in the Western Balkans.

## A Growing Challenge

We can no longer afford to sit by and watch this growing challenge by Russia and Serbia to the security of NATO and the E.U. The growing military expenditures and closer ties between Serbia and Russia need to be checked by a renewed commitment on the part of NATO and

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the E.U. to integrate the Western Balkan nations into these organizations. Our re-engagement in the region needs to offset the already established network of instability that has been created by Russia.

Sanctions and economic pressure need to be applied against actors who wish to undermine the hard work of the last 26 years. NATO should seek to engage more vigorously in the region, including to signal to Russia that further instability will not be tolerated. Sanctions would need to be expanded to cover more of President Dodik's party cadre, and a clear decision by NATO should be made that would station rapid-reaction troops within Bosnia and the wider region to deter possible attempts by Russia to deploy its special forces via Serbia.

The Balkans played a central role in the breakdown of the European order before World War I. We cannot allow it to play a similar role today. With Ukraine at war and the challenges posed by this new world order, we need to show strength and determination, sending a clear message to actors in the region who wish to undermine NATO and the E.U. that the values we hold dear, the values that are currently being challenged in Ukraine, will not be allowed to languish. ■



# U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS AT 50

## LEARNING LESSONS AND MOVING AHEAD

**A half-century of experience points to the need for stronger measures to address future challenges.**

BY ROBERT S. WANG

In its Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States (February 2022), the Biden administration highlighted mounting challenges in Asia, particularly as the People's Republic of China "pursues a sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and seeks to become the world's most influential power." The strategy document asserts: "From the economic coercion of Australia to the conflict along the Line of Actual Control with India to the growing pressure on Taiwan and bullying of neighbors in the East and South China Seas, our allies and partners in the region bear much of the cost of the PRC's harmful behavior. In the process, the PRC is also under-

mining human rights and international law, including freedom of navigation, as well as other principles that have brought stability and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific."

Meanwhile, in the wake of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine, Beijing abstained on the United Nations resolution condemning the invasion, echoed Russia's claims about U.S. and NATO responsibility for the crisis, and refused to join the United States and European Union in imposing economic sanctions on Russia. In fact, after their meeting in Beijing earlier in the month, Presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin announced that the two countries "oppose further enlargement of NATO" and "stand against the formation of closed bloc structures and opposing camps in the Asia-Pacific region and remain highly vigilant about the negative impact of the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy on peace and stability in the region." Further, they "reaffirm that the new inter-State relations between Russia and China are superior to political and military alliances of the Cold War era," and that "there are no 'forbidden' areas of cooperation."

Thus it appears that U.S.-China relations are at a critical stage as an increasingly powerful and authoritarian China has become more aggressive in pursuing its irredentist regional goals in alliance with Putin's Russia, which not only threatens U.S. democratic allies and partners in Asia but could also undermine the rules and values of the U.S.-led liberal international order across the globe.



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*During a 32-year career with the Department of State, he served overseas in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Taiwan and Beijing, where he was deputy chief of mission from 2011 to 2013. His last Foreign Service assignment before retiring in 2016 was as the U.S. senior official for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (2013-2015). He was a senior adviser at Covington & Burling LLP (2016-2018) and a visiting fellow with the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (2009-2010).*

Russia's invasion of Ukraine—following its previous military operations in Georgia and Crimea, as well as intervention in Syria—serves as a useful “wake-up call” for the United States and its allies in Asia.

In this article, I will reflect on U.S. policy toward China over the past 50 years and briefly offer my thoughts on the lessons we should have learned that will, hopefully, be useful in addressing the growing challenges we will face from China. In this I draw partly on my own experiences during a 32-year Foreign Service career that has been focused primarily on U.S.-China relations.

## Was U.S. Engagement Policy a Mistake?

In the November/December 2021 *Foreign Affairs*, John Mearsheimer called U.S. engagement policy toward China “a colossal strategic mistake,” arguing that in recent history “there is no comparable example of a great power actively fostering the rise of a peer competitor. And it is now too late to do much about it.” Mearsheimer wrote: “Washington promoted investment in China and welcomed the country into the global trading system, thinking it would become a peace-loving democracy and a responsible stakeholder in a U.S.-led international order.” Nonetheless, he posited, “China has always had revisionist goals” that were opposed to this order, and “the mistake was allowing it to become powerful enough to act on them.”

In a subsequent rebuttal, G. John Ikenberry pointed out that U.S. engagement policy toward China had been part of a largely successful effort to create a postwar order in which “the United States pushed and pulled the international system in a direction that broadly aligned with its interests and values, promulgating rules and institutions to foster liberal democracy, expanding security cooperation with European and East Asian allies, and generating international coalitions for tackling the gravest threats to humanity.” In this process, he noted, “Washington built counterweights to Chinese power through an invigorated and deepened alliance system” and “regional institutions in



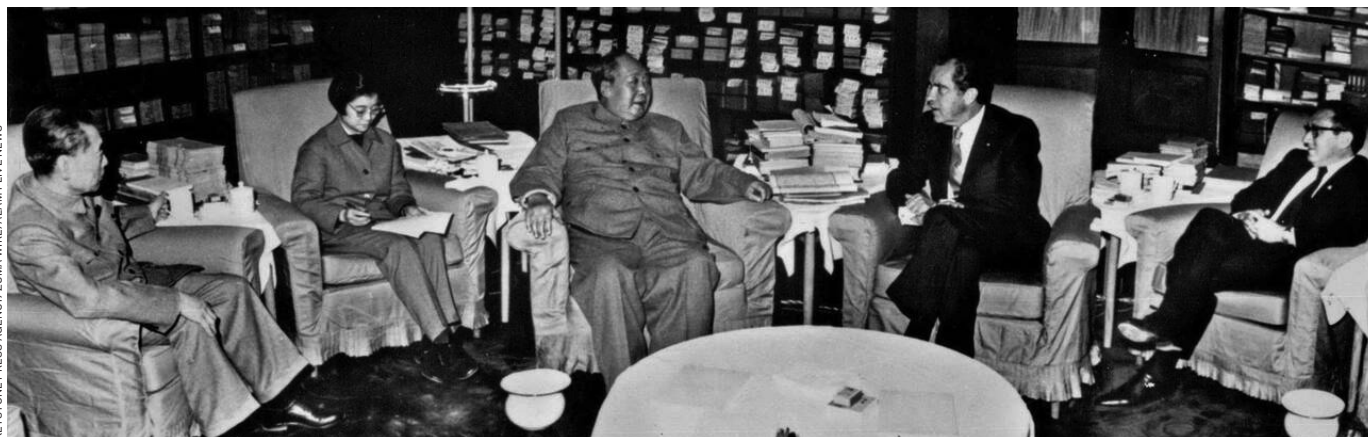
From the 1960s Cultural Revolution, this Chinese propaganda poster reads: “Long live Chairman Mao, the reddest sun in our hearts.” The crowd holds aloft his *Little Red Book*.

the broader Asia-Pacific region.” Ikenberry concluded: “The major failure of U.S. strategy toward China was to not make the country’s integration into the liberal capitalist system more conditional.” And he called on the United States “to work with its allies to strengthen liberal democracy and the global system that makes it safe—and to do so while looking for opportunities to work with its chief rival.”

As I see it, to accept Mearsheimer’s basic thesis would essentially be to disavow the fundamental objectives of U.S. postwar foreign policy that

we in the Foreign Service have worked to advance, even if often unsuccessfully. Even during my posting in Hong Kong during the Tiananmen massacre in June 1989, when we witnessed and offered assistance to the flood of political refugees coming out of the mainland, we retained hope that keeping China’s door open would eventually lead to its transformation into a more open and just society. We continued to work to promote bilateral ties during my tours in Shanghai in the mid-1990s, and then in Beijing in the early 2000s when China entered the World Trade Organization, and a decade later even as China began to assert and expand its regional presence and global reach.

At the same time, it also became increasingly clear to me, especially during my last tour in Beijing (2011-2013) and over the past decade, that U.S. engagement policy had failed to alter China’s autocratic political system or to transform Beijing into a “responsible stakeholder” in the international arena, while propelling its rapid economic and military rise and enabling it to pursue an increasingly assertive foreign policy. Nonetheless, I continue to maintain that while this policy has not succeeded thus far, its long-term objectives remain valid and achievable. As Richard Nixon himself wrote in a prescient article in the October 1967 *Foreign Affairs*: “Taking the long view, we simply



In Beijing on Feb. 15, 1972, China and the U.S. opened official diplomatic relations for the first time since the Communist Party took over China in 1949. From left to right: Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, interpreter Nancy Tang, Chairman of the Communist Party of China Mao Zedong, U.S. President Richard Nixon and U.S. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger.

cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations, there to nurture its fantasies, cherish its hates and threaten its neighbors.” At the same time, he pointed out, this policy requires “recognizing the present and potential danger from Communist China, and taking measures designed to meet that danger.” Nixon warned: “We could go disastrously wrong if, in pursuing this long-range goal, we failed in the short range to read the lessons of history.”

## Learning Lessons

So what went wrong, and what are “the lessons of history” we now must learn to be able to take the necessary measures to confront China’s “present and potential danger”? I focus here on two critical lessons I have derived over the years.

### 1. Don’t underestimate the determination and ability of the ruling Chinese Communist Party to maintain its absolute power and resist political change.

I believe this is the most fundamental “lesson of history” that we should have learned since U.S. engagement policy began 50 years ago. From the Democracy Wall (1979) and the June 4 Tiananmen Massacre (1989) to the crackdown on the Falun Gong (1999), the Jasmine Revolution (2011) and the Hong Kong Democracy Movement (2019-2020), the CCP has amply demonstrated its determination and ability to stifle political dissent, suppress individual freedoms and resist political change in China. This process notably included the purge of some of its own top leaders, such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang in the 1980s. In fact, even as Deng Xiaoping revived economic reforms after 1989, the CCP actually tightened political control, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union that year.

The CCP has imposed draconian measures in Tibet and Xinjiang in its effort to suppress “separatist” movements among ethnic minorities in China. Under Xi Jinping, the CCP’s quest for control has redoubled and reverted into the economic realm, targeting not only state-owned enterprises but both

domestic and foreign private companies operating in China, and expanded into society at large with widespread surveillance and censorship and the initiation of “social credit scores” to assess citizens’ political loyalty. Finally, Beijing has put aside Deng’s “hide and bide” caution and begun to flex its increasing economic and military power abroad to advance Xi’s “China dream.”

Nonetheless, as an open letter to President Donald Trump in 2019 shows, many China analysts, including former U.S. diplomats, reject an adversarial stance toward Beijing. They continue to believe, as they wrote to Trump, that while China’s “challenges require a firm and effective U.S. response,” the recent measures taken by the United States “are fundamentally counterproductive” and contribute “directly to the downward spiral in relations” that “we believe does not serve American or global interests.” In the letter these authors argued that U.S. policy “must be based on a realistic appraisal of Chinese perceptions, interests, goals and behavior,” and that China is not “a monolith, or the views of its leaders set in stone.”

They stated: “Although its rapid economic and military growth has led Beijing toward a more assertive international role, many Chinese officials and other elites know that a moderate, pragmatic and genuinely cooperative approach with the West serves China’s interests. Washington’s adversarial stance toward Beijing weakens the influence of those voices in favor of assertive nationalists. With the right balance of competition and cooperation, U.S. actions can strengthen those Chinese leaders who want China to play a constructive role in world affairs.”

While I, too, want to hold out hope that Beijing will eventually undertake political reforms and adopt constructive policies abroad, I now believe it has become too dangerous to assume the CCP will allow this to happen absent a much stronger—and even “adversarial”—response from the United States and others. In opening our markets and encouraging investments in China, we had assumed an increasingly prosperous and internationally



connected Chinese middle class and intelligentsia would eventually demand political reforms, as we have witnessed elsewhere in Asia, and more cooperative ties with the West. Many were—and continue to be—convinced that the “end of history” and rise of innately superior democracies was and is close at hand.

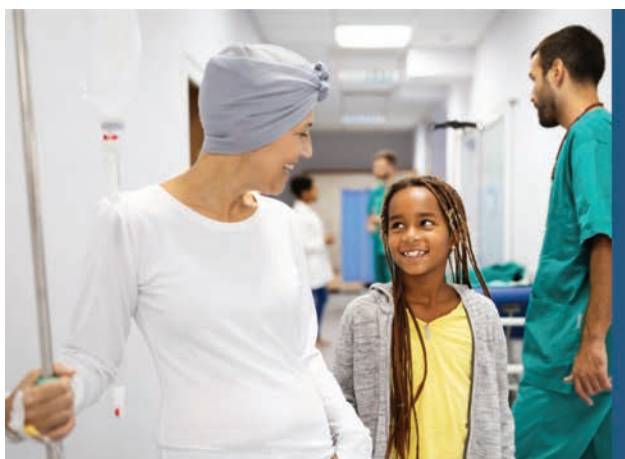
This clearly has not happened, and China has even moved backward under the current CCP leadership. Yet we continued to facilitate China’s economic rise, which allowed the CCP to tout the “Beijing model” to its own people (“socialism with Chinese characteristics”) as superior to Western democracies and enabled the CCP to strengthen its internal controls. Ironically, the CCP has now joined with Russia to accuse the United States of adopting a “Cold War approach,” while further mobilizing nationalist sentiments to support its aggressive foreign policy goals.

To arrive at the “realistic appraisal of Chinese perceptions, interests, goals and behavior” demanded by critics of the Trump policy, it might also be useful for us to look back at the CCP’s long history of violent political struggles, such as the anti-rightist

**While Beijing has been open to dialogues and negotiations, we have few results to show for them.**

campaigns of the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s. Reviewing this history up to the present should strongly suggest that political changes will not come about without a much more significant pushback, even if this does result in increased tension and a deterioration in relations. Our continued unwillingness to accept this reality and the risks of confrontation over the years has led us to where we are today. I think it is time to readjust our expectations and consider new measures to confront China’s challenges.

**2. Don’t assume that China’s internationalization and growing interdependence with the world will transform it into a “responsible stakeholder.”**



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Above: Tiananmen Square in 2016. Inset: Signboards for a protest in Hong Kong feature *South China Sunday Morning Post* coverage of the People's Republic of China government crackdown on demonstrators on June 4, 1989, in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

"Our policy has succeeded remarkably well in expanding China's international role," then-Deputy Secretary of State (and former U.S. Trade Representative) Bob Zoellick said in a speech in 2005. But noting an "unacceptable" \$162 billion bilateral trade deficit with China, he added: "The U.S. business community, which in the 1990s saw China as a land of opportunity, now has a more mixed assessment. Smaller companies worry about Chinese competition, rampant piracy, counterfeiting and currency manipulation. Even larger U.S. businesses—once the backbone of support for economic engagement—are concerned that mercantilist Chinese policies will try to direct controlled markets instead of opening competitive markets."

Zoellick warned that China "cannot take its access to the U.S. market for granted" because "the United States will not be able to sustain an open international economic system—or domestic U.S. support for such a system—without greater cooperation from China." Said Zoellick: "As a responsible stakeholder, China would be more than just a member—it would work with us to sustain the international system that has enabled its success."

Now, nearly two decades later, there is little doubt that China has not become the "responsible stakeholder" Zoellick envisioned. To begin with, while not in itself an indicator of trade practices, the U.S. trade deficit with China reached \$355.3 billion in 2021. More to the point, as reported in the 2018 USTR Section 301 report, the U.S. Intellectual Property Commission

estimated that "Chinese theft of American IP currently costs between \$225 billion and \$600 billion annually." The commission found China to be "the worst infringer of American IP" and that "China effectuates forced technology transfer and theft including via industrial espionage, conditioning market access on technology transfer, tactical employment of vague regulations and laws to pressure U.S. firms into transferring their IP to avoid litigation and localization requirements that force U.S. firms to house sensitive data on the Chinese mainland." The USTR report concluded: "The evidence adduced in this investigation establishes that China's technology transfer regime continues, notwithstanding repeated bilateral commitments and government statements."

Even more troubling for the future, the USTR report explains that "China has issued a large number of industrial policies, including more than 100 five-year plans, science and technology development plans, and sectoral plans over the last decade" to attain global leadership in key strategic industries, including information technology, robotics, aircraft, energy and pharmaceutical industries. The Made in China 2025 (MIC 2025) Plan, the report says, "sets forth clear principles, tasks and tools to implement this strategy, including government intervention

and substantial government, financial and other support to the targeted Chinese industries,” as well as “foreign technology acquisition through various means.”

In an August 2020 “In Focus” update, the U.S. Congressional Research Service reported that “Chinese government guidance funds (GGFs) channel state funding to Chinese companies in support of domestic R&D and overseas acquisitions,” and “as of March 2018, an estimated 1,800 GGFs linked to MIC 2025 were collectively valued at \$426 billion.” CRS stated: “GGFs target and fund strategic acquisitions that appear to build Chinese capabilities through control of foreign corporate expertise, IP, talent pools, and ties to suppliers and customers.”

Based on these assessments and after numerous rounds of negotiations, the United States finally took action to raise tariffs on more than \$350 billion of Chinese imports in different tranches. It took steps to mandate a national security review of Chinese investments in 27 “critical technology” industries and tightened scrutiny of Chinese business operations in the United States.

But the question remains:

Why had the United States not responded earlier to China’s egregiously unfair trade practices, as Zoellick suggested we might, and why do many continue to oppose current and future measures? One answer is provided in the USTR Section 301 report: “U.S. companies have stated for more than a decade, they fear that they will face retaliation or the loss of business opportunities if they come forward to complain about China’s unfair trade practices.” Moreover, American companies have lobbied against and sought exclusions from the recent tariff measures applied on Chinese imports that affect their business operations.

Beijing has long recognized the important role of the private sector in Western democracies and has not hesitated to use its leverage to pressure the United States from taking action not only against China’s trade practices but on political and security issues, as well. In my experience in China, we came to expect visits from U.S. businesses under pressure from the Chinese government whenever bilateral tensions escalated, and this has now been extended to individuals and businesses in the United States. We have also seen such pressures applied by Beijing against other countries, as in the cases of Australia (over investigation of the

## But the question remains: Why had the United States not responded earlier to China’s egregiously unfair trade practices?

origins of COVID-19) or Korea (over deployment of U.S. missile defense systems). Hence, while we had hoped that increased global interdependence would encourage China to be more responsible, it appears, on the contrary, to have primarily increased Beijing’s leverage against the rest of the world.

At the same time, while Beijing has been open to dialogues and negotiations, we have few results to show for them. I recall that a PRC Foreign Ministry official remarked at the end of my last tour in Beijing that China and the United States had conducted more than 90 annual dialogues by 2013 across a full spectrum of subjects from trade and security to labor, law enforce-

ment and human rights. On occasion, “successful” talks have led to “commitments” and “agreements”—but, as we used to advise American companies, the real negotiation begins after contracts are signed. Our bilateral history is replete with such examples, going back to the 1996 Sino-U.S. Intellectual Property Agreement and the recent “historic and enforceable”

U.S.-China Phase One Trade Agreement. Beijing has been skillful in using dialogues and agreements—as well as the WTO—to delay and divert retaliatory actions by other parties, while China continues its policies and practices.

Finally, Beijing has continually used cooperation on “common interests,” such as climate change and nuclear nonproliferation (North Korea and Iran), as leverage to exact concessions from the United States on bilateral issues. As China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi openly told U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry in September 2021: “Cooperation on climate change cannot be divorced from the overall situation of China-U.S. relations. The United States should work with China to meet each other halfway and take positive actions to bring China-U.S. relations back on track.” He urged the United States to “stop viewing China as a threat and rival, and cease containing and



Made in China 2025 is a long-term PRC plan to boost China’s international competitiveness.



suppressing China all over the world” and “actively respond to the ‘two lists’ and ‘three bottom lines’ put forward by China, and take concrete steps to improve China-U.S. relations.”

## Moving Ahead

From the above, it is clear that it will be very difficult for the United States to convince Beijing to undertake political reforms or assume the role of a “responsible stakeholder” in the present international order.

Former Assistant Secretary and current National Security Council Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific Kurt Campbell wrote in 2018: “The starting point for a better approach is a new degree of humility about the United States’ ability to change China. Neither seeking to isolate and weaken it nor trying to transform it for the better should be the lodestar of U.S. strategy in Asia. Washington should instead focus more on its own power and behavior, and the power and behavior of its allies and partners.” Similarly, the 2022 U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy underscores that “our objective is not to change the PRC but to shape the strategic environment in which it operates, building a balance of influence in the world that is maximally favorable to the United States, our allies and partners, and the interests and values we share.” It indicates that we will continue to work with the PRC in areas like climate change and nonproliferation, believing that “it is in the interests of the region and the wider world that no country withhold progress on existential transnational issues because of bilateral differences.”

As I see it, however, the lesson we should have learned is not that we cannot and should not seek to change China, as it continues to violate international trade rules and laws and universal human rights principles. *Rather, it is that we need to be willing to take stronger measures—and accept the necessary costs and risks—to achieve the long-term goals of the U.S. engagement policy that commenced 50 years ago.* In his 1967 article, Nixon warned: “The world cannot be safe until China changes. Thus our aim, to the extent that we can influence events, should be to induce change. The way to do this is to persuade China that it must change: that it cannot satisfy its imperial ambitions, and that its own national interest requires a turning away from foreign adventuring and a turning inward toward the solution of its own domestic problems.” If we allow China to continue to take advantage of the present global order to pursue its economic growth, then I believe we are simply postponing the day of reckoning, as we now see more clearly in the case of Russia.



PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi, shown here addressing the Munich Security Conference in 2017, insists that cooperation must involve U.S. concessions to China.

KLEINSCHMIDT/MSC

We cannot afford to pursue a policy of “strategic patience” in the case of a rising and increasingly powerful and assertive China.

So what specifically should the United States do? I argue here that, apart from defensively “shaping the strategic environment” around China, we can and should start by taking direct and stronger measures to ensure that China cannot continue to pursue the egregious trade practices that have enabled its economic and military rise and enhanced its internal controls. It is critical that President Joe Biden has retained the Section 301 trade measures taken by the previous administration, but more needs to be done, including immediate action to enforce the Phase One Agreement Beijing has clearly not fulfilled. The United States should act to impose stronger sanctions on Chinese entities that violate U.S. intellectual property rights and promote China’s industrial policies. While remaining open to work on “common interests,” the U.S. should reject any linkage to other bilateral issues and minimize further dialogues and negotiations that are simply meant to delay U.S. action. To enhance the impact of these measures, the United States should collaborate with our allies and within the WTO; but we should not hesitate to act on our own as soon as possible.

At the same time, the United States should work with the European Union and other democracies, as well as relevant nongovernmental organizations, to document and publicize even more widely Beijing’s gross human rights violations within China, especially against the Uyghur population in Xinjiang, and its policies that support authoritarian regimes abroad, including

its indirect support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Ultimately, it will be up to the Chinese people to decide on their own political system, but we need to continue supporting those in China who seek to advance political reforms and more constructive policies abroad. We cannot do that by just avoiding confrontation. We should take further steps to support the individual rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong, as well as assist the people of Taiwan in their fight to determine their own political future. As Martin Luther King wrote in 1963: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

The clear message we should be sending by these actions is not that the United States is seeking to weaken China, but that China can continue to prosper only if it abides by the rules of the international order from which it has greatly benefited. Given China's interdependence with the world, the United States and its allies do have important leverage, but only if we are able to mobilize domestic and international support to use it. Doing so will be very difficult; and, frankly, I am not confident that it can

**We need to be willing to take stronger measures—and accept the necessary costs and risks—to achieve the long-term goals of the U.S. engagement policy that commenced 50 years ago.**

be done as things stand today in the United States. Apart from Beijing's retaliation against American businesses and industries, as well as more recent concerns about inflationary pressures in the U.S. economy, there will continue to be opposition from those concerned about the risks of an "adversarial" approach and the dangers of a "new Cold War." But I would still argue that we cannot afford to wait much longer. As Nixon warned in 1967, "we could go disastrously wrong if, in pursuing this long-range goal, we failed in the short range to read the lessons of history." ■

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# Just Another Glamorous Move

**Relocating around the world every couple of years is the “good news” and “bad news” of the Foreign Service career.**

BY DEBORAH DERRICK

**T**he last time my husband, Baxter, and I headed overseas, we invited a Foreign Service friend over for a pre-departure beer. We were on our way to Chile. The packers were coming soon.

Our air freight occupied the living room. Our sea freight was in the bedroom. The rest of our stuff was scattered around the house like litter,

tagged for storage or Goodwill.

Our friend declined the invitation. “Just thinking about what your house looks like right now makes my heart race,” he said. Because only a handful of things in life are more fraught than moving, and adding a new country and language to the mix is a jolly good test of one’s resilience.

If most Foreign Service transitions are difficult, though,



*Deborah Derrick, a Foreign Service spouse since 1990, is a writer and global health expert. She has served overseas with her husband in Poland, South Africa, Canada and Chile. She is the author of Half Lives, the true story of an atomic waste dumping ship, its veterans and a protracted government cover-up.*

Baxter’s and my move to Durban, South Africa, was a high-water mark. It was 1993. We were flying halfway around the Earth, taking the longest flight in the world with three toddlers: a 2-year-old daughter and 1-year-old twins.

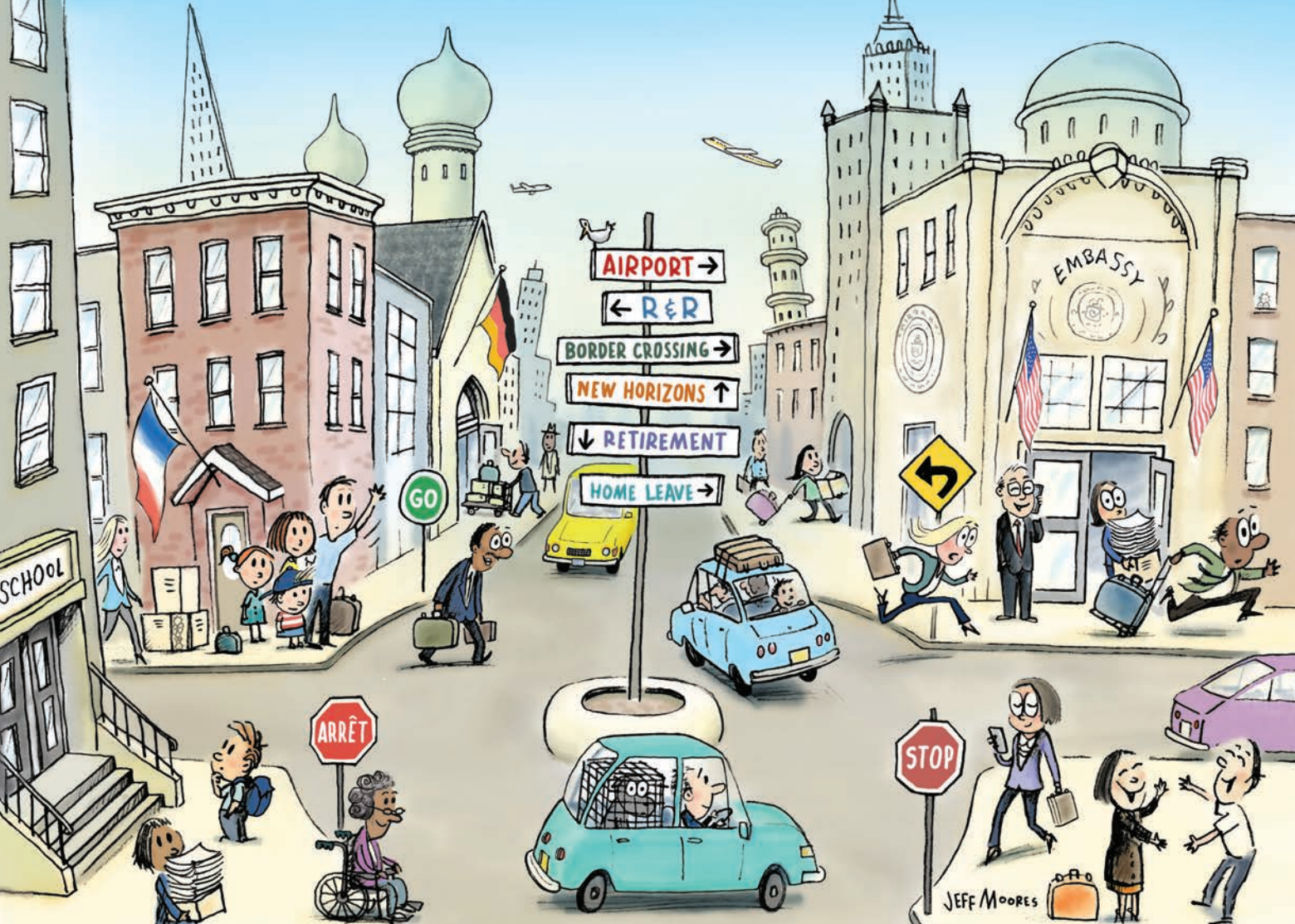
Having flown with our little ones before, Baxter and I decided to seek pharmacological help for the New York-to-Johannesburg leg. We asked a Connecticut pediatrician—whom we didn’t know—for a mild sedative. He looked at us skeptically and, given what later happened, probably gave us a placebo instead.

Passengers on the Johannesburg flight looked aside or down as our family lurched onto the plane. I knew they were hoping we’d be seated far, far away.



The airline had assigned us five seats in a center row. Before the plane took off, however, a stewardess leaned over to tell Baxter and me that they required a one-to-one adult-to-child ratio in each row. She said we’d have to put one child in a different location. I was just imagining the reaction we’d get, asking some stranger to babysit our 2-year-old for 19 hours, when Baxter bit back. He told the stewardess he doubted anyone would be willing to care for a lone child. He said she could ask around, though. The stewardess slunk away, leaving Baxter and me alone in our misery.





## We were flying halfway around the Earth, taking the longest flight in the world with three toddlers.

We flew off into the dark and opened our foil-wrapped meals, but as the other passengers settled in for an uncomfortable night's sleep, our kids became fidgety. Baxter and I read and sang to them. We walked them up and down the aisles. Still, a few hours into the flight, our 1-year-old son, James, threw up on Baxter.

I'd packed extra clothes for the kids but none for Baxter and me. I had a turtleneck under my floral lavender sweater, however, so gave the sweater to Baxter. He resumed pacing the aisles, comforting James, in that lovely, too-tight garment.

Four hours into the flight, Baxter and I decided to use the sedative we'd been given. We poured out a dose and gave it to Stephanie, who swallowed it obediently and uneventfully. Then we gave the medicine to James. He drank it and promptly vomited it back up, onto me—the mother with no spare clothing. I wiped off as much vomit as I could and resigned myself to stinking for the next 15 hours. Baxter and I also decided then

that we would not medicate our other twin, Lindsey. This was the right call. Lindsey and James soon fell asleep. Meanwhile, Stephanie—who'd purportedly been sedated—stayed alert for the rest of the flight.

After we landed in Johannesburg, I rushed to collect my bag, then headed to the ladies' room to change my shirt. My heart sank, however, when I saw it was closed for renovation. I continued reeking as we taxied to a hotel, where our discombobulated toddlers stayed awake all night long, drawing pictures and playing with puzzles.



Our flight to Durban the next day was much shorter, and things were really looking up as we drove to our temporary quarters. We passed miles of white sandy beaches. We approached a stately house with a sparkling blue pool—our short-term new home. The landlady, Mary, came out to greet

## The kids rode their trikes under huge avocado trees. We explored Durban's coast and tidal pools.

us. She was white, English-speaking and matronly in appearance. Within minutes, she let us know that her children were grown, and she now lived alone. She asked where we came from in the United States. When we said Connecticut and North Carolina, she asked what the weather was like in each place.

She showed us around the house. It was appointed with fussy furniture, glossy marble floors and sharp-edged stairs—not great for toddlers. Mary was still living in the house, too. She'd moved to the upstairs mother-in-law apartment, she said, noting that I'd have to fetch her if the phone rang, because it was downstairs.

On the plus side, Mary showed us a master bedroom suite with a huge hot tub. I could almost feel the water warming my bones as she finished the tour. Baxter and I put the kids down for a nap and headed for the hot tub. We opened the tap and went into the bedroom to strip off our clothes. When we returned, though, the tub was full of cold, rank-smelling water. The hot water source was and would remain broken.



Baxter went off to work the next day. The kids and I stayed put, eating and playing on Mary's icy floors. Whenever the phone rang, I sprinted upstairs to knock on her closed door, announcing that she had a call. Mary would come down at her leisure, taking her calls from an elegant chair in the foyer. She always stayed downstairs a bit too long afterward, too, peppering me with questions about the United States while the kids swarmed around and clung to me. Apartheid was coming to an end in South Africa, and she was looking for the exits.

The weeks crept by while workers at the consulate prepared our residence. The kids and I had no car. We were mostly stuck with Mary in her cold fortress, three miles from the nearest coffeeshop or playground. Her Black servant would arrive and work silently in the kitchen, slipping upstairs to bring Mary her food. Mary would come downstairs each night when Baxter got home, cheerfully asking about his work.

Toward the end of our stay at Mary's, the kids and I were running and sliding in our socks on the marble floor when things got too boisterous, and Stephanie chucked up her lunch. Pink-orange vomit flew out of her mouth, hitting the floor with a splatter. It dotted our socks while remnants dribbled down the front of Stephanie's shirt. I froze for a minute, considering my options, none of them terribly appealing. I swept Stephanie up in my arms and had the twins follow me into their bathroom. I ran a bath, peeled off my now-goopy shirt, and stripped off the kids' clothing. I plunked all three in the water and knelt down to lather them, in only shorts and a bra.

Then, as in a bad dream, Mary appeared. She stood in the doorway, asking me when Baxter was coming home. I said I didn't know. She asked about life in the United States, again. I pursed my lips and kept washing my kids. She asked if Baxter handled visas at work. She asked what I knew about the H-1B visa program. I said I was kind of busy at the moment. I hauled the kids out of the tub and wrapped them in towels. I herded them into my bedroom and shut the door.



Not long after, Baxter, the kids and I moved into a permanent residence and, for the next two years, enjoyed an exceptionally high quality of life. The kids rode their trikes under huge avocado trees. We explored Durban's coast and tidal pools. Baxter and I tracked lions in Kruger National Park. None of this would have been possible if we'd stayed in the D.C. metropolitan area.

I'd be doing myself and every Foreign Service family a disservice, though, if I suggested that everything was peachy after our bizarre temporary housing experience. I still had to find new schools for the kids, new stores and new doctors. Baxter and I rarely saw our parents or siblings, and snail mail was our only affordable means of communication. It took months to cultivate new friends.

Even now, decades later, my heart does a backflip when I hear of a Foreign Service family packing out. I wish them fair winds, smooth sailing and courage on their passage. ■



# FS SINGLES How We See Things



**Single people over the age of 18 are a growing demographic, but that isn't the only reason State should be more mindful of its single employees.**

BY NAUREEN NALIA



*Naureen Nalia, the interim chair of the employee organization Singles at State, currently serves as a program officer in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. She previously served in Trinidad and Tobago, India and Mexico. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she worked as a legal aid attorney in Central California.*

**M**y first tour was in India, and after about 20 hours of traveling, I arrived in the early hours of the morning. I remember stepping into my new apartment jetlagged, anxious about the new job, and worried about my chronically ill cat making it through the journey. I was also grieving for my grandmother, who had lived in the same apartment complex as me for my entire childhood and whose recent loss had left me feeling unmoored.

The apartment in India was beautiful, but there was no soap to wash my hands or to shower off the dirt, sweat and germs that come with travel. I had diligently arranged my own transportation; but unfortunately, I was told at the last minute the car would not be available for the first three or four days after my arrival, leaving me stranded in housing that was at least 45 minutes away from other officers.

All the other entry-level officers were housed in the same complex, but I was alone in a distant suburb. I had no idea where to go on that first morning—the welcome book materials didn't have any information about the area because I was the first person assigned to live there. But even if I had known, taxis were not recommended for women traveling alone. There had just been a horrific rape and murder of a woman on a bus, so that did not seem like a good option either. I was expected to be at work in a



## As a single woman in the United States, I was used to being able to manage for myself; but doing so in another country brought unexpected obstacles.

few hours to start my check-in process but had not made motor pool arrangements—I had not expected to need them.

Luckily, another officer came through and provided me with transportation; but it was not a great beginning to my first tour.

### Going It Alone ...

As a single woman in the United States, I was used to being able to manage for myself; but doing so in another country brought unexpected obstacles. The most challenging aspect has been the expectation to come into the office and often spend the entire day there, when your luggage may have been lost in transit, you may not have drinking water, or you have no food at home, and you are so jetlagged you have temporarily lost the language skills you learned at the Foreign Service Institute. Even if you can fill those needs at the office, it is difficult to go to work after hours of traveling and then come back and set up the house on your own. For single parents, coming into the office may mean you must make childcare arrangements or figure out how to get your child enrolled in a new school, because you don't want to drag a jetlagged child to work with you.

There have been several cables in the last few years asking supervisors to give employees a couple of days' leave upon arrival if requested, but there is still resistance. A high-level speaker told a recent A-100 class not to request leave upon arrival or they would suffer career repercussions; several of the members of the cohort started to wonder whether the Foreign Service was the job for them. The Singles at State employee organization showed them the cables supporting their right to make the request for leave, but as long as there are leaders opposed to such accommodation, cables will not be enough. Time off to adjust to being in a new country should be the norm, not something one has to fight for each time.

While COVID-19 quarantines alleviated some of the need to ask for leave, they brought new challenges to the transition

process. It became more difficult to have parents or friends travel with officers to help with childcare, pet transportation or other aspects of making the transition as a single adult. If you were a single without eligible family members (EFMs), you were completely alone and unable to leave your home for the first two weeks in a new country, and that isolation was intensified if you didn't have stable internet at home.

Singles with children now had little to no access to childcare, and therefore no assistance with balancing work and remote education. For those of us who deal with isolation by having pets, restrictions put in place by airlines and countries made traveling with them difficult at best, and often impossible. Some countries have lifted pandemic restrictions, but there are still many locations where restrictions remain or are reimposed every time cases increase. And the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has made it more difficult and expensive to bring pets back to the United States regardless of COVID status.

There are people who argue that having pets, the ability to travel with people who are not EFMs and access to internet at home are not rights but privileges, and when we sign up for this job, we shouldn't expect to have those privileges. That is a debate for another time—and as an employee organization (formerly known as an employee affinity group), Singles at State will strongly advocate against that viewpoint—but if the past two years have taught us anything, it is that we lose good people if we expect them to work without making any accommodations for their mental and emotional well-being.

Singles, especially Foreign Service officers, increasingly tell me they are seeking other employment, because it feels as if the Department of State does not want them or is not a good fit unless you have a stay-at-home spouse.

### ... But Not Alone

In a department that aims to be representative of the broader public we serve, single employees represent a key demographic. In 2017 the U.S. Census reported that there are 110.6 million unmarried people over the age of 18—that's 45.2 percent of the American adult population. This large demographic is demanding a new set of societal norms. At State, single employees represent 25 percent of the direct-hire workforce.

If anyone wants to join us in working to make the department more inclusive toward singles, please reach out to [SinglesatState@state.gov](mailto:SinglesatState@state.gov). Even if you don't have the bandwidth to work on the employee organization, there are ways in which you can ensure that single employees feel welcome. Here are 10 insights about singles to help you do that:

1. We have the same social and downtime needs as people with families. Unless we leave post to travel home or have visitors in town, singles wake up alone every single holiday and birthday. If travel to and from post is difficult (as it has been everywhere during COVID), we singles could go an entire tour without ever seeing a human being who knew us before the beginning of this tour. By contrast, families don't need to travel to see each other. That is why some of us might seem possessive or anxious about our R&R or vacation time. It also means that invitations to join group celebrations on actual holidays are especially meaningful and appreciated.

2. Not all singles are looking to marry/date/hook up. Some may be, but it is always better to not assume.

3. Even though we are single, the well-being of families and family members at post is important to us. Some of us intentionally choose the accompanied, rather than the unaccompanied, assignment because we have been at both and seek the atmosphere of a family post with healthy community morale.

4. Because the spouse community at post tends to be majority female, we watch how post leadership treats EFMs and from that draw conclusions about how much they value women overall.

5. Recognize that in many parts of the world, being a single woman limits your ability to develop contacts after hours. We have worked under leadership who complained that we didn't do enough "night work" (meaning we were not out every night wining and dining contacts in the same way our male colleagues did). We do our share of contact development, but sometimes that is limited to daytime and in offices.

6. The community liaison office coordinator (CLO) has traditionally been exclusively supportive of and engaged with people who have families at post. We have seen leadership open to change, and as things open up, we hope to see CLOs in the field become more inclusive and think about singles. A good way to do that would be to create a buddy system for wellness and mental health check-ins, because a lot of us worry about what will happen if we have a medical emergency or crisis when we are home alone.

7. Just because someone is single it doesn't mean that they will automatically be friends with the *other* singles at post. Many of us try to socialize outside of the bubble, and single people don't *necessarily* like single people just by virtue of their common singlehood!

8. Being single at post can be extremely isolating and lonely (especially, but not limited to, if you are a female office management specialist). This is also true of locally employed (LE) staff

## Time off to adjust to being in a new country should be the norm, not something one has to fight for each time.

who may be from another part of the country or a third-country national. Similarly, being a single employee (Foreign Service or Civil Service) at Main State can be isolating in as much as many of us leave our families and friends to work on foreign policy issues in Washington, D.C.

9. Bidding is not easier for singles. While State denies it, the institution does give consideration to the fact that families have children in school, and that this may inform a certain bidding strategy and also affect permanent change of station (PCS) timings. It would be very much appreciated if State similarly understood that singles have certain criteria related to their unique situation when bidding and took that into consideration, too.

10. Given that we have no extra hands in our household, we would also appreciate at least one more admin day each for receiving household effects (HHE) and for packout.

### Singles at State

While I have worked with many good officers who have families, the Department of State can only benefit by becoming a more flexible employer for those who don't. It is because we love our work, and want our agency to be better, that singles formed our own group.

In response to a formal petition by Department of State employees, the Secretary's Office of Diversity and Inclusion approved "Singles at State" as an official employee affinity group (now called employee organization) in 2021. Singles at State aims to increase awareness across the department about how norms and policies affect single employees (i.e., unmarried, divorced and widowed employees, including single parents, across race, gender, disability status, sexual orientation) and advocates for more inclusivity.

This group is open to all employees of the Department of State and interagency community, regardless of marital status. Join the Singles at State conversation on Teams. ■

# SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND THIRD-CULTURE KIDS *Through FS Transitions*

**There is no one-size-fits-all  
in a Foreign Service  
transition.**

BY WYOKEMIA JOYNER  
AND SARAH GENTON

**N**avigating the Foreign Service journey can be complex. Adjusting to a new home, a new city and a new country all at once brings with it many exciting new discoveries, along with unexpected challenges. For adults, arriving at post and adjusting to a new country often includes figuring out the lay of the land, both personally and professionally.

Whether that is meeting new host country government counterparts and other officials, determining who the key points of contact are to get shipments sorted, or navigating what is and is not available in local grocery stores—the adjustment to life at post includes a full list of to-dos. While important and practical tasks can certainly fill up an arrival schedule, the well-being of children during a relocation is a primary concern for parents.

Transitions in life take a lot of planning, resilience and



*Wyokemia Joyner (left) is an education program specialist with the FSI Transition Center's Foreign Affairs Life Skills Training team.*



*Sarah Genton (right) is director of the FSI Transition Center's Overseas Briefing Center.*





grit—and this is especially true for Foreign Service youth. While they are not showing up to post and being thrown into the latest multilateral negotiation, they are walking the halls of their new international—or French, British or local—school trying to sort out who their new “best friend forever” (BFF) will be, while also attempting to pick up a few new words in the local language to order an after-school snack on the way home, or preparing to apply to college back in the U.S. even though they feel out of touch with “life back home” because they have not lived there in years.

Every few years, each Foreign Service parent and child will undergo a major transition that results in an experience unique to them. Within the same family, one person may have what feels like the perfect transition, while another family member struggles to adjust and find their way in the new place they now call home. There is no one-size-fits-all in the Foreign Service transition story; there is no single blueprint for everyone. However, understanding the unique experience that the Foreign Service journey brings for children can be helpful in supporting them along the way.

## Through the Eyes of Third-Culture Kids

As families move, paying attention to children’s comments and expressions can signal to a parent how a child is experiencing a transition. For some, the hardest part of leaving a post may be saying goodbye to friends and others that children have spent a lot of time with for the last two years or longer. One Foreign Service parent noted, “After leaving post, my 3-year-old’s first words every morning for a year were, ‘When do we get to go home?’ It was heart-wrenching.”

Helping children to say goodbye and maintain connections is important. Consider these ideas to foster memories and connections throughout transitions:

- Take photos of your child with their favorite people and use the photos to make a collage for your child’s bedroom wall or a small photo book they can carry with them.
- Make a copy for your child’s friends or nanny as a gift for your child to give before leaving, so they can remember each other in this way.
- Make note of favorite activities your child enjoyed and find a way to continue those activities at your new location.
- If your child is sad and missing someone,

have them write a note or draw a picture for the person. If possible, send the letter or picture to the individual via email or mail and share the person’s reaction when they receive it with your child.

- Stay connected! Help facilitate or encourage periodic video calls, emails, letters or text messages to stay in touch.

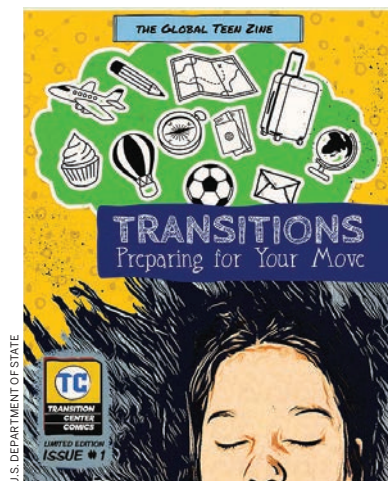
For some third-culture kids (TCKs), comfortable home surroundings make all the difference in acclimating to a new location. One parent said, “When we moved back to the United States, I was excited to show my children our new house. The kids were oddly silent as we walked through it. Finally, my oldest said, ‘Mom, I just don’t see how this house is going to work. It doesn’t even have bookshelves or beds!’ I realized that they’d always arrived to fully furnished homes overseas.”

Making a house feel like home—as quickly as possible—is very helpful to third-culture kids. Bringing wall decals and familiar room decoration items can help make a new, empty house feel

like home. Packing these items in hand-carried luggage may help speed up the acclimation process.

Children take their cues from parents—they learn from watching the adults in the room. Helpful strategies for modeling positivity include finding the good in each event along the way, helping children focus on that which they can control, and setting the example for dealing with challenges and difficult circumstances, like canceled flights, travel disruptions and lost items along the way.

A resilient outlook involves adapting and navigating the many challenges and unique experiences that come from living abroad and moving internationally. To assist with this, it is important to have a



The first issue of the Transition Center’s new five-part “zine” for FS tweens.

# Transitions in life take a lot of planning, resilience and grit—and this is especially true for Foreign Service youth.

diverse set of tools in your toolbox that are always handy for you and your family to use throughout the many transitions of your Foreign Service journey.

## The FSI Transition Center

The FSI Transition Center provides training, support and resources to assist all individuals—including parents and children—in navigating the many transitions of their Foreign Service life. “Our mission is to facilitate the transitions of all members of the U.S. foreign affairs community from all agencies into effective assignments overseas and repatriations,” says Director Ray Leki. “It doesn’t matter if our client is an ambassador going to a key post overseas or the 6-year-old son of a single parent Foreign Service member headed to a first post, or anyone in between. They all deserve our attention, our tailored consultations and resources, and our caring support.”

During his 31 years with the Transition Center, Leki has seen the ups, downs and the all-arounds of Foreign Service families, including third-culture children. From the joys of expanded families through adoption, opportunities to explore some of the most far-reaching corners of the world and the ability to connect with local communities through volunteer work while at post, to the challenges of evacuations, bombings, civil unrest and global pandemics—Leki and his staff have encountered innumerable stories throughout the years. It is the real-life experiences and insights of Foreign Service professionals and their family members that continues to inform and guide TC’s resources, programs and training.

## Building Resilience

In 2016 the Transition Center established the Center of Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience. In fact, TC has long offered customized training and resources to support Foreign Service professionals and their families. Says Eric Cipriano, an education program specialist with CEFAR: “Third-culture kids encounter a lot of change. Changes in schools and changes in their daily interactions. This results in Foreign Service kids having unique needs and common concerns. It’s important to learn from these experiences and apply them to CEFAR programming. We want to do anything we can to help kids move forward collectively.”

One CEFAR course, “Encouraging Resilience in Your Foreign Service Child (MQ500),” is designed for foreign affairs agency employees and their family members and draws from one of the most valuable resources available—foreign affairs youth and their parents. Guided by insights gained from real-life experiences over the years, the course explores factors that affect TCKs in their transient lifestyles and offers parents strategies to assist in facilitating

smooth transitions and parenting in an international, cross-cultural environment.

The Transition Center’s Foreign Affairs Life Skills Training team also offers more than 30 courses to help prepare and equip foreign affairs community members before going to post, during their time overseas and as they transition back to the U.S., including several aimed at supporting families and children.

For instance, to assist parents in understanding some of the resources and options that are

available to them in navigating a child’s education, TC offers “Ask the Education Expert: Educating Your Child Overseas (K-12)” in coordination with the Office of Overseas Schools. Another useful course is “Educating Your Foreign Service Child: The Boarding School Option.” Most recently, the center has added two new courses focused on educating a child with identified needs while posted overseas. Partnering with the Bureau of Medical Services’ Child and Family Program and the Office of Overseas Schools, TC offers “Educating Your Special Needs Child in the Foreign Affairs Community” and “Navigating the Foreign Service Lifestyle with a Child with an Autism Spectrum Diagnosis.”



Inside the “Transitions” zine dealing with moving to a new post.

The Transition Center's courses and webinars offer parents a great place to gather information, learn best practices, share common concerns, and find unique solutions to shared challenges of living and thriving in the foreign affairs community.

## Bringing the Overseas Experience to Life

For years, the Transition Center's Overseas Briefing Center has hosted the annual KidVid Contest in collaboration with the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, where young videographers submit their footage and commentary on life at their current overseas location. The collection provides a glimpse into life overseas from the perspective of TCKs and has grown to include experiences at posts in all regions of the world, while on evacuation status and during the COVID-19 pandemic. For many children, word descriptions of overseas living do not bring to life what they may see and experience at a new post. Viewing real pictures and footage gives children a realistic look and feel for what is to come.

Cultural awareness, another gift that TCKs pick up during their international experiences, proves valuable over the course of a lifetime. To further a child's knowledge, the OBC offers young members of our community access to CultureGrams, a ProQuest product that includes a Kids CultureGrams series. When researching a country, children can learn about local customs and traditions, food, holidays, history, some common phrases and country statistics.

Amid frequent relocations, Foreign Service children often miss the opportunity to process the experience in a meaningful and constructive way. To facilitate adapting to the many changes TCKs encounter, the OBC, in collaboration with CEFAR, created "The Amazing Adventures of [Me]: A Guided Journal to My International Move" with a companion Parent Guide. This interactive resource is filled with activities to encourage curiosity and discovery, quotes from real kids, and games to prompt discussion. The Parent Guide facilitates discussions between children and parents as they process and prepare for an international move.

The Overseas Briefing Center's newest resource, also developed in collaboration with CEFAR, was designed especially for middle schoolers. This "tweens" age group often deeply feels the emotional ups and downs of change, including when it comes to

## Helping children to say goodbye and maintain connections is important.

their mobile lifestyle. "Transitions" is the first "zine" in a series of five based on the concept of a graphic novel but in short-magazine format. Zines tell the stories of FS kids who travel from

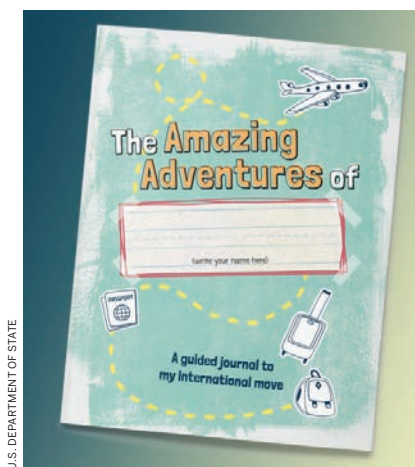
post to post and their struggle to find their place in the world. Whether dealing with the complications of a move, figuring out a new school or finding new friends, zines cover topics that most TCKs can relate to and include age-appropriate ways to deal with common issues they may encounter.

One parent noted that "Transitions" helped prompt a discussion about a familiar thought among tweens: "I'm moving anyway, so it doesn't matter." The feeling that a move means forgetting about friends and not resolving issues before leaving is common among tweens. Yet keeping in touch with friends and family helps TCKs make new friends, share new discoveries and take advantage of new experiences. They can learn to celebrate the adventure of self-

discovery. When supported by communication within the family, with extended family members and friends in a variety of places, a community emerges that provides a sense of belonging wherever a child may be.

With so many different types of transitions and so many todos, it can be challenging to keep up with it all. The Transition Center's *Foreign Service Assignment Notebook: What Do I Do Now?* is a go-to resource for adults that covers important aspects of the Foreign Service experience. The 32-chapter publication answers many of the questions frequently posed by families who take children abroad. Whatever your question, you may find the answer in this resource, so it is helpful to have on hand.

Reach out to [FSITransitionCenter@state.gov](mailto:FSITransitionCenter@state.gov) to learn more about these courses and resources, as well as other TC programs. TC welcomes feedback from foreign affairs families and encourages suggestions for future programming and services. ■



**This interactive Transition Center resource for young children comes with a Parent Guide.**



# THE COMPLEX CHALLENGE OF *Transporting Pets*

**A nail-biter pet shipping experience is an increasingly common part of Foreign Service life. Here are some tips on the process.**

BY MELISSA MATHEWS

**A**sk just about any member of the Foreign Service community to name the most difficult, stressful part of a permanent-change-of-station move, and one answer is bound to bubble up: transporting pets. Flying cats and dogs is expensive, difficult to arrange and risky. In recent years, it's only become harder.

At the height of COVID-19 in 2020, one Foreign Service family paid \$14,000 to get three pets to the United States for home leave. It's more than they'd ever paid before, primarily because of limited pandemic flight schedules from their post.

When home leave ended, the family headed back to the airport with confirmed pet reservations, regulation carriers and required health certificates destined for their next overseas assignment. To their surprise, the airline refused to board some of the animals.

"The resultant scramble to get my big dog off the plane as cargo, rent cars, pack the animals into said cars, and drive back to our home drained us of any reserves we may have been running on [during the pandemic]," they say. "We curtailed the next day."

A nail-biter pet shipping experience is an increasingly common part of Foreign Service life. "For a number of years, there have been some challenges," says Maureen Johnston, of the Foreign Service Institute's Overseas Briefing Center, who is widely regarded as the State Department guru on pet transportation. "Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of changes impacting the preparation time and costs involved for many pet owners has increased dramatically."



*Melissa Mathews, a Foreign Service family member, is the founder of Spring Green Communications and a former journalist. Her family includes husband George; three human children; a diplo-dog, Evie; and a Jordanian street cat, Olive.*

## Best Laid Plans

Comparing one pet PCS (permanent change of station) to another is like comparing a chihuahua with a bull mastiff. As is the case so often in Foreign Service life, the answer to how to transition overseas with an other-than-human family member is: it depends.

The process starts when a Foreign Service member is bidding on the next assignment. The suitability of a post for the family pet is often one of the criteria, alongside issues like schools and air quality, that families or individuals use to decide where they're willing to serve. They research embassy housing, host government laws and quality of veterinary care. Making the arrangements to take a pet to post can take months from start to finish, including securing required vaccines, a rabies titer test and paperwork.

Most pet owners have three paths to get their furriest family members overseas: as airline cargo—the most expensive option; as accompanied baggage—an extra piece of checked luggage; or in the cabin—if the pet is small enough to fit under the seat in its carrier.



Those options are dwindling. Over the past decade, many major American carriers, like United, have limited or stopped flying animals in the hold as cargo or accompanied baggage. And in 2020 the U.S. government ruled that airlines are no longer required to accommodate “emotional support animals” in the passenger cabin. (Trained and certified service animals are still allowed.) In summer 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention largely banned dogs from more than 100 countries. Diplomats traveling on official government orders can usually meet the complex requirements to repatriate their dogs, but the CDC ban continues to sow confusion and difficulties with the airlines.

New for the 2022 transfer season, OBC is advising pet owners transiting the European Union, which hosts typically pet-friendly airlines like Lufthansa and KLM, to check country-specific requirements for transiting its airports. Some countries may require a transiting pet to meet the same requirements as they would to enter, especially if they are coming from a country the E.U. considers high-risk for rabies.

“The pet shipping landscape will continue to be challenging,” Johnston says.

## Who's in Charge?

Shipping pets internationally includes navigating a host of government regulations and entities. First, there's the matter of how to pay for it. The Fly America Act legally limits diplomats to flying on government-funded tickets on U.S. carriers or codeshares, which may not offer the best routing or airlines for animals. In recent years, the government has offered some flexibility with cost constructing—or applying the value of one ticket to another airline or routing—for pet travel, but the ticket still has to meet Fly America requirements. Transfer allowances can be used to reimburse travelers for limited pet transportation costs, including quarantine or shipping agent charges.



**Jennifer Nichols' son, Hunter, with Charcoal, the family dog. An FS officer, Nichols is doing a fellowship on Capitol Hill and has drafted legislation to ease the burden of the CDC dog import ban on government employees.**

COURTESY OF JENNIFER NICHOLS

## Making the arrangements to take a pet to post can take months from start to finish.

Importing and exporting pets is largely regulated by the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, but other government agencies including Customs and Border Patrol, Fish and Wildlife Service and the CDC can play a role.

When exporting pets from the United States, APHIS says the most critical document is Form 7001, the export health certificate. It must be completed by an APHIS-certified U.S. veterinarian, and often then shipped off to an APHIS regional office to be endorsed by a staff vet. Many countries have their own forms and regulations, as well; and the APHIS website includes a searchable tool for all known import requirements from other countries. When in doubt, APHIS says, travelers should check with the embassy of their destination country.

Bringing pets back to the United States used to be as relatively simple as a proof of rabies vaccination, but that all changed with the CDC rules implemented in summer 2021. Now, dogs coming from countries designated as high risk for rabies must obtain a permit from the CDC—a process that takes months from start to finish and includes an annual titer test, along with evidence that the traveler is on government orders.

Earlier this year, when the threat of invasion by Russia led to



COURTESY OF SUSAN JOHNSON

**Retired FSO Susan Johnson, at right as an FS kid in the early 1960s, with school friend Suzanne Potter and Tigger, the dog the family brought from Ethiopia to France and Belgium. Johnson says pet travel was less bureaucratic in those days.**

the evacuation of embassy families from Ukraine, families serving in Kyiv endured layers upon layers of stress: wrapping up affairs, arranging schooling and housing in the United States, saying goodbye to friends and worrying about loved ones staying behind as essential embassy staff. Because Ukraine is considered by the CDC as high risk for rabies, securing an import permit and making travel arrangements for the family dog added to the intense pressures.

"The knock-on effects of the ban resulted in members of the U.S. military and government paying thousands of dollars for tests, additional uncertainty and, for many, deep pain as they contemplated being separated from their dogs," says one embassy family member. Kyiv was fortunate to have a CDC representative posted to the embassy who helped to liaise with the agency to expedite permits. Ultimately, nearly 70 embassy pets were successfully evacuated from Ukraine on a charter flight and reunited with their families.

The Embassy Kyiv family member says of the CDC permit process, "In an evacuation situation like ours, where families



COURTESY OF SUSAN JOHNSON

**Johnson's father, a Foreign Service officer, traveling with Indie on Pan Am circa 1974.**



are focused on leaving quickly under the threat of violence, this shouldn't be the primary focus of our community."

### Not Your Parents' PCS

Susan Johnson, a retired diplomat, former AFSA president and now president of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, grew up in the Foreign Service. She recalls shipping dogs from post to post as a child. Back then, shipping crates sometimes had to be built from lumber rather than ordered from Amazon. "But there was much less bureaucracy," she says, "and traveling with a family dog was not as stressful as it is today." She adds: "Reunions at the baggage claim area were just as heartfelt and emotional."

With a colleague, Johnson established the Facebook group Foreign Affairs Friends of Animals Network, which has nearly 2,000 members. She says FAFAN was just getting started when Cairo evacuated in 2011, forcing embassy pet owners to leave their animals under uncertain conditions. Since then, it's become an ad-hoc support network for people trying to navigate the complexities of pet travel: airline pet reservations canceled at the last minute, questions about crate requirements or heat restrictions on flying, and testimonials about the importance of pet companionship.

The CDC ban has also galvanized the Foreign Service community, which has been signing petitions and reaching out to members of Congress to help. Jennifer Nichols, a Foreign Service officer and Pearson Fellow in the House of Representatives, drafted legislation to ease the burden of the CDC requirements on government personnel. The HENRY Act, which stands for "Helping Employees Navigate Rabies Regulations from over Yonder," seeks to exempt Foreign Service personnel from the dog ban and provide some additional accommodations for government employees traveling with their pets, while supporting the CDC's goal of keeping America rabies free.

For many pet owners, it feels like the rules are changing in the middle of the game. "We got our very first dog last year, about a month before the CDC announced its ban," says Melissa Honigstein, an embassy family member posted to Tbilisi, Georgia. "We

**Bringing pets back to the U.S. used to be as relatively simple as a proof of rabies vaccination, but that all changed with the CDC rules of summer 2021.**



**Mayo, the Honigstein family dog, was adopted in Tbilisi, Georgia, right before the CDC announced its dog import ban. Now the family worries about getting him home at the end of their tour.**

had always resisted getting a dog, but caved because this sweet stray chose us and put his life entirely in our hands."

She says: "We wouldn't have adopted him if the CDC had made their announcement a month earlier. We're deeply dreading the financial and emotional price we're going to have to pay to get him to our next post."

### Supporting Pets, Supporting People

With all the difficulty, it makes you wonder why around 40 percent of Foreign Service members travel with pets (according to AFSA). Both pet owners and mental health professionals say animals can be a critical wellness component to a nomadic life.

"The psychological benefits of pet ownership are well documented, and are even more important in our mobile lifestyle," says Jane Vanelli, a Foreign Service spouse and licensed therapist who counsels expats with the Truman Group. "Pets can

ease loneliness, provide structure and a greater sense of purpose for both kids and adults. The psychological benefits far outweigh the negatives."

Pets are critical to government efforts to recruit and retain a top-notch diplomatic service. The issue has the attention of AFSA and the State Department.

"As much as we can, the OBC is supporting our pet owners," says FSI's Johnston. "We understand the important role pets play as our community transitions from post to post." ■



## FOCUS ON FS TRANSITIONS

# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE ...

# Evacuating

**Nobody wants to do it. But there's a good chance it'll happen to you. Here's what you need to know.**

BY DONNA SCARAMASTRA GORMAN



*Donna Scaramastra Gorman's articles have appeared in Time Magazine, Newsweek, The Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor and the FSJ. A Foreign Service spouse, she has lived in Amman, Moscow, Yerevan, Almaty, Beijing and Northern Virginia. Formerly an associate editor for the Journal, she recently returned to the D.C. area with her family after her husband, who had been serving as deputy chief of mission at Embassy Moscow, was expelled by the Russian government.*



*Jessica Hayden, who wrote "What We Left Behind" and also contributed to the research for this article, is a lawyer, writer and Foreign Service spouse. She has lived in Kyiv, Ankara, Baku, Almaty and Northern Virginia. She recently returned to Falls Church, Virginia, after being evacuated from Kyiv.*

**I**t wasn't really a surprise when it happened. People have been getting expelled left and right from Moscow for the past few years, after all. Still, when we got the diplomatic notice telling us we had a little over a week to get out of the country, the stress hormones kicked in as we swung into action.

Over the course of a 24-year career, we've had to leave in a hurry three times. We were expelled from our first post, Moscow, in 2001. While at our third post, Kazakhstan, we left for a medevac and never returned. And now this—our second expulsion from Moscow. You could say we're something of experts by now.

For my friend Jessica Hayden, however, this was the first evacuation in a nearly 20-year career. She was on the other side of the Russian invasion, in Kyiv, with three kids and a puppy who had to get out in a hurry while her spouse stayed behind.

The two of us met up for coffee in Arlington (okay, there are some good sides to a sudden evacuation) and mapped out what you need to know if—when—this happens to you.

## "We knew it was coming ..."

"Try to have a plan," says retired Diplomatic Security Agent John Rendeiro, now a senior adviser at SOS International, which handled more than 1,000 air ambulance evacuations in 2021,

along with several thousand more “accompanied evacuations,” where patients were able to fly commercial airlines, usually with a nurse in tow. “Think about it ahead of time. Do you have family, friends, a certain area you could go back to?”

It usually happens more quickly than you’d expect. “Even in Ukraine, it wasn’t sudden, or it shouldn’t have been,” says Rendeiro. “We knew it was coming, but many people doubted anything would happen, so it was still a sudden departure for them.”

Evacuations can be triggered by war, civil unrest, local criminal violence or natural disasters. As of mid-April 2022, five major posts were on ordered departure, authorized departure or suspended operations status. Even at the calmest post, you could face a personal medical crisis and have to leave post within a few hours or days. It pays to prepare, no matter how sleepy your post might seem.

## The Go Bag

Everyone knows you need to have a “go bag,” but what does that actually mean?

Laura Gehrenbeck, an FS family member who evacuated from Kyiv ahead of the Russian invasion this year, says her FSO husband David, who stayed behind, made sure they each had copies of all identification documents, COVID-19 vaccine records, banking data, tax forms, school papers, credit card numbers and the family’s entire “encyclopedia of passwords.”

“The go bag thing is real,” says Gehrenbeck, but “don’t get too bogged down by lists. Focus on documents/passwords/crucial information (making sure there is a set for each person if you are a couple) and medicines.”

If you have children, you’ll want electronic copies of school and vaccination records stored in the cloud. Consider scanning and saving any notes or artwork they’ve made, as well. As Jessica and I sit together in Arlington, she’s less upset about the car and other expensive items she may never see again, but she is devastated by the loss of her kids’ artwork.

Juliet Johnson, an FS family member who also recently evacuated from Kyiv, has thought about special things she wishes she’d packed when she left. If she could go back in time, she commented, she would have been more intentional about packing the things that are irreplaceable and hold sentimental value. “We put skis and soccer gear in our UAB [unaccompanied air baggage], which is all just replaceable stuff. But our kids’ bottle cap collection with caps from our posts like Tokyo and Malawi, the handmade bowl we bought in Cordoba, and the potholders my nieces wove are sitting in our apartment in Kyiv. I wish we had put more of our treasures in our luggage.”

## What We Left Behind

**M**y husband is standing in the departures lounge at Kyiv International Airport. The day is Jan. 29, 2022. Our three children are standing close to him. They are all wearing masks that obscure their beautiful faces. We’ve just battled long check-in lines with frazzled airport staff who are struggling to keep up with the frantic pace and demands as too many people try to leave Kyiv on too few flights. In several weeks, this airport will be empty, the sky closed to commercial flights. But right now, it’s a mélange of sweat and panic and exhaustion. And it is also where we are saying goodbye to my husband, who will stay behind.

I snapped a photograph in these last minutes when we were still together, our family of five. I snapped a photograph because that’s what we do as mothers. We capture the little moments that will later be memorialized in our photo albums and on our digital frames. Shared with grandmothers and aunts and uncles. And yet today the act of capturing this moment is discordant. This was not a holiday card or an exotic family vacation.

**I snapped a photograph  
in these last minutes  
when we were still  
together, our family  
of five.**

This was hard. This was pain and uncertainty and grief. This was a rupture in all that we had known. Our 12-year-old son stands next to his father with his head pressed against his chest as he sobs. He knows. He knows what lies ahead is filled with sorrow. His eyes are painted with pain. Our younger kids are aloof. Still focused on childhood concerns like the next snack and getting a window seat.

Months into this evacuation and this war, I often think about that photograph. I think about that moment when we had the privilege to leave before our neighborhood was shelled. I think about how little we knew about the horrors that would befall this city we came to love. How little we knew about the sleepless nights and unanswered questions that were yet to be asked. How little we knew about how strong we would need to be. For ourselves. For our families. For Ukraine.

—Jessica Hayden



If you have a pet, it's essential to ensure their vaccine records are up to date and accessible. It's a good idea to research vets and boarding facilities as soon as you touch down at a new post, in case your pet can't travel on the same flight as you. Moreover, consider not only the rules and regulations for importing/exporting a pet into the United States, but also what is required to transit a pet through the European Union. In Moscow, when the war talk started building, the local veterinarian began making house calls to update rabies vaccines and start travel paperwork. When the invasion began and flights out of country ended, colleagues with pets were forced to drive to the Finnish border to get their dogs out of Russia.

## Plan and Purge

When I was medevaced from Kazakhstan in 2004 after our baby got sick, we had no idea it would be forever. We were mid-way through our assignment, with all the overflowing junk drawers that typically entails. Despite the fact that we'd been expelled from another country—Russia—in 2001, we weren't prepared for a quick exit from post. Packout was a disaster, as my spouse had to manage it alone, while trying to close out his work at post, find a new assignment in D.C. and talk to his stressed-out wife, who was alone with the baby at Children's Hospital. We were overweight, with no time to do anything other than jettison whole boxes without even checking their contents. We learned the hard way about itemizing valuables with the insurance company and



COURTESY OF LOREN BRAUHNÖHLER

**Loren Brauhnöhler and son Quinn wait to board the evacuation flight out of Kyiv in January.**

photographing everything you own. This time, when we saw what might be coming, we spent our winter vacation purging the house in advance.

While at post, periodically go through your belongings. Donate or toss the things you don't need. Shred, scan or file the papers piled on the kitchen counter. Make sure the passports and COVID-19 vaccine cards get put away properly after every trip. And while you're at it, check that your passports and driver's licenses are still valid.

Laura Gehrenbeck says her family had many dinner table conversations about what to bring if they had to leave Kyiv, but "I was convinced at the time that we would be returning in 30 days and really didn't give the sentimental items due consideration. I dismissively flapped my hands declaring, 'It's all just stuff!'" Her husband was more thoughtful about the process, removing pages from the wedding album, grabbing a poem written by their daughter for Laura's birthday from the wall, and tucking away her grandmother's ring. He even, she says, "arranged with a friend to put a quilt I had made for his 50th birthday into their air freight. He was our hero of family memory preservation."

When the consulate and her own residence in Nuevo Laredo were attacked in March 2022, consular officer Elizabeth Baiocchi had an hour to pack up and get out with her 3-year-old daughter. She spent the night with a friend before leaving post the next day. She now faces a remote packout, with help from colleagues still at post, and she says she wishes she had "organized the



COURTESY OF DONNA GORMAN

**A farewell parade at U.S. Embassy Moscow for the Gormans, who were declared persona non grata in December 2021.**

## Evacuations can be triggered by war, civil unrest, local criminal violence or natural disasters.

important papers better and donated some things I had been meaning to get rid of.” She also advises others to “set aside emergency funds, as there are lodging, transportation and clothing expenses that may never be fully reimbursed.”

Identify family and friend helpers or potential hosts, says a Kyiv evacuee, “and have conversations with them about being part of your ‘just-in-case’ team.”

Have U.S. dollars and a working credit card on hand, and consider keeping a U.S. SIM card active so you can text family and access the internet as soon as you land in the States.



Pages from their wedding album that Laura Gehrenbeck's husband preserved during the evacuation from Ukraine.



The Hayden children make their way to their flight out of Ukraine in late January.

### The Need for Good, Timely Information

When it comes to evacuations, says one anonymous Foreign Service specialist: “Nothing is centralized. You’d think it would be. But it all depends on the RSO [regional security officer] and the front office. It becomes a leadership thing at post—did they plan for this or not?”

One spouse in Kyiv said: “The lack of good information shared with the community prior to the drawdown was a real stressor, and those whispers and rumblings among us only served to ratchet up the tension. That is a fact of an evacuation—you are not going to get good information when you want it. This will frustrate you and maybe make you angry. Please don’t direct that anger at people who are working to help everyone through the situation.”

Be prepared to be your own advocate. You may need to purchase your own plane tickets to leave post. You may need to get yourself and your family to the airport or drive across borders. You may need to figure out the bureaucracy of exporting a pet in a foreign language on your own. Although there are always things you can do to be better prepared, each departure will look and feel different—and there is never a way to be fully prepared. Flexibility and the knowledge (and acceptance) that you can’t control how the path will unfold may be your best tools.

“There were a lot of people who were not happy with the way things were communicated/handled,” an FSO assigned to Kyiv said of the recent evacuation. They felt their boss did a good job sharing information, but acknowledged that not everyone may have thought so. “I don’t have EFMs to update,” the FSO said, “but as we’ve seen on Trailing Houses [Facebook group], communicating honestly to spouses is not something at which all direct hires excel.” Make sure your family members have the information they need to make decisions.



## Your Evacuation Checklist

**T**here are many resources on the Global Community Liaison Office crisis management webpage at [bit.ly/GCLOCrisisManagement](https://bit.ly/GCLOCrisisManagement).

You'll find a detailed list of what to pack in your go bag, including which documents, medical supplies and personal items you will need at [bit.ly/GCLOGoBag](https://bit.ly/GCLOGoBag).

Important papers don't just include passports: you'll want school records, employment records, naturalization papers, birth and marriage certificates, and more (see [bit.ly/GCLOImportantDocs](https://bit.ly/GCLOImportantDocs)). Take the time now to scan these documents and store them on a thumb drive or in the cloud. Consider leaving an extra thumb drive with a trusted relative back home.

For help developing a family emergency plan, go to [www.ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

At post, get to know your RSO staff and attend their briefings so you know what's being planned in an emergency. Take drills and radio checks seriously.

If you're the employee, don't assume your family has the information they need. Make sure they know what is happening, and ensure they are on all post communication lists.

Get ready before you need to: shred, donate and recycle everything you don't need. Photograph your valuables—including serial numbers for electronics.

—D.S.G.

A family member who left Kyiv said that in the days before the evacuation was ordered, there was “a lot of pointing fingers and bad-mouthing,” which she believed could have been avoided with better, more direct information. While nobody knew for sure what would happen, she says, telling people “what Plan A may look like” might have helped. “I would rather be told to plan accordingly for worst-case scenarios,” she says, even if they never happen.

### Your New Normal

“Getting your body to safety is one thing. It may take time for the rest of you to catch up,” says Gehrenbeck. “There will be a lot of feelings washing over you. The strongest of them may be guilt. I’m still trying to figure out what to do with that one.”

Survivor’s guilt is real. Expect to worry about the people you left behind and the work you left undone.

Find a support network of fellow evacuees—easily done when it’s a large-scale evacuation, not so easy if it’s a personal crisis like a medevac. If you’re evacuating as a group, consider sticking together at the same hotel; it’ll help when you need a shoulder to cry on or an emergency babysitter. Many families evacuating from Kyiv opted to move to Falls Church, Virginia, and enroll their children in the local school to maintain continuity.

Loren Braunohler, a former Foreign Service officer and Kyiv evacuee, explains: “The bond you first created at post will only grow stronger as you go through the trauma of leaving a place, its people, and your home and belongings so quickly and unexpectedly. That bond will grow even stronger as you start anew together in a new place with new schools, develop new routines and figure out a new temporary.”

As the situation in Kyiv deteriorated, Braunohler and her fellow evacuees in Falls Church relied on each other during the darkest days. “You have each other to lean on, grieve with, and figure out how best to get through the tough times together,” she says. “At this point, your bond will be forever forged, and that is the silver lining of this whole chaotic experience.”

It’s an emotional train ride, says another Kyiv evacuee. We’re “processing feelings of guilt and shame for occasionally wishing we had our comfort items while all this suffering is going on,” she says, and friends, neighbors and local colleagues are exposed to real violence and family separation.

Those who aren’t directly affected by an evacuation have a significant role to play in supporting colleagues. “Ask us how we are,” says one current evacuee, “and be prepared for whatever answer we give. Not every day feels like an ‘Oh, I’m fine, thanks, how are you?’ kind of day. Acknowledge that we’ve lost a lot. Yes,

we have access to insurance and have our jobs, our livelihoods ... but many of us left with two bags and a carry-on.” Offer to babysit. Fire up your DoorDash account, and have a meal delivered. Make plans to take new arrivals to the grocery store.

Know that you will get through this, and eventually the stress of the hurried departure will fade into the past as you move into the next phase: hitting refresh on your newsfeed while waiting for the departure order to be lifted, or curtailing and finding a new assignment if it isn’t.

“I wish I’d had more scope of imagination for the impossible to happen,” says Gehrenbeck. “Because that’s what is happening. And I just couldn’t fit it in my head that Russia would lob missiles, send tanks and earnestly invade Ukraine. Twenty-three years into this gig, and this is our first evacuation. Luckily, those years have helped me to distill and refine what ‘stuff’ means to me, what home means to me, what to plan for and what not to worry about. Even with that perspective, we are still reeling. But we are safe, and for that we are grateful.” ■





# AND NOW FOR SOMETHING *Completely Different ...*

**Foreign Service transitions can involve more than moving from post to post or evacuating. And there are lessons in that, too.**

BY DANIEL CROCKER



*Daniel Crocker, a retired Senior Foreign Commercial Service officer, is the John and Ruth McGee Director of the Dean Rusk International Studies Program at Davidson College. He has more than 20 years of experience promoting and defending U.S. economic security through assignments in Washington, Europe and Latin America. Prior to his diplomatic career, he worked in engineering management positions at Accel and Sequoia Capital, as well as at Benchmark-funded tech startups. He also worked in manufacturing and in oil and gas exploration in the United States and Africa. He is currently a member of the FSJ Editorial Board.*

**M**y relationship with the Foreign Service has been uneven and unusual, consisting of transitions from post to post, as well as transitions in and out and back into the Service. At the least, I suspect, my story is amusing as a quick view of a quirky career path. But it may also hold useful lessons for others. So here goes.

I've just started a new role heading up the Dean Rusk International Studies Program at Davidson College in North Carolina. I'm excited about the opportunity to spend more time teaching, mentoring and helping connect young intellectually curious minds with new opportunities. On a personal note, it also brings me within 10 miles of my mother, who has brain cancer. But it is an abrupt shift from my previous work.

Over the past year I was with Veracity Worldwide, a boutique advisory firm that has helped multinational corporations, NGOs, private equity firms and sovereign wealth funds maximize their investment decisions in developing markets for the last 15 years. Veracity's clients care immensely about two things: first, that their investments conform to environmental, social and governance norms; and second, that their decisions are congruent with U.S. and European Union geopolitical interests.

## Meanwhile, friends from business school were urging me to quit and come to Silicon Valley.

Both this new role at Davidson and the prior position at Veracity are great fits for a former Foreign Service officer. At the surface level, my participation in the Foreign Service looks like a success. I served for just over 20 years, with relatively fast promotions that culminated in an appointment as Commerce's deputy assistant secretary for Europe. And then I left in 2019—for greener pastures, right? The real story is a bit bumpier, however, involving family drama, resignations and quick decisions made with uncertain information. In short, real life.

### The First Round

It all started when I joined State's Foreign Service directly after business school. I turned down corporate offers from the MBA program's generous sponsors to take what was almost surely the lowest-paying job for anyone in my class. The reason was simple and will resonate with many of my colleagues: I was driven by a sense of mission. I wanted to serve. And I figured that if it wasn't a good fit, I could leave at any time to return to the private sector.

Just before heading off to Santo Domingo for my visa tour, my life became richer and more complicated. I got married after a two-month whirlwind romance to a fellow college classmate. I was madly in love, and the job seemed much less important than our life together. That sounds basic, but not honoring marriage and family before career success is something that creates enormous challenges for the Foreign Service, with its quasi-military commitment to frequent moves and adverse postings.

Santo Domingo worked well for both of us. My wife worked in the private sector, and we treated it as a honeymoon. But I can't be the first Foreign Service officer to feel a bit underemployed after doing visa adjudication for two full years. Meanwhile, friends from business school were urging me to quit and come to Silicon Valley. The dot-com boom was in full swing. So my wife and I took a one-week trip to San Francisco. By the end of the week we had, between us, five offers—all of them exciting, challenging and financially remunerative.

I returned to Santo Domingo and resigned. I was not alone—one of my line colleagues, a stellar professional who had just

graduated from law school, headed off to do management consulting. I thought I was done with the Foreign Service.

Silicon Valley in the late 1990s—well, as far as characterizations go, “a modern-day gold rush” may not be far off the mark. My wife's company went public, making her an instant, if brief, internet millionaire. The ecommerce startup I joined was folded into Walmart.com, and I went on to join one of the dot com's most infamous boom and bust stories—Webvan, the leading ecommerce grocery venture.

My wife and I were working long hours with incredibly dedicated people. But then our first child came, and we realized that we did not want to both be working such long hours and in such uncertain conditions. In addition, I missed the sense of mission of the Foreign Service. Then 9/11 happened—and I felt a new determination to return to public service.

### The Second Round

So I reapplied to State and also to the Department of Commerce's small but elite Foreign Commercial Service. Foreign Service insiders may get a kick out of the fact that I found myself being called off two registers, to join as an economic and also as a public diplomacy officer—but had just months earlier accepted the Commerce offer and was already in place in Brasilia, with a focus on complex trade and investment dispute issues for U.S. companies.

By this time, several things had begun to dawn on me. The first was that I had needed the short stint in Silicon Valley to convince myself that the MBA education was not in vain, and that money wasn't the most important factor for job satisfaction. The second was that job happiness may depend less on location and more on your boss and your colleagues. The Foreign Service continues to be challenged with poor management. In Brasilia, however, I had an outstanding direct supervisor who cared immensely about doing the right thing by U.S. commercial interests and demanded much from his staff. At the same time, he was caring and empathetic about balancing hard work with family needs.

The third is that even with that extraordinary boss, I wasn't doing a good enough job being truly present for my growing family. My wife, now with two small children, was underemployed and felt neglected. Even when I was at home, I was still consumed with work. I sensed that something was off. And it came to a head during my next posting, in Monterrey. When my wife told me that we needed to return to the D.C. area because her father was in poor health, I tried to get the balance right by asking for a compassionate curtailment. It was promptly denied. It didn't meet the needs of the Service.

What does one do when family needs conflict with the needs

of the Service? There is rarely a perfect solution. I resigned—and took a Civil Service job at Commerce to ease the transition back to D.C. I honored my marriage but threw the Foreign Service career overboard. A troubling pattern was starting to emerge here. I was 40 years old, and I'd already resigned from the Foreign Service twice. At this point, I saw the Civil Service job, which had me implementing tech solutions for Commerce's global team, as a bridge assignment to return to the private sector.

### **Luck and Politics**

But within two years I was reinstated and headed off to Panama for a four-year assignment. How had this happened? Luck played a strong part in it—a senior political appointee in Commerce and his deputy wanted to retain me and saw reinstatement as the most logical way to do so. In a roundabout way, I'd gotten the curtailment (at the cost of resigning my Foreign Service commission, applying for and obtaining a Civil Service job to come back to D.C., and then going through a reinstatement process to return to the Foreign Service). As a result, however, my wife was able to spend time with her father before he died, and then my father died just months later.

After another decade, I was deputy assistant secretary for Europe, one of Commerce's senior-most Foreign Service positions. It was 2019. I was immensely uncomfortable with directives coming from the White House through Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and directly to me, directives that had profound geopolitical consequences but had not been vetted through any interagency process. Congress was at this time initiating impeachment proceedings as a result of White House activities in Europe. Typically, the National Security Council assesses policy options by consultation with relevant agencies. In these cases, this process was completely bypassed, and information was actively withheld (John Bolton's recent memoir addresses this dysfunction in greater detail).

Foreign Service officers, caught up in this sort of situation, have two honorable options. The first is to suck it up, salute and serve. The second is to resign. I left in November 2019—quietly, and this time after having completed 20 years of service. I had nothing planned, other than a break from paid work. Four months later, the pandemic upended any conventional notion of work, and the presidential election was in full swing. I excised some of the toxicity built up from my last assignment by working on the Biden campaign's Latin America foreign policy team and joining the ground game in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Once the change of administration was complete, in January 2021, it was time to return to work.

**What does one do when family needs conflict with the needs of the Service? There is rarely a perfect solution.**

### **Lessons to Learn**

Where are the lessons here? They seem trivial in print, but I had to learn them the hard way.

First, family matters more than the Foreign Service career (or any other, for that matter). Families sometimes rally in new postings. They can also be torn apart, however. So if you are miserable at work, or your partner is miserable, or your kids are not able to get a good education, I do not think you will regret leaving the Foreign Service to support your family or your principles. After all, private sector demand for Foreign Service skill sets is growing, and there is a strong alumni network in place to help former colleagues. I attribute my new position at Davidson, my former position at Veracity and my work on the 2020 campaign to this network.

Second, I believe that being in the Foreign Service is better seen as a great way to serve the national interest, rather than as a career-long commitment for 20-plus years. Those who serve for a few postings and then leave will always be part of the Foreign Service family. In fact, I would very much like to see our family offer more options to return—some of the finest colleagues I've worked with were better for their time outside of the public sector.

Third, I believe that every job is an opportunity to solve problems. Develop and hone problem-solving skills on the job, and force yourself to make the outcomes you've achieved the core of your evaluations. For my part, helping U.S. companies succeed in the global market and implementing tech solutions to make my colleagues more productive were clear, quantifiable accomplishments that convey directly into the private sector, making it that much easier for companies to see how I could, in turn, solve problems for them. We all know the colleagues at post who solve problems in every cone and specialty—they are the ones you always want on your team. And when, not if, it is time to leave the Foreign Service, if you've become a problem-solver, you'll never want for a job. ■



# Remembering Madeleine Albright (1937-2022)

**Memories and tributes from a few of those who worked  
with this champion of diplomacy and democracy.**

**T**he *Foreign Service Journal* and the American Foreign Service Association mourn the passing of former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, who died on March 28 at the age of 84.

Secretary Albright broke a very persistent glass ceiling when she became our nation's first female Secretary of State in 1997. It was neither the first nor last "first" in her remarkable life. A native of Czechoslovakia who arrived in the United States as an immigrant in 1948, she never forgot what her adopted home country stood for and fought for those principles during her diplomatic career, which included service as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1993 to 1997.

During her four-year tenure as Secretary of State (1997-2001), Albright was a strong advocate for democracy and human rights. She worked to ensure the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons from the former Soviet republics to rogue nations and promoted the

expansion of NATO eastward, dealt with the terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, successfully pressed for military intervention under NATO during the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo in 1999, furthered the normalization of relations with Vietnam, and supported the expansion of free-market democratization and the creation of civil societies in the developing world, among other things.

Following her time at the State Department, Secretary Albright returned to her role as a professor in the practice of diplomacy at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and served as chair of the Albright Stonebridge Group, where many Foreign Service alumni have worked over the years. She received a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012. She remained engaged in U.S. foreign policy—writing, speaking, advising, advocating—right up until her death.

AFSA sends its sincere condolences to Secretary Albright's family, untold colleagues and friends around the world, and to the many students whose lives she touched. The Foreign Service community will fondly remember her.

## Inspiring women ...

By Lycia Coble Sibilla

From 1995 to 1997, I had the pleasure and honor to work with Secretary Albright, then U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and her staff before, during and after the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. I was a member of the Conference Secretariat and then of the President's Interagency Council on Women.

There were Preparatory Committee meetings at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. and lots of briefings with nongovernmental organizations planning to attend the conference. In Beijing, the most memorable moments were the first lady's speech and visits to the NGO conference in Huairou—bad weather and mud notwithstanding. That night, the delegation celebrated at the U.S. ambassador's residence. Spirits were high, and as a memento and a thank you for our efforts, Ambassador Albright gave each delegation member a signed Chinese poem she liked to quote:

*We keep a dog to watch the house. A pig is useful, too.  
We keep a cat to catch a mouse. But what can we do  
With a girl like you?*



The U.S. delegation to the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing in 1995. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright and First Lady Hillary Clinton are in the third row, center, holding white T-shirts.



Ambassador James Collins introducing Secretary Albright at the dedication of a new embassy building in Moscow in 2000. Inset: The Secretary looks as Max Sibilla, the author's son, enthusiastically points out an important feature of the embassy to her.

As part of the U.S. follow-up to the conference, the President's Interagency Council on Women was established at the White House. I was delighted to be asked to help stand up the office and then moved with it to the State Department.

In 2000 Secretary Albright came to Moscow, where my husband was serving. After her meetings with Vladimir Putin, where she wore her famous "Three Monkeys" pins, she and Ambassador James Collins dedicated the new embassy building and met with staff and families.

A few years later I attended her book signing for *Read My Pins* at the Smithsonian and brought the photos from the embassy dedication along for her. She thought they were some of the best unofficial photos of her wearing the "Three Monkeys."

She was an inspiration and is greatly missed.

*Lycia Coble Sibilla, an HRO specialist and currently co-course manager of HR training at FSI, joined the Foreign Service in 2016 and has served in Manila and Beijing. Before that she worked for eight years in the Family Liaison Office, and has been a Foreign Service family member for 29 years, serving with her (now retired) FSO spouse, Chris Sibilla, in Copenhagen, San José, Havana, Moscow, Vienna and Washington, D.C.*





**Secretary Albright and President of Kosovo Ibrahim Rugova meet during the Rambouillet Peace Accords, March 1999. From left: B. Bix Aliu, Secretary Albright, President Ibrahim Rugova and Ambassador Christopher R. Hill.**

## What she taught me ...

*By B. Bix Aliu*

Some say never meet your heroes. Some say they may let you down. Well, I got to meet mine, and she surpassed every expectation I had. She took me under her wing and followed my career until the day she passed away.

Diplomacy is an apprenticeship. You learn by watching, following and at times mimicking those who you've witnessed doing it. Sure, you can read as many books as you want and have many degrees that fill your wall. The art of diplomacy, however, needs to be observed, practiced and mentored.



**Secretary Albright and Bix Aliu meet with refugee families at the Stenkovec Refugee Camp near Skopje, Macedonia, on June 11, 1999.**

Secretary Albright taught me perseverance, confidence and how to be a fierce advocate for democracy. She said: "Human relations ultimately make a huge difference." The Secretary of State would always apologize when Ops would connect us in the middle of the night because she needed me to translate. She would smile and wink at me if I had to make what she said sound humorous in Albanian. She would listen to my suggestions for talking points during her negotiations to create a free Kosovo.

She always said: "I loved being Secretary of State; that's probably evident to everyone who watched me." It was always evident to me, and I was someone fortunate enough to be able to watch her.

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*B. Bix Aliu, deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassy Warsaw, is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister Counselor. He began his Foreign Service career in Macedonia in 1997 where he was a member of the delegation of the U.S. Special Envoy to Kosovo. He has served in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland and the UAE.*

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## She worked harder than anyone ...

*By Shawn Dorman*

A tremendous loss of an inspiring leader. Madeleine Albright was Secretary of State when I was serving in the State Department Operations Center. She was tough and demanding and so very good. We would set up her calls and take notes when she spoke to foreign leaders, which was a lot, every single day. During the Kosovo crisis, every day at 5 p.m., five foreign ministers on one call. She was the only woman on the call; but she was the powerful presence, the woman in charge.

She would sometimes call Ops without notice to ask, "What do I need to know?" And the watch officer who picked up that call better be ready to tell her what was going on in the world that might require her attention. On Christmas Eve I was the watch officer, and she called. She sounded softer, friendly. I recall she said she was making a gingerbread house with her daughters.

What did she need to know? Right now, at this moment, nothing. There was no emergency in the world (that we knew of) that required her immediate attention. It was a special moment for me to get to say that to her. She worked harder than anyone, and she got to take an evening off to be with family.

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*Shawn Dorman, a former Foreign Service officer, is editor in chief of The Foreign Service Journal and AFSA's director of publications.*

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## Leading the way ...

*By Julie Ruterbories*

I was blessed to first meet Madeleine Albright more than 35 years ago. In 1987 I was one of the fortunate students in Georgetown's School of Foreign Service selected for her Senior Seminar. It was an extraordinary experience. We crossed paths just two years later, when I was working at the U.S. embassy in Moscow. I remember how excited I was to share with her the amazing experiences I was having living in the Soviet Union, and how grateful I was for all I had learned in her class.

Then, in 1996, I began a tour in the Ops Center. One weekend we received a call to say that Ambassador Albright was on her way in to review a document. I was sitting in the first seat as you came into the old Watch. I was nervous, so in my head I practiced saying, "Hello, Ambassador Albright." She walked into the room, and before I knew it, I blurted out, "Hi, Professor Albright." We both laughed.

Many years later, as a diplomat in residence for the Southern Mid-Atlantic region, I recounted stories and experiences about a career in public service with the Department of State. One fun fact I was always sure to mention concerned diversity and representation. When I joined the State Department, every single Secretary of State had been a white male. During my career, I served with two women and two African American Secretaries. Madeleine Albright truly led the way. I am forever grateful for her leadership and example.

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*Julie Ruterbories joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1992 and retired in 2016, following her last assignment as consul general in Bogotá. She served in Bishkek, Baku, London and Skopje, and was the principal officer in Amsterdam. She now resides in Charlotte, North Carolina, and continues to support the Bureau of Consular Affairs as a reemployed annuitant.*

## A Night with Albright

*By Kate Nanavatty*

Madeleine Albright's motorcade was lost roaming the Msasani Peninsula in Dar es Salaam trying to find the right house. It was Nov. 29, 2006, and we stood—10 Foreign Service officers—in the living room of our deputy chief of mission's house chatting a bit more anxiously than usual. Staff circulated the first round

I was nervous, so in my head I practiced saying, "Hello, Ambassador Albright."

of cocktails; the DCM did one last check of name cards on the carefully set dinner table; and we determined the proper way to address her.

When Madam Secretary did arrive, only because she instructed her driver to overtake the hopelessly lost motorcycle escort, she greeted us warmly and took a seat on the sofa. She wore a black suit dress with one of her trademark brooches—a large, gold flower. She got straight down to business: "Feel free to ask me anything. Now that I am not Secretary of State, I can try to answer you!"

And she did. From Sudan to Iraq, to North Korea, she answered our questions thoroughly, offering us her insight, experience and her own questions about these quandaries. In Sudan, she admitted, there seemed to be no good options. "I am not sure what is protecting Sudan, but it seems there are a few countries—maybe Egypt and China—that prevent Al-Bashir from an international shaming for Darfur. There is a great deal of public concern about Darfur, and yet nothing is happening. The militia blames the government, and the government blames the militia: There are no good guys, unfortunately."

On Iraq, she underlined her disgust with Saddam Hussein and confessed that even she believed there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq: "I thought there were WMD based on deduction—we knew weapons had gone missing from the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors." But she insisted: "Still, I never believed Iraq to be a direct threat to the United States; and, therefore, the war was one of choice and not necessity."

On North Korea, Albright shared her experience negotiating and dining with North Korean President Kim Il-sung. She stressed that this man was not crazy and had a surprisingly high level of technical knowledge. She recalled presenting a package, which would include U.S. support to help North Korea build light water reactors for civilian nuclear technology. She offered the president a chance to review the package and perhaps respond after consultations with his advisers. But Kim Il-sung immediately began with a series of questions that demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the technology.



**Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright on a private visit to the U.S. Mission in Dar es Salaam on Nov. 29, 2006, to honor the lives lost on Aug. 7, 1998, when terrorists attacked the mission. U.S. Ambassador Michael L. Retzer joined her at the wreath laying ceremony.**

The jaw-dropping story of the night, however, traced back to her father's death in 1977. Dr. Corbell, Secretary Albright's father, was a former diplomat in Czechoslovakia. After immigrating to the U.S., he became a highly regarded professor of international relations at the University of Denver. When he died, Albright explained, there was an outpouring of support from the university community. She recalled the countless bouquets

In Albright's view, the Agreed Framework deal, which she helped negotiate under the Clinton administration, failed mainly because of negligence on the U.S. side rather than North Korean defiance. "The U.S. had made the agreement but forgot that it would cost money. Coming up with the money from Congress was problematic, and we were late on delivering our end of the bargain." Was North Korea cheating? "Of course they were. But that is generally the case with arms control treaties," she explained. "They don't eliminate arms, but they help make it harder to get arms."

Over dinner she revealed her most entertaining stories. She told us how as ambassador to the United Nations, she got her nickname. In 1996, the Cubans downed two U.S. aircraft and were caught on radio quipping that American pilots had no "cojones." This prompted Madeleine to tell Cuba at a U.N. Security Council meeting, that Cuba's action had no "cojones" and was all cowardice. When she attended the memorial service for the downed pilots in Florida, she entered the Orange Bowl to 60,000 fans chanting her new nickname: Madam Cojones! Among Floridians, the name has stuck to this day, and she was approached in cafés on the street as "Madam Cojones." She also reminisced about doing the "Macarena" on the Security Council floor after promising to do the dance if the Democrats won the 1996 election.

of flowers, which were delivered to her house. Among all the flowers, one bouquet caught her eye: it was a piano-shaped vase filled with flowers. Madeleine asked her mother, "Who sent this arrangement?" And her mother replied, "Those flowers are from your father's favorite student, Condoleezza Rice."

Madeleine sought out her father's favorite student and learned that Condoleezza had gone to college to major in music but was persuaded by Albright's father to also major in international relations. Condoleezza had, after all, decided to write her senior thesis on the Soviet influence within the Czech military. Years later, working on a string of losing Democratic campaigns, Albright decided to form a brain trust of foreign policy advisers for Michael Dukakis and to invite Condoleezza to take part.

She telephoned Condoleezza, who at that time was teaching at Stanford University. Albright's proposition was followed by moments of silence. "Madeleine," Condoleezza stammered, "I'm not sure how to tell you this, but ... I'm a Republican." Dumbfounded, Secretary Albright exclaimed: "But Condoleezza, we had the same father!"

We looked at one another around the dinner table in awe. What were the chances that one man was responsible for two female Secretaries of State?!

**Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, far right, at DCM Purnell Delly's residence in Dar es Salaam on Nov. 29, 2006. From left: Political Officer Kate Bernshon Nanavatty, Management Officer Tuli Mushingi and Financial Management Officer Robert Miller. Inset: FSO Nanavatty and Ambassador Albright.**



In addition to storytelling, Secretary Albright had an endearing capacity to self-assess. “I was a bureaucratic nightmare,” she said in a matter-of-fact tone. “Being Secretary of State is the best job in the world. I loved every minute of it. And as a result, I found it very difficult to prioritize.”

She talked about trying to connect with staff and not always succeeding. “I used to make a point of eating in the cafeteria. But usually this meant I ate alone, since people didn’t feel comfortable talking to me.” And she told us that she would stop by people’s offices and ask for their views or feedback. “That didn’t really work either,” she explained. “People generally got all flustered and weirded out.”

She emphasized that she was not the best at taking care of the troops, i.e., State Department bureaucrats. Instead, she traveled the world, seeing her job less as a manager and more as the chief U.S. diplomat abroad. Revealing a bit of the friendly rivalry between her and Secretary Rice, she said, “No matter how much I traveled, I know Condoleezza will travel one more mile than me ... even if it kills her.”

Secretary Albright made clear that she missed her job, a job she saw as the ultimate fit with her passion for foreign policy and problem-solving. Despite being 75, she had not retired from working or from bending her mind around the stickiest situations. How should we deal with conflicts in the Middle East? What about the so-called clash of civilizations? One lesson she wanted to pass on was that the U.S. badly needed religious advisers and greater participation from religious leaders in international negotiations.

“As Secretary of State, I had an expert on everything—every-

thing except religion.” Saying she was in no way trying to blur the line between church and state, she stressed that religion was—like it or not—a part of the picture. She advocated training on religion in addition to area study and language training for Foreign Service officers. She contended that negotiations between Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak at Camp David in 2000 might have

been more effectual had they involved religious leaders, not only to understand the problem but to legitimize the agreement.

Around 10 p.m., her cheeks slightly flushed from a few glasses of wine, Secretary Albright knew it was time to call it a night. She had told stories and answered our questions for more than three hours. As I listened intently for the entire night, these thoughts raced through my head: How am I going to remember all of this? I can’t believe I get to be sitting here. She hasn’t faltered or said “um” or “like” once!

At the time, I couldn’t process in full why it was such a special night—beyond the obvious: I am sitting across the table from the first woman Secretary of State. But with some reflection, I realized what I was appreciating. She was candid about her love of being Secretary. She was honest about not knowing the solution to various problems and open about her weaknesses.

Above all, she was still a fierce optimist about the United States. She conceded that it would be a hell of a job to try to put America back on course, given the foreign policy fiascos at hand. But she also emphasized what America was capable of and that there was room for the Right and Left to work together. “I so believe in the good of America,” Albright said. And I do, too, especially after my night with Secretary Albright. ■

*Kate B. Nanavatty, the outgoing U.S. consul general in Amsterdam, is a Foreign Service officer with 17 years of experience, primarily in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. She won’t ever forget that evening with Secretary Albright during her first tour, in Dar es Salaam.*



# DIPLOMACY

## The Third Strand of *War and Peace*

**In Tolstoy's great work, today's diplomats can learn a lot about how a brilliant writer once viewed their profession and how many people still regard it.**

BY FLETCHER M. BURTON

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, unleashed by Vladimir Putin in February as a "special military operation," has led to wanton carnage similar to that of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812—only this time Russia is the aggressor. To grasp the titanic forces clashing in war, we would do well to pull from the shelf one of the greatest epic novels of the 19th century, Count Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (or *Special Military Operation and Peace*, as wags have called it). The first section of the novel appeared in 1865, the year the American Civil War ended. Tolstoy, a historian noted, towered over his age as did Michelangelo and Beethoven in their day. And yet when he stooped to satire, and his massive novel is streaked with it, he lost none of his authority.

Take, for instance, Tolstoy's rendering of diplomats—his tone usually bemused, sometimes mocking, always insightful. Practitioners of the diplomatic profession today can learn a lot about how a brilliant writer once viewed this profession and how many people still regard it. Diplomacy is the fascinating third strand of *War and Peace*.

Tolstoy portrays diplomacy through his vibrant characters and takes another stab at it in his polemical essay at the end. He compared his tour de force to the *Iliad*, but Homer lacked the Russian aristocrat's uncanny sense of the motley practice of diplomacy. That understanding was almost a birthright. Born into Russian nobility, Tolstoy counted ambassadors as well as generals among his family's ancestors.



During his Foreign Service career, Fletcher Burton served in Saudi Arabia, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. His remembrance of Ambassador Vernon Walters, "From Boswell to Johnson," appeared in the June 2003 FSJ.

(Author's note: Burton has used the translation of *War and Peace* by Constance Garnett, a worn volume his mother read in 1957 and whose marginal markings accompanied him the entire way.)

On the very first page of the novel, which opens in St. Petersburg in 1805 as Napoleon begins to dominate the continent, Tolstoy establishes the sardonic treatment: A guest at a soirée sighs he must also make an obligatory appearance at a weekly event hosted by the English ambassador. Other Russians complain of the boring English gathering. And another guest, a young Pierre Bezukhov, the story's hero and, in some respects, the avatar of Tolstoy, considers going into diplomacy as a profession. But, no, a diplomatic life simply won't do. Pierre finds it not to his liking. We imagine the same for young Tolstoy deciding on his career.

## The Diplomat's Charm

Tolstoy inducts a multinational cast of ambassadors into his narrative: the English, Russian, French and Dutch envoys, as well as the Danish chargé. One of the novel's most memorable characters is the Russian diplomat Bilibin. In his inimitable style, Tolstoy pumps lifeblood into the character. This is no caricature, no stereotype. We learn that Bilibin has served in Paris and Copenhagen and, before Napoleon ousted the Russians, in Vienna. He is young, only 35, but experienced, having trained and served since he was 16. He is not one of the run-of-the-mill diplomats who advance solely by speaking French and keeping their head down. He is a hard worker. He takes pains in producing memos and reports (what we would call tradecraft), and yet—here a Tolstoyan salvo—he seems more concerned with the “how” in chronicling events than the “why” in comprehending them.

It's a resounding critique, for Tolstoy is supremely interested in the big Why. He scoffs at discussions among his characters as to whether a diplomatic note was well or awkwardly composed. Trivial matters these, in his

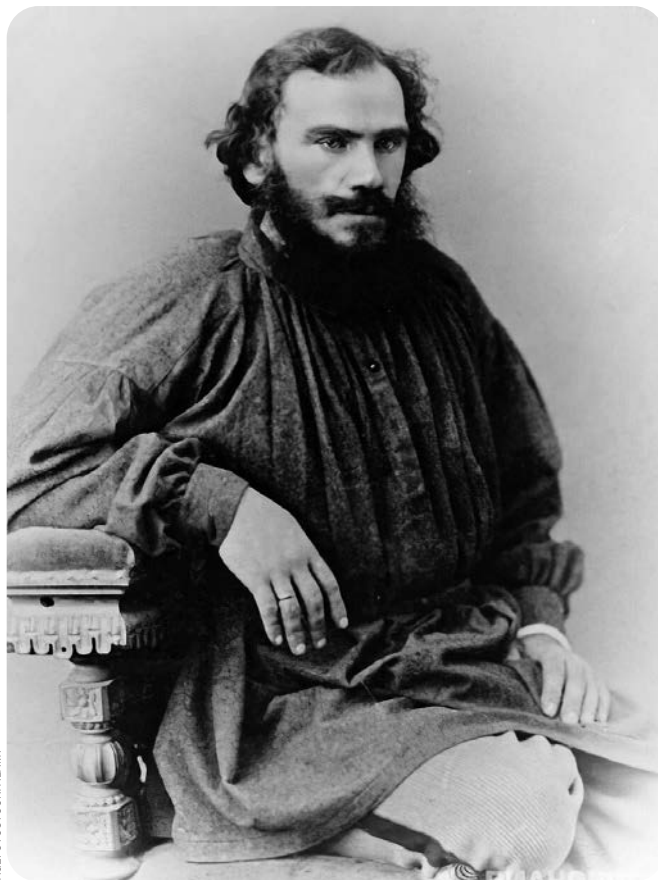
Olympian view. He dismisses the contention that a certain Diplomatic Note No. 178, through its poor wording, marked a turning point in the Napoleonic wars. How is not Why. Tolstoy, the gifted author, betrays a slight admiration for the diplomatic wordsmith. The fierce philosopher does not.

Bilibin has several striking qualities, foremost of which is a facility with bon mots. Time and again, he launches them at social events. To signal their coming, Bilibin always screws up his face, as Tolstoy describes a dozen times in his most sustained satirical sally. Bilibin assumes they are so sparkling, they will be repeated often. If, however, he senses the company is not appreciative, he “treasures them up.” Mostly these are puns and wordplays, amusing but not profound, drawn from incidents of the day or—here a Tolstoyan zinger—from Bilibin's own dispatches.

The Russian diplomat has another habit, not unfamiliar to practitioners then or now. Bilibin relishes a cock-up story.

How, for example, Napoleon secured a bridge that should have been blown up by the retreating Russian army; or how the Russian high command fell into inane bickering. The diplomat enjoys *schadenfreude* in the retelling, even if the misadventure involves his own side. He chafes at diplomatic discretion as a form of “torture.”

Tolstoy does not consider all diplomatic work as empty. He credits Bilibin with solving the irksome puzzle for the Russians of how to address a diplomatic note to Napoleon without bestowing any undue status. Thus, “Emperor” or any other exalted title are out of the question. The ingenious solution: “To the Chief of the French Government.” Bravo, Bilibin. And yet the author seems to whisper, *small potatoes*.



AGEFOTOSTOCK/ALAMY

**A portrait of Russian author Leo Tolstoy in 1868, one year before his novel *War and Peace* was first published in its entirety.**

Born into Russian nobility, Tolstoy counted ambassadors as well as generals among his family's ancestors.

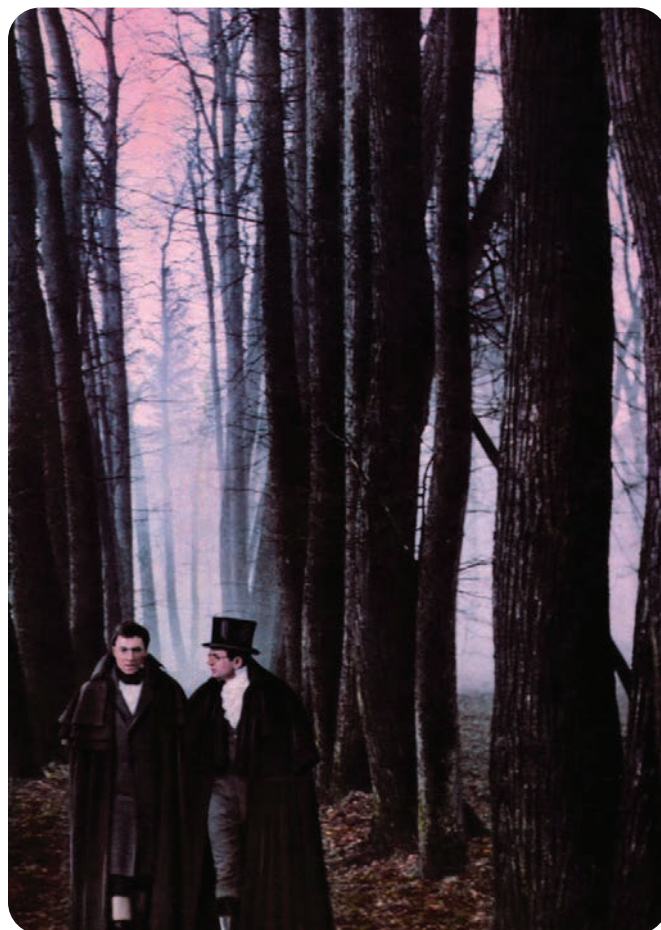
Tolstoy also applauds some fancy footwork by the Russian ambassador who recoils when Napoleon drops his handkerchief in front of him, a cunning test of both his manners and loyalty. The ambassador quickly realizes that turning on his heel would be bad form, and bending to retrieve the article even worse. So, he devises a face-saving stratagem: He drops his own handkerchief on the same spot ... and then picks it up ... and leaves the other. Tolstoy seems to enjoy this rebuke to Napoleon. (We might venture a pun ourselves on the ambassador's toss: a put-down, an instance of one-downsmanship.) Well done, ambassador. But again that whisper, just a *piece of linen*.

### The Envoy's Blunder

One diplomatic episode in the novel may be open to interpretation, but practitioners will readily infer Tolstoy's point. After Napoleon crosses the Nieman River and invades Russia in 1812, Tsar Alexander sends his envoy, Balashov, to warn him of the consequences. The instructions are stern. The tsar "commanded" Balashov to insist all the invaders in the multinational force pull back; it is a firm condition that must be satisfied before the tsar would consider negotiations with Napoleon.

The passage bears study: "Balashov remembered those words [from the tsar]: 'As long as a single enemy under arms remains on Russian soil,' but some complicated feeling checked his utterance of them. He could not utter those words, though he tried to do so. He stammered, and said: 'On condition the French troops retreat beyond the Nieman.' Napoleon observed Balashov's embarrassment in the utterance of those words" and then he flew into a rage.

In other words, the envoy Balashov watered down his instructions, and Napoleon sensed weakness and pounced on it—and continued his march all the way through Borodino to Moscow. Is this a *déformation professionnelle*? A tendency to stint on tough instructions delivered in person to a foreign leader? Tolstoy may be on to something. History offers a few real examples.



This still from the 1968 Russian film version of *War and Peace* shows its protagonist Pierre Bezukhov walking with Prince Andrei Volkonsky.

### The Opposite Number

Employing his dazzling literary technique, Tolstoy creates characters that embody qualities opposite to those of the diplomats. Consider, for example, the peasant Karataev, a "centered" personality, as we would say, a man of many folk sayings, which Tolstoy does not mock as platitudes but serves up as Russian wisdom. (The character borders on a stereotype, perhaps the only one in the novel's multitude.) Karataev could not score with a pun if his life depended on it, but he does exude earthy sagacity and simple integrity. These qualities have a transformative influence on Pierre, his companion in French captivity.

The other counterpoint to the diplomats is the old warhorse, the Russian commander Kutuzov, one of Tolstoy's characters drawn from real life and superbly fictionalized.



## Tolstoy, the gifted author, betrays a slight admiration for the diplomatic wordsmith.

One-eyed but all seeing, poorly informed of the latest military maneuvers but profoundly in sync with the currents of history, Kutuzov doesn't bother to read dispatches or absorb briefings, the very stuff of diplomacy. He speaks with a "homely coarseness." He operates on a higher, or deeper level. He moves on a Tolstoyan plane.

Another diplomatic episode, call it "the dog that didn't bark," illustrates the author's outlook. Having clashed with Kutuzov at Borodino before advancing to occupy Moscow, Napoleon assumes the tsar would be ready for a peace settlement. To initiate talks, he sends him a note in St. Petersburg and awaits a reply. None is forthcoming, so another note is transmitted. Again, no answer from the imperial capital.

In the event, there would be no reply to Napoleon and no negotiations. Tolstoy portrays this diplomatic silence as a masterstroke, the very absence of diplomacy as a Russian triumph. Facing a burnt-down Moscow and an icily silent St. Petersburg, the French invader realizes the snare has sprung. After five weeks in Moscow, Napoleon orders the winter retreat of his Grande Armée out of Russia, back across the Nieman. It is one of the most harrowing retreats in history and most gripping in literature.

### The Statesman's Chair

Early in the novel, Tolstoy dispenses with the contribution of diplomats by ironically postulating that the Bilibins of the world use clever words to exert "influence on so-called great events." There is a lot of poison in that phrase "so-called." And a lot of distillation of Tolstoy's philosophy of history. The diplomats in the novel stand out. Their diplomacy, however, is small-bore.

In his dense essay at the end, rather demanding after a thousand pages and utterly lacking the rousing climax of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," Tolstoy ridicules the concept of "Talleyrand's chair." We may know the theory better as "Cleopatra's nose"—that is, the fanciful notion that little things, such as the style of a chair at a negotiating session or the pulchritude of an Egyptian queen, could jolt History. Such trivialities might rattle teacups, or tweak "so-called great events," but they do not cause upheaval among tectonic plates, not in Tolstoy's view.

To grasp his philosophy of history, we might turn to the latest Nobel Prize in physics, awarded to three scientists for their pathbreaking work in modeling complexity in geophysical phenomena and theorizing on chaotic and apparently random processes. For Tolstoy, history is made partly in such a way, by and in the "swarm" of people and their individual actions.

Tolstoy tries in the novel to model his conception of history's complex interaction, what he sees as a massive collision of countless variables.

Sadly, by the time of his death in 1910, Tolstoy had not won the Nobel, not for physics, a pardonable oversight, and not for literature, a gross miscarriage. The Nobel Committee selected the Russian writer Boris Pasternak in 1958 and noted—ruefully, one senses—that he could be compared to Tolstoy. (Not the only Nobel misstep: Surely Richard Holbrooke deserved the Peace Prize for ending the savage war in Bosnia.)

Reading *War and Peace* is a long but rewarding trek. Its memorable characters—Pierre, Natasha, Andrey—endure great suffering and, at the same time, achieve wisdom, a peace after war. This is an echo of Aeschylus that wisdom comes because of suffering, not in spite of it. (It is the Aeschylus quote on Robert Kennedy's grave.) Our dear Bilibin, the consummate diplomat, the paladin of high society, the spinner of gossamer witticisms, never suffers ... that is, until he is forced to leave Vienna for a charmless village. Tolstoy ultimately abandons him, leaves him behind at a St. Petersburg soirée and bars him from the epilogue, where much of the grand denouement takes place.

### The Practitioner's Handbook

Then what can modern-day practitioners of diplomacy take from the diplomats of *War and Peace*? We should resist the temptation, out of wounded pride, to wave away the novel's diplomats as shallow stereotypes. This is, after all, Tolstoy, creator of archetypes. Like Michelangelo and Beethoven, he soared above stereotypes.

Further, we can take solace in the fact that Tolstoy lampooned other professions, as well. He portrays, for example, an officer who measures his life not in years but promotions; an official who chooses his opinions like his clothes according to the latest fashion; and an author—here a Tolstoyan confession—who might not be immune to flattery. Touché, we recognize these types.

We should resist the temptation, out of wounded pride, to wave away the novel's diplomats as shallow stereotypes.

The great Russian novels, a critic wrote, “added something to the nation’s knowledge of itself” and, during Tolstoy’s reign, were sources not just of pleasure but also “guidance and deliverance.” We should open *War and Peace* in this spirit, seeking an enlarged knowledge of our diplomatic profession. Thus, we can nod at our literary forebears, recognizing traits

that still have purchase on the profession. We can shake our heads at the recurrent follies of the diplomatic corps. Above all, we should face Tolstoy’s insights and take to heart his lessons, including in connection with Putin’s *spetz operatsiya* in Ukraine.

Puns are not policy. Cleverness is not wisdom. Intuition can be a better compass than information. Humility in the face of complexity is a virtue. Time and patience, Kutuzov’s two strategic principles, should be cultivated. The craft of How is inferior to the quest for Why. Diplomatic Note No. 178 does not belong in an anthology, nor Talleyrand’s chair in a museum. Sometimes silence is the best response. St. Petersburg is not Moscow. Nor is it Borodino, nor the vast countryside. The capital (read: the Beltway) may be the room where it happens, but it is not the front line, the realm where it happens, where History really happens.

And literature, especially a magnificent epic, is a marvelous teacher. It can offer guidance. Maybe even deliverance. ■

CALLING  
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SUBMISSIONS  
IS AUGUST 19.



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For more information, and for instructions on how to submit your book and materials, email [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org).

## Foreign Service Day Remembrances and Activities

In a poignant Foreign Service Day memorial ceremony on May 6, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Brian McKeon and AFSA President Eric Rubin delivered remarks in front of the AFSA memorial plaques in the State Department's C Street lobby, honoring Foreign Service personnel who died in the line of duty.

Because of the pandemic, the State Department's commemoration of the 57th annual Foreign Service Day was held virtually.

"Today is an opportunity to honor the thousands of diplomats, development

experts and other professionals who have represented the United States at home and around the world," Deputy Secretary McKeon said in a live feed on the State Department's website and YouTube channel (see [bit.ly/FSday2022](https://bit.ly/FSday2022)).

"Whether you served previously or currently serve ... I want you to know and the Secretary [of State] wants you to know how grateful we are for your work."

"The past few months have shown us precisely why we cannot take the rules-based international order for granted and why American

leadership and American diplomacy are needed more than ever. We do this work because it matters, because we seek to serve our fellow citizens in a mission larger than ourselves. It is work that requires sacrifice and commitment."

### Honoring Service and Sacrifice

"We count ourselves especially fortunate to be adding no new names to these walls today," Ambassador Rubin said in his introductory remarks. "Nevertheless, service carries significant risks, and our happiness today is

## CALENDAR

Please check [www.afsa.org](https://www.afsa.org) for the most up-to-date information.

July 4  
**Independence Day:**  
AFSA offices closed

July 20  
12-2 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

August 17  
12-2 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

September 5  
**Labor Day:**  
AFSA offices closed

September 11-15  
**AFSA Road Scholar Program**  
Washington, D.C.

September 25-30  
**AFSA Road Scholar Program**  
Chautauqua, N.Y.



Deputy Secretary of State Brian McKeon (left) and AFSA President Eric Rubin hang the remembrance wreath during the AFSA Memorial Ceremony on Foreign Service Day in front of the memorial plaques in the State Department's C Street lobby.

tempered by the announcement of a new memorial to be constructed here in the coming months.

"AFSA and the department will soon unveil a bronze plaque commemorating those in the Foreign Service community who lost their lives due to COVID-19 while serving overseas at their post of assignment. Alongside several locally employed staff, Foreign Service family members, and others, two Foreign Service officers, Elbridge Lee (New Delhi, India) and Thomas J. Wallis (Lima, Peru), lost their

*Continued on page 68*





## Time for an Office of Conflict Resolution

Back in November 2020, I wrote about the need for an office of conflict resolution that would be distinct from the State Department process for handling Equal Employment Opportunity, discipline and grievance matters. AFSA believed then and believes now that this is necessary because we have found that the vast majority of workplace conflicts do not fall neatly into any of the above categories—and there is currently no proven mechanism that has provided a solution.

These conflicts, which mainly involve toxic supervisors and bullying behavior, are left to fester and often just waited out until it is time to leave post or a domestic assignment. But we all know that's not the way it should be.

**New office in GTM?** AFSA has learned that there is a plan afoot to establish such an office. From our conversations with GTM contacts and with Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Brian McKeon, one of the challenges of the new office is determining who would be responsible for the investigations.

AFSA supports assigning this role to GTM, but we have heard that some stakeholders favor handing the task to Diplomatic Security. While DS could conduct the investigations, these conflicts do not involve security matters,

so it would make far more sense to place the function within GTM.

Employees and resources would also be needed to staff up the new office, and it would need to have the authority to compel both sides of a conflict to come to the table. Indeed, the problem we have seen with the current setup is that if one side—usually the bullying boss—does not want to participate in any resolution, that's the end of the story.

**Sustained effort needed.** AFSA believes that to generate the sustained effort necessary for its success, the new office should be institutionalized within GTM and have its own staff and budget.

Some years ago, there was such an office within Human Resources. It had investigatory capability, and it helped many employees resolve problems. But when those who spearheaded the office's establishment moved on to other assignments or duties, it unfortunately did not receive the resources it needed and ceased to exist.

One of those who led this effort back then was Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, who was at the time (2012-2015) a deputy assistant secretary in the HR bureau. We are delighted that Amb. Bernicat was confirmed May 27 to be the Director General of the Foreign Service.

AFSA hopes to engage

**The new office should be institutionalized within GTM and have its own staff and budget.**

with her on not only the (re) establishment of this office but also on a whole series of reforms that we think will make the Foreign Service a better and more rewarding place to work.

**Accountability: the name of the game.** An office like this within GTM will help hold department employees, especially supervisors, accountable for their actions. We must change our work culture so that bullying bosses and toxic behavior of any kind are no longer tolerated in the workplace, no matter how productive and hardworking someone is. To the extent it was ever given as an excuse, the ends should never justify the means.

In AFSA's February 2022 Survey on Leadership and Management, members highlighted as a key problem a lack of leadership accountability, often commenting that leadership was not "walking the talk," and that double standards of conduct exist between senior leaders (and their immediate subordinates) and all others. This works both ways, with members telling us that "problem" performers are not dealt with forthrightly by supervisors.

As the new conflict resolution office comes into being, AFSA hopes it will be part of a package of reforms that emphasize accountability at all levels. Such reforms include the potential use of 360s in the employee evaluation review (EER) process so that selection boards know the views of peers and subordinates, not just supervisors.

Admittedly, this will not be easy, but it is not impossible and is sorely needed. Other government agencies, most notably the military, as well as the private sector, use 360 degree reviews as a tool to determine readiness to assume greater responsibility.

In my experience, the only time I received unvarnished feedback on my performance was when I took the required department leadership courses. Some of the comments and marks were a bit painful to see, but I found the exercise incredibly useful. Employees should not have to wait until they take these courses to get real and regular feedback.

Please let us know what you think at [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org). And have a safe and fun summer! ■



## Rebuilding for the Long Term

I frequently cite President Joe Biden's simple yet clear policy declaration: "It is the policy of the United States to protect, empower, and rebuild the career Federal workforce." And I was encouraged to see the FY22 budget omnibus approve a significant increase in USAID operating expense (OE) resources, the funds used to support career U.S. direct hires, including Foreign Service officers.

This OE increase is a significant accomplishment, critical to ending what Administrator Samantha Power referred to in her November 2021 vision speech as the "unsustainable workarounds" of short-term hiring.

But it is just the first step in fulfilling the president's "rebuild" pledge, with further actions needed on the "protect" and "empower" aspects. Let's take a look at the status of these actions within USAID.

**Rebuilding.** I have repeatedly sung the praises of USAID colleagues for their continued recruitment, hiring and onboarding of FSOs throughout the pandemic (no easy task even pre-COVID!). Thanks to them, we have seen an incredible cadre of new Foreign Service officers join the agency, and this FY22 OE boost will help not just to meet attrition but to exceed the congressionally directed floor of 1,850 career FSOs. Testimony and discussions all suggest that the numbers will continue to grow.

But as we expand, we must rebuild the FS as an institution at USAID—as Congress affirms in the Foreign Service Act: "...a professional foreign service that will serve the foreign affairs interests of the United States in an integrated fashion and that can provide a resource of qualified personnel for the President, the Secretary of State, and the agencies concerned with foreign affairs."

And, critically, we must rebuild the FS as a service "operated on the basis of merit principles." So even as we continue to recruit on a competitive basis, we must also improve the agency's capacity to onboard, mentor, fund, train, deploy and support our newest FSOs, and take seriously the Foreign Service Act's declaration that "a career foreign service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest."

The February 2021 "National Security Memorandum on Revitalizing America's Foreign Policy and National Security Workforce, Institutions, and Partnerships" directs executive agencies to "develop proposals to more effectively retain, develop, promote, and support national security employees, such as through expanded external and interagency rotational opportunities, review of time-in-class requirements and criteria for key assignments, provision of affordable

child and family care, and support for those serving overseas and their families, including those with LGBTQI+ members and with special needs."

I'm hopeful agency leadership will take this directive to heart, including efforts to reinstate emergency backup childcare, a program suspended at USAID in 2019 but continued at other agencies.

**Empowering.** Turning to empowerment, I am less sanguine. In the field, there has been a steady erosion of mission authorities, somewhat aligned with an increase in well-intentioned but copious Washington-driven initiatives, policies, reporting needs and guidance.

In one way, this is a positive recognition of USAID's critical role, and certainly some of the initiatives are fantastic. But without the commensurate increase in resources or flexibilities to adapt to the field context, it certainly feels like a diminishment of authorities.

In Washington, the field voice of the career Foreign Service is increasingly drowned out by politically appointed senior advisers, and whereas the FS deputy assistant administrator (DAA) was once designated the "senior DAA" as a matter of practice, that is no longer the case.

Even as the OE boost will increase the numbers of career FS and GS employees, the agency also received from Congress program budget increases and a go-ahead for additional noncareer hiring,

raising questions around agency-level strategic workforce planning goals. What is needed is a comprehensive, rigorous and public USAID workforce plan focused on the president's commitments.

**Protecting.** Finally, the president's executive order and related guidance revoke the previous administration's policies designed to weaken the independence and security of a nonpartisan career Civil Service—FS and GS alike.

In fact, the Biden-Harris administration goes far beyond this step, directing executive branch agencies to negotiate with unions over the numbers, types and grades of employees or positions assigned to any organizational subdivision, work project or tour of duty, and the technology, methods and means of performing work—areas that used to be at management's discretion.

This is a significant protection for employees, but only if the agency follows the president's guidance.

Securing OE budget resources for increased career FS (and GS) hiring is a tremendous first step toward rebuilding USAID's Foreign Service. This must be braced by building out the staff, systems and support to institutionalize a larger FS.

At the same time, USAID must urgently implement the Biden-Harris administration's directive to empower and protect career public servants, securing a stronger USAID to continue its mission from the American people. ■



## Threats to Retirement Benefits

Since first joining the AFSA Governing Board in 1999, I have seen threats to our retirement benefits rise and fall following changes in the composition of Congress and control of the White House. After several years of relative quiet on the threat front, the upcoming November elections seem likely to bring to Congress more voices advocating cuts in federal retirement benefits.

Here is a preview of the issues at stake in case we do start seeing scary headlines about proposals for draconian cuts.

First, yes, Congress does have the power to cut benefits being received by current federal retirees. While they cannot touch existing Thrift Savings Plan account balances, they could, for example, reduce existing federal pensions or eliminate the annuity supplement paid to retirees under age 62.

How likely is it that Congress would do something like that with the president signing the legislation? Highly unlikely during the next two years, but my crystal ball gets cloudier after the 2024 presidential election.

Likely post-2024 targets include cutting annual cost-of-living adjustments for retiree pensions, reducing the government's share of federal retiree health care premiums and lowering the rate of return of the TSP G Fund.

Also, a future Congress

could cut our net retirement income by raising tax rates on income from pensions, Social Security and investments.

AFSA, of course, opposes such cuts. Because each would affect all federal employees and retirees, AFSA's advocacy is primarily through the Federal-Postal Coalition made up of 30 organizations, including the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association and the Civil Service unions.

The Fed-Postal Coalition represents 2.7 million federal employees and 2.6 million federal retirees, with members living in every congressional district. The coalition sends letters to Congress, with AFSA as co-signer, and holds monthly meetings, with AFSA participation, to plan advocacy efforts.

### What You Can Do

What can you do to protect your benefits?

- Maintain your AFSA membership in retirement, so your dues help support the association's congressional advocacy efforts.
- Monitor major developments as reported in AFSA's Media Digest, digital Retirement Newsletter and this column.
- Take the potential for benefits cuts into account when casting your ballot in national elections.
- Write to your representative and senators urging them

to oppose cutting the benefits you earned over a long, challenging career.

Not all threats to our financial security in retirement emanate from Pennsylvania Avenue. Choices that we make as individuals can impact our retirement income.

For example, if savings in the TSP or other retirement accounts are key to funding your retirement lifestyle, you should review the risk-versus-reward balance of your stock and bond allocations from time to time.

If you are most concerned about maintaining the purchasing power of those assets over the coming decades, you may wish to hold more of your TSP portfolio in stocks to beat inflation.

If your top concern is preserving your current TSP balance for immediate spending needs, you may wish to hold more in bonds to protect your nest egg during market downturns.

We also need to be knowledgeable about our benefits to avoid inadvertently undermining our own retirement financial security. For example, retirees nearing age 62 face the decision of when to apply for Social Security benefits. Retirees nearing age 65 need to decide whether to enroll in Medicare Part B.

There is also the decision of whether to apply for long-term care insurance. Income from post-retirement employment can reduce the annuity

supplement or Social Security benefits for retirees in certain age groups.

Divorce or remarriage after retirement can impact your benefits. Failure to keep beneficiary designations and wills up to date can impact survivor benefits.

### Helpful Information

Information on all these topics is in the Retirement Services section of the AFSA website at [www.afsa.org/retirement](http://www.afsa.org/retirement).

Finally, if you have a spouse or others who depend on your federal retirement benefits, please ensure that they know how to start receiving those benefits if you pre-decease them. Their first step is to notify the Department of State's Human Resources Service Center at HRSC@state.gov, 866-300-7419 (toll free), or 843-308-5539 (outside U.S.).

A list of subsequent steps is on page 23 of AFSA's 2022 Directory of Retired Members and posted on the AFSA Retirement Services webpage under Annuities. I suggest photocopying or downloading that information and filing it with your will or other key papers readily accessible to your next of kin.

Through your stewardship of your individual benefits and AFSA's advocacy to protect everyone's benefits, that financial foundation will continue to support a happy and productive retirement. ■



## AFSA's Kennan Award Gets a Makeover

Each year, AFSA has been proud to bestow the George F. Kennan Strategic Writing Award on a graduate of the National Defense University whose final paper is singled out as the best essay on strategy or policy among students hailing from the Foreign Service.

Now, thanks to a recent decision to expand the award's eligibility criteria, this recognition has been renamed the AFSA Strategic Writing Award.

During its April meeting, the Governing Board approved three changes to the award proposed by AFSA's Awards and Plaques committee.

First, the award has been expanded to all Foreign Service students—both generalists and specialists—from any of the foreign affairs agencies attending any of the five colleges under the National Defense University, rather than exclusively the National War College.

These additional colleges include the College of Information and Cyberspace, the College of International Security Affairs, the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy and the Joint Forces Staff College.

National War College FSOs comprise about 25 percent of AFSA members at NDU, and expanding this award to the

other 75 percent ensures that the award is bestowed on the most outstanding strategic writer from the full pool of FS personnel.

Second, the requirement that the \$1,000 prize be used only “for the purchase of scholarly books” has been struck to allow recipients greater discretion in the use of prize money. It was the only AFSA award with prize money designated exclusively for a particular use.

Third, the name has been changed to reflect the broader scope of the award's eligibility. It was initially known as the Kennan Award in honor of the first Deputy Commandant

of the National War College, who wrote his famous 1947 *Foreign Affairs* article, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” while serving at the War College.

Now that award eligibility includes FS members attending any colleges under NDU, the Governing Board determined that a name linked so closely with just one of the colleges no longer made sense.

For more information about the AFSA Strategic Writing Award, please contact AFSA's Awards and Scholarships Manager Theo Horn at [horn@afsa.org](mailto:horn@afsa.org) or (202) 719-9705. ■

## Foreign Service Day Resolution Approved

AFSA thanks the Senate Foreign Service Caucus co-chairs, Senators Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), for their introduction of a resolution and annual commemoration of Foreign Service Day on May 6.

AFSA is grateful, as well, to the other co-sponsors of the resolution this year: Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) and Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.).

The 2022 resolution, S. Res. 627, was approved by

the full Senate in the days following Foreign Service Day. This year marks the third year in a row that the Foreign Service Day resolution has been introduced and passed in the Senate. This is a pattern AFSA hopes can continue each year moving forward.

“For 98 years, the men and women of the Foreign Service have promoted America's interests, strengthened our national security, and assisted U.S. citizens abroad,” Senator Sullivan said in a joint press release. “Today, my colleagues and I salute the

**This year marks the third year in a row that the Foreign Service Day resolution has been introduced and passed in the Senate.**

hard-working members of the U.S. Foreign Service and reaffirm our commitment to providing this crucial diplomatic corps with the support they need and deserve.”

Senator Van Hollen added: “Our Foreign Ser-

vice members commit themselves to protect and promote America's interests—often at great personal risk and sacrifice. Their dedication is vital to maintaining and advancing American diplomacy around the world.” ■

*Foreign Service Day  
Continued from page 63*

lives to this ongoing pandemic.”

Turning back to the memorial plaques, Amb. Rubin went on: “Each name chiseled on these walls represents one of our fellow public servants, fellow diplomats and fellow Americans, whose lives were lost in service of a greater purpose. Each time we pass through these halls, they continue to serve as they remind us to execute our own duties with that same purpose and dignity.”

Rubin also acknowledged the dozens of U.S. embassies and consulates that participated in a moment of solemn silence, creating a cascade effect around the world as they paid their respects to fallen colleagues.

## AFSA Hosts Foreign Service Day Events

On the day before Foreign Service Day, AFSA traditionally hosts a number of spe-

cial programs for active-duty FS personnel and alumni.

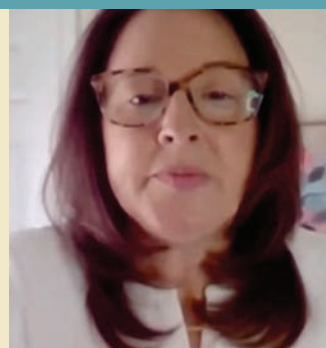
This year, on May 5, AFSA welcomed members to its headquarters for an open house featuring complimentary professional headshots and food trucks serving an array of Peruvian fare and ice cream.

AFSA also hosted two webinars: a look at the association’s work to promote the interests of the Foreign Service on Capitol Hill, led by AFSA Director of Congressional Advocacy Kim Green-

plate; and tips from a social media expert on how to optimize your LinkedIn profile for professional opportunities.

Greenplate discussed AFSA’s recent legislative wins for members of the Foreign Service, some of which had been sought for decades and were achieved despite a split Senate, thin partisan margins in the House of Representatives and the challenges of a global pandemic.

She also outlined AFSA’s ongoing advocacy priorities for the 117th Congress and



AFSA/SCREEN CAPTURE

Career Coach Janeen Shaffer walked members through creating an effective LinkedIn profile during an AFSA Foreign Service Day webinar.

reform goals. The reforms include, among others, seeking authorization and funding for increased positions and personnel at all FS agencies; ensuring a 15-percent training float; placing more career FS members in senior positions and ambassadorships; and reducing the use of personal services contractors and Foreign Service Limited staff at USAID.

Janeen Shaffer, a professional leadership and career coach, hosted a workshop, “Creating an Effective LinkedIn Profile,” to guide members in curating their online presence for networking and job searching.

She pointed out that a successful profile on the platform can help users build professional relationships, connect with key contacts and stay current on market trends and thought leadership. It may ultimately lead to a job offer.

Shaffer walked viewers through the process of creating a profile: how to select a profile photo, write a profile headline and highlight experience, qualifications and awards.

AFSA members may view



U.S. EMBASSY JAKARTA



U.S. EMBASSY KUWAIT CITY

U.S. embassy staff in Jakarta (top) and Kuwait City observe a moment of silence to honor fallen colleagues. By participating in this annual tradition, U.S. embassies and consulates around the world paid their respects to those who gave their lives in the line of duty.





U.S. EMBASSY BELGRADE

U.S. embassy staff in Belgrade observe a moment of silence to honor fallen colleagues on Foreign Service Day.

recordings of these webinars at [afsa.org/video](https://afsa.org/video).

Closing the day's events, AFSA co-hosted a Foreign Service Day reception with DACOR later that evening in the garden of the historic DACOR Bacon House. The event featured live music and dinner, offering guests the chance to meet retired and active-duty members of the Foreign Service.

### AFSA Social Media Campaign

Leveraging Foreign Service Day as an opportunity to inform the American public about the work of U.S. diplomats, AFSA's outreach team launched a special social media campaign.

AFSA asked members to post messages on Twitter and Facebook during the week of May 2, conveying

"Why I Serve" in the Foreign Service and how that commitment relates to Americans. Participants were asked to use the hashtags #WhyIServe and #ForeignServiceDay and to tag @afsatweets on Twitter and @afsapage on Facebook.

AFSA members responded, generating 37,000 tweet impressions on Twitter and reaching 48,000 people on Facebook during the week.

"#WhyIServe is to be a leader in advancing the distribution of food and agricultural products around the world, which is a vital step toward increasing global nutrition and reducing world hunger," tweeted Kyle

Bonsu, an international trade specialist with the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. "Representing U.S. agriculture abroad is an absolute privilege and joy."

"#WhyIServe – because helping promote free and fair Ukrainian elections almost 20 years ago planted the seeds of freedom that flourish in Ukrainian hearts today," said retired FSO Julie Nutter in another tweet.

Social media has proven to be a useful tool for broadening AFSA's public outreach, particularly with newer and younger audiences. Please keep helping us raise awareness by continuing to use the #WhyIServe hashtag. ■



### AFSA Governing Board Meeting, May 18, 2022

The board met in person on May 18 at the DACOR Bacon House.

**Resignation:** The board accepted Foreign Commercial Service Vice President Jay Carreiro's resignation as he prepares to go on assignment overseas, and appointed Charles Ranado to serve as the new FCS vice president, with Mr. Carreiro serving as the alternative representative.

**LCAD Award:** The Governing Board adopted the Awards and Plaques Committee recommendation for AFSA's 2022 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy award. The board further voted to modify the award's criteria to include the stipulation that nominees should not currently be employed in senior positions in government service.

**Committee Members:** The board approved the appointment of five members recommended to serve on the Committee on Elections. ■



JENFER MORRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

AFSA co-hosts a Foreign Service Day reception with DACOR in the garden of the historic DACOR Bacon House.



## AFSA Welcomes Newest FS Members

At a series of events in April and May, AFSA was pleased to welcome new members of the Foreign Service and introduce them to the work of the association. The events included virtual meetings with a Foreign Commercial Service class and a USAID class, as well as in-person lunches with the State Department's joint Foreign Service orientation 164-210 class.

AFSA President Eric Rubin welcomed all groups, explaining whom the association represents and outlining its ongoing work for members, collectively and individually.

Meeting in person with the State class, which was split up into four small lunch events on May 12 and 13, State VP Tom Yazdgerdi discussed the role of labor management. Director of Programs and Member Engagement Christine Miele then spoke about the benefits of AFSA membership and led a Q&A session. Each table had a "table host," an active-duty or retired member of the Foreign Service, seated alongside the new FS members to answer questions about a career in the Foreign Service and AFSA's role.

These back-to-back lunches were the first in-person events welcoming new orientation classes in more than two years, and AFSA was delighted to have the chance to meet the new-



AFSA hosted the State Department's joint Foreign Service orientation 164-210 class for in-person luncheons on May 12 and 13.

est FS members over a meal at its headquarters.

The new State class was made up of 85 generalists (11 economic, 13 consular, 14 management, 20 public diplomacy and 27 political cone) and 97 specialists (with the largest subgroup consisting of 37 Diplomatic Security special agents). It contained six Presidential Management Fellows, six former Consular Fellows and 11 Mustang Program Civil Service conversions.

Among the class members are individuals who have climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, sung opera on a Chinese game show, worked for NASA and issued the last non-immigrant visa from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

Languages spoken include the "big six" of the United Nations, as well as



Azerbaijani, Croatian, Dari, Dutch, German, Hausa, Hindi, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kosraean (of Micronesia), Marathi, Mongolian, Norwegian, Persian, Portuguese, Romanian, Swahili, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese, Urdu and Yoruba.

The newest FCS class, which met virtually with AFSA and FCS VP Jay Carreiro on April 30, is made up 14 members who have been assigned to Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Thailand and Turkey.

USAID's C3 Class 29,

which met virtually with AFSA and USAID VP Jason Singer on April 4, has 15 members across six backstops: five population, health and nutrition officers; three financial management officers; three environmental officers; two contracting officers; one education officer and one humanitarian officer.

The new USAID FSOs speak a combined total of 18 languages and have worked and studied in 57 countries. Many also have experience working for USAID, nonprofit and humanitarian organizations, the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps. ■

AFSA/HANNAH MCDA NIEL

## Overtime and Comp Time Overseas: A Q&A with AFSA's James Yorke

*As U.S. missions around the world head into the busy fall season, some Foreign Service members may be looking to brush up on overtime and compensation policies overseas. James Yorke, AFSA's senior labor management adviser, reviews the basics.*

### **Q: Who is entitled to overtime and comp time overseas?**

**A:** With some exceptions, FS specialists and FS untenured generalists serving overseas are entitled to "premium compensation," which includes overtime pay, compensatory time off (comp time), holiday pay, Sunday premium pay, night differential, etc. This compensation falls under Title 5 of the U.S. Code, and employees are eligible if they work more than eight hours per day or 40 hours per week. After tenuring, generalists are no longer eligible under Title 5. Tenured officers can get special comp time and special differentials under the FS Act. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is not applicable overseas.

### **Q: When can I receive premium compensation overseas?**

**A:** Only when the overtime is ordered or approved in writing by an authorizing official. Form DS 3060, "Authorization of Premium Compensation," should be

used to document approved overtime. Get your overtime approved in writing, in advance. The department's regulations require this, even though it is not required by the Title 5 regulations.

### **Q: Are there different kinds of overtime work?**

**A:** Yes. There is a distinction between overtime work that is "regularly scheduled" and that which is "irregular and occasional."

Regularly scheduled overtime is scheduled in advance (before midnight Sunday) as part of your administrative workweek, or before 12:01 a.m. on Sunday. For example, if your supervisor schedules you to work five hours of overtime in advance of the workweek to cover a VIP visit, that overtime is "regularly scheduled."

"Irregular or occasional" overtime is not scheduled in advance. For example, if your supervisor asks you to stay after hours to finish a cable, the overtime is "irregular or occasional."

However, if an authorizing official knew in advance of the workweek the specific days and hours of the work requirement and could have determined which employee had to be scheduled to meet that requirement, the overtime may be converted to "regularly scheduled" overtime.

For example, if you have had to work four hours of overtime every Friday for the past two months to cover for a foreseeable recurring event, you have a good argument for having the overtime converted to "regularly scheduled overtime."

### **Q: Does the distinction between regularly scheduled and occasional overtime matter?**

**A:** Yes, it's important because it affects the type of compensation you can receive. For specialists and untenured officers, if the overtime is regularly scheduled, you must receive overtime pay.

For specialists and untenured officers, if the overtime work is irregular or occasional, and your basic rate of pay is at or below the maximum rate for GS-10/10, you may choose either overtime pay or regular compensatory time off. (GS10/10 BASIC rate in 2022 - \$67,425)

For specialists and untenured officers, if the overtime is irregular or occasional and your basic rate of pay is greater than the maximum for a GS-10/10, then you are only entitled to receive compensatory time off (assigned the same monetary value as overtime pay and subject to the biweekly pay cap for EX-V or GS-15/10, whichever is higher).



### **Q: Is there a cap on compensation?**

**A:** Yes. Under Title 5, you may receive premium compensation if it does not raise your total pay—basic pay plus premium pay—for any biweekly pay period above the basic pay for GS-15, Step 10, or an EX-V, whichever is greater. For pay cap purposes, comp time is monetarily equivalent to overtime pay.

There is no GS pay scale overseas, so a notional overseas rate that applies the 21.02 percent OCP comparability must be calculated. In 2022, therefore, the overseas notional pay for a GS15/10 is the greater amount, so the biweekly premium pay cap overseas is \$6,808.06.

### **Q: What should be my hourly OT rate?**

**A:** Your overtime hourly rate is either one and half times your hourly rate, one and a half times the hourly rate of a GS-10/1, or your own hourly rate. (To find your hourly rate, divide your annual rate by 2,087.)

In 2022, therefore, if your hourly rate is less than \$30.17 overseas, your

*Continued on page 72*



David L. Mortimer, CPA, has over 25 years of experience in tax planning and research. Including developing tax minimization strategies, planning business/real estate transactions and audit representation.

- Income tax services
- Financial planning
- Practiced before the IRS
- Member AICPA

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## AFSA NEWS

*Overtime and Comp Time Overseas  
Continued from page 71*

overtime pay will be one and a half times your basic hourly rate. If your hourly rate is more than \$30.17 and less than \$45.12, your overtime hourly rate will be \$45.12 overseas. If your hourly rate is more than \$45.12 overseas, your overtime hourly rate will be the same as your basic hourly rate.

### **Q: Can I liquidate my comp time hours?**

**A:** In some cases, yes.

Comp time must be used within 26 weeks of the pay period in which it was earned, or it will be forfeited. However, if you earned comp time under Title 5 and have been unable to use it due to the demands of the post, you may have the comp time converted to money if you follow the correct procedure, even if your basic rate of pay is greater than that of a GS-10/10.

The award of comp time must have been approved by your supervisor and recorded on form DS-3060, and you must have requested to take the compensatory time off by submitting Form SF-71, "Application for Leave."

If you have earned comp time off, you must fill out the SF-71 and request to use the comp time within the 26 pay periods. If your supervi-

sor denies the request, and if there is no opportunity to reschedule the leave within the 26 pay periods, make sure that a copy of the SF-71 showing the disapproval, along with your written request for liquidation, is provided to the timekeeper to support the payment of the overtime for those denied comp time hours.

### **Q: Can I take my comp time with me when I transfer?**

**A:** Usually not. Accumulated comp time will be forfeited if it is not used or liquidated before you transfer to another post or back to the United States. Comp time requested by the employee but not granted before the employee's transfer must be paid, subject to the premium pay caps noted above.

Comp time may only be transferred to your next post, or used in conjunction with home leave, if specifically authorized by HR in exceptional circumstances.

If you have specific concerns regarding overtime or comp time which you cannot resolve at post, please email James Yorke at [yorkej@state.gov](mailto:yorkej@state.gov). You may also submit a question to the HR Service Center at [HRSC@state.gov](mailto:HRSC@state.gov). ■



## Concerns Regarding the OIG Report on FSSB Public Members

AFSA read with dismay the May 2022 Office of the Inspector General's report, "Review of the Recruitment and Selection Process for Public Members of Foreign Service Selection Boards" (FSSBs). The report, which is viewable at [bit.ly/OIG-FSSB](https://bit.ly/OIG-FSSB), has identified clear examples of favoritism, bias and failure to follow criteria for selection of these public members.

All Foreign Service members and the American people need to have confidence that FSSB members selected for service, including the public member, meet all the required qualifications; that rules are followed; and that favoritism or bias does not exist in the process.

The State Department shares with AFSA the composition of each FSSB panel. AFSA scrutinizes the FSSB Foreign Service members to ensure that they have no pending grievances or EEO complaints against them and that there is no documented record of poor judgment.


Regarding FSSB public members, AFSA is not provided with their background or qualifications and assumes that the department has followed documented procedures and ethics rules. Sadly, the OIG report shows that is not the case. In the future, we will ensure that this information is provided to AFSA.

AFSA urges the department to implement the OIG recommendations as soon as possible. We will also demand a full accounting on whether unqualified public members may have affected the ability of FSSBs to render legitimate decisions. We are already hearing from our members about this concern.

Rest assured that AFSA will work hard to ensure that FSSB recruitment and selection of public members is transparent and legitimate.

Please let us know what you think at [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org). ■


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■ **Gina E. Barile**, 94, a retired Foreign Service secretary, passed away peacefully at the Laurel Ridge Rehabilitation Center in Boston, Mass., on March 12, 2022.

Born in Boston on Feb. 3, 1928, to Constantino and Assunta “Susie” Barile, Ms. Barile was raised a “Northender,” a native of the city’s Italian neighborhood. She attended Girls’ High School, graduating in 1945 with high honors, and then received an associate degree in commercial science from the Boston University School of Practical Arts and Letters.

In January 1956, she joined the Department of State as a Foreign Service secretary. Over the next 32 years, Ms. Barile served as an executive assistant to seven different ambassadors in Argentina, Belgium, France, Italy, Jordan, Sweden and what was then Yugoslavia. She spoke fluent Italian, Spanish and French, and worked to become conversational in the local language at all her overseas assignments.

She later recalled that one highlight of her career was at post in Rome when she had the opportunity to meet the Apollo 11 astronauts, the first to land on the moon.

Ms. Barile retired in March 1988 and moved back to her hometown of Boston, where she cared for her elderly parents. Between her friends and her extensive Italian family, she led an active social life.

While living at Laurel Ridge, Ms. Barile frequented a local diner where she noticed that a certain group of men would dine on a regular basis and discuss world events. She asked to join their all-male group and became a member of the “Romeo” club, or “Retired Old Men Eating Out.”

She was admired by those who knew her for her beauty, sharp intellect, efficiency and strong opinions. Her deep Catholic faith remained important to her throughout her life.

Ms. Barile is survived by her nieces, Melissa Hoff and Lydia Melech of Apex,

N.C., and Amy Justice of Reston, Va. She was preceded in death by both her parents and her brother, Joseph Barile.

■ **Annie M. Carter**, 86, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died on April 17, 2022, in Bethesda, Md.

Born near Paris, France, Ms. Carter initially worked as an accountant and auditor for the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army in France. In the mid-1950s she met and married Walter Carter, a fiscal specialist who joined the Foreign Service in 1963.

Ms. Carter became an American citizen in 1966 and volunteered for nonprofit organizations while overseas as a Foreign Service spouse. She also worked for various companies in the U.S. and co-founded a real estate investment and management consultant firm.

In 1986 she joined the Foreign Service as a fiscal specialist. She served as chief of the payroll systems branch of the American Payroll Division before joining the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs’ Executive Directorate (EAP/EX) in 1991.

In 1996 she spent several months at the embassy in Canberra on temporary assignment. She went on to rise through the financial management ranks with EAP/EX, serving in various positions including budget director and deputy chief financial management officer.

She retired as EAP/EX chief financial management officer in 2010 with a combined 50 years of government and industry service. Her work was recognized by the State Department’s Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards three times, in 1992, 1998 and 2006.

In retirement, she enjoyed reading, travel, the outdoors and time with her grandchildren.

Ms. Carter was predeceased by her husband, Walter, a retired Foreign Service officer, and is survived by two children,

Bruce (a retired U.S. Navy captain) and Celia (a senior government executive), two grandchildren and many nieces and nephews in both the U.S. and France.

■ **Andrew J. “A.J.” Koplak Jr.**, 73, a retired Foreign Service specialist, passed away peacefully on March 30, 2022, surrounded by his family at INOVA Hospital in Fairfax, Va.

After serving in the U.S. Navy for 20 years, Mr. Koplak joined the State Department in the late 1980s as a messaging communications officer in the Bureau of Information Resource Management. His overseas assignments included Lisbon, London, Sarajevo, Dublin and Tel Aviv.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Koplak was responsible for control and coordination of telecommunications, information technology and telegraphic programs in IRM’s messaging center at the State Department.

He also served as a liaison messaging communications officer supporting the Executive Secretariat’s Operations Center on matters concerning State telecommunications operations with other government agencies and Foreign Service posts.

Mr. Koplak retired from the Foreign Service in 2013 and immediately returned as a retired annuitant in IRM, retiring for the second time in 2020.

He is remembered as a great friend who captivated audiences with his fascinating stories. Described by his colleagues as a loyal co-worker and mentor, he was affectionately known as “our A.J.”

■ **Thomas “Tom” Lee Marr**, 79, a retired Foreign Service officer with USAID, passed away on April 26, 2022, in Lake Ridge, Va.

Mr. Marr was born on Feb. 19, 1943, to Bill and Trudie Marr in Miami, Fla. After graduating from Hanford High in 1960, he

earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of San Francisco.

He began working in the Bay Area. Eventually, he obtained a master's degree in business administration before embarking on a lifelong career with USAID.

From 1979 to 1999, he served as an auditor and a project development officer with postings in Kenya, Senegal, Egypt and Washington. After 1999, he continued working for USAID as a contractor through Cape Fox Facilities Services, serving both as a program officer and as a chief of party.

Mr. Marr's last engagement with USAID began in 2010 as an assignment and career counselor for program and project development officers in the Bureau for Human Capital and Talent Management. He served concurrently as the foreign language training adviser for the Development Leadership Initiative and the Career Candidate Corps.

In 1980 Mr. Marr met Gloria Jean Zengler at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church in Woodbridge, Va. The pair were married the following year and went on to have three children.

A devout Catholic, Mr. Marr felt a special devotion to the Blessed Mother. He loved his work and his family, and had hobbies such as traveling, studying history, flying planes and reading.

He also enjoyed the great outdoors (especially hiking), sports (especially football), computers, cooking, craft beer, international cuisine and pie.

Mr. Marr was predeceased by his parents; his brother, Jeffery Marr; and his sister, Julie Marr.

He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Jean; sons Andy (and wife Glauca), Alan (and wife Meaghan) and Aaron (and wife Beth); six grandchildren, Lucas, Logan, Hector, Avery, Theodore and Eulalia; a sister, Dolores Marr; six nieces and nephews; and 15 great-nieces and great-nephews.

■ **Francis Joseph "Frank" Meehan,** 98, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on May 7, 2022, at his home in Helensburgh, Scotland.

Mr. Meehan was born in East Orange, N.J., and grew up in Clydebank, Scotland, where, as a teenager, he took part in clean-up operations after Luftwaffe air raids.

He earned an M.A. in history at Glasgow University and was already fluent in German before joining the U.S. Army and being assigned to Germany in 1945. After his discharge in 1947, he became a clerk at the American consulate in Bremen.

The following year he moved to Washington, where he worked for the Economic Cooperation Administration, which administered the Marshall Plan.

In 1951 Mr. Meehan joined the Foreign Service and was assigned to Frankfurt, then to Hamburg and Paris/NATO before returning to the U.S. in 1956 to study at Harvard. He received a master's degree in public administration in 1957 and entered the Department of State's Russian language and area studies program.

He was initially assigned to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research before getting his long-desired posting to Moscow.

In 1961 Mr. Meehan transferred to Berlin just in time to see the Berlin Wall go up. His close working relationship with East German lawyer and East-West spy exchange negotiator Wolfgang Vogel ensured the release of American student Frederic Pryor from an East Berlin prison cell at the same time as the spy swap of Francis Gary Powers for Colonel Abel at the "bridge of spies" in 1962.

Mr. Meehan was promoted to head the Eastern Affairs section of the Berlin mission; he was the principal American liaison with the Soviet authorities in East Berlin and Potsdam, as well as with the

East German government, which the U.S. government did not recognize until 1974.

He then became deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassy Budapest in 1968. In 1972 Mr. Meehan returned to Germany as political counselor at Embassy Bonn. From there he moved to Vienna, as deputy chief of mission, in 1975. In 1977, he went back to Bonn as deputy chief of mission.

President Jimmy Carter appointed Frank Meehan ambassador to Czechoslovakia in 1979 and then, a year later, ambassador to Poland. He was in Warsaw for the historic rise of the Solidarity movement.

Caught in Washington for consultations when General Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law in 1981, Amb. Meehan was smuggled back into Poland in the back of a diplomatic van.

Amb. Meehan's last diplomatic assignment was as ambassador to the German Democratic Republic, appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1985. Once again, he dealt with East German spy-exchanger Wolfgang Vogel and was on the East German side of the "bridge of spies" with Natan Sharansky when the Russian champion of freedom crossed over to the West in 1986.

In 1989, after a career spanning four decades of the Cold War, Amb. Meehan retired to Scotland. There, he followed international developments and U.S. politics closely, indulged his gardening skills—honed at so many homes over the years—and attracted visits by his widespread family members.

He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by Glasgow University in 1986 and was the subject of a BBC Scotland documentary in 2017.

Ambassador Meehan was predeceased by his wife, Margaret Kearns Meehan, in 2015. He is survived by his children, Anne, Catherine, Frances and Jim; seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.



■ **John K. Menzies**, 73, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, passed away suddenly on March 26, 2022, in Morristown, N.J.

Mr. Menzies was born in 1948 in Pittsfield, Ill., to Pastor James Menzies and Iridell Fisher. Though he grew up humbly with limited means in the Midwest, his parents instilled in him a profound sense of duty and service.

He earned his B.A. and M.A. in German from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and his doctorate degree in German from the University of California, Berkeley.

In 1982 Mr. Menzies began his career with the State Department. He had assignments in Hungary, Austria, East Germany and Bulgaria, where he was a co-founder of the American University of Bulgaria in Blagoevgrad in 1991.

Mr. Menzies arrived in Sarajevo as deputy chief of mission in 1994. Later that year, he received AFSA's William A. Rivkin Award, along with 13 other Foreign Service officers, for "displaying integrity and constructive dissent in developing and advocating alternative policy views on the difficult issue of Bosnia." They had expressed deep concerns about the efficacy of U.S. policy toward that country and promoted a more activist route.

The award citation said the group "courageously carried their challenge to existing policy to successively higher levels, including the Secretary of State [Warren Christopher]. Their proposals ultimately were adopted in part, and their principled arguments are still part of the continuing debate over U.S. policy toward Bosnia."

He was appointed ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1995 to 1996, and served again as ambassador, this time in Kosovo, from 2001 to 2002. He worked in various roles within the State Department and the U.S. mission to the United Nations in New York.

After he retired from the Foreign Service in 2002, Amb. Menzies pursued an academic career and became the president of Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa. He became dean of the John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall in 2007 and served until 2013.

From 2012 to 2015, he was on the American University in Bulgaria board and served as a university council member. Later on, he became president of the American University of Kurdistan and then vice president for international relations at the American University of Iraq-Baghdad from 2018 to 2021.

Ambassador Menzies is survived by daughters, Lauren, Alexandra and Morgan; a granddaughter, Dylan; and a brother, Jim.

■ **Katherine Radosh**, 84, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, passed away in Jacksonville, Fla., on March 11, 2022, after a decade-long struggle with myelodysplastic syndrome.

Ms. Radosh was born on Sept. 20, 1937, in the Bronx borough of New York City, to Edmund and Catherine Koenig. She grew up mostly in New Jersey and California, often relocating because of her father's work with the Army Signal Corps.

After graduating with a B.A. from the University of Chicago in 1957, Ms. Radosh was accepted into a Navy training program in computer programming. Thus began her career working for the Navy and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

During the Thanksgiving holiday of 1959, she met 1st Lt. Burnett Radosh on a train returning to Washington, D.C., from New York. By January they were engaged, and the couple married on March 26, 1960.

Six months after the birth of their first child, Alaric, in 1961, the Radoshes moved to France on the USNS *Patch*, a troop ship. In France, while her husband pursued his

military career, Ms. Radosh gave birth to a second son, Jeremy, in 1962. She also worked as a substitute teacher in U.S. Army elementary schools. The Radosh family lived in Bussac, Poitiers and Orleans.

After two years in France, the family moved back to the States. When Mr. Radosh embarked on his first of two Army tours in Vietnam, Ms. Radosh returned with the boys to Northern Virginia. She worked for the State Department writing essential programs that were run on State mainframe computers. Her sons remember her being called back to work in the middle of the night on occasion to fix computer problems.

In 1976 she sponsored an extended family of Lao and Vietnamese refugees who lived with the Radosh family for half a year. The family remained good friends with Ms. Radosh throughout her life.

Ms. Radosh went on to obtain a master's degree from American University, and she and her husband took up sailing, beginning their education with the Navy Sailing Association Annapolis Chapter.

When Mr. Radosh retired from the military and Alaric and Jeremy graduated from high school, Ms. Radosh switched from State's Civil Service to the Foreign Service. She flourished in four assignments: Jeddah (1980-1983), Bangkok (1983-1984), Port au Prince (1984-1986) and Tokyo (1986-1988), accompanied by Mr. Radosh.

She was eventually promoted into the Senior Foreign Service before retiring in 1990 to help care for her ailing mother and in-laws.

Together with her husband, she joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary and was an award-winning editor and publisher of her flotilla's newsletter and an adept helmsman or crewmember on patrols, retiring after 15 years of service.

In their catamaran, *Nerissa*, the Radoshes sailed from South Florida

to Maine several times, once entering Canada and experiencing the notorious Bay of Fundy with a tidal range of more than 20 feet.

Taking up quilting late in life, she produced lovely display-worthy quilts. An omnivorous reader, Ms. Radosh volunteered at the Lighthouse Point public library and read about one book every day, both fiction and nonfiction.

Ms. Radosh is survived by husband Burnett Radosh of Jacksonville, Fla.; sons Alaric of Arlington, Va., and Jeremy of Herndon, Va., as well as daughters-in-law Li-chuang and Handan. She is also survived by grandchildren Natasha Duke and Tolga Akyatan and great-grandchildren Kiana Carper, Mckayla Carper and Elif Akyatan.

Ms. Radosh will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

■ **Patricia Franklin Schofield**, 75, wife of a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away at her home in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 23, 2022, following a long illness.

She was born on Jan. 4, 1947, in Dawson Springs, Ky., to Decola Franklin and Brunette Russell. She graduated from Western Kentucky University and later received her doctorate from the University of Maryland.

Ms. Schofield worked for several years with organizations providing services to handicapped individuals in Kentucky, Georgia and Washington, D.C. She married William Schofield on July 31, 1976. He soon became a Foreign Service officer, and Ms. Schofield accompanied him on overseas assignments in Brazil, Jamaica and Slovakia.

She was active in embassy life and served as community liaison officer in Jamaica. She also volunteered with international groups at her posts, especially those that supported aid to the handi-

capped. While in Slovakia, she participated in a University of Maryland-sponsored assessment of special education in Sarajevo.

Upon return to Washington in 1999, she began work at the Transition Center of the Foreign Service Institute, where she received a Superior Honor Award. She retired from there in 2009.

Patricia Schofield is survived by her husband of 45 years, William Schofield; a sister, Denell Storms, and her husband, Edward; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

■ **John Jackson “Jay” Taylor**, 90, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, died peacefully at home on March 3, 2022, in Decatur, Ga., surrounded by his family.

Mr. Taylor was born in Little Rock, Ark., on Dec. 4, 1931, to Annie Laurie Cain and Alfred Wesley Taylor. The family later moved to Nashville, Tenn., where his father, a lawyer, worked in the insurance industry.

At the age of 16, Mr. Taylor entered Vanderbilt University. He graduated in 1953 and joined the Navy, where he became an air cadet.

While training at Naval Air Station Pensacola, he met Betsy Rose, a nursing student at Touro Nursing School, at a chance encounter in the Café du Monde in New Orleans. After a first date at Antoine’s Restaurant, which was quite a splurge on a cadet’s salary, the couple never looked back; they were married four months later.

Mr. Taylor switched to the Marine Corps, becoming a helicopter pilot, and served in Japan and California. In 1957 he fulfilled his long-held dream of becoming a Foreign Service officer when he passed the exam—after three tries.

During his 37-year career, Mr. Taylor had nine overseas postings: Accra, Taichung (for Chinese language school),

Taipei, Kuching, Hong Kong, Pretoria, Cape Town, Beijing and Havana.

Highlights of his career include serving as deputy assistant secretary of State for intelligence and research; chief of mission of the U.S. interests section in Havana; a member of the National Security Council staff for East Asia; diplomat in residence at the Carter Presidential Center; and director of analysis for Asian and Pacific affairs.

By the time of his retirement in 1994, Mr. Taylor had achieved the rank of Minister Counselor in the Senior Foreign Service. His fascinating career, which involved many momentous world events such as the opening of diplomatic relations with China and the struggle against apartheid, is recorded as part of ADST’s Foreign Affairs Oral History Program.

Along the way, Mr. Taylor earned a master’s degree in Far Eastern studies from the University of Michigan and wrote three books on international relations, including *The Dragon and the Wild Goose* (1987), a comparative study of China and India.

After retiring from the Foreign Service, Mr. Taylor wrote and directed a PBS documentary on South Africa (“Ubuntu, African and Afrikaner,” 2001) and wrote two more books, including *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Belknap Press, 2009). It won the prestigious Lionel Gelber Prize as the “best book on international relations” for 2010.

Mr. Taylor frequently contributed op-eds on world affairs to *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *The LA Times*. He was an associate in research at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University. His significant contributions to current scholarship on the history of Taiwan and China are among the legacies of his rich life.

In private life, he is remembered as a wonderful, kind and loving father who took his four children on many grand

adventures around the world. He was an important presence in the lives of his nine grandchildren as well, spending time with each of them and inspiring them with his *joie de vivre*; his generosity and compassion; his lifelong quest to learn; his love of political discourse, music and art; his sense of ceremony and elegance; and his ever-present and impish sense of humor.

Mr. Taylor was a prolific poet, penning verse on occasions both great and small for his family, which he affectionally called the Golden Horde, and especially for his wife, whom he considered his muse.

Mr. Taylor is survived by four children and their spouses: John Taylor and Jeanette Walls, Laurie and Joel Rice, Amy and Jim Scully, and Cynthia and David K. Young (a retired FSO), and nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

His beloved wife of 62 years, Betsy Rose, passed away in 2017. It gives the family great comfort to know the two are reunited; they recall he liked to imagine Betsy saying, "What took you so long?"

Mr. and Ms. Taylor will be inurned together at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors in a public ceremony on Sept. 19 at 3 p.m.

■ **Dennis Edward Wendel**, 75, a retired Foreign Service officer with USAID, passed away suddenly on Dec. 5, 2021, in Falls Church, Va.

He was born to parents Mary and Reuben Wendel in Marinette, Wis., a farming and shipbuilding community on the shores of Lake Michigan. He attended St. John's University in Minnesota, majoring in economics and Spanish, and later received a master's degree from Cornell University in international development. He also completed coursework for a Ph.D. in sociology at Colorado State University.

Mr. Wendel led a life of purpose and service. In 1968 he volunteered for the

Peace Corps in Peru, supporting remote Indigenous livelihoods through agricultural science and veterinary medicine. From 1971 to 1975, he was a development and civil operations adviser in Vietnam, receiving the USAID Award for Valor, the agency's second-highest award, in 1975 for his courageous evacuation efforts during the fall of Saigon.

The career that he built as a democracy and governance specialist over the ensuing 35 years includes postings to high-profile political transition, conflict, stabilization and reconciliation environments in the Pacific Islands, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen and Afghanistan.

As a water resources specialist in India in the 1980s, he designed and launched an innovative regional irrigation and water management program. As a rural development specialist in Egypt (1989-1992), he ran more than 20,000 local development activities in rural schools, water, sanitation and infrastructural development.

As acting USAID mission director and office director of democracy programs in South Africa in the mid-1990s, Mr. Wendel designed and developed crucial civil society programs amid the country's first multiracial democratic election.

In Indonesia, after the end of the Suharto regime, Mr. Wendel was responsible for a \$28 million USAID program to support election education, national dialogue, media transparency, and legal and constitutional reform. As senior USAID representative of the regional reconstruction team in the Kurdistan region in Iraq, he led programs in public finance, basic infrastructure, anti-corruption and rule of law activities.

At his last post before retirement, as director of the Pacific Islands USAID regional office, he began programs to address climate change and environmen-

tal management, gender violence, public health, and to support Fiji's political transition toward more democratic governance.

In these roles, Mr. Wendel was a beloved team leader who was committed to local solutions. Colleagues remember him as a profound philosopher who excelled in considering the relationship between technical strategies and social theory.

In retirement, Mr. Wendel was an avid walker who traversed three miles a day with achy knees and jumped like a frog just so his grandkids would laugh. He was fulfilling a lifelong dream of rebuilding his family cabin with a view to sunrises over Lake Michigan.

Every day, he captivated the family dinner table with his rigorous consideration of an issue, telling stories and posing questions, all with laughter and humility that is sorely missed. He leaves behind several ongoing projects of the small and large engine variety and a family who thinks the world of him.

Mr. Wendel is survived by his cherished wife of 48 years, Chien Wendel; son Eric Wendel, an engineering doctoral candidate; daughter Cristin Kaspar, a pediatric nephrologist, her two children and husband; and daughter Delia Wendel, a university professor, and her daughter and husband.

He is also survived by two sisters living in his hometown of Marinette, Wis., Mary Kay Selsor and Jayne Drys. ■



If you would like us to include an obituary in *In Memory*, please send text to [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org).

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



## The “Wine-Dark Sea” of the Information Age

**Information at War: Journalism, Disinformation, and Modern Warfare**

Philip Seib, *Polity*, 2021, \$24.95/  
paperback, e-book available, 240 pages.

REVIEWED BY VIVIAN S. WALKER

Philip Seib's *Information at War: Journalism, Disinformation, and Modern Warfare* offers an elegant and meticulously researched overview of the contemporary relationship between war and information, and the struggle for narrative control of the conflict “story.”

In tracing the “long and twisting path from Homer to Murrow to Putin to Xi Jinping,” Seib effectively makes the case that wars are no longer under the exclusive control of “bards and presidents and generals.” Rather, they are won—and lost—as decisively in the public information space as they are on the battlefield.

In *Information at War*, Seib brilliantly depicts the growing competition for public influence between the government and media, from the Cold War to the present day. He is especially effective in describing how improvements in information technologies, e.g., radio and then television, brought war “home” to the American public, motivating citizens to take an interest in its outcome.

In the chapter on “Living Room Wars,” for example, Seib ably demonstrates how the immediacy and emotional intensity of Edward R. Murrow’s 1940 radio broadcasts during the London blitzkrieg “stirred the conscience” of the American people and helped make the political case against isolationism.

Seib also persuasively tracks the emergence of the now familiar “mutual

distrust” between the media and the government that came to dominate reporting on the Vietnam War, arguing that this mistrust actually originated with the John F. Kennedy administration’s heavy-handed attempts to suppress press reports about its ill-fated engagements with Cuba.

By the time Lyndon Johnson came to power, television reporting—with its capacity to provide graphic depictions of military setbacks—challenged the government’s ability to control the narrative. As Seib illustrates, the 1967 Tet Offensive became a “tipping point at which information from the news became ascendant, outweighing the government’s messaging and reshaping perceptions of the war.”

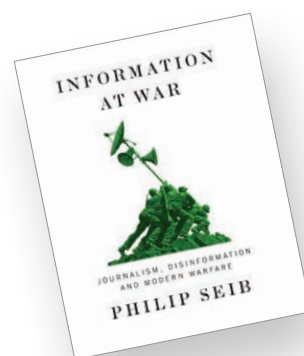
**Ultimately, this meditation on the tension between “information democracy” and “information anarchy” is more elegy than handbook.**

In subsequent chapters, Seib assesses the impact of media embeds on objective reporting during the first Gulf war, highlighting the challenge of accessing information without “excessive government interference.” In his view, instead of questioning the government’s rationale for the conflict with Iraq, the American journalistic establishment “accepted it as gospel.” At the same time, while the acceleration and diversification of social media platforms mitigated against an information monopoly, it also

empowered individual citizens/soldiers whose narrative intent may have been no less subjective.

Turning from the media’s role in shaping the wartime narrative, Seib next evaluates the mechanics of contemporary information warfare, beginning with a competent overview of terrorist information tactics as conducted by al-Qaida, ISIS and other extremist organizations. He then takes on Russia’s weaponization of information and its corrosive effects and concludes with the unexpectedly fatalistic prediction that China is well on its way to exerting a “determinative” influence in the global media space.

In the closing chapters, Seib effectively explores the holistic yoking of journalism and disinformation, and the



degree to which the public is both combatant and victim in the competition for influence. Like most experts confronted with the challenge of combating disinformation effects, however, Seib falls back on “preventive measures” such as media literacy training as an antidote to influence manipulation. But this is a half measure at best, one that requires enormous, sustained investments in education that are well beyond the purview of government-sponsored counterdisinformation programs.

Indeed, *Information at War*, to quote a modernist bard, ends “not with a bang but a whimper,” offering little in the way of solutions, but much in the way of dismay about the moral and ethical failures of conflict reporting. Seib correctly identifies the growing presence of value judgments embedded in ostensibly objective journalism. At the same time, he holds the public accountable for its failure to take responsibility for its information consumption by seeking out multiple (responsible) sources and viewpoints.

Seib is also more than a little dismayed by the digitally driven democratization of the global media space, in which free and unmediated access to information both empowers and imperils. To wage war successfully,

a government must have the capacity to influence, if not control, the media ecosystem. But, as Seib notes, the competition for information domination does not necessarily benefit the public. The government seeks popular support for its policies, while the media seek to increase audience shares. The global public has, in the internet age, become directly involved in shaping these narratives of conflict to its own ends.

For a study focused largely on the current information environment, Seib’s decision to frame his text with the opening lines of Homer’s *Iliad* is telling. Ultimately, this meditation on the tension between “information democracy” and “information anarchy” is more elegy than handbook. Seib’s fundamentally

pessimistic take on what he sees as a fractured, polarized and essentially uncontrollable media environment leaves the reader adrift on the “wine-dark sea” of the information age. ■

---

*Vivian S. Walker is executive director of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. A retired Foreign Service officer, she serves as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University’s Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and a faculty fellow at the University of Southern California’s Center on Public Diplomacy. Previously she taught at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary; the National War College in Washington, D.C.; and the National Defense College of the United Arab Emirates. She is a current member of the FSJ Editorial Board.*

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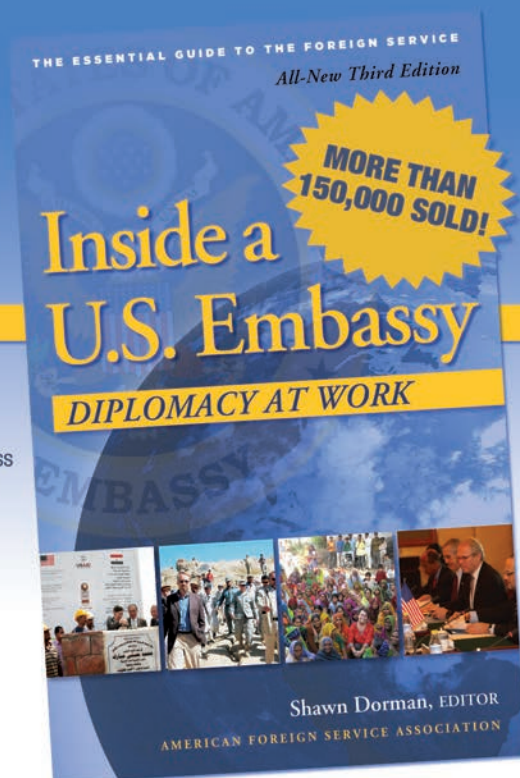
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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Calling FS Authors / 62

## CLASSIFIED LISTINGS

Classifieds / 86, 87

## FINANCIAL PLANNING & TAX SERVICES

David Mortimer CPA / 72  
MCG Financial Planning / 73  
Windecker Financial Planning LLC / 73

## INSURANCE

AFSPA – Critical Illness / 25  
AFSPA – Dental / 11  
Blue Cross Blue Shield Federal  
Employee Program / 3  
Clements Worldwide / Back Cover  
FEDS Protection / 14

## LODGING

Capitol Hill Stay / 81  
FSJ Extended Stay Housing / 81  
Residence Inn Arlington/Rosslyn / 81  
TDY Rentals / Inside Back Cover

## MISCELLANEOUS

Address Change / 11, 85  
AFSA Retiree Membership / 72  
FSJ Gift Subscription / 4  
Fund for American Diplomacy / 85  
*Inside a U.S. Embassy* / 80  
Marketplace / 17  
Senior Living Foundation / 29

## REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Chambers Theory Property Management / 82  
Corporate Apartment Specialists / 85  
FSJ Guide to Property Management / 85  
McEneaney & Associates / 84  
Promax Management / 84  
Property Specialists, Inc. / Inside Front Cover  
Richey Property Management / 83  
Washington Management Services / 84  
WJD Management / 82



# Pearl Buck's Rehabilitation in China

BY BEATRICE CAMP

**E**arly in my assignment as consul general to Shanghai, I was invited to speak at the 70th anniversary of Pearl Buck receiving the Nobel Prize for literature. The conference took place in Zhenjiang, where Buck grew up with her missionary parents, Caroline and Absalom Sydenstricker.

Aware that Pearl Buck came from the type of missionary background that was denounced by the Chinese Communist Party, I was surprised by the invitation. During my first assignment in Beijing 25 years earlier, this kind of recognition would have been unthinkable.

I knew that Buck was not welcome in China for many years. Her request for a visa after President Richard Nixon's historic 1972 trip was denied on the grounds, as stated in the rejection note, that her works took "an attitude of distortion, smear and vilification towards the people of new China and its leaders." After her departure in 1934, Buck never again set foot in China.

As historian Jonathan Spence wrote in 2010 in the *New York Review of Books*: "Her views were not welcome in China: both Chinese nationalist politicians and intellectuals and the Communist forces dug in against the nationalists in the northwest of China objected

**Zhenjiang embraced its long-ago resident as Buck moved from persona non grata during the Mao years to rehabilitated celebrity in the 21st century.**



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

**A portrait of Pearl S. Buck, circa 1932.**

violently to her vision of their country as backward, dirty, and demoralized. (The Chinese delegates invited to attend the 1938 Nobel celebrations boycotted the proceedings.)"

Buck lived in Zhenjiang, a city in Jiangsu province, until she was 18. The city at that time was a bustling treaty port at the junction of the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal, with a British concession. Zhenjiang is still one of China's busiest ports for domestic commerce and famous for its black vinegar, which I learned to praise at every banquet during my visit there.

By 2008, more than 30 years after her death, Pearl Buck was back in favor in China, where she was now highly regarded—as a bridge between cultures and, possibly, a way to attract tourists. Zhenjiang embraced its long-ago resident as Buck moved from persona non grata during the Mao years to rehabilitated celebrity in the 21st century.

Meanwhile, Americans had lost interest, with many scorning Buck's mass-market appeal. Spence quotes literary historian Peter Conn's observation: "Pearl's Asian subjects, her prose style, her gender, and her tremendous popularity offended virtually every one of the constituencies that divided up the literary 1930s. Marxists, Agrarians, Chicago journalists, New York intellectuals, liter-



*Beatrice Camp's Foreign Service career took her to China, Thailand, Sweden and Hungary, in addition to assignments at the department and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. She is the editor of American Diplomacy. The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the U.S. government.*

Declared a cultural landmark, the author's former residence in Zhenjiang became the Pearl S. Buck Museum in 1992 after its restoration funded by the Chinese and American governments. Here is a room with Buck's typewriter and portrait in the Zhenjiang museum.



COURTESY OF BEA CAMP



The façade of Buck's former residence turned museum in Zhenjiang.

any nationalists and New Humanists had little enough in common, but they could all agree that Pearl Buck had no place in any of their creeds and canons."

It didn't help that Hollywood had cast the movie version of *The Good Earth* in yellow face, passing over Chinese American actress Anna May Wong in favor of German-born Luise Rainer, who won an Oscar for the 1937 role. But, many years later, the Chinese academics at the conference craved reassurance that Pearl Buck was still important in the U.S.

My speech-prep research included asking my teenage niece, herself adopted from China, whether she had heard of *The Good Earth*; Buck's novel about

struggling peasants in China is her best-known book and cited in her Nobel Prize. I decided to take her vague response as a yes, allowing me to assure my listeners that the book was on school reading lists in the United States. That message was well received.

Pearl Buck's hometown for childhood and early adulthood, Zhenjiang, had started actively promoting the author's legacy, renaming its public park Pearl Square and unveiling a monument at the Zhenjiang No. 2 high school where Buck studied and later taught. A newly opened museum showed Buck studying the Chinese classics and called her a "daughter of Zhenjiang."

The October 2008 conference attracted 100 participants, including several Buck family members from the United States and the board and executive staff of Pearl S. Buck International, the charitable organization in Pennsylvania. At the conference, agronomist John Lossing Buck, the son of the author's first

husband, gave further testimony to renewed interest from China in the once-scorned Bucks; he described a surge in Chinese contacts about his father's research and historical land survey data, recently rediscovered at Nanjing Agricultural University.

For those of us at the Shanghai consulate, the conference and related opening of a Pearl S. Buck Museum next to the restored family home offered an encouraging signal of strong interest in this U.S. connection. Looking ahead to the then-upcoming celebrations of the 30th anniversary of U.S.-China relations, we took Zhenjiang's fervor for its long-ago American "daughter" as a good sign for the relationship.

Four years later, Pearl Buck's image in China received another boost when Nanjing University gained approval for the restoration of the campus house in which Buck lived with her husband, who created and headed the university's department of agricultural economics. Another site, the cottage at the missionary retreat on Lushan, where Buck and her family spent some of their summers, also became a tourist attraction, featuring a mannequin of Buck at a desk.

Whether these efforts represented an acceptance of Buck's portrayal of China or an opportunity to capitalize on potential tourist interest, her rehabilitation was well on the way.

While remaining homesick for China throughout her life and heartbroken at being unable to return, Pearl Buck at least achieved a second life in the country that inspired her work and won her a Nobel Prize. ■



The first edition cover of Buck's 1931 classic novel.

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*James Talalay is a photographer and FS family member, married to Public Diplomacy Officer Sarah Talalay. They are currently posted in Tashkent, on their fourth tour. He took these photographs with a Fujifilm X-E4 and 10-24mm lens. See more of James' work at [jamestalalay.com](http://jamestalalay.com).*

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