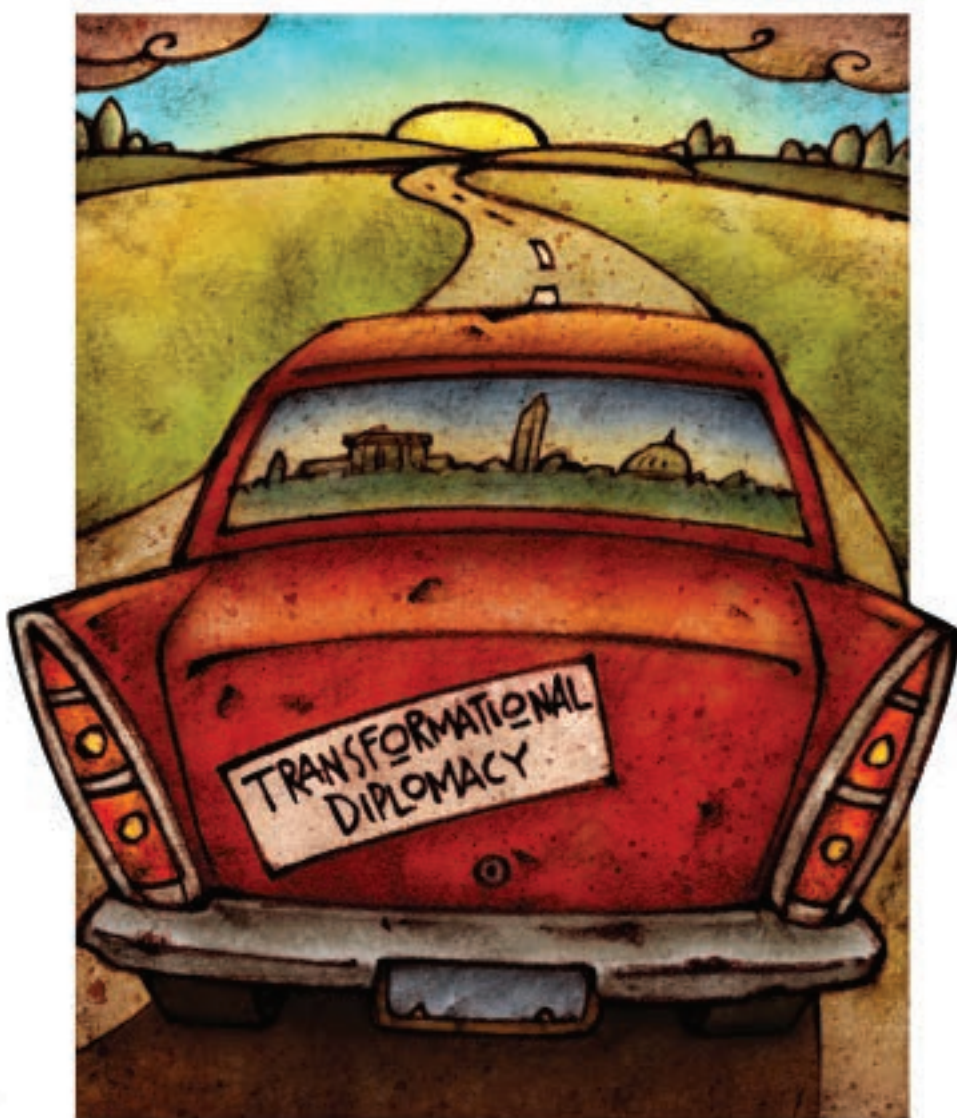


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THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

Foreign Service Journal (ISSN 0146-3543), 2101 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 is published monthly with a combined July-August issue by the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), a private, nonprofit organization. Material appearing herein represents the opinions of the writers and does not necessarily represent the views of the *Journal*, the Editorial Board or AFSA. Writer queries and submissions are invited, preferably by e-mail. *Journal* subscription: AFSA members — \$13 included in annual dues; others — \$40. For foreign surface mail, add \$18 per year; foreign airmail, \$36 per year. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Services (PAIS). The *Journal* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photos or illustrations. Advertising inquiries are invited. The appearance of advertisements herein does not imply the endorsement of the services or goods offered.

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E-MAIL: journal@afsa.org

WEB: www.afsa.org; www.fsjournal.org

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Printed in the U.S.A. Send address changes to:

AFSA

Attn: Address Change

2101 E Street N.W.

Washington DC 20037-2990

Printed on 50-percent recycled paper, of which 10 percent is post-consumer waste.



PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

Renewing American Diplomacy

BY JOHN K. NALAND

Barack Obama won the presidency pledging to renew American diplomacy. In so doing, he not only called for changes in substantive foreign policy positions, but also looked beneath the policy superstructure and identified the need to strengthen the platform upon which diplomacy is conducted. For example, he called for increasing Foreign Service staffing at State and USAID.

AFSA, of course, completely agrees on the need to fix the staffing deficits that have hobbled our foreign affairs agencies. Toward that end, we look forward to working with President-elect Obama, Secretary of State-designate Hillary Clinton and other incoming officials to obtain the needed resources from Congress.

But as candidate Obama and his campaign policy papers made clear, the mere application of more resources will not be sufficient to strengthen America's international engagement. Instead, our diplomats and development professionals also need increased capabilities.

As I have written (www.afsa.org/fsj/oct07/training.pdf), testified to Congress, and told every journalist who would listen, chronic underinvestment in training has long shortchanged Foreign Service members on career-long professional education. Colin Powell is said to have remarked that Foreign Service officers start their careers better educated than U.S. Army officers, but



that Army officers end their careers better educated than FSOs.

As a result of this underinvestment, today's Foreign Service does not have to a sufficient degree the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for 21st-century diplomacy. There is an urgent need to strengthen the skills that — taken together as a package — uniquely equip career diplomats to conduct foreign policy. Those include: foreign-language fluency, advanced area knowledge, leadership and management ability, negotiating skills, public diplomacy know-how, program management skills and job-specific functional expertise.

In AFSA's November-December 2008 survey of State Department Foreign Service members, 50 percent of respondents said that training shortfalls made it more difficult for them to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. I suspect that the true percentage is much higher and that many of those who could benefit the most from additional training do not realize it. You may know such people.

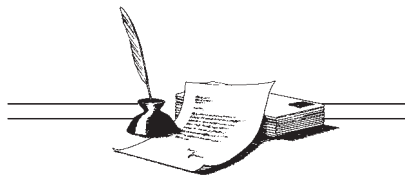
Just as the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 began a period of reform that has produced today's generation of well-educated, interoperable military officers, the Foreign Service today needs reform. The first step would be to significantly increase our staffing, including creating more positions for training and interagency details. However, as was the case for the uniformed military after Goldwater-Nichols, many observers believe

the Foreign Service not only needs to be offered more training but also needs to be required to actually take it.

Toward that end, an October 2008 report by the American Academy of Diplomacy called for setting new career-long training requirements that Foreign Service members would have to fulfill as a condition for promotion to the senior ranks. Such requirements could include an academic year of knowledge-expanding formal training (for example, at a military war college, a private university, or a mid-level or senior seminar at the Foreign Service Institute) and a horizons-broadening developmental detail (for example, at another Cabinet agency, an NGO or in private industry). State could re-establish its yearlong Senior Seminar and its mid-level course — both of which succumbed to budget cuts years ago.

I am confident that Foreign Service members would welcome a “grand bargain” that coupled a significant expansion of staffing with a re-engineering of our personnel system to set new, career-long training requirements. But whether or not such a reform would be universally welcomed, I am convinced that it is necessary. Unless the Foreign Service raises the level of its game by sharpening knowledge, skills and abilities needed to meet the challenges of 21st-century diplomacy and development assistance, the president and Congress may increasingly look elsewhere — including to our already overstretched military — to conduct our nation's engagement with the world. ■

John K. Naland is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.



LETTERS

Talking with Iran

For the first time in decades, there is the possibility, indeed the probability, of official dialogue between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran. President-elect Barack Obama is on record favoring talks with Tehran, when they are in the American interest and at a time and place of our choosing. That language leaves room for the essential preparatory diplomatic maneuvering, including the need for prior consultation with friends at the United Nations Security Council and the European Union — a channel where this past summer, for the first time, there was participation by the U.S. under secretary of State for political affairs.

Still, the process will not be easy. This channel has dealt only with the nuclear issue, where Iran has continued to reject the precondition that it must first suspend its enrichment of uranium. Tehran has already ignored four Security Council resolutions on the subject, reiterating there and elsewhere that its enrichment process is dedicated only to building the basis for production of nuclear energy — a less than plausible claim, given Iran's lack of full transparency in its obligations as a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Meanwhile, the American and Iranian ambassadors in Baghdad have had occasional contact, but those exchanges have been desultory at best, specifically limited to a focus on stability in Iraq.

Nonetheless, we may soon be on a

new path in our tortured relations with Iran, which have set a record among diplomatic ruptures. In that regard, some historical background may be useful.

There has been no formal diplomatic contact between the U.S. and Iran since President Jimmy Carter broke relations in April 1980 over the hostage crisis that had begun on Nov. 4, 1979. After five months of secret probes and public frustration, Pres. Carter finally ordered the closure of Iran's embassy in Washington and its consular presence elsewhere and the departure of all resident personnel within 36 hours.

But in Tehran, all American personnel had been taken hostage when the embassy was forcibly overrun, including myself as *chargé d'affaires*, my deputy chief of mission and a security officer. We were held by Iranian Army guards within the foreign ministry, while my Iranian counterpart in Washington, also a *chargé d'affaires*, remained free and in place inside his embassy on Massachusetts Avenue until the formal break in relations in April 1980. It was a most unusual state of half-diplomatic relations between two sovereign nations.

Though I was a hostage, I was determined, until my later solitary confinement, to maintain a facade of diplomatic decency in my capacity as the American *chargé d'affaires*. Somehow I found enough paper to write a stream of formal protests to Iran's officialdom about my treatment and that of my

colleagues — the two in the ministry with me and the 50 others held hostage in the embassy compound on the other side of the city. Surreptitiously handed to guards and contacts within the foreign ministry, the notes may never have reached their addressees. But the mere act of sending them boosted my morale.

Today, nearly 30 years later, I remain the last senior American diplomat to have been accredited and resident in Tehran, in direct contact with the Islamic Republic. During my time, however, there was no opening for the kind of sustained dialogue essential for any diplomatic relationship. Indeed, the one opportunity that did arise proved seriously adverse.

That was the meeting in Algiers on Nov. 1, 1979, between Iran's secular Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan and U.S. National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski — each heading his country's delegation to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Algerian Revolution.

I had pressed Bazargan hard to go to Algiers because dialogue at that level seemed essential for the still-uncertain relationship between the Khomeini regime and the U.S. Three days after that meeting, radical Iranian students, concerned that Bazargan was taking Iran back into a relationship with the Great Satan, overran our embassy. The rest is history.

There have since been quiet probes and occasional policy initiatives, but all were unsustainable and lacked adequate



focus on the not-inconsiderable range of shared regional interests, not least vis-à-vis Iraq. Meanwhile, poisonous rhetoric has ruptured that essential element of diplomacy, mutual trust, that will require years of groundwork to be restored. The path will be long and difficult, but as an old American expression has it, we need to get off the dime and start talking again.

Bruce Laingen
Ambassador, retired
Bethesda, Md.

More Peace Corps Volunteers

The value of the Peace Corps has been underscored in the October and November editions of the *FSJ*, but for too long that value has been limited by insufficient resources. The current number of volunteers is half of what it was four decades ago, and more than 20 countries have pending requests for Peace Corps programs. President-elect Obama has promised to double the size of the Peace Corps, as did President Bush, but without funding this cannot be achieved.

In 2008, the National Peace Corps Association launched a grassroots campaign called MorePeaceCorps to advocate for strengthening the Peace Corps, including doubling its size by 2011. A combination of concerned and prominent Americans including President Jimmy Carter, Senator Chris Dodd, D-Conn., Wisconsin Governor James Doyle and several former ambassadors, myself included, have joined the National Advisory Council of MorePeaceCorps to advance the cause. You can learn more about this effort at www.morepeacecorps.org.

Thomas N. Hull
Ambassador, retired
Grantham, N.H.

The Peace Corps and the FS

The ultimate experience is to serve as a Foreign Service officer in the country where you were a Peace Corps

Volunteer. Depending on how much time has passed between the two experiences, you gain a view through a telescope or a magnifying glass focused on your special country. If there are many years in between, your telescope reveals how history changes people's lives. If it's been a short time, you may have a close-up comparison of in-the-field versus halls-of-power viewpoints. But maybe we just feel that through-the-looking-glass amazement at finding ourselves in such different situations in the very same place!

I was sent to Brazil in 1968 as a community organizer in Nazare das Farinhas (population 20,000) in the northeastern state of Bahia. In 2005, I became the principal officer at the only U.S. consulate in northeast Brazil, Recife. From day one, I ran into former Peace Corps Volunteers and staff working in Brazil, now with USAID, nongovernmental organizations or universities, as well as retirees who had returned to live there. (The Peace Corps left Brazil in the 1970s.) Peace Corps alumni take an active role in helping Brazil address the inequalities and poverty that continue to trouble the giant of Latin America. They make me proud.

Having been a volunteer in Brazil made me very comfortable with all segments of society and more knowledgeable about the country's political divisions. That experience had given me friends who lived exceptional lives and inspired me. I stayed in touch with several of them for more than 30 years.

I applied what I learned in the Peace Corps to my efforts as consul to enable Americans to work with Brazilians for peace, prosperity and justice. What struck me most was how, in the backlands of Brazil's poorest region, people would ask me if I knew "the American" who had lived there some 30 years ago.

Here we see the value of the Peace Corps: Volunteers are remembered

with admiration as true representatives of the United States in places where diplomats rarely go.

Diana Page
FSO
Washington, D.C.

Senior Pay

The list of performance-pay recipients (announced in 08 State 110778) has swollen to over 270 members of the Senior Foreign Service. These bonuses total an estimated \$3 million. Here are observations from one of the smallest tadpoles in State's pond.

These people are the highest-paid employees in the Foreign Service. They receive senior-level salaries to do senior-level jobs. State's pay scale is not secret; people understand government salary limitations when they sign up.

Yet seniors receive an additional 20.89 percent, once called locality pay, no matter where they work worldwide. This serious money is denied to the majority of FS employees overseas who work side by side with seniors, who suffer the same hardships and who go home to smaller houses. The unfairness of this policy is so egregious that AFSA has vigorously battled it for years. Perhaps to calm ruffled feathers, State eliminated the term "locality pay" and the extra cash was folded into seniors' base pay. As if hiding it makes it more palatable.

Seniors point out that they don't receive step increases. What they *don't* point out is that they instead compensate themselves with pay-for-performance increases that far exceed any step increase. The bar is set low enough that a child could step over it: their performance must merely be "satisfactory." By the time someone becomes a senior, shouldn't the expectation be that their performance will be far better than that?

But I digress. Let's not confuse pay-for-performance increases with performance pay bonuses.



There was probably a time when performance pay meant something special, a time when the list was shorter and could almost be justified. Today, however, when embassies worldwide must identify painful cuts and freeze real jobs — threatening our ability to meet mission goals — laddling out millions of dollars in bonuses to our highest paid employees feels irresponsible and, frankly, grotesque.

In rewarding exceptional performance by seniors, why not use the Awards Program — the mechanism used for the rest of us. Awards are transparent, requiring nominations and committee decisions. Where is the transparency in performance pay bonuses? The group deciding who gets them is a subset of the group receiving them. Nice arrangement!

Doling out bonuses is not part of a struggle to retain seniors leaving for lucrative private-industry jobs. Statistics don't back that argument. And when the list becomes as bloated as it has, it is clearly no longer an issue of identifying the true standouts either.

Real leadership comes from above, and real leaders lead by example. We are all public servants, accountable to taxpayers. Is it really ethical to spend millions on bonuses for those who are already at the top of State's pay scale?

*Linda Ingalls
Office Management
Specialist
Embassy Pretoria*

Voice of Experience on Mid-Level Hiring

Contrary to Kevin Stringer's assertions in his October 2008 Speaking Out column, "Mid-Level Hiring and the War for Talent," bringing in all new FSOs at entry-level grades is good human resource management. The circumstances surrounding the handling of a prior mid-level hiring program show why.

Allow me to quote a State memo of

Nov. 14, 1983, in which then-Director General Joan Clark wrote to then-Secretary George Shultz recommending that the mid-level program be shut down:

"Mid-level appointees usually require a prolonged adjustment period to become familiar with Foreign Service procedures, such as administrative and consular regulations, and to develop effective reporting techniques. The lack of prior Foreign Service experience will usually place mid-levels at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis their colleagues of the same grade, who have generally been in the Service five to eight years and have had the opportunity to develop basic FS skills. In the consular and administrative fields, in particular, Class 3 officers are likely to have significant supervisory responsibilities which assume prior in-Service experience."

The memo continues: "The appropriateness and necessity of a mid-level entry program are often questioned by those officers who have entered at the junior ranks through the highly competitive examination process. Since the recruitment of officer candidates at the mid-level has resulted in a reduced need for officers at the grades of FS-2 and -3, we have been obliged to make significant downward adjustments in promotion opportunities for junior officers."

Ambassador Clark's criticisms of the mid-level hiring program were not those of a management theoretician or armchair diplomat. They were the criticisms of the DG who worked with the program, an officer with 38 years of experience. Her comments on the particular inappropriateness of mid-level hiring in consular and administrative fields should not be brushed off. After all, she had spent most of her career in the administrative field, and her understanding of consular work was so deep that, after finishing up as DG, she was selected to serve as assistant secre-

tary for consular affairs. I am unaware of any proponent of mid-level hiring whose qualifications to offer an opinion come close to Amb. Clark's.

*William E. Shea
FSO
Consulate General
Nuevo Laredo*

England in the Muslim World

Among many others over the decades, *Foreign Service Journal* contributors have researched and commented upon U.S. relations with the Muslim world. Especially significant are Amb. Chas W. Freeman Jr.'s "America in the World" (November 2008) and Dr. Frederic Grare's "The Pakistan Piece of the Puzzle" (July-August 2008).

In my view — as someone who lived through the birth of our ally Israel, the independence of India and the creation of Pakistan — most of the charges and countercharges regarding U.S. involvement and the seemingly perpetual nightmarish problems fall well short of the mark. Perhaps weak institutional memory is at fault.

Although the U.S. has positioned itself at the center of this stage, everyone seems to have forgotten that, without reference to Washington, Great Britain created the contemporary Middle East as a result of her defeat of the Ottomans in World War I. Unfortunately, the new nations could be said to have been stillborn, remaining under colonial domination for some time. Much of the stillborn quality continues.

As Dr. Grare reminds us, the British merely drew a boundary in 1893, the Durand Line, in India's Northwest Territories that incorporated part of Afghanistan into what 54 years later would become Pakistan. Then, of course, Pakistan itself was created similarly. Chaos, death and ill feeling ensued and continue. Britain should remain responsible for orienting these regions, yet somehow the ball and most of the bill have been passed to the

LETTERS



American people.

For the Middle East, I would recommend an international conference chaired by Her Majesty's Government and, assuming they'd want to be involved, co-chaired by the Turks, with all affected nations attending. The United Nations or the U.S. could be the host, and the purpose would be to address and resolve the many nagging difficulties created by Britain in the first place. (Should France be a co-chair or invited? I'd leave that to Britain and the other conferees.)

As for India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, I see a similar conference chaired by the United Kingdom, with the active participation of the three states. Hosting could be similar. In both cases, if not the host, the U.S. should be an observer.

I write on Veterans Day 2008, 90 years since Britain reorganized the Middle East; about 115 years since the Durand Line was drawn; and 61 since the independence of India and Pakistan. Why the American people should be trapped by the results of British imperialism is a question that requires answers. As I recall, the U.S. itself opted out of that arrangement 232 years ago.

Now that change is in the air, surely it's time Washington returned the ball to 'the lads' for them to 'give it a go.'

Louis V. Riggio
FSO, retired
Hollywood, Fla. ■

CORRECTION

Due to an editing error, the first sentence of John Dickson's vignette in the article "From the Peace Corps to the Diplomatic Corps, Part II" (November) incorrectly identified his Peace Corps service. He was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Gabon from 1976 to 1979, not in Bulgaria from 2001 to 2003. We regret the error.



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CYBERNOTES

A Question of Responsibility: Humanitarian Response 2008

Though the world's largest international aid donor, the U.S. only ranks 13th in generosity when the nation's assistance dollars are viewed in relation to its size. And while it is number one as far as sectoral distribution of funding through U.N. appeals is concerned, second in terms of the capacity for informed decisionmaking and fourth when it comes to timely funding, Washington drops to the bottom of the rankings on promoting standards, enhancing the implementation of human rights and humanitarian law, and maintaining neutrality and independence in responding to humanitarian needs.

These are some of the results of the Development Assistance Research Associates' 2008 Humanitarian Response Index (www.hri.daraint.org/), released to an audience of nongovernmental organizations, U.N. agencies, academics and civil society activists in New York City on Nov. 19. DARA is a Spanish nonprofit dedicated to improving the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of humanitarian aid (www.daraint.org/web_en/index.php). The group launched the index one year ago to make a comparative evaluation of the practices and programs of the world's leading donor nations, the 23 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee.

"We developed the HRI as a way of holding governments accountable to

The *Journal* is as good, or as mediocre, as its contributors throughout the world help it to be. ... Many of our readers have said they find the *Journal* brighter, more vital, more professional these days. We hope it is, and we should like to thank our contributors herewith individually for sending us clippings, articles, letters of appreciation, comments and criticisms. And to them all we would like to wish a very Happy New Year.

— From "Washington Letter" by
Gwen Barrows, Jan. 1959 *FSJ*.

the principles of good practice they agreed to," Silvia Hidalgo, executive director of DARA, explained, referring to the principles of good humanitarian donorship agreed upon in 2005 by the 23 states. "Aid is not about generosity, it's a question of responsibility," she added. "We're using the HRI as a tool to help governments identify what works well, and where they need to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid."

The index is based on field research in 11 different crises around the globe, interviews with representatives of more than 350 humanitarian organizations directly engaged in providing assistance, and more than 1,400 re-

sponses to a questionnaire on donor behavior. Complementing the field research is quantitative data on donor funding, policies and practices from donor agencies and sources like the U.N., World Bank and others.

Though the HRI is available online in condensed form, Palgrave MacMillan is publishing a larger, more detailed version including full reports from the 11 crisis areas surveyed, and policy discussion on the HRI and needs and response assessments (<http://us.macmillan.com/humanitarianresponseindex2008>).

More Foreign Policy Ideas for Team Obama

In the December issue, we surveyed an array of foreign policy recommendations for the new administration. Here are a few more that merit attention.

Elevate and strengthen diplomacy and development. The *Global Plum Book* identifies 100 leadership positions that will shape the next administration's foreign policy agenda (http://usglobalengagement.org/Portals/16/ftp/Global_Plum_Book.pdf). Divided into four sections — The Policymakers, The Managers, The Influencers and The Implementers — this useful publication derives its name from *United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions*, commonly known as the "Plum Book," which is published after every presidential election and lists over 7,000 federal Civil Service positions that may be filled by



political appointees.

This guide for students of the Obama administration's likely foreign policy was released on Nov. 13 by the Center for U.S. Global Engagement (www.usglobalengagement.org), along with a report, "First Step Recommendations for the President-Elect to Elevate and Strengthen Development and Diplomacy" (www.usglobalengagement.org/tabid/3316/Default.aspx).

Modernize foreign assistance. "New Day, New Way" comes from the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, a reform coalition composed of international development and foreign policy practitioners, policy advocates and experts, concerned citizens and private-sector organizations (www.modernizingforeignassistance.net/documents/newdaynewway.pdf).

MFAN also issued transition recommendations for the president-elect to set the modernization process in motion, including ensuring that the Secretary of State nominee agrees that modernizing foreign assistance policies and operations is a top priority; empowering a single individual with broadened responsibility for USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief; and naming a deputy national security and economic adviser for development, with joint National Economic Council/National Security Council responsibility for interagency and White House coordination of development policy (www.modernizingforeignassistance.net/pressroom.html).

Re-establishing American leadership. In late 2006, Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy assembled a working group to evaluate the geopolitical challenges facing the country. The group's final report, "America's Role in the World," is a thorough and thought-provoking survey of today's foreign policymaking

context and the choices and responses available to the new administration (http://isd.georgetown.edu/Americas_Role_in_the_World.pdf). During more than a year of deliberation, the high-powered group, led by Thomas Pickering, Chester Crocker and Casimir A. Yost, produced a series of related studies and working reports that are also available online (http://isd.georgetown.edu/americas_role_description.cfm).

NATO's future. A keystone of post-war U.S. foreign policy, NATO's role in the 21st century has been called into question and its enlargement process is at a crossroads. The Obama administration now has three choices, explains FSO (and FSJ Editorial Board member) James P. DeHart in a new report issued by the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy of Georgetown University: 1) accelerate NATO's eastward expansion to bring in Georgia and Ukraine; 2) sustain expansion, but slow it down for Georgia and Ukraine; and 3) suspend eastward expansion to achieve other foreign policy goals. In "The Burden of Strategy: Transatlantic

Relations and the Future of NATO Enlargement," DeHart presents the history of the enlargement issue and the rationale for each choice (http://isd.georgetown.edu/burden_of_strategy.pdf).

Nuclear security. The seventh annual study from Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, "Securing the Bomb 2008," urges the incoming administration to carry out "a global campaign to lock down every nuclear weapon and every significant stock of potential nuclear bomb material worldwide as rapidly as that can possibly be done" (www.nti.org/e_research/cnwm/overview/cnwm_home.asp).

Commissioned by the Nuclear Threat Initiative (www.nti.org), a non-proliferation organization co-chaired by former senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, the report states that although Russia still possesses the world's largest stockpiles of such material, the effort should be broadened to include other countries. There are 130 research reactors around the world that still use highly enriched uranium as fuel, many

Site of the Month: Technorati.com

Founded in 2002 by David Sifry, *Technorati.com* is the original Web log search engine and arguably the most comprehensive online source of information on the blogosphere. Whether you are an accomplished blogger or a curious neophyte, you are sure to find this site interesting and helpful.

Chosen by Time magazine as one of the "25 Web sites we can't live without," *Technorati.com* indexes millions of blog posts in real time, tracking not only their authority and influence, but who and what is most popular in the blogosphere. The site's mission, in its own words, is to help bloggers succeed by collecting, highlighting and distributing the online global conversation.

The blogs are sorted by subject area: business, entertainment, politics, sports, lifestyle and technology, and then further defined by subcategories such as, under business, advertising, finance and small business. The site's "Blogger Central" feature zeroes in on the practice of blogging, featuring tricks and tools for practitioners to refine their art.

Of particular interest at the start of the New Year is *Technorati's* annual report, "State of the Blogosphere 2008," an extensive and detailed survey that is loaded with insights and information on the state of this ever-burgeoning realm (www.technorati.com/blogging/state-of-the-blogosphere/).



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50 Years Ago...

Hillary's appointment is a sign to friend and foe of the seriousness of my commitment to renew American diplomacy and restore our alliances. There's much to do, from preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to Iran and North Korea and seeking a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians, to strengthening international institutions.



— President-elect Barack Obama, announcing Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's nomination as Secretary of State, Dec. 1 (http://change.gov/newsroom/entry/the_national_security_team/).

of which have only modest security measures in place, the report notes.

Public diplomacy and relations with South America. The Brookings Institution, whose Presidential Transition Web page we highlighted last month (www.brookings.edu/topics/presidential-transition.aspx), has issued two more high-powered foreign policy reports aimed at the incoming administration.

As part of a comprehensive plan to enhance Washington's public diplomacy, "Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century" urges the creation of a nimble and entrepreneurial new nonprofit organization, the USA-World Trust, to complement and support U.S. government efforts, drawing on the good will, creativity, knowledge and talent of the American people and like-minded partners overseas (www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/11_public_diplomacy_lord.aspx).

The report's diverse board of advisers included Intel Chairman Craig Barrett; Harvard professor, ambassador and former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns; National Security Adviser-designate Gen. James L. Jones; and former USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios. The report's recommendations are based on an appreciation of the new realities the U.S. faces in engaging the world.

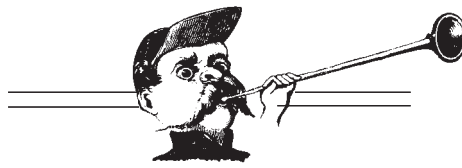
Brookings' Partnership for the

Americas Commission's recent report, "Re-Thinking U.S.-Latin American Relations," argues that a hemispheric partnership is essential and offers specific policy recommendations in five key areas: energy and climate change, migration, trade, organized crime and drug trafficking, and U.S.-Cuban relations (www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/1124_latina_america_partnership.aspx).

Open government. A diverse non-partisan group that spent 20 months studying the problem of excessive government secrecy and how to fix it, under the aegis of the nonprofit OMB Watch, has released a series of recommendations aimed at bringing federal record-keeping and communication into the 21st century. "Renewing Government" encompasses recommendations in three areas: national security and secrecy, usability of information and creation of a government environment for transparency (www.omb-watch.org/article/archive/551).

The group points to www.usaspending.gov, a Web site launched this year under legislation co-sponsored by President-elect Obama requiring the Office of Management and Budget to put government contract information online, as a precedent for the kind of change needed. ■

This edition of Cybernotes was compiled by Senior Editor Susan Brady Maitra.



SPEAKING OUT

Let's Help "H" Make the Case for State

BY STETSON SANDERS

Since I joined the Foreign Service five years ago, two things have surprised me: the constant refrain to “do more with less” because of inadequate resources, and the hands-off approach of the State Department toward Capitol Hill. Increasingly, I have come to see these two issues as intertwined, the former caused by the latter.

While there is no substitute for an active, committed Secretary of State and front office in making the argument for more resources, the department should also raise its profile with policymakers and appropriators on Capitol Hill by investing in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. Known as “H,” the bureau could be an effective advocate for the department and help reclaim State’s proper place in the foreign affairs community.

Readers of this magazine know all too well that the Foreign Service’s growing responsibilities for “transformational diplomacy” call for the resources to identify, train and deploy a larger and more sophisticated corps. Yet despite the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative and other efforts to keep up with those demands, all the trends are going in the wrong direction.

Fortunately, as the focus section of the December issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* spelled out, a widespread, bipartisan consensus has developed that the situation has become too dire for “business as usual.” So now is the time to expand the Legislative Affairs Bureau’s capacity to fight

Investing in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, known as H, will make it a more effective advocate for the department.

for us on several fronts to attain: greatly increased funding streams in order to meet the department’s expanding responsibilities; broader recognition of the role and needs of the Foreign Service among policymakers on the Hill; increased involvement of relevant congressional staff in State’s overseas activities; and closer collaboration with the private and nonprofit sectors.

Increase H’s Staffing

Policymaking on Capitol Hill is a contact sport that relies on relationships. Sending more State personnel to build those relationships will improve opportunities to make our case. Currently, the H Bureau consists of just three people in the Appropriations Affairs section, and four each to deal with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. As hard as those individuals work, such limited staffing is simply inadequate.

Consider the following statistic: The Bureau’s Liaison Office, now appro-

priately located in the Rayburn House Office Building, conducted visits to 174 members of Congress during Fiscal Year 2006, according to its FY 2009 Strategic Plan. But that means 361 members — fully two-thirds of the legislative branch — did *not* receive an outreach visit that year. No wonder the department’s resource needs are not a high priority on Capitol Hill!

While the H Bureau recognizes it needs to do more, it has been constrained by the very resource problem this column seeks to address, operating at funding 30 percent below minimum needs. But as Ambassador Thomas Boyatt, a long-time advocate of lobbying Congress to support diplomacy, stated in a July-August 2008 *Foreign Service Journal* interview, we ought to “build the structure around the needs” — not simply cobble together our strategy after we’re told how many resources we have at our disposal.

Target Outreach Efforts

State’s congressional relations team needs to include mid-level and senior staff members dedicated to liaison work with each of the following constituencies:

- House Committee on Foreign Affairs
- House Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs
- Individual House member offices
- Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- Senate Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on State, Foreign



Operations and Related Programs

- Individual Senate member offices
- Other State bureaus and agencies

The H staff should also be expanded to coordinate and capitalize on the resources of the private and non-profit sectors. This objective warrants an additional officer, at the FS-1 level or higher. That individual's responsibility would be to coordinate with private-sector and nonprofit entities that are stakeholders in foreign affairs. Such cooperation with like-minded organizations — many of which have experienced, concerted congressional relations operations — would allow State to leverage, where appropriate, their resources to provide additional support in making our case on Capitol Hill.

Business for Diplomatic Action, for example, is a task force that facilitates private-sector involvement in diplomatic activities and cooperation with the Department of State and the broader foreign affairs community. The Foreign Affairs Council, American Academy of Diplomacy, and Center for Strategic and International Studies' "Smart Power" Commission are just three of a growing number of organizations whose data, expertise and advocacy would buttress the work of an expanded H team seeking specific, attainable achievements in the appropriations and broader congressional arena.

Telling Our Story

Many at State blame our poor access to key members and staffers on Capitol Hill on the fact that we do not have a natural constituency to keep foreign affairs and diplomatic issues in the forefront of legislators' minds. Yet the success of the small Armenian-American constituency in stalling the confirmation of an ambassador to Yerevan is just one example of an effective, goal-oriented effort on Capitol Hill carried out from a small base.

Every day, State's overseas missions support major initiatives and historic events putting the vision of transformational diplomacy into practice. These achievements would enlighten policymakers and appropriators on the Hill — but only if they know about them and can take some of the credit.

Let me cite an example from my first Foreign Service tour, in Tajikistan. In August 2007, years of work and \$40 million led to the opening of the Tajik-Afghan Friendship Bridge. The Defense Department-funded, Army Corps of Engineer-constructed project was completed, literally, on the front lines of transformational diplomacy, with the goal of increasing economic activity and cultural interaction as "the centerpiece of a new Central Asian trade route."

The results are impressive. In the year since the bridge opened, Afghan-Tajik trade tripled, vehicle traffic rose sevenfold and Afghan customs revenues at the port of entry increased tenfold, fueling the revitalization of border towns and small businesses. Unfortunately, the ceremony marking the project's completion, attended by the presidents of both countries, did not include a single member of Congress or even a staffer, despite the fact that it took place during the traditional summer recess. So chances are that the next time State representatives seek funds for a similar initiative, they will encounter more skepticism than they otherwise would have.

Another example comes from India, where the new consulate general in Hyderabad expanded the U.S. presence. The opening of any mission is rare in the diplomatic world, and this post is even more unique because it is in the heart of one of the largest Muslim communities in the country. Unfortunately, there was no congressional representation on hand for the opening or first visa issuance at the current temporary facility. Perhaps an appro-

priate effort could be coordinated in time for some Capitol Hill delegation to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the permanent building next year.

Expand Pearson and Congressional Fellowships

Currently, up to seven Foreign Service officers serve as Pearson Fellows each year, and another five serve as Congressional Fellows — "depending upon funding decisions." Here again, acknowledging State's perpetual resource crisis would easily justify permanently allocating stable — if not increased — funding for these programs, elevating them at least to the status of most other department positions.

Currently, both fellowships are one-year assignments. The program description says, "Employees selected for congressional assignments are encouraged to seek a follow-on tour in H." This should be amended to make the assignments two years, with the first spent on Capitol Hill and the second a compulsory year in H.

Such a change would serve several goals. First, it would develop a cadre of H staffers and future officers with both experience and contacts on the Hill. Second, it would provide natural liaisons to effectively coordinate and solicit input from bureaus, offices and missions in forming their H-related strategies. (See more on this below.) Finally, it would free State personnel to accompany congressional and staff delegations, just as the military sends its officers on such events. Many of the closest relationships on Capitol Hill are formed during such trips because they provide invaluable opportunities to bond and share points of view while traveling in areas of strategic interest.

Similarly, networking with congressional policymakers often involves receptions and after-hours events. Funding should therefore be sought to provide officers on these assignments with shift differential, similar to that of



officers staffing the Operations Center or the Executive Secretariat. This would both incentivize officers who are considering bidding on these assignments and elevate the stature of the assignments — and the H Bureau in general — by making clear that such service is a top priority.

Other Ideas

Use existing expertise. HR Online's Employee Profile+ database could identify officers of all levels with experience on Capitol Hill or congressional relations, who could then be encouraged to work in H — much the same way an Arabic speaker might be contacted about an assignment in NEA. Once the department's leadership decides to make the bureau's staffing a higher priority, they can equate Hill expertise with a "Congressional Needs" designation, similar to the critical-needs language designation.

Identify outside expertise. Congressional appropriations are an extremely complex process. Even in Washington, few people understand the difference between appropriations and authorizations, the timing and importance of mark-ups, or the subtleties and implications of budget scoring. While approximately one-third of the current H staff are political appointees, State should identify more veterans for those slots with the required contacts and expertise — if they are not currently in the department — to provide training and strategic counsel on a long-term appropriations strategy. This should be done as committee memberships change with each new Congress.

A related option would be to seek the services of a private firm on a contract or retainer basis to assist in developing and executing a plan ensuring that accurate information is delivered in a timely manner to the right policy-making and budget staff.

Beef up training. Foreign Service personnel need to appreciate the con-

***Policymaking on
Capitol Hill is a contact
sport that relies
on relationships.***

nection between their work and receiving the resources in order to perform in the future. Some version of the Foreign Service Institute's PA-215 course, Principles of Appropriation Law, could easily be adapted as online or short-term training. As part of the leadership training continuum, that course should be mandatory for career progression.

Require each bureau and office to have a congressional relations component in its annual action plan and mission strategic plan. For example, technology and personnel offices could work with H to document and demonstrate the constraints they encounter in meeting their congressionally mandated obligations, such as increasing the opportunities for telecommuting, recruiting and hiring officers in a timely manner, and expanding paperless processes.

Overseas posts and their desk officers could highlight upcoming events and activities that lend themselves to invitations to congressional members and staff. For issues of strategic importance, this might involve facilitating visits of foreign dignitaries and elected officials to meet with lawmakers. Another possibility might be to support meetings and visits between foreign ambassadors in the U.S. and lawmakers on key bilateral issues.

Encourage officers to visit their representative and senators upon returning from overseas tours, particularly

those at critical-needs posts. Facilitated by the expanded H staff, this would give policymakers and their staff up-to-date, personal indications of the role of the Foreign Service on the front lines and begin to establish recognition of our work.

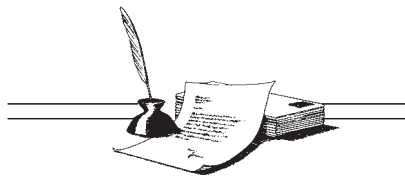
It is time for State to be more aggressive in seeking the resources to fulfill its growing mission. None of these recommendations on their own will rectify the resource crisis overnight, but a multiyear effort would pay off in spades.

As AFSA President John Naland noted in a recent column, "The Foreign Service personnel system has been re-engineered every 28 years — exactly the length of time since 1980," the last time the Service received a congressional overhaul. With legislative change on the horizon, State must ensure it has the resources to strongly advocate its role — and resource needs — in a revised regime of American foreign aid, empowering itself in the future to live up to its potential. ■

Stetson Sanders, a vice consul in Chennai, previously served in Dushanbe. Prior to entering the Foreign Service in 2004, he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Russia, executive director of the International Intellectual Property Institute, and an intern with the Congressional Economic Leadership Institute.



***Have something
to say?
Speak Out!
Send your thoughts
to journal@afsa.org.***



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Happy New Year! Once again it's time for my periodic invitation to take advantage of the many opportunities to contribute to the *Journal*.

Each issue of the magazine features a focus section examining various facets of an issue related to the Foreign Service or international relations. This month, as President Barack Obama takes office, we examine the transformational diplomacy initiative, including the Global Repositioning Program, that outgoing Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice launched with great fanfare three years ago.

Whether to retain that approach is one of the key foreign policy decisions the new administration faces, yet to the best of my knowledge, there was no debate about the program before or after it was announced — neither inside nor outside State. And as far as I know, there has been no public assessment of its progress.

To rectify that situation, we are pleased to present Associate Editor Shawn Dorman's article describing how the program has been implemented, both in Washington and in the field, and how it has fared thus far. Her research began last spring in Indonesia, where she was able to meet with the GRP officers at Embassy Jakarta, as well as the deputy chief of mission, the management counselor, the political counselor and others. The U.S. mission to Indonesia has turned

out to represent a sort of best-case scenario for effective utilization of GRP positions. The broader story is not as positive, however.

Shawn repeatedly ran into one disconcerting problem that bears mention: many Foreign Service personnel speaking about their experience with GRP declined to be quoted by name. Some of them even asked her not to mention their post, for fear of retaliation. It should trouble all of us that so few people felt safe going on the record on a subject of professional interest.

The falloff in use of the Dissent Channel and in nominations for AFSA's Constructive Dissent Awards in recent years may be another reflection of this climate. And the fact that the outgoing administration allowed the four-decade-old Secretary's Open Forum to go dormant certainly reinforced the view that constructive dissent is not welcomed.

We follow that article with two others that examine other aspects of the outgoing administration's record on transformational diplomacy: "The Brave New World of Democracy Promotion" by Robert McMahon of the Council on Foreign Relations, and "The Middle Eastern Partnership Initiative: Adding to the Diplomatic Toolbox," by FSO Peter Mulrean.

Looking ahead: To the right is a list of the focus topics our Editorial Board has identified for the coming year

2009 EDITORIAL CALENDAR for the *FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL*

JANUARY 2009

Transformational Diplomacy/
Global Repositioning Program

FEBRUARY 2009

The World Politics of Energy
(PLUS AFSA Tax Guide)

MARCH 2009

Coping with Separation:
Unaccompanied Posts
& Evacuations
(PLUS AFSA Annual Report)

APRIL 2009

60th Anniversary of NATO

MAY 2009

Iraq after the War:
Relations with Iran and the Region

JUNE 2009

USAID/MCA & Development
Assistance
(PLUS semiannual SCHOOLS
SUPPLEMENT)

JULY-AUGUST 2009

FAS and FCS
(PLUS AFSA Awards coverage)

SEPTEMBER 2009

Consular Issues

OCTOBER 2009

Public Diplomacy a Decade after
USIA's Demise

NOVEMBER 2009

COVER STORY: "In Their Own Write"
(annual roundup of books by
FS authors)

DECEMBER 2009

The Foreign Service as an Institution
(PLUS semiannual SCHOOLS
SUPPLEMENT)

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



(subject, of course, to revision).

Because of our lead time for publication, and the requirement for Editorial Board approval, we need to receive focus article submissions at least three months (and preferably longer) prior to the issue's release date. Thus, we have already lined up authors for the January, February and March issues, but there is still time to submit manuscripts for later months. Submissions should generally be between 2,000 and 3,000 words, though shorter pieces are always welcome.

If those choices don't grab you, or if you feel we have not devoted enough space to a professional concern or functional issue, please consider writing a feature article (also generally 2,000-3,000 words long) for us.

FS Heritage, a new department we introduced last year, is off to a strong start. However, we continue to welcome submissions spotlighting U.S. diplomats whose names many of us know only from history books or the halls of State.

Our annual **FS Fiction Contest** continues with the same rules that applied last year: Entrants are restricted to one story of 3,000 words or less, which must be e-mailed to us at campi@afsa.org no later than March 1. We will publish the winning story (selected by the FSJ Editorial Board) in our July-August 2009 double issue, and the other top stories over the fall months. For more details, see the ad elsewhere in this issue, or contact us directly.

We invite those of you who expect to publish a book between now and next fall to send us a copy (along with promotional materials) for inclusion in our annual compilation of recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors, **In Their Own Write**. Sept. 1 is still the deadline for

*There are many ways
you can share your
insights in our pages.
Let us hear from you.*

the roundup, which will run in November. For more information, contact Senior Editor Susan Maitra at maitra@afsa.org.

Share Your Insights

We take seriously our mission to give you "news you can use" — e.g., information about how to advance your career; tips on dealing effectively with the bureaucracy at State and the other foreign affairs agencies, especially when you are trying to resolve a problem; and updates on how AFSA is working to improve working and living conditions for Foreign Service employees and their families.

Much of that coverage is found, of course, within the pages of **AFSA News**. That section offers many different ways for members to share their experiences, thoughts and concerns regarding professional issues, including the following departments: Family Member Matters, Of Special(ist) Concern (a forum for specialists), Where to Retire, The System and You, On the Lighter Side (FS humor), Memo of the Month, and The System and You (notes from inside the bureaucracy). Contact AFSA News Editor Francesca Kelly for more information at kelly@afsa.org.

Another place to look for such items is our periodic **FS Know-How** department. We welcome contributions on topics ranging from managing one's

career and cutting red tape to parlaying one's professional skills in retirement, as well as financial information and guidance targeted to Foreign Service personnel.

There are many other ways you can contribute to our pages, of course. I hope you will share your reactions, positive and negative, not only to this issue but to what you read every month, by contributing to our **Letters** section. Just bear in mind that, as with all periodicals, the briefer and more focused your letter is, the more likely we'll be able to print it in full. (In general, 200 to 400 words is a good target.)

The **Speaking Out** department is your forum to advocate policy, regulatory or statutory changes to the Foreign Service. These columns (approximately 1,500 to 2,000 words long) can be based on personal experience with a professional injustice or present your insights into a foreign affairs-related issue.

Our **Reflections** department presents short commentaries (approximately 600 words long) based on personal experiences while living or traveling overseas. These submissions should center on insights gained as a result of interactions with other cultures, rather than being descriptive "travel pieces." We are also pleased to consider poetry and photographs for publication, either in that section or as freestanding features.

Please note that all submissions to the *Journal* must be approved by our Editorial Board and are subject to editing for style, length and format. For information on how to submit a column, article or letter, please contact us at authors@afsa.org and we will be delighted to respond. For other inquiries — changes of address, subscriptions, etc. — e-mail us at journal@afsa.org.

Let us hear from you. ■

GLOBAL REPOSITIONING IN PERSPECTIVE



David Wink

GLOBAL REPOSITIONING IS A KEY ELEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE RICE'S SIGNATURE INITIATIVE. HERE IS AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE PROGRAM.

BY SHAWN DORMAN

As we close the book on the Bush administration and Condoleezza Rice's term as Secretary of State, it is appropriate to take a look at the Global Repositioning Program — a key element of her signature Transformational Diplomacy initiative — to evaluate its impact and consider what elements might be kept by the Obama administration.

"To advance transformational diplomacy ... we must change our diplomatic posture," Sec. Rice said during her policy

address at Georgetown University on Jan. 18, 2006. “In the 21st century, emerging nations like India and China and Brazil and Egypt and Indonesia and South Africa are increasingly shaping the course of history. At the same time, the new front lines of our diplomacy are appearing more clearly, in transitional countries of Africa and of Latin America and of the Middle East. Our current global posture does not really reflect that fact.” Rice outlined the Global Repositioning Program, designed to shift hundreds of Foreign Service positions from Europe and Washington (primarily) to “emerging nations.”

Global repositioning was essentially the bureaucratic expression of transformational diplomacy, a restructuring of State Department staffing aimed at meeting the policy goals of TD. “It is clear today that America must begin to reposition our diplomatic forces around the world,” Sec. Rice said in the same speech. “So over the next few years the United States will begin to shift several hundred of our diplomatic positions to new critical posts for the 21st century. We will begin this year with a down payment of moving 100 positions from Europe and, yes, from here in Washington, D.C., to countries like China and India and Nigeria and Lebanon, where additional staffing will make an essential difference.”

This “down payment” was to be followed by new resources. “We are also eager to work more closely with Congress to enhance our global strategy with new resources and new positions,” Sec. Rice said. As it happened, however, she would implement the Global Repositioning Program (hereafter called GRP) without new resources, only by shifting positions.

Individuals closely involved in the GRP process offered assistance and insights for this assessment. We consulted with members of the team that recently completed a worldwide review of the program for the Office of the Inspector General. Approximately 30 FSOs from both gaining and losing posts offered their own observations and experiences. Though all sources are known to the *Journal*, and we have identified people wherever possible, much of

The so-called “peace dividend” of the 1990s had been used to cut staff at embassies around the world.

the information provided was given on background.

Scribbles on the Back of a Napkin

The GRP set in motion the first major overhaul of staffing patterns in decades, revealing that many embassies were still staffed in much the same way they had been during the Cold War. In Germany, there were 200,000 people for every FSO, while India had about 25 million per officer and China 40 million, a point made often by Sec. Rice and then-Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns in describing the rationale for the GRP.

At the same time, the so-called “peace dividend” of the 1990s had been used to cut staff at embassies around the world, and even though the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative gave a significant boost to worldwide staffing during Secretary of State Colin Powell’s tenure, those gains were erased by the requirement to fully staff large missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In December 2005, the mandate came down from the Secretary of State: Create several hundred new transformational diplomacy positions in emerging countries by eliminating positions elsewhere. And do it fast! The first 100 new positions were to be in place and filled by the summer of 2006. With an assignment system based on bidding one to two years out, depending on language and other training, and with just about every embassy and office in dire need of more rather than fewer staff, the task of moving hundreds of positions quickly threatened to be a bureaucratic nightmare.

To cut through the inevitable red tape, Sec. Rice tasked U/S Burns and Under Secretary for Management Henrietta Fore — a strategic pairing of the policy and management sides of the house. The two under secretaries created a high-level working group of about 10 senior staff who were able to work independently and outside of any one bureau or box. The implementation process was not publicized widely either inside or outside the department, and even the makeup of the group was not widely known.

The group had to work quickly; as one participant described it, the earliest plans were drawn “on the back of a napkin.” The exercise was driven by the Secretary’s insistence on quick implementation of her GRP vision, without allowing time for serious consideration of security, physi-

Former Foreign Service political officer Shawn Dorman is associate editor of the Journal and the editor of AFSA’s best-selling book, Inside a U.S. Embassy.

cal space and other supporting infrastructure — or even of the precise roles of those whose positions would be moved. GRP decisions were also tied to population numbers in cities around the world, with the goal of increasing U.S. representation in urban centers.

“The rather unique element of the GRP exercise was that the position decisions were based on our policy priorities, rather than current workload or resources,” explains John Heffern, who was executive assistant to U/S Burns and co-chair of the GRP Working Group. “The idea was to add positions to posts in countries high on the Secretary’s list for transformational diplomacy, where posts could demonstrate that the new positions would be used for new and additional tasks. We did not intend for the new positions to focus on control officer duties or preparation of mandated annual reports.”

Blood on the Floor

In a climate of no new money, the GRP was the only game in town. The final plan would involve the creation of 285 new jobs, to be assigned in three phases. An equivalent set of positions would be eliminated. The new ones were to be primarily political, economic and public diplomacy slots, with no new positions added on the management side during the first two phases. Embassies receiving new officers were to support them through existing administrative resources, including provision of housing and office space.

Phase I involved 100 new positions to be staffed in summer 2006. Phase II, for 2007, involved creation of another 100 jobs. Phase III, for 2008, was supposed to include another 85 positions, though it has only been partially implemented because of budget constraints.

When figuring out which positions to create and which to eliminate, the working group could not calculate in terms of one-for-one swaps, because one overseas FSO position costs as much as two to three Washington positions to support. So, in fact, more slots had to be cut to cover the new ones created. These would come from both Civil Service and Foreign Service ranks.

Bureaus, working with embassies in their regions, were told to come up with lists of jobs that could be cut, as well

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any one bureau or box.*

as wish lists of jobs that should be created. In Phase I, every bureau that gained positions also had to give up positions. Almost no bureau or embassy wants to lose FSOs, especially at a time when demands are increasing, staffing is already short and budgets are tight. “There was blood on the floor,” says one knowledgeable official.

But the bureaus duly came up with the proposed positions to add and eliminate, and the working group created final lists, which Burns and Fore presented to Sec. Rice for approval. This happened so fast and so late in the assignment cycle that some of the positions to be eliminated in the first round already had officers assigned to them. As a result, some 29 people were left scrambling for new jobs quite late in the bidding season.

The European Bureau took the biggest hit in Phase I, giving up 34 positions in 2006. By the end of Phase II in 2007, EUR had given up 49 positions overseas, while Washington offices lost more than 100. The missions that gained the most positions were China and India. Among the other gaining missions were Brazil, Indonesia, Sudan, South Africa, Kenya, Bolivia and Venezuela. The biggest losers in the repositioning were Germany and Russia. However, because Embassy Moscow had already begun its own “streamlining” initiative before the GRP, it was able to manage the impact well, explains then-DCM Dan Russell.

One target for Phase II was the elimination of certain functional jobs in the department as well as labor jobs overseas. In the end, labor positions were spared and most bureaus contributed both overseas and domestic slots. For Phase III in 2008, all positions to be eliminated would be domestic. This round was not fully completed because of increasingly serious budget constraints. Positions were eliminated and only a few new GRP jobs were created. Phases I and II were managed by the two under secretaries and the GRP Working Group, while Human Resources was tasked with implementing Phase III.

The Pain-Gain Calculus

The critical flaw in the GRP exercise was that it was not funded. On the contrary, the worldwide crisis-level staffing and funding shortages continued, and worsened.

Transformational Diplomacy: What's New?

During a Jan. 18, 2006, speech at Georgetown University, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced a broad initiative that she called Transformational Diplomacy: “To work with our many partners around the world to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people — and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system. ... Transformational diplomacy is rooted in partnership, not paternalism — in doing things with other people, not for them. We seek to use America’s diplomatic power to help foreign citizens to better their own lives, and to build their own nations, and to transform their own futures.”

The Secretary’s Georgetown address left many diplomats scratching their heads: Well, if this is new, then what were we doing before? Some have called it just the latest bumper sticker in a slogan-rich political environment, doomed to pass into oblivion once the administration ends. This response from an FSO in a TD position was typical: “I’ve never really understood how transformational diplomacy was any different from what we were doing, or were supposed to be doing, anyway.”

Even some of those closely involved in the process agree that transformational diplomacy as a new idea was oversold. Marc Grossman — while serving in both a management position as director general (2000-2001) and a policy position as under secretary for political affairs (2001-2005) for Secretary of State Colin Powell — may have laid the groundwork for the Secretary’s TD concept with his calls for FSOs to stop reading tea leaves and get out and do something. Sec. Powell’s tenure was marked by similar calls for more emphasis on action and less on reporting.

One aspect of TD is as basic as “getting out from behind the desk” and engaging with people beyond the foreign ministries and the capital cities around the world. But what Foreign Service officer chose a diplomatic career to sit behind a desk? Who thought, I want to go through the difficult and absurdly lengthy entry process so I can go to

an exotic foreign country and never leave the embassy?

The power of transformational diplomacy may lie in that “what we were supposed to be doing” element. Over the past decade, what diplomats have actually been doing has been increasingly dictated by demands from Washington, mandatory reporting for Congress and requirements for supporting official visitors. Missing resources and staffing shortages have forced many diplomats to spend more of their time confined within embassy walls. One piece of TD is actually outreach and public diplomacy activities by another name.

Similarly, the program management element of TD sounded a lot like what USAID officers already do and what State FSOs are not trained to do. But it also raised the possibility that State political, economic and public diplomacy officers might have access to new sources of funding that would be welcome and useful.

One element of TD, however, that focuses on the role of U.S. diplomats in transforming other countries, helping them be more democratic, has been met with concern in some places. In China, for instance, use of the word “transformational” raises hackles. The sentiment that host countries may not welcome American efforts to transform them is shared by many foreign governments, and so TD officers define the term based on the dynamics of the country in which they serve.

As Anny Ho, the American Presence Post officer for Zhengzhou, has suggested in the China context: “Stay clear of the terms American Presence Post and transformational diplomacy. The Chinese cringe at hearing this (they don’t appreciate even the hint of being transformed). Instead, if TD gets brought up, explain it in terms of how we (the State Department) are transforming ourselves and the way we do business, by expanding out beyond the cities where our embassy and consulates are based so that we can better understand our host country as a whole.” Sounds like good advice.

— Shawn Dorman

Some have called it just the latest bumper sticker in a slogan-rich political environment, doomed to pass into oblivion once the administration ends.

There has been almost no new money for additional State positions outside of security jobs since 2004, even though staffing demands have increased dramatically over the past five years. As AFSA President John Naland pointed out in his testimony before a July 2008 Senate Subcommittee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, “Unfunded mandates include 325 positions in Iraq, 150 in Afghanistan, 40 in the office to coordinate reconstruction efforts, 100+ training positions to increase the number of Arabic speakers” — and the 285 GRP positions.

“Due to the mismatch between resources and requirements,” Naland explains in his testimony, “hundreds of Foreign Service positions worldwide are now vacant. As a result, the State Department is reportedly moving to ‘freeze’ (leave unfilled) about 20 percent of the Foreign Service jobs (overseas and domestic) due for reassignment in summer 2009 (excluding fully staffed Iraq and Afghanistan). That is on top of other positions left unfilled in the 2008 assignment cycle. All together, 12 percent of overseas Foreign Service positions are now vacant.”

Some of the FSOs who commented to the *Journal* on global repositioning mentioned that “DRI cuts” — positions created under Secretary of State Colin Powell’s Diplomatic Readiness Initiative that are now being eliminated — had minimized the impact of gains from the GRP. But one knowledgeable official explained that, in fact, there were *no* DRI cuts; rather, many of the new positions created by the DRI were temporary by design, to accommodate the “bubble” of new hires brought in under the program between 2002 and 2004. Still, it is easy to see how new positions created under DRI would become essential to the embassies that received them.

The “Iraq Tax” — the shifting of staff and resources to accommodate the requirement to staff Iraq and Afghanistan at 100 percent — represents another significant cause of staffing shortages for many embassies. The Iraq mission is the largest in the world, and one-year assignments mean new personnel must rotate in every year. Whatever name we give to the cuts in recent years, the reality has been that GRP gains were not always as significant as they appeared on paper. Many posts lost people at the same time that they gained people through the GRP.

This was also true with respect to USAID staffing. In some countries, at the same time USAID was making se-

In a climate of no new money, the GRP was the only game in town.

rious cuts to staff and programs (including those under the TD rubric), State was sending new GRP officers to the same posts. As noted in the September 2007 OIG report, “Inspection of the Bureau of Human Resources, Part II”: “The GRP has

not yet brought together USAID and [State] department planning.”

“For Embassy Phnom Penh, the GRP has been all about pain mitigation,” says FSO Piper Campbell, who works there. That embassy gained one position but lost one public affairs slot and another in the combined political/economics section. Brazil, a major gaining post under the program, also lost positions, including two public diplomacy slots, for a net gain of only one position.

“We are so busy managing Washington visitors, I feel a great sense of achievement when I get out to talk to someone — anyone — outside of a visit,” says an FSO serving in Brasilia. “Relations with nongovernmental folks are the first to go. It is an odd paradox that as Brazil is stepping out onto the global stage and our relationship is booming here, we are being told verbally, through budgets and through staffing, that it is not a priority.”

Still Doing More with Less

“Even with new GRP slots, we’re still grossly understaffed,” says one Washington-based FSO who served at a losing post. “One new GRP position here and there is not going to make any difference. We need dozens, hundreds of new positions, so we can do the basics of our jobs, much less anything transformational.”

“By moving positions around we are not solving the key issue that there simply are not enough to go around,” says FSO Brian McInerney, who’s serving in South Africa. “Hopefully soon our elected leaders will realize this and increase State’s budget so FSOs can be placed everywhere they are needed and we don’t have to take from one place to give to another.”

FSO Ralph Falzone, who served in a GRP position in Vietnam, explains that his post “could have absorbed three to four more positions. There was an impact for sure, but everyone is still ultimately doing more with less.”

The OIG report on the HR Bureau notes: “The GRP transferred positions but did not always transfer adequate resources. Almost all positions moved in the first two rounds, for example, were in political, economic and pub-

F O C U S

lic diplomacy affairs. The OIG team found near-unanimous views among regional bureaus that sufficient support costs for these positions had not been provided.” There was no money allocated for FY 2007 for transformational diplomacy or the GRP, according to a Congressional Research Service report on transformational diplomacy.

The overall budget climate and weak state of the dollar also contributed to the difficulties of supporting new positions at embassies overseas. Travel within the host country was supposed to be a significant element for many GRP officers, especially those who were assigned to open new posts. But many embassies were facing crisis-level financial stress and had to actually *cut* travel money for the mission.

Space was also an issue for some posts. “There was no office space for the new positions and we received little additional support funding,” said one officer who served in a large mission that gained positions under the GRP. “There was never any thought given to the additional Foreign Service National staff needed in the general services

office or at the constituent posts to support the increased number of American employees and family members.”

“The support and funding have been grossly inadequate and the position has not been integrated into post operations, other than nominally,” says one FSO in a GRP position who declined to be named. Going on, this officer says that “there was no financial support and little informational support.”

“We had no say or warning that we were getting additional positions,” said a senior diplomat formerly assigned to Nigeria. “Our new embassy compound was some 50 percent too small the day we moved in. There were no provisions for any additional support resources (housing, vehicles, furniture, admin staff) with any of the GRP positions.”

American Presence Posts: Not Present

Question: How do you create new, one-person posts in cities across the globe with no new money? Answer: You don't.

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An important element Sec. Rice introduced as part of the initiative was the plan to create American Presence Posts — one-officer posts outside capital cities in priority countries. In making requests for new GRP positions, the missions, through the bureaus, were told to include requests for new APPs.

This wasn't actually a new concept. "One-officer consulates were once staffed by diplomats in areas of the globe that took weeks to reach by boat," says FSO Tom Daniels. "Support was minimal and conditions often rustic. Communication with locals and representation of U.S. interests were the keys to success. Sounds like old-style diplomacy in a modern era to me."

APPs had been introduced in France in the 1990s, including posts in Lille, Rennes, Toulouse and Bordeaux, in part to compensate for the elimination of consulates there. Egypt had one APP in Alexandria, and Canada opened an APP in Winnipeg in 2001. The U.S. office in Medan, Indonesia, sometimes held up as an example of a successful new APP, was a consulate before it was shut down in the mid-1990s, only to be reopened as a consulate during Sec. Powell's tenure. It is now a two-officer post. Eight APPs were created during the past decade — all before the GRP.

APP Lyon officer Harry Sullivan — who bid on that post after his job in the economic section of Embassy Paris was cut under the GRP — says that "We cannot fully engage the French from Paris only, so I am out of my office and away from Lyon at least 50 percent of the time. There is a great thirst for knowledge about the U.S. that would otherwise be unmet."

While the establishment of new APPs sounds logical in terms of expanding U.S. diplomatic coverage in an increasingly globalized world, it has often turned out to be unrealistic. A great example of big thinking, it was not matched by big — or even minimal — resource support. In addition, security concerns in many countries create almost insurmountable barriers to opening single-person offices. For the APP exercise under the GRP, cities were selected without regard to the financial, administrative, legal and security elements of the equation. In fact, realities on the ground have dictated that most of the APPs *not* be created.

No bureau or embassy wants to lose FSOs, especially during a time when demands are increasing, staffing is already short and budgets are tight.

The India mission, for example, had recommended up to 10 APPs under the GRP exercise. But due to complications in international law and a shortage of funds, none have been established. A new U.S. consulate in Hyderabad, inaugurated in October 2008, was the first new U.S. post established in India since 1947 (when the country's population was only about 350 million). This consulate was not established under the program, but the principal officer there is in a GRP position.

APP jobs were heavily bid because they were seen as new and exciting, involving lots of independence and responsibility, and were considered a priority because the mandate came from the Secretary. But the actual job for just about every officer assigned to an APP position has not delivered on the promises. Almost all APP officers arrived in their country of assignment only to discover that they would not be moving to the designated city or opening that office at all. In a few cases, they found that not only was the post not going to be created, but they could not even visit their designated city because there were no available travel funds.

The experience so far points to five key barriers to the establishment of APPs:

- Security constraints and requirements are significant.
- There is no provision for such facilities in the Vienna Convention or any other international agreement. Under international law, APPs are actually consulates, so the rules for opening a consulate apply — making creation of a new outpost vastly more complicated than simply dispatching one good FSO with a laptop to the selected city. The establishment of consulates poses numerous legal issues, falls under congressional oversight and poses reciprocity issues with the host countries.
- U.S. law does not allow an APP to be created in a city where the U.S. already has a consular agent.
- Additional funding for the U.S. missions charged with opening new APPs — including the facilities, security and support staff — has been almost entirely absent.
- Ground rules were not established for the APP program, and there is no central office in the State Department in charge of them, so each post had to figure out how to set up — or not set up — its designated posts.

F O C U S

Out of 18 proposed APPs, only two have been opened: Wuhan in China, and Busan in South Korea. Both were established as consulates. In early 2008, Washington put all plans to establish new APPs on hold.

Smoke and Mirrors

Take Brazil, where three officers were assigned to establish APPs, in Porto Alegre, Belem and Belo Horizonte. None of those officers has been able to set up a post, and they have had to recreate their positions. “Embassy Brasilia thought that the department would provide extra funding for the costs involved,” an official involved in the OIG inspection of Brazil said. Most embassy travel funds went to support the ambassador’s travel. APP officers do visit the cities in which they were supposed to take up residence, but officers were visiting those cities before the APPs were designated, so there has been little actual change on the ground there.

In Malaysia, the APP officer assigned to Kota Kinabalu arrived in Kuala Lumpur in December 2007. According

to the embassy, “Early in January 2008, post received notification that a hold had been placed on additional APP openings until further notice. Uncertain how long the hold would last, post management wrote new work requirements that provided for travel to Eastern Malaysia as a circuit rider based in Kuala Lumpur. Drawing upon post travel funds as well as funds from other sections designated for specific projects, the APP officer traveled to Eastern Malaysia on eight separate occasions over the past 11 months. ... Until the APP situation is resolved, the APP officer will attempt to accomplish from a Kuala Lumpur base many of the same goals that were originally established for the APP position in Kota Kinabalu — developing regional expertise, establishing local contacts and conducting public affairs outreach. The Kota Kinabalu position remains on the open assignments list.”

“Everyone thinks the APPs are a great idea,” one officer tells us, “but the problem has come in the execution. You feel like the third wheel. Institutionally it’s tough, because you don’t have support or a budget. You don’t fit

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INDONESIA: Poster Child for the GRP

Embassy Jakarta gained five positions under the Global Repositioning Program and appears to have maximized the benefits of a net increase in staffing. Officers in new positions have enabled the embassy to expand outreach activities and increase domestic travel, not only for those five individuals but for the mission as a whole. With innovative travel plans and programs already established and operating, Mission Indonesia represents a best-case scenario for the GRP.

Certain factors that contribute to Indonesia's success may inform evaluation of which countries might be best equipped to actually "do more with more" in the future.

These factors are:

- A fairly strong dollar has resulted in a healthier budget than at many other posts.
- Supportive leadership from the front office makes transformational diplomacy and the GRP a top priority for the mission.
- Domestic travel programs, supported across sections and even agencies, maximize travel by the most embassy personnel.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, unlike some other recipient posts, Indonesia is truly an emerging democracy, and there is considerable scope for TD-type work because of the open climate.

A Dramatic Comparison

Ten years ago, when I served in Jakarta's political section during the two years leading up to and through the fall of the Suharto regime, the Asian financial crisis hit, dissatisfaction with the regime was growing and democracy activists were being kidnapped by the military. The U.S. government was haltingly moving away from a long-term close relationship with President Suharto and the Indonesian military. Back then, the embassy was already engaged in what could be called transformational diplomacy — meeting regularly with opposition figures, student leaders, NGOs and labor unions. USAID and the U.S. Information Agency were supporting democracy programs.

During a spring 2008 visit to Embassy Jakarta, I was able to meet with all of the GRP officers as well as the management counselor, the deputy chief of mission, the polit-

ical counselor, three other political officers and two USAID FSNs working on democracy programs. It was breathtaking to see that, after 10 years, not only has democracy taken hold in Indonesia, but Embassy Jakarta itself appears to have come together in new and innovative ways to support its growth and institutionalization there.

The embassy did not ask for many American Presence Post positions, practicing, as Deputy Chief of Mission John Heffern put it, "truth in advertising." The mission knew that it would be impossible to set up full-time, one-person posts in a number of cities in a high-threat country like Indonesia. Instead, the embassy created a new program aiming to achieve similar results — the Liaison Officer Program, established in September 2007. The embassy formed teams from different sections — political, economic, consular and public diplomacy — to cover different regions of the vast archipelago.

The officers involved are called "circuit riders." They do not live in the cities they cover; their positions are Jakarta-based. They include both entry-level and more senior-level officers. They travel to their designated regions to conduct public outreach and educational programs at universities, schools and business forums. They meet with local NGOs and other organizations and build contacts.

What the GRP did was "add new officers to the gene pool," Management Counselor Lawrence Mandel explains, allowing all sections to "bump up" transformational diplomacy activities. The embassy spread the wealth around, taking advantage of the new positions to allow GRP and non-GRP officers to travel more often. Careful stewardship of travel money, with an emphasis on domestic over international travel, combined with a reasonably strong exchange rate, has helped the Liaison Officer Program succeed. The GRP coincided with what the embassy needed and is "a great hook," as Mandel describes it, to deploy resources differently.

One of two new GRP positions in the economic section has opened up the opportunity for more coverage and cooperation on environment issues. The other GRP position in the economic section has been used, in part, to expand anticorruption and decentralization activities. And the new

public diplomacy entry-level position created under the GRP allows for wider personal contact with journalists and broader outreach to Muslim youth groups.

Front Office Leadership

Embassy leadership and a well-run country team are also critical factors in Mission Indonesia's success. A morning senior staff meeting ensures all sections know what the others are doing. Cooperation with U.S. military representatives is good, according to the GRP group — though, as one only half-joked, DOD has “the money we should have” for programs.

The front office views the success of the GRP as a priority, and that sets the tone for the whole embassy. Heffern co-chaired the GRP Working Group during his last post in Under Secretary Nick Burns' office, and Ambassador Cameron Hume has been personally involved in making the program work in Indonesia. As one observer who declined to be named explains, the DCM was confident enough to implement it in a flexible, and thus effective, way. The result allowed everyone to add new dimensions to their jobs. It didn't hurt that Embassy Jakarta also had a management counselor who was a strong advocate for the program, helping create that successful mix of policy and management.

Consulate Surabaya, for instance, did not gain any positions from GRP, but exemplifies the priority of interactions beyond the capital. “I've been in the Foreign Service for almost 18 years,” says Surabaya Consul General Caryn McClelland. “For me, the phrase ‘transformational diplomacy’ simply puts a new name, and perhaps renewed emphasis, on what FSOs have been doing all along. It's impossible to understand a country sitting in your office in the embassy. ... I just spent four days in South Sulawesi, speaking with approximately 1,000 students and educators, as well as meeting with religious leaders, government officials, businessmen and media. ... Outreach pays huge dividends over the long term and FSOs should be encouraged to do more of it. If the department wants

to call that TD, that's great; but we've been doing it since I joined the Foreign Service.”

Cooperative relationships within the mission are vital. “We work closely with the various embassy sections to expand our outreach activities. We invite embassy officers to join us on trips, and sometimes they take us up on it,” McClelland tells us. “For example, the DCM and GRP Economic Officer Scott Kofmehl joined us on a trip to Maluku to look at the impact of regional autonomy policies. We traveled on the Defense Attaché Office plane, and Marine and Navy attachés joined our outreach events, which was great and made a huge impression on the kids.”

The embassy spread the wealth around, taking advantage of the new positions to allow GRP and non-GRP officers to travel more often.

Lessons Learned

“GRP has had a big impact on Mission Indonesia,” says John Heffern. “We have been able to run extensive outreach programs; e.g., on the American elections, allowing officers from all over the embassy to spread our message and, at the same time, benefit from a real professional development opportunity. So the entire mission

has benefited from the new GRP positions, and many officers have benefited from additional outreach opportunities.”

A September 2007 message to Washington from Ambassador Hume offers several lessons learned that bear repeating: “1) The most important requirement for transformational diplomacy is a partner committed to democracy, anti-corruption and the rule of law, and determined to improve the standards of governance and service provided to the citizens. 2) Once there is agreement on overall goals, the U.S. government has offered a variety of programs from which the Indonesians can choose, securing buy-in from Indonesian partners. 3) TD works slowly and at times unevenly, so programs must continue long enough, perhaps for a decade or more, so that initial progress is gradually so integrated into the institutions of government that it becomes part of the government's genetic code.”

— Shawn Dorman

into the existing bureaucracy. And at a consulate covering an APP city, you're one more link away in the chain." (Note: That comment, which does not seem particularly controversial, was given anonymously so the FSO would not "commit career suicide." This was not an atypical response, and one has to wonder why simply describing the situation feels like such a risk.)

"The APPs were a joke," explains one FSO who served in a large mission that gained positions under GRP. "The host country rightly pointed out that the Vienna Convention does not mention anything like an APP, so they must, in fact, be consulates. When we agreed, they asked for reciprocity. That was not forthcoming, so the APP idea withered away."

APP assignments are still appearing on current bid lists, even though plans to actually open any new ones have been put on hold. In a late-2008 message responding to inquiries about APP positions still listed on the bid list for that country, one post was saying: "In early 2008, the Management Bureau placed a moratorium on opening additional American Presence Posts through the end of the current fiscal year. This moratorium included APP _____. The future status of APP _____ is unclear at this time and may not be known until a new administration is in office." Sure, go ahead and bid on that job!

Does this mean that the APP program failed? Not exactly, or at least not everywhere.

Circuit Riders and Virtual Posts

The most common solutions for reaching APP cities without actually setting up such a post have been the "circuit riders" and the Virtual Presence Posts, where the FSO is not based in the designated city but covers it remotely through Web-site connections and travel. The circuit rider approach has been successful in Indonesia, where a missionwide travel program has been established and more frequent visits to more islands have become possible with the addition of GRP staff. (See sidebar on Indonesia, p. 26.)

When plans for the GRP were announced, the Secretary called for both APPs and VPPs to be established in many countries. As described by the eDiplomacy Office of the State Department, under which the VPP program falls, Vir-

A great example of big thinking, it was not matched by big — or even minimal — resource support.

tual Presence Posts "help the department broaden its engagement with key cities, communities, regions and countries without an American embassy or consulate building. For example, most Virtual Presence Posts have a Web site and diplomats in nearby embassies or consulates may use travel, public

outreach programs, media events or online Web chats to create a 'virtual' presence that is quite real to local populations."

The success of the VPP program has varied widely from country to country, depending in large part on whether resources and personnel were available to manage the content and to travel to the locations as a component of the program. "A joke. A Web site, nothing more," says a Washington-based FSO. "And the quality of the Web site depends on whether the public affairs section has any staff or time to devote to it. With the staffing shortages all posts are facing, it is unrealistic to think we have time to do this."

"The Virtual Presence Posts were a great idea to start with, but there were no positions available to maintain the content," says the FSO who served at a large gaining post. "Eventually, due to a lack of resources — everybody was fully occupied doing their regular jobs — this [idea] also withered away."

But in some countries, such as China and Indonesia, the VPP model does serve as a substitute for the APP. China gained 24 positions under GRP, the largest for any mission. One of these positions was designated "transformational diplomacy coordinator." MaryKay Carlson is the second FSO to hold this position, which is now in the public affairs office. Her predecessor was based in the political section and spent most of his time negotiating the opening of Consulate Wuhan and trying to get permission for the APPs. Carlson primarily focuses on the new Virtual Presence Post program, with 10 VPP teams covering major metropolitan areas.

Embassy Beijing requested five APPs and was approved for four: Wuhan, Xiamen, Zhengzhou and Nanjing. Wuhan was officially opened as a consulate general in November 2008, while the other three APPs have not yet been established. The opening of Wuhan was possible because the 1981 bilateral consular convention allows the U.S., based on reciprocity, to open a consulate there. The Chinese authorities would not entertain posting single of-

Global Repositioning On the Ground

We are short-staffed all over the world, so the impacts [of the GRP] are extremely significant at losing and gaining posts, while at the same time insignificant in terms of being able to make a dent in managing the continually growing workload overseas. I served at both a losing and a gaining GRP post. My public affairs position in Italy was eliminated under the GRP at the end of my tour; I later encumbered a newly created GRP position in Vietnam.

The U.S. mission to Italy receives a large number of VIP and congressional delegation visits that it is expected to support, so taking a working-level officer “off the payroll” inevitably increases that burden. The GRP has stripped many positions out of Western Europe, which is home to key NATO, Group of Eight and United Nations allies. We may take them for granted, but the truth is these diplomatic relationships require continuity, maintenance and support. Our alliances there are not a given, and anybody who has served there knows the high degree of anti-Americanism and skepticism regarding our policies that abounds. In the short term, reductions in Western Europe will have an expected and manageable effect on workload and VIP-visit support for the losing post. In the long run, however, taking FSOs out of Western Europe will only hurt us diplomatically and make our foreign policy objectives there harder to achieve.

The gaining post in Asia where I served could easily have absorbed three to four more positions. There was an impact with the additional position for sure, but everyone is still ultimately doing more with less at the end of the day. The problem is not so much one of shifting positions as it is about prioritizing and reducing the workload, eliminating redundancies and adding positions only when truly required. Right now we need more everywhere in the world to manage the ever-expanding workload.

On paper, the concept of transformational diplomacy is a good one — get diplomats away from writing e-mails, cables and reports and into engaging with host-country communities and doing transformational programs. However, operational realities overseas prevent TD from having any serious relevance.

Unfortunately, it is the U.S. government business

model overseas that has been “transformational” — we have added significantly more U.S. government personnel overseas in the last 20 years while we conduct less and less actual diplomacy. Most diplomats are spending a lower percentage of their time engaging host-country interlocutors as the reporting requirements, VIP visits and demands from Congress and Washington are overwhelming for most posts. And at more and more posts, Foreign Service officers, tasked to explain America to the world, are now in the minority.

We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to recruit each U.S. diplomat (many with advanced degrees), train them in foreign languages and send them overseas. There they make hotel and transportation arrangements for the ever-increasing number of U.S. government travelers; manage the impact and growth of (usually better funded) non-State agencies; research and write a growing number of redundant, congressionally ordered reports, many originally mandated in the pre-Internet era; and handle extensive grant and exchange program administrative requirements. They also administer an immigration system where we have a visa category for every letter of the alphabet, a security advisory opinion named after every animal, a whole series of visa ineligibilities and a separate waiver process for every one of those ineligibilities.

In addition, we tell our diplomatic recruits not to talk to the media overseas lest they not be promoted, while our enemies engage the media every day. Our critical development assistance programs and personnel have been significantly reduced or rerouted, and Congress continues to add more and more reporting and regulatory requirements, while embassies add more non-Foreign Service personnel every month.

We do not need additional training to talk to foreigners and decide priorities. If Washington wants us to engage in transformational diplomacy, then our political leadership needs to first decide why we have diplomats overseas, what they should be doing on a day-to-day basis, and which agency should lead our foreign policy execution.

— *Ralph Falzone*
Abu Dhabi

ficers (in APPs or any other kind of post) in cities outside our established consulates and embassy.

This is not to say that those other cities are being abandoned in the mission plans. Instead, the Xiamen officer is based in Guangzhou, the Nanjing officer is based in Shanghai and the Zhengzhou officer is based in Beijing and will also cover Xi'an. They are called "officer designees" and travel to their cities on a regular basis. They have also created newsletters and Web sites for their regions.

"Consulate General Guangzhou has made a real effort to use the new positions to raise the visibility and profile of the U.S. government in areas outside of Guangzhou," says Gary Oba, an APP officer based there. "These areas include multiple cities with multimillion populations. ... China's refusal to accept APPs has meant that the APP officers assigned there are faced, first, with the task of 'transforming' their own positions. In addition to requiring a good deal of flexibility, creativity and initiative, the job also requires a high degree of tolerance for ambiguity. The job is not well understood even within our own bureaucracy — much less in the wider world."

Looking Ahead

A re-evaluation and realignment of positions at posts where staffing hadn't changed since the Cold War made good management sense, as does the notion of reassessing the U.S. diplomatic posture worldwide. However, the GRP was essentially half-baked: new positions in emerging nations came with little or no resource support, and at losing posts there was no commensurate reduction in workloads.

Moscow was the biggest loser in the GRP exercise, with a total of 13 positions eliminated. Germany also lost a significant number, six in Berlin and six from the consulates. Other losing posts included London, Tokyo, Warsaw, Oslo, Budapest, Paris and Hong Kong.

These posts are among the most visited and busiest missions in the world. Many of the other eliminated jobs were in Washington, where overburdened desk officers, especially those responsible for small European posts, have become even more overburdened and have difficulty keeping up with the mandatory work.

"The next step, on which more needs to be done," explains John Heffern, "was for the department to seek relief from non-essential embassy duties so that all officers and staff overseas could focus more on outreach and other transformational tasks." This critical piece of the program

is still pending.

Overall, however, the difficulties with the GRP have been tied primarily to the lack of resources devoted to supporting the new positions and to the reality of staffing shortages worldwide. In a February 2008 reprise at Georgetown — two years after launching the GRP — Sec. Rice finally asked for 1,100 new State positions and 300 for USAID in the FY 2009 budget proposal, although most of those new positions were for functions unrelated to the program. In the absence of any sustained lobbying effort by the Bush administration, Congress did not fund the request for a major staffing increase, but did fund a minor one, pending finalization of the FY 09 budget after the new president takes office.

The impact of global repositioning has varied widely from post to post. Extra positions seem to prove useful where the post has a budget that can support them, especially with domestic travel funds; the front office and administrative team support them; and the host-country environment allows for more "transformational diplomacy" activities.

Some believe that the push to get more FSOs out of capitals should continue. "The APP concept collided with budget realities, security constraints, issues of diplomatic reciprocity and other requirements, but it is still the right one and I hope it will survive into the next administration," says Geoff Pyatt, who was Embassy New Delhi's deputy chief of mission from 2006 to 2007.

Many agree that despite the problems, repositioning is necessary. "When the dust clears," says an officer close to the OIG review, "we may actually have helped get our overworked political, economic and public diplomacy officers out from behind their desks and back to doing the kind of internal political and outreach work, including travel outside the capital, that they want to do but were finding it harder and harder to do."

If the next administration is inclined to leave in place these initial rounds of global repositioning and move further in that direction, it will have to tackle the problems that have been neglected thus far. It will need to take a hard look at the overall concept and practicality of transformational diplomacy and define in concrete terms the new roles of FSOs who are being shifted from developed countries to developing countries. Most importantly, it will need to match the level of Foreign Service funding, staffing and material resources to the ambitious tasks implicit in "transforming" the world. ■

THE BRAVE NEW WORLD OF DEMOCRACY PROMOTION



David Wink

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U.S. DEMOCRACY PROMOTION POLICY APPEARS TO BE AT A CROSSROADS, WITH BIG DIVISIONS WITHIN BOTH PARTIES OVER HOW MUCH OF IT WE SHOULD BE DOING.

By ROBERT McMAHON

resident George W. Bush made democracy promotion the cornerstone of what he described as his “freedom agenda” and, in a departure from previous U.S. practice, the focal point of his Middle East policy. The policy was equally central to second-term Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s call for “transformational diplomacy.” Yet with the exception of the Iraq War, few of the administration’s foreign policy initiatives have been as bedeviled and confused as that one, at least in terms of its execution.

In his second inaugural address (January 2005), Pres. Bush promised “to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.” His administration claimed its military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan had liberated more than 50 million people from authoritarian rule, opening the way for free and fair elections. And in her first months as Secretary of State in 2005, Condoleezza Rice spoke frequently about the obligation “we on the right side of freedom’s divide” have to help those living under nondemocratic rule.

The administration’s second-term freedom agenda initially rode a wave of momentum. The so-called “colored revolutions” in Georgia (Rose) in 2003 and Ukraine (Orange) in 2004 had already brought to power pro-U.S. governments from the former Soviet sphere seen as committed to fighting corruption. Lebanon’s 2005 Cedar Revolution led to the ouster of Syrian troops and promised greater freedoms for that country. Even Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak relented under U.S. pressure and held multiparty elections that year.

But by 2006, the wave had crested, leaving the Bush administration on the defensive against criticism that it was too bombastic, inconsistent and hypocritical in promoting its freedom agenda. A series of setbacks, especially in the Middle East, cast a negative light on the administration’s pro-democracy emphasis, notably the victory of Hamas forces in Palestinian elections held in January 2006. U.S. officials had endorsed the elections, only to withhold recognition of the resulting Hamas-led government because of its refusal to renounce terrorism.

The administration also eased up on its pressure for democratic reforms in Egypt following the strong showing of the Muslim Brotherhood in parliamentary elections in late 2005. As for Iran, while the administration was able to squeeze the regime financially for its refusal

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*Presidential administrations
dating back to World War II
have supported policies
aimed at spreading
democracy.*

to suspend its uranium enrichment program, its democracy promotion efforts fell flat.

Compounding these difficulties, the Bush administration was promoting the rule of law and transparency at the very time it was holding hundreds of foreign detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, without trial, and facing accusations of abuses of prisoners in

Iraq and elsewhere.

To critics, the administration’s emphasis on democratization antagonized U.S. allies, made false promises to local civil society actors and undermined Washington’s credibility. For supporters, it was a catalyst for economic and political progress that triggered a dialogue in the Middle East and elsewhere about freedom and governance issues — one that will continue under Bush’s successors. The challenge for President-elect Barack Obama is whether to carry on policies seen as both flawed and essential, yet closely tied to the unpopular Bush administration.

A Bipartisan Mission Since 1983

Presidential administrations dating back to World War II have supported policies aimed at spreading democracy, seeing in them the seeds for a more stable world built on a foundation of shared values. Modern-day democratization efforts can be traced to 1983, when President Ronald Reagan created the National Endowment for Democracy. In a speech the year before to the British Parliament signaling this initiative, Reagan said a Western policy dedicated to the spread of freedom and democracy would help crush Marxism-Leninism. He stressed bipartisanship and the need to engage all sectors of the country in promoting democracy:

“The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties [and] universities, which allows a people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means.”

To carry through Reagan’s vision, four core grantees received most of NED’s funding. They included organizations dedicated to nurturing democratic political systems, such as the National Democratic Institute (affiliated with

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the Democratic Party) and the International Republican Institute (affiliated with the Republican Party), as well as the business-oriented Center for International Private Enterprise and the labor-focused Free Trade Union Institute. Numerous nongovernmental organizations, including some recipients of U.S. funding, stepped up their own democracy promotion efforts, including the International Foundation for Election Systems, financier George Soros' Open Society Institute and the human rights watchdog Freedom House, whose annual report on freedom in the world is a widely watched barometer of global democratic reforms.

Some experts say a true bipartisan consensus on democracy promotion did not emerge until a few years after the creation of NED, when the Reagan administration was tested by the 1986 "people power" revolution in

Modern-day democratization efforts can be traced to 1983, when President Ronald Reagan created the National Endowment for Democracy.

the Philippines. The administration played a pivotal role in the ouster of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, a staunch Cold War ally widely seen to have rigged presidential elections. In the face of growing public agitation over his rule, the U.S. withdrew support for Marcos and facilitated his departure from the country.

Democracy spread at breathtaking speed over the next several years with the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Scores of NGOs based in democratic states, attracted by the yearning of former Warsaw Pact states to join the European Union, NATO and other Western and trans-Atlantic bodies, assisted in implementing sweeping political and economic reforms in the newly liberated quarters of the continent.



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Democratization efforts were not confined to Europe, of course. A spring 2008 report from the National Academy of Sciences estimated that between 1990 and 2005, the U.S. Agency for International Development spent \$8.47 billion in about 120 countries on democracy and governance assistance. U.S. administrations of both parties also promoted democracy development programs as a component of United Nations nation-building efforts in post-conflict zones ranging from Kosovo to East Timor. A summer 2008 report by the heads of NDI and IRI — Kenneth Wollack and Lorne Craner, respectively — noted that, as of 2007, about half of the world's nations had received U.N. assistance in holding and monitoring elections.

Newly emergent Eastern European states boosted U.S. efforts to expand global democracy development after the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall. They were also an important part of the founding of the Community of Democracies in Warsaw in 1999, a project enthusiastically supported by then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The organization emphasized in its preamble the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, but nonetheless vowed to “cooperate to consolidate and strengthen democratic institutions.”

After 9/11: A National Security Imperative

The 9/11 attacks injected more urgency into the effort, bringing a focus on strengthening failed states and addressing the democracy deficit in the Arab world. President Bush's September 2002 National Security Strategy made democracy promotion a core feature, stating his government would make “freedom and the development of democratic institutions key themes in our bilateral relations, seeking solidarity and cooperation from other democracies while we press governments that deny human rights to move toward a better future.”

Bush also sharply adjusted the U.S. approach to development assistance, announcing a significant increase in such aid, conditioned on countries' demonstrated commitment to improved governance and democratic reforms. Though development experts have since faulted

The 9/11 attacks injected more urgency into the effort, bringing a focus on strengthening failed states and addressing the democracy deficit in the Arab world.

the slow disbursement of aid, they have credited Bush's Millennium Challenge Corporation with triggering genuine interest in the rule of law and governance reforms in states from West Africa to Central America.

The Bush administration zeroed in on the Middle East, the origin of the 9/11 bombers. By creating transparent and accountable forms of government in repressed and backward societies in the Arab world, U.S. policymakers reasoned, they would help eliminate the circumstances that served as a breeding ground for terrorists.

There were stirrings for change from within Middle Eastern societies, as well. A much-noted report by Arab scholars, commissioned by the U.N. Development Program and released in July 2002, found those countries had the lowest level of political freedom of any region in the world. The report said the area was plagued by deficits in freedom and knowledge and made a plea for comprehensive political, economic and social reforms.

Echoing such concerns, Bush's speech of Nov. 6, 2003, at the NED's 20th-anniversary ceremony formally launched his new policy for advancing democracy and freedom in the Middle East, putting U.S. allies and adversaries on notice about the new emphasis. “Sixty years of Western nations' excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe — because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty,” Bush said. His second inaugural address 14 months later expressed many of the same themes.

“Hypocrisy Is an Essential Element”

But the administration made its own job tougher, in part through its prosecution of the war in Iraq in the initial years and its broader declared “war on terror.” The spring 2004 publication of photos revealing degrading treatment of prisoners in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison was a pronounced setback for an administration pressuring Arab states to crack down on torture and other human rights abuses.

Former Bush aide Michael Gerson, now a senior fel-

low at the Council on Foreign Relations, told a panel discussion at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute in September 2008 that criticisms of U.S. behavior were inevitable as it pressed the freedom agenda. But he said abandoning authoritarian regimes in the Arab world to their own devices was not a good option, either. "Hypocrisy is an essential element of the democracy promotion [agenda], but when you are looking at alternatives there don't seem to be any good ones," Gerson said.

The case of Egypt brought criticism of another sort to the administration. Both Pres. Bush in his inaugural address and Secretary of State Rice in a June 2005 speech in Cairo, called on the Egyptian government to lead the way to democratic change in the Middle East. They also vowed a greater U.S. commitment to spurring freedoms in the region.

Nonetheless, Mubarak held flawed presidential elections that kept him in office and sent his main opponent, Ayman Nour, to prison on trumped-up charges. After a strong showing by the Muslim Brotherhood in parliamentary elections at the end of 2005 (it won 88 out of 454 seats) the government cracked down on the party, arresting hundreds of its members and harassing others. It effectively banned the Brotherhood from forming a political party by banning political activity based on religion in constitutional amendments passed in March 2007. Authorities also cracked down on a lively civil society movement, including pro-democracy bloggers.

The U.S. response to such moves has been relatively muted. A number of experts point out that the initial Egyptian crackdowns took place as Iraq descended deeper into sectarian strife and Iranian hegemony in the Middle East was growing — just as regional allies were badly needed on a number of fronts.

Bush's repurposing of the Iraq mission to democracy promotion after the country was found not to possess threatening weapons of mass destruction also raised doubts about U.S. aims. In the aftermath of the U.S. military's ouster of Saddam Hussein, Iraq was wracked by violence from a Sunni-led insurgency, as well as sectarian battles between Sunni and majority Shiite forces. Still, the country held three sets of landmark nationwide elections in 2005 and was on course to hold provincial

*The George W. Bush
administration's second-term
freedom agenda initially rode
a wave of momentum.*

elections in early 2009.

The Bush administration says that political reforms are beginning to take place amid more secure conditions brought about by the U.S.-led military surge in 2007, combined with the Sunni Awakening movement. But many of the 18 reform benchmarks

agreed on by Iraqi and U.S. officials in 2006, including a law on sharing oil revenues, remain unmet, and sectarian tensions persist in the country.

Afghanistan, too, held successful nationwide elections for president and parliament and adopted a constitution after the 2001 removal of the Taliban regime. But the country is far less developed than Iraq, and its international partners have lagged on reconstruction amid reports of rampant corruption, thus opening space for a Taliban resurgence that has gained support from disaffected Afghans, particularly in rural areas. A September 2008 report by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service found that the Afghan central government is "relatively stable, but it is perceived as weak, corrupt and unresponsive to core needs."

Even ahead of the U.S. presidential transition, in which an Obama administration is expected to sharpen the focus on securing and stabilizing Afghanistan, U.S. military officials had undertaken a review of strategy in Afghanistan. Two major elements under consideration were possible government reconciliation with some Taliban elements and cooperation with neighboring countries like Pakistan and Iran.

The Shadow of Regime Change

The spring 2006 announcement of a \$75 million boost in democracy promotion efforts in Iran — at a time when the administration was trying to contain wide-scale sectarian fighting in neighboring Iraq — immediately drew denunciations, even by some Iranian dissidents, as a cover for regime change.

In the absence of official relations and with concerns about U.S. threats over Iran's nuclear program, some activists like Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi characterized the U.S. democracy initiative as an intrusion into Iranian domestic affairs. In a commentary for the November/December 2008 edition of *Foreign Affairs*, Iranian dissident Akbar Ganji expressed the desire of his fellow activists

for a democratic system of government, but said the Bush administration's intimations of regime change only strengthened the hand of the rulers in Tehran and hampered the country's transition to a more liberal system.

"The constant identification of democracy promotion with the Iraq intervention and other regime-change policies has besmirched the very concept in the eyes of many around the world," wrote Thomas Carothers, who directs the Democracy and Rule of Law Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in a May 2008 op-ed in the *Washington Post*.

Another prominent dissident from the region, Saad Eddin Ibrahim of Egypt, has criticized the Bush administration for raising the hopes of democracy activists in the Arab world and essentially retreating after Hamas won a majority in the Palestinian parliament in 2006. Now in exile in the United States, Ibrahim ramped up an effort in late 2008 to have the large U.S. disbursement of annual aid to Egypt conditioned on reforms. But some regional experts doubt the effectiveness of such a move. Council on Foreign Relations Senior Fellow Steven A. Cook says aid cuts tied to Cairo's democratic performance could be counterproductive. "The Egyptian government is not going to heel because we're cutting \$100 million or \$200 million from the aid package," Cook says. "They will find money elsewhere to replace it with and, ultimately, we'll have less influence and leverage because of these punitive actions."

A less-discussed channel for democracy promotion in the Middle East is U.S.-funded broadcasting. Here, too, the picture is mixed. Much of the tens of millions of dollars approved for U.S. democracy promotion in Iran ended up funneled into broadcasting efforts like Farsi-language TV (run by the Voice of America) and Radio Farda, a 24-hour service with a lively Internet presence. Both networks are aimed at informing Iranians about domestic and international developments and, although questions have arisen about the breadth and purpose of their efforts, they have received generally positive reviews.

The Arabic-language flagships — pop music-driven Radio Sawa and Al-Hurrah Television — receive much lower grades from experts. Al-Hurrah, for example, has faced criticism for lax editorial oversight that has raised

Current calls for a reboot of democracy promotion policy come amid signs of general backsliding.

questions about its coverage of sensitive topics like Iraq. The Board of Broadcasting Governors defends the professionalism and impact of both broadcasters, but there are few benchmarks for gauging success in their stated goals of being democracy promotion tools.

On the plus side in the region, the Arab monarchies of Morocco and Jordan have taken steps like holding multiparty elections, improving some rights for women and permitting a relatively open civil society sector to function. Democracy and rights watchdog groups, however, say both countries have far to go in terms of political reforms. The Libyan regime's decision in 2003 to renounce its non-conventional weapons program and subsequent thawing of ties with the West raised initial hopes about coming reforms, but the country's record on human rights and political reforms remains abysmal.

Experts' calls for a reboot of democracy promotion policy come amid signs of general backsliding among democracies. For instance, the Freedom House survey of global political rights and civil liberties for 2007 spotlighted democratic reversals in one-fifth of the world's countries, including geopolitically significant ones like Russia, Pakistan and Nigeria.

Larry Diamond, a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, who has warned of a "democratic recession" in the world, advises democracy advocates in the West to place more emphasis on shoring up at-risk democracies like Kenya, instead of seeking to bring freedom to autocratic states. "So many of the new democracies that have come into being in the last couple of decades or so are really not functioning very well. And if we're serious about sustaining this, then we have to work more creatively and persistently to improve the quality of democratic functioning where democracy has actually already emerged," he says.

A Sense of Community?

Democracy promotion was not exactly a flashpoint in the 2008 presidential campaign. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was most closely associated with the issue through his plan for a "League of Democracies," an organization of states with shared values and interests that would periodically coordinate on pressing matters like relieving suffering in Sudan's Darfur region or imposing tough

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sanctions on Iran as penalty for continuing its uranium enrichment program. Though seen in some quarters as a proposal to supplant the United Nations, he stressed that he intended the league to complement U.N. activities rather than replace them.

On the Democratic Party side, some leading policy experts favor a “Concert of Democracies,” which McCain’s plan resembles. This approach, too, sees a need for a formal structure uniting the world’s democracies and providing a framework for them to act on crises such as Darfur or assist fellow democracies in responding to security or economic threats.

In both cases, supporters of these organizations look to take a step further than the nearly decade-old Community of Democracies by providing stricter guidelines for membership and taking more assertive collective action. Two supporters of the “concert” model, James Lindsay and Ivo Daalder, wrote in the January/February 2007 issue of *The American Interest* that a good starting point would be the

bolstering of the U.N. democracy caucus “into a genuine and effective coalition — one whose members seek to develop common positions prior to important votes, just as regional groups of member states do now.” Yet the issue is a subject of some dispute among leading Democrats. CFR Senior Fellow Charles A. Kupchan, a National Security Council official in the Clinton administration, writes in *Foreign Affairs* that such an organization “would expose the limits of the West’s power and legitimacy.”

President-elect Barack Obama is on the record as supporting democracy programs. He told the *Washington Post* in March 2008 of his interest in starting a “Rapid Response Fund for young democracies and post-conflict societies that will provide foreign aid, debt relief, technical assistance and investment packages that show the people of newly hopeful countries that democracy and peace deliver, and the United States stands by them.”

Speaking about the challenges posed by the Middle East, the CFR’s Steven Cook says: “Until policymakers

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and analysts have an answer to the question of how we protect our very real interests in the Middle East during that fraught and unstable short-term and medium-term period of a democratic transition, we're always going to back away when people we don't like get elected."

The Community of Democracies has already disappointed many activists. Since its founding, it has inspired a Democracy Caucus that meets annually at the United Nations, and it also helped establish the U.N. Democracy Fund, which aids efforts like election monitoring. But many experts have remarked on the lack of solidarity among the club in areas like human rights enforcement. They also point to the group's failure to speak out against attacks on democracy or even to issue praise for countries that have made progress. Developing-world democracies like South Africa, India and the Philippines have often voted against Western states on human rights issues at the United Nations.

In the Middle East, autocracies remain dominant. Experts based in the United States see little tangible improvement as a result of the Bush administration's freedom agenda. "Neither incumbent regimes nor reform advocates believe any longer that the United States is seeking the democratic transformation of the region," wrote Marina Ottaway, director of the Carnegie Endowment's Middle East program, in a June 2008 paper. "Credibility will not be restored by new rhetoric but by consistent efforts to promote attainable goals." Yet few advocate abandoning the effort altogether.

Another area of concern has been the stalled progress of democratic reforms in the non-Baltic former Soviet states. Russia under Vladimir Putin has steadily rolled back political and press freedoms since he became president in 1999, and his successor, Dmitry Medvedev, shows no signs of reversing those trends. Moscow's brief war with Georgia this past August and its recognition of separatist regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states have raised alarms about an end to reforms in the country and region.

Meanwhile, the Georgian administration of President Mikheil Saakashvili, while widely credited with expediting economic reforms and tackling corruption, also raised concerns about heavy-handedness against its political opposi-

*The Bush administration
has expressed pride in
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freedom agenda.*

tion. And Ukraine remains mired in a dispute between its two Orange Revolution avatars, President Viktor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko, leaving it vulnerable to Russian pressures.

Despite these setbacks, Steven Cook of the Council on Foreign Relations credits the Bush admin-

istration with spurring a substantial new public dialogue about democracy and freedom. "No longer could the regimes deflect demands for change, because the United States was [now] watching," he says. "This allowed for the flowering of this debate about reform and questions of the sources of power and authenticity and legitimacy in these societies."

At a Crossroads

While acknowledging setbacks, the Bush administration has expressed pride in its promotion of the freedom agenda. In its final year it issued National Security Presidential Directive 58, codifying many of its policies as a guide to future administrations. These include the use of foreign aid to promote democratic development, support free trade and lead the effort to combat global hunger and disease.

But in the waning months of Bush's presidency, Republican, Democratic and nonpartisan foreign policy experts alike have produced a number of reports calling for an overhaul of the Bush approach. Their recommendations include the following:

- Draw a distinction between regime change and democracy promotion, making clear the United States does not use military force to remove governments in the name of democracy;
- Establish more modest goals for bolstering democracy in a limited number of states;
- Take steps to improve coordination on democracy promotion across the numerous U.S. agencies involved in related work;
- Renew engagement in the Community of Democracies as a forum for strengthening democratic institutions and increasing involvement with existing multilateral bodies that deal with democracy, such as the United Nations;
- Emphasize strengthening of governance and rule of law over the holding of elections in countries in transition; and

• Take a more realistic approach to democracy promotion in the Middle East, while continuing to prod states in the region to open up their societies politically and economically.

As the Obama administration takes office, U.S. democracy promotion policy appears to be at a crossroads. Stanford University's Diamond observes that the goal "no longer enjoys consensus and there are big divisions within both parties on how much of this we should be doing." While many leading Republicans and Democrats still consider democratization essential for advancing U.S. interests in the world, there are disagreements over the pace, sequencing and intensity of such efforts.

President-elect Obama may have a built-in advantage as he engages with the world and considers policies that

President-elect Obama may have a built-in advantage as he engages with the world and considers policies that could expand and sustain democracy.

could expand and sustain democracy. The U.S. presidential campaign was widely watched and scrutinized globally, and the fact that it produced the country's first African-American executive drew admiring comments from many corners of the globe about the U.S. system. On the other hand, Obama comes into office facing a financial crisis that has many nations questioning the credibility of the United States and Western Europe as stewards of good governance and market freedoms.

The United States still possesses enormous influence and resources to reshape the global financial system, a task Obama is already moving to confront. So this is also a time of rare opportunity to revive Washington's reputation as guardian of a message of freedom that has become muddled in translation. ■

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David Wink

DESPITE MANY OBSTACLES, THE MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE HAS COME A LONG WAY IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

By PETER F. MULREAN

In 2002, the United States elevated democracy promotion to the top of its agenda in the Arab world — a major shift for a region that had previously gotten a pass on these matters. It's not that democracy promotion is new to U.S. foreign policy. Many of the elements of what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice calls “transformational diplomacy” have been in play elsewhere for decades. Think of American support for dissidents during the Cold War, for nascent political parties and nongovernmental organizations in Latin America in the 1980s or Eastern Europe in the 1990s,

and public statements about human rights abuses even in countries where we have important relationships, such as China or Russia.

What is new is the attempt to take a holistic approach to democracy promotion in the Arab world. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, a Near Eastern Affairs Bureau–led review of our policy toward the region concluded that the United States needed to significantly increase efforts to promote reforms addressing the needs and desires of the people, and not just the governments. That analysis tracked closely with the 2002 United Nations Development Program’s *Arab Human Development Report*, a frank study by Arab scholars that identified three “deficits” in the region.

According to that report, the freedom deficit, the women’s empowerment deficit and the knowledge deficit not only prevent the Middle East from fulfilling its potential, but put it in danger of falling ever further behind in the globalized economy. Such stagnation might create fertile ground for breeding extremists.

The U.S. policy review concluded that we should pursue democracy promotion in the Arab world on two tracks. The first track is diplomatic, urging governments to recognize that reform is in the long-term interest of both the people and the regimes. The second track is programmatic, using U.S. assistance funds in direct support of reform efforts.

TD in the Arab World: A Coherent Approach

The Middle East Partnership Initiative, launched in December 2002, was the embodiment of this new policy and an effort to craft a coherent approach to transformational diplomacy for the Arab world. It was based on twin assumptions: that democratic development would only be sustainable if home-grown, and that top-down, government-led reform was unlikely to lead to significant change

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unless accompanied by bottom-up demand from the people. MEPI was therefore designed as a flexible program tool to provide concrete support directly to reformers in the region instead of to, or through, governments.

Basing the program at the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs was a signal that it would be an integral part of our day-to-day foreign policy. MEPI’s four-pillar structure — democracy, economic growth, education, women’s empowerment — was aimed at addressing the shortcomings outlined in the UNDP report.

The challenges to make MEPI work effectively were formidable — and many still are. Within the State Department, both the pro-reform policy and the programming to support it represented a major shift in the way we did business in the region. NEA lacked the bureaucratic structures and experienced personnel for developing and managing these types of assistance programs. Our regional posts faced similar problems, because staff members with program experience were few in number and already had full-time jobs. There was little prospect in the short run of adding new embassy personnel to assume the new responsibilities. In addition, some posts had only limited contacts among the local activists in civil society that MEPI was targeting.

Externally, the obstacles loomed even larger. Middle Eastern governments paid lip service to democratic reform, but varied greatly in their actual commitment — with many dead-set against it. To make matters worse, civil society in most of the countries was weak, badly organized and hampered by restrictive legislation and/or repression by the state.

Given those obstacles, MEPI has come a long way in five years. On the internal front, NEA created the Office of Partnership Initiatives, now staffed with 27 area and grants specialists from both the Civil Service and Foreign Service. And in 2004 two MEPI regional offices opened in Abu Dhabi and Tunis, with two Foreign Service officers and six local specialists in each. These personnel coordinate activities with embassies and consulates, perform outreach to potential partners, develop and oversee programs, and contribute to public diplomacy efforts.

The Crux of TD

As our permanent presence in each country, U.S. embassies and consulates have become central to the process of identifying reform priorities, funding opportunities and potential partners for MEPI programs. In many ways, this

field work has constituted on-the-job training for “transformational diplomats,” by adding a new activist dimension to their work.

With a mandate to identify potential projects and groups to implement them, a diplomat’s responsibilities now extend well beyond reporting on developments. Instead of simply meeting with an NGO or business association and sending a reporting cable back to the State Department, an officer can also explore ways in which the U.S. government might support these groups through MEPI.

This transition from reporting on developments to actively supporting them is in many ways the crux of transformational diplomacy. It has both supporters and detractors within the Foreign Service. The latter often argue that, by moving beyond relations between governments and directly supporting individuals or groups, the United States is both flouting appropriate diplomatic behavior and making bilateral relationships unnecessarily difficult. These points deserve to be examined.

The basic goal of foreign policy is to advance national interests through the management of relations with other countries. Bilateral relations consist of many and varied interests — some common, some competing. Maintaining diplomatic ties, however, does not necessarily mean preserving the status quo, for relationships adjust to changes in the mix of interests on one side or the other.

Governments use a variety of tools to influence each other in favor of their own national agendas and they do not limit themselves to official interaction. These range from quiet bilateral discussions to public statements and lobbying, and from development and military assistance to business delegations and multilateral negotiations, to name but a few. In other words, there is plenty of pushing and pulling involved, not all of it done behind closed doors or using traditional diplomatic means. Seen in this light, providing support to nongovernmental actors that is neither covert nor illegal is simply another way to advance one’s diplomatic agenda.

Thus, a program like MEPI provides the United States with an additional tool for pursuing its stated objective of promoting democratic reform. The trick is figuring out how to pursue the new policy within the context of the overall bilateral agenda. The need for diplomats to balance the myriad foreign policy objectives and ensure that our comprehensive methods are sensibly serving our national interests was one more key reason for making MEPI the work of NEA, rather than a functional bureau or agency

focused on only one area of our policy in the region.

A Varied Response

The response by governments in the Arab world to the initiative has varied. While almost all the governments viewed it with skepticism at the start, some have come to welcome both the concept and the concrete assistance these programs provide to local actors. Others are ambivalent, but allow MEPI programs to take place in their countries. Finally, a small number are not only opposed, but actively make it difficult for MEPI-funded activities to take place on their territory. In other words, we are at different stages of adjusting bilateral relations with the countries of the region to match the new reality that the United States is placing a higher priority on democratic reform.

Because the initiative was designed to reach beyond governments, it is also worth noting that the general public in the region is pretty much unaware of MEPI or its programs. Where the approach has made considerable inroads is with the “community of reformers” in the Arab world. When I made initial visits across the region after opening the MEPI Regional Office in Tunis four years ago, most activists and reformers met me with skepticism — when they met me at all. The reasons for their reticence varied: doubts about American sincerity on reform; objections to certain policies; fear of being tarnished, or endangered, by association with the U.S. government.

With sustained engagement, a consistent message and concrete program support, we have largely turned that reaction around. It’s not that the reformers now agree with all U.S. policies, but they have concluded we share a common interest in promoting democratic change and believe the United States delivers on its promises of concrete support, even to those who don’t always agree with us. The bottom line is that many of the groups who avoided us in the past are now coming to us with ideas for reform projects and seeking support.

One of the biggest challenges to U.S. democracy promotion has been how we talk about what we are doing. Words do matter, particularly in a region where conspiracy theories are an art form. There is a growing hunger for democratic practices across the Arab world. The way most people express this desire, however, is in the context of their daily problems and not abstract societal concepts. Terms like “freedom,” “democracy” or “rule of law” are harder to grasp for most people than “corruption,” “equal access to jobs” or “fair treatment by judges,” even if the latter are just

examples of the former.

Arab opponents of reform frequently deride the idea of democracy as a Western model being imposed on their society. However specious, these arguments have resonance with a large segment of the population, even among liberal reformers. We have not yet found a magic lexicon to address this challenge, but are working on it.

Hot-button words vary by country, as do examples of democratic practices that resonate. In general, people respond well to specific examples of change that affect the daily lives of average individuals. The key for outsiders like the U.S. government is to find terms that reinforce the ideas that democratic development is already taking place; that it is not being imposed from the outside, but is home-grown; and that expanding democracy ultimately leads to concepts that are genuinely shared by our different cultures, such as justice and security.

The Projects

During its first two years, MEPI primarily funded U.S.

NGOs to implement large regional programs — either the same activity in several countries or activities bringing participants from different countries together. This approach was effective in establishing relationships and testing the appropriateness of certain types of assistance, but it was not adequate to fulfill the initiative's mandate to be flexible and responsive to the needs and opportunities of reformers on the ground.

To accomplish this, we have put greater emphasis on country-specific strategies, and MEPI has shifted increasingly to direct funding of local groups. American NGOs continue to play a crucial role, providing technical assistance and organizational skills that allow us to maintain effective regional programs and to focus their expertise where none exists at the local level. These adjustments have required significant outreach efforts by embassies and MEPI staff to local reformers and activists.


Identifying and building relationships with reliable local civil society partners is central to our strategy and serves the overriding objective of supporting home-grown demo-




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cratic practices. These groups often need help developing certain skills and capacities, but they have both the local savvy and the long-term commitment to be the catalysts and the shepherds of positive change in their countries.

Embassy engagement in identifying partners and opportunities, combined with MEPI's ability to move assistance funds quickly, has proven highly effective in addressing fast-moving situations. In 2005, we responded rapidly to the announcement of elections in Lebanon following the February assassination of ex-Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, and later that year assisted with preparations for Egypt's first-ever popular vote for president.

For numerous projects, MEPI moved from a concept to a signed grant agreement in four to eight weeks, a turnaround time nearly unheard of in the assistance field. Activities included public opinion polling, roundtable discussions of electoral issues, public education campaigns promoting participation and extensive domestic election observation. None of these programs was designed to affect the results of the elections, but rather to help raise the level of informed debate, confirm election results by independent observers and, more generally, add to the public sentiment that voters had a stake in the process — in other words, to help build the culture of democratic practice.

While having a rapid-response capability is an advantage, simply waiting for the next momentous reform opportunity does not constitute a credible strategy. After examining where MEPI had demonstrated a real value-added during its first three years, we shifted in 2006 to a two-track approach. The first track continues timely and flexible responses to short-term reform opportunities as they arise, often using small grants to local partners to get the ball rolling. The second is a continuous, long-term effort to help build the next generation of reformers, by funding projects by local groups that encourage democratic practices and facilitating focused training and internships in the United States.

For example, an early MEPI program for young Arab businesswomen, the Business Internship Program, was judged highly successful in its combination of an intensive academic course (mini-MBA) with a three-month internship at a U.S. business. Employing this model, MEPI has

*Programs like the
Middle East Partnership
Initiative are a powerful
tool for promoting
democratic reform.*

developed new programs as part of our broader effort to strengthen the capacity of reformers in a range of sectors. The New Generation Program and the Leaders for Democracy Fellowship provide training and internships to political activists who have already begun making a mark in their respective fields. And the Women's Legal and Business Network offers a cadre of profes-

sionals the opportunity to work in the U.S. legal and business environment while learning from each other and their American counterparts.

In five years, we have supported more than 350 MEPI projects, large and small, worth more than \$430 million in 17 countries. Examples where we have provided U.S. expertise to reformers include training female politicians in campaign techniques; bringing hundreds of university students to the United States for a summer of leadership and civic engagement training; placing short-term experts at central banks to advise on privatization; and embedding media managers in independent newspapers to improve quality and ensure financial sustainability.

Examples of projects developed and implemented by local groups include fighting corruption by exposing financial irregularities during major corporations' stockholder meetings in Egypt; exposing dozens of religious leaders in Yemen to the principles of democracy and documenting how these principles were incorporated into sermons; training hundreds of local democracy activists in communications, civic engagement and negotiation techniques; producing a play in Morocco to teach illiterate women about their rights under the new family code; and engaging teenagers living in a Hezbollah-dominated area of Lebanon in "democracy in action" activities, including volunteerism, advocacy campaigns and media training. And this list only scratches the surface.

An Enduring Objective

We have spent the first five years of MEPI setting up the necessary bureaucratic structures, conducting outreach on the ground, developing hundreds of programs and managing the impact on bilateral relations. But has our approach, including but not limited to MEPI, advanced the objective of democratic reform in the Arab world? I would argue that it has, but only if we accept a realistic view of

FOCUS

both the timeline for genuine democratic change and how much influence the U.S. has on the process.

First, if we look back over the past five years, we can say that our efforts to promote reform in the region have had some notable successes. Still, no one could claim that democracy has firmly taken hold in any country. On the other hand, viewing the same period as the first stage of a decades-long process, there have been important developments that could form the foundation for democratic societies in the Middle East.

Second, our assistance cannot single-handedly bring democracy to this region. What we *can* do is support those who strive to spark democratic change in their own countries and urge the governments to listen to their people. In this regard, one should not undervalue the impact that U.S. political support for democratic reform, backed up by concrete support for the courageous people trying to achieve it, can have on changing the dynamic in these countries.

We have already seen proof of that on many occasions. We must accept, however, that this outside role will never

be decisive. For democracy to succeed, it must come from within. That is not a linear process, however: there is no magic formula for getting there, and the U.S. government doesn't (and shouldn't) have its hands on the controls.

After five years of the MEPI experience, the United States is now better positioned to play its role promoting democratic reform in the Arab world. We have established a relationship of trust with a network of reformers in the region, instilled an understanding of the policy/program nexus within the State Department and embassies, and created an effective mechanism for identifying reform opportunities and responding with programs and political support.

One can always question whether all the priorities are on target or all the cogs are meshing, which I fully expect the next administration will do. After all, promoting reform in the Arab world will remain a U.S. priority, so the next administration will need all the appropriate instruments for advancing this very real interest. In MEPI, we have added a unique, if still imperfect, tool to the diplomatic toolbox. ■

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MENTAL HEALTH CARE AT STATE: A BROKEN SYSTEM

FOREIGN SERVICE EMPLOYEES HAVE INCENTIVES TO HIDE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT OR, WORSE, TO LET THEIR PROBLEMS GO UNTREATED.

By ANONYMOUS

In the year since I wrote an article for the *Foreign Service Journal* (“Encouraging Employees to Seek Help”) detailing my interactions with the Bureaus of Diplomatic Security and Medical Services and the director general about my mental state, the following events occurred. My father spent four months seriously ill and then died; I suffered a disfiguring and debilitating illness; my spouse took a position in a wartorn country on another continent; and I’ve spent months helping my mother deal with her new life. Thanks in part, I assume, to my antidepressants and my weekly therapy, I reacted to all of this with great equanimity.

There was, of course, some monetary cost involved as the Foreign Service Plan generally continued to pay just \$49 of the \$140 weekly fee for therapy. When the therapist or I engaged in lengthy discussions with the American Foreign Service Protective Association, or Coventry, they grudgingly paid \$90 for a session or two. Then the bargaining and negotiating would have to start all over again with the next month’s bill.

In July, my therapist and I agreed that I was no longer in

need of therapy, but I decided to stay on medication. At the same time, the FS bidding process started. I read the cabled and e-mailed instructions about medical clearances, went on MED’s Web site, and asked my therapist to write to MED addressing the three questions asked on the Web site. She did.

I wasn’t worried about a clearance because someone in MED had assured me last year that my Class 2 medical clearance would only keep me out of Iraq and Afghanistan. I wasn’t happy about those exclusions, but I was relieved that the rest of the world was still available to me.

Through the Looking Glass

In August, I contacted MED to make sure it had everything it needed in order to clear me. Eventually a nurse told me that they lacked a statement from my psychiatrist. I explained I didn’t have one. The nurse asked for a statement from my internist since he had prescribed my medication. I rushed over to my internist with a detailed mental health questionnaire in hand. The internist faxed a letter to MED that same day. At this point I had bid on a variety of deputy chief of mission and principal officer positions, given a list of those posts to MED, and was anxious to get the post-specific clearances.

In September, I contacted the same nurse to see where my clearance stood and was told they’d never received the letter from my internist. I requested that he send the fax

The author is the same Foreign Service officer who wrote about mental illness in the January 2008 issue of the Journal that focused on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, available at www.afsa.org/fsj/jan08/encouraging.pdf.

again. He did. I called the same nurse. She confirmed that my internist had sent a fax in August and again in September, but repeated that they needed a report from my psychiatrist.

I reminded her that she'd agreed to accept a letter from my internist instead. Memory triggered, she agreed to move my file to the next step in the clearance process. In the meantime, the assignment process was humming along.

In October, I was given an appointment with a psychiatrist in MED. I assumed that we would review my therapist's and internist's evaluations and the list of posts on which I'd bid, and then I'd be cleared. Instead, the psychiatrist gave me an hour to tell the history of and reasons for my depression; my eating and drinking habits; whether I worry about money (just days after the stock market plummeted 700 points!) or that I've left the stove on when I'm out of the house; the history of my mental health treatment; and my family structure, my exercise routine, and everything except my favorite color. At the end of the hour, she picked up my list of bids, now down to just two viable overseas posts, and told me I would not be cleared for one of them.

This one post for which she said I couldn't be cleared was literally the only place in the world (except Iraq and Afghanistan) where my spouse and I shared a decent chance of being assigned together, in challenging jobs at our grades. Not even Washington meets these criteria. The place is two short flights away from my mother. It's sunny and warm, which always helps my mood. And the job would be full of interesting new challenges. The post for which the psychiatrist said I could be cleared is in a cold, dark city a continent and an ocean away from my mother, and offers no jobs for my spouse. I would also have no chance of a promotion out of this assignment and my time-in-class would expire at the end of the tour.

MED apparently makes its clearance decisions solely on the basis of the availability of American-trained mental

health practitioners, even in cases such as mine where my therapist and I are confident that I no longer need therapy. Thinking MED would consider potential for satisfaction and happiness when they look at post-specific criteria, I made this point to the psychiatrist, giving her all the reasons why the unsuitable post was, in fact, suitable and vice versa. She agreed to take my case to the committee, assuming that my former therapist could respond to the question sheet that I was given for my internist. The therapist did so, and also offered to be available to me by phone and e-mail. I was then cleared for the more challenging and geographically desirable job.

State still treats mental health issues differently than physical health issues, even in cases where the problem(s) can be addressed with medication.

Disincentives to Seek Treatment

My own story has a happy ending. But the system still has many flaws:

- Mental health issues are still treated differently than physical health issues, even in cases where the problem(s) can be addressed with medication.
- The Web site on clearances for people with post-specific clearances doesn't mention that there's a specific form for people with mental health issues.
- MED's records aren't complete, and people are sometimes forced to run back to their doctors for forms and letters that have already been submitted.
- The purpose of the appointment with a department psychiatrist isn't made clear.
- MED focuses too much on the availability of treatment and not enough on whether the employee actually needs treatment.
- MED is reluctant to communicate by e-mail, which can be a problem for people who are in different time zones, in open cubicles or shared spaces, or away from their phones during business hours.

These may all be minor problems, but when combined with the larger problems of security clearances and Class 2 medical clearances, they act as incentives for people to hide their mental health treatment from DS or MED — or, worse, to let their problems go untreated. ■

THE *BLACK SWAN* COMES HOME

A LETTER DISCOVERED IN THE EMBASSY PARIS MAILROOM IN 2003 HELPED SOLVE
A 60-YEAR-OLD MYSTERY. HERE IS THE REST OF THE STORY.

By DOUGLAS W. WELLS

I was sitting at my computer in early 2007 when an e-mail popped into my in-box with a familiar subject line: “The Black Swan.” It had been three years since I’d published an article about a Frenchman, Mr. Yves Carnot, who had devoted his life to preserving the memory of the crew of the B-17 that crashed near his grandfather’s farm during World War II (“The Last Flight of the Black Swan,” *FSJ*, April 2004). The e-mail was short, to the point, and filled with emotion:

My name is Richard Theodore Hensley. My father was killed in action over France in December 1943. I was born June 25, 1943. I never met my father. I have searched many databases, to no avail. One hour ago, I received a series of e-mails that led me in your direction. I am tearfully overwhelmed. I can find no words to articulate what is in my heart today. There is a deep sorrow coupled with happiness in my soul I didn't know existed. Since I was a boy, I wished I had a dad, my own dad, to share the things only a father and son can share. I have borne a specific loneliness for this since I can remember. Thank you for your foresight and actions in discovering the letter, and writing the article in the Foreign Service Journal, which has led to Mr. Carnot and my father, Technical Sergeant Richard George Hensley.

I thought back to that day in 2003, when in an Embassy Paris mailroom after the start of the Iraq War I had picked a letter of support out of a mountain of indignant protest notes.

Douglas W. Wells, a Foreign Service officer since 2000, is the information systems security officer for U.S. Mission Geneva. He has previously served in Hong Kong and Paris, and is the author of a book about his Peace Corps experience, In Search of the Elusive Peace Corps Moment (Xlibris Press, 2001).

It was from Mr. Carnot, whose amazing story inspired me to write the article. His dedication to the memory of those who had made the ultimate sacrifice for his country during the war was a welcome and refreshing perspective during a dark time in French-American relations. And now the power of Internet search engines that helped me find the author of the letter and publish his story in the *Foreign Service Journal* would enable Richard Hensley to solve a 60-year-old mystery and connect to his father, a genuine war hero and a member of the crew of the *Black Swan*.

The Carnot Connection

One thing was clear: I needed to put Richard Hensley in touch with Mr. Carnot, who over the years had acquired an impressive list of contacts who either were in the *Black Swan*, had witnessed the crash or had served with the plane’s crew members. Within 48 hours, Mr. Hensley had the names and addresses of the crew members who were still alive. He also had the phone number of the pilot, Verne Woods, who had struggled in vain to get Hensley’s father out of the plane before the crippled bomber crashed into the Brittany hedgerows. Mr. Hensley was able to talk to the first person beside his mother who had a living memory of his father — a man who had lived with his father, ate with him, heard all of his stories about his family and was an eyewitness to his ultimate sacrifice.

Meanwhile, Yves Carnot was busy making arrangements to have Richard, his wife and his sister DeEtta come to Brittany for the next annual ceremony honoring the *Black Swan* and its crew. Every year on Dec. 31, the day of the crash, the small town of Bannalec pays for flags and flowers and invites people to remember the sacrifice of Richard Hensley and

Stuart Mendelsohn, the co-pilot, who also perished when the plane went down. The weather in Brittany at that time can be very unpleasant, but Yves Carnot is always there, along with the mayor of Bannalec, witnesses to the crash, French World War II veterans and resistance members. Often representatives from the French military and, sometimes, an American from the embassy or American Battle Monuments Commission also attend. After the ceremony, Mr. Carnot and his family always make the 200-mile round-trip pilgrimage to the Brittany American Cemetery to lay flowers on the graves of Hensley and Mendelsohn, who lay alongside the nearly 4,500 American soldiers who lost their lives helping to liberate Europe from the Nazis.

A few months later, I received an e-mail from Mr. Carnot; Richard Hensley, his wife and sister were coming to France! “You simply must attend,” he wrote. It was a seven-hour trip by train from Geneva, but I would have traveled twice as far to be a part of this heartwarming experience. So on Dec. 30, 2007, I stepped off a train near Bannalec and shook hands with Richard Hensley, a man who was anxious to gather every memory and experience possible to bring him closer to the father he had never known. He had learned much from Verne Woods, and hoped to find out more in the place where his father fought and died. And he would not be disappointed.

Yves Carnot put us all up in an elegant stone farmhouse. First thing the next morning, he pulled up outside the house with a van and announced that we were going to the field where the plane actually went down, a few hundred yards from where the ceremony was to be held. When we arrived, two old men were waiting. They smiled and nodded as the Hensleys got out and immediately started gesturing and talking in French. I fell into the role of unofficial translator and did my best to pass everything along as they told their story.

‘They Went Down Fighting’

The men were brothers and had lived nearby all their life.

They were 4 and 6 years old at the time of the crash and had been visiting their grandmother on that day. When they heard the clatter of gunfire, they ran out of the barn where they were playing. They saw two small planes diving on a larger plane, which suddenly lurched and drifted into a slow banking turn, with smoke coming from front. Then they saw small specks falling and sprouting parachutes as the crew bailed out. As the plane dropped and came closer, they saw two forms come from the plane and hit the ground with no parachutes.

*The brothers then showed us
where the bomber had
bounced off a hedgerow before
finally plowing into the ground
and bursting into flames.*



The Black Swan and its crew. Richard George Hensley (front row, far right) and Stuart Mendelsohn (back row, third from right) died when the plane was shot down. Pilot Verne Woods (back row, fourth from right) and the others survived.

Their eyes bright with excitement, they talked over each other trying to relate the story, as if they were little kids again who had just run into the kitchen to tell their grandmother. They pointed out to the field and beckoned us to follow. Two white objects stuck out of the ground far ahead. As we got closer, we found out what they were: two painted wooden crosses that had been made by the brothers and placed exactly where Richard Hensley, the machine gunner, and Stuart Mendelsohn, the co-pilot, had hit the ground.

We all stood by quietly as Richard and DeEtta knelt and touched the cross with their father’s name. The two men, who had talked nonstop since we got out of the car, stood silently nearby, dabbing at their eyes.

The brothers then showed us where the bomber had bounced off a hedgerow before finally plowing into the ground and bursting into flames. There was a clear dent in the hedgerow and, amazingly, the trees and bushes still hadn’t grown back. As Richard gazed at the sign Carnot had made and posted on the spot, Yves reached into his pocket and pulled out a piece of Plexiglas and a couple of

empty .50-caliber shell casings he had found the previous spring. The field still yields bits of the B-17 with each yearly plowing, he explained, pressing them into Richard’s hand. “This proves they went down fighting,” he said. “Your father died trying to save his plane and crew.”

Our next stop was the Brittany American Military Cemetery. Yves had called ahead to the cemetery caretaker, who

agreed to conduct the special ritual for veterans' family members in which sand from the Omaha landing beach is rubbed into the letters on the gravestone, making them more visible, and taps is played. We had talked quite a bit during the two-hour drive but fell silent when we pulled into the cemetery parking lot. The caretaker came out to greet us and showed us through the immaculately kept cemetery.

Yves and I hung back as Richard and DeEtta approached their father's resting place among the thousands of fallen heroes. As the sound of taps drifted over the cemetery grounds, they knelt side by side, gently running their hands over the white marble cross. They were talking to their father for the first time. It was an incredibly moving scene.

The long drive back was quiet, each of us thinking our own thoughts about the day, the sacrifice of the men in the cemetery, and the acts of kindness and respect shown to them by the local population. I think we were all hoping that the Iraq War would end soon, and French-American relations could get back to normal.



Mr. Yves Carnot.

More Surprises

The ceremony in Bannalec took place the next day. As we all sat in the country house eating breakfast, Yves kept looking across the table at me, and I knew he had something more up his sleeve. Actually, he had several more things in store.

First, he had requested and received an honor guard from the French military for the ceremony. Second, the lobbying I had done with

the embassy had worked, and there would be a U.S. naval officer present. Third, thanks to Yves and the caretaker of the cemetery, that officer would present the American flag that was flying over the Brittany cemetery on the day of their visit to the Hensleys. And last ... well, that one requires a little background.

Some years ago, Yves had visited a watchmaker's shop in a neighboring town looking for items related to



The memorial erected by Yves Carnot at the site of the crash.



Images from the Bannalec ceremony: Richard and DeEtta Hensley (center inset) discovered the father they never knew, Technical Sergeant Richard George Hensley (right inset).

Each of us was thinking
 our own thoughts about
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 men in the cemetery, and
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 and respect shown to
 them by the local
 population.

World War II. Genuine memorabilia was quite valuable and traded among war re-enactors like Yves and his friends, so he was interested even in a box full of odd parts and nonworking watches the watchmaker kept under the counter.

As he sifted through the box, a particular watch caught his eye. It was a simple U.S. Air Force timepiece, the kind given to air crew and support personnel (pilots usually had fancier ones), dated 1943. It had received some kind of shock and stopped running but was still in fairly good shape. The watchmaker told Yves it had been given to him by his father, who had gotten it decades ago from a man who had brought it in for repair, and left it when he found it couldn't be fixed. The man had said the watch was from the body of an American aviator, and locals had taken it before the Germans arrived at a crash site near the town.

Yves realized that it must be related to the *Black Swan*, because no other U.S. plane had crashed in the area. Moreover, the watch had stopped at just after 3:20 p.m., the precise time the plane was attacked and shot down by German aircraft. He tried to

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*The ceremony at
Bannelec spanned time,
national boundaries
and language.*

buy it, but the watchmaker politely refused. The watch wasn't especially valuable, but it was a memento related to his father, and he wanted to keep it to show friends and interested customers. Each year, Yves went back to the shop to make an offer, but was refused.

After he started planning the Hensleys' visit, Yves had suddenly remembered the watch. Richard Hensley wasn't a pilot like the other victim that day; he was a technical sergeant and would have been wearing a watch like the one in the box. It all fit together, and now there was no doubt: it *was* the watch worn by the father of his soon-to-be-arriving American visitors. He grabbed his keys and wallet and headed over to the next town, ready to say, pay or do anything to bring this precious relic back to its home.

But after he breathlessly related his story and began pleading once more for a chance to buy the watch, the watchmaker simply slid it across the table and told him to take it, no charge. Its emotional value to him was far outweighed by the emotional value it would have for its new owner, he explained, asking only that Yves pass along his best wishes and thanks to Richard for his father's sacrifice.

A Part of Something Bigger

So what was the ceremony at Bannelec like? It spanned time, national boundaries and language. The sight of the old French resistance fighters

holding up their unit flags, juxtaposed with the young, impeccably uniformed honor guard, and the crisp salute of the American naval officer as he presented the flag, is an image I'll carry with me for the rest of my life. Yes, there were tears on the part of Richard and DeEtta Hensley, but what made the biggest impression on all in attendance were their humble nods and sincere words of gratitude to the participants. It was obvious they knew, as we all did that day, that we were a small part of something very, very big, and the greatest honor was to those not there.

When Yves pulled out the watch and explained to the crowd what it was, a hush fell. As he pressed it into the American's hands, the only sounds were Richard's sobs, followed by the swelling applause and cheers of the on-lookers. Everyone gathered around for a look at the watch, shaking hands with the Hensleys, and the locals slapped Yves on the back.

As we all walked toward the village hall and some well-deserved food and drink, the old mayor of Bannelac spotted me and came over to talk. He was around at the time of the crash and knew Yves Carnot and his story well. He politely asked me why I was there and what my relation to the *Black Swan* was. I started to try and explain my work at the embassy, how I found the letter, and how the *Foreign Service Journal* had made it possible for Richard and DeEtta to find their father. But I could see by the look on his face that he wasn't following the many strange coincidences and twists of fate that brought me to his village.

So I stopped and looked back at the marble memorial stones bearing the names of Richard Hensley and Stuart Mendelsohn, under the gently waving American and French flags. "I'm just a friend of Yves," I finally said, and we walked on together down the muddy track between the Brittany hedgerows. ■

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AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • January 2009

AFSA Welcomes New Administration

BY JOHN K. NALAND, AFSA PRESIDENT

AFSA's transition planning, which began last summer with meetings with senior foreign policy advisers to the two nominees for president, kicked into high gear following the election of Barack Obama. AFSA immediately submitted a request to meet with Vice President-elect Joe Biden, since in recent decades it often has been in the White House, not Capitol Hill, that foreign affairs agencies' budget requests have faced their biggest hurdles.

In early December, AFSA had very productive meetings with President-elect Obama's transition teams at State and USAID. AFSA will also seek early appointments with Secretary of State-designate Hillary Clinton, the USAID Administrator-designate, and other incoming officials with foreign affairs responsibilities.

As AFSA and our Civil Service colleagues did for Secretary Colin Powell in 2001, we have offered to organize a welcoming ceremony in the C Street lobby for Secretary Clinton on her first day. □

AFSA Scholarship Application Deadline – Feb. 6

High school seniors and college undergraduates of Foreign Service employees (active-duty, retired and deceased) are eligible to apply for one-time-only AFSA Academic/Art Merit Awards and renewable need-based AFSA Financial Aid Scholarships. See page 61 for details.

LAST CALL FOR AFSA AWARD NOMINATIONS

BY BARBARA BERGER, PROFESSIONAL ISSUES COORDINATOR

Who among us in today's Foreign Service has not thought about challenging some issue related to our work? Perhaps you have witnessed a colleague's courageous stand against the status quo, his or her willingness to ask the tough questions or to disagree with conventional wisdom.

Yet too often the tendency is to shrug one's shoulders, to "go along" and not rock the boat. Then we find ourselves thinking of the "what ifs" — what if we had registered our dissent when it might have made a difference? Or taken the time to recognize someone who took a risk for what he or she believed?

This is our last call for nominations for the 2009 AFSA Dissent Awards. Please take this opportunity to put in writing and submit to AFSA your nomination for someone who had the courage to challenge the system. There are four award categories:

The Tex Harris Award for a Foreign Service Specialist

The W. Averell Harriman Award for a Junior Officer (FS-4, 5 or 6)

The William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer (FS-1, 2 or 3)

The Christian A. Herter Award for a Senior Officer (FE-OC-FE-CA).

Help AFSA show that there are still risk-takers among us. Your participation in this process is critical. Constructive dissent is born of intellectual

courage. Help us demonstrate that this quality exists in our Foreign Service.

AFSA also offers three awards for exemplary performance and extraordinary contributions to professionalism, morale and effectiveness. These are: the **Avis Bohlen Award**, for a Foreign Service family member;

the **Delavan Award**, for an Office Management Specialist; and the **M. Juanita Guess Award**, for a Community Liaison Officer.

We are the only organization representing federal employees to actively encourage and publicly honor the "risk-takers" and the "shin-kickers" in our midst. Please take the time to send in your nomination now. The deadline is Feb. 27, 2009.

Information on submitting a nomination is detailed in the December 2008 *AFSA News*, and it is also posted online at www.afsa.org/awards, along with a nomination form, which can be submitted online. You can also link to articles about the AFSA awards and find a comprehensive listing of past award winners in all categories.

Any questions may be directed to Professional Issues Coordinator Barbara Berger at berger@afsa.org, by telephone at (202) 338-4045, ext. 521, or by fax to (202) 338-6820. □



AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



Welcome to New Board Member

Kathryn Ting is the newest member of the AFSA Governing Board, representing the Foreign Agricultural Service. She joined FAS as an agricultural economist in 1983 and became a Foreign Agricultural Affairs Officer in 1986, serving in Hong Kong, Brussels (USEU), Manila and Mexico City. She was recently assigned as agricultural minister-counselor in Seoul for 2010. She looks forward to working with AFSA, particularly during the upcoming transition period.

AFSA Member Wins Federal Employee Award

On Sept. 16, career U.S. Agency for International Development Foreign Service officer Richard Greene was honored as the 2008 Federal Employee of the Year. The nonprofit, nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service sponsors the Service to America Medals program, also known as the "Sammies," to recognize excellence in the federal work force. Mr. Greene was selected from nearly 500 nominees representing two dozen federal agencies.

Mr. Greene is director of USAID's Office of Health, Infectious Diseases and Nutrition, where he manages programs in maternal and child health, nutrition, avian influenza, health systems, tuberculosis and neglected tropical diseases. The award stems from his design and oversight of the President's Malaria Initiative, which aims to reduced malaria-related deaths by 50 percent in 15 African countries through expanded availability of prevention and treatment measures. Already, more than 25 million people in Africa have benefited from this program.

In a statement, USAID Administrator Henrietta H. Fore praised Mr. Greene, saying that he "represents government at its best [and] reminds us that when we come together in the service of a common cause, we transform the lives of others across the globe."

AFSA joins Administrator Fore in congratulating Richard Greene on this remarkable achievement. You may read more about the President's Malaria Initiative at <http://www.fightingmalaria.gov>.

Applicants Sought for 2009 Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowships

Applications for the 2009 Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs/Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program are being accepted now, with a deadline of Feb. 6 for undergraduate applications, and Feb. 3 for graduate applications. Talented students in academic programs relevant to international affairs, political and economic analysis, administration, management and

science policy are encouraged to apply. The goal of the Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship program is to attract outstanding students from all ethnic, racial and social backgrounds who have an interest in pursuing a Foreign Service career in the U.S. Department of State. The program is funded by the Department of State and administered by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.

Undergraduate fellowships are open to students enrolled in their sophomore year of college at the time of application. Those interested in graduate fellowships must be in the process of seeking admission to graduate school for the following academic year; graduate fellowship winners are expected to enroll in two-year master's degree programs in areas such as public policy, international affairs, public administration, business, economics, political science, sociology or foreign languages. For both undergraduate and graduate fellowships, United States citizenship is required.

Please visit <http://careers.state.gov> or e-mail careers@state.gov for more information and to start the application process. □

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A Mixed Report Card

As we prepare to welcome a new Secretary of State, AFSA looks forward to presenting her management team with a “most urgent” list: the actions the department needs to undertake to restore fairness, employee-friendliness and professional pride to the Foreign Service. A useful starting point would be to take stock of the past two years by reviewing the progress — or lack thereof — on AFSA’s “wish list” of priority items, which we submitted to the director general in July 2006.

Our list, intended to help bring the Foreign Service into the 21st century, included sensible changes in personnel policies, procedures and regulations. We sought to address our members’ fairness and equity concerns and to attend to the needs of FS families serving abroad in an increasingly difficult and dangerous world.

Drawing on opinions expressed by the 5,000 Foreign Service members who responded to AFSA’s worldwide survey last fall, let us review the progress made thus far on the 2006 wish list.

1. *Apply Open Assignment rules fairly to end preferred treatment of bureaus’ favored insider candidates.*

Status: While the DG and HR/CDA now ensure better treatment of those coming out of war-zone postings, the vast majority of our members still perceive an assignment system driven by cronyism and insider-trading.

2. *Address concerns about security and effectiveness of Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams.*

Status: The department has come a long way towards providing bidders with a detailed, honest accounting of conditions at PRTs — but there has been little serious discussion of the implications of U.S. military redeployment on the future security, effectiveness and feasibility of PRTs.

3. *Facilitate overseas employment of spouses/partners.*

Status: Our members welcome initiatives such as the Expanded Professional Associates Program, but family members’ ability to find meaningful employment overseas remains stymied by bureaucratic rigidity, tight budgets and a lack of available positions.

4. *Increase promotion numbers and reduce the unrealistically high mandatory 5-percent low ranking.*

Status: Employees still feel that promotions are slow, unfairly tied to hardship service, and too dependent on supervisors’ EER-writing abilities. No effort has been made to address the 5-percent low ranking requirement.

5. *Create a State Department support structure for families separated by unaccompanied tours, along the lines of the U.S. military.*

Status: Other than a small, token increase in the Separate Maintenance Allowance and some outreach activities by the Family Liaison Office, State has done little. The Department of

Defense continues to put us to shame.

6. *Provide recognition and benefits to domestic partners of Foreign Service members assigned overseas.*

Status: The outgoing administration’s hostility to same-sex couples and insistence on broad applicability of the Defense of Marriage Act have precluded any progress in this area.

7. *Expedite fair, transparent handling of security clearance suspension cases.*

Status: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security has recently moved on many cases of security clearances that have been in limbo for as long as four or five years, but others remain unresolved. Our members still perceive that too much power is invested in DS as accuser, investigator, prosecutor, judge and jury.

8. *Create more humane maternity/paternity policies for Foreign Service members assigned overseas.*

Status: Medieval U.S. laws limiting maternity leave for federal employees have blocked efforts to address the unique problems facing Foreign Service families overseas. Female FS employees who become pregnant are still forced to exhaust their annual and sick leave — and often to go on leave without pay — during the mandatory three-month evacuation for childbirth.

9. *Rewrite the outdated, unclear and sometimes contradictory rules on reporting foreign contacts.*

Status: DS and HR, working collaboratively with AFSA, accomplished this long-overdue task this year.

10. *Liberalize antiquated overseas housing requirements.*

Status: Most of the 1960s-era regulations that tie the hands of overseas posts on housing decisions remain in place.

11. *Revolutionize technology in the workplace.*

Status: State has advanced in the welcome direction of making OpenNet Everywhere more accessible to Foreign Service employees and expanding availability/use of wireless devices.

12. *Ease the burden of declining per diem for long-term training.*

Status: The department’s Cost-Effective Lodging Initiative has helped our members avoid going out of pocket on lodging costs.

13. *Allow reimbursement of the costs of transporting and quarantining pets.*

Status: No significant change.

Finally, AFSA urged that the department honor the experience and expertise of its career diplomats and restore to them a pre-eminent role in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. We leave it to our members and readers to reach their own conclusions about progress on this point. □



Advice for the New USAID Administrator

This month, we will all be part of the historic inauguration of the first African-American U.S. president, whose mantra is change. We expect that the new USAID Administrator will not only have change in mind but improvement.

As a USAID employee for almost 30 years, I have seen many administrators come and go. All faced unique challenges and problems, but at no time do I recall the tsunami of issues we are currently experiencing: poor staff morale, confusing foreign assistance roles, insufficiency of resources, deficient organizational structures and an unclear overall mission. Many of us have addressed this in previous *FSJ* articles, publications and studies. It is critical that USAID now take this opportunity to pursue a new path. The recommendations and observations below are based on my experience, my personal interactions with employees and the results of employee surveys. I hope they will be accepted as an honest, caring attempt to improve our agency.

Organizational Structure

With three different administrators in the last eight years, it was inevitable that the USAID organizational structure would be modified. The latest change, though, was disturbing. Along with naming the first director of foreign assistance to also serve as the USAID Administrator, a new entity called the “F” Bureau was created at the State Department. Concurrently, at USAID the Policy and Program Coordination Bureau — the traditional heart and lungs of our operation — was disbanded, with the idea that the F Bureau would take over some of its functions. The F Bureau was a well-intentioned but misguided effort to align our foreign aid with foreign policy along the lines of a new “transformational development” initiative.

Unfortunately, the F Bureau did not work out as planned. Administrative paperwork increased for USAID missions worldwide, and the agency became hypercentralized. Strategic planning disappeared, and creativity and flexibility were crippled overseas as missions spent valuable time drafting country operational plans. USAID FSOs, sensing that F Bureau jobs were not career-enhancing, refused to bid on them, resulting in weak field-based experience in that unit. Many USAID Civil Service staff were unhappy being forced to work at State, so turnover was understandably high. Today most of the F Bureau staff is comprised of State Department and USAID Civil Service employees who review country operational plans — work for which they have little practical background.

The main premise of bringing USAID into the State Department was to ensure that foreign development projects would not involve activities contrary to U.S. foreign policy. This

fear is illogical, because neither State nor USAID is a policymaker; both are *implementers* of policy.

Recommendation: Disband the F Bureau and re-establish the PPC Bureau. If coordination is still a goal, a small number of State Department personnel should be assigned to work at USAID headquarters.

The new requirement that the Office of Human Resources report directly to the Administrator’s office represents another major change. This seemed like a wise move at the time because personnel issues were mismanaged for many years. However, the real reason for continuing problems at the Office of Human Resources is the dearth of staff available to handle the increased demands of the agency.

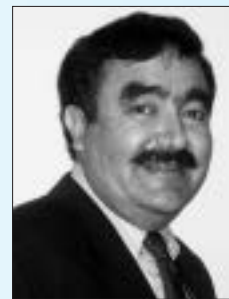
There is also a need to rethink the practice of always appointing a Foreign Service officer as the director of HR instead of a professionally trained and experienced Civil Service personnel expert. Very few HR directors have been personnel experts. In the last 10 years, there have been five Foreign Service officers in that job, with backgrounds ranging from engineering to health. Typically, they do not have the skills, knowledge or training to run the office at the level needed for such a complicated operation. In addition, the HR office should be under the assistant administrator for management, as before. Issues such as annual budgets and overseas staffing are too intricately related to manage in separate organizational units.

Recommendation: Increase funding to fully staff the HR office and recruit a proven Civil Service human resources expert to be the director, who will then report directly to the assistant administrator for management. A Foreign Service officer can serve as the deputy in order to ensure that the overseas perspective is taken into account.

Personnel

This is the area where the agency has made the most mistakes. The mid-1990s reduction in force and the subsequent hiring freeze reduced the overall U.S. direct-hire FS and CS staff by a third, from about 3,000 employees to 2,000, in just a few years. However, the overall program funding for foreign assistance has almost tripled since then. To cope, the agency began creatively using program funds to supplement the meager operational expense funds being doled out by Congress. The result was a huge increase in employees contracted to perform administrative work at headquarters and overseas.

Next, all of these extra employees were made “legitimate” by converting them to Foreign Service Limited status. This created a parallel universe of personnel and lowered the morale of



AFSA Issue Brief

Filling New Mid-Level Positions

BY JOHN K. NALAND, AFSA PRESIDENT

the regular FSOs, who felt cheated as FSLs jumped ahead of them in rank and salary. The latest assault on morale has been the attempt to bring in mid-level hires at the FS-3 and FS-2 grades, many of whom would be FSL employees.

The good news is that we now have bipartisan and executive-level support for doubling our FS staff numbers through the Development Leadership Initiative, from the current level of 1,200 officers to over 2,000. The bad news is that the agency leadership has been using the DLI to bring in too many mid-level applicants without regard for the career Foreign Service. AFSA has protested that move, insisting that the agency hire mid-level employees only as a last resort.

Recommendation: Resist the urge to bring in mid-level hires unless absolutely necessary. Many current employees took a pay cut to join USAID and are more qualified than outside professionals to perform at the higher levels of the agency. Eventually, as intake increases at the junior levels and more officers are promoted, the staffing pyramid will normalize.

Recommendation: Establish more Civil Service positions, not only in HR but in the other bureaus. Backstopping support for our overseas programs will increase as we draw in more Foreign Service officers. In fact, many of the FSL employees in Washington, whose limited five-year terms are ending, will gladly apply and compete for these headquarters-based Civil Service jobs.

This is an exciting time for all of us at USAID as we look forward to positive changes to come. Although somewhat battered from past events, we are still optimistic and dedicated to doing a great job for our country. □

During the presidential campaign, Senator Barack Obama repeatedly endorsed the expansion of Foreign Service staffing, which would enable U.S. diplomacy and development assistance to meet the challenges of the 21st century. As we await the inauguration of President-elect Obama and the convening of the new Congress, AFSA is cautiously optimistic that the Department of State and USAID will see significant Foreign Service staffing growth in the coming years.

AFSA recommends that newly created mid-level positions be filled with those who already possess substantial Foreign Service experience.

An analysis of those staffing needs is contained in the October 2008 American Academy of Diplomacy study, "A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future." AFSA participated in the preparation of that report, which documented the need to increase staffing at State by 3,441 and at USAID by 1,250 over the next five years. While many of those are positions to be filled by new entry-level employees, some jobs require skills, knowledge, seasoning and judgment that justify classifying them as mid-level work.

But where can many new mid-level employees be found? One place *not* to look is outside of the Foreign Service. The State Department has tried mid-level hiring several times over the past decades with poor results. Even people with successful careers in related fields do not have the knowledge and experience needed to step into mid-level Foreign Service jobs, such as those that involve leading a section in an embassy or consulate. It is also unfair to bring in someone "off the street" and put him or her in

charge of employees who have spent up to 15 years gaining Foreign Service experience — especially veteran employees who took a pay cut to join and then "paid their dues" serving at hardship posts.

Instead of resorting to a problematic mid-level hiring program, AFSA recommends that newly created mid-level positions be filled with those who already possess substantial Foreign Service experience. We suggest drawing from five pools of such people:

1. Increase promotions for existing employees into the mid-level grades: Last year, State promoted about 70 percent of FS-4 generalists. In 2001, it was near 90 percent. Last year, State generalists promoted to FS-1 averaged 16 years of service. In 2002, it was 14.8 years.

2. Expanded use of WAE and "recall" appointments: Our "up or out" system forces the retirement of many highly talented Foreign Service members. Increasing the number of retired annuitants brought back to serve would re-employ their overseas experience and foreign language skills.

3. Temporarily increase the number of limited career extensions given to FS-1s who would otherwise be required to retire: The same justification for Item 2, above, applies.

4. Increase the number of Eligible Family Member positions: In July 2008, State added 105 positions to the Professional Associates Program for EFMs serving overseas. Most were entry-level, but many EFMs could successfully fill select mid-level positions.

5. Raise the mandatory retirement age: Changes in human longevity and in federal retirement benefits argue for raising the Foreign Service mandatory retirement age from 65 to 67 to match the age for receiving full Social Security benefits. This change would require legislation. □

2008-2009 Financial Aid Scholars

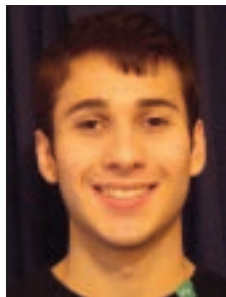
AFSA takes pride in awarding \$151,300 in undergraduate need-based scholarships for the 2008-2009 academic year to 69 children of Foreign Service employees. In addition to the AFSA Financial Aid Scholarships listed, AFSA administers the DACOR Bacon House Scholarships and also awards scholarships in cooperation with other organizations, such as the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) and the Public Members Association of the Foreign Service.

These organizations, along with many individual donors, provide valuable support to the scholarship program.

Financial aid winners are listed below in alphabetical order, along with the name of the university the student attends and the name of the scholarship(s) the student is receiving. Those students who didn't submit a photo are listed at the end.

The AFSA Merit Awards, a separate category from the need-based awards listed in this issue, to-

Financial Aid Scholarship Recipients



Brian Archabal — attending the University of Texas-Austin. Recipient of the AFSA Janet K. and Charles C. Stelle Memorial Scholarship.



Paul Armstrong — attending the University of St. Thomas. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.



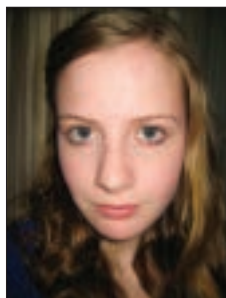
Jonathan Bates — attending Central Connecticut State University. Recipient of the AFSA John and Hope Rogers Bastek Memorial Scholarship, the AFSA Francesca Bufano Lapinski Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Scholarship.



Elise Bliss — attending George Mason University. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.



Lindsay Daniels — attending Macalester College. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship.



Fiona Davidson — attending the National University of Ireland at Galway. Recipient of the AFSA Clare H. Timberlake Memorial Scholarship.



Dylan Dempsey — attending Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.



Quinn Dempsey — attending Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.



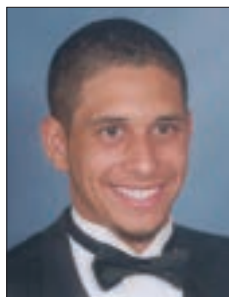
Andrew Deulus — attending Virginia Commonwealth University. Recipient of the Public Members of the Foreign Service Scholarship.

taled \$28,500 in 2008. Academic and Art Merit Awards were given to 25 students in May 2008. These one-time-only award winners, all Foreign Service high school seniors, were recognized in the July-August 2008 issue of the *Foreign Service Journal*.

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credits a semester, maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 grade point average, attend an accredited two- or four-year college or university in the U.S. or overseas, and show need by completing the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile. Unfortunately, grandchildren of Foreign Service employees are not eligible for the program.

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David Bobb — attending St. Edwards University. Recipient of the AFSA Harriet P. Culley Memorial Scholarship.



Catherine Christensen — attending Brigham Young University. Recipient of the AAFSW Scholarship.



Alexandra Christoff — attending Seton Hill University. Recipient of the AFSA Gertrude Stewart Memorial Scholarship.



Uthman Claiborne — attending North Carolina Central University. Recipient of the AFSA Marcia Martin Moore Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship.



Elliot Consigny — attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Recipient of the AFSA Beirut Scholarship and the John Foster Dulles Memorial Scholarship.



Alexandra Dubel — attending Florida State University. Recipient of the AFSA Barbara Bell Black Memorial Scholarship, the AFSA Robert Woods Bliss Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Ruth Frost Hoyt Memorial Scholarship.



Zachary Dubel — attending Florida State University. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Ruth Frost Hoyt Memorial Scholarship.



Elizabeth Einhorn — attending the University of Notre Dame. Recipient of the AFSA Gertrude Stewart Memorial Scholarship.



Alexandra Einhorn — attending Washington University in St. Louis. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.

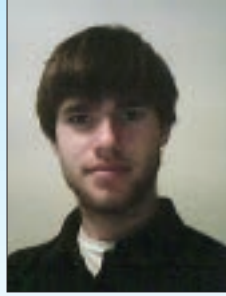


Erin Einhorn — attending Washington University in St. Louis. Recipient of the AFSA William Benton Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Robert E. and Florence L. Macaulay Memorial Scholarship.

Financial Aid Scholarship Recipients



Daniel Friedheim — attending the University of Virginia. Recipient of the AFSA Gertrude Stewart Memorial Scholarship.



Evan Fritz — attending the University of Mary Washington. Recipient of the AFSA Gertrude Stewart Memorial Scholarship.



Tessa Gellerson — attending Tufts University. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.



Carlos Grover — attending Tulane University. Recipient of the AFSA Anthony G. Freeman Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Edward T. Wailes Memorial Scholarship.



Nina Hamilton — attending Kenyon College. Recipient of the AFSA William Leonhart Memorial Scholarship.



Rebecca Konschak — attending the University of South Florida-Tampa. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.



Garrett Lanzet — attending New York University. Recipient of the AFSA Martin G. Patterson Memorial Scholarship.



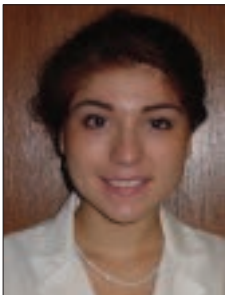
Brandt Lanzet — attending Virginia Tech. Recipient of the AFSA George and Mattie Newman Memorial Scholarship.



Robin Lutjohann — attending McGill University. Recipient of the AFSA William P. and Adele Langston Rogers Memorial Scholarship.



Paula Majumdar — attending the University of Virginia. Recipient of the AFSA Suzanne Marie Collins Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Walter K. Schwinn Memorial Scholarship.



Celest Pedraza — attending the University of the Incarnate Word. Recipient of the AFSA Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Scholarship.



Gregory Pennington — attending Western Washington University. Recipient of the AAFSW Scholarship.



Jonathan Pennington — attending Western Washington University. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship.



Alexandra Rauland — attending Knox College. Recipient of the AFSA Jacq Bachman Siracusa Scholarship.



Kristine Romero — attending George Mason University. Recipient of the AFSA George and Mattie Newman Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Ernest V. Siracusa Memorial Scholarship.



Peter Harmon — attending James Madison University. Recipient of the AAFSW Scholarship.



Yun-A Johnson — attending American University. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.



Alexander Julian — attending Brigham Young University-Idaho. Recipient of the AFSA Albert E. Carter Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Scholarship.



Jeremy Keaveny — attending Fordham University. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship.



Nathan Keesling — attending Brigham Young University. Recipient of the Selden Chapin Memorial Scholarship, the AFSA Harriet Winsar Isom Scholarship and the AFSA Clarke Winship Slade Memorial Scholarship.



Natalie McNeill — attending the University of Delaware. Recipient of the AFSA Charles B. Hosmer Memorial Scholarship.



Kristin Neuser — attending the University of Arizona-Tucson. Recipient of the AFSA Turner C. Cameron Memorial Scholarship.



Caitlin O'Dowd — attending Hamilton College. Recipient of the AFSA Landreth M. Harrison Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA John C. Whitehead Scholarship.



Fallon O'Dowd — attending Harvard College. Recipient of the AFSA Wilbur J. Carr Memorial Scholarship.



Irene Pedraza — attending Saint Mary's University of San Antonio. Recipient of the Prabhi G. Kavalier Memorial Scholarship.



Simone Ruiz Smith — attending the University of Iowa. Recipient of the AFSA Sheldon Whitehouse Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Scholarship.



Stephanie Ruse — attending Washington University in St. Louis. Recipient of the AFSA John M. and Anna B. Steeves Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA John Campbell White Memorial Scholarship.



Lucas Schellack — attending the Leon Kozminski Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management. Recipient of the AAFSW Scholarship.



Sean Skinner — attending Virginia Tech. Recipient of the AFSA Julius C. Holmes Memorial Scholarship.



Anastasia Sokoloff — attending the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. Recipient of the AFSA Marc Grossman and Mildred Patterson Scholarship and the AFSA Naomi Pekmezian Memorial Scholarship.

Financial Aid Scholarship Recipients



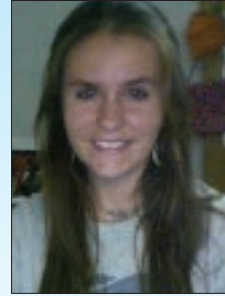
Christian Ternus — attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Recipient of the AFSA James Bolard More Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA George Shultz Scholarship.



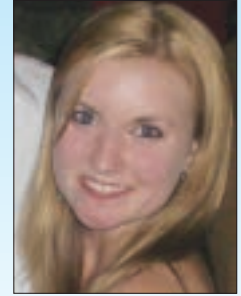
Brendan Ternus — attending Yale University. Recipient of the AFSA Susan Lowe Modi Memorial Scholarship, the AFSA Evelyn K. and Horace J. Nickels Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Paris Scholarship.



Adel Terzic — attending Virginia Tech. Recipient of the Adolph Dubs Memorial Scholarship, the AFSA Jefferson Patterson Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Vietnam Scholarship.



Maura Tousignant — attending the University of Virginia. Recipient of the AFSA Norton W. Bell Scholarship and the AFSA Lawsuit over the Movie “Missing” Scholarship.



Elaine Tousignant — attending the University of Virginia. Recipient of the AFSA Honorable Philip and Barbara Kaplan Scholarship.



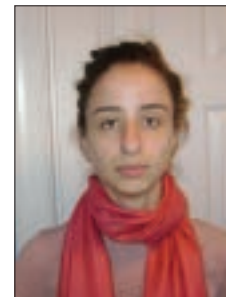
David Tueller — attending Brigham Young University. Recipient of the AFSA Oliver Bishop Harriman Memorial Scholarship.



Paul VanKoughnett — attending Harvard College. Recipient of the AFSA Philip C. Habib Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Harry A. Havens Memorial Scholarship.



Madeline Wilson — attending Sacramento City College. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.



Maggie Yoder — attending Randolph Macon College. Recipient of the AFSA Colonel Richard R. Hallock Memorial Scholarship.

Scholarship recipients who did not submit photos:

Alexandria Aguasvivas — attending Rollins College. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.

Karolina Bassi — attending Virginia Commonwealth University. Recipient of the AFSA Rose Marie Asch Memorial Scholarship.

Jessica Carter — attending Virginia Tech. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.

Thea Daves-Brody — attending St. John’s College. Recipient of the AFSA Stephen A. Hubler Scholarship, the AFSA Dalton V. Killion Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Lowell C. Pinkerton Memorial Scholarship.

Nathan Daves-Brody — attending the University of New Mexico. Recipient of the AFSA Betty Carp Memorial Scholarship, the AFSA Robert and Evelyn Curtis Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Everett K. and Clara C. Melby Memorial Scholarship.

Jordan Gilbert — attending the State University of New York-Albany. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Harriet C. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship.

Ashley Huyett — attending Schiller International University. Recipient of the AFSA Elizabeth M. and William E. Cole Memorial Scholarship, the AFSA Arthur B. Emmons Memorial Scholarship and the AFSA Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Scholarship.

Jonathan Jackson — attending Macon State University. Recipient of the AFSA Howard Fyfe Memorial Scholarship.

Jonathan Mines — attending the University of New Mexico. Recipient of the AFSA Louise Holscher Memorial Scholarship.

James Tilghman — attending Lehigh University. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship.

Peter Tilghman — attending Dickinson College. Recipient of the AFSA David K. E. Bruce Memorial Scholarship.

2009 AFSA Dues Rates

AFS membership dues have been raised in accordance with the AFSA bylaws by 4.8 percent for most membership categories. Dues will remain at the 2008 rate for retirees with an annuity of less than \$25,000, and for surviving spouses. This increase is 1 percent less than the 3rd-quarter Consumer Price Index published by the Department of Labor and used by the Social Security Administration to calculate the 2009 Cost of Living Adjustment increases. The new dues rates will take effect on Jan. 1, 2009. Members paying dues via payroll deduction or annuity deduction will see a small, automatic increase in the amount deducted from their paychecks and annuities. Members who pay annually will be billed the

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FS 6, 5, 4	\$163.95	\$6.30
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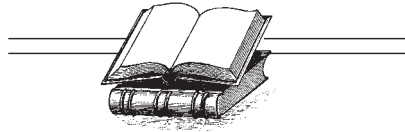
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BOOKS

What Went Wrong

The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace

Aaron David Miller, Bantam Books,
2008, \$26.00, hardcover, 408 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVID T. JONES

We've all heard the saying that success has a thousand fathers while failure is an orphan. When it comes to U.S. Middle East policy, however, failure has a thousand explainers, rationalizers and apologists. *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* is one such account, reflecting Aaron David Miller's 20 years of total immersion in U.S. Middle East policy.

Trained as a historian, with a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern studies and expertise in Hebrew and Arabic, Miller enjoyed extensive access to U.S. policymakers and their Israeli, Palestinian and Syrian counterparts. He offers rich anecdotal accounts of U.S. and foreign leaders, often including earthy quotations that leave no doubt of their familiarity with four-letter words. In the process, he makes it clear that, with few exceptions, these individuals neither liked nor trusted one another.

With painstaking, albeit retrospective, honesty, Miller details the many errors and miscalculations of the suc-

*Miller makes clear
that, with few
exceptions, the
leaders involved in
the Mideast peace
process neither liked
nor trusted one
another.*

cessive administrations he served in their efforts to bring the sides together, as well as comparable mistakes by foreign interlocutors. Not everyone will agree with his conclusion that the current administration had few opportunities to make progress in this arena, though he makes a compelling case that the post-9/11 focus on Afghanistan and Iraq largely precluded making Arab-Israeli issues a top priority. But Miller does concede that President George W. Bush made the least of what openings were available. Miller also correctly anticipated early on that nothing would come of the November 2007 Annapolis conference.

Interestingly, Miller dismisses the effect of the "Jewish lobby" on U.S. policy, both because Israeli interests are already embedded in U.S. political/bureaucratic DNA and because the Israeli prime minister is invariably an

effective interlocutor with a U.S. president.

Miller lays out a somewhat artificial but useful "five Ts" of effective Middle East diplomacy: making it a top priority; being tough with negotiating partners; being tenacious in the effort; engendering trust; and having a sense of timing for the possible. He cites Henry Kissinger (for his deviousness), Jimmy Carter (obsessive focus) and James Baker (unsentimental toughness) as effective negotiators, while Bill Clinton, despite immense effort and empathy, was "not the son-of-a-bitch that he needed to be" with either Arabs or Israelis.

Although the book offers much, it lacks any maps — a glaring omission in a region where boundaries are the essence of the conflict. Likewise, there is no chronology to put Miller's hop-skip-and-jump writing style into context. Thus, the volume is best in providing perspective for a reader already thoroughly grounded in the issues and diplomatic history of the period.

Moreover, while there is copious documentation for the author's numerous high-level interviews (over 150 listed and dated), this compilation does not include several obvious potential sources with whom Miller worked closely or was personally familiar, specifically President Clinton and Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzhak Barak and Benyamin Netanyahu.



For the next administration, Miller urges continued, indeed renewed U.S. engagement despite the limited prospects for success. But given the region's long, ongoing history of assassinations, atrocities, massacres and ethnic cleansing, many readers may be forgiven for concluding that after 4,000-plus years, the inhabitants of this "much too promised land" have learned (and forgotten) nothing.

David T. Jones, a retired Senior FSO, participated in a study of the last two years of the Clinton administration's Middle East peace process conducted by the Office of the Historian. The co-author with David Kilgour of Uneasy Neighbo(u)rs: Canada, the USA and the Dynamics of State, Industry and Culture (Wiley, 2007), a study of U.S.-Canadian relations, he is a regular contributor to the Journal.

Seeking Colossal Success

Why American Foreign Policy Fails: Unsafe at Home and Despised Abroad

Dennis C. Jett, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, \$79.95, hardcover, 197 pages.

REVIEWED BY J. BRIAN ATWOOD

The title of Dennis C. Jett's new book, *Why American Foreign Policy Fails: Unsafe at Home and Despised Abroad*, may strike many readers as hyperbolic. But its contents paint a damning picture of the state of our democracy and the influences that distort the policymaking process.

This is a book about lobbyists representing powerful interests, including foreign nations, and about ideologues

Jett believes those who refuse to accept responsibility for poor decisions would "rather hire a new salesman than change the policy."

who have abandoned pragmatism and, often, the facts themselves to pursue their compulsive views. It also describes an America whose recent leaders have assured us that we have the luxury of ignoring important external factors because of our status as the "only remaining superpower."

If those halcyon days ever actually existed, they are certainly long gone. Now, in an era when U.S. power is being challenged by state and non-state actors, Dennis Jett poses the pressing questions that confront us. Can we contain our hubris and the internal forces vying to push policy in one direction or the other? Can we resist the recurring urge to isolate ourselves, or to militarize our policy options? Or, are internal political forces so strong, as he suggests, that a more rational, more diplomatic, approach to international challenges is no longer possible?

Jett, a retired FSO and former ambassador to Peru and Mozambique who is now a professor at Penn State University, deplores the use of fear to create "wedge" issues in foreign policy. Vice President Dick Cheney's 2004 assertion that the election of John Kerry

"would risk another terrorist attack" — symptomatic of the divisive politics Jett says distorts U.S. policy — continued to echo in 2008, when it was directed against Barack Obama as a candidate who supposedly had too little experience to deal with terrorism. To be fair, the author does not ignore Democratic Party efforts to gain political advantage, citing trade protectionism as a similar effort to appeal to an electorate concerned about the loss of jobs. But his focus is mainly on the past eight years of Republican rule.

Throughout the book, Jett uses a series of case studies to illuminate policy failures or weaknesses in the decision-making process. He has no patience for the argument that our foreign policy alienates so many people overseas because it is "not understood or articulated properly." Those who refuse to accept responsibility for poor choices, he says, would "rather hire a new salesman than change the policy." He thus argues that public diplomacy is of marginal importance in the absence of sound decisions. Other case studies involve missile defense, arms control, Cuba and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

In his analysis of these cases, Jett relies heavily on contemporary periodicals. He employs the analytical skills he learned as a diplomat, but there is little evidence that he interviewed today's professionals. Nor does he acknowledge the Bush administration's diplomatic achievements in North Korea and Libya.

Jett concludes that "American foreign policy thus far in the 21st century has been a colossal failure." His solution is for ordinary citizens to become better informed and "participate more actively in [their] democracy."

Many Americans took this advice



on Nov. 4, 2008. Perhaps that intense participation in the electoral process, along with new and enlightened leadership with a mandate for change, will produce an era of “colossal success.” For that to happen, however, diplomacy must take its rightful place in the nation’s security strategy.

J. Brian Atwood, a former Foreign Service officer, was administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development from 1993 to 1999. He also served as assistant secretary of State for congressional relations from 1979 to 1981, and under secretary of State for management in 1993. He is currently dean of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

What We Have Here ...

Managing the President’s Message: The White House Communications Operation
Martha Joynt Kumar, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, \$35, hardcover, 345 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOE B. JOHNSON

More people will read (or pretend to have read) Scott McClellan’s memoir of his days as George W. Bush’s press secretary (*What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington’s Culture of Deception*, 2008) than this detailed analysis of White House communications. But Profes-

sor Kumar’s comparative study of how U.S. presidents have dealt with the news media over the past 100 years offers better insight into what the new president may do.

Unlike most accounts of White House media operations, which have been embedded in personal memoirs, this one comes from an outsider. Kumar has spent her academic career studying all facets of the White House and its inhabitants, as in her 1981 book, *Portraying the President: The White House and the Media*. To write this one, Kumar drew on more than 100 interviews with members of the last four administrations and the reporters covering them. She even set up an office in the basement of the White House press room to observe the day-to-day

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relationship up close, where “even in the occasional period of intense acrimony, cooperation governs the relationship.”

Managing the President’s Message: The White House Communications Operation truly offers something for everyone. The diplomat will find insights on presidential choices and maneuvers in foreign affairs, while the historian can plow through comprehensive tables that show — for example — which president gave the most frequent press conferences. (By the way, it was Calvin Coolidge, known in his day as “Silent Cal.”) And every reader will find a book characterized by relentless organization and a luxury of anecdotes and descriptive detail.

Public diplomacy practitioners should make this book professional reading. Kumar compares how four recent presidents struck the balance between communication planning and responding to the media. As she explains, inside the White House the press secretary reacts to the demands of the press corps, whose agenda hardly matches that of the administration. Meanwhile, the communications chief (given different titles in each administration) plans how the White House will try to use the media to publicize presidential policies.

Every U.S. ambassador must strike the same balance in miniature: the responsibility to answer to the public through the news media while advancing the government’s policy goals in country. Though only the largest U.S. embassies have a dedicated press spokesman, the challenges of handling the global news media will be familiar to every public affairs officer.

The author also painstakingly traces the shifting balance between the influence of press secretaries and commu-

Public diplomacy practitioners should make this book professional reading.

nications directors over the years. One constant has been steady growth in the numbers of staff involved. While Grover Cleveland relied on a single private secretary, the current press and communications staff totals 108 — larger than the staff advising on economic and domestic policy.

At the end of her book, Kumar puts the whole thing in context: communication has never solved political or policy questions. However, she does point out that the two modern presidents who failed to be re-elected — Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush — were the ones who showed the least interest in managing their message to the public. Image and information are necessary if not sufficient.

Though this book was published in 2007, Kumar continues to focus on this topic as communications lead for the White House Transition Project. The new administration is likely to seek new ways to reach beyond the mainstream media to social networks via the Internet. Observers will find no better baseline for interpretation of its success, or failure, than *Managing the President’s Message*.

Joe B. Johnson, a former FSO, has authored three online training courses in media relations for the Foreign Service Institute.

No Mere Cookbook

Cuisines of the Axis of Evil and Other Irritating States: A Dinner Party Approach to International Relations
 Chris Fair, *The Lyons Press*, 2008, \$24.95, hardcover, 336 pages.

REVIEWED BY KAPIL GUPTA

Flagrantly defying categorization, Chris Fair’s *Cuisines of the Axis of Evil and Other Irritating States* is an entertaining smorgasbord of far-flung recipes, international political history, high- and low-brow trivia, impassioned op-ed and autobiographic travel writing. In other words, this book synthesizes disparate elements of a stereotypic Foreign Service traveling library into one practical tome.

Written during a professional transition from the United States Institute of Peace to the RAND Corporation, Fair pairs cutting analysis with chopping onions. Evoking the ironic tone of *Economist* captions, the prose oscillates between policy wonkery and gastroporn. The countries covered are a top-10 list of political hot spots: North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Israel, India, Pakistan, Burma, China — and also the United States.

Fair’s country summaries are amusing but well-researched explanations of contemporary political conflicts — along with the dishes that feed the participants. Artfully citing authoritative sources, *Cuisines* is likely the only cookbook with footnotes citing State’s annual human rights reports, the Pew Global Attitudes Project and the International Crisis Group.

The country reviews segue to the

BOOKS



intersection of politics and food. On Burma: "While the generals eat well, as do the urban sophisticates of Rangoon (or Yangon, if you want to flaunt your support for the Buddhist junta), the rest of the folks eke out their caloric intake in whatever way they can, including mountains of rice." Occasionally Fair's sarcasm obscures the substance. Too fast a reading of the above quotation, for example, may lead one to conclude that she grants the SLORC their political appropriation of Buddhism.

Each chapter concludes with a dinner party set-piece for appetizers, entrées and dessert. Fair's choice of recipes delivers rewards from off the beaten path. For India, she avoids familiar Mughlai and South Indian

dishes to explore Kashmiri cuisine, which is rarely found in restaurants. The final chapter focuses on the United States and could be particularly useful when planning your embassy's next Fourth of July party menu.

While the recipes and flavors are subtle, the book's opinions are anything but. From dismissing vegetarians to decrying human rights violations, the author delights in mocking political correctness: "The best gift for an Indian bride is a wardrobe made of asbestos! UNICEF estimates that in India, some 5,000 women die each year in various 'kitchen fires.'"

Fair's double entendres and roastings of U.S. foreign policy could be distasteful to readers with delicate

constitutions. But anyone who has chafed at delivering minced words and pabulum talking points will revel in this book's cornucopia of career-compromising cocktail fodder.

Cuisines offers a taste-filled romp through the world's political hot spots, guided by a potential culinary correspondent for *Jane's Intelligence Review*. If you have a sense of humor about the most serious international challenges we face, you will likely enjoy reading, and cooking, from it. ■

Kapil Gupta, an FSO since 2005, serves as an economic officer in Accra. His views and cooking habits are entirely his own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State or the U.S. government.

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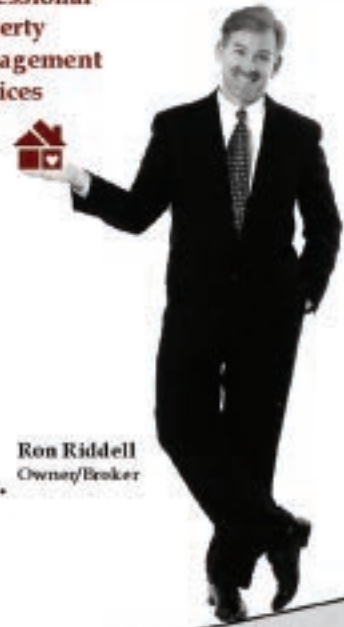
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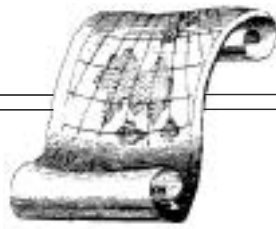


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REFLECTIONS

Dean Rusk and Rolling Thunder

BY JOHN J. ST. JOHN

An e-mail I received recently recounted a dramatic, indeed heroic, event that took place during Operation Rolling Thunder, which — as older readers may recall — was the code name for the secret bombing of North Vietnam in the early part of that war. The mention of that operation reminded me of a very different experience I had back then, one in which heroism played no role whatsoever.

My Foreign Service job in early 1965 involved standing rotating watches in the State Department Operations Center, monitoring information arriving from all sources and making sure the important stuff got to the pertinent senior levels right away.

On one of the earliest days of “Rolling Thunder,” while being briefed for the midnight-to-8 a.m. watch, I was told we had lost an aircraft earlier that evening — the first such loss of this secret operation — and that the senior watch officer had phoned Secretary of State Dean Rusk at home to inform him. Rusk’s questions — and this was of vital interest to me in case it should happen again on my watch — were:

First: Did the pilot get out safely?

Second: Did the plane go down on our side of the North Vietnamese border, where the operation’s secrecy could more easily be protected, or on the enemy’s side?

Third: Precisely where did the plane go down? And don’t confuse the Secretary with map coordinates; what he wants is the name of the nearest town or village.

The smirk on the colonel’s face told me everything I needed to know.

Around 2 or 3 a.m., we got word that a second plane had been shot down and, unlike the earlier loss, this one happened in North Vietnam. The senior watch officer decided that I, as the junior officer on the team, would benefit most from the experience of awakening the Secretary of State at 3 in the morning with the bad news. I went into the small side office occupied by the bird colonel who was our Pentagon liaison, and asked him the expected first question.

Unfortunately, he said, there was no word yet as to the pilot’s fate. Regarding the exact location of the loss, he started to blurt out a set of coordinates. “Hold it,” I said. “The Secretary doesn’t do coordinates. He wants the name of the nearest town.” The poor colonel didn’t know whether to laugh or pass bricks. “Town?” he said. “What town? We’re talking boonies here. There *are* no towns out there.”

I wasn’t prepared to accept this at face value, not with a dead-of-night wake-up call to the Secretary of State about to take place. At my insistence, we went over to his wall map, plotted in the coordinates on its plastic overlay, and there — within a mile or two — was a town. Or a hamlet. Or maybe

just a few huts with a name. Whatever, it was a name. And because the Secretary had a map just like it at his bedside, it was a name I could refer him to.

There was just one tiny problem. The name, I swear to God, was Phuc Kyu!

“What,” I asked the colonel, “is the correct pronunciation of this name?”

The smirk on his face told me everything I needed to know, but he replied anyhow. “It’s pronounced exactly the way you think it is!”

As I dialed Rusk’s home phone, I tried to mentally rehearse the way I was going to present this. But all I could hear in my mind was the Secretary thanking me effusively for waking him from a sound sleep at 3 in the morning just to tell him to go screw himself, and how exactly did I spell my name because he wanted to be sure to get it right.

I can’t remember exactly what was said on that call, but the initial greeting and my basic report went OK, as did my replies to the first two questions.

Then he asked the third question. I took a deep breath, and said in a firm, clear voice, “Fook KIYyu, Mr. Secretary.”

Hey, we can’t all be heroes. ■

John J. St. John began his Foreign Service career in Monterrey in 1961 and retired as director of Mexican affairs in 1989. Among other postings, he was economic minister in Geneva from 1980 to 1984, served in London and Managua, and held two office directorships in the Economic Affairs Bureau.

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