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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, a private, non-profit 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. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Foreign Service Journal*, 2101 E Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Service (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. FAX: (202) 338-8244 or (202) 338-6820. E-MAIL: journal@afsa.org. WEB: www.afsa.org. TELEPHONE: (202) 338-4045. Printed in the U.S.A. Send address changes to AFSA Membership, 2101 E Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990. Printed on 50-percent recycled paper, of which 10 percent is post-consumer waste.

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President's Views

Foreign Assistance: Transformational Diplomacy's Key Missing Ingredient

By J. Anthony Holmes

If American diplomacy is to become even more focused on hands-on activism and managing programs to advance our agenda in key developing countries, major elements of the initiative must be our foreign assistance programs and the Agency for International Development. For transformational diplomacy (TD) to succeed, it will be necessary to greatly strengthen USAID by ensuring adequate personnel and operating budgets, and create new assistance programs that will reconcile the inherent short-term (i.e., political) nature of the TD initiative with the fundamentally long-term nature of economic and democratic development.

Despite a remarkable increase in foreign assistance during the Bush administration, USAID is still reeling from a decade of relentless attacks and cutbacks. USAID's cadre of Foreign Service officers is hardly a quarter of what it once was. Year after year it goes through contortions to tap project funds to cover shortfalls in operating expenses, while visions of the mid-1990s RIFs and furloughs haunt its staff and poison agency morale.

Nor is USAID everywhere it should be to advance transformational diplomacy. It has no presence in a number of important TD focus countries. Many overseas missions were closed in the 1990s in response to earlier budget cuts and shifting post-Cold War priorities. The number of bilateral USAID missions in Africa fell from 36 to 22 in 1996.

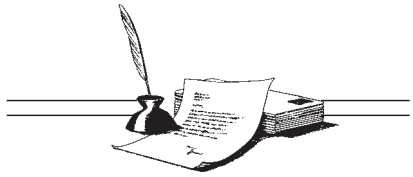
USAID's overseas presence essentially reflects the pre-9/11 world. It is based on a strategy of shrinking to survive and choosing an "invest-in-success" model that, while an excellent development strategy, in no way addresses the challenges of our post-9/11 re-ordered priorities that force us to deal with the problems posed by precisely those countries left outside an invest-in-success strategy. There is a strong institutional proclivity at USAID to have USG funding channeled to countries where it has missions and to minimize assistance flows to countries where it doesn't. This may be a natural bureaucratic reaction, but it distorts the process of matching U.S. interests with U.S. aid allocations.

The recent confirmation of Randall Tobias as USAID Administrator and, particularly, his concurrent accession as the first State Department Director of Foreign Assistance has attracted much attention. It has also generated palpable fears among USAID's employees over their agency's future and the role of long-term development in the administration's foreign policy plans. After a series of briefings at both State and USAID, I have concluded that the administration truly has no intention of State absorbing USAID, that it does not want to spend the energy and the political capital that an agency merger would require, and that it really wants to make U.S. assistance programs more responsive to perceived policy imperatives. The extent to which it can match assistance programs with policy in its remaining two-and-a-half years in office remains to be seen.

For TD to succeed, however, the State Department must come up with something my briefings reveal it is not yet aware of — assistance programs specifically designed to allow the diplomats Secretary Rice wants to be "hands-on" to carry out the transformational work she wants done. The officers being repositioned from Europe to priority transformational countries must have well-conceived and well-funded programs with which to engage their target audiences and advance our values and agenda. If the point of departure for the Secretary's vision is action not reporting, these people need the right tools — and the right training — to do the job she wants done. Most existing USAID programs will not permit this, but State does have a few modest programs that are useful models, such as the Democracy and Human Rights Fund. The experience and expertise at USAID should be invaluable in crafting the answer to this need.

All of us know that the U.S. gets far too little credit internationally for our contributions to international development: bilateral assistance, IMF/World Bank support, direct investment by businesses, openness to imports, remittances from immigrants here, and the intellectual contributions generated by the success of our private enterprise model. Our policy focus has now shifted to imparting values and developing institutions. For this high-profile shift to succeed, it will require certain additional, unavoidable investments. ■

J. Anthony Holmes is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.



LETTERS

Strength of Character

Two letters in the April *FSJ* lead me to violate my rule against publicly commenting on Foreign Service issues. Mary Lee Garrison's comment that "It is past time for the department's Freedom of Information Act managers to give their troops clear instructions that drafting and clearing information should always be redacted from documents released to the public," is on the mark. I am, in fact, appalled to learn that this is apparently not now the case.

It is so obviously a necessary protection against irresponsible — and often politically motivated — attempts to smear FSOs simply because their names appear on a document that someone finds offensive, that it should have been in place years ago.

The second letter, a long explanation of why Peggy Zabriskie has decided to resign from the Foreign Service, is equally noteworthy. While I disagree with virtually every reason Ms. Zabriskie lists as responsible for her decision to resign, I greatly admire her courage and intellectual honesty. She has taken a step that, after so many years in the Foreign Service, must have been painful in the extreme. I applaud her strength of character, and regret that the Foreign Service is losing someone who clearly was, and would have remained, a truly valuable member of the Service.

Lawrence S. Eagleburger
Former Secretary of State
Charlottesville, Va.

Iraq *Is* Our Priority

Unfortunately, I did not see the Iraq service survey that was referenced in the March *FSJ*, but I would support directed assignments — and not just for Baghdad, but for any hard-to-fill posts. Iraq probably will not be the last wartorn country where we are required to serve, so a policy needs to be put in place now.

Many of the survey responses focused on Iraq service "not being what I signed up for," "too hard on my family," etc. What saddens me is that when I joined the Foreign Service in 1986, it was to serve my country. I took the oath and the worldwide availability requirement seriously. With the exception of my current post, all of my overseas assignments have been at 15-percent differential or above. What I often see now is officers looking for a chance to serve at a few interesting places; and what I hear is that if they don't get the post of choice or their spouse does not get a job, they'll just quit and move on to something else. There is not the commitment to service that I saw in the past.

I totally agree that if we do go to directed assignments, everyone has to be treated the same, starting with fair-share bidders. I don't consider 5-percent posts a hardship; fair share should be based on having served at 15-percent posts or above. Anyone who has not served at one of these posts should be directed to Baghdad or any of the other tough spots. Then work down to those who have already done a 15-percent post. Yes, that will cause hardships for our families, but this is a consideration that should be made before joining the Foreign Service and having the U.S. government invest so much in our training. Being married to a (now) retired Marine, I am well aware of the sacrifices that military families make. Worldwide availability should be just that.

Another gripe I saw in the March issue was that people disagree with the policy in Iraq. Having served under several presidents and Secretaries of State, I can attest that policy changes often. None of us always agree with all of the policies, but part of our job is to publicly support the incumbent's decisions, even if we disagree privately. Right now, Iraq is our priority and we are failing in our efforts to support the administration. I think it is imperative that we be there to assist the Iraqis' struggle to become an independent democracy.

I hope that the department will have the courage to do what it takes to have officers, all officers, pull their weight and serve wherever they are needed.

Gayle C. Hamilton
FSO
Guadalajara

Keep Development Independent

In her recent announcements, Secretary Rice coined the "transformational diplomacy" concept. At the same time, she laid out plans both for broader representation of Foreign Service officers and integration of foreign assistance, to include both devel-

opment and diplomacy. It is the latter that I wish to comment on, as I feel this approach may undermine the objectives that it seeks to achieve.

There are many benefits to development, one of which is that it lays the groundwork for better diplomatic relationships. It can also help move developing countries toward better governance, stability, prosperity and health. Lastly, it is humanitarian to assist those in need with short-term and long-term succor.

I was immensely pleased when, under USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, development became one of "The Three Ds" — Defense, Diplomacy and Development — confirming that, at last, development in its own right was being recognized. When we prioritize development for its own sake, we help recipient nations achieve both their goals and our own. They are less likely to breed terrorism and conflict. Prosperity down the road leads them to be better trading partners. Control of their epidemics helps us control ours.

But when development is used as a tool of diplomacy, the nature of the work and the outcomes are different. When development assistance becomes the carrot (a prize for governments that cooperate), and the stick (to be removed from those who don't cooperate), objectives become short-term, high-cost and high-profile, and have the appearance of governments co-opting governments, rather than people helping people. Faith in aid's continuity and sustainability is lost, as the criteria for who are our friends or enemies become increasingly arbitrary, and can shift with the winds of successive administrations.

If the U.S. can maintain a constant, independent development arm of its foreign assistance in the countries that most need it and show the most promise of success, without putting it on the table in diplomatic discussions, I believe we can achieve our goals just as constantly and consistently. U.S. foreign-policy makers need to prioritize development objectives independently from diplomatic objectives in order to achieve both.

Rachel Cintrón
Public Health and Nutrition officer
USAID/Kenya

Smart Savings

Congratulations on Steve Honley's excellent article on the Thrift Savings Plan (FS Know-How, April). The

only way to get the attention of people so foolish as not to take full advantage of the generous TSP provisions is to hit them over the head, which your very straight language did. I hope *FSJ* readers listen, for our country at the moment simply refuses to save. Very dangerous.

I would like to think that the Foreign Service community is more sensible, more able to foresee future needs and to plan for them.

Bill Harrop
Ambassador, retired
Washington, D.C.

More to the Colombia USAID Story

I enjoyed Phillip McLean's article "Colombia is Complicated" in the April *FSJ*. However, befitting the title of the article, the motivation behind the Colombian economic minister's decision to order the closure of the USAID mission in 1976 is rather complicated.

As chief of USAID's Caribbean/North Coast Loan Division, I backstopped the Colombia portfolio during this period. At that time, USAID was providing annual cash transfer assistance in the form of sector loans in three strategic areas — education, health and agriculture. The loan agreements of these cash transfers obliged the Colombian government, which received the dollars as balance of payments assistance to the Central Bank, to invest an equivalent amount of pesos in these three sectors over and above their own budgetary allocations. The objective was to seek a major increment in social-sector investments by the government.

This model was in effect for several years and resulted in significant gains. Loans totaling over $300 million were signed and disbursed annually. However, as they say, no good deed goes unpunished.

While performing my oversight function, I encountered evidence that the government, faced with increasing inflation and rising foreign exchange reserves, had "sterilized" $300 million in the Central Bank, in effect not issuing local currency to the budget, and had failed to inform USAID that it was not meeting the agreed-upon targets regarding budget allocations. (In retrospect, USAID's zeal to meet annual obligation targets had overrun itself and the Colombian absorptive capacity.) After further investigation confirmed my original assertion, my office prepared and delivered to the government, via the American embassy, an official U.S. government bill of collection for $300 million.

The Colombian government grudgingly paid the amount and subsequently requested that the USAID mission be closed. So, as Paul Harvey says, you now know the rest of the story.

Ronald F. Venezia
FSO, retired
North Bethesda, Md.

Embassy Kabul History

Just a quick correction to Joseph Schreiber's April "Speaking Out" on opening new embassies: we left Embassy Kabul in 1989, not 1979. I know this because, as acting deputy chief of mission, I was part of the last group to leave in late January 1989, after Secretary Baker ordered our evacuation in anticipation of the completion of Soviet military withdrawal.

Also, one other minor detail: technically, Embassy Kabul never actually closed; it just lost its American contingent. Our Afghan employees loyally stayed behind, taking care of the grounds until we reoccupied the embassy 13 years later, in the wake of the defeat of the Taliban.

James F. Schumaker
FSO, retired
OSCE Project Coordinator
Kiev

Where's the Fiction?

What happened? Have you done away with the summer fiction issue? I hope not! While I don't have a story to submit this year (too busy with my memoir), the summer fiction issue helped launch me into a writing career, and I suspect it has similarly helped many other FS writers.

Foreign Service careers generate adventures and bring out the 'wannabe' writer in many of us. The *Journal*'s summer fiction contest each year was encouragement to try and, in my case, to succeed in writing seriously for publication. Rather than drop this valuable source for beginning FS writers, I would make more of it — it could even be a moneymaker for the *FSJ* — by anthologizing and publishing the entries and selling them in book form. I'm sure all or most of the authors would agree. Witness the success of AFSA's *Inside a U.S. Embassy.*

I hope the Editorial Board changes its mind. While I haven't had stories published in the *FSJ* in a couple of years, I had plans to keep trying.

Mary Cameron Kilgour
USAID FSO, retired
Gainesville, Fla.

Editor's Note: We are still holding the annual fiction contest. However, we will be spreading out publication of the winning stories over the coming year, rather than running them all in a single issue as in the past.

Context Matters

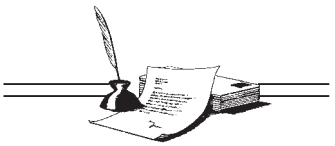
In order for the U.S. to effectively apply "transformational diplomacy," it is essential to analyze thoroughly all the basic elements that have contributed and are in play in each country's society. While we are all human beings, each country's way of thinking and acting has been conditioned by all that has happened in its formation, and it would be wrong and ineffective

for our American society to think that all other countries should accept our way of thinking and doing as an example to follow.

The U.S. was not conquered but was invaded by people from different parts of the world seeking work. Because of that, we have developed a way of thinking and organizing our society quite different than that of other nations with very different historical developments and customs. For this reason, it is essential for our leaders to make every effort to deal with other countries in a way that establishes a discussion: urging an exchange of views regarding what each society would like for its future development, and seeking a way of dealing with each other that will be of common benefit and will avoid undesirable confrontations.

The State Department is a bureaucratic operation with professional experts who should be intelligently advising Congress and the president on foreign policies with a sound basis for full support and adoption.

Adolf B. Horn Jr.
FSO, retired
Guadalajara ■



Send your letters to: journal@afsa.org. Note that all letters are subject to editing for style, format and length.

CYBERNOTES

Ambassadorial Authority: A "Continuing Discussion"

The Special Operations Command's growing use of elite Special Ops troops in operations to combat terrorism outside of war zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan — operating in areas traditionally handled by the CIA and State Department — presents particular problems for ambassadors and heads of mission.

We highlighted the issue in the May Cybernotes ("Special Ops Crowding Out Diplomacy?"), citing a March 8 *New York Times* report on SOCOM's public acknowledgement of the so-called Military Liaison Elements that have been placed in more than a dozen embassies in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and South America. According to that report, SOCOM officials say that the MLE teams are placed only upon approval by the local U.S. ambassador.

However, a subsequent report in the April 23 *Washington Post* indicates that the situation is considerably more murky (**http://washingtonpost.com**). According to the *Post*, State Department officials remain concerned over "gray areas" pertaining to the special ops teams' status and how to maintain clear lines of authority. "Special Ops wants the flexibility and speed to go in there," one official told the *Post*, "but there are understandably questions of how you do that and how you have clear lines of authority."

In a classified order last year, the *Post* reports, the Pentagon "gained the leeway to inform — rather than gain the approval of — the U.S. ambassador before conducting military operations in a foreign country." A defense official familiar with the order told the *Post*, "We do not need ambassador-level approval."

There remains, one State Department official says, "continuing discussion, to put it politely, in terms of how this is going to work."

Meanwhile, SOCOM's budget has grown 60 percent since 2003, to $8 billion in FY 2007, to carry out its lead responsibility in the global war on terror. To extend its reach to more countries, the command is increasing the number of Special Operations troops to 13,000, including soldiers skilled in language and working with indigenous militaries. With 7,000 troops deployed overseas today, SOCOM is already seeing its biggest deployments in history.

— *Susan Maitra*

Site of the Month: www.gdnet.org

The Global Development Network is a "global network of research and policy institutes working together to address the problems of national and regional development." Launched in 1999 as the result of World Bank-sponsored consultations among think-tanks from developing countries, GDN aims to generate high-quality, policy-relevant research at the local level in developing and transitioning countries.

As a live forum for scholars and researchers, particularly in the developing sector, to share their work and expertise, **www.gdnet.org** is a unique resource in the area of development research. A monthly newsletter features development-related news, such as upcoming conferences, competitions and projects. A quarterly opinion column called "Global Issues, Local Voices" features current work of regional scholars on critical issues. The results of GDN's first global research project, "Explaining Growth," are available.

The GDN Knowledge Base is a comprehensive portal to, among other things, development research produced in developing countries over the past three years, all of which is available free and accompanied by clear conclusion-based summaries. The Knowledge Base also contains information on development-related scholars and institutions. Online services also include access to information on sources of funding for research.

Though most of the resources are open to all, some features of the site, such as submissions and research funding information, are available only to registered users. There is no cost, but registration involves a somewhat complicated process akin to setting up a job interview and is intended for professionals working in the field (i.e., those with previously published papers, or experience with a research institution).

— *Shawn Guan, Editorial Intern*

CYBERNOTES

Intelligence Estimates: Fuzzy Math?

"Our assessment is that the prospects of an Iranian weapon are still a number of years off, and probably into the next decade," National Intelligence Director John Negroponte said recently. When asked about his faith in the estimate, however, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld replied, "No, I'm not confident."

The varying estimates of Iran's progress toward a potential nuclear weapon point to the continuing turmoil in the U.S. intelligence establishment since the 9/11 attacks highlighted systematic problems of coordination and credibility.

Now, four years later, another CIA chief has been let go, his named successor faces contentious nomination hearings and the turf war between civilian and military intelligence agencies continues unabated. Further, a GAO report released in March indicates that no progress has been made to improve the sharing of terrorism-related information that is critical to homeland security (**http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06385.pdf**).

"It all points out the fact we need to do much better in rebuilding our intelligence community … that we give policy-makers the information that they need so that we can make better decisions," states Peter Hoekstra, R-Mich., chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

To follow the ongoing fight over intelligence reform, the Council for Foreign Relations offers excellent online resources. Click on Intelligence under the "Must-Read" section of the Web site for links to news analysis and reports (**http://www.cfr.org**).

And in the meantime, find out for yourself how close Iran is to a nuclear weapon with the Federation of American Scientists' do-it-yourself tool for calculating how long it takes a country to produce enough enriched uranium to assemble one (**http://fas.org/cgi-bin/ucountdown.pl**). Instructions for predicting Iran's nuclear schedule (based on known data) are provided. Just plug in the numbers and the program tells how many years it will take to amass 50 kilograms of uranium.

— Susan Maitra and Shawn Guan, Editorial Intern

A Chance for Stability in Indonesia?

Deadly clashes between Papuans and the Indonesian police, protests against an American mining company and Australia's controversial granting of asylum to a group of Papuan refugees collectively brought the issue of autonomy for the easternmost province of Indonesia to the forefront in mid-April. According to a Council of Foreign Relations special report, there is now a unique window of opportunity to settle the last outstanding separatist conflict in Indonesia.

"The next two years are a critical period in which the government and Papuans should embark on bold initiatives toward peace, before the 2009 presidential and legislative elections begin looming on the horizon," states Blair King, program manager for Asia at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and author of the report, "Peace in Papua: Widening a Window of Opportunity" (**http://www.cfr.org/publication/10442/peace_in_papua.html?breadcrumb=default**). The change of leadership in Jakarta and the recent movement toward peace in Aceh province, after years of bitter struggle against the central government, help make this a possibility (**http://www.cfr.org/publication/8789/indonesia.html?breadcrumb=default**).

Originally granted independence by the Dutch in 1962, Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) was annexed by Indonesia in 1969 in a referendum. To this day, the presence of the Indonesian government remains controversial in the resource-rich province. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice President Jusuf Kalla have allowed the formation of the Papuan People's Assembly, an important component of the 2001 Law on Special Autonomy for Papua, and Papuans have high expectations that a comprehensive settlement can be achieved under their leadership.

Recently, the Indonesian military increased its deployment in the region. In March, the Australian government granted temporary protection visas to 42 Papuans (out of a group of 43), causing a diplomatic row between Indonesia and Australia. Allegedly, the group of refugees includes some key Papuan independence activists, among them members of a separatist group. The refugees claim that the

50 Years Ago...

But discipline can surely be achieved without destroying, or even weakening, the initiative and sense of responsibility which a nation's foreign representative should possess.

— Gordon A. Craig, from "Bismarck and His Ambassadors: The Problem of Discipline," *FSJ*, June 1956.

Indonesian military is still committing human rights abuses in Papua.

In the report, King advocates "quiet but firm diplomacy" toward Indonesia, along with technical and infrastructure aid to Papua and governmental reforms aimed at curtailing corruption and creating greater transparency. King's recommendations would capitalize on the momentum generated by the thus-far-successful Aceh peace agreement, itself spurred by both the tsunami and the election in 2004 of Susilo Yudhoyono to the Indonesian presidency.

Of great concern to many observers is the alleged connection between Indonesian security forces and Laskar Jihad, a militant Muslim group with ties to al-Qaida. In the past, this group has been accused of inciting inter-religious conflict in other parts of Indonesia. After the 2002 Bali nightclub bombing, the group claimed to have disbanded, but many analysts doubt that. Now there are reports that Laskar Jihad has established itself in Papua.

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim country, and any unrest or destabilization could provide extremists with an opportunity to exploit. The peaceful resolution of the Papua issue is important for both regional and global security, as Laskar Jihad's alleged influence in Papua emphasizes. Compounding the issue is the fact that Papua has a Christian majority, further increasing the likelihood of a conflict for religious extremists to take advantage of if the situation were to deteriorate.

For additional background on the Papua issue, Yale University has published a detailed study on the legal and historical specifics of the Indonesian military's actions in Papua (**http://www.law.yale.edu/outside/html/Public_Affairs/426/westpapuahrights.pdf**).

— *Shawn Guan, Editorial Intern*

State's Travel Budget Under Scrutiny

In a March report the Government Accountability Office summarized its recent audit of the State Department's travel budget, citing "breakdowns in internal controls, a weak control environment, and ineffective oversight" as responsible for squandering tens of millions of dollars in taxpayers funds (**http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06298.pdf**). GAO found that the majority of the wasted tax money stemmed from improper premium ticket purchases and tickets that went unused altogether.

Between April 2003 and September 2004, State purchased 32,000 premium-class tickets. These tickets represented only 19 percent of the total tickets bought by State, but the cost accounted for 49 percent of total travel expenditures. Significantly, the GAO found that 67 percent of this

premium-class travel was not properly authorized, justified or both.

Further, the audit found that six million dollars worth of tickets were never used or processed for refunds. State was also found to have defaulted, in effect, on $2.7 million in possible rebates due to a failure to dispute unauthorized charges and pay the bill in accordance with the contract.

State has concurred with all 18 recommendations the GAO made to remedy the situation, including regular audits of premium-class travel and requirements for identification and processing of unused electronic tickets.

— Shawn Guan, Editorial Intern

Immigration Reform: Dueling Proposals

Immigration is a terribly important issue in the United States and, as it always has been, a highly charged one. To make the kind of major changes in legislation needed to deal with the fact of some 12 million "illegal" immigrants currently living and working in the country in an election year requires political sagacity of an extremely high order. So it should not be surprising that the outlook is bleak for near-term success — President Bush's May 15 prime-time plea for compromise notwithstanding.

And perhaps that's just as well, a contribution to "The Immigration Debate" on the Foreign Policy Association Web site suggests. For with more time for thought and discussion, a better policy may emerge (**http://www.fpa.org/topics_info2414/topics_info_show.htm?doc_id=368994**).

Moreover, in the view of many, Foreign Service officers among them, concerted attention to legal immigration procedures and practices — the manpower crisis resulting from new visa processing requirements, the effects of more stringent requirements on education and business, etc. — is urgent and, in fact, overdue.

> Russia has a choice to make. And there is no question that a return to democratic reform in Russia will generate further success for its people and greater respect among fellow nations. Democratization in Russia helped to end the Cold War, and the Russian people have made heroic progress in overcoming the miseries of the 20th century. They deserve now to live out their peaceful aspirations under a government that upholds freedom at home, and builds good relations abroad.
>
> *— Vice President Richard Cheney, from remarks at the 2006 Vilnius Conference, May 4, **www.whitehouse.gov**.*

As it now stands, however, the focus is on the "illegals." Congress has produced several widely divergent pieces of legislation. The Senate proposal leans more towards immigrant rights, while the House bill is skewed towards security. In the Senate, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act, S.1033, by Senators John McCain, R-Ariz., and Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., features a guest-worker program, a reduction of the immigration backlog and stricter border security measures.

A compromise, S.2611, drafted by Senators Mel Martinez, R-Fla., and Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., retains those features but tightens restrictions for the guest-worker program. The compromise would allow illegal immigrants who have been in the U.S. five or more years an opportunity to stay and earn citizenship and those who have been in the U.S. two or more years a chance to earn a temporary work visa. But those here for fewer than two years would have to return to their countries of origin.

The Sensenbrenner bill, H.R.4437, passed by the House of Representatives in December takes a harsher tone toward illegal immigration. Under its provisions, illegal entry into the U.S. would be considered a felony, as would affording humanitarian assistance to illegal immigrants. Companies found to be employing illegal migrants would be fined. In addition, the bill passed calls for a 700-mile-long fence on the U.S.-Mexico border and the removal of birthright citizenship from the children of illegal immigrants.

The legislation can be accessed and tracked online at **www.thomas.loc.gov**. In addition, there are a wealth of online resources that are useful in coming to grips with this vital issue. The Community Resource Bank (**http://communityresourcebank.org/**) contains demographic data on immigrants as well as links to other resources on the topic. The Urban Institute, along with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has published a detailed report on immigration data (**http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310844_the_new_neighbors.pdf**) . The Government Accountability Office has created a page with links to all of their previous studies on immigration, both legal and otherwise (**http://www.gao.govdocsearch/featured/immigration.html**). For more resources, please see the National Immigration Law Center (**http://www.nilc.org/**) and the Center for Immigration Studies (**http://www.cis.org/**). ■

— Shawn Guan, Editorial Intern

SPEAKING OUT

Iranian Nuclear Weapons: Advantage or Liability?

BY GEORGE B. LAMBRAKIS

The issue of nuclear weapons coming into Iran's hands has seized center stage and is likely to remain there for quite some time. Many, President Bush among them, describe it as a development that must not be allowed to happen, in part because they take Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's ranting against Israel at face value. Other observers familiar with the Middle East discount Ahmadinejad's threats as empty posturing for the benefit of his domestic audience, neighboring Arabs and fellow Muslims whom he is trying to impress. Still, there is an understandable fear that the rise of a second nuclear-armed state in the Middle East (alongside Israel), may drive the Arab states of the region into a headlong race to develop their own nuclear weapons.

Many consider it a foregone conclusion that, no matter what the West does, Tehran will persist in trying to develop such weapons, whether overtly or covertly. The logic of strategic realism appears to justify Iran's nuclear program both as a counter to threats it perceives from the U.S. and other sources, and as a backstop to its own ambitions in the Middle East and broader Muslim world. Unfortunately, Iran is far less vulnerable to Western pressure than Colonel Qaddafi's largely isolated Libya, which voluntarily gave up its nuclear program. It is also not as geographically isolated and economically unthreatening as North Korea, whose stated nuclear intentions are reluctantly being tolerated, at least by its immediate regional neighbors.

> *There is little chance that an Iranian nuke would constitute a "Muslim bomb" or be comfortably accepted as such by its neighbors.*

Western diplomatic alternatives have failed so far, and U.S. or United Nations sanctions are unlikely, unworkable and perhaps counterproductive. Some continue to place hope in a possible Iranian deal with Russia, even as Tehran drags out the negotiations, probably mindful of Moscow's past maneuvering in the region. Meanwhile, the possibility of American or Israeli military action is referred to darkly, and Pentagon planning is supposed to have taken on new life, even as the potentially disastrous practical and political consequences of any pre-emptive attack stare us in the face.

Ironically, in the midst of all the fuss being made by policy-makers and the media, U.S. intelligence has announced that Iran will be unable to develop nuclear weapons for another decade! This timeline is disputed by Israeli analysts who suggest that Iran will pass a point of no return in developing nuclear capability within months, not years. And, of course, past experience (e.g., American surprise at how close Saddam Hussein had gotten to the bomb before the first Gulf War, and how far from such capability he was at the time of our 2003 invasion) suggests that skepticism as to such estimates would not be misplaced.

What are we to make of all this?

Three Realities

As head of Embassy Tehran's political section at the time of the Iranian Revolution, and a hostage in the first (one-day) takeover of the embassy on Valentine's Day, 1979, I do not underestimate the current Islamic regime's potential for mischief. I also see little to be gained by any effort to blunt the international community's unhappiness and growing frustration with Iran's camouflaging of what any rational person can see is its ultimate ambition.

Still, whatever the status of Tehran's nuclear program, three realities stand out. The first is that Iran is a Shiite, non-Arab country with a long history of competition and even conflict in a region primarily populated by Sunni Muslim Arabs. Thus, any significant increase in Iranian power is bound to be eyed suspiciously by neighboring governments, whatever may be Iran's protestations of anti-Israeli militancy that often resound well in the Arab "street." Such suspicion can quickly turn to alarm, especially if the new, Shiite-dominated Iraq — the only military foil to Iran in that part of the Arab world — appears to ally itself with its Shiite neighbor's policies.

Such alarm would be particularly likely in the Arab Sunni states with sizable Shiite minorities, such as militarily weaker Saudi Arabia, whose oil-producing region is populated by Shiites (and where Iran is already known to have backed terrorist outrages intended to embarrass the ruling regime), or tiny, secular Bahrain, which hosts a U.S. and British naval base in the midst of its majority-Shiite population (over which Iran has historically claimed sovereignty even though this claim was dropped by the shah's pre-revolutionary government). And where Saudi Arabia leads, most of the smaller states of the Arabian Peninsula tend to follow — backed in most instances by the politics of key secular Arab governments such as those of Egypt, Algeria and Morocco, who also fear any spread of Iran's radical fundamentalism. In this context, we in the West, Arab leaders, and the Iranians themselves should all ask whether the political liabilities of nuclear weapons possession might actually outweigh any benefits for Iran's political ambitions in the region and more broadly in the world.

This leads to a second reality. Is it conceivable that Iran, even armed with nuclear weapons, will ever risk its security — its very survival — in a serious confrontation with a nuclear-armed Israel for the benefit of its Sunni Arab neighbors? The world has noted the surprise and apprehension with which the clerics who really rule Iran greet their president's public threats. While some Israelis might worry that the existence of Iranian nuclear weapons would deter any possible recourse to nuclear weapons by Israel and could embolden neighboring Arab states to launch attacks on Israel with conventional weaponry, everyone knows that such attacks have only lost the Arabs more land in the past. Then there is the fact that

both Egypt and Jordan have recognized Israel's right to exist and concluded peace treaties with her. There is, in fact, little chance that an Iranian nuclear weapon would operate as a "Muslim bomb," or be comfortably accepted as such by its neighbors.

Finally, there is the fact that the presence of nuclear weapons in Israeli, Indian, Pakistani and, eventually, Iranian hands will certainly cause some hard and specific thinking in the Arab world. Would a rich state such as Saudi Arabia try to produce its own nuclear weapons? Would Egypt or Syria, or some other Arab state do so? And as these governments think about it, would such an effort not seem costlier and riskier in terms of their political relationships than seeking nuclear protection elsewhere? In fact, could not such Iranian armament actually provide an incentive for some of these states to seek the protection of the American nuclear deterrent? Tehran might usefully ponder that idea.

Such considerations should provide a degree of comfort to Western governments. They might eventually provide arguments to persuade Iran that developing nuclear weapons is not worth the political cost. They should refocus diplomacy on the direction of civil society in the Middle East and the relative place of Iran in the broader picture.

The Right Side of the Rubicon

Given how murky our understanding of Tehran's inner policy-making process is, I am not arguing against current efforts to dissuade it from crossing the technical Rubicon in pursuit of nuclear weapons. This is particularly true if, over the next months and years, new options should develop (changes in the region or in Iran's domestic situation, for example). Rather, I am suggesting that Iran's leaders have a more complicated decision to make than perhaps they (or we) now recognize.

This recognition should enable us to resist the growing media-fueled panic. Instead, the situation calls for using a combination of containment, pressure and engagement not unlike that which Western governments learned to practice to good effect in the last years of the Cold War. In the present case we might even get effective Russian assistance — if Moscow finally chooses broader cooperation with the West, and if Iran's historical suspicion of Russia is overcome now that the two no longer share a common border.

As a start, American policy-makers should consider that, however the current mess in Iraq resolves itself, it has reminded everybody in the region of the historic Sunni-Shia split within Islam — and the fact that Iran is not on the majority side of that fault line. This will hold true in spite of any efforts that Tehran may make to appear as a peacemaker in Iraq's growing Sunni-Shia conflict.

Second, U.S. policy-makers should recognize the centrality of facilitating a settlement in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, which would defuse many tensions in the region. Instead, as a result of Washington's hands-off attitude, and the absence of diplomatic competition from prestigious Arab leaders in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, or even Saudi Arabia, Tehran currently enjoys a special opportunity in the Palestinian problem. It has been getting considerable mileage out of its self-appointed role as a defender of the Palestinians (even though most of them are Sunni or, indeed, Christian). It has been providing moral and financial assistance to suicide bombing, both directly and through the (Shiite) Lebanese Hezbollah. It has recently given $50 million to help the Hamas-led government in Palestine survive U.S., Israeli and European

pressure. Clearly, Iran is trying to disassociate itself from the growing Sunni-Shia split, presumably in recognition of the looming danger to Iran's regional relationships.

This special Iranian-Palestinian relationship is bound to change if the Palestinians manage to strike a deal with the Israelis. It is obvious, therefore, that renewed American efforts to help achieve such a deal will also help to counter such aspects of Iranian policy — which, one might suspect, currently trouble the Israelis at least as much as Iran's purported nuclear threat, despite their public relations campaign on that issue.

Finally, let us not underestimate the realists who almost certainly make the final decisions in Iran. For, unlike most other countries, under Iran's constitution the head of state (President Ahmadinejad) is subordinate to the top clerical leadership of the nation, embodied at present in Imam Khomeni's successor, Ayatollah Khamenei. Just as they showed a readiness to cooperate with the American-led coalition when it first invaded neighboring Afghanistan, and recently offered to discuss with Americans the post-election politics in Iraq, these clerics must be interested in what happens while the coalitions maintain a presence and/or influence in both those countries. They must also be keeping an eye on neighboring (Sunni) Pakistan, where the U.S. also has and should maintain influence. If and when Iran's present advantages in Iraq and Palestine diminish or disappear altogether, it may regret its attitude toward the Great Satan.

For all these reasons, realities on the ground — if recognized and acted upon by Washington and its allies — are in time likely to dictate a less abrasive Iranian foreign policy. At the very least, if we have any confidence at all in our own intelligence estimates, we should enjoy a few years in which to shape our policies, taking due account of the factors discussed above. ■

George B. Lambrakis, Ph.D., was a State Department Foreign Service officer from 1957 to 1985, following two years in Vietnam and Laos with USIA. His overseas postings included Tel Aviv, Beirut, Tehran and London, among many others; he also worked on Middle East affairs in New York City and Washington, D.C. He now heads the international relations and diplomacy program at Schiller International University in London.

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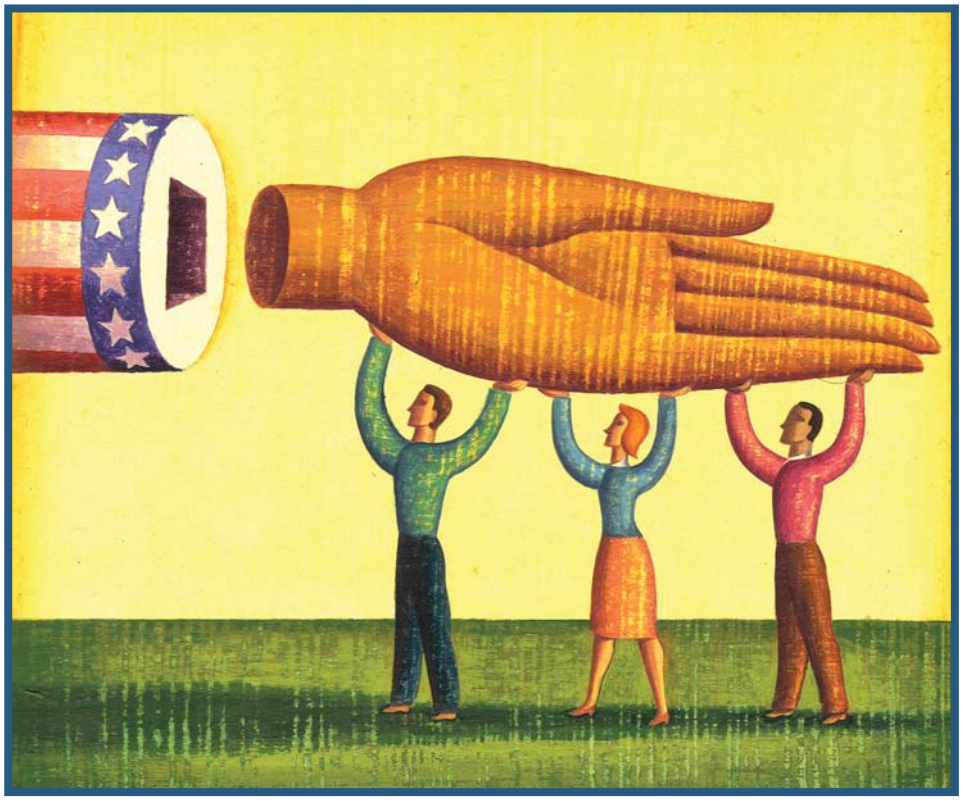
USAID IN THE POST-9/11 WORLD



Phil Bliss

REFORMS ARE REALIGNING THE AGENCY'S POLICIES AND OPERATIONS TO MATCH TODAY'S STRATEGIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES.

BY ANDREW NATSIOS

The past five years have witnessed more changes in our foreign assistance program, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, than at any point since the Kennedy administration: in fundamental purpose, in spending levels, in allocation standards and in new programs. These changes are designed to prepare the agency for the foreign policy challenges of the post-9/11 world, in recognition of the likelihood that international development may be the most powerful and appropriate response to these challenges. This article will explore the intellec-

tual rationale for foreign assistance programs, describe the organizational changes already undertaken in USAID over the past five years, and discuss the changes yet to be implemented during the remaining years of the Bush presidency.

The urgency of these changes becomes even more evident given President Bush's announcement over the past five years of 21 new foreign assistance initiatives. U.S. spending levels show an increase in official development assistance from $10 billion in 2000 to an estimated $27.5 billion in 2005.

Fragile and failed states also represent one of the greatest development challenges of our time.

Modernizing Foreign Assistance

Whenever the vital national interests of the country are being redefined, as they have been since the 9/11 attacks, foreign aid goes through a redefinition as well. It is not surprising, then, that the program strategies, funding mechanisms, organizational structure and business systems of USAID have all undergone more change in the past five years than in the past several decades combined. The focus has been on realigning the policies and operations of the agency to: match the strategic and developmental challenges facing the developing world in the post-9/11 era; modernize the business systems that carry out the agency's work; create a new set of nontraditional partners; contribute to the administration's major foreign policy initiatives; and participate more aggressively in the U.S. government's public diplomacy efforts.

Toward these ends, USAID has promulgated more than a dozen new strategies in various sectors, reshaping program design, budget decisions and staffing patterns. The most significant of the strategic documents explaining the new direction are: *Foreign Aid in the National Interest*; *U.S. Foreign Aid: Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century* (commonly known as the *White Paper*); the *Fragile States Strategy*; and the *Democracy and Governance Strategy*.

These four strategy papers represent a historic departure from traditional development practice. The first two address broad questions of development policy and programming, while the *White Paper* proposes to move USAID away from sector-based programming (the traditional way in which our country assistance programs have been designed) to a model based on the stage of development which each country occupies. Specifically, it recognizes the following categories: transformational states that are experiencing rapid rates of growth and progress; countries that are neither collapsing nor progressing (a category added later); strategically important states; fragile states under stress; failed states in crisis requiring humanitarian assistance; and transnational challenges such as avian flu and HIV/AIDS.

USAID is now redesigning its budgeting and programming systems to reflect these developmental categories. In Sudan, for example, the reconstruction program for the south has been redesigned as a fragile-state strategy by focusing the effort on the factors that would most likely lead to a breakdown of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement; after all, if the agreement collapses and the war starts again, the rest of the reconstruction program becomes irrelevant. The most important factor, then, in reducing the fragility of Sudan and making sure reconstruction succeeds is ensuring the success of the CPA. Under the new strategy, early initiatives will be taken in the three most explosive geographic areas covered by the peace agreement to reduce the country's vulnerability.

Two of the new strategy papers address the central

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Previously, Amb. Natsios was director of USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance from 1989 to 1991 and assistant administrator for the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance (now the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance) from 1991 to 1993. He is the author of numerous articles on foreign policy and humanitarian emergencies, as well as two books: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse *(Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1997) and* The Great North Korean Famine *(U.S. Institute of Peace, 2001).*

challenge of dealing with governance failure in developing countries that have become magnets for terrorist networks, criminal gangs, illegal arms trade, narcotics cartels, money laundering and counterfeiting rings. Three such states — Somalia, Sudan and Afghanistan — served as hosts for Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network during the 1990s.

Addressing Failed States

Fragile and failed states also represent one of the greatest development challenges of our time. Two billion of the poorest, most undernourished, and sickest people in the world live in about 50 fragile or failing states.

Fortunately, in responding to this challenge we now have a truly historic confluence of vital national interest, rigorous development analysis and great moral purpose. In fact, not since the Marshall Plan of nearly 60 years ago have we witnessed such a clear alignment of these traditionally conflicting interests in our aid program.

Over the past five years, USAID has sought simultaneously to realign its organizational structure, budgeting and personnel systems, and programming to address state fragility and failure. For instance, we have created a new career track (called a "backstop," equivalent to a "cone" in the State Department) within the Foreign Service personnel system called crisis, stabilization and governance, which 10 percent of the agency's officers have now joined. This cadre is now being trained in common doctrine, programming design and operating systems to carry out these new strategies.

Four years ago we created the Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management to create new program instruments and analytical tools to deal with conflict, a major factor in state fragility and failure. Officers from CMM have been assigned to State's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization to do joint planning. USAID has also established an Office of Military Affairs to better coordinate its crisis response planning with counterparts in the regional commands.

This enhanced focus on conflict and fragility is reflected in a USAID program on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. The Livelihood Enhancement and Peace Program is designed to assist former combatants of the Moro National Liberation Front make the transition from guerrillas to commercial farmers and fishermen. Since 1997, LEAP has provided over 24,000 former MNLF combatants with technical assistance and training, agricultural and aquaculture production inputs, and post-harvest equipment and support facilities. In order to assist in bringing about greater trust between the Philippine government and the former combatants, LEAP uses local government offices to deliver services.

I recently came across a poignant endorsement of this program's efforts in a letter from an Islamic insurgent commander in Mindanao to former U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Frank Riccardone, a good friend of mine and one of our most able diplomats. It says: "If LEAP-USAID was in Mindanao 30 years ago, war did not happen in Mindanao" (sic). The commander asked the ambassador for a similar program to be extended to his area. Riccardone responded that they would have to lay down their arms first; then we would talk about a reconstruction program for them.

USAID's internal realignment will assist our friends in the developing world to escape the failed-state trap. One African head of state turned to me at an international conference and remarked, "As a nation, America can no longer afford to have its friends fail in the development process." I would put it more positively: it is in America's national interest for our friends to succeed in the development process. That mandate calls for a better alignment of American diplomatic, trade, military and development resources to facilitate their efforts to reduce poverty through sustained economic growth; build competent, well-governed democracies; and provide reliable public services.

A new communications strategy is being implemented to parallel the State Department's own enhanced public diplomacy campaign. All USAID missions are hiring development information officers to work alongside the political section in embassies to explain USAID programs to the public. For instance, a new branding campaign for all USAID field programs uses the traditional handshake logo, which goes back to the Marshall Plan, but combines it with a new tag line — "USAID from the American People" — in red, white and blue.

In strategically important regions such as the Islamic world, USAID missions are carrying out public service campaigns on local radio and television to advertise programs. We now have ample polling data to conclude that the branding and communications plans are substantially increasing public awareness of these programs. In the West Bank and Gaza, awareness of the USAID programs among the Palestinian people went from 5 to 55 percent

as a result of this aggressive communications campaign. In Aceh, Indonesia, where a large U.S. government tsunami reconstruction program is under way, more than 50 percent of the people surveyed could identify U.S. projects. This much higher visibility and public identification of American aid programs make a powerful statement about our intentions in the world that can win the hearts and minds of people at the community level.

The Global Development Alliance

Over the years, USAID cultivated a comfortable group of implementing partner organizations — universities, nongovernmental organizations and contractors — which did not change much from year to year. The agency maintained this continuity for a good reason: this relatively fixed set of partners has reduced the risk of program failure and improved accountability and program quality. But some of these organizational relationships fostered dependency and a sense of entitlement, which translated into an increasing effort by some partner organizations and advocacy groups to protect themselves and their sectors against the risk of USAID leaders changing priorities, regional emphasis and programming focus. They did this by encouraging congressional earmarks and directives, which have tied the agency into a budgetary straitjacket with little flexibility.

To minimize this tendency, we have now expanded the circle of partner organizations to include more groups that do not principally depend on the federal appropriation process for their survival. Through an initiative called the Global Development Alliance, the agency has invested more than $1.1 billion in more than 300 alliances with private foundations, faith-based groups, nongovernmental organizations, corporations and universities, garnering $3.7 billion in private foreign aid. The Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University recently conducted a case study on USAID alliance-building and has chosen the GDA for its Lewis and Clark Award for Innovations in Government.

The GDA takes advantage of the massive increase in private funding of foreign assistance programs over the past four decades. In 1970 only 30 percent of aid flows to the developing world from the U.S. were private contributions, while 70 percent were official development assistance, principally from USAID. By 2004 nearly 85 percent of the cash flows came from private donors, while just 15 percent was public. This is not so much because of cuts in U.S. government funding as a massive increase in private funding, a desirable trend in that private funding brings with it commitment and support from American civil society for foreign assistance.

One of the most interesting components of this private foreign aid has been remittances from ethnic diasporas in the United States. While remittances account for a substantial percentage of the gross national product in many developing countries, until recently, research on international development did not examine their full impact. For example, much of the private funding for micro-lending in Mexico comes from Mexican-American remittances from California.

Recognizing this trend, we designed an innovative approach to multiply the power of remittances through the technical and management disciplines of the agency. Working with members of the Haitian-American community who agreed to contribute a small percentage of all their remittances passing through a bank in Port-au-Prince, USAID matched their contributions through a Global Development Alliance grant and built public schools using the combined funds. We opened the first of these Haitian schools in 2003.

Changing the Way USAID Does Business

USAID's business systems, country strategy processes and internal structures have all been overhauled to prepare to implement the new strategies and programs. In the summer of 2001 we undertook a major reorganization, which later made possible the agency's massive efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. A new financial management system has been installed, the first unified system in 25 years. This has resulted in clean, unqualified audits for two years in a row, the first time this has happened in the agency's history. All nine management vulnerabilities identified by the Inspector General in 2000 have now been eliminated. A new automated procurement system, designed also for use by the State Department, is under development. And a new unified management information system to better track USAID spending and programming will replace 129 informal ad hoc systems that individual operating units have created over the years to help managers with their budgets and programming.

We undertook these internal reforms just as the agency was designing and implementing two of the largest programs in its history in Afghanistan and Iraq, together totaling more than $9 billion over four years.

In Afghanistan, USAID efforts have contributed to rebuilding infrastructure and supporting increased agricultural production. In fact, we have paid more than $15 million in wages through a "cash-for-work" program to approximately 194,000 farmers to provide a viable alternative to poppy cultivation. The agency has worked hard to improve over 6,000 kilometers of irrigation canals covering 290,000 hectares of farmland. Consequently, agricultural output has risen substantially, with cereal output increasing by 24 percent and livestock and poultry production yielding an additional $200 million annually. Since 2001, over 170,000 students (58 percent of them young women) have participated in USAID's Accelerated Learning Program which is educating adult women who were denied access to schooling under the Taliban. More than 60,000 former combatants have given up their weapons and are reintegrating into the civilian labor force. Some seven million Afghans (70 percent of them women and children) now have better access to quality health services.

USAID's increasing reliance on contractors and FSNs is exacerbating chronic funding problems.

Similar successes have been achieved in the Iraq reconstruction effort, particularly in education and health. As of September 2005, over 2,800 Iraqi schools had been rehabilitated and 45 constructed. Over 47,500 secondary school teachers and administrators had received training. USAID has edited, printed and distributed 8.7 million Iraqi math and science textbooks. School supplies have been distributed to one million primary, and two million secondary, schoolchildren. In addition, sports equipment has been distributed to every school. USAID-supported emergency campaigns in 2005 alone immunized 98 percent of Iraqi children between 1 and 5 years of age (3.62 million) against measles, mumps and rubella and 9 percent of children under 5 (4.56 million) against polio. USAID partners have trained 11,400 staff at over 2,000 community-based centers in almost every province to manage malnutrition in children.

Admittedly, these efforts came with a significant cost in human life. Nearly 150 staff of USAID-funded partner organizations were killed implementing this massive effort, the largest loss of life the agency has sustained since the Vietnam War. Many of those killed were selected because USAID programs were a softer target of opportunity than taking on the U.S. military directly, which insurgents quickly learned could be quite costly to their forces.

Fixing Our Foreign Assistance Structure

Severe understaffing remains one of the most serious problems facing the agency. Nine new USAID missions — mostly in the Islamic world — were opened during the past five years, even as the agency experienced severe staff and operating-expense shortages.

This situation is a grim legacy of the 1990s, when USAID lost nearly 35 percent of its Civil Service and Foreign Service staff through a reduction in force and retirements. Most of these positions have never been replaced, even during the subsequent period of new missions and budgetary expansion. Instead, the agency hired contractor staff and Foreign Service Nationals to provide surge capacity in the new missions. While these employees are able and dedicated, they are not direct hires of the U.S. government, do not fully understand the business systems of the agency and perform functions that, in my view, only direct hires should be carrying out. Furthermore, when FSNs and contractors take jobs in other institutions, their departure deprives the agency of historical memory and technical expertise.

I once asked a government minister who was engaged in a fight to stop corruption within his government to identify the most important thing the agency did for him. He replied that the technical assistance from NGOs was useful and the funding was helpful, but what made a critical difference was having a USAID FSO down the street who helped him with strategizing, recruiting and planning. It is not an overstatement to say that the USAID staff of each mission *is* the program, providing the technical expertise to design projects, advising government ministries struggling with policy reform, and helping civil society organizations implement their projects. These officers have traditionally spent much of their time working alongside local counterparts to ensure that programs are effective or get them back on track.

With impending retirements, the agency will shortly have fewer than 1,000 Foreign Service officers; in my view it needs at least double that to do its job properly. So

if the executive and legislative branches are serious about expanding foreign assistance, they must restaff the USAID Foreign Service to bring in officers with the technical (economists, agricultural scientists and medical doctors, etc.) and program management (procurement officers, financial analysts and logistics officers, etc.) skills needed to sustain this effort over the long term.

The increasing reliance on contractors and FSNs is also exacerbating chronic funding problems. While USAID's overall budget rose from $7.6 billion in FY 2000 to over $12.6 billion in FY 2005, representing a 44-percent increase when adjusted for inflation, the operating expenses component (which includes salaries and benefits for direct hires, administrative costs, and maintenance of computer systems) increased far less substantially — going from $519 million in FY 2000 to just $696 million in FY 2005, or about 17 percent when adjusted for inflation. The OE budget of USAID is rooted in the mistaken view that technical staff is separate from programs. An anachronism, it is compromising the agency's ability to carry out its work.

Another critical foreign assistance issue that needs to be addressed is the diffuse organizational structure of the agencies and departments administering the current foreign aid program. Our foreign assistance portfolio is now spread out over a dozen federal departments. There are too many internal bureaucratic and external interest-group pressures driving conflicting agendas, leading to a serious imbalance in funding for some sectors and reliance on organizations lacking expertise on program implementation abroad under sometimes challenging conditions.

For example, Africa needs to strengthen democratic institutions and good governance, prevent or settle civil conflicts, stimulate economic growth through trade and agricultural development (70 percent of the people are farmers) and build infrastructure. Yet with the exception of the Millennium Challenge Account, the U.S. government's budget for Africa has been focused disproportionately on humanitarian assistance and social services. While these social service programs are admirable, does anyone believe that their success would meet the continent's development challenges? If so, consider just one statistic: the U.S. government spent over $1.4 billion on food aid to Africa in FY 2005, but only $134 million on agriculture programs to enable Africans to grow their own crops and end recurring food crises.

Toward a Strategic Vision

Finally, the U.S. foreign assistance program lacks both strategic coherence and a comprehensive vision — unlike national military policy, which regularly undergoes the Quadrennial Defense Review. This is a broad, governmentwide process that produces a strategy to drive programming and budget allocations. In contrast, while USAID has worldwide sector and country strategies and program-results indicators in each of the 80 countries in which it has a presence, these have no effect on spending done by other departments. Worse, hundreds of special-interest-driven congressional earmarks and directives determine programming decisions, not a thorough analysis of U.S. interests, program performance or host-country needs.

Precisely because President Bush has so dramatically increased foreign assistance funding and reformed the strategy for using it, the need for structural reform to address these discontinuities is all the more apparent. The Rice Plan for Foreign Assistance Reform will tie together the president's foreign assistance initiatives and correct some of the weaknesses in the existing system. Under the plan, the administrator of USAID will be dual-hatted, also serving as the director of foreign assistance programs, with Deputy Secretary of State rank and control over all 150 Account spending. Randall Tobias, my successor as USAID administrator, will have authority to speak for the U.S. government internationally concerning foreign assistance policy and implementation. And by holding both portfolios, he will be able to rationalize what is currently a highly diffuse, and not very strategic, use of foreign assistance dollars.

In English, we say that "the devil is in the details," for the invariably boring minutia of how processes will be changed and business models altered determine the success of reforms in any institution. We all know that badly implemented reforms can make things worse rather than better. However, there is a Hungarian proverb that suggests the other side of this reality: "The angel is in the details." Sometimes even modest reforms, well implemented, can be profoundly salutary.

Sec. Rice's proposals provide the structure needed to ensure that our $27.5 billion in foreign assistance resources are effectively and accountably used, advancing America's vital interest in seeing developing countries succeed in achieving good governance. ■

SERVING IN HIGH-THREAT POSTS

Phil Bliss

THE RULES GOVERNING ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARDS HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH SINCE 9/11. IT IS TIME TO RE-EXAMINE THEM.

BY MARK WARD

I was the first USAID officer to return to Pakistan in 2002, in the wake of 9/11, when Secretary of State Colin Powell instructed the agency to reopen the U.S. foreign assistance program after an eight-year hiatus. I will never forget my first day back (I had served in Pakistan from 1991-1994). After the country team meeting, the regional security officer introduced himself and told me he was strongly opposed to USAID's return. "Give me any trouble," he warned, "and you'll be on the first plane out of here." It was only weeks after the attack on the Protestant

International Church, a stone's throw from our embassy, and the RSO was clearly concerned about providing security for a large new assistance program.

Fortunately, over time we developed a solid working relationship. He came to see the value of USAID's programs for the war on terror, and I insisted my staff follow all the RSO's guidance without exception. But he knew on that first day that if I was going to do my job well, we were going to make it much harder for him to do his.

Working in high-threat environments creates a real conundrum for USAID and the State Department. On the one hand, foreign assistance, public affairs, political and economic officers need to venture beyond the embassy compound regularly to do their jobs. But chiefs of mission and RSOs are responsible for protecting U.S. lives, even if that means keeping people behind embassy walls.

Meanwhile, the rules governing Accountability Review Boards, to which COMs are summoned in the case of death or serious injury, haven't changed much since 9/11. In places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the threat level would have forced us to evacuate just a few years ago, the U.S. government is actually ramping up development and public diplomacy efforts. We all regret the loss of FSOs in the line of duty, most recently in Karachi, but a zero-tolerance approach to risk, while understandable, is no longer practical.

Accountability Review Boards

The U.S. Code requires that the Secretary of State convene an Accountability Review Board within 60 days "in any case of serious injury, loss of life, or significant destruction of property at, or related to, a United States government mission abroad, and in any case of a serious breach of security involving intelligence activities of a foreign government directed at a United States government mission abroad." The ARB is instructed to examine the facts and circumstances surrounding the security incident and make written findings on: a) the extent to which the incident was security-related; b) whether the security systems and procedures at that mission were adequate; c) whether the security systems and procedures were properly implemented; d) the impact of intelligence and information availability; and e) other facts and circumstances that may be relevant to the appropriate security management of U.S. missions abroad. The board then submits its findings to the Secretary of State with recommendations to improve the security and efficiency of the program or operation under review.

Perhaps more important to ambassadors and RSOs, the ARB must also make personnel recommendations whenever it finds reasonable cause to believe that an individual has failed in his or her duty. The board is instructed to transmit the finding of reasonable cause to the head of the appropriate federal agency and recommend that the agency initiate an appropriate investigatory or disciplinary action. Within 30 days of receiving the recommendations of the board, the head of the agency must transmit a report to Congress explaining the nature of the case, a summary of the evidence and the decision by the agency to take disciplinary or other appropriate action against that individual — or the reason for not doing so.

This is legislation with teeth, with potential for real impact on careers. Patrick Fine, a former USAID mission director in Afghanistan, has said that facing an ARB is viewed by many ambassadors and RSOs as a "career-ending event." Harry Manchester, USAID's head of security, likens the ARB to a sword that continually hangs over RSOs' heads. Ambassador Nancy Powell said at a December 2004 State-USAID conference in Cairo on managing assistance in high-threat countries that COMs and RSOs must now consider proposed activities in a new light: can it be justified as worth the risk in front of an ARB someday, if something goes wrong?

As long as the ARB system remains in place, COMs and RSOs will have an incentive to follow the most conservative approach toward risk — or take all the risk upon themselves. After the devastating December 2004 tsunami, our ambassador to Indonesia found himself between a rock and a hard place. He had to accept full responsibility for any security incidents involving official Americans in strife-riven, previously inaccessible Aceh when he decided to allow a few FSOs to work out of a

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small office in Banda Aceh. His decision has paid great dividends for the U.S. at a critical time in Indonesia, but he had to put his own career on the line in the process.

Operating in Critical Environments

State Department and USAID officers cannot do their jobs living in fortresses. Much of our success depends on our ability to interact with host-government officials, politicians, academics and community leaders.

In Nepal, for instance, the international community has struggled to correctly assess the needs and issues facing internally displaced persons. But the deteriorating security situation has forced USAID to rely heavily on second-hand information to develop programmatic responses. In another instance, a recent *Washington Post* article strongly criticized U.S. efforts to build and refurbish schools and clinics in Afghanistan, citing our failure to provide adequate oversight and quality control. According to the *Post*, the delays and deficiencies in this reconstruction program have greatly disappointed our Afghan counterparts and eroded Washington's credibility, hindering efforts to advance key U.S. objectives. But with greater access to project sites, USAID could have quickly detected and averted some of these problems.

The State Department is similarly hindered by stringent security protocols, especially because diplomatic success relies on the ability to meet and build relationships with key government officials and politicians. In the March 2006 *Foreign Service Journal*, an FSO serving in Baghdad explains that "…often security restrictions keep us overly locked down, where we cannot accurately track or influence events." It is particularly difficult for public affairs officers to build trust and good will with host-country audiences when they are surrounded by "shooters" whenever they travel — if they get out at all.

To make up for the security restrictions, USAID is relying heavily on highly qualified local staff and non-governmental organizations to monitor and implement our programs in high-threat environments. In the West Bank/Gaza, for example, USAID has delegated some program management to local contractors and Palestinian employees, who have greater freedom of movement when border checkpoints are closed. USAID/Sri Lanka relies on local organizations to implement and monitor programs in Tamil-controlled areas where mission staff may not go. We have also developed synergistic relationships in conflict areas with U.S. military personnel who can often act as our "eyes and ears" in particularly dangerous circumstances.

Toward a Long-Term Solution

But we will not win the war of ideas in the long term by employing proxies to design, monitor and publicize our programs. I recall a conversation with Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., in Islamabad in 2003. I was describing our program to improve primary schools in Baluchistan, one of Pakistan's most dangerous provinces. He asked how often I traveled to the school sites. I explained that my travel depended on the security situation at the time and place, but he wasn't convinced that I was doing enough to "show the flag." American officers have to be seen, we agreed, even in the most dangerous places.

I offer three recommendations to move this issue forward. First, and easiest to accomplish, the training for new ambassadors and RSOs should focus on more than the negative consequences of security incidents. Chiefs of mission and DS officers who have served in high-threat environments should be invited to share examples of the creative solutions they employed to manage the trade-offs between security and program success. USAID officers who have developed creative ways to deliver assistance in high-threat environments should do so, as well.

A second, tougher, solution is to change the criteria for the ARB. Congress recently amended the Diplomatic Security Act of 1984 to provide a limited exemption from the requirement to convene a board, at the discretion of the Secretary of State, in the event of a major security incident in Iraq or Afghanistan. The amendment acknowledged that the old rules should not apply in the war zones in which we now work, a step in the right direction. But the waiver is exercised *after* the fact, so the COMs in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to have an incentive to be very cautious. In addition, the exception applies only to two of the several high-threat unaccompanied posts where we work today.

Finally, we need strong leadership to shift our thinking about risk and establish an appropriate threshold for risk-taking. The first step is opening up the discussion and acknowledging that we are operating in an entirely new paradigm. I hope this article will keep the dialogue going.

If we are to achieve our foreign policy goals in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere in the world, we must first accept that only with great risk comes great reward. ■

FOREIGN AID POLICY: OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES?

Phil Bliss

A SHIFT TO FOSTERING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, RATHER THAN PROVIDING DIRECT AID, WILL MEET BUREAUCRATIC RESISTANCE.

BY THOMAS DICHTER

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's Jan. 18, 2006, speech at Georgetown University on transformational diplomacy can be taken as one bookend of the new U.S. foreign policy. In it, Sec. Rice noted that the "fundamental character of regimes now matters more than the international distribution of power." She ended her speech by reminding the audience that "democracy is hard and democracy takes time."

The other bookend could be identified as USAID's January 2004 *White Paper*, "U.S. Foreign Aid: Meeting the

Challenges of the 21st Century." In it the agency commits itself to transformational development and notes, among other things, that "institutions, not resources, matter most;" that "countries not committed to reform conventional development programs are unlikely to advance development;" and that "aid is essentially supportive, while local leadership, ownership and participation are critical." The paper underscores the need to pay attention to absorptive capacity constraints and emphasizes the concept of "selectivity," meaning that aid ought to go where it has the best chance of making a lasting difference.

So framed, U.S. foreign aid policy could be said to recognize officially the following four principles: 1) the importance of time, implying that any expectation of quick and easy solutions is unrealistic; 2) the primacy of institutions over resources, implying that money is not the answer (or at least not money alone); 3) the key role of commitment and political will on the part of the developing countries, implying (along with the related notion of selectivity) that it does not really pay to provide much development aid without them; and 4) the role of aid as a support, implying that instead of conventional delivery (directed packages and projects loaded with "cargo"), aid might be reconceived of as more indirect and strategic, aimed at catalyzing and fostering host-government initiatives.

Even if these interpretive add-ons might be less than fully intended by official policy, the new emphases still add up to a conceptual framework that is surprisingly on the mark. I say "surprisingly" because the aid establishment (U.S. and worldwide) has been agonizingly slow in saying openly what thousands of veteran aid practitioners have known for decades. And "on the mark" because, indeed, these are pretty accurate distillations of over 50 years of lessons — lessons that, as others and I have lamented, were apparent but never clearly articulated, much less acted upon.

Is there any evidence that these sound principles are being translated into action? What would foreign assistance programs based on them look like? And, more important, what are the prospects that they will become the basis for development aid in the future? Before addressing these questions, it is useful to review how we got to this point.

The Aid Dilemma

The 1961 U.S. Foreign Assistance Act can be seen as the practical beginning of "modern" American development-oriented foreign aid; namely, aid aimed at helping the many new nations (then called "underdeveloped") as opposed to post–World War II relief, Marshall Plan aid in Europe or aid tied to "mutual security." Worldwide, official development assistance from the advanced industrial nations to the developing nations grew fairly steadily until about 1990, when it leveled off at about $60 billion per year. ODA stayed in that range until 2002, but since then has been growing steadily again.

USAID economic assistance (which does not include food aid, State Department programs such as the HIV/AIDS Initiative, the Peace Corps or military assistance) was $12.9 billion in FY 2001, $16.1 billion in FY 02, $20.8 billion in FY 03 and $26.6 billion in FY 04. Not surprisingly, target countries and sectors have varied considerably over the last 50 years: the 1960s saw large infrastructure projects; the 1970s, Basic Human Needs; and the 1980s, appropriate technology, with microcredit becoming popular in the 1990s. Today debt relief and Iraq reconstruction are major budget lines. Altogether, about $2 trillion dollars have been spent on aid for the developing countries since 1961.

But for those of us who have been "out there" for any length of time during the past five decades, a private discomfort has grown as we have seen how little we have to show for the trillions of dollars. Let's leave aside budget support to certain preferred countries, as well as disaster and humanitarian relief; those aid categories are basically unrelated to long-term development and poverty reduc-

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tion. The lack of results is distinctly on the developmental side of the balance sheet. Half of the world's population (3 billion people) live on $2 a day or less. One billion do not have access to clean water (despite a commitment made by the advanced nations that there be clean water for all by 1990). In 1978, the world's donor nations resolved to see to it that primary health care be fully available to all by 2000. We are still not anywhere near that goal. Roads and other projects we built years ago are in ruin or disrepair in many countries. Poverty in much of Africa is as bad as, or worse than, ever.

Most important, we have seen how incredibly tricky it is to figure out how to leave behind something sustainable after "the project" is over.

Where there *has* been significant poverty reduction (e.g., China), it has had little to do with aid; and where direct aid has dominated, we have seen little lasting poverty reduction. We have seen how often well-meaning anti-poverty projects get captured by corrupt officials, bureaucratic red tape and local elites. We have seen how easy it is to create dependency in the midst of a rhetoric of self-reliance; and how even brilliantly-conceived, well-executed projects come to naught in a context of political instability, underdeveloped or nonexistent infrastructure and lack of human capital. Most important, we have seen how incredibly tricky it is to figure out how to leave behind something sustainable after "the project" is over and, thus, how easy it is to succumb to the temptation to make the day-to-day accounting for development "cargo" substitute for development — as if the accounting for seeds, hoes, tractors, pumps, pipes, hours of consultant time, vehicles, numbers of agricultural extension officers "trained" and, more recently, microcredit loans processed were all we needed to prove we had done our jobs well.

Our discomfort is often tempered by the tendency to say, Wait a minute, didn't we eradicate smallpox? Aren't we on the way to controlling guinea worm and trachoma? Aren't we finally seeing progress (in places like Uganda) against HIV/AIDS? Haven't we inoculated millions of kids against many diseases? Haven't we prevented the starvation of millions more through food donations? What about those bags of wheat USAID used to unload in countless counties, the ones with the handshake logo and the words (in several languages) "Gift of the People of the United States"? Didn't these things make a difference?

Of course they did — in the short term and on a one-to-one basis. But they didn't lead to development in the real sense of the term; i.e., economic growth and lasting poverty reduction. In virtually all of the poorest nations of the world (the Nigers, the Haitis, the Malawis — those countries in which the aid portion of the budget dominates) the picture after decades of assistance is embarrassing, to say the least. In Guinea (Conakry), for example, the national railroad grid has literally disappeared: the tracks are gone or buried under silt and vegetation and the rolling stock is in ruins. In many of the poorest countries, the precariousness of daily existence has increased to the point where the clamor to leave is intense, especially among young people. This is "voting with one's feet" in the worst way because this desire to leave represents the people's "report card" on the country's future.

Many of us in the field began to realize long ago that institutions are more important than resources; that lack of absorptive capacity is a killer constraint; and that aid should be a support and not the name of the game itself. But we hardly ever saw our agencies take that knowledge on board.

Aligning Practice with Rhetoric

Today official doctrine belatedly reflects these realities. So what would aid programs based on an appreciation of these realities look like? Here are just a few examples of the innovations implied in the new rhetoric.

First, they would not be direct, time-bound "projects." Such projects may fit well with direct interventions like community water systems, farmer-to-farmer programs, irrigation, soil improvement, livestock, maternal and child health, microcredit, fisheries and so on, but increasingly they are anachronisms. No matter how enlightened they look on paper — with their emphasis on stakeholder participation, capacity building and even on policy formulation — outsider-funded and outsider-designed projects tend to be engineered down to the smallest detail. And, once launched, the objective becomes filling in the boxes in the quarterly workplan or log frame (now called the "results framework"). It ends up being about check-

lists. So the training workshop — rather than absorption of the workshop content — becomes the "result." And, inevitably, the focus is on money — funding the workshops, the vehicles, the per diems of workshop participants, and so on. Though the word invariably figures in the project description, "sustainability" is not usually a result.

What is needed now, instead, are more supple, longer-term efforts that are cargo-less, and where some of what is transferred has to be paid for. These efforts should have experts present who can become part of the system over the long term, not just for two, three or five years. The focus should be on the institutions that can enable growth: legal, judicial, financial, property registration and other systems. Some of this type of work is going on today, but it has for the most part been stuffed into a "project" mold. We need efforts that are longer, more flexible and more process-oriented, and that can work with what is there, step by step, taking the time needed to bring about lasting results.

Such approaches will not lend themselves to a quarter-by-quarter results framework matrix, so creative arrangements will be needed to replace a finite budget. One possibility is to have USAID interventions in the institutional realm (whether in the form of loans or grants) indemnified or underwritten by private equity (a role, potentially, for some of the new philanthropy). Thus, even if public money ends up being difficult to account for over a long timeframe (say, 10 or more years), a fund would have been created and managed to pay back the Treasury.

More conventionally, we could at least go back to basics: the building blocks of development — roads, education, health — and this time get it right by ensuring that the institutional context to support such building blocks is there or can be built alongside. How to ensure that context is another question. The answer is not to pay for the building to house the road maintenance organization and buy its equipment. The viability of the institution is in its "software," not its machines and bricks and mortar. To determine what that software is — how

things work, what incentives and stakes really count, what the obstacles are — takes homework we are not used to doing.

In addition, we need to invest not just in better understanding how things really work in particular countries, but also in serious research on phenomena that lie on the periphery of development but have the potential to undermine or to support it. For example, a growing brain drain is affecting much of Africa and we need to understand its mechanisms better. Similarly, the role of remittance transfers back to many developing countries (now double the worldwide total of official development aid) has vast untapped potential for local development, yet the phenomenon is not well understood.

In short, we should be shifting radically to a smarter, less-is-more approach to aid; to an approach that wrestles almost entirely with institutions and not the delivery of things; that tackles development's challenges in innovative, experimental ways; and that relies more on fostering, catalyzing and supporting institutional change, rather than on doing things directly for the poor.

Forces Against Change

Unfortunately, however, this shift cannot be made without taking on the combined weight of the political, social and cultural forces in and around the aid bureaucracy that militate against change. There are at least four different factors in place that tend to keep USAID operating in a business-as-usual mode.

1. Political-cultural forces. The U.S. is one of the most evolved democracies in the world. One result of that is an exponential growth in the formation of highly diverse constituencies. We have a culture that more and more values everyone having a voice; that values the opportunity for everyone's interests to be mediated and debated. We have also, perhaps as a consequence, a politics and culture that are highly tuned to fad, buzzwords and political correctness.

USAID is notoriously hampered (if not entirely driven) by this political-cultural complex. So while new and refreshing visions may catch the public eye, the foreign aid system itself seems likely to continue to reflect the myriad interests that have created a long checklist of dos and don'ts. Between the lines (and not very well hidden at that) USAID's mission statement remains: "Something for everyone; all (or most) things for all (or most) people" — crisis response, conflict resolution, stabilization of emerging and transitional countries, food aid, democratization, HIV/AIDS prevention, business development, rural development, etc. — whether or not it excels at any one thing, or whether or not any one thing may be more important than any other for long-term development.

Moreover, in the post-9/11 environment, the newly explicit link between aid and national security, and the closer day-to-day ties with the State Department, make hopes for a focus on the new developmental emphases even less likely.

As might be expected, the budget reveals the priorities. Of the total American aid budget of $33.4 billion for FY 2004, fully 20 percent was for military assistance, with the rest for economic assistance provided by several government agencies including USAID ($11.1 billion), the Department of Agriculture ($3.1 billion, mostly for food aid) and the State Department ($4 billion including HIV/AIDS, narcotics control, refugee assistance and anti-terrorism). The lion's share of economic assistance will continue to go to a small number of countries, largely for carrot-and-stick reasons rather than development selectivity: Israel, Egypt and the post-9/11 foci of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc. Of USAID's FY 04 budget, 27 percent went for "security support." Economic assistance, albeit on a much smaller scale, will continue to go to old targets with little regard for the new emphases. These small sums add up: USAID's own record shows, for example, an accumulated total of economic assistance up through FY 04 of $1.4 billion in Malawi, $1 billion in Niger, $1.46 billion in Guinea, and $3.4 billion in Haiti. The numbers differ slightly, but the picture is similar for Morocco, Ghana, the Philippines, Panama, Sri Lanka and so on. USAID seems poised to continue to spread itself around rather thinly to all manner of needy countries regardless of the principle of selectivity, or the dangers of continuing dependency.

USAID's "yellow book" (its directory of contracts, grants and cooperative agreements with universities, firms and non-profits) tells the same old story. The Indefinite Quantity Contracts, the grants and other arrangements continue to be made with familiar players, beginning with the venerable Beltway bandits — the for-profit firms whose business is delivering USAID's packages (DAI, Chemonics, Nathan, Checchi, Abt, and so on). The business-as-usual theme shows up especially in contract durations. They remain, by and large, just one to five years (and no more than seven), ignoring the deepest lesson of all:

development takes time, and usually open-ended time.

2. The role and position of NGOs. Up through the late 1970s, the world of U.S. NGOs in development assistance was a peripheral one. They were run by dedicated people who worked for little money (recall the word "voluntary" in the now-less-used term Private Voluntary Organization). They often worked close to the grassroots in the field (they emphasized "community participation" in project planning long before the concept was formalized in the aid establishment). They rarely showed up at meetings in Washington. They were too busy and, in any case, couldn't really afford the price of the airfare or hotel. Only a few had a working relationship with the U.S. aid establishment.

What is needed now are more supple, longer-term efforts that are "cargo-less," and where some of what is transferred has to be paid for.

In 1988, there were 205 American NGOs registered with USAID. By 1996 that number had grown to 439. Today there are 533 U.S. NGOs registered with USAID, plus 59 international NGOs. All of these are listed in the USAID Private Voluntary Organization Registry so that they can apply for a piece of the official aid pie. Today their IQCs and contracts are not much different than those concluded with for-profit contracting firms, and even small NGOs maintain Washington offices.

Meanwhile, some of them have become giants: for example, CARE, with an annual budget of over $600 million; Save the Children, at $271 million; and World Vision, at $807 million. They are now large bureaucracies, with large public relations and marketing staffs. And even though the giants rely largely on private money for their budgets, they continue to maintain a healthy relationship with USAID, in part because federal money is cheaper (getting a million-dollar USAID contract uses less marketing energy than getting a $10,000 private gift), and in part because it usually allows a percentage to be used for operational overhead, while private money is more restricted. There are other NGOs, however, with budgets in the $5-million to $20-million range, that depend more heavily on USAID for 15 to 40 percent of their operating budgets, making them "quangos" (for quasi-NGOs).

Whatever potential the American NGO world might have had to act as a critical counterpoint to the official aid bureaucracy has been dissipated, if not entirely lost. The independent, nimble, committed, on-the-ground NGO is today more of a myth than ever. Instead, a large number of NGOs depend on business as usual.

3. The dominance of money in the public debate about development. From the Monterrey Consensus and Tony Blair's Africa Commission report, to Jeffrey Sachs' (and Kofi Annan's) *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (United Nations, 2005) and rock star Bono's private meetings with George W. Bush, the central message has been that development efforts to reduce poverty will only succeed "when we get more money" (the calls range from doubling to quadrupling today's worldwide aid budget).

It is close to impossible today to make reasoned arguments about alternative ways to foster development in the face of all this noise. The late British economist P.T. Bauer's comment about the misguided belief in money as the answer went unheeded 15 years ago; today it is not even dimly heard: "To have capital is the result of economic achievement, not its precondition."

Of course there is a role for resources, but there is just no compelling argument for increasing what we already have, especially if we look at the history of development aid. Money has been more of a problem than a solution. It has created or at least encouraged dependency and corruption, and certainly has diverted our attention from the hard lessons we have learned. As aid has become more and more about resources, those resources seem to be tied as much to the perpetuation of the aid industry — its contractors and its employees — as they are tied to the supposed beneficiaries. Is the money for us, or is the money for "them"?

4. Development aid as a profession and a career. The evolution of development assistance into a full-fledged profession has created a set of stakeholders whose interests are at base opposed to adapting the lessons we have learned. Only business as usual — especially if the calls for more money are heeded — makes it possible for aid agencies to grow and thus absorb new people. The more aid projects there are — and especially the more they are about resources (money and things), the more

staff are needed, and the more the giant consultant databases can be made to cough up chiefs of party and project specialists.

There are also more formal entry doors into the U.S. aid structure than ever before. Many young idealistic Americans have always aspired to meaningful work that promises to improve the world, and they now have many options to prepare themselves for such a career: the Peace Corps, professional graduate-degree programs, work with NGOs — and especially work in the newly formed foundations of the young (and rich) entrepreneurs of the dot-com age. The appearance of a number of youngish, new-money philanthropists is a significant new phenomenon in the history of U.S. development assistance. Money talks. Yet while most donors say they want only to do things that are effective, if you suggest that it might be more effective to spend $2 million on banking reform than to spend $100 million on the direct provision of microcredit, they are likely to be skeptical.

Whatever potential the American NGO world might have had to act as a critical counterpoint to the official aid bureaucracy has been dissipated, if not entirely lost.

In conclusion, the forces arrayed against change are powerful. Under their sway, ideas that do not cost a lot of money, that do not lead to large contracts, and that do not involve vehicles, computers, office equipment, furniture, travel allowances or hardship pay are unlikely to gain much traction. The stakes in keeping things pretty much the way they have been (cosmetic changes notwithstanding) are as high as ever.

For the time being, U.S. foreign aid policy (still) packages the same old wine in new bottles. ■

USAID IN 2006: BAND-AIDS, NOT DEVELOPMENT

Phil Bliss

ECONOMIC GROWTH IS TOO IMPORTANT TO CONSIGN TO A RESIDUAL CATEGORY OF THE BUDGET, BELOW EARMARKS AND UNFUNDED MANDATES.

BY JAMES W. FOX

The U.S. Agency for International Development has become largely a dispenser of Band-Aids for poor countries, rather than a tool for reducing poverty. It addresses immediate hurts, not underlying problems. Conspiracy theorists and antigovernment extremists might agree on an explanation: government bureaucrats don't solve the problem of world poverty because that would put them out of a job. But this is too simplistic. There is still so much poverty in the world — close to one billion people (one-sixth of the world's population) live on less than $1 per day —

that any "poverty bureaucrat" can look forward to decades of steady work.

A better, more precise, explanation is that people (including members of Congress) respond more to pictures than to theories. Any American who watches the local news knows this implicitly. Fires, murders and other disasters, followed by caught-in-the-act corruption and a couple of heartwarming human-interest stories, dominate. This is not a conspiracy by journalists. It is a response to what the American people want to see and hear.

At the same time, there is ample evidence in the recent history of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, among other countries, that economic growth — as opposed to the many humanitarian and aid initiatives — is the key to poverty reduction. There is, furthermore, a unique and vital role for USAID to play in helping to improve the environment for business in developing countries. For that to happen, however, economic growth must be reclaimed from its place as a residual category of USAID's budget and made a priority.

The Idea of Foreign Aid for Development

When President Kennedy proposed the creation of the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1961, he offered a clear statement of its purpose: to lift countries out of poverty through sustained economic growth. Some of the original concepts were simplistic or naïve — notably Kennedy adviser Walt Rostow's concept of "takeoff," whereby countries would soar into the wild blue yonder of development once specific preconditions were met. In the ensuing years, some takeoffs were short helicopter rides; others were crash landings, sometimes with economies going up in flames.

But the idea that poverty could be cured by rapid economic growth has been amply demonstrated. This has happened most clearly in Asia, where first Japan, then South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong leaped from poverty to abundance in little more than a generation. They were followed by Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and, more recently, China, Vietnam and India. Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Lucas, after examining such successes and the possibility of repeating them in other poor countries, observed that once you have thought about this, it is "hard to think about anything else."

Yet sadly, USAID does spend most of its time thinking about other things: child survival, basic education, family planning, microfinance, environmental protection, women's rights and HIV/AIDS. These are all worthy causes, but none are likely to be transformative. Much ink has been spilled by the proponents of these various programs in justifying their role in sustained economic growth, but the data do not support a causal connection.

For instance, basic education is claimed to speed economic growth. But the continent with the most massive increase in years of schooling between 1950 and 2000 — Africa — also had the most dismal growth record. HIV/AIDS is argued to be a major cause of slower economic growth in countries with a high incidence of the disease. But Botswana, the country with perhaps the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS on the continent, continued its record as the only country in continental sub-Saharan Africa to experience rapid and sustained economic growth. Similarly, decades of effort to reduce fertility in Niger have produced almost nothing — the country's women have an average of nearly eight children, just as they did in 1950. Meanwhile, Niger's economy has alternated between stagnation and decline. Indeed, in the case of family planning generally, it is easier to argue that the causality is the opposite of what is claimed: faster economic growth leads to lower fertility, not the other way around.

All of the activities mentioned in the previous paragraph are important, worthy of U.S. support and important contributors to the well-being of people in poor countries. But as far as the problem of poverty is concerned, they are not solutions. Only economic growth — as rapid as in the Asian countries discussed earlier if possible, but slower and more steady if necessary — can lead to an end to dependence on the largess of the United States and other rich countries. The United States itself has been a "slow and steady" country. Since 1820, it has grown in per capita terms at only about 1.7 percent per year. But that rate, maintained over 181 years, produced a 22-fold increase in average incomes and turned the United States into the most economically powerful nation on earth.

Retired former FSO James W. Fox served with USAID in Costa Rica, Uruguay and Colombia, and was later the agency's chief economist for Latin America. He also served two stints at State and worked on developing country issues at Treasury and for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Before joining State, he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in El Salvador. He is currently a consultant to the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group.

Sources of Economic Growth

So what generates economic growth? The short answer is that business enterprises do it by finding ways to be more productive — whether through better technology, better management practices, or investment in people and equipment. Government policies do not cause economic growth, but they do set the environment that either encourages or discourages it. The macroeconomic and microeconomic environments enterprises face can, with mild overstatement, be called the *drivers* of economic growth, because by addressing them the efforts of governments and donors are most likely to enjoy success. Other things that donors help governments do — education, HIV/AIDS treatments, family planning or any of a variety of other activities — should be thought of as *enablers* of economic growth. Where the drivers are in place, improvements in the enablers will speed growth. If the drivers are absent, improvement in the enablers will improve human welfare, but will not end dependence on continued donor funding.

There has been great progress on the macroeconomics of development over the past two decades. Nearly all countries accept the general principles that central banks ought to have the goal of low inflation, that government fiscal deficits ought to be modest, that exchange rates ought to be competitive, and that barriers to international trade ought to be modest. These four are all features of the "Washington Consensus," and no alternative policy set has gained much traction. Nearly all countries agree with them in principle, if not in practice. But practice has also improved. For 2003, the World Bank's World Development Indicators database shows that 119 countries had single-digit inflation in that year, and only 30 countries had higher rates — with the highest at 95 percent. The median inflation rate was 3 percent. In 1990, by contrast, only 70 had single-digit inflation, while 65 countries had double-digit inflation or higher. There were five with triple-digit inflation, and four more with quadruple-digit inflation. The median inflation rate for the 135 countries reporting data for 1990 was 17 percent.

On the microeconomic side, however, no simple performance measurements or recipes for success have been devised. Microeconomics addresses the role of incentives and markets at a level that tends to be specific to individual countries, markets and productive sectors. Consequently, the importance of any problem area (e.g., price controls on agricultural products or taxes on exports) will vary widely from one country to another.

In crude terms, macroeconomic policy recommendations can be fashioned in Washington; but microeconomic policy needs to be made in-country, with an understanding of local institutions and the political economy of reform. The lack of easy measurement and generalization from first principles has led successive generations of economists to largely ignore microeconomic problems and concentrate on the easily modeled and easily measured macroeconomic issues. Following the dictum of their quantitative-minded professors in graduate school that "if you can't count it, it doesn't count," they have concentrated on the countable macroeconomic features.

Only recently has the microeconomics of development begun to yield to quantitative analysis, with pioneering efforts by groups like the Heritage Foundation and the World Economic Forum. Still, these early efforts provided only extremely crude estimates of the quality of the microeconomic environment for economic growth.

Spotlight on Microeconomics

In 2003, the World Bank made a breakthrough with its Doing Business database (http://www.doingbusiness.org). It offers annual data for 150 countries on 39 variables that seem most linked to economic growth at the level of the individual enterprise, including information on such matters as: How difficult is it to start a business? How much will it cost? How hard is it to enforce a contract if the other partner simply refuses to pay? How difficult is it to hire a new worker? To dismiss a worker? Is there a credit bureau that keeps track of the willingness of borrowers to repay loans? If a borrower defaults, what recourse, if any, does the lender have? Dozens of other questions that impinge directly on the ability of firms to create value, to employ workers productively and, generally, to increase productivity in a poor country are covered.

Perhaps the most notable fact demonstrated by this new information resource is that government regulation of business is dramatically more extensive, more expensive and more time-consuming in poor countries than in rich ones. On most issues, the United States and Sweden are both far more permissive about virtually any aspect of business than the average poor country.

The table on p. 39 is extracted from the Doing Business database. It presents a sampling of the 39 indicators comparing the United States and Sweden with large developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The

United States ranks third overall in the ease of doing business, after New Zealand and Singapore. Swedish requirements are often simpler or involve fewer delays but, like most of Europe, Sweden makes dismissing workers more costly than in the United States (but less costly than in most poor countries). For most developing countries, these microeconomic regulations constitute a major impediment to business productivity and efficiency.

Why do poor countries have so much more regulation? In some cases, it is the legacy of beliefs learned decades ago at Western universities, when suspicion of the private sector and belief in the benevolence of government were the conventional wisdom. In others, the benefits that accrue to government officials for their help in getting around such regulations are surely a factor. Regulatory complexity is a major feature in the pervasive corruption, favoritism and crony capitalism of many developing countries. One Latin American wag has characterized the situation for government officials in the region: "For my enemies, the law. For my friends, I can do better."

Reforms of such microeconomic policies need to be identified and addressed on the ground, through the various tools of political economy — doing studies that identify the costs of excessive regulation, making common cause with reformers, building coalitions of adversely-affected groups (often nontraditional exporters), responding to opportunities presented when a particularly dynamic minister takes over an important ministry, or a variety of other approaches that creative donor-agency officials might use to help open up a country to creative entrepreneurship. In sum, addressing such problems requires in-country staff, connected to the local economy and polity.

Funding Drivers of Economic Growth

The level of funding provided by congressional appropriations for promotion of economic growth is modest. Only about 4 percent of the USAID budget is available for unencumbered use to promote the largely microeconomic reforms that can speed economic growth in poor countries. Another 20 percent or so of the USAID budget is

The Microeconomics of Running a Business

Comparative Indicators for Five Countries

Procedure	United States	Sweden	Brazil	Nigeria	India
Time to start a business (days)	5	16	152	43	71
Cost of start-up (% of per capita income)	0.5	0.7	10	74	62
Time needed to acquire construction licenses	70	116	460	465	270
Time needed to import a cargo container (days)	9	6	43	53	43
Time needed to export a cargo container (days)	9	6	39	41	36
Hiring Costs (% of salary)	8	33	27	8	12
Firing cost (weeks of salary)	0	24	165	4	79
Time needed to enforce a contract (days)	250	208	546	730	425
Cost of enforcing a contract (% of debt)	8	6	16	37	43
Time needed to register commercial property (days)	12	2	47	274	67
Recovery from a business closure (cents on the dollar)	76	75	54	31	13
Overall Rank	**3**	**14**	**119**	**94**	**116**

available for promoting economic growth in a particular sector (e.g., microfinance, education), for a particular country or region (e.g., Egypt, Jordan, the former Soviet bloc) or for a particular purpose in a particular country (e.g., antinarcotics in the Andes and Afghanistan). The principal reason for this modest support is that funding for economic growth lacks the easily-explainable human dimension offered by HIV/AIDS, basic education, child survival, microfinance or family planning. All these worthy purposes have funding levels earmarked by Congress. Economic growth has no earmark, and is therefore a residual category. Worse, Congress typically adds an unfunded mandate or two each year. Since none of the earmarked categories can be cut to carry out the mandate, the economic growth residual is reduced further.

The Bush administration tried to rectify the imbalance between immediate alleviation of suffering and an eventual end to dependence on foreign aid through faster economic growth by establishing the Millennium Challenge Account. The MCA was intended to reward progress by developing countries that had demonstrated the strongest commitment to three goals: promoting economic freedom, investing in people and ruling justly. To gauge the worthiness of countries on these three dimensions, its executive agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, adopted a set of 16 indicators, all calibrated by other institutions. Many of these indicators address the macro- and microeconomic drivers of economic growth. The indicators have been generally approved by outside observers, but the sluggishness in moving from idea to action has caused consternation. The largest problem — the two-year gap between the initial proposal by President Bush and the establishment of a functioning MCC — was caused by the White House and the Congress.

In recent months the MCC has picked up speed. It now has signed agreements ("compacts" in MCC jargon) with eight countries, totaling more than $1.7 billion. The compacts approved so far have been heavy on infrastructure (notably roads and ports, with additional smaller amounts allocated for potential users of the infrastructure — farmers, agribusiness firms and others producing for export markets). As a program to mobilize interest in better policies, and as a vehicle for rewarding countries that offer economic freedom, the MCC has every promise of success. At the same time, it has, and is likely to continue to have, very limited country coverage: its staff is largely based in Washington, with in-country offices focused on implementing the specific terms of the compact.

The difficulties in obtaining congressional approval for a goal as abstract as economic growth are evident in comparing the appropriations for the MCC and for President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Each initiative was announced as providing $15 billion during its first four or five years. PEPFAR is ahead of schedule to reach this goal, but the MCC will fall far short.

A Key Niche for USAID

In the early 1990s, there was a famous meeting (at least in the world of USAID economists) where Deputy Administrator Carol Lancaster announced that economic growth promotion was a task better left to the World Bank. USAID would concentrate its efforts elsewhere,

she said. Thereafter, the staff of USAID economists and private-sector officers quickly declined.

At the macroeconomic level, there cannot be any doubt that the World Bank has the best economics professionals in the development business. Unfortunately, most World Bank staff members live near Washington, D.C., and only make short "economist tourist" visits (though traveling in first or business class) to the countries they assist, so their capacity to address microeconomic issues is far weaker. World Bank President James Wolfensohn made some progress in decentralizing the institution, but in an environment where any overseas posting had to be entirely voluntary the change was not far-reaching. Most World Bank employees prefer the comfortable life in Washington to the often-difficult conditions for them, and their families, in poor countries.

An even bigger obstacle to World Bank assistance for microeconomic reform is the fact that the Bank only lends to governments (or to others with a governmental guarantee). Such agreements usually need to be ratified by the national legislature, sometimes causing long delays and leading to the intrusion of politics into project implementation. In general, World Bank programs to promote the private sector do so by funding government agencies, and they do it with long delays between design and implementation. This is a recipe for ineffectiveness.

Here USAID has a strong comparative advantage, vis-à-vis both the World Bank and most other donors — who either lend only to governments or are suspicious of the private sector, or both. For, despite its numerous limitations, USAID has some distinctive assets. In the first place, it has substantial in-country knowledge, both from high-quality national employees and from experienced economists and private-sector officers. Second, the agency tends to benefit from a long-demonstrated commitment to partnership with the host country. Finally, it makes grants, thereby eliminating the need for (and the often long delays associated with) legislative approval. So USAID can, for instance, fund business associations or NGOs that lobby for simplified regulation, or that help mobilize the business community to demand pro-growth policies.

Numerous anecdotes could be related in support of the claim that USAID can play a uniquely effective role in helping to bring about constructive microeconomic reforms. But the strongest support for it comes from Simeon Djankov, the director of the World Bank's Doing Business project. He reported in a recent e-mail to USAID that "among the countries identified in each of the past two annual Doing Business reports as the top 10 business climate reformers over the previous year, an average of six of those 10 reform efforts were supported by USAID projects." As suggested earlier, the reforms USAID promotes tend to be specific to the particular country's circumstances. In Vietnam it was wholesale reform of the legal environment for business; in Central America, simplification of customs procedures and unification of customs documentation; and in Georgia, simplification of procedures for starting businesses.

In sum, USAID has the tools — in-country staff, a proven commitment to a partnership with the host country, grant funding and (limited) financial resources — to address the key constraint to faster growth in poor countries: the poor environment for business.

What Needs to Be Done

Economic growth in poor countries is too important to consign to a residual category of the USAID budget, after humanitarian and photogenic earmarks and unfunded mandates take their shares. Only strong action by the executive branch, to make clear the foreign policy importance of adequate funding for economic growth, will make USAID an important actor in ending dependence on hand-outs from the United States and other donors.

But a larger budget for economic-growth-promoting activities will not do the job alone. Two other reforms are needed. First, USAID needs to hire more economists and private-sector officers, mostly mid-career people with extensive experience in developing countries. Second, the onerous procedural and contracting requirements that USAID (unlike the MCC) must follow need to be simplified, so that funding can flow to where it is needed when it is needed.

The naming of a new head for USAID — who also carries the rank of Deputy Secretary of State and is empowered, at least in theory, to coordinate the numerous foreign aid programs of the U.S. government — is cause for some optimism. For the first time in decades, a senior official may be able to look at U.S. foreign aid in its entirety and make judgments about whether the numerous allocations, earmarks and narrowly-focused aid spigots add up to a sensible program. This author believes that it does not now do so, and that only a larger focus on economic growth will move countries from permanent dependence on U.S. help to eventual self-sufficiency. ■

CROSSING THE GENDER DIVIDE IN DISASTER RELIEF

Phil Bliss

THE FOREIGN SERVICE AND RELIEF AGENCIES NEED TO ADDRESS GENDER EQUITY IN DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

BY ROXANE RICHTER

After natural disasters strike, in many societies around the world it has traditionally been up to men to take action, leaving women to stoically endure the losses as hapless victims. It is true that this division of labor may reflect the reality that women are disproportionately affected by disasters and the ensuing collapse of public authority.

But it means that more than half of a community (i.e., women) remains uninvolved and voiceless in relief, reconstruc-

tion and development efforts.

Now consider the alternative: a vision of community aid that encompasses this tremendous untapped potential, with programs gender-savvy enough to plan, strategize and manage relief efforts *with* women rather than for them.

"Gender is a central organizing principle of every society. We need to make smart decisions to meet the needs of everyone, not just half of society," observes Elaine Enarson, Ph.D., a noted author on gender in disasters and assistant professor of disaster and emergency studies at Brandon University in Manitoba, Canada. (Enarson's personal catalyst for her research was surviving 1992's Hurricane Andrew.) As she says, "Some policy-makers and practitioners today are willfully ignorant; they don't want to challenge their way of thinking. Too often, raising the issue of gender is seen as divisive."

In order to mobilize entire populations and NGOs, relief agencies and the Foreign Service community need to first address the role of gender equity in disaster and relief programs, looking specifically at differential power struggles, issues and needs (medical care, protection from sexual and domestic violence, etc.), rights (fair resource distribution), and vulnerabilities and strengths (caregivers, peacemakers and community mobilizers) in these arenas.

Fortunately, this is not a new concept. In April 2003, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell sent the following guidance to all State Department officials: "Women's issues are human rights issues, health and education issues, and development issues. They are ingredients of good government and sound economic practice. … Women must play prominent roles in relief, reconstruction and development efforts if these undertakings are to succeed."

"We've recognized the need and positive contributions that women can bring to disaster planning and recovery," says Katherine Blakeslee, director of USAID's Women in Development office. "The U.S. is the largest supporter of humanitarian aid and development and where disasters go, we go. And in our own preparedness, we are trying to incorporate concern for the differential impacts that disasters and conflicts have on women and men."

The WID office "promotes a stronger and more productive role for women in development" through gender integration, outreach and gender-equity training, addressing issues such as trafficking, legal rights, violence and education.

A Human Rights Issue

The 20th century witnessed many international accords and declarations testifying to women's equality under human rights laws. In 1945, the newly established United Nations set the goal of eliminating gender-based discrimination, and in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights abolished any "laws, customs, regulations and practices that are discriminatory to women" (Article 2). In 1979, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women, which 180 of the world's 192 countries have ratified (the U.S. is the only industrialized country that has not ratified it).

CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination, which includes "... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

Global conferences like 1995's "Beijing Plus 10" have attempted to empower and improve the lives of women by establishing a guide for national governments to set public policy. That conference's Platform for Action provided benchmarks through which citizens could measure their government's implementation of the Beijing commitments.

Regrettably, those fine words have not been fully matched with action. According to the World Bank, one of the reasons it's been so difficult for NGOs and government agencies to do so is the dearth of gender-disaggregated data. Incredibly, there is no gender-specific data on mortalities in 90 percent of developing nations or on unemployment in 75 percent of the global population. Half of

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A certified National Registry Emergency Medical Technician, Roxane Richter worked with numerous female Hurricane Katrina evacuees who fled to her native city of Houston in 2005. Those experiences provided the catalyst for her research on gender issues in disasters and development. She has served in several disaster relief programs and humanitarian aid organizations, traveling to over 50 countries. For 15 years she worked as a professional writer and is currently vice president of World Missions Possible (www.worldmissionspossible.org), a nonprofit organization that assists the underprivileged with medical services, humanitarian aid and disaster reconstruction efforts.

the world lives in places where economic activity by gender has not been reported for at least the last decade. "The fact that we still have not fully mainstreamed gender issues amounts to the exclusion of women. We need to make women more visible in statistics," says Maya Buvinic, director of gender and development for the World Bank's Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network.

Yet despite legal and social instruments to protect women against inequitable aid distribution and human rights abuses, and the existence of numerous governmental and private agencies capable of enforcing those measures, there continues to be an inordinate amount of gender-based violence and suffering among women in disaster settings.

While women are severely affected by natural and manmade disasters, they also gain unique opportunities to change their gendered status in society.

In September 2000, Human Rights Watch charged that widespread sexual and domestic abuse had left countless female refugees from Rwanda and Burundi physically battered, traumatized and fearful for their lives in Tanzanian refugee camps. "When Burundi[an] women fled the internal conflict there, they expected to find safety and protection in the camps. Instead, they simply escaped one type of violence in Burundi to face other forms of abuse," wrote Chirumbidzo Mabuwa, author of the report and researcher for the women's rights division of HRW. For instance, Tanzanian police officers did not regard domestic violence as a crime. So, rather than investigate reports of domestic violence, police simply referred the victims to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other organizations for counseling.

Women in such situations are also frequently attacked and raped by police, military personnel, border guards and traveling bandits because most of the programs and services offered to victims and refugees are developed, implemented and administered by men, and sexual favors in exchange for food, relief assistance and documentation are all-too-common occurrences.

In Disasters, Gender Matters

When we speak of disasters, we need to realize that there are a wide variety of types, each with differing implications for women. In broad-based terms, according to the U.N. Development Program, these include:

- Rapid-onset disasters (e.g., earthquakes, storms) that destroy homes but usually do not lead to displacement;
- Slow-onset disasters (e.g., drought, desertification) that can have a severe social and economic impact, but also offer more time to formulate and implement relocation and coping strategies;
- Human-induced disasters (e.g., armed conflicts) that not only cause displacement and loss of possessions, but can trigger more profound psychological trauma than do natural disasters;
- Epidemics (e.g., HIV/AIDS), in which women bear disproportionate caretaker burdens;
- Floods that cause displacement for short time periods; and
- Refugee emergencies (e.g., mass persecution, armed conflict) that cause displacement and extreme social and familial disruption. They also increase work demands, sexual violence and psychosocial trauma for women.

Globally, approximately two billion people were affected by natural disasters between 1990 and 1999 alone, stated the World Health Organization in a 2002 report. Those calamities caused over 600,000 fatalities, accounting for nearly a third of that total. The study also found that there is a pattern of gender differentiation at all levels of the disaster process — in preparedness, response, physical and psychological impact, risk perception, risk exposure and recovery and reconstruction.

Enarson says that the trend is toward increasing vulnerability to such disasters. "We need to engage local people to develop local capacities and stop thinking only outside experts can repair disasters. … We need to stop focusing on relief [and instead] back up and review the root causes of the disasters." She points out that the impact of disasters is steadily increasing due to erratic weather, growing populations in coastal regions and ongoing issues for women such as poverty, illiteracy and a lack of social safety nets.

As a result of their lower status in society, women are disproportionately affected by natural disasters, and are made even more vulnerable to disasters through their socially constructed roles. The International Labor

Organization has declared, "Gender shapes the social worlds in which natural events occur." For instance, many Bangladeshi women died in their homes with their children in a 1991 cyclone because they needed to wait for their husbands to make an evacuation decision. Higher female death rates in an earthquake in Maharashtra, India, were due to women being inside the home while men were in open areas. One report from Bangladesh, according to the World Health Organization, describes a father who could not rescue both of his children — and chose to release his daughter, rather than his son, saying, "[He] has to carry on the family line."

This is certainly not to say that men are unaffected by disasters. "Both men and women are handicapped by socialization. When men fail to fulfill their 'perceived' responsibility by protecting their family, they react in many ways, like an increase in alcoholism and domestic violence," explains Betty Morrow, Ph.D., a professor emeritus at Florida International University's International Hurricane Center in Miami, Fla. "If there is a definitive gender difference in disasters, women are more likely to evacuate and weigh risk more carefully than men. I can't tell you how many men I've interviewed in FEMA trailers and shelters who said, 'I wish I'd listened to her.'"

Risk Factors

Many factors contribute to gender differences in the degree of exposure and social vulnerability to disasters:

Less access to help. Essential information and resources in disaster preparedness, mitigation and rehabilitation are less available to women. These include transportation, social networks and influences, and decision-making skills. (Of the billion or so illiterate people around the world, two-thirds are female.)

Gender division of labor. Worldwide, women hold (predominantly) underpaid jobs in agriculture (and own just 1 percent of the world's land). They are more often self-employed and tend to operate within the informal economy. Because the agricultural and informal economy sectors are the most affected by natural disasters, women are over-represented among the unemployed after a natural disaster.

Less ability to migrate for employment. Due to home, child and/or elderly care issues, women are less mobile generally. But inadequate post-disaster shelter (for cooking, bathing, etc.) leaves women with even less freedom and mobility to look for work.

Loss of "bargaining position" in households. When a woman's household possessions and other economic resources are taken away in a disaster, her social position and authority also decline.

Heightened perception of disaster risk. Because girls and women generally perceive disaster threats as more serious than do men, they suffer more distress and emotional disorders in their aftermath, according to studies by the World Health Organization. However, it should be noted that overall declines in emotional well-being may be due to expanded post-disaster caregiving roles.

Significant increases in domestic and sexual violence. In the wake of a loss of social authority following a natural calamity (such as a police force), women are left unprotected from crimes like rape, violence, theft and other forms of exploitation.

Greater risk of being/becoming sole economic providers. Following a disaster, a woman is more likely to be left responsible for family members and children.

Higher dependence on social services. In their roles as family caretakers, women rely heavily on schools, clinics, child-care centers and public services, as well as water, fuel (wood), crops and other natural resources. These assets tend to be disrupted by natural disasters.

Social isolation. In general, women have less free time, personal autonomy and less knowledge of how to access emergency assistance or capacity to do so.

Low representation in emergency management organizations and professions. This disparity leaves women less visible in the mainstream "malestream" of high-level emergency management decision-making roles.

Health issues. Due to inadequate (or nonexistent) OB/GYN health care and reproductive control, after a disaster women suffer more infections, premature births, malnutrition, unwanted pregnancies and pregnancy losses.

Yet this lengthy list of risk factors may well give only half of the picture. While women are severely affected by nat-

ural and manmade disasters, they also gain unique opportunities to change their gendered status in society. For instance, after Hurricane Mitch struck Guatemala and Honduras in October of 1998, women proved themselves indispensable by building houses and shelters and digging wells. Though it is often against men's wishes, women can take on "male" tasks in such crises, which can permanently change that society's conceptions of women's capabilities. There have also been effective media campaigns to help change men's attitudes towards violence against women.

The Other Side of the Coin

There are also many changes that can take place in gender relations following a crisis or disaster, including a change in demographics as fewer men survive than women (Rwanda currently reports a 7-3 female to male ratio); a change in expectations for marriage and children; changes in labor division and increased political mobilization as women experience the benefits of working with other women.

Children and women account for 75 to 80 percent of the world's refugees. Still, it should be understood that their vulnerability is primarily cultural and organizational, not biological or physiological. Paradoxically, relief agencies have tended to treat women as ill-fated victims — incapacitated by vulnerability — rather than concentrating on building upon women's strengths and opportunities in post-disaster scenarios. According to Refugees International, women play "a vital role in the alleviation of poverty, prevention of conflict and in sustaining peace, and are also the majority of the displaced in conflict settings. Yet women, particularly displaced women, are largely excluded from decisions that ensure their very survival."

In the 1980s, it was not uncommon to have all aid go only to every able-bodied male head of household. Due to U.N. mandates like the 1991 Guidelines on the Protection for Refugee Women, this global scenario has changed — and women are now included or even singled out as the sole household recipients of distributed goods.

Back in 1995, an assessment by the World Food Program showed that "gender-neutral" language in aid distribution was taken by the organization as a mark of success in reaching women. Unfortunately, like many other studies, the WFP findings overlooked the complexities of culture, gender and crisis, consigning women to the catchall relief classification of "women and children" — a term that some gender researchers argue carries the connotation that it is through their maternal relationship to children that women are rightfully "deserving" of help. Still, the WFP does attempt to distribute some 80 percent of relief directly into the hands of women and 50 percent of its educational resources to girls.

When men are the only registered aid recipients, according to the University of Sussex's Institute of Development, drawbacks can include: food being sold on the market or used to supply armed forces; adverse nutritional effects on children whose mother's status as a polygamous wife is low (as in Tajikistan and Gaza); men using food aid as a tool to reinforce their control over female kin; and women losing their influence over food management (a singular area of female control). For example, in written correspondence after the massive 2004 tsunami, a South Asian judge told relief workers, "As usual, the women and the children have suffered most. Even the little relief aid that is sent is grabbed by the stronger men."

Yet there is growing evidence that women are more effective recipients of aid than men. According to a November 2005 *Newsweek* article, "Around the world, if you give cash to a mother, she tends to use it to invest in her children's health and education. A man, on the other hand, will often take it and head to the local watering hole." Studies from Brazil show that the survival possibilities of a child increase by 20 percent if the income is in the hands of the mother rather than the father.

Gender-Based Policies that Work

According to *InterAction*, a publication of the American Council for Voluntary International Action, a basic "to do" checklist for integrating gender into relief efforts would include the following elements:

- Incorporate input from displaced females into assistance efforts;
- Use gender-sensitive rapid assessment checklists from the onset of crises;
- Design relief efforts to strengthen sustainable development;
- Announce all distributions of food, supplies and services as widely as possible; and
- Train field staff in gender analysis, gender and culture assessments.

There have been many examples of successful women-led initiatives. For instance, according to Marion Pratt, social science adviser to USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, displaced women in southern Sudan are

taking on active and successful peacebuilding roles not only in the refugee camps, but once they return home. "They've been marginalized in the past, but now they have the chance to change their future," says Pratt.

Similar scenarios are taking place elsewhere. The Rwanda Women's Network caters to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence "in the recognition that women and children bore the brunt of the genocide, and remain the most vulnerable and marginalized groups within Rwandan civil society." These women are also creating informal social organizations. While these networks may go largely unrecognized by government entities and global NGOs, they are durable replacements for all-but-vanished formal networks and infrastructure.

So in the end, there is no longer any question that women have gender-distinctive physical, psychological, social and economic needs, vulnerabilities and capabilities in disaster situations. No longer can women — who make up the "silent majority" of the world's poor, aid recipients and displaced persons — be consigned to the "women and children" catchall classification.

There is a tremendous global need to fight against the marginalization of women in disaster and aid programs. It may only be through the worldwide promotion of women's rights — based on universal human rights and government-sponsored and enforced laws — that true equity in development and assistance might be realized.

Perhaps the ancient Baháí writings speak most eloquently to the importance and promise of equitable roles for women in disaster aid programs: "Humanity is possessed of two wings: male and female. So long as these two wings are not equal in strength, the bird will not fly."

The struggle for human rights and equity in disasters must be about making women's lives count the same as men's — allowing justice and equality to take wing for all.

For more information on gender issues in disasters, view *The Gender and Disaster Sourcebook*, an electronic compilation of international resources on policy, practice and research designed to help address gender concerns in disaster risk reduction. The *Sourcebook* is available through the Gender and Disaster Network Web site: http://www.gdnonline.org/sourcebook/. ■

An Interview with Director General W. Robert Pearson

In a valedictory interview, the former DG reflects on the success of the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative and the challenges of transformational diplomacy, among many other topics.

By George Gedda

On Feb. 27, 2006, Ambassador W. Robert Pearson stepped down as director general of the Foreign Service and went into retirement, ending a 30-year diplomatic career. He started out as an Asia hand, but for the past two decades Europe has been his specialty, at least during overseas assignments. Before becoming DG, he served from 2001 to 2003 as ambassador to Turkey. The final months of his stay in Ankara were marked by deep reservations among Turkish leaders and the Turkish people over the American invasion of neighboring Iraq.

From July 1997 to July 2000, Pearson was the second-ranking official at the U.S. embassy in Paris. Earlier, he served two stints at NATO, the first as No. 2 at the U.S. mission, from 1993 to 1997, a period encompassing the Balkan crisis and NATO enlargement; and from 1987 to 1990, when he was chair of NATO's political committee. Between 1991 and 1993, he was the department executive secretary under Secretary of State James A. Baker. He also served as deputy executive secretary of the National Security Council (1985-1987) and political officer in Beijing (1981-1983). His first overseas assignments after joining the Foreign Service were in New Zealand and in the East Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau.

A native of Tennessee, Pearson graduated from the University of Virginia Law School in 1968. He speaks French, Chinese and Turkish. His wife, Margaret, is a career public diplomacy officer. The Pearsons have one son, Matthew.

Three days before his retirement, Pearson sat down for this interview, his second with the *Foreign Service Journal.* (*FSJ* Editor Steven Alan Honley interviewed Amb. Pearson shortly after he became director general in 2004.)

FSJ: *Can you describe the quality of the applicants that the State Department has been getting in the recent past?*

WRP: One woman who is a published playwright in South Africa came into the Foreign Service because she said she wanted to make a difference. She is as good a metaphor as any for the quality of people we've been getting. We are recruiting extremely well among very qualified people ever since the 9/11 attacks. There is a kind of broad sentiment out there among young people who feel motivated to come into public service to do something good in a difficult time. And the numbers seem to be holding up.

FSJ: *There was a spike in interest in the Foreign Service right after 9/11. Has there been a decline since the Iraq War, which many people consider to be a mistake?*

WRP: No. Usually we have more people out of an entering class who want to go to Iraq than we have places for them to go. They are not going because of a kind of chauvinistic or nationalistic sense of patriotism. The people who are coming to us are interested in projecting the values of America that we consider to be good and positive, and believe they can be useful in doing that. That is a statement that is not necessarily for or against the Iraq War, but is a little bit more like coming to the assistance of a country in a time of challenge; they think they have something to offer in that regard.

George Gedda, a longtime Journal *contributor, is the State Department correspondent for The Associated Press.*

FSJ: *So there has not been a decline in the number of applicants over the past three years?*

WRP: In fact, the latest numbers are that 30,000 people sign up for the annual written exam and about 20,000 take it. Between 3,000 and 3,500 pass and go through our oral assessment. This is in order to get to a core group of 450 to 500 new Foreign Service officers each year. So we're still getting a very large number of applicants.

FSJ: *In the 1990s, the Foreign Service had trouble retaining people in their 30s and 40s who were hitting their prime. What is the retention rate nowadays for people in this category?*

WRP: We did a study of people who came in roughly between 1982 and 1986. The ones who came in during, let's say, 1985 and 1986 had been in about 10 years by the mid-1990s. [This group] had the worst retention rates. We can only reason from hindsight, but many of them must have thought the department wasn't going to get the resources [from Congress]; they were not going to have the advancement opportunities; they were going to be stuck in place for a long time. We've had a higher than usual loss for those people. If they stayed, they've all done fine. But we did have a higher loss. So if we were making the argument to the public, to the Congress, we could easily say that it's very clear that when the department is under-resourced, we lose our best people. They lose hope.

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One way of keeping our best people is to give adequate resources to the State Department. And that's why I think, looking at what's happened over the last five years, you can say that our retention rate is very high. Our attrition rate is still very low even for younger officers who obviously are adjusting to the Service and sometimes are serving in the most difficult places. It is certainly lower than for the Civil Service and is one of the lowest loss rates of any [agency] in the federal service.

FSJ: *Another problem in the 1990s was the poor state of many embassies around the world.*

WRP: Embassies were run down. Consulates were closed. The USIA press centers and points of access to the public were closed. People wanted a dividend from the end of the Cold War. It was a huge mistake. I can remember that when we opened our first embassy in Albania, it [consisted of] two unheated hotel rooms. In Armenia [in the early 1990s] Richard Armitage was sent on an [earthquake] relief operation to the Caucasus and was given the only heater in the embassy so he could have a good night's sleep. [Recently] the head of the Office of Building Operations, Gen. [Charles] Williams, has done a magnificent job of getting the embassies and posts on line. [But] we still have a lot of facilities that by textbook standards are still not secure enough. We're working hard to make them as safe as we can make them.

FSJ: *I understand posts in China will be getting 10 additional officers under Sec. Rice's Global Repositioning Initiative.*

WRP: There will be a more than 20-percent increase in officers in the substantive areas there: political, economic, cultural, public affairs. I think you could say that for many of the countries affected, it is in the neighborhood of a 20-percent increase in the staffing for those critical responsibilities. Just from a demographic standpoint, by the middle of the 21st century, the combined populations of North America and Europe will represent 10 percent of the world population.

Another group of 15 to 25 countries are in the process of trying to reach the level of the modern industrial democracies. So to make that success most likely, you have to put your assets into those areas. If you were a company, that's certainly where you would put your sales force or business development force or strategic planning people to concentrate on that deal. And diplomacy is a little like any other business. That's almost an inevitable kind of logic because the world has changed.

FSJ: *Where are these 15 to 25 countries? Are they mostly in Asia?*

WRP: No, they are scattered all around. Obviously China; also India, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan. [These are places] where there are going to be enormous changes in the next 25 to 40 years. Therefore, this is where we are going to have to be present.

FSJ: *Generally, is there less reporting and analysis out of embassies today, so that you can focus more on outreach?*

WRP: The news is transmitted almost as it happens nowadays. And there is no requirement at all in embassies any more to report if [news is] carried back by media instantly. In many cases there are other things that don't have to be reported, either: trends and things that are reported commercially or online or easily with the slightest bit of research. So embassies are going to end up doing more in-depth reflection on trends and [U.S.] interests and providing "value

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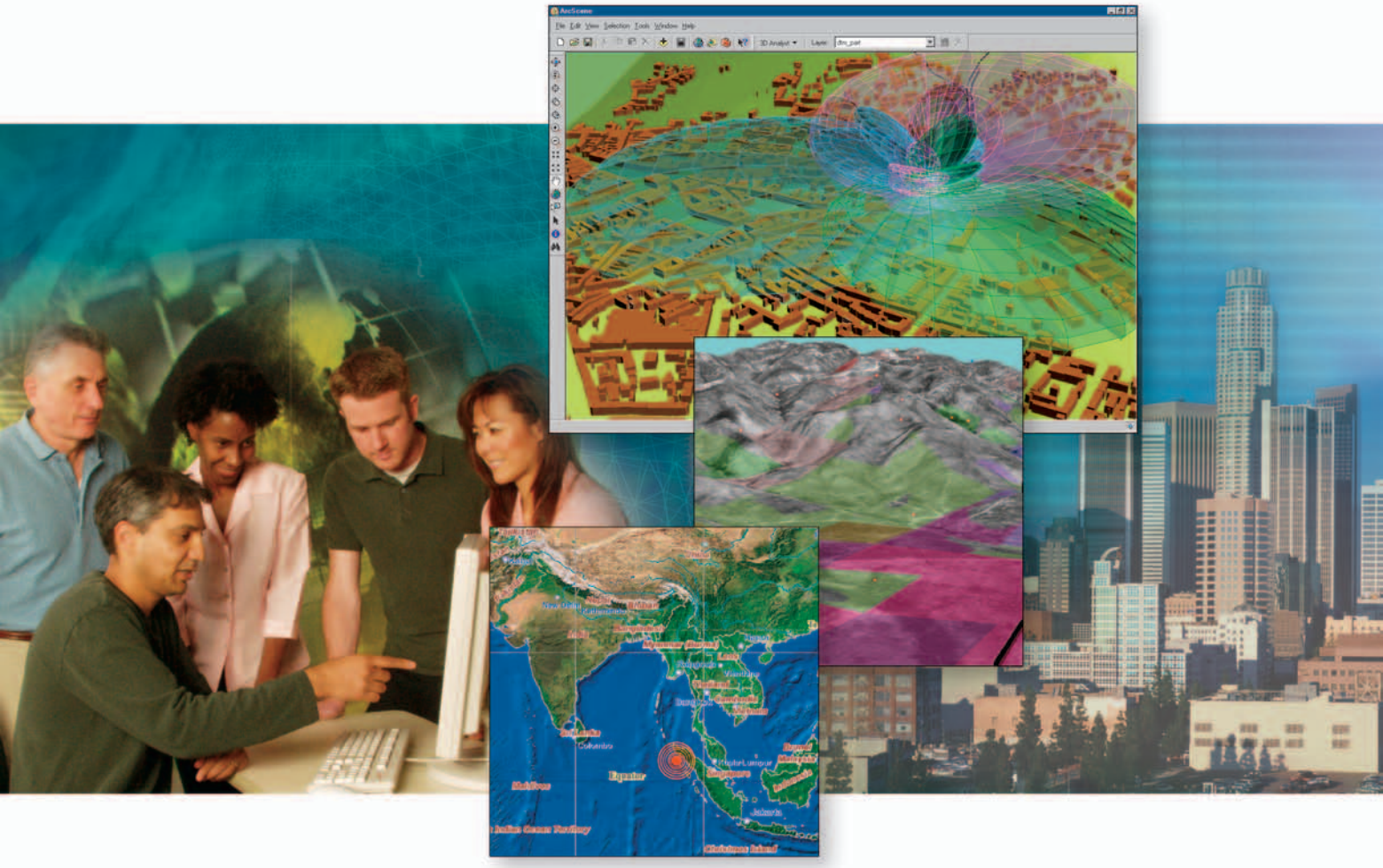

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added" that isn't going to be available from some other source.

In order to do that, people in embassies are going to have to go out and get sources and information and insights that are not simply replicas of what you could research on the keyboard by Googling the item. And if you're going to influence audiences, you're actually going to have to physically go after them. My own experience is that there is no substitute for a real live person in front of an audience listening to their concerns, answering their questions. Ninety-eight percent of the world wants to know what the United States is like, what we think about things, what are Americans really like. And there is enormous potential for Americans being out there doing that.

I think the new emphasis on public diplomacy as much as anything has to be an emphasis on people, young Americans who are out in front of audiences around the world, talking about things that matter to us and obviously to them. That's a strategic approach. That means a decades-long effort. [Having been in Turkey], I know what can make a difference. It's not documentaries and films, slick brochures, no matter how brilliant: it is having serious conversations with people.

FSJ: *Explain the rationale behind Virtual Presence Posts.*

WRP: We want to be seen by a local community as being present. When I was in Turkey, we had reading rooms where American materials were available but where an American officer didn't have to be available. We had places where terminals were available, maybe even staffed by an official from the local American Chamber of Commerce. [At] a Virtual Presence Post we create an Internet site available to anyone hitting the site. [For instance, in Russia] you've got your virtual site somewhere in Siberia and your webmaster in Moscow. It's tailored for local conditions. When someone goes to that city's Web site, what they see are the attractions, the industrial opportunities, the local government. If you're interested in studying in the U.S. or finding more about the U.S., that material is on that same Web page. Currently, there are 29 Virtual Presence Posts. We could eventually have up to 50.

FSJ: *The department has also been trying to expand its diplomatic reach by opening up small missions outside capital cities. How does that work?*

WRP: These are American Presence Posts. In Paris, for example, we took a person from our own staff at the embassy and sent him to Toulouse. The officer was a fluent French speaker who was in contact daily with local authorities and VIPs. We have an

office in a commercial building there, with no flag, no car, no classified information. Their visibility and profile are really quite unlike what you would see for an embassy or a consulate general.

There is no additional cost to the taxpayer. An apartment in Toulouse costs less than one in Paris. There are no visa services. The [officers in these posts] learn to operate on their own. There is a very deliberate effort to make it low-profile, blend it in with the community. This approach strengthens the Foreign Service corps. Every time we open one of these posts, we go to our diplomatic security colleagues for a security assessment.

We don't put an American anywhere unless we think the security concerns are adequately addressed. Elsewhere, there are 600 unaccompanied positions. Service is for one year. We had 300 as of Sept. 11, 2001. I'm not certain we will have a great deal more.

FSJ: *Is it true that new entrants into the Foreign Service are close to 50 percent women?*

WRP: We're almost at parity. We may pass it one day, who knows? We were 49 percent two years ago, 47 percent last year.

FSJ: *Not too long ago, it was 27 percent.*

WRP: I can't remember my own class, but I wouldn't be surprised if 27 percent was a pretty good number for my class in 1976.

FSJ: *Why do you suppose it has jumped from 27 percent to almost 50 percent?*

WRP: I think for lots of reasons. We have worked very hard to make the Service attractive for women. We have tried our best to give the women who come in jobs that are at the same level of seriousness and importance as the men get. And I think the nature of the work that we do gives women who want to take advantage of it a sense of independence about their own choice and about how they want to live their lives. It's a clear alternative to a corporate structure. And it is still an extremely fulfilling professional life.

FSJ: *You've been around long enough to remember when the atmosphere was not as welcoming.*

WRP: Yes, I can remember when it was not as welcoming for women or minorities. And I can remember the unstated assumption that men possessed all the wisdom that was necessary on really important issues. [It was thought that] women could do other things. [It was an example of] the sort of old Ivy League heritage mentality. I can remember that.

Since I didn't come from that tradition, I have a lot of feelings myself about how narrow-minded that was,

how much it cost the country to keep a lot of other talent out of the process.

FSJ: *What are the percentages for minorities (African-Americans, Hispanics and Asian-Americans)?*

WRP: We're recruiting African Americans now at about 19 to 20 percent, the highest number ever. We've had what I think is a pretty dramatic increase from 2000, when we were recruiting about 13 percent a year. So we're not only at the highest level ever achieved, but we've made significant progress in the last five or six years.

We're less strong in recruiting Hispanics. We really need to make a major effort there. Now we're getting a lot of heritage speakers [people fluent in the language of their forebears], including South Asians. So we're looking at that group as well for recruiting. When we look at promotions, minorities and women are being promoted at the same rate as, or slightly faster than, non-minorities. For my purposes, that shows that the system is not discriminating against minorities and women in terms of recruitment or advancement.

FSJ: *I can remember during the 1990s when it took something like 27 months for a Foreign Service candidate to go from passing the exam to actual assignment. Do you know how many months it is now?*

WRP: From the time one takes the exam to when one enters the class it is now about 10 months. But we believe we can actually make it shorter than that. We are making information electronic now in a way that, for example, allows us to [quickly] track the status of every person who has been accepted — their medical clearance, their security background check, etc. This tells us where the bottlenecks are so we can work on them.

FSJ: *You said earlier that "We don't put an American anywhere unless we think the security concerns are adequately addressed." How, for example, is this being done in the case of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams being set up throughout Iraq?*

WRP: For PRTs and our personnel elsewhere in Iraq, Afghanistan and the world, addressing their security concerns will remain a top priority. The Secretary pressed for and obtained agreement from DOD for protection of the PRT personnel. The details in each location will be worked out in Iraq and in Washington. From my conversations, I know the Secretary has a very personal interest in the safety of our people there.

FSJ: *Would it be fair to say that security concerns are discouraging FSOs from bidding on those jobs and on American Presence Posts?*

WRP: Every one of us has a right to raise questions about security in our posts and a right to receive clear answers. Knowing the details of the security to be provided will enable the embassy, bureau and assignment officers to answer those questions. People bid or don't bid for a number of reasons; security should be one of them, but we have the positions filled for this summer, and we expect to fill future ones.

FSJ: *Historically, in almost any other country as dangerous as Iraq is today, the State Department has moved quickly to reduce the U.S. presence by evacuating personnel or even closing the mission. It has not sought to ramp up staffing. Why is Iraq different in this regard?*

WRP: Iraq is different because the stakes are so much higher. People who have gone there often have said that they wished to make a concrete difference in the lives of ordinary Iraqis and to help a government to form and function effectively. That work cannot be left solely to the mili-

tary, however critical their role is in other dimensions. This has been a unique challenge for the department, and I admire and respect the professionalism of our colleagues who have gone to do a job they knew would be tough.

FSJ: *Do you believe the Foreign Service will continue to attract enough qualified bidders (for example, with Arabic and regional expertise) for positions in Iraq and other critical-needs countries to avert the need for directed assignments?*

WRP: The work in Iraq, Afghanistan and, indeed, in all the other tough posts in the world has been accomplished almost entirely by volunteers. This speaks strongly in support of a genuinely bipartisan, professional Foreign Service. It also commends all our Civil Service colleagues who have stepped forward.

We are training four times the number of Arabic speakers today compared with 2001. The requirement for hardship service in the career development plan will also spread the burden and create broader expertise in our Service. We've introduced new flexibilities for civil servants to move into the Foreign Service after tours overseas, and for specialists to change professions. Directed assignments occasionally are necessary, but I do not believe we have arrived at that point.

FSJ: *Do you favor offering more incentives for service in hardship posts?*

WRP: We have a very good package of incentives that also preserves fairness for the rest of the Service. The incentives reflect the seriousness of the work and the difficult and dangerous environment. They should be adjusted as needed to reflect those factors. For example, we fought hard to have the hardship and danger-pay limits raised from 25 to 35 percent. We need to constantly review what is offered, however, and we especially need to ensure we are providing more support for our families whose loved ones are serving in unaccompanied posts.

FSJ: *What are the top challenges confronting the Foreign Service as an institution in the post-9/11 era? How is the department meeting them?*

WRP: The most important single challenge is strengthening the diplomatic arm of the United States for the decades ahead. As a culture, traditionally we have given greater weight to action, but the overwhelming majority of issues facing us in the world today must still be solved by negotiation in one form or another, even when force must be a component. By the middle of the 21st century, 90 percent of the world's population will live outside Europe and North America. Our challenge as a Service and a country requires helping

that 90 percent prosper and ensuring a world safe for American values. Secretary Powell restored our base, righting a decades-old deficit. Secretary Rice correctly has launched transformational diplomacy, and we have a great deal of work ahead.

FSJ: *Some skeptics contend that transformational diplomacy is basically a buzzword for what the Foreign Service was already doing before Secretary Rice coined it. In what ways is it truly a new concept?*

WRP: Yes, for years the Foreign Service has done many of the things Sec. Rice has mentioned. Those who work in these areas deserve great credit. But there are two key differences: first, it was not our priority as a diplomatic service and, secondly, we did not have the resources to carry out a transformation. So it is a new departure because the Secretary has highlighted its critical importance with a major initiative and has worked hard to create a plan to achieve this end, including finding the resources to move ahead. I hope those who have already been doing some of these things will be delighted to see their interests at the top of the list now.

FSJ: *What are your own plans for life after the Foreign Service?*

WRP: In the retirement course, we're taught that retirement begins the best period of our lives. We have great experience plus control of our own schedule and priorities for the first time in our lives. So I want to make good use in the private sector of my diplomatic, legal and trouble-shooting experience, volunteer in my community to help others, and do all those projects I've been putting off for years. In a perfect world, that will include writing and getting my golf handicap down to single digits. It's a very exciting time, and I'm looking forward to it. Thank you for letting me speak to our AFSA colleagues. ■

Human Rights Report for the Hun Empire, A.D. 451

THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS SUBMITTED
A MERE 15 CENTURIES AFTER THE EVENTS IT DESCRIBES ...

By Donald A. Roberts

I wrote the original version of the following piece back in 1984, when I was working in the Human Rights Office of the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, as it was then known. Among other responsibilities, I was editing the annual human rights report for the Philippines, part of the department's annual compilation of worldwide country human rights reports. This was a particularly delicate task, for while the situation there was egregious, our embassy in Manila did not want to upset then-dictator Ferdinand Marcos by saying so.

Attila the Hun has repeatedly stated his firm and principled opposition to all excessive torture.

In fact, the U.S. ambassador had recently returned to Washington for the express purpose, we were told, of keeping the Philippines human rights report "under control." (As it turned out, the embassy's defense of the Marcos dictatorship was rendered moot only a few months later, when popular reaction to the assassination of Benigno Aquino caused the collapse of the regime.)

While I was editing the umpteenth weaselly-worded redraft of the Philippines report late one night, something snapped inside me. I put aside the document and dashed off a human rights report on Attila the Hun's regime, as it would have been submitted by an overprotective embassy circa 451 A.D. However, I do not really consider myself its author, for the parody is really a composite plagiarism of over a hundred similarly euphemistic reports actually submitted to the department by posts from around the world in the early 1980s. I should also note that most of the particulars on Attila and his empire are historical facts, not my own inventions.

The parody immediately began making the rounds as a sort of samizdat text. More than two decades later, I am pleased to have it published in the *Journal.*

Although the report covers the year 451, it follows the standard format used by HA for the 1983 reports. Like the typical country human rights report of the early 1980s, it has been submitted late — although 1,500-plus years late is at the extreme end of the scale.

Donald A. Roberts, a Foreign Service officer from 1971 to 1998, served in Islamabad, Ankara, Bogota, Bamako, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Manama and Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he served with USAID in Morocco and was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines. He recently completed a When Actually Employed posting on the Africa Bureau's Economic Policy Staff, where he was responsible for trade issues, and is currently on the NEA/SA roster for WAE assignments.

ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT — EMPIRE OF THE HUN HORDE, A.D. 451

The Empire of the Hun Horde is a benevolent monarchy under the enlightened and farseeing rule of Attila the Hun. Regarded as a Beloved Father by his people, Attila has been sole ruler of the Empire since 451, when his brother and co-ruler was executed for reasons of state necessity. The Empire of the Hun Horde, in keeping with the treasured traditions of the Hun Horde, operates under a simplified system of government in which the encumbrances of constitution, law, courts, legislature and other impedimenta of Western liberal democracy, which are considered unsuitable by the Hun people, are replaced by the efficient and infallible decisions of Attila, the Great Leader.

Although forming only 2 percent of the Empire's population, the Hun people have been unanimously chosen by the other peoples of the Empire – largely Germans and Slavs, but also including captured Romans – to serve as the vanguard of the masses and the transmitters of the words of the Great Leader, the benevolent Attila. In order to more efficiently carry out these essential functions, the Huns maintain a high standard of living, and consequently of health, on the basis of the willing contributions of the subject peoples. These contributions, in addition to the tributes paid by the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, have enabled the Hun people to maintain the highest standard of living in Europe. The subject people have also prospered, with some of them even surpassing the subsistence level before taxes.

As in previous years, the Hun Empire in 451 maintained an exemplary human rights record, with no credible allegations of violations of rights by the Great Leader or any of his people. There were egregious cases, however, of serious injuries and even deaths caused by Thracians and Gauls obstructing the rescue missions undertaken in their respective territories by the Hun hordes. While the possibility remains of similar human rights violations against the Huns in future rescue missions in other territories, the outlook in Gaul and Thrace has been greatly improved by the elimination of three million terrorists of all ages.

There were no political prisoners.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Unlawful or Arbitrary Deprivation of Life

There were no cases of unnecessary killing by the followers of the Great Leader. Several miscreants unlawfully attempted armed defense against benevolent Hun actions, causing some loss of life; fortunately, justice was served in all cases, and the offenders – along with their families and neighbors – were executed in fashions designed to encourage others to be more cooperative. As of the end of 451, peace reigned supreme throughout the Empire.

b. Disappearance

There were no cases of disappearance in the Empire of the Hun Horde in 451. Dissidents and other miscreants were invariably publicly impaled within 24 hours after their arrest or, in cases of other types of disposition, their heads were publicly displayed for ready identification.

c. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Attila the Hun has repeatedly stated his firm and principled opposition to all excessive torture, and there were no credible reports of such cases in 451.

In contrast to barbaric Roman practices whereby persons may be imprisoned for years, the Huns do not keep prisoners and consequently have no prisons. Detainees are maintained in healthful fresh air and sunshine during interrogations — except when properly located anthills are unavailable. Interrogation materials are used at a temperature which ensures their sterility.

There were no credible reports of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention or Exile

There were no credible reports of arbitrary arrest. All arrests of dissidents and other miscreants were fully justified. Detentions are normally brief, with no detainee known to have survived more than five days; less than 24 hours is more normal. There has never been a need to exile anyone, and no credible cases were reported during 451.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

Hun customs make trials unnecessary; however, all sentences are just, with miscreants and their families and neighbors receiving exactly the punishment they deserve.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home or Correspondence

The sanctity of the home and family is universally respected under Hunnish tradition, except for cases of suspected opposition to the Great Leader. The subject and slave peoples of the Empire enjoy similar freedom from intrusion, except for the obvious necessity of entry into homes for the purpose of suppressing miscreants, collecting tributes and satisfying the bodily needs of the beloved Huns. Great care is taken to maintain family unity, and all known relatives are normally executed along with a miscreant. Slaves are not sold separately from their families except where the practice will lead to revenue enhancement.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Rights, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Great Leader, Attila the Hun, has proclaimed freedom of speech to be a fundamental principle of the Empire, and no one made any contrary statement. Freedom of the press is totally unrestricted in the Empire; however, since the example of the Great Leader has demonstrated the desirability of illiteracy, there was no legal publication of any sort in 451 and no readership for foreign publications.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The people joyfully assemble when convoked by the Great Leader, Attila the Hun. There is no need for other forms of assembly or association.

c. Freedom of Religion

There are absolutely no restrictions or hindrances on correct religious beliefs and practices in the Hun Empire. The Sky God religion of Attila the Hun is the chosen faith of all people of the Empire.

d. Freedom of Movement within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration and Repatriation

There is complete freedom of all permissible movement within the Empire for all Huns. Serfs, slaves and other subject peoples may move as necessary when sold. Because of the idyllic conditions within the country, there is no foreign travel (other than rescue missions led by the Great Leader) and, aside from persons returning from such missions, there is no repatriation. Over 800,000 Thracian and Gaulish slaves were welcomed into the Hun Empire for resettlement in connection with rescue missions in 451.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The Hunnish system of streamlined government consists of the Great Leader, Attila the Hun, who makes all necessary decisions and issues the necessary directives. Hindrances such as constitutions, laws, legislatures and courts are dispensed with. The rule of Attila the Hun enjoys the unanimous support of the population of the Hun Empire, with no complaints reported in 451. Complaints in the earlier years of the Great Leader's rule were invariably dealt with in a timely and efficient fashion, and there have been no credible repetitions in recent years.

Local administration is carried out by Huns known as "picked men" who are freely chosen by Attila the Hun and are assigned specific tribes of subject people as their responsibility.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigations of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

The Empire of the Hun Horde does not require any governmental or private bodies for the investigation or defense of human rights.

While investigating commissions from two foreign human rights organizations were permitted to enter the Empire during 451, these commissions, like previous ones, have not emerged to file their reports. In any case, no criticism of human rights practices was necessary.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SITUATION

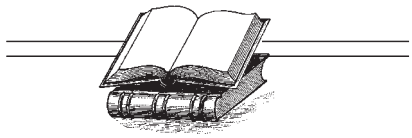
The remarkable political stability achieved under the enlightened leadership of Attila the Hun has enabled the Empire of the Hun Horde to enjoy equal-

ly remarkable economic growth and prosperity. The Great Leader's farsighted economic development plans give absolute priority to private property and individual ownership. All wealth and means of production are the private property of Attila the Hun, including ownership of all individuals acquired during the Empire's expansion projects. The veritable paradise created by the Great Leader has brought universal contentment to all of the Empire's inhabitants.

The economy of the Hun Empire is essentially agrarian. The high tax rate on commerce and industry (100 percent) has discouraged business growth, but tributes from the Eastern and Western Roman Empires supply all of the Huns' needs for manufactured or imported goods. All land is privately owned by Attila the Hun; agricultural products are, however, allotted to the other Huns, who collect them from the subject peoples after harvest. The natural fertility of the soil and the industriousness of the subject peoples have ensured the Huns the highest standard of living in the known world. The annual per capita income of the Huns (analyzed separately from the distorting effects of the large subject population) was over 1,000 gold talents. Income per capita of the subject peoples was somewhat less, perhaps 65 cents. This high standard of living, with some members of the subject population surpassing the subsistence level before taxes, has led to correspondingly high levels of health, with the life expectancy at birth estimated at over 20 years.

The Empire of the Hun Horde, which stretches from the depths of Central Asia to the borders of Gaul, is relatively underpopulated, with a population of approximately 10 million. The population is essentially stable, with immigration of slaves balanced by executions of miscreant groups.

Because the example of Attila the Hun and his forebears has demonstrated the innecessity of education or literacy, the Hun Empire has no school system and the literacy rate was close to 0, other than among certain slaves. Social mobility does not depend on education nor, for that matter, is it known to exist. ■



BOOKS

A Success Story

Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building: Results of a Cross-National Quantitative Study
Steven E. Finkel, Aníbal Perez-Linan and Mitchell A. Seligson, USAID (www.usaid.gov), 2006, 116 pages.

REVIEWED BY TED CRAIG

With democracy promotion elevated to unprecedented importance in U.S. foreign policy, the question of whether tangible assistance can make a difference has become urgent. After more than 15 years of experience in the field by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the State Department and affiliated NGOs, an answer remains elusive despite the best efforts of practitioners, academics and auditors.

This should not surprise anyone; after all, democracy, like economic development, is a broad goal. It is not easy to know when you have achieved it, or how much of it you've secured. And even where you can see progress, it is nearly impossible to say what brought it about. At a minimum, it is almost always more plausible to give credit to local actors and circumstances than to the modest assistance program of an outside donor.

USAID deserves praise for funding and supporting a detailed and complex assessment of these efforts: *Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building: Results of a Cross-National Quantitative Study.* Skeptics may balk when a government-funded study demonstrates the effectiveness of a government program, but this peer-reviewed report by three prominent researchers — Steven E. Finkel, Aníbal Perez-Linan and Mitchell A. Seligson — withstands scrutiny.

The U.S. must help fragile democracies get stronger. This study appears to show we can.

The authors, affiliated with the University of Virginia, University of Pittsburgh and Vanderbilt University, respectively, utilized over 50 indicators — including some very specific ones like "favorable conditions for the nonprofit sector" or "rights in judicial proceedings for minorities" — but relied on two comprehensive measures (Freedom House and Polity IV) of democratization. They then looked at trends in 165 sovereign developing countries (plus Palestine), 121 of which received some U.S. democracy and governance aid between 1990 and 2003.

Next, they used growth models and other tools to isolate the impact of our democracy and governance assistance from other commonly cited factors that may strengthen or undermine a developing democracy, such as economic performance, inequalities and ethnic division.

They found that an investment of $10 million per year in DG assistance in an average country will produce a fivefold acceleration in democratic progress. On the Freedom House 13-point scale of political rights and civil liberties, this translates into a gain of 0.25 points a year. However, general development assistance did not produce discernible democratic progress.

Only three other variables proved to have a significant impact on democracy: 1) economic growth; 2) the spillover effects from being in a democratizing region; and 3) political and social conflict or violence.

Still, the authors conclude that the greatest variations in democratic performance cannot be attributed to any of the studied variables, including DG programs. Instead, they suggest that democratic development is influenced significantly by "contingent choices made by social and political elites (as well as by citizens) in contexts of high uncertainty." More prosaically, leadership, interest groups, and popular movements matter. And so too, then, could diplomacy.

In an era where weak or incapable governments are vulnerable to transnational terrorism, global trafficking and ethnic chauvinism, some have suggested that we have undervalued order and authority in our rush to democratize. The counter-argument is that only democracies can offer legitimate and stable government for the long term. From either perspective, it matters greatly whether donors help fragile democracies get stronger. This study appears to show we can.

It bears emphasizing that the study

is confined to assistance programs, and runs only from 1990 to 2003. Also, it does not address the effectiveness of public diplomacy.

As diplomats and assistance practitioners, we must strive to understand the country we are working in and to offer our best counsel as to how to advance democracy — whether through technical programs, through public American leadership or, in some environments, through a less visible American role.

The study is available at: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/impact_of_democracy_assistance.pdf

Ted Craig, an FSO since 1991, has served in Guatemala, Botswana, Bolivia and Washington, D.C. He is currently on a one-year Rusk Fellowship at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. He joins the State Department's Policy Planning staff this summer.

A True Turning Point

The Last Battle of the Cold War: An Inside Account of Negotiating the INF Treaty
Maynard W. Glitman, Palgrave-MacMillan, 2006, $69.95, hardcover, 272 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVID T. JONES

Throughout the 45-plus years of confrontation with the Soviet Union following World War II, the United States grappled with how to secure Western democracy and freedom — and avoid a nuclear Armageddon. We fought in tertiary areas of the globe via proxies (Angola, El Salvador) or alongside the forces from one side confronting the surrogates of the other (Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan). However, in the most pivotal potential battleground, Europe, we successfully maneuvered to maintain a Western unity that was the best assurance against a Soviet invasion. We balanced military deterrence, combining conventional and nuclear forces, with diplomatic efforts to negotiate arms control agreements to reduce East-West tensions and, ultimately, to lay the groundwork for a mutually beneficial peace.

Perhaps the most dramatic of these struggles came during the period between 1976 and 1987, when Soviet deployments of mobile intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Eastern Europe generated unprecedented tension. There were profound disagreements within NATO over whether the West should counter Soviet INF systems with comparable U.S. missiles or accept the USSR's dominance. After much debate, NATO sought an appropriate military counter, but also took a crucial additional step. Rather than accepting the status quo, the U.S. packaged the short-term stationing of those weapons within a diplomatic agreement that would ultimately eliminate them worldwide.

Maynard ("Mike") Glitman, a career Foreign Service officer, was a key figure throughout this decade. As the leader of the INF negotiating team that concluded the INF Treaty and orchestrated its Senate ratification, Mike Glitman not only has an incredible story to tell, but tells it well. *The Last Battle of the Cold War: An Inside Account of Negotiating the INF Treaty* is an adroit combination of careful diplomatic detail and insightful anecdote. For instance, he paints a damning portrait of how the Soviet Union's brutality and the ritualized duplicity of Soviet leaders were reflected in their negotiators.

He also walks the reader through the politico-military circumstances of the mid-1970s and the factors leading to the decision to deploy U.S. INF missiles to Europe. He explains the tit-for-tat U.S./NATO Alliance negotiating proposals juxtaposed with Soviet ploys designed to retain their military advantage and split the Western alliance.

Equally interesting, he examines internecine Washington battles over such questions as how much verification was necessary to fulfill the Reagan-era maxim of "trust but verify." He concludes with an account of the Senate ratification debate that is a classic of the genre.

Particularly instructive for current U.S. policy, however, is Glitman's detailed account of the exhaustive (and exhausting) public diplomacy campaign to maintain the NATO alliance's cohesion. Even when facing a concrete threat like intermediate-range nuclear weapons, alliance maintenance will always be equivalent to herding cats. It is even harder if the threat is as abstract and distant as terrorism is today.

All too often we mistake a bend in the road of history for one of its major turning points. The INF Treaty, however, was a true turning point. It eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons, created new paradigms for verification and strengthened NATO's solidarity. *The Last Battle of the Cold War* provides a precise account of how politico-military resolve and diplomatic calculation, epitomized in an astute arms control agreement, helped close down the global threat of Soviet military power. Diplomatic efforts such as those Mike Glitman led were pivotal to Western success. ■

David T. Jones, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, is a frequent contributor to the Journal .

TAKING A GAP YEAR

TIME OFF CAN GIVE STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE AND CLARIFY WHAT THEY WANT TO DO.

BY INGRID AHLGREN

When I told my friends I was taking a year off between high school and college, they were shocked. I was an "A" student, and I had been accepted to Brown University, one of my top choices. I was excited about Brown, but I didn't feel ready to go. Instead, I wanted to go to Venezuela with my parents. My father, a Foreign Service officer, would be working at the U.S. embassy in Caracas.

As it turned out, taking a so-called "gap year," a year off before or during college, was one of the best things I ever did. Before heading to Venezuela, I spent time with my parents in the D.C. area, where my father was studying Spanish. In Washington, I interned at CNBC. I also went on an Outward Bound course in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of Minnesota. In Caracas, I learned how to dance, became fluent in Spanish, volunteered at a bicultural center, audited courses at a Venezuelan university, and worked as a "summer hire" at the embassy. When I headed to college in the fall, I was much more ready to be on my own than many of my classmates.

As a Foreign Service kid, I also found it empowering to choose where I was going for once. For years, my brother, Ted, and I had followed our parents wherever the State Department wanted them to go. This time, it was my choice to go with them.

Why Take a Gap Year?

In the U.K., Australia (where it's known as the "walkabout year") and New Zealand, gap years are more common than they are in the United States. Although official statistics for U.S. students taking gap years don't seem to exist, a 2003 *Princeton Review* poll found that "very few American students take time off, but the ones who do, report getting better jobs and grades."

One of my close friends from college also took a gap year. She was from suburban Massachusetts, had never lived elsewhere and wanted to see more of the world. And so my friend spent a year in Mexico. Today she's launching a career in international public health, something she might never have considered if she hadn't taken the gap year. Another young woman, Lucy Terrell, spent the first six months of her gap year living with her parents in Virginia and working at a doctor's office; she then used some of the money she saved to go backpacking in Europe.

Although many Foreign Service kids have already seen a lot of the world, they might want to experience living or working in another country. There are many other reasons people take a gap year. Some individuals think it will help them get into a better school or get a better job. Some people don't know what they want to do, and they hope it will help them figure out a career path. Others know what they want to do next, but simply want a break. They also might want to gain hands-on work experience in a particular field.

For a Global Nomad — someone who has lived outside their parents' country of origin before adulthood because of a parent's occupation — the idea of staying in one place for more than a year or two can be very compelling. That is what prompted one young woman to opt for taking a gap year. Marloes Miller, 32, lives in Maryland and works at a biotech company. She is originally from Holland, but grew up in Egypt, Greece, Switzerland and Hong Kong. Miller was living in Zug, Switzerland, when she decided to take time off.

"I was signed up to go to hotel management school in

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Ingrid Ahlgren is a Foreign Service kid who took a "gap year." She currently works as a researcher at National Geographic Traveler *magazine.*

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Leysin, Switzerland, but decided on fairly short notice that I wanted to try living in one place for four years in a row," explains Miller. "Because it was already past the application deadline for U.S. colleges, I needed to use the year to apply during the next cycle."

During her gap year, Miller lived in Zug. "My parents were none too pleased about my decision not to go to hotel school, but said they would be willing to pay for college if I lived on my own that year and found a job," says Miller. "I worked as a receptionist for a while, was unemployed for a while, waited tables at the local four-star hotel, and was later rehired to the receptionist position for the rest of my time there."

The Advantages

There are several advantages to taking a gap year. Time off can give students an opportunity to plan for the future and clarify their ideas about what they want to do.

As was true in my own case, people who take gap years meet new people and learn more about themselves, as well as build confidence.

Miller explains what she learned from her gap year: "I learned the value of $10 (it can buy a week's worth of food if you use it right). I learned I never want to wait tables again because I am terrible at it. I also learned I wanted my career to be something more intellectually stimulating than the work I was able to get with just an international baccalaureate and no training."

During time off, students can gain relevant work experience and new skills. As was true in my own case, people who take gap years meet new people and learn more about themselves, as well as build confidence.

"I am very glad I decided not to go to hotel school," says Miller. "It was the first time in my life I had a choice about where I would end up, and I am pretty sure I would have been miserable in the hotel world. It was also a conscious decision to try something other than the nomad life I had been forced to live up to that point. The gap year itself was not something I especially enjoyed, though." Miller

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2006: The Year of Study Abroad

In late 2005, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a bipartisan resolution designating 2006 the "Year of Study Abroad."

"Whereas ensuring that the citizens of the United States are globally literate is the responsibility of the educational system …

"Whereas a National Geographic global literacy survey found that 87 percent of students in the U.S. between the ages of 18 and 24 cannot locate Iraq on a world map …

"Whereas according to a 2002 American Council on Education poll, 79 percent of people in the U.S. agree that students should have a study abroad experience sometime during college, but only 1 percent of students from the U.S. currently study abroad each year …

"Whereas study abroad programs not only open doors to foreign language learning, but also empower students to better understand themselves and others through a comparison of cultural values and ways of life … the Senate designates 2006 as the 'Year of Study Abroad' and encourages the people of the U.S. to support initiatives to promote and expand study abroad opportunities."

It is, by all accounts, an idea whose time has come. The number of students studying abroad for academic credit rose by 9.6 percent in 2004, following an 8.5 percent increase the year before, according to *Open Doors 2005*, the annual report on international education published by the Institute of International Education with funding fromn the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. In March 2004, there were 191,321 American students studying abroad, up from about 75,000 just a decade ago. Significantly, study abroad in nontraditional destinations — such as China and India, where American students see potential career opportunities — is expanding rapidly.

The *Open Doors* report also shows that increasing numbers are involved in shorter-duration programs. "U.S. students now have literally thousands of short-term programs available to them," Janet Hulstrand writes in the May-June issue of *International Educator.* "Obviously this number includes a variety of program types, durations and qualities, so there is something for every student. It's personalization of education abroad in shorter timeframes than a traditional semester or academic year abroad."

But, as *Transitions Abroad* founder Clay Hubbs observes in the magazine's March-April issue, the most important change of all in international education may be "the increasing numbers of students (and nonstudent adults) who are going abroad to learn in ways outside formal study programs" — such as internships and volunteering. Clay states that statistics on visits to the publication's Web site, which contains an archive of resources on work, study, living and educational travel, indicate that undergraduate study abroad has become a gateway to longer-term work abroad. Former students go abroad either to find employment or to sharpen their skills for work in the globalized U.S. economy.

Participants in the international experience are also younger in age and come from a wide variety of backgrounds. "More and more visitors to our Web site are senior and high school students," Hubbs notes.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

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Gap Year Resources

Books

The Gap-Year Advantage: Helping Your Child Benefit from Time Off Before or During College, Karl Haigler and Rae Nelson (St. Martin's Griffin, 2005, $14.95).

This book provides parents with tips, advice and information to help students develop a gap-year plan. It includes anecdotes from gap-year students and parents. The last part of the book gives program options that include travel, interning, and working and volunteering in the United States and abroad.

The Gap-Year Book, Joe Bindloss, Charlotte Hindle and Andrew Dean Nystrom (Lonely Planet Publications, 2005, $24).

This travel-oriented guide on planning and taking a gap year includes pre-trip planning advice, info on gap-year organizations, and advice from "gappers" as well as industry experts.

Taking a Gap Year (4th edition), Susan Griffith (Vacation Work Publications, 2005, $21.95).

Griffith covers the rewards and risks of taking a gap year. Her book also has information on timing, discussions with schools, fund raising, etc., and includes a country-by-country guide of gap-year opportunities.

Taking Time Off, 2nd Edition, Colin Hall and Ron Lieber (Princeton Review, 2003, $13).

This book tells you how to make the most of a break before or during college. It features stories of 26 students as well as practical advice on planning a gap year. A resources section lists jobs, programs, etc.

Delaying the Real World, Colleen Kinder (Running Press Book Publishers, 2005, $12.95).

There are still opportunities for taking time off after college graduation. This book discusses short-term opportunities, such as traveling overseas, during the years following college.

Web Sites

www.findagap.com

A comprehensive gap year directory (jobs, travel, expeditions, etc.).

www.gapyear.com

This site's tagline is "your complete guide to taking time out." It includes ideas for things to do, gap-year money advice, info on jobs overseas and message boards.

www.gap-year.com

From U.K.-based Peridot Press, this site has information for "gappers," with an emphasis on travel to locations such as Tibet and India. Slogan: "All you need for planning your gap year."

www.interimprograms.com

The Center for Interim Programs is a counseling service that helps young people identify gap-year programs. The center has been around since 1980, and has designed gap years for more than 5,000 individuals.

www.yearoutgroup.org

Offers information for young people and their parents and advisers.

[During the gap year] I put my life in perspective. I came to college much more focused than I would have otherwise.

— Lucy Terrell

had few friends in the area during her gap year, and she found that the German part of Switzerland was not very accepting of foreigners.

In their book, *The Gap-Year Advantage* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2005), Karl Haigler and Rae Nelson write: "Students who have been on the fast track, who are burned out amassing credentials on the way to college, or who just want to explore the world, may need a break before plunging into a multiyear commitment to the academic grind." In the essay "Time Out or Burn Out for the Next Generation," three Harvard administrators write about how today's students are at risk for burning out. "Perhaps the best way of all to get the full benefit of 'time off' is to postpone entrance to college for a year," write the administrators. (The essay is posted for prospective students at the Harvard College Web site and also at http://www.educationalexpeditions.net/time_out.html.)

Lucy Terrell, who is now 21 and studying at Carnegie Mellon University, says: "I wanted a break from the stress of school work. By the end of high school, I was pretty worn out. [During the gap year] I calmed down and took time to put my life in perspective. I didn't realize how much stress I had been under in high school until about four months

after I graduated." Terrell adds that she didn't get to spend much time with her family during high school due to her busy schedule; the gap year helped her reconnect to her parents and siblings.

Rae Nelson, an education specialist and co-author of *The Gap-Year Advantage*, says other types of kids can also benefit from taking time off. These include children who are not yet mature enough to go to college, individuals who aren't sure what they want to do with their careers, and children who have had disadvantages related to health or personal tragedies. Nelson says kids who have taken gap years tend to gain independence and confidence. She adds that they tend to be more active learners, and that they are better able to manage practical life skills than other college students. Students who have taken gap years also tend to have a greater respect for the peoples and cultures of the world.

There are some possible downsides to taking a gap year. It can be hard to get back to the routine of study after time off.

In addition, a gap year can increase a person's passion for future study and work. When I got to Brown after my time in Caracas, I was really excited to be there. Miller also found this to be true. She explains: "I became more motivated to make college a success since it had been my choice rather than doing it because my parents decided for me. If I had planned ahead, I might have been able to avoid the gap year entirely, but I don't know if I would have tried as hard in college if I had not had that experience."

Terrell agrees that her gap year helped her succeed in a university setting. "I came to college much more focused and prepared than I would have otherwise," she says.

Anna Maripuu, a Swede whose father worked for the United Nations, went from high school straight to college and then immediately to graduate school. Maripuu now wishes she had taken a year off. She says that she wishes she had taken time off between college and graduate school in particular. A big part of why she did not was that she wanted to keep

her student visa and stay in the United States, but she ended up feeling burned out in grad school.

"I wish I had felt less pressured," Maripuu explains. "I would maybe have made different choices about my studies and my career direction. Instead, I felt pressed to keep on and maybe made my decisions about the direction of my life and career in too much haste."

Finally, taking a gap year can be of special benefit to Foreign Service youth. Although diplomatic kids often have lived outside of the United States and traveled a great deal, they probably haven't planned travel for themselves. They could learn a lot from actively planning something that is theirs. In addition, if they have not lived extensively in the United States, a gap year could offer an opportunity to volunteer or work in the United States and reconnect to U.S. culture.

A gap year could present an opportunity to volunteer or work in the United States and reconnect to U.S. culture.

It's Not for Everyone

There are also some possible downsides to taking a gap year. It can be hard for some students to get back into the routine of study after time off. Also, while some people might be able to earn and save money during their year off, taking a gap year can be expensive. And going to college is more costly after taking a year off. According to CNN/Money, as of 2004 annual hikes in tuition were between 4 and 11 percent, with most schools estimating an increase of 5 to 6 percent in tuition per year. Finally, certain schools and certain types of academic programs may not allow students to defer admission.

One Foreign Service spouse, Mari O'Connor, says her middle daughter, who is about to graduate from high school in Portugal, doesn't want to take a gap year. "She feels that taking a year off will make it more difficult for her when she does start her university program, and she's correct," says O'Connor. "She has had two conditional offers from veterinarian programs in the United Kingdom, is awaiting word from a third and expects to hear from her American school applications. The

veterinarian programs do not allow a gap year because they are very careful with their quota of offers. "

Taking a gap year may be better for some students than others. O'Connor says her oldest daughter didn't do a gap year, and was not even interested in discussing one. O'Connor explains: "She was ready to 'fly the coop' and anxious to get out on her own. She graduated from high school in Lisbon and is now in year two at the University of York, England (and loves it). We did not think that it would be a good idea for her to do a gap year since she has difficulty getting motivated to do things and would have spent the year sleeping late, hanging out with friends, watching TV and reading. Instead she is doing all of those things in England *and* going to classes!"

Rae Nelson feels that most students will benefit from a gap year.

It is important to research different programs and look closely at one's internal motivation for taking a gap year.

However, she acknowledges that, "It's not for everybody." In particular, Nelson says, students shouldn't take a gap year instead of dealing with other underlying problems or if they haven't done the proper research ahead of time.

Considerations for FS Families

Lina Brown, a Foreign Service dependent who graduated from high school in June 2005, was set on going to college. She was debating among several universities in the Washington area. However, she says, "I made a sudden decision to move to Beijing with my family and do a gap year."

Brown adds that her gap year in China has turned out to be difficult. Why? "Apparently with my diplomatic status, I am not allowed to enroll in a university's classes or programs," explains Brown. Confronted with the option of either giving up her diplomatic status to learn Chinese in a university or keeping it and finding other ways to learn the language, Brown ended up keeping her diplomatic status.

This is not necessarily the case in other nations. For example, South

Africa gives diplomatic status to unmarried children of diplomats as long as the dependent is under the age of 21. South Africa also recognizes foreign representatives' dependent unmarried children between the ages of 21 and 23 who are enrolled full time in an educational institution and form a part of the household during a term of duty.

It's also important to consider the State Department's regulations about dependents when planning a gap year. The Family Liaison Office explains: "A family member who turns 21 is no longer eligible for any allowances (except educational travel described below), coverage under the health unit, or medical or emergency evacuations. …

"If the employee is assigned to the United States, the family member will not be included on orders for the next post. When an employee is heading to a new post (on Permanent Change of Station orders), a child approaching the age of 21 may be included on the transfer orders. However, return travel to the U. S. can only be authorized if the child actually traveled to post under the transfer orders prior to reaching age 21. …

It's important to consider the State Department's regulations about dependents when planning a gap year.

"There are a few exceptions if the family member is still in undergraduate college in the U.S. (or in an affiliated 'junior year abroad' program), or has served in the military. In the first case, the family member will continue to receive the educational travel allowance until he/she turns 23 or graduates from undergraduate studies" (http://www.state.gov/mdghr/flo/rsrcs/pubs/4598.htm).

Foreign Service families should also think about health insurance when planning a gap year. Federal health insurance coverage stops for children when they turn 22. At that point, the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program has a Temporary Continuation of Coverage program for up to three years after the change in status is reported (for additional details, see Family Liaison Office publications at the previously men-

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A New Kind of College Guide

U.S. News & World Report's annual ranking of colleges, and others like it, have become very influential in the choices parents and their children make about schools. Understandably, parents want to be assured that the considerable financial outlay for their child's higher education is "worth it," and existing college rankings aim at identifying the "best" schools in terms of academic excellence.

By contrast, the *Washington Monthly College Guide* that debuted this fall sorts schools according to what the schools give to society. "Other guides ask what colleges can do for you," says *Washington Monthly*. "We ask what colleges are doing for the country." In the new college guide, schools are ranked by how well they perform three vital socioeconomic functions: how well they serve as engines of social mobility; how well they serve as producers of the scientific minds and research that develops new knowledge and drives economic growth; and how well they promote an ethic of service.

Not surprisingly, the headline schools routinely found at the top of the *U.S. News* list did not necessarily finish at the top of the *Washington Monthly* list. In fact, only three schools in the 2006 *U.S. News* top ten are in its highest ranks: MIT, Stanford and the University of Pennsylvania. Among the Ivy League schools, only Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania made *Washington Monthly*'s top ten. Princeton, tied with Harvard for first place in *U.S. News*' 2005 list, ranks 44 on the *Washington Monthly* list.

Interestingly, MIT earned its overall number-one ranking in the *Washington Monthly* guide not so much because of its ground-breaking research. What made the school number one was its commitment to national service, where it ranked 7, far better than most of its elite peers. Similarly, UCLA, which finished second on the overall list, excelled in research and came in first in the social mobility rating because of its astoundingly high graduation rate given its large number of lower-income students. Overall, the *Washington Monthly* list contains many more first-rate state schools than the *U.S. News* list, which has no public universities within its top ten.

The rankings have had a growing impact on schools, too. College administrators scramble to increase the amount of money given by their alumni or raise the SAT scores of their incoming freshmen to improve their score in the ranking. Competition to improve rankings in the *Washington Monthly* guide could have far-reaching effects as schools start enrolling greater numbers of lower-income students and making sure that they graduate, encourage more of their students to join the Peace Corps or the military, and intensify their focus on producing more Ph.D. graduates in science and engineering.

The *Washington Monthly College Guide*, including an explanation of the methodology behind it, is available online at http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2005/0509.collegeguide.html.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

Schools at a Glance

Go to our Web page at www.fsjournal.org and click on the Marketplace tab for more information.

School Name | Advertisement Page No. | Enrollment | Gender Distribution, M/F | Percent Boarding | Percent International | Levels Offered | Common Application | Accepts/Offers ADD and LD | Miles to Int'l Airport | Int'l Students Orientation | Dorms w/E-mail, phones | Holiday Break Coverage | Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Washington International School	75	825	49/51	NA	37	PK-12	N	Limited	8	Y	NA	NA	21,375

ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Rock Creek International School	83	220	40/60	0	60	PK-8	N	Y	20	Y	NA	Y	16,975

JUNIOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

British School of Washington	67	300	50/50	NA	50	PK-12	N	N	10	Y	NA	NA	19,465
Dana Hall School	81	465	All girls	40	10	6-12	Y	Limited	12	Y	Y	N	39,405
Oakwood Friends School	73	180	55/45	45	10	6-12	Y	Y	35	N	Y	N	33,325
Oldfields School	71	190	All girls	75	15	8-12, PG	Y	Limited	35	N	N	Y	35,900
Perkiomen School	89	265	60/40	60	20	5-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	N	34,300
St. Margaret's School	81	150	All girls	75	15	8-12	Y	Limited	50	Y	Y	N	34,500
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart	75	740	All girls	NA	5	JK-12	N	N	15	N	NA	NA	10,000-19,275
Stony Brook School	87	336	55/45	56	20	7-12	Y	Limited	50	N	Y	N	29,600

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Foxcroft School	87	170	All girls	68	15	9-12	Y	N	30	Y	Y	Y	35,700
Interlochen Arts Academy	85	455	39/61	93	13	9-12, PG	N	N	16	Y	Y	N	34,100
Kents Hill School	80	225	60/40	70	20	9-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	Limited	37,645
King George School	70	72	60/40	100	5	9-12	Y	Y	60	N	N	Y	5,800/mon
Miss Hall's School	65	175	All girls	75	18	9-12	Y	NA	40	Y	Y	N	37,800
Montverde Academy	73	170	55/45	71	50	7-12	Y	Limited	22	Y	Y	Limited	18,455
Purnell School	64	110	All girls	85	10	9-12	Y	Y	35	Y	Y	N	34,725
Salem Academy	63	184	All girls	50	18	9-12	Y	N	20	N	Y/N	Y	28,500
Western Reserve Academy	77	375	55/45	65	11	9-12, PG	N	N	35	Y	Y	Y	26,700

Key: NA - Not Applicable. ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder. LD - Learning Disability.

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tioned URL). In my case, I turned 22 during my senior year in college (I would have graduated at the age of 21 if I hadn't taken a gap year) and opted to pay for the TCC program myself.

Keys to Success

The key to a successful gap year is planning ahead. Nelson says experts recommend planning for time off as part of the college process; however, the reality is that students often think about doing so only when they get college acceptance letters.

Nelson says it is important to research different programs and look closely at one's internal motivation for taking a gap year. Otherwise, she says, the student could end up with a bad match. Nelson also suggests doing upfront research on the financial and academic risks of taking a gap year. She notes that students can sometimes receive college credit for programs or even get scholarships if they plan ahead. "You could have more positive gains," she explains.

Experts recommend planning for time off as part of the college process; however, students often do so only when they get college acceptance letters.

Nelson and Haigler's book, as well as other publications on gap years (see Resources, p. 66) offer detailed advice on planning and logistics for a gap year. There are also organizations such as the Center for Interim Programs that help young people plan them.

Those who have taken gap years also have some suggestions. "Explore your choices," says Terrell. "I considered becoming an au pair in Australia for a while, or spending a month or two with my grandparents. There are also programs like City Year [a national service organization for youth between the ages of 17 and 24]. I have a friend that worked in a local theater for her gap year, and others who studied in Spain and Germany."

Miller adds: "Make the best of it, and remember that the most valuable thing you take away from it will most likely be something unexpected." ■

USEFUL LINKS:

ASSOCIATES OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE WORLDWIDE
Web site created by Foreign Service spouses.
www.aafsw.org

EXPAT EXCHANGE
An online resource for information, employment, services and shopping overseas.
www.expatexchange.com

FOREIGN SERVICE YOUTH FOUNDATION
Provides information, advocacy and activities for Foreign Service youth.
www.fsyf.org

GLOBAL NOMADS WASHINGTON AREA
Activities, resources and information on Global Nomads.
www.globalnomads-dc.org

TALES FROM A SMALL PLANET
A Web zine for expats offering "Real Post Reports" and tales from around the world.
www.talesmag.com

TCK WORLD
Web site for the support and understanding of Third Cutlture Kids (TCKs).
www.tckworld.com

Schools at a Glance

Go to our Web page at www.fsjournal.org and click on the Marketplace tab for more information.

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MILITARY SCHOOLS

School Name	Advertisement Page No.	Enrollment	Gender Distribution, M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD and LD	Miles to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Dorms w/E-mail, phones	Holiday Break Coverage	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
Chamberlain-Hunt Academy	67	145	All boys	95	2	7-12	N	Y	60	Y	N	N	15,000
Valley Forge Military Academy	63	600	All boys	100	12	7-12, PG	Y	N	15	Y	Y	N	28,550

SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

Gow School	89	143	All boys	100	20	7-12, PG	N	All LD	20	Y	Y	N	40,300
Landmark School	91	447	60/40	50	10	2-12	N	Y[1]	25	N	Y	N	29,700[2]

DISTANCE LEARNING

Texas Tech University	70	K-12 and accredited HS diploma; Bachelor's through graduate programs. Visit http://www.de.ttu.edu
University of Missouri-Center for Distance and Independent Study	83	Independent study: Grade 3 through university. 26,000 enrolled. Accredited HS diploma. Bachelor's degree completion. For more information, go to cdis.missouri.edu/go/gFSJ6.asp

OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

Marymount International School	77	800	49/51	NA	50	PK-12	N	Limited	15	Y	N	N	10,125-19,500
St. Stephen's School	85	211	45/55	16	63	9-12, PG	N	N	12	NA	Y	N	35,978[3]

OTHER

AAFSW Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide	74	Bringing the FS community together to promote a better quality of life. Go to www.aafsw.org
Diplotots		Capacity: 123 children Ages: 6 weeks - 5 years NAEYC Accredited Tel: (202) 663-3555
FSYF Foreign Service Youth Foundation	68	Assists Foreign Service Youth by coordination development programs. Go to www.fsyf.org
International Schools Services	79	Go to www.iss.edu

Key: NA - Not Applicable. ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder. LD - Learning Disability.

Notes:

[1] Must call school.

[2] Additional fees may apply.

[3] Euro 28,000 – USD equivalent based on the May 2006 exchange rate.

FAQ: EDUCATING SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN OVERSEAS

EDUCATION IS A CHALLENGE FOR FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILIES. BUT FOR THOSE WHOSE CHILDREN HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS, IT CAN BE OVERWHELMING.

BY FRANCESCA HUEMER KELLY

"Are there resources for autistic children in India?"

"I recently gave a presentation on sound-based therapies — let me know if you want more information."

"We just got our bid list! Has anyone had experience with special needs kids in the following places …?"

Almost as soon as these messages were posted to the Foreign Service Special Needs e-mail group, support and information exchange among the group's members — American Foreign Service parents of special needs children — were swift to follow. Formed in 2005 by Foreign Service spouse Mari O'Connor (with help from Bert Curtis and Rebecca Grappo), the group is a new resource available to special needs families in the Service, and its membership is growing by leaps and bounds. That's good news, because FS special needs families need as much support as they can get. Here are some frequently asked questions.

What are "special needs"?

Children with learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, attention deficit disorder, behavioral problems, speech and language issues, autism, giftedness, Down's Syndrome and other exceptional traits often need services, both educational and therapeutic, that the standard educational system alone cannot provide. In the U.S. public schools, these services must be provided under the terms of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act to children who qualify.

What do I do if I suspect my child may qualify for special needs education?

Families who are posted overseas should contact the regional medical officer through the embassy or consulate health unit. The RMO will most likely then talk to the Employee Consultation Service at State, as well as State/MED, and arrange for evaluations for the child. If the child is school-aged, certainly the child's teachers will have some opinions and input to offer.

"Last year when my son was in kindergarten, his teacher recommended that we have him evaluated by a speech therapist," reports Julie Drolet, who is posted to Paris. "An American speech therapist who sees students at the American School of Paris did the evaluation, and found that our son has a mild language disorder. This year, in grade one, our son continues with sessions twice a week, at the school, organized as 'pull-out' sessions."

Families who are currently in the U.S. need to go through their local school system, their pediatrician, and ECS (at State) in order to get the child evaluated and diagnosed. Children with special needs who qualify will be given, by law, an Individualized Education Plan, which is necessary to receive special education services in the States, and which is helpful overseas in arranging for services.

Why is meeting "special needs" sometimes more difficult in the Foreign Service?

Even for Foreign Service families without special needs issues, moving frequently from country to country poses

Francesca Huemer Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse presently based in Brussels, is a professional freelance writer whose work is published regularly in American and international magazines. She is a founder of Tales from a Small Planet *(talesmag.com), was the Web site's editor-in-chief from 1999 to 2003, and currently serves in an advisory capacity. Also a trained concert singer, Ms. Kelly has lived in Milan, Leningrad, Moscow, Belgrade, Vienna, Ankara and Rome. She is the mother of four children.*

great challenges; finding good schools is one of them. For families with a child who has special needs, the task can be overwhelming. Most special needs parents will agree that finding the right educational and therapeutic services for their child is their number-one priority. But unlike U.S. public schools, private overseas schools are not obligated to provide special needs education.

Stefanie Bates Eye, a third-tour consular officer in Montevideo, finds her greatest difficulty is "understanding exactly what it is you are walking into with each new post." She explains: "You have to first understand your child's needs, which can change from year to year or even more frequently; you have to understand the regulations that govern medical clearances, the allowances and the bidding process; and you have to conduct exhaustive research not only on the job you want to bid on, the country, the security and the lifestyle, but also on the school, the medical community, access to the APO system for prescriptions (for kids with conditions that require medication) and even the tolerance levels of the local and expat communities."

Unlike U.S. public schools, private overseas schools are not obligated to provide special needs education.

This painstaking process puts a great deal of emotional pressure on everyone in the family. Adds Eye: "Perhaps the most challenging part of all is trying to weigh and balance the needs of one child with those of the other children, the spouse and the employee. My special needs child's education is certainly more important than my other child's need for access to competitive sports, for example, but that's not to say that my other child shouldn't also be considered in our plans for onward assignments. It becomes a very fine balancing act that doesn't seem to get easier with time or experience."

Which posts have the best services for special needs children?

The challenge for the various offices and organizations that monitor and support special needs education is compounded by the fact that "spe-

cial needs" is an umbrella term encompassing literally dozens, perhaps hundreds, of very different issues and conditions. What works for one family in one posting will not work for another.

Maris Edler Imbrie can attest to that. Her family is posted to Brussels, where the International School of Brussels offers a well-regarded special education program. Her initial contact with the school was warm and welcoming (which has not always been the case at other schools in the past).

But the school's program, while excellent for children with learning delays or Down's Syndrome, cannot accommodate Ms. Imbrie's son Christopher, who is 19 years old, highly intelligent — and autistic. "He needs a tutor for advanced academic subjects," says Imbrie, "but the tutor also has to have a special appreciation for the challenges of autism." The Imbries spent almost a year trying to find the right tutor for Christopher without success.

"Special needs" is an umbrella term encompassing perhaps hundreds of different issues and conditions.

Then, due to a chance encounter with an International School of Brussels guidance counselor who promised to help, they finally found someone who is working out well. But in every new place they live, the process must be started over again, and it changes as Christopher's needs change with age.

Despite the Imbries' situation, Brussels is considered a dream posting for many special needs families, largely due to the fact that there is a huge English-speaking expatriate community there, and more than one school offering specialized programs.

Unfortunately, however, Brussels is not the norm. Most FS special needs families say that the greatest challenge they face is finding a good educational program, in a good school overseas, that will work well for their child. Many overseas postings will simply not be appropriate for the family with a special needs child. Often, difficult choices confront both the FS employee and the spouse. "My husband had to change his career path," says Imbrie.

"Here are some realities we must face," says Rebecca Grappo, the Education and Youth officer in the State Department's Family Liaison Office. "First of all, even with the best of intentions, it is rare that small schools would be able to offer the spectrum of services in a limited setting like the ones we find in American public schools, where the resources for special needs students are often spread throughout the district in various resource centers, depending on the severity of the needs for the students."

Secondly, reports Grappo, there is a national shortage of special education teachers: "So why are we surprised when a school overseas would have difficulty recruiting special ed teachers for some of the places where we serve?" Add to that the difficulty in convincing many overseas schools to offer special education services at all — something both Grappo and the Office of Overseas Schools are constantly working on — and the challenges in educating special needs children abroad become even clearer.

Homeschooling is not an option for everyone — but for some families, it may be the only alternative.

Is homeschooling an option?

Yes, and sometimes it is the only one. Many an accompanying spouse, who may have no previous experience in teaching, has found herself suddenly becoming, out of necessity, an expert in educating her own special needs child.

Tammie Gandy is one such parent. A retired military medic, Gandy started researching homeschooling for her son Brandon, who is learning disabled, as soon as her husband joined the Foreign Service. She pored over books and Web sites and spoke frequently with various offices at the State Department. "About six weeks before our departure from Washington state, I resigned from my job for the express purpose of spending time in Brandon's classroom at school. He was in a 'self-contained' classroom environment for his academics. I was able to form an opinion about how I would probably teach based on the way his teachers taught and his response to them. We also spent a considerable amount of time reviewing his Individual Education Plan and recommendations on how to write future IEPs."

Gandy's considerable research, time and expense paid off. By the time the family arrived at post in Germany, she was well prepared to plunge right into homeschooling her son.

Homeschooling is not an option for everyone — but for some families

who are determined to continue living overseas, it may be the only alternative. (See Resources, pp. 84-85, for more homeschooling information.)

How can FS parents find the right program or school abroad for their children?

"First, look at your list and try to narrow it down to those posts which might be more obvious choices as far as resources available," advises Susan Ford, a special needs parent currently in Mexico City.

"Then, I would get the school list from the Office of Overseas Schools, and contact the schools directly, either by e-mail or phone," Ford continues. "Often the schools will be able to tell you what's available in that city, and sometimes they have specialists within their schools. Or they might be willing to bring someone in to work with your child. This would be an additional expense, but one which the special education allowance would cover." (For the most current information on the Special Education Allowance, go to http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/1740.htm.)

A family may discover that in fact there are resources at post that the State Department is not aware of.

Ford's experience in finding resources has not been smooth, however. "While A/OS has a list of schools offering special ed," she adds, "they tell you that the info is self-reported, and that you have to double-check everything. We had a few schools that just never responded."

"My first resource is always the embassy," says Mari O'Connor, currently in Lisbon, whose son Christopher has IDIC (15) — an extra partial 15th chromosome that has left him severely disabled. "I ask the nurse and CLO about international schools, and local schools, and for a local contact whom I could tap for information. I also look at the State Department post report as well as 'Real Post Reports.' And I e-mail the Office of Overseas Schools and ask for guidance. It is a long process best started early."

Another parent comments that "we're told to direct questions to the CLO at post, but sometimes the

Returning to the U.S. with a Special Needs Child

By Becky Grappo, Education Youth Officer, Family Liaison Office

"What happens when I return to the U.S. with a special needs child?" "How can I pick the best school to meet my child's needs?" "What happens if we are here in between assignments?"

Important questions, but difficult to answer. If you asked your local school system, "Which of your schools offer the best LD support programs?" the answer very likely would be, "All of them do an excellent job." While many of the schools in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area offer excellent special education programs, there are subtle differences between them. It is these differences that can determine whether a program works well for your child or does not.

Differences in schools are found in the personnel, the skill of the special education staff and the overall make-up of the student body. But how do you know which of these factors will most affect your child's learning experience? A school's glowing reputation doesn't necessarily ensure a perfect fit for your child, nor does the lack of one mean there aren't a number of children who have found great success there.

A good place to start your online school research is the Virginia School Report Card. The report groups schools by division as well as listing individual institutions, and provides very detailed statistical and demographic information regarding size, student body, test scores, graduation rates, and more. The Family Liaison Office's Web site at www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm provides a link to the Virginia School Report Card and a similar tool for the state of Maryland under Washington Area Schools.

Does Your Child Qualify?

Determining if your child qualifies for special education services in the U.S. will most likely be a different procedure than what you may have experienced overseas at an international school (be aware that a diagnosis of attention deficit disorder may not be enough to qualify). The difference begins with the Individual Education Plan, essentially a contract between the school and the family, which outlines the child's needs and how educational goals will be set to meet those needs. The IEP is a pivotal part of the Federal mandate under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. An "IEP" written by an overseas school does not have the legal status of an IEP written by an American public school. (An excellent article, "Understanding the IEP Process," may be found on the LD Online Web site at

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Most FS special needs parents find they must be proactive in doggedly researching every school.

CLOs know nothing, especially if they're new."

Peggy Matsuya, who has gone through the bidding process three times, has a system that works for her. "Each time, I take the list of available posts that have positions within a realistic grade range (at grade, one up and one down). I then get a copy of the Bidding Tool and highlight all posts that appear to have a school that deals with special needs."

Most FS special needs parents find they must be proactive in doggedly researching every school. Matsuya adds: "Once I have my list of possible posts, I get the Office of Overseas Schools CD-ROM from CLO/FLO. I begin making my own list of possible posts and schools. I Google, e-mail and call schools to narrow my list. When I get something confirmed from a school, I get it in writing or e-mail and send that to MED and my Career Development officer. I make sure they all know that my assignment is contingent upon schooling for my son, and I also e-mail them any information about and confirmation from schools that have agreed to accept my son. It does take time, but it has worked for us."

Matsuya's final advice is to be sure to list bids in the order of preference on the final bid list, including comments such as "perfect match for both personal and career reasons," or "no school for my son."

"Don't forget to inquire about schools within the corporate commu-

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SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES

GETTING STARTED

The Foreign Service and Your Special Needs Child — This page lists all the regulations, allowances, links and procedures you will need and is a great jumping-off place: http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/28253.htm. Of particular interest is the Department of State's Standardized Regulations, Section 276.8: Education Allowance – Child with Special Needs.

Transitioning Overseas with Your Special Needs Child — This Department of State pamphlet is available at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/28018.pdf.

Special Needs and the Foreign Service Child — This Web publication, put out by the Family Liaison Office, is available at http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/9856.htm.

E-MAIL GROUPS/LIST-SERVS

Foreign Service Livelines is an FS-wide group focusing on FS topics and issues, sponsored by AAFSW (aafsw.org). To join, send a blank e-mail to livelines-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Foreign Service Special Needs provides support and information on special needs issues in the Foreign Service. To join, send a blank e-mail to FSspecialneeds-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Foreign Service Gifted is an e-mail group for Foreign Service parents of gifted children. Join by sending an e-mail to fsgifted-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Special Needs Abroad, sponsored by *Tales from a Small Planet* (www.talesmag.com), is for expatriate families with special needs children. Join by sending an e-mail to specialneedsabroad-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Special needs-oriented e-mail groups abound. You can find very specific groups for people with Asperger's Syndrome, Down's Syndrome and auditory processing problems, as well as the gifted and talented — the entire array of special needs conditions. Try www.yahoogroups.com to get started, or Google the name of your child's condition and look for an official organization Web page.

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICES AND AFFILIATES

Family Liaison Office Home Page — Contact the Family Liaison Office not just to talk with the Education and Youth Officer, but also to find out who the Community Liaison officer is at each overseas mission. The CLO should be able to help with local contacts. http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/.

Education and Youth Issues (Family Liaison Office) — The Education and Youth officer covers every educational issue for the Foreign Service family and liaises with other offices and agencies. Check out the helpful links on this Web page, too. http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm.

Employee Consultation Service — This office, made up largely of social workers, advises State's Office of Medical Services on medical clearances for special needs children, as well as arranges evaluations and acts as a liaison between parents and specialists. ECS can be reached by telephone at (202) 663-1815 or by e-mail at MEDECS@state.gov.

Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS) — One of the first stops for families transitioning overseas, this office has worked hard to greatly increase special needs programs in overseas schools, and provides a list of schools. http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/.

A/OS's Web page, Schools by Regions — This page, which is updated yearly, can be accessed at http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/c1684.htm.

The Overseas Schools Advisory Council — Made up of representatives of corporations with families overseas, the council funded the publication of a book, *Count Me In! Developing Inclusive International Schools*, now in its fourth printing. This book for teachers, administrators and parents, is available on the Office of Overseas Schools Web site at www.state.gov/m/a/os/c14053.htm.

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

When it's time to make up your bid list, check out *Tales from a Small Planet*, which features **Real Post Reports** as well as a list of international schools: www.talesmag.com or www.realpostreports.com.

Rebecca Grappo of FLO recommends **LD Online** (http://www.ldonline.org), a Web site that provides support for all sorts of learning disabilities. Be sure to sign up for their newsletter. Also note the page called "Understanding the IEP Process" at http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/iep/understanding_iep_process.html.

Reading Rockets is funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Education'sOffice of Special Education Programs. The goal of the project is to provide information on how young kids learn to

read, why so many struggle and how caring adults can help.
www.readingrockets.com

Pyramid Educational Services helps enhance the lives of those with autism and related conditions. www.pecs.com

Wikipedia is an online encyclopedic resource that allows users to add resources to a topical Web page.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Needs

Certificate/Training in Special Education
George Mason University's Fast Train program for Foreign Service spouses offers a new certificate program, which can be done online, in special education. Some special needs parents may want to pursue this program, not just for their own children's sake but to find employment overseas and stateside in a field in which there is a shortage of personnel worldwide.
http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/fasttrain/programs_of_study/special_ed_program.html

Sound-Based Therapies
www.tomatis.com
http://www.auditory-integration.net/index.html
http://www.thedaviscenter.com/

Online Tutoring Services
The following online tutoring services are a great alternative for FS families who don't have qualified tutors available at post.
http://www.growingstars.com/
http://www.smarthinking.com/
http://www.tutor.com/

Live-in Tutoring Services
http://www.tutors-international.com/

Homeschooling Resources
http://homeschooling.about.com/od/gettingstarted/p/homeschool101.htm
About.com's site for homeschooling is a good place to start — there are links, articles and resources.

www.calvertschool.org
The Calvert School is home to nationally recognized experts on homeschooling curricula.

http://www.nathhan.com
This is a Web site for Christian families with special needs kids who are homeschooled.

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nity at post, or with other embassies," suggests Kelly Midura, who found that the school attended by the overwhelming majority of official Americans at post was unwilling to accommodate her academically gifted son. She moved him to a British school with excellent results. "Just because most Americans send their kids to a certain school doesn't mean there aren't other options."

Sometimes all the planning and research pay off, or serendipity plays a role, and an overseas assignment becomes a dream-come-true for the special needs family. FS spouse Nicole Zupan found this to be the case for her autistic child while they were in Dubai: "Our Australian tutors did wonders for our son. He also had a wonderful nursery, where his teacher took time out of her weekend to attend one of Josef's play therapy sessions with a psychologist so she could learn what she could do for Josef at school." However, Zupan warns, the special needs education allowance does not always cover all of their expenses.

FS families, especially special needs families, know to expect the unexpected.

Yet FS families, especially special needs families, know to expect the unexpected. Sometimes a family will arrive at post only to find that the resources supposedly available to them are not what they expected, or even non-existent. Mari O'Connor has had at least one school refuse to take her child after the initial response was positive. "I have come to realize that, even if it doesn't seem like a perfect fit, or if you get to post and discover that things sounded much better by e-mail than in person, you can do a lot with the special education allowance to make it better."

Conversely, a family may discover that, in fact, there are resources at post that the State Department is not aware of. Kristin Cooney, currently posted in Accra, whose daughter has developmental delays involving speech, found her own speech therapist after being told that there wasn't one available. "Like many of us, I have had to put together my own resources, and work with other parents of special needs kids, to come up with the plans our kids need,"

Returning to the U.S.

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http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/iep/understanding_iep_process.html. While on the Web site, take the opportunity to subscribe free of charge to LD Online's informative newsletter).

To qualify for special education services in the U.S., students must go through an identification process that determines eligibility. To get the process started, a parent or teacher will recommend the child for special education. The Child Study Committee (comprised of an administrator, special ed teacher, school psychologist or social worker, and teacher) will meet within two weeks to review the referral and decide on the next steps. These steps may include testing, observation and classroom intervention. The process of identification can take as many as 65 working days and still be in compliance with the law. Once the child is found eligible for services, the IEP is written and special education services are guaranteed.

An "IEP" written by an overseas school does not have the legal status of an IEP written by an American public school.

It is important to note that this process plays out differently when people come back from overseas with psycho-educational evaluations in hand. The school may, or may not, accept outside testing. Most school divisions do their own assessments, using multiple criteria. If outside testing is accepted at all, it may be considered as but one factor in the assessment process. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a hard and fast rule on whether or not a school will accept outside testing; it depends entirely on the policy of the school. In many cases, the family will need to start the process once they arrive back in the U.S. Qualifying for special education depends on very strict criteria within the local school division and national standards, and the disability must be significant enough to meet the criteria.

Other Options

Your child may go through the entire process and not qualify for special education. Should this be the case, there are two options:

• One option is the 504 plan (504 is a section of the Americans with Disabilities Act, civil rights legislation that preceded IDEA), which outlines accommodations based on identified needs. The accommodations may include things teachers might do in the classroom, such as preferential seating, extended time for tests and homework, sharing of teacher notes, etc.

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Cooney says. "We have been the ones informing the embassy medical unit of the specialists we have managed to find, not the other way around." Cooney adds that this speech therapist has turned out to be "one of the best we've had anywhere."

Why isn't there one comprehensive list of all overseas resources?

To be fair, it is probably impossible to document all the personnel, programs, schools and resources available at every post worldwide, particularly since the expatriate population is in a constant state of flux. It is that population that often provides the tutors, therapists and specialists used by special needs families, whose needs change with every arrival and departure.

However, there have been calls for a more comprehensive resource, perhaps Internet-based, that lists all current schools with special education programs, as well as occupational therapists, physical therapists, educational specialists, speech therapists and others working in relevant fields at all Foreign Service posts. The schools list maintained by the Office of Overseas Schools is helpful (see Resources, pp. 84-85), but A/OS is careful to inform families that the resources on this list are not always up to date.

To be fair, it is probably impossible to document all the personnel, programs, schools and resources available at every post worldwide.

What department offices can help?

Office of Overseas Schools. Carol Sutherland, information coordinator for the Office of Overseas Schools, is actively trying to make conditions better for FS special needs families. "A/OS for many years has worked diligently to assist and encourage department-assisted overseas schools to offer special needs programs. The result of this effort has been a significant increase in the number of schools able to assist children with mild to moderate learning difficulties," she says.

Sutherland urges parents of special needs children to take advantage of A/OS's briefings for new hires and

publications available on the Internet and intranet (see Resources, pp. 84-85): "We encourage families with children with special needs who are bidding on posts to contact the regional education officers — who are assigned to different worldwide regions and who travel from school to school, talking with staff and parents. They will share their knowledge of the schools and advise parents on locating appropriate posts to meet their children's needs. They also have a good working relationship with the social workers at Employee Consultation Service."

Employee Consultation Service. ECS provides comprehensive support and assistance to families with children who have special education needs and provides medical clearance recommendations and post approvals to the Medical Clearances section of State/MED. "We work very closely with parents, academic institutions, post health units and the Office of Overseas Schools and the career development officers," says ECS Director Stan Piotroski. As many FS families have discovered, a Class 2 (limited) medical clearance, rather than a Class 1 (unlimited, eligible for any worldwide assignment) clearance, will narrow the list of posts on which an FS employee can bid. "The bottom line is that the child is assessed properly and that wherever the family is going, they will have the services necessary to support them. We have to put the child first," Piotroski adds.

> ***"The most important thing to know is that, as a special needs parent in the Foreign Service, you are basically on your own."***
>
> ***— Maris Imbrie***

Yet many special needs parents, perhaps because each child's situation is so unique, feel they are not getting enough support from the bureaucracy. FS special needs parents have learned the hard way to be adept and resourceful at finding what they require — because often they have had no other alternative. As Maris Imbrie says, "The most important thing to know is that, as a special

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• The other option is to see if the child's learning has been affected significantly enough by the AD/HD or other health issue to qualify for an IEP under "Other Health Impaired," one of the categories under IDEA.

Even if your child does qualify for special education, it remains to be seen how much you can really expect. Some school divisions do not provide services for any AD/HD or LD student unless they are failing in regular classes. (In some schools, but not all, this makes it more difficult for IB and AP students to receive any accommodation. Schools need to be aware of the unique needs of kids who are "twice exceptional," or gifted *and* learning disabled.) Ultimately, this is a question only the schools can answer.

But you can ask your school for assistance, for example, with making a request to the College Board for extended time for your high school student to take SATs and Advanced Placement exams. SATs taken with extended time are no longer flagged, so colleges are unaware of who received an accommodation during the test. This helps to level the playing field for the AD/HD child, or the child with other learning issues.

If outside testing is accepted at all, it may be considered as but one factor in the assessment process.

Step by Step

FLO recommends the following steps be taken upon return to the United States:

• Once you have determined the base school for your child's school district, make an appointment with the Director of Guidance before registering your child. It is important to discuss your child's unique Foreign Service experience (see "School Personnel and the Foreign Service Child" on FLO's Web site at http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c8128.htm).

• Address your child's learning needs with the guidance counselor (a good primer on special education is a paper at http://www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/83.htm).

• Inform them that you would like to initiate a parent referral to start the identification process. This is something to be done immediately as it can be a long process. Please note: Pursuant to the reauthorization of IDEA last December, a school *must* honor the accommodations of an IEP from another public school division in the U.S.

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needs parent in the Foreign Service, you are basically on your own."

Rebecca Grappo of FLO is very much aware of the gaps between what offices do, what schools provide and what families need. Grappo reports that there have been a growing number of discussions among the offices involved in special needs education: "ECS is trying to get a Post Capability Database in place and have even hired someone just to do this. They are working through the health units to gather the information. This is a new project, and it will take time to get it off the ground. It's a challenge because people relocate frequently. But we know it is crucial to have this information in place." She adds an appeal to Foreign Service special needs parents: "If you've found that 'someone wonderful' at post, please tell the health unit and insist that it be reported to ECS for the database. We are listening and we care."

"Family is the most important thing for kids with special needs. A close family is everything."

— Chris Imbrie

For many families, the situation is improving. Special needs families face some of the most difficult challenges in Foreign Service life, but with e-mail support groups and newly-created databases in the offing, their task may be easier in the near future.

"Finding suitable schooling for your child while overseas is difficult," sums up O'Connor. "If your child has learning problems, you must hope for support in the school or create your own. If your child has developmental delays, you must hope for kindness, compassion and understanding from the school and the other children."

Still, Foreign Service parents who are anxious about educating their special needs children can take comfort — and gain perspective — from the words of one such young man: Chris Imbrie, the 19-year-old working with a tutor in Brussels. "Family is the most important thing for kids with special needs," Imbrie wrote in a recent e-mail. "If you have a good family, you can cope with the changes. A close family is everything." ■

Returning to the U.S.

Continued from page 89

until a new one is generated. But remember, this is not the case for IEPs from private or international schools.

• Once your child's schedule has been established, ask the Director of Guidance for an appointment with your child's new team of teachers (for secondary students) or classroom teacher (for elementary). A word of advice: Take the time to establish your own means of communication with the teachers, giving you the opportunity to share with them your child's education history (the guidance counselor does not have to be present at all meetings). Teachers will appreciate knowing in advance what the child's needs are and what accommodations have been made in the past.

• Lastly, families are advised to forge partnerships with their child's teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators in an effort to keep the lines of communication open. Occasionally you might find some school administrators and teachers resistant to suggestions for meeting your child's needs but, overall, most professionals are very eager to help each child reach his or her potential. Do keep in mind that in the D.C. area, high school teacher class loads are 150 to 180 students per day, and a counselor has several hundred students to follow! Needless to say, this is very different from the smaller international schools Foreign Service families are used to — in some ways better, but in other ways much more impersonal.

Even if your child does qualify for special education, it remains to be seen how much you can really expect.

In Between?

If you are in between assignments, it is possible to get updated evaluations done on your child, paid for by the Department of State or your home agency. The State Department's Employee Consultation Service will arrange testing done by well-qualified, outside psychologists. Testing can be done in Washington, or wherever you happen to be while in the U.S. Just be aware that good evaluators book up months in advance, so if you are thinking about a summer evaluation, you should start making arrangements early.

FLO has compiled a number of valuable resources to help parents understand the various issues related to special needs and their children. You may find them on the FLO Internet site under "Special Educational Needs and the Foreign Service Child," which is accessible from the home page on Education and Youth at www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm. ■

Should We Hire a College Admissions Counselor?

If you lack a guidance department or if you're homeschooling, consider hiring a college admissions consultant. "I do think homeschooled students would benefit from hiring a college admissions consultant," stresses Judy Frohlich, partner of College Counseling Consultants, based in the Chicago area (cccns@ameritech.net). "The presentation of their credentials in their application is even more important than students in a traditional school setting because the means of comparison with other students is much more challenging."

In fact, as Rebecca Grappo, education and youth officer for the State Department's Family Liaison Office, points out, using a private educational consultant can have many benefits. "A good consultant is extremely knowledgeable about various programs and offerings available at colleges and universities around the country, as well as the college application process," says Grappo.

"These professionals pride themselves on getting to know a student's abilities, aspirations and personality well so that they can advise a family on appropriate options that fit the needs of the individual student," Grappo adds. "They can also spot unforeseen pitfalls that can save time and money in the end."

Frohlich and her partner charge $2,250 for a two-year package (unlimited assistance beginning junior year and going through the completion of the admissions process at the end of senior year), but a similar package can run as high as $30,000 with well-known New York firms. "Usually consultants are hired on a retainer rather than an hourly basis," says Frohlich. "We sometimes do charge on an hourly basis when people just need a little bit of help here and there."

Although she prefers to meet at least initially in person, Frohlich believes that "counseling could be done purely through e-mail if the student is a good communicator and is motivated. Problems might arise in Internet counseling when an unmotivated student is resistant to the process."

— Francesca Huemer Kelly

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REFLECTIONS

When Suits Came Back to Managua

BY BRIAN RUDERT

Managua is hot, always hot. The seasons are dry and wet, not hot and cool as in northern latitudes. Every May when the rains first start falling, marking the transition from the dry to the wet season, it becomes hot and muggy rather than hot and dusty.

When we arrived in 1990, the business attire in vogue made absolute sense for the climate. For men, a long-sleeve shirt with an open collar was considered to be formal. President Violeta Chamorro swore in government ministers in their best long-sleeve, open-collared shirts. The veteran U.S. ambassador, Harry Shlaudeman, wore a suit to his first diplomatic function but switched to open-collared, long-sleeve dress shirts after noting that he was the only one there with a suit on. He said that this was the most sensible thing he had ever seen in his 35 years of diplomatic service.

During my assignment with the U.S. Agency for International Development, our biggest challenge was helping the new Chamorro administration whip the evil beast of hyperinflation. In my first six months in Managua, the exchange rate for the cordoba went from 800,000 to 25 million to the dollar. The velocity of the money supply could have been measured in light-years.

It was said that the cordoba bills burned people's hands on Friday paydays as people converted their earnings into hard goods or dollars in anticipation of yet another weekly devaluation. Luckily, the Nicaraguans had already resorted to printing additional zeros on existing money, so there was no need to cart cordoba notes around in wheelbarrows, as was done in post-World War I Germany.

Hyperinflation is caused by the misuse of a unique government privilege called seigniorage, which means the printing of money. When anyone else other than governments exercises seigniorage, it is usually called counterfeiting. The velocity of a particular money supply is equal to the gross domestic product or size of the economy divided by the size of the money supply. The Sandinistas had committed the grave sin of running the money printing presses 24 hours a day without getting the economy to grow accordingly.

To stop hyperinflation, a deal was reached with the new government to stop the printing presses in exchange for a couple of hundred million dollars of U.S. taxpayer funds to stabilize the government's fiscal situation. This trade-off worked remarkably well, and Nicaragua has had a stable currency since 1991.

Another part of the deal was getting the Chamorro administration to allow private banks to begin functioning again in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas had banned them, and people simply had no confidence in opening savings accounts for their newly stabilized currency in the government banks the Chamorro administration inherited.

Once the first private banks started operations, in 1992, the bankers started showing up to cocktail parties in business suits and ties. I knew then that it was all over for comfort and sartorial sanity in Managua. Sure enough, at every social event more and more people arrived wearing suits and ties. The die was irretrievably cast when Amb. Shlaudeman's replacement, John Maisto, began showing off his Hart, Schaffner & Marx business suits that had seen duty in the cooler climes of the north. They couldn't be happy with comfortable and cool cotton — to add insult to injury, it was going to be wool blends!

I know it's heresy, but maybe, just maybe, the Sandinista Sartorial Sanity presidential candidate, Daniel Ortega, might win in November and bring comfort back to hot and steamy Managua. ■

Brian Rudert was a Foreign Service officer with USAID from 1977 until his retirement in 2004. He served in Managua from 1990 to 1995. He currently works for the Academy for Educational Development as chief of party for the USAID-funded Panama Canal Watershed Management Project. Stamp courtesy of the Stamp Corner.

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • June 2006

2,300 WEIGH IN ON KEY ISSUES

AFSA Polls Members on Proposed Iraq PRT Service Incentives

On April 25, AFSA launched an online opinion poll seeking member input on Secretary Rice's proposal to introduce new incentives for Foreign Service employees to volunteer for service in Iraq with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams. AFSA sought feedback on two proposed incentives, the modalities of which would have to be negotiated with AFSA:

1) A commitment to a post-Iraq onward assignment to one of the volunteer's top choices — i.e., early placement into one of the volunteer's top five at-grade, in-cone bids, with no language waiver;

2) "Enhanced possibility for promotion," which AFSA understands to include one of several proposals that would explicitly give special weight to Iraq PRT service for promotion purposes.

By mid-May, more than 2,300 active-duty State FS employees had responded, and more were pouring in. AFSA will report the final results once the survey is closed.

It is already clear that the membership worldwide draws a sharp distinction between onward assignment guarantees and promotion preferences for those willing to volunteer to serve in a PRT. Driven by the imperative to avoid the threat of directed assignments to a war zone, a majority of the active-duty Foreign Service appears prepared to accept special guarantees for onward assignment as a one-time reward for PRT volunteers, but by a wide margin, rejects the notion of luring people to go to Iraq by promising special promotion advantages that bypass the normal performance evaluation system.

Nearly 2,000 member comments on the survey revealed nuances in thinking about the proposed promotion benefit. People widely believe that the promotion system is sacred — that a level playing field is fundamental to the Foreign Service promotion system — and should not be tampered with to address the assignment crisis of the moment. They feel strongly that advancement to a higher grade should result from stellar performance, not willingness and availability to volunteer to serve in a dangerous place. Many respondents currently serving at Embassy Baghdad, at posts in Afghanistan and at many other extreme-hardship posts elsewhere expressed bitter resentment that this proposal would not apply to them.

Many members nonetheless said they were willing to make painful choices to prevent the department from resorting to involuntary "directed" assignments to a war zone, and in that spirit might go so far as to countenance some qualified mention of Iraq service in the promotion precepts, as long as it remained tied to performance.

The AFSA Governing Board will use the poll results to formulate an appropriate response to management. ❑

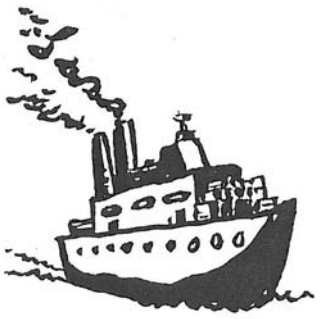
Inside This Issue:

AFSA NEWS: LAST BUT NOT LEAST

We're Moving ...

Beginning in July, *AFSA News* will have a new home within the *Foreign Service Journal*. Moving *AFSA News* to the back of the *Journal*, and switching to the same paper used for the rest of the magazine (while using a solid border for easy identification), will save AFSA money and will also give us more flexibility with *AFSA News* production.

Let us know what you think of the new format. ❑



AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Transferring This Summer? Get Your TM-2 Early

All State Department Foreign Service employees planning either to transfer to an onward assignment or take mid-tour home leave between July 6 and 16 must submit their TM-2 (Proposed Itinerary) to the Bureau of Human Resources (HR/CDA/AD) by June 15 to ensure the timely processing of their travel authorizations, also known as "TA," or travel orders.

Prospective travelers who wait too long to finalize their travel plans and submit their TM-2s will risk not having their orders issued prior to their desired travel dates.

From July 6-16, most of HR's computer systems, especially the Global Employment Management System and associated functions (family management, PCS travel, FSBid, etc.), will be down for maintenance and upgrading. Without these systems, HR/CDA will be unable to process travel orders, and there is no manual back-up process for issuing TAs. Hopefully, the system's maintenance and GEMS upgrade will be successful and HR/CDA will be able to return to the normal issuance of travel orders by July 17.

The department reminds employees that before travel orders may be issued, travelers must be certain that they are in possession of: 1) an assignment notification and 2) all necessary clearances (medical, security, etc.).

Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER

"Sir, I'm not sure there's any point in trying to negotiate with these clowns."

And Let AFSA Know

Don't wait for your *Foreign Service Journal* to find you months from now. As you get ready for a summer move, let AFSA know where you're going so we can keep in touch. Send your new address to member@afsa.org or change your address online at www.afsa.org/comment.cfm.

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The Overseas Employment Challenge

One of the hottest "hot button" issues that AFSA hears about regularly from members is the widespread frustration over the difficulties of finding meaningful employment for spouses and partners overseas. Despite the State Department's stated policy of facilitating family member employment, the reality is that our loved ones who faithfully accompany us to one foreign location after another often encounter nothing but closed doors and bureaucratic red tape when they try to get decent, properly paid work.

Reciprocal work agreements with various countries do give family members the legal right to seek jobs on the local economy, but we all know that many professions do not transfer well to foreign locations. Language barriers and credentialing/licensing restrictions make it all but impossible for a spouse or partner to practice law, architecture, accounting, medicine, engineering, banking/finance or many other specialized professions. Even opportunities on the local economy for traditionally more "transplantable" professions, such as nursing, teaching and construction trades, are often very hard to come by for someone who just arrived in a foreign country and will only stay for a couple of years.

This leaves the U.S. mission as the only viable option. There the department's record is spotty. The department's Family Liaison Office has come up with a number of creative approaches and programs designed to address this complex problem, but there is no magic bullet. Some posts bend over backward to accommodate spouses and partners, while others do not. Budgetary constraints make it more attractive for posts to hire locally-employed staff than family members. Even when jobs are available within the mission, AFSA hears too many stories of spouses and partners who wait excessively long periods for security clearances or are forced to fight the system to get the wage to which their previous qualifications entitle them. And, of course, many of the jobs available within the mission are not going to satisfy the professional aspirations of highly-trained spouses and partners.

We need to do better. We need to make spouse and partner employment a top priority for all overseas posts. Some limited opportunities do exist for family members to take hard-to-fill jobs, but perhaps these should be expanded. At a time when the Foreign Service is struggling to fill hundreds of unaccompanied positions in dangerous places and at hardship posts, we need to find inventive ways for qualified spouses and partners who are willing to serve in those places to get those jobs — and be paid at levels comparable to those of FS employees. AFSA applauds the department's program along these lines for Embassy Baghdad.

> We need to make spouse/partner employment a top priority for all overseas posts.

AFSA members worldwide have offered numerous ideas, which we are happy to carry forward to management. For example, AFSA has proposed that the department finally implement a long-discussed "equalization fund" that would make it financially just as advantageous for a post to hire an FS spouse or partner as a local employee. We have urged the department to pay hardship differential to family members who agree to take unfilled jobs at unaccompanied posts.

What about a much more aggressive effort to help spouses and partners find professional employment on the local economy? We believe the Family Liaison Office should have considerably greater authority to remove obstacles to employment. Perhaps M/FLO should report directly to the Office of the Director General, and be given regular access to the Secretary, which would give them the autonomy to think "outside the box" and to propose policy changes without needing HR's clearance?

We are no longer in the 1950s. The Foreign Service family has changed. Foreign Service professionals typically have highly-educated spouses and partners who are also professionals and who already have to make tremendous career sacrifices to accompany the member overseas. These people are an invaluable resource for our missions abroad. Moreover, let's face it: what family can thrive on a single government salary today?

If the Foreign Service hopes to continue attracting the best and brightest, we need to do far more to help their spouses and partners pursue meaningful, properly compensated careers overseas. ❑

V.P. VOICE: **FCS** ■ BY DON BUSINGER

Satisfied with AFSA; Much Less So with Working Conditions

In March-April 2006, AFSA FCS sent a survey to 219 FSOs in the Foreign Commercial Service (those who are non-management, non-limited career FSOs) to complement the earlier surveys done by State and the Foreign Agricultural Service (see *AFSA News*, Nov. 2005: "Online Opinion Poll Shapes AFSA Agenda," by State VP Steve Kashkett; and "Capitalizing on FAS's Human Resources," by FAS VP Laura Scandurra). The FCS response was excellent. We heard from 124 FSOs, a strong 57-percent response rate.

Like our State colleagues, FCS officers strongly endorse seeking overseas locality or comparability pay as AFSA's top priority, with 95 percent of respondents agreeing (about 70 percent agreeing "strongly"). Likewise, 85 percent or more of members responding supported fighting for fairness in assignments and promotions, assisting members with individual labor-management problems, and defending the reputation and role of the professional Foreign Commercial Service as AFSA priorities (see chart). As we all know from the April *Foreign Service Journal* issue and elsewhere, the administration has proposed phasing in overseas locality pay, in tandem with pay for performance for FS-1s and below, in mid-2007.

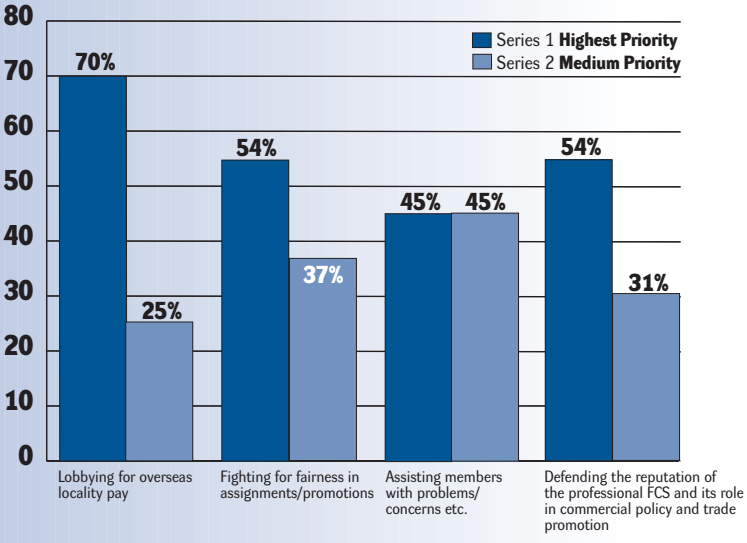
In terms of how well AFSA is serving FCS members, 70 percent of respondents feel AFSA should be "more vocal and assertive" with management, but 78 percent are basically satisfied with FCS/AFSA's efforts on behalf of its members. AFSANET e-mails and the *Foreign Service Journal* are the main sources of information about AFSA activities and efforts, while word-of-mouth and the AFSA Web site are important but secondary. We continue our efforts to improve the Web site by posting more information, and encourage members to visit it regularly: **www.afsa.org/cspage.cfm**.

Certain recurring themes in individual survey comments are worth noting. Several FCS officers feel that AFSA, overall, and the *FSJ* are too State-centric. The emphasis on State is understandable, however, given the disproportion in our relative membership numbers. Others note that FCS does not "get credit" for supporting other divisions of Commerce and other U.S. government agencies in broader commercial diplomacy, in addition to traditional export promotion work. (It is worth noting that AFSA testified on the Hill before the House Small Business Committee about the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee on April 26.)

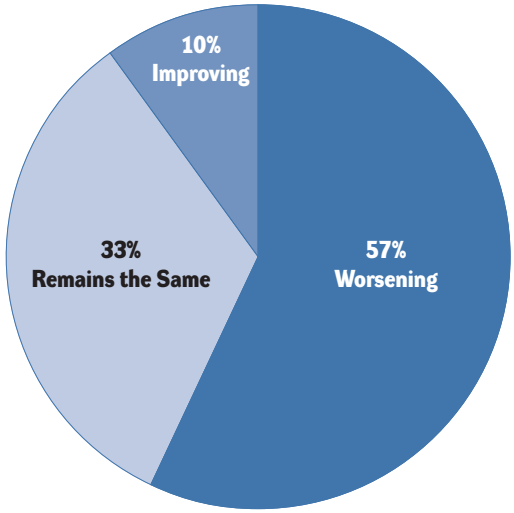
Despite the fact that FCS officers have served in our domestic network in the nominally integrated U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service since the mid-1990s, we continue to hear that more progress is needed on domestic positions, evaluations, promotions, etc. "Too often, commercial officers go into the domestic field and are sort of forgotten," one member commented.

Finally, several officers wonder whether AFSA could play an effective role in seeking more and better resources for a Commercial Service from which, according to one respondent, "the fat has been cut and we are now losing bone marrow." In fact, ominously, more than half of FCS officers surveyed feel that working conditions are getting worse rather than better. ❐

What would you like to see as AFSA's top priorities?



Present Foreign Service Working Conditions



PEARSON MOVES ON

AFSA Meets with Outgoing DG

Outgoing Director General W. Robert Pearson met with the AFSA Governing Board on April 5 to share his thoughts on the relationship between AFSA and management and other issues of interest. He emphasized his belief that management needs to have a good partnership with AFSA.

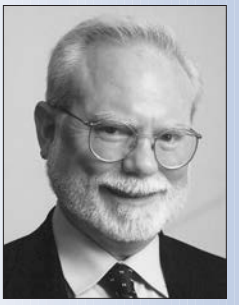
In a discussion of the headway made recently on locality pay, Amb. Pearson said the pay issue had moved further along than ever before. It is being linked to initiating pay for performance, he said, noting that much of the federal work force in Washington, D.C., is already on a pay-for-performance system. The DG pointed out that 80 percent of Foreign Service spouses expect to work, while there is currently enough work in mission jobs for only 35 percent. He encouraged AFSA to continue to support efforts to expand employment opportunities for family members.

AFSA intends to put together a "wish list" for the new director general, laying out issues and proposals of particular importance to Foreign Service members.

AFSA President J. Anthony Holmes raised the question of how AFSA could set up a stronger partnership relationship with management, to include big-picture discussions. AFSA intends to put together a "wish list" for the new director general, laying out issues and proposals of particular importance to Foreign Service members. ❑

V.P. VOICE: **RETIREE** ■ BY DAVID REUTHER

The Retiree Role



While recently visiting the Foreign Service retiree community in Arizona, I was impressed that some of them had served in Vietnam or were in Beirut during the 1983 embassy bombing, and therefore recognize today's challenge to active-duty officers.

The reality is that the retired FS community remains a valuable asset to the State Department and to the country. For example, like many of you, AFSA Retiree Representative Larry Lesser applied his skills recently as an election observer in Belarus, while Retiree Representative Gil Sheinbaum plugged a staffing gap at an embassy in Europe a few years ago and twice was an election observer in Sri Lanka. Retirees now staff, on a part-time basis, various offices in the department; e.g., the department's FOIA and records-access programs. Some have served as scribes and compilers for many congressionally mandated reports, such as the annual human rights report. After 9/11, the Political-Military Bureau formed a 24/7 action team staffed entirely by retiree WAEs (When Actually Employed) to coordinate interagency policy and activity on the Global War on Terrorism. Overseas, WAEs have issued visas, kept administrative sections running and served as interim deputy chiefs of mission, among many other functions.

WAEs cost the department less than contractors, yet legislation prevents the department from maximizing its use of WAEs. AFSA has steadfastly encouraged Congress to correct this anomaly. With heavy demands for personnel to fill positions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the department recently encouraged the Senate to amend the FY2006 Emergency Supplemental to expand the Secretary's authority to waive limitations on WAE re-employment, to help cover those positions that might otherwise be unfilled as more of our Foreign Service personnel staff Afghanistan and Iraq. AFSA and its legislative allies see this as a win/win for us and the department, since it allows increased use of a ready work force that has the motivation, the talent, the language and the cultural sensitivity to provide staffing for the immediate needs of the Service and for our retirees. But the ultimate winner is our country.

The WAE issue also underscores Congress' total control over retirees. It is in our best interests to let our members of Congress know we are among their constituents. You can find talking points on the AFSA Web site (alternatively, we can mail them to you). Bottom line: our senators and representatives should be reminded that the retiree generation is proud to have served, that their loyalty, dedication and patriotism should be reciprocated, and that they are ready to help strengthen efforts at home and abroad. There are retirees in almost every congressional district, and greater traction would come from more retirees interacting with the Congress.

Some say, "Well, I will join AFSA after you prove you can move Congress." But, the Catch-22 is that AFSA and its allies on the Hill (staffers as well as members of Congress) need everyone's declared support to make things happen. We can do better at protecting our interests by being part of a group rather than remaining silent. The AFSA Governing Board is dedicated to working hard for retiree communities, like Arizona's, and we will continue to work the halls of Congress and educate the American public.

AFSA is your voice, your advocate. Join us if you are not already a member — and if you already are, please join our collective efforts to protect our retirees' interests and assist our active-duty FS personnel. ❑

TIPS FOR TRANSFER SEASON

Pets — From Paperwork to Pack-out

In the U.S., more than 60 percent of U.S. households had at least one pet in 2005. Foreign Service life complicates the commonplace. "Sometimes my cats have more papers than I do," Foreign Service officer Amy Pitts notes.

As a resource specialist with the Foreign Service Institute's Overseas Briefing Center, Maureen Johnston has helped many families navigate the maze of pet regulations. Her recommendations, and those of other pet owners, follow.

Do your homework.

Research restrictions before bidding. Get OBC's Pet Chart and check post welcome cables, also available from OBC. Confirm the information with post, especially for exotic animals. Consider housing, local attitudes and available services. Will your 120-pound dog be permitted in an apartment? Will your elderly tabby thrive without vet care?

Reconfirm requirements.

Once you have an assignment, recheck and schedule entry procedures. Some countries require a six-month process on a specific timetable. Making a mistake or starting late could lead to an expensive quarantine.

Book travel early.

Plan layovers and itineraries, asking recent travelers for the best transit points. Airlines limit the number of animals on board, and some no longer permit pets in the cabin or as accompanied baggage. Reservation agents do not necessarily have accurate information, and their word carries no weight at the airport. OBC offers an Intranet summary of airline policies. Check that, go to the airline's Web site, print out the policy and carry it with you.

Consider back-up options.

Situations change. Unfortunately, research does not guarantee results (although it helps!). Could you leave your animal behind with a friend, relative or pet shipper if necessary?

Enlist help.

You may prefer using an authorized pet shipper, expensive but a "sanity saver." Or ask if family members can help. "I shipped my cats out of Indonesia two months before I left," says office management specialist Jennifer Henderson. "It was one less thing to worry about."

Amy Pitts

Purchase supplies.

Ask pet owners at post if basic necessities such as kitty litter or medications are available. Learn how to groom pets or provide other necessary services.

Plan for pack-out.

Moving day confusion can cause your pet to head for the nearest open door, or to hide and end up lost or packed, with tragic results. Find a safe haven for your pet.

Prepare for shipping.

What kind of crate or container will the airline accept? Companies differ in interpreting rules. Attach photos of your pet and use both stick-on and tie-on labels with your name and your pet's name, contact numbers, itinerary and destination address.

Stay alert when traveling.

Get to the airport early. Notify post of your (and your pets') travel plans and enlist help in case you are separated en route. Locate the animals at transit points and ensure they make the next flight. Carry photos of your pets for identification.

Save your receipts.

You may request reimbursement for pet shipping (not quarantine) expenses as part of your foreign or home transfer allowance. Unreimbursed costs can be claimed on your federal income taxes using Form 3093 (see **www.irs.gov**).

Make arrangements at post.

Amy Pitts adapts housing to keep her pets safe: at one post, for instance, she paid to have window screens made and installed. As a management officer, she plans ahead for possible evacuations. "At every post, I find a 'Noah,' someone willing to take all the animals out before an evacuation," she explains.

Start planning ... again.

Well in advance of departure from post, research new posts or requirements to return to the U.S. For instance, birds need CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna) certificates and bands. European Union countries may require a particular type of microchip, even for transit.

Expect the unexpected.

Twice Jennifer Henderson found that she needed additional cash to collect her pets, even though she had supposedly paid in full. Amy Pitts once stopped a foreign airport vet as he was about to lethally inject her cat: he had failed to notice the paperwork U.S. officials had attached under the cage.

Enjoy!

"It has cost me a lot of extra effort and money," Pitts says, "but my cats are definitely worth it! They have enriched my life, and I wouldn't go anywhere without them."

For more information, see the OBC's Intranet site, fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc (click "OBC" and then "Traveling with Pets") or e-mail: FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov. ❑

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from page 2

Congratulations to AFSA Student Merit Scholarship Winners

AFSA has selected the winners of the 2006 Academic and Art Merit Scholarships. This year, the 22 winners will receive a total of $26,500 in scholarships funded by the AFSA Scholarship Program. Winners receive $1,500 awards and honorable-mention winners receive $500 awards. Judges are individuals from the Foreign Service community. To see the list of winners, go to **www.afsa.org/scholar/index.cfm**, or look for them in the July/August edition of *AFSA News*.

AFSA received 42 applications for the Academic Merit Awards, and from these winners for Best Essay and Community Service were also selected. Nine students submitted Art Merit Award applications under one of the following categories: visual arts, musical arts, drama or creative writing.

Six named academic merit scholarships have been established to date. These awards go to the highest scoring students. The named scholarships are:

- Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide Scholarship
- John and Priscilla Becker Family Scholarship
- John C. Leary Memorial Scholarship
- Joanna and Robert Martin Scholarship (two awards)
- Donald S. Spigler and Maria Giuseppa Spigler Scholarship

The awards were presented to the students on May 5 during Foreign Affairs Day. For more information on the AFSA Scholarship Program, contact Lori Dec at AFSA, either by phone: (toll-free) 1 (800) 704-2372, ext. 504, or by e-mail: **dec@afsa.org**.

Awards and Plaque Committee Leadership Change

Ambassador L. Bruce Laingen has resigned his post as chair of the AFSA Awards and Plaque Committee after many years of service. AFSA greatly appreciates the 20 years of service Amb. Laingen gave to the committee, which he joined in 1987.

In March, the AFSA Governing Board appointed Gib Lanpher as the new AFSA Awards and Plaque Committee chair. He was already serving on the committee and thus is familiar with all the issues and challenges that it handles. Janice Bay, retired Foreign Service officer and current director of the AFSA Elderhostel program, was appointed to fill Mr. Lanpher's seat as a regular member of the committee.

AFSA Welcomes New Database/Web Associate

Sheng Zhao joined AFSA in March as the new Database/Web Associate. He attended University of Maryland. Before starting at AFSA in March, he worked as a PC rental technician. He can be reached by e-mail: **zhao@afsa.org**; or by phone: (202) 338-4045, ext. 523.

Job Bulletin for FS Family Members

The Department of State has purchased a department-wide subscription to a weekly bulletin of screened, home-based jobs, called "The Rat Race Rebellion." The subscription, available to Foreign Service family members, is tied to a contract State has with the company Staffcentrix, LLC, to offer training to Foreign Service family members as "e-Entrepreneurs." The bulletin is available at overseas posts through Local Employment Advisors and Community Liaison Office coordinators. Family members in the Washington, D.C., area may obtain their subscriptions directly online, at **http://www.fse-entrepreneur.com/efmsub.htm**.

The "Rat Race Rebellion" is edited by former Foreign Service family member Michael Haaren, and contains approximately 65 home-based job leads per issue, as well as news and commentary on trends in virtual careers. According to Haaren — who notes that a 30-to-1 "scam ratio" prevails in home-based job ads found on the Internet — the leads range from administrative work to interpreting and translating to IT positions and management positions.

Have "Real Post Reports" Helped You?

During bidding season, have you taken advantage of the wealth of information on more than 250 cities worldwide provided by "Real Post Reports" on the *Tales from a Small Planet* Web site, at www.talesmag.com? Do you participate in the online discussions about Foreign Service and expat life? If you do, please lend a hand in keeping this small nonprofit alive by making a donation. If you're not already a *Tales* reader, please check out the site, and consider submitting a Real Post Report yourself.

To make a donation or find advertising rates, go to **www.talesmag.com/tales/usfiles/sponsorus.shtml**. ❑

When Your Spouse Is Away

Living overseas as the spouse of a Foreign Service officer has been rewarding and interesting, but what I didn't expect was the amount of traveling my husband would do and the amount of time the kids and I would be on our own in a foreign country. Several years ago when he left for a few months, I decided to talk to others in my situation. I invited other spouses from the embassy and from the expat business community to share their experiences and frustrations. Having to adjust to this on-again-off-again lifestyle is hard enough without having to do it in a place where people don't speak English, drive on the "wrong" side of the road and where there is no Wal-Mart!

Having to adjust to this on-again-off-again lifestyle is hard enough without having to do it in a place where people don't speak English, drive on the "wrong" side of the road and where there is no Wal-Mart!

We came up with a list to help us function with peace of mind in our spouse's absence.

1. Know the location of the fuse box and how to change a blown fuse.

2. Have an extra set of keys to everything!

3. Know all Personal Identification Numbers.

4. Have a will, and know where it is.

5. Keep passports up to date and in an easily accessible location.

6. Program the phone numbers of two or three reliable friends into your mobile telephone (and have a mobile telephone!).

7. Program the phone number for Post One at the embassy, or the regional security officer, into your mobile phone.

8. Have the phone numbers of at least two reliable friends prominently displayed on the refrigerator. Explain to your children and babysitters who they are and explain when they should be called.

9. Have access to U.S. and local cash for emergencies.

10. Don't expect too much out of homecomings, especially good (or even any) conversation. Usually your spouse will be jet-lagged and overwhelmed at the adjustment, so be patient for just one more day before sharing your stories.

Spouses who are also parents of children at home have a particularly difficult time during extended separations. They miss out on sticky kisses, school plays and ball games. So here's a list, for both the spouse who's home and the spouse who's leaving, of things to do that can help the entire family adjust.

For the one leaving:

1. Send regular postcards, letters, mobile phone text messages and e-mails.

2. Take photos and bring them back to share.

3. Bring back small (repeat small) gifts. Help your child start a collection of things such as little dolls, animal figurines, money, etc. from different countries.

4. Call when possible, but don't expect great conversation. However, "I love you" or "I'm thinking of you" goes a long way.

For those spouses remaining at home:

1. Ask for help from friends, and be specific (lunch out for adult conversation, picking up mail from the embassy, etc.). Your friends and colleagues want to help, but often don't know how, so don't be shy; just ask.

2. Try something new that you've wanted to learn. Taking up a new hobby is a great way to keep your mind off your problems and make new friends.

3. Keep the usual routine; this will help the children stay adjusted. However, do make a few fun, small changes during the absence. A few nights of cereal for dinner can be a welcome change.

If there is any spouse or child who would like to share stories, get advice and just not feel so isolated during absences, please e-mail me at **lisa_a_Kessler@hotmail.com**. My family has been doing the "revolving spouse and father" routine for 10 years and would be more than happy to try and help others get through it a bit easier. Friends can make a world of difference in the Foreign Service! ❐

Lisa Kessler, DrPH, MPH, has been posted to Dubai, Jeddah and Nicosia and is currently in Vienna. She is a professor of public health and the mother of three. She has been married to a "revolving door" spouse for 21 years.

EXTENDING AFSA'S REACH

AFSA Meets with Pearson and APSA Fellows

On March 20, AFSA President Tony Holmes met with the current Pearson and American Political Science Association fellows working on Capitol Hill on legislators' and committee staffs. The fellows are members of the Foreign Service who are taking a one-year detail both to learn about Congress and the legislative process, and to help provide information to senators, members of Congress and fellow Hill staffers about foreign policy issues, the foreign affairs agencies and the Foreign Service. These fellows work on the Hill not as representatives of the Department of State, but as knowledgeable participants in foreign affairs.

AFSA meets with each class of Pearson and APSA fellows to explain our legislative agenda, describe how we see developments on Capitol Hill and to get their reactions and feedback. This year, we discussed many issues, ranging from the Secretary of State's transformational diplomacy and global repositioning initiatives to AFSA's primary legislative objective of a Washington, D.C.,-pay level for all members of the Foreign Service, regardless of where they are posted.

AFSA explained that in a change from previous years, the administration now supports a new worldwide pay system and

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included it in the president's Fiscal Year 2007 budget request. However, it is being tied to a change in the Foreign Service personnel system to a "pay-for-performance" basis. These issues were fully discussed, with Holmes providing the AFSA perspective for the fellows to consider as they go back to their jobs on the Hill, and the fellows offering their own inputs that can help AFSA continue to sharpen its legislative approach.

These meetings are certainly helpful to AFSA and, hopefully, to the Pearson and APSA fellows as well. During their year on the Hill, the fellows develop a unique perspective as participants in the legislative process who have an "insider's view" of the Foreign Service and life overseas. They can help provide information to us on the current dynamics of the Hill, and can also help clear up misperceptions there about the Foreign Service and its operations. ❑

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