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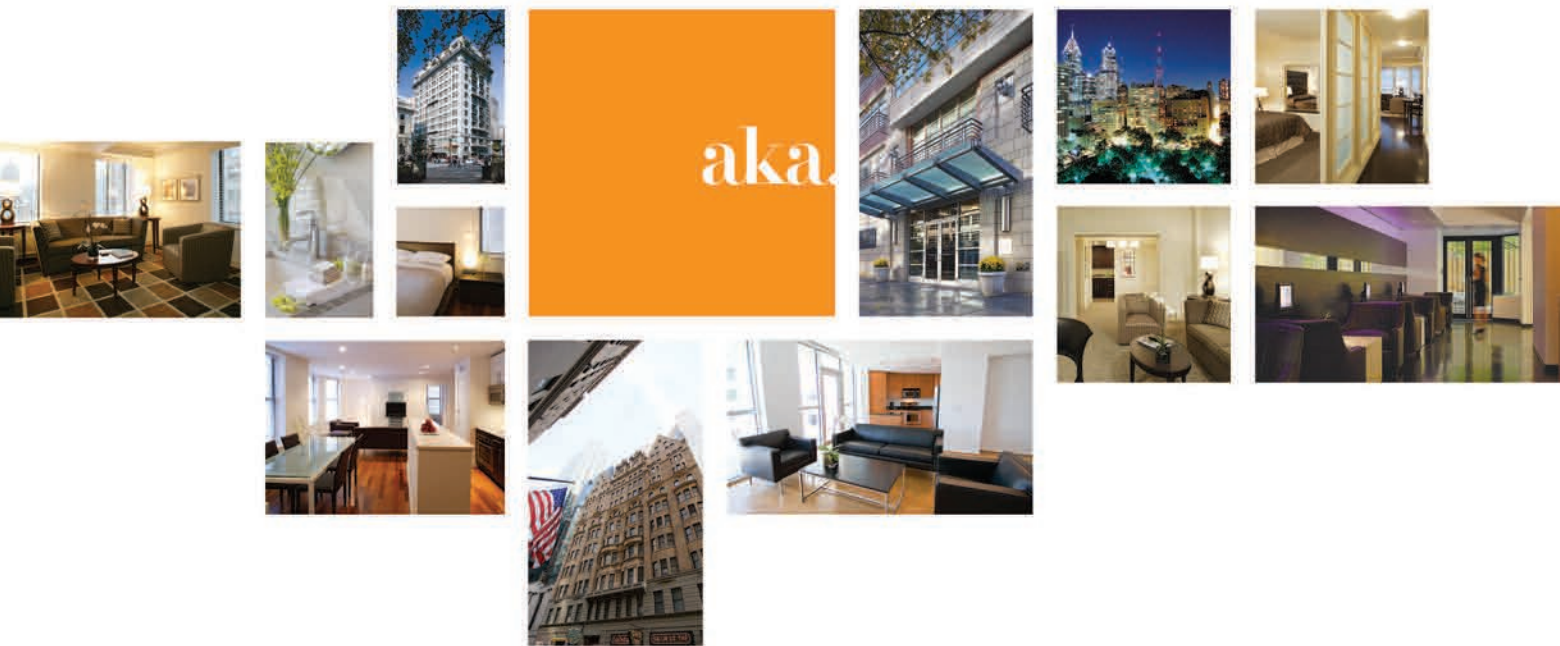
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# PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

## *Tobias, Transformational Diplomacy and the Evisceration of USAID*

By J. ANTHONY HOLMES

Randall Tobias' sudden departure from USAID provides an unexpected opportunity to pause in the "reform" of U.S. foreign assistance and examine where we are and where we're going. Done largely in the dead of night under the rubric of harmonization with Secretary Rice's signature "transformational diplomacy" initiative, it involved only minimal consultation with Congress and America's diverse foreign aid constituency. The gap between the rhetoric and the reality of his wholesale changes is greater than on any issue I've seen over the past 18 months, even Iraq.

Despite Tobias' denials that a "stealth merger" with the State Department would occur and his reassurances that long-term development and poverty reduction remained USAID's overarching goals, the systematic evisceration of USAID is well under way. During the last fiscal year the agency has hired 29 new FSOs, while 65 retired. This year it hired another 29, while over 100 are expected to retire, many voluntarily as they vote with their feet. Remember the debilitating impact of the State Department's hiring well below attrition in the mid-1990s? At USAID the situation is already much worse. Almost 30 percent of the positions in the Africa Bureau are vacant, as the agency's top management position has been for two years.

Chronic underfunding of USAID's Operating Expenses account — to



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

support its people and the costs of maintaining them in the field — has led to a long, slow decline in its ability to play its proper role in U.S. foreign policy. The agency that is *the* key to transformational diplomacy is being stripped of its ability to do what Sec. Rice says she wants done.

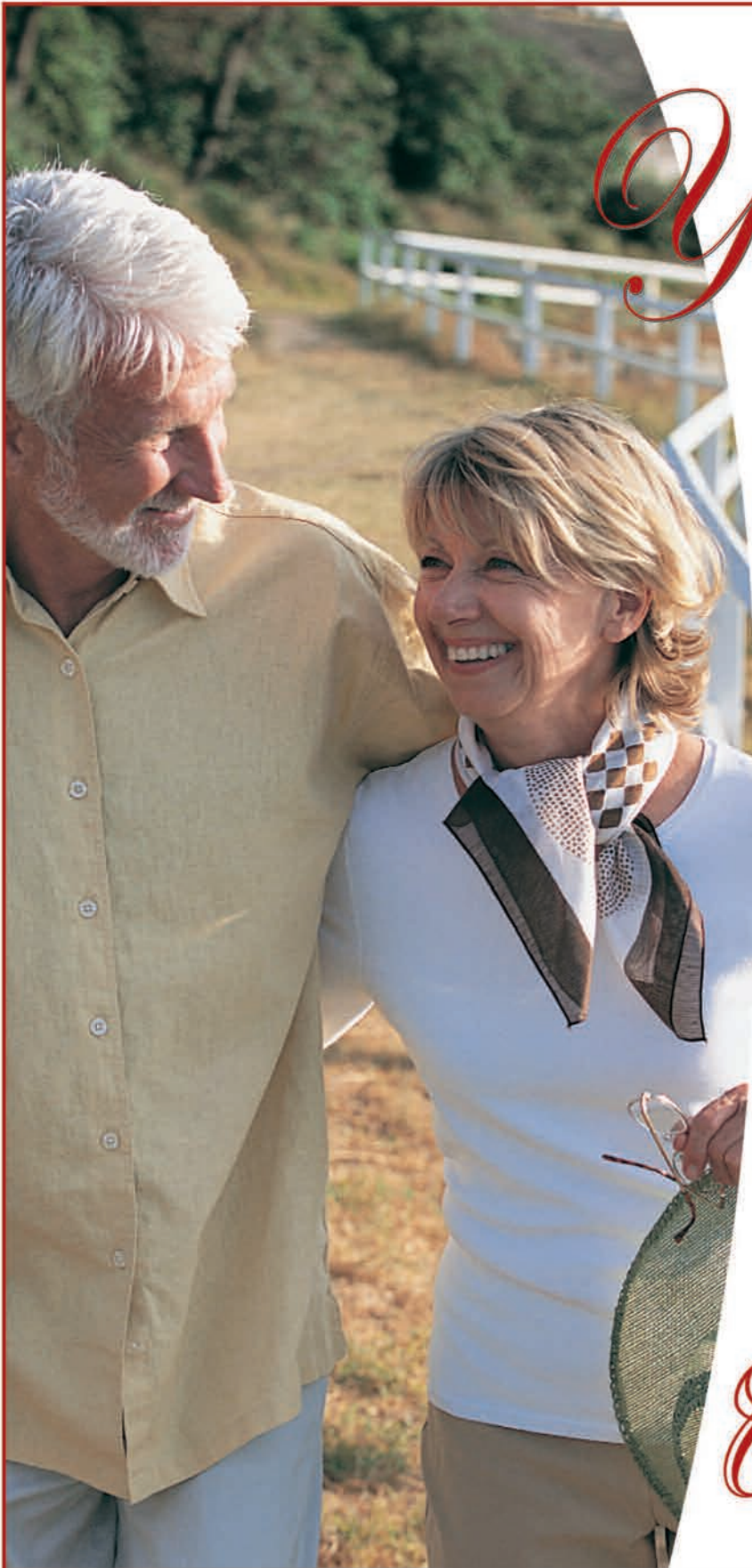
The coup de grace in the recent sudden rush to gut USAID, though, is the administration's explicit call for a 15-percent cut in its OE account in FY 2008. This will lead to RIFs, furloughs, less management oversight, and the mass closing of USAID missions overseas. The Africa Bureau already has plans to eliminate 12, including those in such well-performing countries as Ghana, Tanzania, Mozambique and Senegal — if Congress agrees to the reduction. This will have a profound impact not only on AFSA's constituency at USAID, but also for our foreign policy effectiveness in terms of our political and diplomatic clout in both recipient and donor capitals. It will also greatly limit the options open to the next administration, regardless of which party wins the 2008 election.

There is broad agreement that some reform of the U.S. foreign assistance allocation process is needed, both to better match our aid with foreign policy goals and to consolidate the 50 or so aid spigots that Congress has created. But Mr. Tobias' overwhelming rhetorical focus on process obscured the substantive and operational impact of the changes, which were

never analyzed. He seemed, by cutting back so sharply an already woefully understaffed system, to be trying to eliminate the agency's capacity to do anything beyond contracting with private sector consultants to implement projects. For example, USAID's apparatus for developing and analyzing development policy (i.e., what to use aid to do and then how well we're doing it) was abolished last year when he moved to the State Department, which does not have that capacity. So when Mr. Tobias talked about matching resources with policy priorities, he meant which countries to assist, not what to do with the money. But if our aid is to be "transformational," the latter is crucial.

When there is such a huge chasm between what I'm hearing and what I'm seeing, instinct and experience tell me to trust my eyes. The only explanation that makes any sense to me is that USAID is being intentionally gutted. Perhaps Mr. Tobias thought the best way to institutionalize his "reforms" was to make turning back the clock such a slow and painful process that the only realistic alternative would be to simply eliminate USAID and shift the remnants to the State Department.

As his successor takes the reins on an interim basis and then navigates the confirmation process, I hope that all interested parties will use this opportunity to consider these issues and ensure that our national interests are not harmed by either the intended or unintended consequences of Mr. Tobias' "reforms." ■



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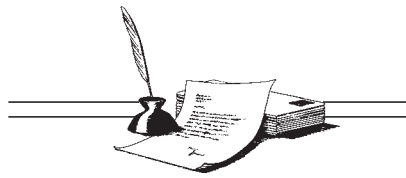
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# LETTERS

## Shining Light on PRTs

Your March issue on relations between the Foreign Service and the military is a resounding success. It throws much-needed light on little-understood aspects of our government's civilian efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, which are rarely covered by either the print or electronic media.

I was particularly impressed with Danny Hall's article on serving on a PRT in Afghanistan, an incisive analysis full of cogent detail and wry humor. It made me almost want to be there. (Almost!) Hall may not know it, but he's an extremely talented writer who captivates his reader's attention and holds it to the very last sentence. Kudos to him and to the editors!

*Albert Ball  
FSO, retired  
Temecula, Calif.*

## State Structures and Staffing

I'd like to offer some historical perspective on the concerns about State Department structures and staffing found in the March *Journal*. The letters to the editor giving pros and cons on the proposed move of the transportation office and other employee services from the Truman Building to SA-1 called to mind an earlier instance when the shifting of the department's facilities sparked heated debate.

In his book *Present at the Creation*, Dean Acheson describes how the issue of State moving from the Old Executive Office Building to its current location in Foggy Bottom "had

been tearing the department apart for six months" before George Marshall was sworn in as Secretary of State in January 1947. Only moments after Marshall took the oath of office and Acheson briefed him on this issue, the retired general ordered State to "Move!"

Decades after the department left Pennsylvania Avenue, the controversy continued. In a speech to the department a few years ago, the late senator and former ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan observed, "When State moved out of the Old Executive Office Building, a new State Department — the National Security Council — moved right in." Nevertheless, American diplomacy survived this major disruption. The record suggests that the department might also continue to thrive despite the shifting of employee services across the street.

In his *AFSA News* piece, "Overhauling the Foreign Service Exam," *AFSA* State Vice President Steve Kashkett writes that one of the goals of the new FS exam process is "to make sure it attracts the best and the brightest people who can handle the unique challenges facing us overseas today." I occasionally hear this term used as part of human resources discussions within the department. But while State surely has many committed and clever employees, I find "the best and the brightest" to be a bit off-putting and even ironic.

The phrase was popularized by the late David Halberstam's best-selling

1969 book of the same name, which addressed U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The phrase referred to President Kennedy's "whiz kids" — leaders of industry and academia brought into his administration — whom Halberstam characterized as arrogantly insisting on "brilliant policies that defied common sense" in Vietnam, often against the advice of career State Department employees. Indeed, Halberstam (who passed away in April) recently wrote this about the term: "It went into the language, although it is often misused, failing to carry the tone of irony that the original intended."

*Daniel P. Sheerin  
Civil Service Program  
Analyst  
Washington, D.C.*

## The Real "Cautionary Tale"

For a member of the European literati to grotesquely distort history in order to bash President Bush is unexceptional. For the *New York Times* to publish an opinion piece by that author, Robert Harris, apparently without checking the facts, is the norm for that publication. But for the editor of the *Foreign Service Journal* to incorporate that op-ed into his review of Harris' book, *Imperium: A Novel of Ancient Rome* (Books, March), again without checking the facts, is disappointing at the very least.

Harris' tortured analogy, endorsed by *Journal* Editor Steve Honley in his review, equates the Bush administra-

## LETTERS



tion's military reaction to 9/11 and the alleged concomitant loss of American personal rights with Pompey the Younger's campaign against Mediterranean pirates (who had attacked the Roman homeland) and the willingness of Romans to "compromise their centuries-old rights in return for promises of security."

That interpretation of history is so outrageously phony it is hard to know where to begin. First, would Romans who had seen their lands ravaged by Hannibal and the Gauls a few generations before have been so shaken by a pirate attack on one city? Hardly. Second, the Romans who enjoyed those "centuries-old rights" were basically a narrow oligarchy.

Finally, the Roman senators — the "Conscript Fathers" at the acme of that oligarchy — had fully compro-

mised their rights at least generations before Pompey the Younger strutted upon the scene. Marius was five times consul (contrary to law) before Pompey was born, and both Marius and his successor, Sulla, caused laws to be passed that enabled the wholesale confiscation of the property of their Roman citizen enemies, as well as their "proscription" — which is to say, their legalized murder. In fact, Roman law was in tatters long before the pirates attacked Ostia in 68 B.C.

The *real* "cautionary tale" here is that authors and editors, at both the *New York Times* and the *Foreign Service Journal*, are entitled to their own opinions — not their own facts. Those interested in accurate history and greater literary flair in their fiction should read Colleen McCollough's trilogy about the end of the *Roman*

*Republic: The First Man in Rome* (1990), *The Grass Crown* (1991) and *Fortune's Favorites* (1993).

Thomas D. Boyatt  
Ambassador, retired  
McLean, Va.

### Democracy, Diplomacy and Conservatism

Dale Herspring's article, "Understanding Vladimir Putin" (April *FSJ*) reinforces an observation my father made, based on his six years as an Austrian prisoner of war in Russia, mostly Siberia, from 1914 to 1920. He reported: "Under the czars, it was said you could do anything you wanted as long as you stayed out of politics. Under the communists, everything was political." This would seem to reinforce Herspring's analysis of Putin's politics as an outgrowth of the

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Russian cultural tradition.

Speaking of politics, Susan Maitra's March *Cybernotes* summary ("In a Pinch, Call in a Diplomat") of Joshua Kurlantzick's *New Republic Online* article arouses my deep concern as to what it now means to be a "conservative." I used to think conservatives believed that laws should be strictly enforced, allowing for people to gain the full benefit of their capabilities, while preserving traditional social values. They differed from liberals chiefly in relation to economic policies and social issues, but shared with them, and perhaps exceeded, their regard for the importance of law and due process.

This question recalls to mind my most memorable educational experience, which occurred during a spring 1968 course on economics at the Foreign Service Institute. The class met in a high-rise building in Rosslyn, with a splendid view of the Potomac and Washington, D.C. On April 18 of that year, we were listening to a lecture by Dr. Herbert Furth, "International Finance and the Role of Gold," as smoke began to rise across the river. That was the day after Martin Luther King's assassination, and riots were taking place in our nation's capital. Columns of smoke could be seen rising from various points in the city.

Dr. Furth appeared unaware of the disturbance as he discussed the stabilizing, but also limiting, effect the gold standard had on currency and the economy that depends on it. Then he paused and said: "All this may seem irrelevant to what is happening across the river, but the same question is at issue in both cases. Can people govern themselves on the basis of reason, or must we always be subject to physical force?"

I remember that question as I think of our constant struggle to order our world. I conclude that the answer

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## LETTERS



is that we must seek a balance between reason and force, and that balance depends on law, derived from the "consent of the governed." People who would disregard the law and rely on physical force as the prime determinant in governmental action do not, I believe, merit the title "conservative," but rather "authoritarian" — or worse. This may define the difference between diplomatic and military approaches to international problems.

At the same time, I would find it tragic if our military leaders have lost the respect they once had for law and reason. Some, I realize, have disregarded the origins of law and considered only its presence on the books, but I believe most Americans — civilian and military — have recognized the importance of our reliance

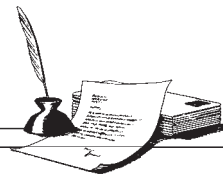
on due process, both in enforcing and establishing the law. At the same time, I think that diplomats and others who seek to maintain the rule of law in international affairs are true conservatives, and also true liberals. (For the record, I have long regarded myself as a liberal, as have my friends — many of them conservatives — and I hope earnestly that we can restore this shared principle to the dialogue.)

The U.S. must try to restore and strengthen its reputation for upholding international law. This is the only long-term solution I can envision for the dangerous and depressing situation we have created for ourselves with the Iraq venture.

*Robert Willner*

*FSO, retired*

*Rickreall, Ore. ■*



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## State's Mixed Record in "Best Places to Work" Survey

In late April, the Partnership for Public Service and American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation announced the 2007 edition of "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government." Although the State Department made an impressive overall showing — one of only three Cabinet departments to figure in the top 10 — on closer inspection serious problems are evident. USAID, meanwhile, which tied with the Department of Labor for 18th place in 2005, dropped to 21st place in 2007.

The comprehensive biannual rankings are based on the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Human Capital Survey. Conducted in 2006, the survey drew responses from more than 220,000 executive branch employees in more than 280 federal organizations.

State raised its standing from 10th to sixth place among the 30 largest federal agencies and ranked first among women respondents. As for best-in-class scores, in a field of 29 the department took third place in support for diversity, effective leadership and performance-based rewards and advancement, and fourth place in teamwork.

Significantly, however, on family-friendliness State ranks at the bottom of the list, having dropped down another notch from 2005, to 28th. Only the Department of Homeland Security is deemed less family-friendly.

The Department of State is the

## 50 Years Ago...

Yet, unlike the American emissary who carries a gun, they [FSOs] get little support at home. In the current economy drive in Congress they have become the popular cats to kick. ... It is assumed that GIs and their officers stationed abroad need not only housing but facilities for recreation. Yet in congressional zeal to cut appropriations of the State Department, a furor has been raised over expenditures for swimming pools, clubhouses and such for Foreign Service personnel.

— Malvina Lindsay, *Washington Post-Times-Herald*, quoted in the *FSJ*, June 1957.



only large agency whose employee satisfaction score has had a double-digit percentage increase (about 15 percent) since 2003 — but 98 percent of the gain occurred from 2003 to 2005 and is directly attributable to the effects of the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative on training and development and other measures. In 2007, State dropped a notch in training and development, to 12th of 29, and plunged from 10th place to 20th in terms of work/life balance.

USAID, which had also registered laudable gains from 2003 to 2005, lost even more ground in crucial categories, dropping from 18th (of the 30 departments and independent agencies rated in 2005) to 21st out of the 31 small agencies evaluated separately in 2007. Its highest ranking was for diversity (8th out of 31), but for training and development the agency registered a poor 21st, and for work/life balance its standing is

even worse: 28th. In effective leadership and strategic management, where the agency registered strong gains in previous years, USAID's ranking also dropped sharply.

For more details, go to <http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/about/>.

— Susan Maitra, *Senior Editor*

## Crisis of Confidence in U.S. Foreign Policy?

Public Agenda, together with *Foreign Affairs*, recently released the fourth "Confidence in U.S. Foreign Policy Index." The new index — along with its "Anxiety Indicator" — indicate a shift in attitudes since last fall and provide evidence of widespread public doubt about the nation's international position.

"The Anxiety Indicator is moving closer to the 150 mark, the 'red zone' that to me would signal a full-blown crisis of public confidence," says Public Agenda Chairman and co-founder

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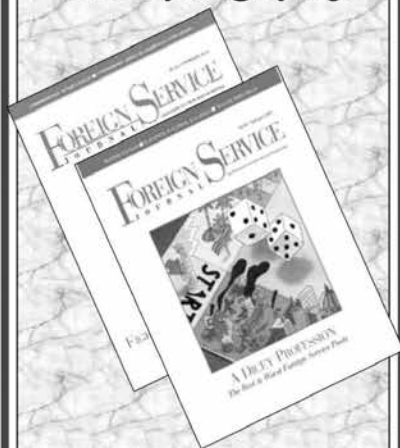
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## CYBERNOTES



Daniel Yankelovich. Since September 2006, the indicator has risen seven points to a score of 137, based on a random sampling of 1,013 adults over the age of 18 between Feb. 21 and March 4.

The public's frustration over Iraq has reached what the report's authors view as a 'tipping point,' with the potential to color public opinion on other issues. Almost 75 percent of interviewees gave the U.S. a grade of C or below in the achievement of its goals in Iraq. And, according to the report, majority public opinion believes a withdrawal from Iraq will not threaten U.S. security.

Meanwhile, the public's belief that government can do "a lot" about a host of foreign policy issues is dropping, and public support for military solutions in many scenarios is virtually off the table. Promoting democracy is a major U.S. goal, respondents concur, but fully 74 percent say that it is something other countries can only

do on their own. As many as two-thirds of respondents say U.S. foreign policy is "on the wrong track." Nearly six in 10 say they don't think the government tells them the truth on foreign relations, up sharply in the past six months.

Indeed, according to the report, Americans are in general wary — and weary. Tired of a war experienced primarily through media coverage, Americans nevertheless see first-hand the effects of an international community widely opposed to U.S. actions in Iraq and elsewhere. Consequently, these same Americans worry very much about their security.

Public Agenda is a nonpartisan research organization founded in 1975 by Daniel Yankelovich, a social scientist and author, and former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. For the full report, go to [www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org).

— Margaret E. MacFarland,  
Editorial Intern

### Site of the Month: [www.besthistorysites.net](http://www.besthistorysites.net)

Here is an award-winning portal that will engage general history buffs as well as history teachers and their students. *Best of History Web Sites* contains annotated links to over 1,200 history-related Web sites that have been screened for quality, accuracy and usefulness.

Ranked number one for "history Web sites" by Google, the site receives more than 112,000 visitors per month. It is not hard to see why. The site provides quick, convenient and reliable access to a variety of excellent history-oriented resources. The links are organized in broad categories — e.g., prehistory, early modern Europe, art history and oral history — as well as by functionality — e.g., the best sites for lesson plans/activities and the best sites for research. Each category is further broken down by topics and periods: in American history, for instance, links are grouped under six different topics and 19 discrete periods.

*Best of History Web Sites* was created by Thomas Daccord, a history and technology teacher at the Noble & Greenough School in Dedham, Mass. An innovator in educational technology, he is also president of the Center for Teaching History with Technology, which was established to help history educators integrate technology into their curricula.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor



### Cybercafé Security Tips

The cybercafé, that spinoff of the IT revolution, is now a handy fixture of even the most remote corner of the earth. But, as news reports regularly attest, using a cybercafé has its risks. Often, the facility is little more than a dusty hole in the wall with poor electrical wiring, a generator belching diesel fumes, and cramped computer tables — in short, a health and fire hazard. Moreover, its openness and anonymity offer scope for misuse.

In the past six months alone, cybercafés in the Gaza Strip, Kabul, Mogadishu, Istanbul and Casablanca have been bombed. Because the ones located in developing countries are magnets for American tourists, businesspeople, NGO workers and Peace Corps Volunteers, they are an obvious potential target for anti-American extremists. Fortunately, awareness of the ABCs of Internet café security can reduce the health, safety and security risks when using them.

The first step is to visually scan the premises before committing to use a computer terminal. Is there only one entry/exit? Is the generator placed too close to the door? Is the wiring old? Are fuel, ozone (from electrical wiring) or other noxious odors present? Are the desks so close together they there is little privacy or room to maneuver in an emergency?

Inside the café, Americans should generally maintain a low profile by paying with local currency instead of dollars and not wearing clothing that identifies them as foreigners. Refraining from having conversations in English will help keep their nationality under wraps. Varying patronage in terms of both time and location, and avoiding using Internet cafés as meeting places further enhance security.

Americans should watch out for individuals who take an inordinate amount of interest in observing them.

Conversely, they should refrain from showing inappropriate interest in the activities of other patrons.

The checklist for computer security includes the standard precautions against identity theft and snooping that are basic to all Internet use, as well as other measures unique to the cybercafé environment.

- To protect your identity and finances, avoid entering personal information, especially credit card, passport and Social Security numbers.

- Never save documents to the computer's hard drive, but rather to a jump drive or other portable storage device.

- When saving documents or visiting sites, keep in mind the fact that the chance of acquiring viruses when doing so is quite high.

- Use a "throwaway" e-mail account; if compromised, it can be painlessly sacrificed.

- Finally, cover your tracks: thoroughly erase the browser's history, close any programs opened, etc. With older computers this task can take a few minutes, so be sure to allow enough time for its completion.

A little informed caution can go a long way.

— Bob Feldman

*Foreign Military Studies Office  
Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.*

### Nigeria: What Next?

The landslide victory of Umaru Yar'Adua the candidate of Nigeria's governing People's Democratic Party, on April 21 was assailed by Nigerian and international election monitors as neither free nor fair. But, despite the violence, vote rigging and opposition vows to challenge the results, there is every indication as we go to press that the country's new president will be sworn in as scheduled on May 29. Whether Yar'Adua, Nigeria's first president with a university education,



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**W**e need to win the battle for hearts and minds against extremists so we can have an end to the terrorism that has done so much damage.

— Gordon Brown, British finance minister and incoming prime minister, May 11, <http://www.time.com/time/quotes>.

will be able to consolidate his hold on power and translate that into effective leadership for constructive ends remains to be seen.

There is much at stake. Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, with

sub-Saharan Africa's largest Muslim population, and it is also one of the world's leading oil producers. At the same time, the country is hobbled by corruption, extensive poverty, an HIV/AIDS epidemic, poor infrastructure and an underdeveloped economy almost entirely dependent on oil. The monopolization of political power by the country's elite aggravates both poverty and instability.

Due to outgoing President Olusegun Obasanjo's use of state institutions on behalf of the ruling party, the People's Democratic Party significantly expanded its grip on power in the elections. The PDP now controls three-quarters of the nation's governorships and about two-thirds of the National Assembly seats. Yar'Adua has said that he will continue Obasanjo's policy of free-market reforms. In addition, he plans to increase spending on national infrastructure, agriculture and an expansion of electricity generation.

To do this, the new president will have to boost national revenues, and that means unblocking oil production. That will force him to come to terms with militants in the delta region of the country that accounts for 95 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. There, activists of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta are holding the country's oil production for ransom. MEND kidnapped

four more foreign oil workers and mounted new attacks on the pipelines in early May (the 58 kidnappings so far in 2007 are more than occurred in the whole of 2006). With tighter control over the fractious political scene and a willingness to consult with the opposition, Yar'Adua may be in a better position to reach a settlement.

This is not simply a domestic matter. Roughly 20 percent of U.S. oil imports come from sub-Saharan Africa. Though the Bush administration reportedly rejected a recent Nigerian government request to send Marines to the delta to protect vital oil facilities, the U.S. naval presence in the nearby Gulf of Guinea has increased significantly since 2004. In addition, Pres. Bush recently approved the creation of a unified military command for Africa, AFRICOM, scheduled to be operational in 2008.

But, as the International Crisis Group observes, the international community — which tends to see Nigeria as a regional police force and major oil producer — needs to better grasp the internal dynamics and intricacies of the Nigerian situation. Otherwise, there is a very real potential for persistent violence to escalate, with major regional security implications.

To brush up on the background to these important issues, see the Council on Foreign Relations' April report, "Nigeria: Elections and Continuing Challenges," available online at [www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org). The International Crisis Group ([www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)) produced a series of detailed reports on Nigeria during 2006 and 2007 that are also very helpful, and the ICG's broader Africa Program provides additional context. To follow day-to-day developments in Nigeria, [www.allafrica.com](http://www.allafrica.com) is a good place to start. ■

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

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# SPEAKING OUT

## *Working It Out with the Military: The View from Kabul*

BY THOMAS E. JOHNSON JR.

When I received the March *Foreign Service Journal*, I was pleased, for the issue of relations between the Foreign Service and the military has been front-and-center for me during my two years in Kabul. Yet as good as they were, the two articles centered on Provincial Reconstruction Teams offered only a glimpse of the uneasy partnership between the two institutions, and what this relationship means for “transformational diplomacy.” That’s unfortunate, because it is a profoundly important topic, one I would like to explore in this column.

The National Security Strategy the Bush administration issued back in 2002 explicitly addresses this issue. I was serving in Washington then, and still recall that many of us in the Foreign Service cheered the fact that for the first time, defense, diplomacy and development were jointly enunciated as the basis for our country’s national security. After my time here in Afghanistan, I am more convinced than ever of the strategy’s soundness, although its execution in the field needs thought and attention.

Both the U.S. armed forces and their NATO colleagues here have embraced the “3-D” doctrine. In fact, they say explicitly that the war against the resurgent Taliban cannot be won by military means alone. But for a variety of reasons, the U.S. military does not seem to accept that this approach requires a *true* partnership with the Foreign Service. Instead, frustration with what they perceive as our overly diplomatic, bureaucratic

*The military’s  
“mission creep” into  
the Foreign Service  
lanes seems to be  
happening without  
planning or  
coordination.*

and ponderous approach to delivering assistance has driven the military to move to cover all the “3-D” bases themselves — often with insufficient coordination — in order to accomplish the mission.

### **Mission Creep in 3-D**

Within the Foreign Service, we truly appreciate any additional resources and manpower that can be brought to bear on the vast needs of a country like Afghanistan, as well as the military’s earnest interest in doing the right thing. They recognize that development, including reconstruction, governance and the rule of law, is perhaps the most important “line of action” in their campaign strategy. But the military’s “mission creep” into the Foreign Service lanes seems to be happening without sufficient thought, planning or coordination. The question is whether this represents an official policy of our government, or whether it is happening by stealth.

Consider the Commander’s Emergency Response Program. Pentagon guidance issued in July 2005 states

that CERP is intended to enable commanders to “respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction within their areas of responsibility by carrying out programs that will *immediately* assist the indigenous population” (emphasis added). But in Afghanistan, and perhaps Iraq as well, military commanders are increasingly using CERP for long-term, multi-million-dollar development projects. This impedes efforts by USAID to get a handle on the various streams of assistance in a particular country, and harmonize and coordinate them to maximize “unity of effort.”

It is troubling that an entirely new stream of foreign assistance has come online, largely uncoordinated, outside the 150 Account box. A recent “peer review” of U.S. foreign aid by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee found that the percentage of official U.S. development assistance managed by the Department of Defense climbed to 21.7 percent in 2005, from only 5.6 percent in 2002. Addressing this “new map” will require the Foreign Service to utilize a tremendous amount of manpower and time to match the legions of military planners who spend their days collecting information, developing, “deconflicting” and synchronizing plans, and coordinating with any other U.S., host-country or international body they can identify.

The realities of the Washington budget environment mean that it is far easier to add a few hundred million to the DOD budget for CERP and mili-



tary staffing costs, than to the USAID development budget, even in countries like Afghanistan or Iraq. So while the Pentagon is seeking \$1 billion in CERP funds for FY 2008, State and USAID operating expense accounts have been slashed. These have been the policy choices over the past several budget cycles.

The question now is which of the following three broad options the new Congress, controlled by the Democrats, will pursue:

- Give State and USAID the resources, staff, bureaucratic and legislative authority to do the development and political tasks required in conflict zones;
- Split the missions (which is the de facto situation today in Afghanistan and Iraq), but increase the equality and improve the partnership between

the Foreign Service and military; or,

- Accept an increasing military role in political diplomacy and development.

The first option would require a major reorientation both in terms of policy and budgeting. This somewhat radical approach could essentially mean cutting in half the “two armies” Thomas Barnett writes of in *Blueprint for Action* and creating something akin to his “Department of Global Security.” Recent developments concerning the State Department’s new Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization indicate baby steps in this direction. Even so, this is the least likely scenario of the three to be adopted, at least in the short term — despite the fact that it is arguably the closest to the “3-D” approach of the NSS. This is a classic

case of a good strategy on paper not being supported by necessary budgetary and institutional realignments.

The third choice entails accepting a growing military role in political diplomacy and development. Although this appears to be the trend, Barnett and others argue it is not in the military’s best long-term interest. Not only does it diminish what he terms the “Leviathan” or fighting-force ability of the military; it also contributes to the current stretch the military is feeling. I suspect few Foreign Service personnel would welcome such a trend, either. And others are concerned, as well: the Pentagon’s growing role in foreign assistance has drawn criticism from observers ranging from Senator Richard Lugar, R-Ind., to former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. According to a recent report in the *Washington Post*,

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Gingrich told the Council on Foreign Relations that “we do not want the uniformed military doing what others should be doing.”

### Improving Civ-Mil Cooperation

The second option, splitting the missions, represents the reality on the ground. But to improve the balance and efficacy of the FS-military partnership, it is necessary to increase the number of adequately trained FS staff and improve the flexibility and responsiveness of State and USAID.

And, no matter what other long-term efforts may be made to strengthen the Foreign Service’s role, it makes sense to keep working on fostering greater interagency understanding. This is essential to maximize the effectiveness of U.S. assistance and security efforts overseas.

NATO/ISAF’s “Operation Medusa” last fall in the southern province of Kandahar is an example of what can be done. USAID was asked to undertake immediate and short-term programs in areas affected by the fighting. Within a few weeks we had reprogrammed nearly \$25 million for programs ranging from reconstructing economic infrastructure to offering assistance in rebuilding the lives of civilian victims caught in the crossfire. This work helped earn the praise of Gen. David Richards, the ISAF commander, who said in a January interview with *The Guardian*: “I have a huge admiration for what the U.S. is doing in Afghanistan ... pouring billions of dollars into the country, gripping issues other countries should and often putting the rest of the international community to shame in the process.”

There have been unsuccessful initiatives, as well. The Afghan Ministry of Education has developed an innovative program to build, equip and staff “model schools” that are intended to

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diminish the attraction and influence of madrassas (Islamic religious schools) within the country and in Pakistan. The U.S. military understands the strategic importance of this program and strongly supports it; but USAID is wary of the religious content of the “model schools” (reduced greatly from the madrasa curriculum, but still present), citing the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. This reluctance has caused major frustration on the part of both the military and the Afghan government.

While the March *FSJ* articles succeed in portraying the first-hand experiences of FSOs working in PRTs, they are not complemented by other descriptions of where and how the Foreign Service interacts with the military. I’m referring to the work of the political advisers and development advisers in regional commands and headquarters (in the case of Afghanistan, now NATO/ISAF); the role of the civ-mil offices in both embassies and USAID missions; and, finally, the considerable time and effort spent by embassy and USAID mission front offices on military interaction. We even have USAID personnel operating in the field with the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (i.e., the Special Forces). Perhaps our most successful partnership with the military is found in southern Afghanistan, where an ISAF regional command has dedicated portions of a British-led task force to secure a zone around a major infrastructure project, allowing reconstruction to proceed.

In addition, USAID/Afghanistan has established a unique chief-of-staff position in the office of the mission director dedicated to civil-military affairs and oversight of the PRT program. This is a “grey hair” position; the current incumbent has 30 years of experience with USAID and can “talk the talk” with the military brass. (His

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***Efforts are under way to improve the civilian-military partnership, largely through training.***

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predecessor had been a naval officer before joining the agency.) In addition, we seek out military veterans, ideally with subsequent USAID or State experience, for these positions. Our incoming PRT deputy director is a Vietnam vet with nearly 20 years of USAID experience, most recently in conflict zones such as Nepal and Colombia. Both State and USAID need to institutionalize this type of recruitment. For similar staffing recommendations, see the U.S. Institute of Peace’s recent special report: “Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq” ([www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)).

Over the past several years, the U.S. has made a number of efforts to improve the civilian-military partnership, largely through training at venues such as the National Defense University, the Army War College and U.S. Army facilities like Fort Bragg, as well as NATO military bases in Europe. Curricula are being revised, and even more training programs are in development.

While not explicitly linked to the partnership, S/CRS is also involved in this effort. It is, for example, currently building an interagency management system with broad participation that will define and shape civ-mil operational models. In addition, USAID has created the Office of Military Affairs in the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs. USAID FSOs have

been placed in the regional commands, and military officers are being assigned to OMA as well as S/CRS.

These are all steps in the right direction, but are they enough without more fundamental changes?

**The Way Ahead**

In closing, let me offer some specific recommendations for the administration and Congress:

*Increase the number of FSOs in countries like Afghanistan with huge military contingents.* USAID/Afghanistan has just one development adviser based at NATO/ISAF headquarters, which is clearly insufficient.

*Deploy more senior FSOs to civil positions with significant partnership opportunities.* Most USAID program officers in Afghanistan are Personal Services Contractors, and are on the young side with little or no time in USAID (much less military experience). Despite skill and dedication, they are generally not the best partners for the military.

*Encourage flexibility and a willingness to take risks within the culture of the Foreign Service.* USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Office of Transition Initiatives both work well with the military and are highly respected by them, precisely because they respond quickly and decisively to crises. However, their mandates are limited to particular events and periods.

*Clarify the respective lines of operational responsibility among DOD, State and USAID to ensure their efforts are “coordinated and primarily focused on development outcomes,”* as recommended in the OECD report cited earlier. This is perhaps a responsibility that should be given to President Bush’s new “war czar,” Lt. General Douglas Lute.

*Rewrite the Foreign Assistance Act to reflect current realities.* The world has changed dramatically since the

## SPEAKING OUT



FAA's original drafting in 1961. Despite several major revisions, the legislation still does not envision the close coordination and collaboration now becoming the norm with the military, or accommodate the need for special operational requirements in some environments. Updating the FAA will obviously take time and effort and should not be undertaken lightly or hurriedly. In the meantime, funding appropriated for countries like Afghanistan and Iraq should contain "notwithstanding authorities" that will promote programmatic flexibility and responsiveness — key qualities of assistance from the military's perspective.

If the Millennium Challenge Account is the Bush administration's foreign assistance legacy, then let the next administration's project be new institutional arrangements targeting

countries at the other end of the "development continuum" from the MCA. These will include a subset of societies where reconstruction and stability operations, not development per se, are paramount, and where the Foreign Service–military partnership is therefore of critical importance.

In such places, increased innovation and risk-taking must become the norm. In short, a new business model to help achieve the goals of transformation diplomacy is required. As a recent report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (*Breaking Point: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan*) noted, staying the course, even with additional resources, will not be enough. At the heart of any such model must be a carefully considered, balanced partnership between the Foreign Service

and the military.

Such cooperation may never be easy to maintain, given the institutions' different perspectives, cultures and competencies. But the experience of the Vietnam-era Combined Operations Rural Development Support program (described in the March *FSJ* by John Graham) demonstrates that FSOs can successfully perform development and political liaison work in conflict zones — when they have adequate resources, authority and security provided by their partners in the armed forces. ■

*Thomas E. Johnson Jr. is a USAID program officer in Kabul. Since joining the Foreign Service in 1987, he has served in Bangkok, Tegucigalpa, Maputo, Washington and Bogota. His next assignment is to Jerusalem.*

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# THE U.S. AND IRAN: MYTHING THE POINT



Julia Vaskar

PAST CLASHES HAVE LED AMERICANS AND IRANIANS TO ASSUME MUTUAL ENMITY, AND LATER EVENTS HAVE PROVED THE ARGUMENT. BUT IT NEED NOT BE SO.

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*By JOHN W. LIMBERT*

**I**t is nothing new for the United States and Iran to denounce each other as “mad mullahs” and “great Satans” (to use the title of Professor Bill Beeman’s recent study). What *is* new is the volume of the recent saber-rattling accompanying these stale and predictable epithets. Carrier battle groups are moved; war games are conducted; quasi-diplomats are detained; captured weapons are displayed; accusations of high-level complicity are made; and defiant speeches are delivered. Each side’s neoconservatives push the case for military action and accuse skeptics

at home of appeasement and worse; both the Iranian president and the U.S. Secretary of State visit the other's neighbors to build alliances and "counter the threat;" and both countries' presidents fill their speeches with denunciations of the other country as the source of world misfortune.

## **In a Downward Spiral**

All these recent moves and harsh rhetoric tell us that American-Iranian relations remain about where they have been for the past 28 years: locked in a downward spiral of mutual hostility and suspicion.

In this spiral, each side views the other as absolute evil. Each sees every move of the other in the worst light possible, and responds accordingly. Those hostile responses provoke further antagonism from the other side, thus justifying the original accusation ("We told you they were evil!"). Hostility creates further hostility, and both sides find themselves in a stubborn cycle of provocation and counter-provocation.

Each side assumes the other is an implacable enemy; and every action by one side proves its enmity to the other. The U.S. expects that the Islamic Republic will be antagonistic; therefore, it should move pre-emptively before Tehran can carry out some unfriendly act. Of course, the Islamic Republic expects the same of us, and will react in the same way.

Each side believes it is acting defensively against hos-

tile, offensive moves by the other. Aggressive rhetoric from Presidents Bush and Ahmadinejad have fed this spiral and convinced each side that it is facing a cold-blooded, malicious opponent resolved to do it ill. According to this view of the world, the Islamic Republic is determined to build nuclear weapons to threaten Israel and other U.S. friends in the region and to make itself (under the banner of a militant Shia ideology) the dominant power across the Middle East. As for the United States, in the reciprocal view, it cannot tolerate a defiant Islamic Republic and has decided on a policy of "regime change" — i.e., overthrow of a government it does not like.

## **Through Warped Lenses**

In the midst of such exchanges, the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran have come to view each other through pairs of badly warped lenses. In our exchanges, mythology has replaced reality. Even those coming new to the subject are struck by the depth of ill-will and mutual suspicion. I recently asked my political science students at the U.S. Naval Academy — who had been studying U.S.-Iranian relations for only a few months — how they thought the U.S. and Iran viewed each other. They said that, based on the last 50 years of history, the U.S. saw the leaders of the Islamic Republic — and by extension many Iranians — as:

- **Emotional.** Iran's leaders cannot calculate their country's national interest, and have become captives of their own rhetoric.

- **Devious.** They have been misleading the rest of the world about their nuclear program. They will cheat and deceive if it suits their purpose — or sometimes to no apparent end.

- **Obsessed with the past.** They are still fixated on seventh-century conflicts in Islamic history and with events of 50 or 60 years ago.

- **Obsessed with religion.** They are attempting to establish a theocratic state in the 21st century based on a version of a seventh-century community in Arabia. They are attempting to run a modern society and economy according to archaic and misogynistic laws.

- **Unreliable.** They cannot be trusted to keep their word. You cannot believe anything they say.

- **Irrational.** Emotion, not reason, rules their decisions. Many of their actions are self-destructive. They cannot understand the consequences of their own actions or understand the workings of cause and effect. They

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hold a paranoid belief that the entire world is plotting against them.

- **Incomprehensible.** Many of their actions are inexplicable. One cannot begin to understand or predict how they will act.

- **Vindictive.** They will harbor grudges for decades and even for centuries. They over-react against opponents or critics, murdering translators or writers who present no political threat. In 1979, for example, the regime executed an elderly politician for his role in Reza Khan's coup d'etat of 1921.

- **Fanatical.** They have thrown themselves in front of Iraqi guns in a quest for martyrdom.

I then turned the question around, and asked them how they thought the Islamic Republic, in light of that same history, viewed the U.S. administration and its leaders. The answers, equally uncomplimentary, included:

- **Belligerent.** The U.S. cannot tolerate opposition, and will react violently when it believes it is challenged.

- **Hypocritical.** The U.S. lectures others on human rights and democracy, yet supports numerous undemocratic and oppressive regimes, including that of the late shah, the Egyptians and the Saudis.

- **Calculating.** The U.S. is forever weighing the profit from courses of action, without regard to any moral or religious scruple. It is always willing to sacrifice humanity for some strategic advantage.

- **Godless and immoral.** The U.S. exports and glorifies a corrupt culture that undermines family, religion and tradition. It deliberately seeks to lure young people in the Islamic world away from the militant spirit of their religion.

- **Exploitative.** The U.S. is constantly looking for sources of oil and other resources that it can steal or buy cheaply in exchange for the trash — especially military trash — that it makes.

- **Materialistic.** The U.S. believes that people are ruled by their desire for material goods, and have no interest in spiritual values.

- **Bullying.** If the U.S. cannot get its way, it will resort to threats, subversion and direct intervention. The U.S. has never stopped bullying the Islamic Republic because it has refused to submit to American demands.

*For the American side,  
the 1979 seizure of  
Embassy Tehran by  
Iranian militants laid  
the foundations for the  
subsequent myth.*

- **Arrogant.** The U.S. is seen as exemplifying “global arrogance” (estekbaar-e-jahaani). It claims that its political, economic and cultural system is the only valid one for humanity. It has no curiosity about or interest in other systems or ideologies.

- **Meddling.** The U.S. has been meddling in Iranian affairs since it occupied the country during World War II — if not earlier. The shah was nothing but an American puppet. The Bush administration is determined to overthrow the Islamic Republic and install a more obedient regime.

- **Patronizing.** The U.S. denigrates other cultures and lectures the rest of the world on the need to recognize American hegemony and imitate the American way of life.

Next I asked my students how they thought each side viewed itself. Their answers were in stark contrast to how we look at the “other.” Americans, they said, see themselves as humane, open, well-intentioned, democratic, freedom-loving and generous. Iranians, they believed, see themselves as spiritual, cultured, artistic, courteous, literate, generous, quick-witted, good-humored, articulate and devoted to friends and family. Iranians also view themselves historically as victims of external forces they could not control.

Why is there such a gap between these positive self-images and the negative view by the outsider? Why do we see nothing but malevolence in each other? How have both of us come to believe that history proves the other is the personification of evil? Why, after 27 years, are the United States and Iran unable to get beyond these opinions and the accompanying fruitless denunciations, accusations, finger-pointing and sterile rhetoric?

### **The Stuff of Myths**

One answer lies in decades of two-sided myth-making, in which the United States and Iran have built our negative views on versions of two recent events — versions that mix reality with fantasy to concoct a picture of absolute malevolence in the other side. In the American case, the seminal event is the 1979 seizure of Embassy Tehran and detention (with the connivance of the Iranian authorities) of its staff members. The images of screaming crowds and



## FOCUS

burning flags televised nightly, the hysterical rhetoric, the threats, the failed rescue mission and the Iranians' unwillingness to recognize their own responsibilities toward those under their country's protection all ensured that the United States would see Iran with all the negatives noted above.

In the Iranian case, the key event is the 1953 U.S.-backed coup d'état that toppled the nationalist Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and restored the power of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. Although scholars still debate exactly what happened, for most Iranians there is no doubt: the U.S. arranged the overthrow of their freely-elected leader and replaced him with its puppet in order to thwart — just as the Russians and British had done earlier — Iranians' desires to be free of foreign tutelage and take control of their greatest source of wealth.

I was personally involved in the hostage crisis; along with my colleagues, I spent 14 months — nine of them in solitary confinement — as a "guest" of the Islamic Republic from November 1979 to January 1981. Although none

of my captors were old enough to have any personal memory of the Mossadegh period, they knew for certain that the perfidious U.S. had instigated his downfall and was thus responsible for all of Iran's subsequent misfortunes. Their first question (with straight faces) to me was, "What was your role in the coup of August 1953?" I could answer honestly, "A very minor one. I was 10 years old at the time."

In fact, neither Americans nor Iranians should be proud of their country's actions in this sorry history. Whatever momentary advantage was gained and however much those responsible may boast of their courage and cleverness, both sides have paid a heavy price for their acts. The two events continue to cast long shadows over U.S.-Iranian relations, and have come to assume mythic importance far beyond any reality. They have shaped each side's view of the other in the most negative way possible. From those two events — and much that followed them — derive the views my students described above. The events of 1953 and 1979 have pro-

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vided each side with the assumption of enmity: with those starting points, subsequent events have proved the argument.

### **The Incomprehensible Iranian**

For the American side, the embassy seizure laid the foundations for the subsequent myth. The students' action suggested that the Islamic Republic and its leaders had all the evil attributes noted above. Through most of the crisis, the Iranian side seemed impervious to reason, obsessed with real or imagined past grievances, and determined to follow Ayatollah Khomeini's most extreme rhetoric even if it led them to destruction. Seen through that prism, many events following the crisis — the Khobar Towers attack, the Embassy Beirut bombings, the Lebanon hostage-takings, the arms-for-hostages deal, the attack on the Buenos Aires Jewish centers, and the recent, dubious Holocaust conference in Tehran — provided further confirmation that our original opinions were correct. Their own actions proved that Iranians — or at least those in charge of the Islamic Republic — are as bad as we thought: devious, mendacious, fanatical, incomprehensible and worse.

The reality of that event is both more complex and more tragic than the myth. The traumatic embassy seizure convinced the United States that it was facing a collection of screaming fanatics. But if the captivity was harsh and difficult for us and our families, for most Iranians the ramifications of the episode were many times worse. Iranian analysts, including some of the hostage-takers themselves, have maintained that the upheavals surrounding the hostage crisis led directly to the mass slaughters of the Iran-Iraq War, the victory of brutal extremists in Iranian domestic politics, the establishment of a harsh and intolerant social system, the loss of an educated middle class and the ruin of an economy. The hostage-taking eliminated any hope that the Islamic Revolution might bring something better for the Iranian people.

### **The Arrogant American**

The Islamic Republic has created its own myths about the United States and its actions in 1953. Starting from those events, it has convinced itself that the U.S. is determined to dominate and exploit Iran, preferably by indirect means, but by force if necessary. Prime Minister Mossadegh was determined to re-exert Iranian pride and

independence, symbolized by nationalizing the country's oil resources. The U.S., which Iran had hoped would be a counterweight to the traditional colonial powers (Britain and Russia), could not tolerate such independence from a small, Third World country, turned against a nascent Iranian democracy, and betrayed the hopes that America would support Iranians' struggle to be masters in their own house.

From that unfortunate beginning, subsequent American actions — lavish support for the shah, insisting on immunity for military advisers and their families in the 1964 Status of Forces Act, tacit and explicit support for Saddam in the eight-year Iran-Iraq War, the sinking of Iranian naval vessels, the 1988 downing of an Iranian civilian airliner (Iranair Flight 655), the 2002 "axis of evil" rhetoric and the increased military presence on Iran's periphery — have all confirmed the stereotype, first created in August 1953, of an America determined to bend Iran to its will and to crush Iranians' aspiration for independence.

Whether this unhappy relationship of accusation and counter-accusation is "mirror imaging" or a "downward spiral," it is clearly one that feeds on accumulated grievances, reciprocal negative views, and stubborn refusals to admit that the view of the "other" — distorted as it might be — may have some basis in reality. Those in authority in Iran have never come to terms with the 1979 embassy seizure and their responsibility for that event. They pretend it never happened, rationalize it or, like former President Mohammad Khatami in 1998, say something like "Well, I am sorry that you feel bad about it." (From individual Iranians, however, I have heard many apologies and expressions of regret, most recently during a Persian VOA-TV call-in show last November.)

For their part, many American officials dismiss the events of 1953 as ancient history (if they know about them at all), excuse them as Cold War necessity and, when pressed, advise Iranians to "get over it."

### **Eternal Enemies?**

The cumulative effect of all this myth-making has been to build a huge wall of distrust between our two countries. Even when one side makes a tentative offer to explore a way out of the impasse, the other side reacts with suspicion and immediately asks itself, "Why are they making this offer? What are they really up to? Are they admitting weakness?"

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In 1998 and again in 1999, for example, the Iranians rejected the Clinton administration's serious offer of talks without preconditions ("a road map to better relations"). Then in 2003, Washington — riding a wave of illusory triumph in Iraq — ignored a proposal from the Iranians to open talks on all subjects of mutual interest.

If our two countries ever do agree to negotiations, each side will come to the table already convinced that the other side's only purpose is to cheat and deceive. Many Iranians will ask (repeating Khomeini's famous image), "Why should the sheep negotiate with the wolf?" Many Americans will ask, "What do we have to negotiate about? The Iranians are so devious (and we are so simple) that we will lose everything and gain nothing."

Yet the United States and Iran need not be con-

*All this  
demonizing should  
not keep our  
two countries from  
talking out our  
differences.*

demned to endless enmity. All this mutual demonizing and myth-making should not be an eternal and impassable barrier to our two countries' talking out our differences rather than shouting or shooting at each other. Despite the myths and rhetoric, the number of actual casualties in our conflict — in Beirut, the Persian Gulf and even in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. — has so far been relatively small, in the hundreds on each side.

Compare those numbers with the hundreds of thousands of victims on both sides of the Vietnam War, and it is hard to understand how the U.S. can today enjoy normal diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, while we and the Islamic Republic cannot find our way out of a quagmire of myths and festering grievances, real and imagined. ■

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# BET ON THE OPTIMISTS: PROSPECTS FOR REFORM



Julia Vaskar

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A SOCIETY WHERE THE GENIE OF DISSENT HAS BEEN LET OUT OF THE BOTTLE CANNOT REMAIN SILENT IN PERPETUITY.

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By *MEHRZAD BOROUJERDI*

Three years ago, a front-page editorial in *Shargh*, an Iranian daily newspaper, observed that “The reformist camp trusts Europe more than America because they are concerned that American pragmatism might sell the reform enterprise to the conservatives like any other business commodity. . . . Yet while in the Balkan War the Europeans supported the Croats and the Russians the Serbs, only America supported the Muslims because the multi-ethnic nature of America has prevented the emergence of the notion of a pure race.”

The commentary continued: “The nuclear issue will one day come to an end and then the issue of human rights will take over. If a militarist America is worried about nuclear energy, the secular Europeans are instead waiting to ambush you under the cause of human rights. On that day the Islamic Republic will not be able to favor the secular, nationalist and ideological Europe over the religious, multiethnic and pragmatic America.”

That editorial seems to advocate a course of foreign policy diametrically opposed to the cantankerous, maladroitness and raucous diplomacy that has become the hallmark of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s administration. It is indicative of the deep ideological and political fissures among Iranian political elites.

Pessimistic analysts of Iranian politics cite the intimidation and imprisonment of prominent activists, lawyers, editors and publishers; draconian measures against the press; and vigilante violence as evidence that things have changed little in the last decade. They maintain that the parliament still lacks power; the judiciary and the Guardian Council, accountability; the civil service, dexterity; and the press, freedom.

Optimists, on the other hand, insist that we should not interpret the curbing of the belligerent press and the arrest of iconoclastic journalists as anything more than temporary setbacks in Iran’s long and arduous march toward a more open society. A society where the genie of dissent has been let out of the bottle cannot remain silent in perpetuity, they say, arguing that the demography of a young, urban, well-educated and politically aware population favors the reform movement.

The optimists interpret these demographic trends as harbingers of the new revolution of rising expectations gaining momentum in the country. Furthermore, they claim that, thanks to the addition of over 20 million new entrants to the ranks of eligible voters since the 1979 Revolution, Iranian voters are increasingly asserting their willingness and commitment to reshape the socio-political and cultural system of the country.

These different readings provide diverging answers to the following questions: Did former President Mohammad Khatami’s (1997-2005) cautious and syncopated cru-

sade for political liberalization drive his popular base toward cynicism, demoralization and dejection? Did hardliners manage to wear down the reformist camp and discredit it in the eyes of voters? If the reform movement is now battered and beaten, does this mean that political change can now only emerge from outside the ranks of the regime? Before we can begin to sort through the answers to these questions, we must try and get a better sense of the deeply embedded cultural and political paradoxes and nuances of Iranian politics.

### **Toward a Modern Society**

The profound cultural, demographic and socio-economic shifts during the post-revolutionary era are rapidly reworking the contours of Iranian society from a traditional-authoritarian structure to a modern and open one. They have also bequeathed to Iranian politics a multidimensionality and sophistication previously unimaginable.

While less than half of the country’s population lived in urban centers at the time of the 1979 revolution, that figure has now reached over 61 percent. During the same time span the literacy rate skyrocketed from less than 47 percent to over 80 percent, and the population’s median age is now 24 years. As of 1996, out of the country’s population of 60 million, 40 percent were below the age of 15 and 30 percent were students in primary or secondary school (16 million) and college (2 million).

The events of the past two decades have made it clear that the members of Iran’s strong cultural middle class now view themselves not as mere nationals but as citizens. No longer interested in hearing pontificators talk about their patriotic and religious duties, they are increasingly inquiring about their citizenship rights (e.g., jobs and political and social freedoms). A robust and sober movement representing millions of high school and university students is a formidable constituency that the state cannot simply absorb, ignore or buy off.

In addition, Iranian journalists and writers have managed to create a substantial, serious and sophisticated media audience and an animated court of public opinion that looks skeptically at the clergy’s attempts to present a whitewashed view of Islamic history and their own revolutionary pedigree. One need only recall the ministerial interpolations and melodramatic public trials that took place during Khatami’s term in office as an example. While the clerical and revolutionary courts almost always reprimanded or found the accused guilty of the alleged

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offenses, the court of public opinion concurrently gave the defendants the honor of being icons of reform and democracy.

Iranian society is evolving rapidly. Unctuous sophistry, hidebound slogans and superficial palliatives are now met with cynicism and tongue-in-cheek ridicule; emotional and frenzied crowds are giving way to calm and organized opponents; family structure is becoming more egalitarian; personal relationships and expectations are better defined; and both the consumers and purveyors of goods and services are becoming better informed. Furthermore, the commercialization of the electoral space, the financing of political life by businesses, elite factionalism, and the entry of new constituencies (such as families of the martyrs, Hezbollah activists and war veterans) into the political fray are altering the political landscape. In short, the process of the transition from a traditional-authoritarian society to a more modern-open one continues despite the various setbacks.

The weight of the demographic tidal wave, coupled with the accumulation of people's unmet socio-economic needs and political expectations (e.g., free speech and assembly, free elections, a fair judicial system), which gave birth to the reformist movement, are hard to ignore. Yet despite the demographic trends that predominantly favor the reformists, prudence dictates that we should not confuse hope with reality. We should be wary of formulations that reduce politics to mere reflections of economic processes and social structures.

Iran is still a country where the conduct of politics remains nontransparent, where tutelary patronage is a long-established tradition, where elites define interests largely as individual needs and private ends, where politicians are viewed with cynicism, where deliberate political provocations are often effective, where the precipice of mediocrity is hard to ignore, and where "free and fair elections" is not synonymous with "democratic governance." It is still a country of persons, not laws, where the religious-patriarchal state is both able and willing to devour institutions of civil society, and where nongovernmental organizations cannot act as ombudsmen between civil society and the state.

***Optimists argue that the  
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reform movement.***

In addition, primordial ties often overshadow social obligations. Trust as a factor of social capital barely manages to cut across the horizontal family, clan and friendship ties. Social mobility is viewed as based on fortuitous factors, connections or influence-peddling rather than hard work. And civil society remains underdeveloped, its shock-absorbing institutions fragile.

**Pendulum Swings**

In Iranian politics, observed trends and regime positions are never absolute. Flexibility toward change is the norm. The popular reform movement that appeared on the Iranian political radar screen on May 23, 1997, exposed the fallacy of the argument that we cannot transform a bona fide theocracy from within. On that momentous day — without having been cajoled by any leader or established political party — over 83 percent of eligible voters voted in the largest-ever turnout for any executive or legislative branch election and provided the reform candidate, Mohammad Khatami, with a landslide victory. In three subsequent elections — the 1999 village and city council elections, the 2000 parliamentary elections, and the 2001 presidential elections in which Khatami was once again a candidate — a respective 64 percent, 69 percent and 67 percent of Iran's voters went to the polling booths and each time overwhelmingly cast their votes for the reformist candidates.

Conversely, political fortune smiled on the conservatives in the 2003 and 2006 city and village council elections, the 2004 parliamentary elections and the 2005 presidential elections. On these occasions the Iranian public registered their disillusionment with the status quo by electing conservative candidates who were largely politically unknown.

The crushing electoral defeat of the reformist camp can be partly attributed to their failure to mobilize the mushrooming constituency of the urban poor, a group not as preoccupied with the cultural sensitivities of the educated elite, but experiencing the burdens of corruption, unemployment and inflation. These elections also showed that we should not underestimate the power of the conservative establishment or the enduring appeal of

religiously informed social practices. The conservative camp has extensive economic and social roots, solid organizational strength, and an army of foot soldiers (e.g., pensioners affiliated with charity foundations, Basij forces, etc). Meanwhile, the influence of the Revolutionary Guards in Iranian politics is bound to grow. The adjutants of the clerics, who have finished their apprenticeship in revolution, are now demanding recognition as the linchpins of the Islamic Republic.


## The Upcoming Elections

All political personalities and parties in Iran are already eyeing the three important upcoming rounds of elections: parliamentary voting in late 2008, presidential elections in early 2009, and city and village council elections in 2010. Because the institutions that will in one way or another oversee the conduct of the elections (the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Intelligence and the Council of Guardians) are controlled by the conservatives, it is very probable that a high enough number of reformist candi-


dates will be disqualified to prevent them from recapturing control of the parliament.

The prospects for electoral interference and irregularities are less likely in the 2009 presidential elections, because many of the potential leading candidates are established political heavyweights who cannot be barred. On the reformist side, former presidents Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami, and former speaker of parliament Mehdi Karroubi, are being mentioned as potential candidates. The conservative camp is likely to be represented by Pres. Ahmadinejad, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf (the present mayor of Tehran) and Ali Larjani (the chief nuclear negotiator). Karroubi and Ghalibaf may prove to be the two candidates most capable of unseating the incumbent. If that were to happen, Ahmadinejad would be the first post-revolutionary president who completed a full term in office but did not manage to win re-election.

Since its latest round of electoral defeats, the reformist camp has been attempting to become more mainstream



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and a bit more united, especially as signs of internal division have emerged among the governing conservatives. While they have not managed to abandon their own internal fights, it is much less likely that they will repeat the mistake of the 2005 presidential elections when they fielded four of the final seven candidates and split the popular vote.

The municipal council elections scheduled for 2010 will be influenced by the outcomes of the preceding parliamentary and presidential elections and the political waves they will set in motion. Because the Council of Guardians applies less stringent criteria in vetting many thousands of candidates in municipal elections, it is possible that individuals with reformist dispositions will manage to win seats.

### **A Work in Progress**

Ira Lapidus, a historian of the Middle East, commented in the *New York Times* in 2000 that Iran is “a nation that is open and welcoming but remains hidden and mysterious; a clerical dictatorship, but one of the Middle East’s liveliest democracies; a puritanical regime, but a people who love everyday life; a severe orthodoxy, but an expressive cinema and an argumentative press; a revolution that has rejected secularism, but a nation heading toward a fusion of Islamic and Persian identities.” We can also add the following paradoxes to the list provided by Lapidus.

- A constitution that simultaneously affirms religious and secular principles, democratic and anti-democratic tendencies, as well as populist and elitist predilections;
- A society in which many cultural, political and social institutions are Western and modern in pedigree and configuration, yet native and traditional in iconography and nomenclature;
- A hyperpoliticized society that does not benefit from the presence of recognized, legitimate or effective political entities such as parties;
- A theocracy where religion is an axiom of political life, and yet secular agents, aspirations, ideas, institutions, language and motifs continue to survive and — more importantly — manifest their significance in the private and public space;
- A society where the eclectic texture of popular cul-

***Historian Ira Lapidus  
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mysterious.”***

ture has made the practicality — let alone desirability — of religiously sanctioned statecraft highly doubtful, in turn leading to a gradual but consistent disillusionment with the belief that Islam is the only political solution;

- A clerical leadership that has claimed to protect tradition but has amended and broken numerous age-old religious protocols for the sake of state expediency;

• A society whose Islamic intellectuals resort to the writings of Western thinkers to validate their own “Islamic” critique of the West;

- A citizenry that has come to enjoy sophisticated artistic and intellectual productions despite living under a politically repressive state; and

• A society where women’s rights have been trampled upon, yet where women have continued to make strides into the educational, cultural and professional domains, thereby increasing awareness of women’s rights and issues at the social level.

These paradoxes demonstrate that what has softened the hardness of an Islamic republic born through revolution — and will continue to do so — are the eclectic realities of the political landscape and popular culture of the country. We must bear in mind that in the overtly polarized, regimented and stilted world of Iranian politics, every action is politically and symbolically significant. Even the most innocuous signs (pictures, cartoons, theatrical plays, ambiguous language, nostalgic lyrics), acts (clapping, dancing, holding hands, whistling, anodyne leisure or recreational activity or other manifestations of youthful verve) and events (victory or defeat of the national soccer team, temporary loss of water or electricity, factory closures) can cause a serious political crisis, because the state is neither ideologically nor structurally capable of preventing or defusing such incidents.

As an adviser to former President Khatami has put it, the Iranian regime resembles a tall glass building where voices echo, and even the smallest stone that is thrown creates a loud shattering noise.

### **The U.S. As a Wedge Issue**

“In a curious sense, Iran and the United States are mirror images of each other,” writes Gary Sick, a long-time



observer of American-Iranian relations. “Both countries are prone to a moralistic air of self-righteousness, especially in foreign policy matters; and both are inclined to ideological rigidity and a sense of moral superiority. Each perceives itself as the indispensable state. Above all, these are two interpenetrated societies whose mutual sense of grievance, humiliation and betrayal has infiltrated their respective internal politics until the line between foreign and domestic policies is often indistinguishable.”

Domestic Iranian politics plays a significant role in how elites frame and implement policies vis-à-vis the United States. How the political elite make use of the image of the United States reflects the vagaries of factional politics in Iran. In the absence of legitimate and effective political parties, factions employ multiple conventional and unorthodox means to undermine rivals and achieve their policy objectives.

For example, factionalism is reflected in the media. The hard-line outlets consistently urge the citizenry to remain steadfast against the “Great Satan” and portray the United States, depending on the mood of the day, as a “paper tiger,” an “imploding power,” a “reckless bully,” a “hypocrite” or “the world’s leading arrogant power.” The reformist press, by contrast, continually reminds the hardliners that the only way to thwart potential threats from the United States is to open up the Iranian political system and thereby enhance its legitimacy.

This stance should be understood in light of the reformists’ weaker position within the political establishment. Although the reformists do not consider the United States their sworn enemy, they dangle the possibility of an American threat to create greater elbow room for themselves. The operating assumption is that whichever party manages to restore relations with the United States will stay in power in perpetuity and enjoy popular support.

As such, those groups that are the underdog at any given moment will do their best to torpedo the other side’s efforts at any type of rapprochement. Spoiling the efforts of one’s rivals, which can also include members of one’s own faction, can take place in the form of managed leaks (i.e., revealing the 1985-1986 Iran-Contra affair), public

***We should be wary of  
formulations that reduce  
politics to mere reflections  
of economic processes and  
social structures.***

criticism, intimidating American tourists and business people who are visiting Iran as guests of the government, etc. So the squabbling conservatives and reformists will continue to work against each other for the foreseeable future, so long as rapprochement remains out of reach.

The mainstream public and elite’s views of the United States are first and foremost driven by what America represents: the world’s largest economy, the strongest military, the most cutting-edge technology and a hegemonic entertainment culture. These realities are hardly lost on anyone. Yet for most Iranians, these qualities do not translate into naively believing that what is good for America is good for them. Indeed, they are reluctant to attribute any altruistic motives to American actions toward their own country or any other. Complaints about American unilateralism, militarism, lack of humility, inadequate knowledge of Muslim cultures, and shallow public relations campaigns are shared by people and elites across the political spectrum.

Moreover, the words and actions of Washington echo loudly in Iranian society. President George W. Bush’s “axis of evil” speech in January 2002 deeply offended all those Iranians who had empathized with Americans after the 9/11 attacks and were now perplexed and angered by this designation. Meanwhile, the conservatives managed to ably exploit this “nefarious label” to their advantage in domestic politics.

Furthermore, although Iranians are rather critical of the clerics’ style of statecraft and their political track record (human rights abuses, economic hardships, political violence, etc.), they resist the historical proclivity of their predecessors to call for the revolutionary overthrow of any government of which they disapproved. Some contend that the legacy of two revolutions (1905 and 1979) and numerous other political upheavals (1941, 1946, 1953 and 1964) in one century has diminished Iranians’ appetite for radical and drastic change.

Still, at a time when the nuclear cleavage has obscured more meaningful approaches to U.S.-Iranian relations, one is left wondering whether there is, in fact, any desire in Washington or Tehran to escape the present quandary. ■

# GRASPING THE NETTLE: IF DIPLOMACY FAILS IN IRAN



SHOULD DIPLOMACY FAIL TO DEAL WITH THE THREAT OF A NUCLEAR IRAN, POLICYMAKERS WILL HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN PREVENTIVE WAR AND DETERRENCE.

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*By JUSTIN LOGAN*

**O**n May 31, 2006, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice held a press conference to announce that the United States would be open to joining the European Union Three (the U.K., France and Germany) in negotiations on Iran's nuclear program. This statement represented a shift away from Washington's narrower attempts to pressure and isolate Iran, and increased the chances for a peaceful solution to the conflict over Iran's nuclear program.

A year later, despite some movement, Washington's approach to the Iran issue still has a good chance of failing. President Bush added a potential "poison pill" precondition — that the Iranians suspend uranium enrichment — before talks could take place. Ultimately, Tehran responded by rejecting any preconditions, defying the U.S.-led demand. At the time of this writing, the United States is pushing for further U.N. sanctions against Iran.

Unless Washington offers to put security guarantees and overall diplomatic and economic normalization on the negotiating table, it is unlikely that Iran will decide that the benefits of a diplomatic deal will outweigh the costs. Given the likelihood of failure, then, it is worth evaluating America's options should the diplomatic approach prove fruitless. The question comes down to this: Would it be better to use military force in an attempt to stymie Iran's nuclear program, or to accept its acquisition of a nuclear weapon and prepare for a policy of deterrence?

### **The Preventive War Option**

One possible approach would be to start a war in order to attempt to delay Iran's acquisition of a nuclear capability. However, there are a host of problems with such a policy.

The first problem is intelligence. A presidential commission concluded in 2004 that the U.S. intelligence community had "disturbingly little" information on Iran's nuclear activities, and there's little reason to believe the picture is any clearer today. It is quite difficult to gather credible data on a country with which America has not had diplomatic relations for more than a quarter-century, and a successful attack against a nuclear program as dispersed and effectively hidden as Iran's apparently is would require very good intelligence. The United States learned of startling advances in Iran's nuclear program in 2002 only after revelations regarding the Natanz and

Arak facilities were made very publicly by the opposition Mujahedeen-e-Khalq's political arm, the National Council of Resistance in Iran. Given that these facilities obviously would rank highly on any list of potential targets, we must assume that the Iranians expect that they would be the first targets of any U.S. air strikes.

As Jeffrey Record of the U.S. Air War College has pointed out, "an effective strategy of counterproliferation via preventive war requires intelligence of a consistent quality and reliability that may not be obtainable within the real-world limits of collection and analysis by the U.S. intelligence community." Even the MEK has issued a slew of "false positive" intelligence reports. The disadvantages of relying on information from exile groups with a vested interest in regime change should have been illustrated in Iraq.

Although the analysis in this paper is based on open-source reporting, and it is possible that the classified materials contain a systematic intelligence picture of the Iranian nuclear program, it is far from clear that that is the case. Given our apparent information-gathering shortcomings inside of Iran, a preventive-war-as-counterproliferation policy in that country would be unlikely to produce a decisive outcome.

### **The Question of Escalation**

Supporters of air strikes simplify a complex situation by assuming that we know where the relevant Iranian nuclear facilities are. Some analysts explicitly point to Israel's 1981 strike against Iraq's Osirak reactor as a model. This analogy is strained at best. The attack against Osirak was a targeted strike at one above-ground facility located roughly 10 miles outside of Baghdad in open desert terrain. By contrast, Iran's known and suspected (to say nothing of unknown and unsuspected) nuclear facilities number as many as 70, some of which are in or around civilian population centers.

Unlike the Osirak reactor, Iran's nuclear facilities are widely dispersed. As Anthony Cordesman and Khalid al-Rodhan of the Center for Strategic and International Studies note, "many of Iran's research, development, and production activities are almost certainly modular and can be rapidly moved to new sites, including tunnels, caves and other underground facilities." Again, targeting these sites would require an excellent intelligence picture, which no one appears to have.

Uncertainty about the scope of the Iranian program,

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coupled with the question of the regime's willingness to escalate the conflict, could well lead to a full-blown war. Put another way, if the United States initiated air strikes against Iran's known nuclear facilities, would it stop there, or would it carry on to suspected nuclear as well as chemical and biological weapons sites? Would an air campaign attempt to eliminate Iranian air defenses, which have been piled up around the known nuclear sites? What about Iranian command and control nodes? The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps? Ultimately, once Iran responded to a U.S. attack, would Washington target the Iranian leadership?

Both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency have conducted war games on Iran; and, as *Newsweek* magazine reported in September 2004, "no one liked the outcome." Retired General Barry McCaffrey went so far as to argue on NBC's "Meet the Press" that "the notion that we can threaten them with conventional air attack is simply insane." The essential problem is that even if the strikes began as targeted, it is unlikely that Washington would be able to prevent or even control the escalation of such a conflict.

Iran holds a number of cards to play against the United States in response to a military attack. First among them is the prospect that Iran's political and military penetration of Iraq could lead to a rapid escalation of violence in that country, and might well plunge the entire Persian Gulf region into chaos.

### **Iran's Cards**

In particular, both the political and the security situations in Iraq could become nightmarish if the United States were to attack Iran. In January, powerful Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr announced that if Iran were attacked, Sadr would throw his support behind Iran. Although it is possible to overstate Iran's influence in Iraq (and, in particular, Iraqi Shiites' degree of fealty to Iran), it is important to recognize the influence that Tehran has cultivated in Iraq, and the implications that a U.S. assault on Iran could hold for the stability and viability of the Iraqi government.

## ***Uncertainty about the scope of the Iranian program, coupled with the question of Iran's willingness to escalate the conflict, could well lead to a full-blown war.***

There is also the potential for a U.S. military meltdown in Iraq. As the old military adage holds, "Amateurs talk strategy. Professionals talk logistics." American supply lines through southern Iraq would be highly vulnerable to sabotage and attack, which could quickly imperil the entire occupation. Nearly all of the supplies that come into Iraq are transported from Kuwait through southern Iraq, in supply trucks driven by foreign civilians. As Patrick Lang, former head of the Near East bureau at the DIA, has pointed

out, it is a difficult and resource-consuming endeavor to protect supply convoys over hundreds of miles of hostile territory.

Another risk inherent in a U.S. attack against Iran is the potential for Tehran to lash out against Israel. Mohammad-Ebrahim Dehqani, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, stated in May 2006 that "wherever America does something evil, the first place that we will target will be Israel." It is no secret that both the Iranian leadership and public see Israel and the United States as close allies, and would look upon an attack by one of them as an act of war by both.

Last summer's violence in Lebanon and northern Israel underscored one potential Iranian tactic in such a situation: the use of proxies such as Hezbollah to attack Israel. Even in that limited conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, the former was able to achieve surprising tactical successes against hard Israeli targets. Forty-seven Israeli tanks were struck by anti-tank missiles, and 15 or 16 of them were completely destroyed. More notably, Hezbollah's ability to use a radar-guided missile to disable an Israeli warship on patrol in the Mediterranean Sea indicated a new level of sophistication in its attacks.

Even attacks inside the United States are not inconceivable. Terrorism analyst Daniel Byman says that Iranian attacks against the U.S. homeland are "less likely" than attacks against U.S. interests overseas, but "far from impossible." A former chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Bob Graham, stated after the 9/11 attacks that Hezbollah was the terrorist group with the largest presence inside the United States. An attack

against Iran would likely clarify any uncertainties about Hezbollah's reach.

### **Squeezing the Oil Pipeline**

Another concern is that Iran could attempt to use mines or small dhows armed with anti-ship weapons, or rigged for suicide attacks, to impede oil shipments in the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly 40 percent of the world's oil flows. Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, director of the DIA, testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2005 that "Iran can briefly close the Strait of Hormuz, relying on a layered strategy using predominately naval, air and some ground forces."

An Iranian attempt to close off the strait would be a risky gambit, both diplomatically and militarily. Doing so would invite wide opprobrium from the international

***Doubts that Tehran would close the Strait of Hormuz should not remove fears about the potential Iranian responses to an attack.***

community, because it would cause oil prices to skyrocket. Moreover, disruptions could affect Iran's oil shipments, as well. As Secretary Rice has commented, "I think something like 80 percent of Iran's budget comes from oil revenue, and so obviously it would be a very serious problem for Iran if oil were disrupted on the market." Although the actual figure is closer to 60 percent, the logic stands.

Military shenanigans in the strait could also expose Iran's limited naval capabilities to the vastly superior U.S. Navy. (When Iran attempted to cause mischief in the strait in 1988, during the "tanker war," U.S. naval forces showed near-total dominance in the water, disabling six Iranian vessels and attacking two oil platforms used by Iran for intelligence monitoring.)

Still, Iran has surely attempted to determine the

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weakest points of the U.S. Navy. The 2000 attack on the USS *Cole*, in particular, has no doubt been a topic of interest for Iranian strategists. Although the Navy has since increased countermeasures to guard against a similar attack, U.S. Admiral Vern Clark remarked after the *Cole* attack that “it would be extraordinarily difficult to have ever observed [the attacking boat] in time to do anything to have stopped it.”

Doubts that Tehran would close the Strait of Hormuz should not remove fears about the potential Iranian responses to an attack. The essential truth is that Iran has a variety of tactics at its disposal that range from undesirable to quite dangerous.

### **Unintended Consequences**

The longer-term and unintended consequences of attacking Iran are important to examine as well.

First, there is the issue of proliferation. Since the Cold War ended, the United States has embraced a foreign policy that is seen as inherently dangerous to many countries. Observers point to U.S. military action against Serbia and Iraq and our support for regime-changing “color revolutions” in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. In addition, after the Sept. 11 attacks, President Bush singled out Iraq, Iran and North Korea as members of an “axis of evil.” Of the axis members, the one country Washington suspected had nuclear weapons, North Korea, has remained essentially untouched, while the one country we were certain did not have nuclear weapons, Iraq, was invaded. As Kenneth Pollack of the Brookings Institution notes, “the Iraq example coupled with the North Korea example probably is part of the motivation for some in Iran to get a nuclear weapon.”

Bombing Iran would only further underscore the dilemma faced by states that find themselves on Washington’s hit list. Without nuclear weapons, there is no assurance that the United States will *not* attack — other than supine acquiescence to Washington’s various demands. As Nobel laureate Thomas Schelling has pointed out, the perverse fact is that America’s counter-proliferation policy is a prime driver of proliferation.

Other unintended consequences would include the effect of Iranian civilian casualties on our diplomatic

## ***The issue of undermining the reform movement in Iran is (or should be) at the center of the debate about whether or not to bomb.***

standing and the hatred of America that it would amplify in Islamic countries. Any decision to attack Iran should be evaluated in terms of how it would affect the “war on terror.” Footage of civilian casualties would be aired again and again in Arab and Muslim media, providing fodder for anti-American demagogues. And starting a war with a third Islamic country in less than a decade surely would be used as evidence that Osama bin Laden’s

predictions about U.S. intentions were correct.

As a number of recent U.S. government reports have admitted, the main driver of Islamic extremism is American foreign policy. The Government Accountability Office concluded in May 2006 that “U.S. foreign policy is the major root cause behind anti-American sentiments among Muslim populations.” Two years earlier, the Pentagon’s Defense Science Board made the point even more forcefully: “American direct intervention in the Muslim world has paradoxically elevated the stature of and support for radical Islamists, while diminishing support for the United States to single digits in some Arab societies. ... Muslims do not ‘hate our freedom’ but, rather, they hate our policies.”

If we are going to fight a war against Islamic terrorism, it would be wise to take into account the factors that feed it. Policy choices that worsen public opinion of the United States in the Muslim world are strategically relevant, and would be detrimental to the war on terrorism.

### **Undermining the Reform Movement**

Finally, the implications of a U.S.-Iran war for the prospect of gradual political and economic liberalization — the factors most relevant to the eventual erosion of the clerical regime in Tehran — would be dire. “Any attack on Iran will be good for the government and will actually damage the democratic movement,” Iranian dissident Shirin Ebadi has warned.

This issue of undermining the reform movement in Iran is (or should be) at the center of the debate about whether or not to bomb. The logic behind bombing relies on a series of assumptions about the results: first, that it would delay Iranian acquisition of a bomb; second,

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that during the delay Washington could somehow effect regime change; and third, that the new regime would be so appealing that fears about its nuclearization would vanish, or else (optimally) the new regime would forswear nuclear weapons. The problem with this logic is that the likely effect of bombing Iran would be to shore up the hard-liners within the current regime, not cause their demise. In addition, if bombing has the effect of entrenching the current leadership, any delay in Iran's nuclear program would be offset by the strengthening of the current regime.

The prospect of targeted air strikes eventually escalating to regime change also raises a whole host of questions about the postwar environment, and these questions have not been addressed by war proponents. Who would take power in Iran? Would the deep ethnic and sectarian fissures that are touted as such a source of weakness for the Iranian regime bubble up to the surface and create a low-level civil war as they have in Iraq? What would be the medium- and long-term strategic implications?

Similar questions were either not asked or were answered with propaganda and wishful thinking before the Iraq War, and America is still paying the price. We should not repeat the same mistakes in Iran.

### **The Deterrence Option**

Although the preventive war option for dealing with Iran's nuclear program is remarkably unappealing, the prospect of deterrence raises a host of undesirable consequences, as well. These also warrant thorough consideration.

The question of how to deal with the Islamic Republic would change dramatically if one were to accept the assumption that the regime acts not according to rational calculations, but theological and ideological ones. The allegation that Iran is fundamentally undeterrable has become common. For some, the situation is akin to that of Europe in the 1930s, with Ahmadinejad in the role of Hitler. Bernard Lewis, the Princeton historian who has advised Vice President Cheney, has gone so far as to

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claim that Ahmadinejad and the Iranian government “clearly believe” that “the cosmic struggle at the end of time ... ending in the final victory of the forces of good over evil” has begun.

### **Are the Mullahs Crazy?**

Because accepting these notions would lead almost invariably to a war with Iran, such claims deserve deep scrutiny. Hawkish commentators seize upon Pres. Ahmadinejad’s bizarre and reprehensible statements about the Holocaust, and the Iranian government’s stated desire to “wipe Israel off the map.” Although the comments have gained new currency in the context of the nuclear dispute, it is important to recognize that such rhetoric has been a part of Iranian boilerplate for years. Similar statements have been uttered by a broad swath of political figures, including Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the former president

While not particularly reassuring in itself, this consistency does demonstrate that there has not been a noticeable shift in policy in Tehran that has thrown the levers of power to a madman who acts outside the standard (admittedly poisonous) political rhetoric. Moreover, many knowledgeable commentators, including Kenneth Pollack, Judith Yaphe and Charles Lutes of the National Defense University, have argued that there is no reason to believe that Iran’s leadership would take the suicidal step of initiating a nuclear war. Reuven Pedatzur, a political scientist at Tel Aviv University and Israeli Air Force veteran, puts it bluntly: “Past experience shows that the radical Iranian regime, headed by the most extreme of them all, Ayatollah Khomeini, behaved with absolute rationality at the moment of truth.”

Iran’s record during the Iran-Iraq War, for example, shows that the clerical leadership is sensitive to costs, but will press for advantage where it can. Tehran’s rhetoric was uncompromising initially, but once it became clear that the country was in danger of losing outright, its leadership sued for peace. In the words of the late Ayatollah Khomeini, he was forced to accept the advice of “all the high-ranking political and military experts” in Iran, who

***While a nuclear capability  
would take unprovoked  
regime change off the table,  
it would not give Iran carte  
blanche to act as it pleases  
with respect to all of its  
foreign policy goals.***

had apparently told him that the prospect of victory was at least five years away and that Iran would be fighting a defensive war and attempting to rebuild its forces over the entire five years. This shift in policy would seem to reflect a fundamental rationality.

Further, it is hard to believe that Israel or the United States would wait for a court-of-law degree of certitude after absorbing a nuclear attack to retaliate against the most likely country of origin: Iran. Nor would the transfer of weapons out of control of

the Tehran government to a non-state group be viewed as anything less than an act of war by the United States. Either development would bring an immediate end to the ruling regime. Although no one can prove a negative, in the case of Iran there is little evidence that the clerical regime would bring about its own immolation in pursuit of ideological or religious goals.

### **The Regional Response**

Another major concern is the potential response of other states in the region. Iran would likely feel emboldened by its acquisition of a nuclear weapon, and could make a play for regional hegemony. That, in turn, could cause neighboring countries to seek nuclear deterrents of their own, or to bolster their own militaries generally in an attempt to deter the Iranians from any mischief.

This concern is probably legitimate, but overstated. Those who fear the prospect of an arms race in the Middle East argue that it would increase the likelihood of war. But, in fact, war becomes more likely if neighboring states do *not* arm themselves. If neighboring states maintain their current, insufficient military efforts, and allow Iran to build power based on its nuclear capability, that would increase the likelihood of war by lowering the perceived cost to Iran of provoking conflict. As it happens, there is evidence that neighboring states do recognize the threat of a nuclear Iran and are beginning to consider appropriate countermeasures.

At the IDEX 2007 arms trade fair in February, Arab countries went on a buying spree, spending billions of



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dollars on advanced weapons platforms. The *New York Times* reported that the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia brokered deals that would raise their total defense expenditures in 2007 to nearly \$60 billion, dwarfing Iran's defense budget.

In March, the *Boston Globe* reported that the State Department and Pentagon were pressing for congressional approval for further increases in arms sales to Arab countries that have prickly relations with Tehran. One former Arab official told the *Financial Times* that the Arabs are now looking at themselves and saying they have to deal with their own problems. Iran is at or near the top of the list of those problems. Although recent reports indicate that Israel is pressuring the administration to back away from arms sales to the Gulf states, Washington should ignore such pressure. Fostering balance in the Persian Gulf is sound policy.

Israel, the one existing (but undeclared) nuclear power in the Middle East, appears to be ramping up efforts to develop a failsafe second-strike capability. This

effort is prudent and justified, but Israel would have a viable land-based second-strike capability even if a potential adversary were to launch an extremely high number of nuclear strikes first. The country is currently thought to possess roughly 200 nuclear weapons, dispersed throughout its (admittedly small) territory. Given that Israel reportedly possesses both nuclear-equipped Jericho-2 missiles in hardened silos and submarines armed with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles (both of which are extremely difficult to destroy, even with highly accurate weapons), it is clear that no conceivable Iranian first strike in the foreseeable future would destroy Israel's retaliatory capability. Furthermore, an Israeli second strike would have a devastating effect on Iran, given that roughly two-thirds of its population is located in urban centers.

It is difficult to believe that the Iranian leadership would bring about the destruction of its own country so that Sunni states like Saudi Arabia could claim the mantle of a victorious post-Israel Islam.



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### **Cramping Our Style?**

Another likely result of Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon is its use as a deterrent to limit U.S. and Israeli policy options in the Middle East. Clearly, Iran's nuclearization would dramatically raise the costs of a U.S. regime-change effort in Tehran. Analyst Thomas Donnelly of the American Enterprise Institute admits that this is a primary concern: "A nuclear-armed Iran is doubly threatening to U.S. interests not only because of the possibility it might employ its weapons or pass them to terrorist groups, but also because of the constraining effect it will impose on U.S. behavior in the region."

In his groundbreaking work *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons* (co-authored with Scott D. Sagan in 1995), Kenneth Waltz put things still more bluntly: "A big reason for America's resistance to the spread of nuclear weapons is that if weak countries have some, they will cramp our style." This is indisputably true, but it would be less important if America revised its grandiose and radical foreign policy posture.

Analysts like Donnelly fear an Iranian bomb because they favor a revolutionary American foreign policy that attempts to use force to transform regimes Washington dislikes. However, to evaluate the implications of Iranian acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability and the resulting narrowing of America's options, it is necessary to determine where the two nations' interests are likely to clash, and to further evaluate these interests in the context of nuclear deterrence.

The threat of nuclear retaliation is most credible when it is tied to the core interests of any state: government survival and territorial integrity. Thus, while a nuclear capability would take unprovoked regime change off the table, it would not give Iran *carte blanche* to act as it pleases with respect to all of its foreign policy goals. Threats to use nuclear weapons to secure peripheral interests would be vastly less credible.

In general, Washington's perception of itself as omnipotent has led to excesses in its Middle East strategy, such as the Iraq operation, and a strategic myopia in terms of its diplomatic posture in the Middle East. For instance, Washington has long promoted and encouraged an unrealistic approach to Israeli security. It has consistently refused to stop the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and supported the ill-advised assault on Lebanon's civilian infrastructure in July 2006. American support for Israeli expansion has damaged our reputation

in the world and done little to put Israel on a path to long-term security. A nuclearized Iran will not "cramp our style" in the sense of altering America's fundamental commitment to Israel's existence; what it may preclude is an extension of the present, unrealistic approach to the Middle East generally.

### **War vs. Deterrence**

Ultimately, the benefits of either policy can be defined by the negative outcomes that they preclude. The benefit of the preventive war option is that it could conceivably delay the Iranian nuclear program. As discussed above, however, this prospect is far from certain, given the poor U.S. intelligence on the Iranian nuclear program.

Even if the United States is able to buy a few extra years of time before a nuclear Iran emerges, it is not clear that the delay will ultimately prevent the mullahs from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The policy could yield all of the negative outcomes of a war, and still ultimately fail to prevent what the war was supposed to prevent — the emergence of a nuclear, theocratic Iran. Admittedly, a policy of bombing now could avoid the uncertainties and dangers of a deterrence policy, at least for a few years. Juxtaposed against that potential benefit, however, is an array of negative consequences, varying from merely undesirable to extremely dangerous.

By contrast, embracing a posture of deterrence would prevent the inevitable loss of American life that would result from a war. Moreover, billions, if not hundreds of billions, of dollars would be left in the productive economy, rather than being allocated to attempting to destroy Iran's nuclear program. The mullahs in Iran would remain unpopular, unable to use the American bogeyman to consolidate support internally. We could also avoid a range of Iranian countermeasures: further chaos in Iraq, attacks against U.S. troops in that country or against Israel, and the prospect of sky-high oil prices and volatility in the Strait of Hormuz. The problems of chaos in a regime-changed Iran, should a conflict escalate to that level, could also be avoided.

In the end, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that deterrence is a preferable policy to preventive war under the circumstances. The latter option opens so many uncertainties that are out of the range of control of the American government that it should be looked on as a supremely undesirable policy. ■

# NEGOTIATE WITH IRAN FROM STRENGTH



Julia Vaskar

U.S. THREATS ARE PROVING HOLLOW — BUT, IF NOT BALANCED BY A VIABLE NEGOTIATING STRATEGY, THEY COULD STILL HAVE HIGHLY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ALL CONCERNED.

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BY *GEORGE B. LAMBRAKIS*

**T**he Bush administration currently has two problems with Iran: Tehran's development of a nuclear capability and suspected Iranian interference in Iraq. Washington correctly sees the two issues as intertwined, but has not yet worked out how to address both together. Instead, American rhetoric has emphasized the stick over the carrot, feeding international alarm that President Bush will turn to military force to "solve" the problems — even though doing so carries major risks.

Meanwhile, the European Union (and individual European countries), the International Atomic Energy Agency and other entities have mainly focused their diplomatic energies on countering Iran's nuclear ambitions. Their collective lack of success can reasonably be ascribed to insufficient leverage, in keeping with the widespread belief that effective diplomacy between adversaries requires what is often described as "negotiating from strength." However, such strength need not require the threat of military power.

Fortunately, an alternative negotiating strategy is available, built on the following premises: Both sides must believe that negotiations have a reasonable chance to succeed, and that direct talks are better than any other alternative currently available. Unless one of the parties is, in effect, prepared to surrender, this usually means that each party must believe it is negotiating from some strength.

For example, by scaring Israel with a creditable military capability during the opening stages of the 1973 "War of the Crossing" (Yom Kippur War), and not being too disastrously defeated at its end, Egypt and Syria gained the confidence to feel that they could negotiate with Israel afterward. This paved the way for the successful Kissinger disengagement agreements and the Egypt-Israel peace treaty President Carter mediated three decades ago.

### **Huffing and Puffing Can Lead to War**

Observers generally agree that the defeat of the Taliban, the ouster of Saddam Hussein and his Sunni-dominated Baath Party, and the bogging down of America in Iraq and Afghanistan have all bolstered Iranian confidence. This has unleashed the hubris of President

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Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and his government has not accepted the commercial and other carrots offered by the Europeans to give up Iran's nuclear aspirations. The Iranians correctly note that the program actually predates the 1979 fall of Shah Pahlevi, though that phase was conducted under considerably different circumstances. These developments have understandably led the U.S. government to seek compensating leverage elsewhere.

So far, the U.S. government has sought to do this by building up naval and air power in Iran's vicinity as a necessary precondition for successfully negotiating from strength (as Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and others have made explicit). There have been sanctions and implied or open signals suggesting military action. In theory, there is nothing wrong with such an approach — if it works. But it has not. There is no indication that it will force the Iranian government to back down, however often it feigns interest in negotiations to buy time.

(The frivolous argument that U.S. anti-missile defenses are required to protect countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic from Iranian attack is patently far-fetched, and only provokes Moscow just as the U.S. is seeking Russian assistance with Iran.)

The danger is that the escalation track on which sanctions and military threats are now riding usually leads, experience shows, beyond any bluffing to actual military action. It engages both sides in a game of chicken from which only extraordinary restraint in the face of unthinkable consequences (as, for example, in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis) forces both sides to stop, take stock and compromise. The great — and in many ways incalculable — consequences of military action against Iran have been explored elsewhere and need not be repeated here.

It would be far better for the U.S. to pursue an alternative strategy, one which also aims at negotiating from strength to match Iran's current confidence. This approach should investigate and make explicit the various disadvantages to Iran of its current behavior, particularly as this behavior could affect when and how the U.S. departs Iraq and how it proceeds in Afghanistan.

### **Iranian Vulnerabilities**

Obviously, a prime requirement in deciding whether and how to negotiate is to obtain the best possible understanding of your adversary's strengths and weaknesses. From Washington's vantage point, the most important of these is a recognition that Iran's early post-revolutionary

## F O C U S

ambition to spread its Shia political version of Islamic fundamentalism abroad has been blunted. This setback derives from several factors:

- Iran's experience in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, when Arab Shias fought for Iraq, not Shia Iran;
- The imperviousness of Sunni Muslim movements around the Arab world to Iranian leadership;
- The fact that Iran's leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, adopted a more pragmatic view before he died; and (perhaps most important of all),
- The reality that most Iranians, particularly the younger generation, display little enthusiasm for fundamentalist crusades. Indeed, most observers agree that the younger generation is in the process of moderating, if not actually seeking to dismantle, the more extreme aspects of Iranian leadership.

On the other hand, the patriotism Iranians demonstrated in the 1980s is very much alive. So are national and religious pride. The election of Pres. Ahmadinejad over a more pragmatic opponent (who was quietly assist-

ed by some members of the religious establishment) is sometimes seen as a resurgence of fundamentalist Iranian aggressiveness. More likely, it stems from the dominant religious establishment's fear of being ousted by a combination of domestic opposition and external pressure.

Within that context, Ahmadinejad's taunting of Israel and America, and Iran's fervent efforts to win or buy friends in the Arab world — such as the Shia Hezbollah in Lebanon or Sunni Hamas in Palestine — should be seen as more defensive than aggressive. After all, Iran has no discernible claims to foreign territory (ever since the late shah dropped his claims to Bahrain). Nor is it currently fomenting terrorism in the West (where the widespread diaspora of Iranians opposed to the present regime constitutes a strong counterterrorist intelligence asset).

In addition, Iran must view itself as in need of maximum protection in a region populated by a majority of Sunni Arabs. This is brought home by al-Qaida's aggressive Salafist Sunni extremism, and by secular Sunni Arab governments (with the exception of Syria, whose minority

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Alawite Shia leadership is still hanging on in a Sunni-majority state). These are supported by a U.S.-led coalition that includes Britain, one of Iran's historical bogeymen.

True, there are currently no strong Sunni Arab armies that could threaten Iranian sovereignty. But in Iranian eyes the American threat cannot be overlooked, so Tehran must do what it can to produce friendly neighbors in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, while building a nuclear deterrent for the long run. As a bonus, emphasizing external threats — including the key Arab bogeyman, Israel — draws the attention of young Iranians away from their complaints about poor governance and uncertain economic prospects, and enables Tehran to gather support in the anti-Israel Arab “street” to undercut Sunni Arab governments.

This line of Iranian policy is already drawing counter-moves from the area's Sunni governments. It has led the Saudi Arabian government, in particular, to revive King Abdullah's initiative toward an Israeli-Palestinian settlement (previously sidelined by the Israeli and U.S. governments), and to help the Lebanese government resist Hezbollah's pressure for greater influence in Lebanon (contrary to the thrust of Iranian and Syrian policy). Further discussions among Sunni governments and within the Arab League are clearly under way, and they appear to have quiet American and other European encouragement. Even talk of a need to process nuclear fuel in a country such as Saudi Arabia (which holds the world's largest oil reserves) has begun.

### **American Incentives**

It is here that negotiations with Washington become attractive for Tehran. The Americans can be helpful to Iran in countering a variety of uncomfortable developments or actual threats that may arise after any precipitous departure from Iraq or Afghanistan, such as:

- Civil war in Iraq between Sunnis (supported by outsiders) fighting Iran-supported Shias, thus accentuating the Sunni-Shia split to the regional disadvantage of Iran;
- Splits among the Shia militias in Iraq, along the lines of the internecine Christian and Muslim conflicts in Lebanon, which Iran cannot control;

## ***Tehran has already offered several times to talk to the U.S. about developments and possible cooperation in Afghanistan and Iraq.***

- Creation of a Kurdish state with claims to sections of Iran, and the probability of Kurdish clashes with Turkey leading to repeated disorder on Iran's borders; and

- A resurgence of the Taliban as a threat to Iran's interests and a possible magnet for certain portions of its population.

Conversely, there are many ways in which Washington could make the regime uncomfortable;

e.g., supporting anti-Iranian moves in the Sunni world and imposing additional financial and other sanctions that would drag on interminably (as in the Libyan and Cuban cases). Also, once American troops disengage from Iraq, and possibly Afghanistan, Washington gains the advantage of more options against Tehran without running the risk of Iranian countermeasures locally. (This contingency in itself suggests it would be a mistake for Iran to promote anti-American mischief-making in Iraq or Afghanistan aimed at kicking the Americans and British out precipitously.)

We should note in passing that failure to reach viable agreement with the Americans would reinforce Tehran's determination to develop a nuclear deterrent despite the political and economic liabilities Iran might incur, as I outlined in this magazine a year ago (“Iranian Nuclear Weapons: Advantage or Liability?”).

### **Show Confidence, Not Arrogance**

The IAEA and the U.N. Security Council, at American instigation, continue to demand that Iran suspend its nuclear enrichment processes before negotiations begin, in return for the U.N. Security Council suspending the relatively mild sanctions it recently agreed to apply. This approach resembles the failed attempt to impose preconditions in the North Korean case — and, indeed, the current demand that the Palestinian National Authority explicitly recognize Israel before those negotiations proceed.

Giving in to such preconditions is seen by the weaker party as an admission of weakness, not strength, feeding its resistance to talks. Furthermore, once negotiations do begin, they are likely to focus on obtaining from the very start what those demands have been asking for (as with North Korea). Thus it doesn't make sense to insist on

them before negotiations begin — provided one wants to negotiate in the first place.

The Iranian government has already offered several times to talk to the U.S. about developments and possible cooperation in Afghanistan and Iraq. Spurning these advances only signals a combination of arrogance and lack of negotiating confidence on the part of the American-led coalitions. There is no essential reason that prevents a U.S.–Iran dialogue even if neither side starts with conceding a precondition — e.g., Iran suspending its nuclear enrichment processes in return for the U.S. and others on the U.N. Security Council suspending their sanctions. Those sanctions have been hard to reach, are very limited and are a weak reed on which to base all future U.S. dialogue with Iran.

Talking to Iran without reference to preconditions has the added benefit of sidestepping the kinds of onerous negotiations that the U.S. would have to go through once again if it allowed some of the more reluctant members of the Security Council to suspend the sanctions and found

that its talks with Iran were going nowhere. Happily, the U.S. position seems to be softening, at least as regards negotiations with Iran and Syria on Iraq, following the recent recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton Commission. If such talks start well, perhaps broader negotiations can follow.

### Sending A Message

Indeed, Tehran's attitude might be gleaned from the peculiar recent military adventure in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, which saw Iranians pouncing on unsuspecting British sailors and marines in waters that Tehran claims are Iranian, but which clearly are not so demarcated internationally. (The British assert they are actually Iraq's.) The incident is reminiscent of the drawn-out 1979-1981 hostage crisis, during which Islamic militants seized some 50 American diplomats and held them for 14 months, despite worldwide condemnation of such an unprecedented breach of universally accepted international law. Contrary to initial reports and rumors of mal-

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treatment comparable to the way the American diplomats were then held, Tehran reversed course and quickly released the British sailors and marines substantially unharmed. The release was painted by the regime (and personally by Pres. Ahmadinejad) as a generous gesture, even though the British government did not fully respond to Tehran's demand for a face-saving apology.

What are we to make of this? A very likely explanation might be that Iranian activists who believe in demonstrating that they are not afraid of U.S. and British power initiated this incident. They were originally supported by higher Iranian authorities (as the November 1979 hostage-takers were by Ayatollah Khomeini), but were eventually overruled by calmer heads backed by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei (as Iranian hostage-takers who had previously invaded the American embassy back in February 1979 were overruled by an earlier, more moderate Iranian government).

We can interpret this as something of a parallel to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's growing frustration in

the early 1970s, when important gestures like throwing his Soviet military advisers out of Egypt failed to elicit a friendly response from the American government. He eventually resorted to a more dramatic gesture with the 1973 attack on Israeli-held territory that launched the Yom Kippur War. In short, this peculiar incident may signal that the Iranian moderates want to talk before things deteriorate further.

For all the reasons cited here, it makes sense for the U.S. government and its allies to deal with Tehran through a combination of pressure, engagement and containment, as they did over so many years with far more aggressive opponents during the Cold War. The current approach of treating Iran as an enemy, and threatening regime change, only encourages extreme behavior from a government that is already under domestic pressure to transform itself. U.S. threats are proving hollow, but if they are not balanced by a viable negotiating strategy, they could nevertheless have highly negative consequences for all concerned. ■



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# WOMEN'S HEALTH UNDERCUT BY ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

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COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH PROGRAMMING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IS BEING SCUTTLED,  
ALONG WITH THE CONSTITUTION, UNDER THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S IDEOLOGICAL AGENDA.  
SUB-SAHARAN WOMEN ARE AMONG THE IMMEDIATE CASUALTIES.

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BY TAMERA FILLINGER

**B**ush administration policies are constraining women's access to family planning, HIV/AIDS and other public health programs in the developing world and are undermining best practices, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Taken together, the Mexico City Policy, which applies to U.S. family planning funding; the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which governs U.S. funding to combat HIV/AIDS; and a series of USAID policy and funding directives have acted to restrict comprehensive health programming in the developing world while expanding funding to Bush administration supporters and faith-based organizations, even those without experience in the health sector specifically or development generally.

A barrier to women's security and development, these policies are reversing the hard-won gains of recent decades. They have contributed to declines in maternal and child health and access to health care generally, and have led to

increases in birth rates and maternal mortality rates. They have diverted vital funding away from implementation of effective HIV/AIDS prevention strategies and successful multilateral initiatives such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Further, the policies have deflected public attention, as well as taxpayers' funds, from health programs benefiting women who rely on U.S.-financed public health programs for life-saving services.

## The Mexico City Policy

On Jan. 22, 2001, his second full day in office, President George W. Bush reinstated the Mexico City Policy, created during the Reagan administration and named for the city that hosted the conference where it was first introduced. It prohibits USAID family planning funding from going to foreign nongovernmental organizations that — with funding from any source, including their own — do any of the following: provide counseling and referral for abortion; perform abortions in cases not involving a threat to the life of the woman, rape or incest; or advocate making abortion legal or more available in their country.

These prohibitions do not apply to U.S. organizations. However, their programs are still profoundly affected because they are required to enforce the restriction on foreign NGOs receiving U.S. family planning assistance. This has resulted in the exclusion of many capable foreign NGOs from partnerships with U.S. implementers, fragmenting the local public health delivery infrastructure and wasting funds to duplicate public health delivery channels. The policy also

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*Tamera Fillinger was an FSO legal adviser with USAID, serving in Nairobi, Jakarta and Washington, D.C., from 1992 to 2000. She now advises international development NGOs in private practice. She lives in Beijing with her family. This article was prepared for a University of Maryland law school symposium on the global advancement of women. A footnoted version of the article is available as "Enhancing Human Security: U.S. Policies and Their Health Impact on Women in Sub-Saharan Africa," 6 U. Md. L.J. Race, Religion, Gender & Class 337-52 (2006).*

imposes restrictions on the free expression of foreign NGOs: they must limit their advice and services to patients, even when financed by non-U.S. sources, or lose U.S. funding.

The Mexico City Policy has forced the closure of health clinics in sub-Saharan Africa. In many rural and underserved areas, these facilities are the only source of affordable primary health care. They not only offer reproductive health services and counseling, but provide prenatal and postnatal obstetric care, HIV/AIDS voluntary counseling and testing, management of sexually transmitted infections, pharmaceutical and laboratory services, maternal and child health services, Pap smears, minor surgery and well-baby services.

In Kenya, the two leading reproductive health organizations (Marie Stopes International Kenya and the Family Planning Association of Kenya) lost all U.S. family planning funding after refusing to accede to the terms of the policy in 2001, and were forced to close clinics when other donors were unable to make up the budget shortfall. Thousands of people — primarily women and children — were left with little or no access to health care. Similarly, Zambia's largest family planning provider, the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia, lost its U.S. funding and closed clinics due to the Mexico City Policy.

By crippling reproductive health care providers, the policy has undermined HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts as well. Because HIV/AIDS in Africa is primarily transmitted via heterosexual sex, clinics offering family planning play a key role in HIV prevention. Funding shortages have decreased community-based distribution programs, which are also a supply conduit for HIV/AIDS drugs.

Making matters worse, U.S. government funding for family planning — even to those NGOs that adhere to

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## *The Mexico City Policy has forced the closure of health clinics in sub- Saharan Africa.*

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the Mexico City Policy — has decreased each year of the Bush administration. This is despite the fact that access to family planning and contraception has been shown to help prevent unintended pregnancies and reduce abortions. After reinstatement of the policy, a lack of access to reproductive health services has led to an increase in unsafe abortions: this remains a major public health threat, disproportionately affecting women under 25 and contributing to high maternal mortality rates.

### **Abstinence, Not Prevention**

President Bush announced the “President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief” during his 2003 State of the Union address, and Congress enacted the program later that year by passing the U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003. PEPFAR is meant to provide \$15 billion over five years (2004-2008) for AIDS-related services in 15 countries: 12 in Africa, two in the Caribbean and one in Asia. To administer the funds, the administration created the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, housed in the Department of State, and named Randall Tobias, the former CEO of the Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company, as director. (He later succeeded Andrew Natsios as USAID administrator, but resigned at the end of April.) Mark Dybul currently serves as the U.S. global AIDS coordinator.

Though primarily directed toward Africa, where the world’s highest HIV prevalence rates occur, PEPFAR does not address the grim realities facing that continent’s women, who contract 60 percent of the infections in sub-Saharan Africa (and comprise a majority of those infected with HIV worldwide). Each year almost two million Africans die from AIDS, while over three million more become newly infected. In sub-Saharan Africa, 80 percent of new infections are the result of unprotected sex, often within marriage. Recent data indicate that the rate of new infections is spreading fastest among married women and adolescent girls, who are 2.5 times more likely to become infected with HIV than young men. Women living in poverty across the region are under extreme pressure to enter into sexual relationships for economic or cultural reasons; they are often forced into early marriages (with potentially unfaithful partners) or into sexual associations to support themselves or their families.

Compounding the crisis for African women, those found to have HIV are often blamed for bringing the virus into the home, and abandoned by their families. Unequal property and inheritance rights leave them defenseless. They have little or no recourse when they face abusive relationships or are left homeless when their partner dies of an AIDS-related disease; and they face a nearly-guaranteed death sentence, for themselves and their children, from AIDS.

Instead of addressing this reality, and getting funding to those who need it most, PEPFAR rewards two key political supporters of the Bush administration: the pharmaceutical industry and Christian conservatives. The pharmaceutical industry benefits because the lion’s share of funding under the initiative is designated for AIDS treatment rather than prevention, and the treatment budget goes

to purchase antiretroviral drugs from U.S. pharmaceutical companies.

Only 20 percent of PEPFAR funding is allocated to prevention, despite the millions of new infections that occur each year. And the prevention budget's resources have largely been offered up to faith-based organizations. PEPFAR requires that one-third of all prevention funding go to abstinence and faithfulness programs, even though there is little evidence to demonstrate their effectiveness. In practice, this one-third requirement, or earmark, is routinely exceeded due to pressure from the administration. In addition, the program has reduced funding for condom procurement and limits distribution to certain high-risk groups, rather than the general population of sexually active individuals.

### **A Stark Shift in Policy**

PEPFAR represents a stark shift in U.S. HIV/AIDS policy — away from prevention and toward treatment; away from science-based approaches and toward ideologically-motivated programs. In the midst of the pandemic decimating Africa, the Bush administration has chosen to abandon the effective, comprehensive strategies of transmission education, voluntary counseling and testing and the provision of condoms, in favor of unproven abstinence and faithfulness strategies that are largely irrelevant in a context where the majority of women and girls are already married, have unfaithful partners already infected with HIV, or have little sexual bargaining power.

Further, PEPFAR is a unilateral, single-donor approach. As such, it undervalues the vital integration of U.S. efforts with other donors and host governments, and downgrades American interest in, and funding for, multilateral financing instruments such as the Global Fund. There is continued confusion over how U.S. procurement of medications for treat-

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ment will be coordinated with the Global Fund and other donors.

PEPFAR's requirement that medications be FDA-approved (rather than World Health Organization-approved, as the Global Fund requires), and thus only available from U.S. pharmaceutical companies, dramatically increases costs, thereby reducing the number of people served. When Dr. Charles Carpenter, the head of HIV/AIDS research at Brown University's medical school, visited Africa as part of an Institutes of Medicine oversight panel, doctors complained to him that they could buy three times as much medicine if PEPFAR accepted WHO approvals.

The program has been divisive, triggering battles among groups with differing perspectives on prevention and embittering donors. When Uganda faced a dire shortage of condoms in August 2005, Stephen Lewis, U.N. special envoy for AIDS in Africa, said: "There is no question in my mind that the condom crisis in Uganda is being driven and exacerbated by PEPFAR and by the extreme policies that the administration in the U.S. is now pursuing in the emphasis on abstinence."

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Lewis has also said that the emphasis on abstinence at the expense of condom distribution is a “distortion of the preventive apparatus and is resulting in great damage, and undoubtedly will cause significant numbers of infections which should never have occurred.”

In April 2006, a Government Accountability Office report (GAO-06-395) found that the earmark requiring that one-third of prevention funds be used for abstinence and faithfulness programs is undermining and diverting funds from effective AIDS education and prevention. In addition, it found that the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator is applying the abstinence earmark to more, and sometimes far more, than a third of funding, further limiting appropriate, country-specific interventions. In Nigeria, nearly 70 percent of PEPFAR prevention funds have gone to abstinence-until-marriage programs. In Tanzania, the newest prevention grant dedicates 95 percent of the funds to abstinence and faithfulness programs for youth between 15 and 24 years old.

In March 2007, the Institute of Medicine, the most prestigious medical advisory panel in the U.S. — which is required by PEPFAR’s authorizing legislation to oversee the program — reported that its effectiveness is seriously hampered by restrictions imposed by the administration and Congress, especially the abstinence and faithfulness earmark and the requirement for separate FDA approval of AIDS drugs that WHO has already approved. The institute also recommended that PEPFAR focus much more on prevention than treatment: “otherwise, the epidemic will never end.”

### **Promoting Faith-Based Organizations**

Starting in 2003, a series of USAID policy directives helped steer U.S. foreign assistance funding to faith-based

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***Directive 04-08 and  
Executive Order 13279  
alter the longstanding  
practice that groups  
preach religion in one  
space and run government  
programs in another.***

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organizations. Policy Directive 03-10, titled “Prohibition on Requirement for Prior USAID-Specific Experience in Evaluation Criteria for Award of Agency A&A Instruments,” became effective on Oct. 31 of that year. Under the guise of broadening competition and ensuring lower prices, this policy served to open up federal funding to faith-based organizations, even those with no prior developing-country experience.

The directive states: “Over the years, in efforts to identify highly qualified and responsive recipients ... solicitation documents have begun to reflect increasingly restrictive minimum qualification and evaluation factors for award.” One of these factors is the requirement of “prior USAID experience” for minimal qualification.

It continues: “While the need for familiarity with the type of work typically executed through USAID instruments is understood, the agency must be careful to avoid requirements that are unduly restrictive and are contrary to the agency’s commitment to promoting competition.”

The meaning is clear — faith-based organizations may be deemed competitive for federal funding based on factors other than prior USAID experi-

ence or development know-how. In altering established procurement rules in order to reward Bush administration supporters, the policy helped bolster the mission of the new Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. CFBCI was established by Pres. Bush at USAID in 2002 to create a level playing field for faith-based groups to compete for agency programs, and to increase their access to and knowledge of U.S. government funding sources. Another stated focus of the initiative is to educate USAID/Washington and field staff about the critical role faith-based organizations play in meeting development objectives.

On June 29, 2004, another noteworthy step was taken. USAID Policy Directive 04-08, titled “Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Faith-Based and Community Organizations,” implemented Pres. Bush’s Executive Order 13279 (Dec. 12, 2002) titled “Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations.” This policy applies to all USAID funding sources.

### **Blurring Church and State**

The directive states: “No organization may be discriminated against on the basis of religious character or affiliation in the administration or distribution of federal financial assistance. ... Faith-based and other community organizations must be able to compete on an equal footing for federal financial assistance. ... Faith-based organizations may not be required as a condition of federal assistance to sacrifice their independence, autonomy, expression or religious character. Among other things, faith-based organizations may use their facilities to provide social services supported by USAID, without removing or altering religious art, icons, scriptures or other symbols from these facilities. In addition, a faith-based organization may retain religious terms in its name, select its board members on a religious basis, and include

religious references in its mission statements and governing documents.”

This dramatic shift in approach blurs the separation of church and state required by the Constitution. For decades, U.S. policy has sought to avoid intermingling government programs and religious proselytizing, aiming to abide by the First Amendment’s prohibition against a state religion and ensure that aid recipients are able to receive assistance, even if they don’t share the religion of the provider.

Directive 04-08 and Executive Order 13279 alter the longstanding practice that groups preach religion in one space and run government programs in another. Now organizations may schedule prayers or religious services immediately before or after dispensing taxpayer-funded aid. The administration rejected efforts to require groups to inform beneficiaries that they don’t have to attend religious services to get aid. Instead, groups are merely encouraged to make that clear.

In addition, the directive and executive order require USAID to provide data to the Office of Management and Budget regarding the participation of faith-based organizations in federally financed programs, to ensure that they are not being discriminated against.

### **Opposing Work with Prostitutes**

On June 9, 2005, USAID issued an additional directive to further the administration’s ideological agenda. Policy Directive 05-04, which applies to PEPFAR’s \$15 billion in funding, requires that any organization receiving such funding sign a certification opposing prostitution and sex trafficking. The directive is significant because it replaces a 2004 policy on the same subject that applied only to foreign, not U.S.-based, NGOs, and now extends the requirement to American organizations.

The 2004 policy had specifically stated that this certification require-

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## ***Organizations may schedule religious services before or after dispensing taxpayer-funded aid.***

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ment could not be applied to American organizations because — mirroring court precedent that the government could not restrict or require certain speech of U.S. organizations as a precondition for funding — the Department of Justice had determined it to be unconstitutional. The 2005 policy reflects the DOJ’s new opinion that “there are reasonable arguments to support [the] constitutionality” of the requirement.

This groundbreaking directive was seen as a trial balloon to determine whether it would be possible to extend the Mexico City Policy to U.S. organizations, as well. The reaction was overwhelming: many American organizations objected, and a group of them brought suit (Alliance for Open Society International et al. v. USAID). The lawsuit argued that the directive violates the plaintiffs’ constitutional rights in three ways: 1) it is unconstitutionally vague; 2) it requires grantees to adopt, as their own organization-wide policy, the ideologically-motivated position of the U.S. government regarding sex work; and 3) it imposes an absolute bar on grantees using their own, nongovernmental funding to engage in speech activities.

The directive constrains the provision of public health funds to women of the developing world. First, the policy rescinds a previous requirement that organizations utilize a mul-

tisectoral approach to HIV/AIDS prevention. That requirement had been put in place by advocates of science- or evidence-based strategies, due to the effectiveness of the approach. The single-sector (e.g., abstinence-only) approach championed by conservative Christian advocates was largely untested abroad.

The directive’s language, which tracks the language of PEPFAR, means that, in spite of past USAID practice and scientific evidence regarding effectiveness, the government may fund single-sector, ideologically-driven programs. In fact, it gives organizations permission to ignore even the Bush administration’s own much-touted ABC approach — a shorthand for promoting abstinence, being faithful and using condoms — and focus only, for example, on abstinence training.

Second, the policy prohibits recipients from promoting the legalization or practice of prostitution or sex trafficking. This does not sound overly restrictive on its face, given that very few organizations promote the legalization of prostitution. However, the prohibition on promoting the practice of prostitution leaves room for an overly broad interpretation that could compromise any project that includes sex workers. Despite numerous requests for guidance on what the phrase means, neither USAID nor the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator has offered any clarification.

Because sex workers are a primary vector of HIV/AIDS transmission, they play a vital role in HIV prevention programs. By requiring NGOs to issue statements that condemn such practices, the policy acts to further stigmatize sex workers. It thereby exacerbates the difficulty of helping them protect their health and the health of others, undermines efforts to encourage healthier means of employment, and ignores the social and economic vulnerability that drives people into such work.

## A Chilling Effect

Further, the lack of guidance on what constitutes promoting prostitution constrains U.S. and foreign organizations from working in any capacity with sex workers. Does providing them with health care promote prostitution? Does teaching them English or clothing or feeding their children do so? The resulting murkiness has had a chilling effect on HIV/AIDS programming that relates in any way to sex workers. Funding recipients also face an historically aggressive USAID inspector general's office that may impose both civil and criminal liability for even inadvertent transgressions. They are also aware that the Bush administration has devoted additional resources and efforts to detecting and punishing noncompliance.

Third, the policy requires recipients to certify that they oppose prostitution and sex trafficking. In their court case, the U.S. NGOs argued that this requirement violates their rights because it requires, as a precondition to funding, that an organization confirm that it adheres to a certain set of beliefs and may not have a differing view on the subject, in any country context, for any reason. Like the Mexico City Policy, this requirement serves to constrain an organization, and now a U.S. organization, from providing advice or taking certain actions, even when doing so with its own money.

In addition to the more fundamental objections, any certification requirement of this magnitude creates a burden on recipients that was meant to be addressed by the Paperwork Reduction Act. Such new certification requirements are to be announced in the *Federal Register*, the paperwork burden assessed, and the public given a reasonable period for comment. However, in this case, USAID chose to impose the policy on U.S. organizations without affording them any opportunity for assessment

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## *A return to best practices in the provision of U.S. assistance and leadership in the international health sector can reverse this trend.*

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or comment. As it did when reimposing the Mexico City Policy in 2001, the agency utilized an "emergency" exception that allows a policy to be instituted without notice in the *Federal Register* and without notice to the public.

Directive 05-04 was declared unconstitutional on May 9, 2006, by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. The court ruled, in *Alliance for Open Society International et al. v. USAID*, that the certification requirement violated the First Amendment rights of the two plaintiff organizations, Alliance for Open Society International and Pathfinder International, by restricting their privately funded speech and by forcing them to adopt the government's viewpoint in order to remain eligible for funds. "The Supreme Court has repeatedly found that speech, or an agreement not to speak, cannot be compelled or coerced as a condition of participation in a government program," wrote Judge Victor Marrero.

Despite this decision, USAID has not withdrawn or amended the directive and continues to require recipients (other than the two plaintiffs) to sign the certification requirement. In August 2006, the government appealed the district court's decision in the

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

## A Return to Best Practices

The Bush administration's ideological agenda in the health sector increasingly and disproportionately hurts women, which is especially tragic in sub-Saharan Africa where the greatest needs exist. A return to best practices in the provision of U.S. assistance and leadership in the international health sector can reverse this trend. These best practices include:

- Proven, comprehensive, science-based HIV/AIDS prevention strategies, including reproductive health education and services, transmission education, voluntary counseling and testing, and the provision of condoms;
- Programs that focus in each country context on the factors that put women and girls at greater risk of HIV/AIDS and that support improvements in their legal, economic, educational and social status;
- Collaboration with NGOs, other donors and host governments to coordinate the provision of essential HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and public health services and commodities;
- Commitment to each host country's national HIV/AIDS plan, including participation in the country's coordinating agency and national monitoring and evaluation framework;
- Renewed and increased commitment to the Global Fund, the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Population Fund, and other successful multilateral initiatives and programs benefiting women's health; and
- Renewed and increased commitment to family planning services and reproductive health education programs that lead to fewer unsafe abortions, lower maternal mortality, decreased sexually transmitted infections and HIV, and improved maternal and child health. ■

# AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • June 2007

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS DAY 2007

### Memorial Plaque Ceremony Honors Fallen Colleagues

AFSA's annual Memorial Plaque Ceremony was held on May 4 during Foreign Affairs Day. The ceremony serves to honor those Foreign Service personnel who have lost their lives while serving their country overseas in the line of duty or under heroic or other inspirational circumstances. With the addition of three more names this year — Margaret Alexander, Doris G. Knittle and Henry W. Antheil Jr. — the total number of names on the plaques has reached 225.

AFSA President Tony Holmes gave the opening remarks at the ceremony and presided over the presentation of the colors by the U.S. Armed Forces Color Guard. He then introduced Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns, standing in for Secretary Condoleezza Rice, who was traveling in the Middle East. Attending the ceremony were family



MIKKELA THOMPSON

Under Secretary Nicholas Burns (left) meets Thomas Knittle, brother of Plaque Ceremony honoree Doris Knittle.

members of those being honored as well as Under Secretary for Management Henrietta Fore, Director General George

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## LITTLE-KNOWN CABLE GIVES GUIDANCE ON REFUGEE REFERRALS

### How to Aid Iraqis with U.S. Government Ties

BY SHAWN DORMAN

AFSA often hears from members who have served in Iraq or are serving there now about their concern for the safety of the Iraqis with whom they have worked. They want to help these colleagues but do not know how. It is no secret that Iraqis who have worked, or still work, for the U.S. government in Iraq — for the embassy, the U.S. military or a U.S. gov-

ernment contracting organization — are a particularly vulnerable group, because of those ties.

The issue of U.S. responsibility for these individuals is gaining public attention, through hearings on Capitol Hill, press reports including George Packer's widely publicized March 26 *New Yorker* article,

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## DAY ON THE HILL

### AFSA Hosts Retiree Visit to Capitol Hill

BY AUSTIN TRACY



MIKKELA THOMPSON

Day on the Hill participants study briefing materials on the way to Capitol Hill.

May 3rd marked AFSA's seventh annual Day on the Hill, an opportunity for Foreign Service retirees and active-duty members to head to Capitol Hill to help raise awareness of key Foreign Service issues with members of Congress. Over 40 members and AFSA staffers representing 10 states, including the District of Columbia, participated in this

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# AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



## AFSA/USAID's Publishing Venture Pays Off

Following the disappearance of the USAID newsletter *FrontLines* in the spring of 2006, AFSA heard many complaints from FS members who missed the publication. AFSA was told that *FrontLines* had ceased publication because all USAID publications were undergoing a review. To fill the void, AFSA/USAID established a new publication, *The Vanguard*, in order to keep employees updated on what is happening inside the agency and in the field. After the release of the second edition of *The Vanguard* in May, AFSA/USAID heard from agency management that *FrontLines* will begin publishing again in June and received quiet praise for the successful pressure on the agency to restart the publication. Due to the positive response to *The Vanguard*, AFSA/USAID intends to keep publishing it, with a focus on human interest stories from USAID officers in the field. Send story ideas and photos to [fzamora@usaid.gov](mailto:fzamora@usaid.gov).

## Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER



In yet another post without an officer fluent in the local language, the Rapid Response Mimes swing into action...

## AFSA Receives Large Contribution to Scholarship Fund

The AFSA Scholarship Fund has received the final disbursement, of \$102,800, from the Naomi Pekmezian Trust. Since 2005, the Naomi Pekmezian estate has made three contributions to AFSA, totaling over \$162,000. Ms. Pekmezian, a retired FSO, died in November 2005 at the age of 95. She was instrumental in developing the Turkish Basic Language course at the Foreign Service Institute during the 1960s. The course was later developed into a textbook and audiotapes that are still in use today.

The generous financial contributions from Ms. Pekmezian to AFSA will benefit Foreign Service families for years to come.

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Gilbert Sheinbaum



## Today's Foreign Service: Love It or Leave It?

There is a great — and widening — divide within the Foreign Service. The changing nature of many overseas assignments in the global-repositioning era, the proliferation of extreme-hardship and unaccompanied posts, and the need to fill hundreds of war-zone positions throughout Iraq and Afghanistan have all polarized our once tightly-knit professional community. Two very different visions of the Foreign Service career are competing against each other.

The thousands of comments that AFSA received in response to our latest electronic survey of active-duty State members worldwide revealed deep passions, bitterness and — to my surprise and regret — a profound lack of sympathy among our colleagues on both sides of this divide.

On the one hand, there are the people (a vocal minority) who feel they have unfairly spent a disproportionate amount of their careers in hardship assignments — often going from one dusty Third World country to another — while nursing a simmering resentment of those who they see as slackers interested only in Washington, Western Europe and a few other cushy posts. Many of these multiple-hardship veterans sent us comments accusing a whole class of colleagues of craftily avoiding the tough assignments by “gaming” the system and exploiting seventh-floor connections and personal ties to certain bureau front offices.

These people are often so angry about this perceived inequity that they are prepared to accept virtually any changes in the assignment rules that might put the squeeze on anyone who has failed to do a recent hardship tour, regardless of the reason. On this side of the divide, the AFSA survey responses were full of harsh comments directed at colleagues along the lines of: “This is the Foreign Service, after all ...” and, “If they can't be worldwide-available, they should just get out.”

On the other hand, there are the people (a slight majority) who feel equally strongly that the Foreign Service needs to preserve some balance between the demands of hardship service and the demands of family-friendliness and career planning. These members argue that people who are committed to the Foreign Service career often reach a point in their lives where personal circumstances might make it impossible for them to take certain kinds of assignments for a period of time. Many of them insist that they have done more than their fair share of hardship postings at an earlier time, but that it is a perfectly legitimate expectation at some point to be able to put a couple of teenage kids through a decent high school. They also

note that, while we have to fill differential positions, we also need Europe/Japan/Canada specialists and people working on important policy issues in Washington.



Many of those currently in Washington or at less difficult overseas posts express frustration over the increasingly exclusive focus on hardship, which they believe is penalizing them in promotions and onward assignments and making them feel as if their hard work is not valued any more. These people are urging AFSA to fight for Foreign Service assignment rules that allow members to have some control over their careers and to preserve the ability to deal with family issues when they arise, without being threatened with expulsion from a profession they love.

Both sides in this debate, I think, might show just a little more understanding for the other. The hardliners should realize that, regardless of their perceptions and the fact that we all know of a handful of egregious individual cases, the total number of true hardship avoiders in the Foreign Service is quite small: only a couple of hundred FS members (out of 11,300) are technically subject to “fair share” bidding requirements. They should also know that many of those now arguing for family-friendliness were themselves in the hard-line camp just a few years ago, until something — often a personal development beyond their control — forced them to shift gears. In many cases, they are coping with a dying parent, a health crisis involving their spouse, or a painful child custody situation that changes their outlook for a while. But these people still remain devoted to the Foreign Service and cannot just pick up and leave after putting in 10 or 15 years. The facile suggestion that they should just “switch to the Civil Service” is utterly unrealistic (as is obvious to anyone who knows how limited such opportunities are at State).

Conversely, the family-friendly crowd should show some sympathy for the legitimate concerns of members who are currently bearing the heaviest burden of service in extreme-hardship and unaccompanied posts. Conditions at some of these posts are much tougher than in the past, and life for multiple-hardship veterans is no cakewalk. Yet we must all face the unpleasant reality that our system does not really spread the pain evenly.

And while we're at it ... How about a little bit of understanding for AFSA's efforts to represent in good faith our members on both sides of this divide? □

**Day on the Hill • Continued from page 53**

year's program. The event is held on the day before Foreign Affairs Day in order to allow retirees in town for that event to participate.

AFSA President Tony Holmes welcomed participants at the Foreign Service Club for a morning briefing and breakfast and thanked everyone for attending, especially those who traveled long distances. Participants were then introduced to Ian Houston, AFSA's director of legislative affairs, who gave an overview of the issues at hand. Houston encouraged the participants to stay connected with AFSA, and particularly with AFSA's legislative team, in order to help create and strengthen a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service.

The key messages taken to Capitol Hill included an appeal to fully fund the international affairs budget request of \$36.2 billion and to eliminate the penalty for service overseas by passing overseas comparability pay. AFSA also advocated several issues of concern to Foreign Service retirees, chiefly the passage of the Social Security Fairness Act of 2007 to repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, both of which unfairly disadvantage lower-income annuitants.

After taking a bus to Capitol Hill, par-



AFSA delegation meets with Senator Richard Lugar, R-Ind. From left, AFSA/USAID VP Francisco Zamora, Legislative Affairs Director Ian Houston, Board Secretary Tex Harris, Sen. Lugar, Amb. Thomas Boyatt and Amb. William DePree.



The AFSA delegation heads to Capitol Hill.

ticipants met inside the hearing room of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations with two active-duty FSOs serving on the Hill as Pearson Fellows. Ms. Cherri Daniels

from the office of Senator Bill Nelson, D-Fla., and Ms. Strother Murray from the office of Senator Joseph Lieberman, Independent-Conn., spoke about the challenges facing the State Department on the Hill. Both highlighted the respect and admiration held by members of Congress for the individual career diplomats working around the world to advance the nation's interests. Noting that the Department of Defense has a strong, vocal constituency base, Daniels urged Foreign Service

families and retirees to maintain contact with the local constituent offices of their members of Congress to advocate for a stronger Foreign Service.

In a new approach, several teams of AFSA participants visited the majority leadership offices of the House and Senate as well as Democratic and Republican staffers of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs Committee. Mr. Houston will follow up on these meetings to maintain good relations with the leadership offices and the committees that affect the Foreign Service.

AFSA's Day on the Hill participants visited congressional offices representing California, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington. □



Legislative Affairs Director Ian Houston, Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., and AFSA President Tony Holmes.

**Plaque Ceremony • Continued from page 53**

Staples, Acting USAID Director Jim Kunder, Commercial Service Director General Israel Hernandez, Ambassador Juri Luik of Estonia and Ambassador Pekka Lintu of Finland.

In his opening remarks, Amb. Holmes said, “Every year during Foreign Affairs Day, it is customary to pay tribute to those individuals who have lost their lives in diplomatic service to their country while serving overseas. These two plaques on either side of the lobby are a testament to the commitment and dedication of the men and women who chose to proudly advance America’s interests abroad and to promote its cherished values of freedom from tyranny, democracy and peace. However, these plaques also remind us of the profound sacrifice made by these individuals and their families while pursuing these goals.

“The three individuals whom we honor today are separated by many years and the circumstances of their deaths were very different. However, they all ventured forth voluntarily to serve their country, despite the risks and hardships inherent in the nature of the Foreign Service.”

**Margaret Alexander**, a Foreign Service officer with USAID, was killed on Sept. 23, 2006, in a helicopter crash in Nepal. At the time of her death, she was serving as the deputy director of the USAID mission in Nepal, and had recently been confirmed as the new USAID mission director to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Ms. Alexander was returning from a ceremony marking the handover of a World Wildlife Fund conservation area to local control. There were no survivors among the 24 people on board, including several Nepali officials, the Finnish chargé d'affaires, a USAID Foreign Service National serving as the environmental officer at the mission and several officials of the World Wildlife Fund.

**Doris G. Knittle** served as a Foreign Service nurse in Kabul. She was found murdered in her home in August 1970. Through the efforts of many people who were at the embassy at that time — including Amb. Bruce Laignen, who was the deputy chief of mission, and Dr. John H. Baker, the chief medical officer who discovered her body, as well as a nurse practitioner recently stationed in Kabul, Ms. Elaine Leach — sufficient documentation was obtained to determine that Ms. Knittle, was killed in the line of duty and thus should have her name inscribed on the Memorial Plaque. Her brother, Thomas Knittle, told *AFSA News* that he



MIKELA THOMPSON

Honoring those who died in the line of duty during the AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony.



MIKELA THOMPSON

New names added to the AFSA Memorial Plaque.

was shocked, and then thrilled, by the news that his sister would be honored in this way, nearly 37 years later.

**Henry W. Antheil Jr.** worked as a clerk in the U.S. legation in Helsinki and was on TDY to the Tallinn legation as a diplomatic courier. He was removing sensitive materials from the office in Tallinn on the same day that the Soviet blockade of

Estonia went into effect. He was on his way back to Helsinki on a Finnish passenger plane when it exploded in mid-air on June 14, 1940, minutes after take-off. All passengers aboard the plane were killed.

In his remarks, U/S Burns said, “This is a day to remember that we are on the front lines all over the world in 266 embassies and consulates, that we and the professional diplomatic corps accept the responsibility and the honor of serving our country, and we also accept the dangers that go along with that in an increasingly dangerous profession.”

Later in the day, AFSA hosted a reception for retirees and other Foreign Affairs Day guests. Amb. Holmes presented merit scholarship awards to the five winners who were at the ceremony: Jason Meer, Sarah Haviland, Andrew Keith, Paul Armstrong and Erica Wickman. Erica, the recipient of the art merit scholarship for her clarinet performance, treated the AFSA guests to a piece. The scholarship donors who were present for the ceremony were John and Priscilla Becker; Giuseppa Spigler and her son Richard; Nancy Leary; AAFSW President Judy Felt; and DACOR Bacon House Foundation Executive Director Richard McKee. Amb. Edward Dillery and Amb. Holmes conferred the awards. □

## In-State Tuition: Do Your Homework

Given that Foreign Service personnel spend good chunks of their careers overseas, we often make our decisions about where to buy property based upon where we expect our children will go to school, or where we plan to retire. While this makes sense, it pays to do your homework, particularly with regard to college tuition planning. I recently learned that assuming that buying property, paying state income tax and registering to vote will qualify your child for in-state tuition can be a costly mistake.

I had planned to sell my Virginia townhouse and buy a home in Michigan, where I intend to retire. Michigan has excellent public universities for my eighth- and sixth-grade sons to attend when they finish high school. Because property prices are lower in Michigan, I was hoping to buy a larger home with the equity I have in my Fairfax home.

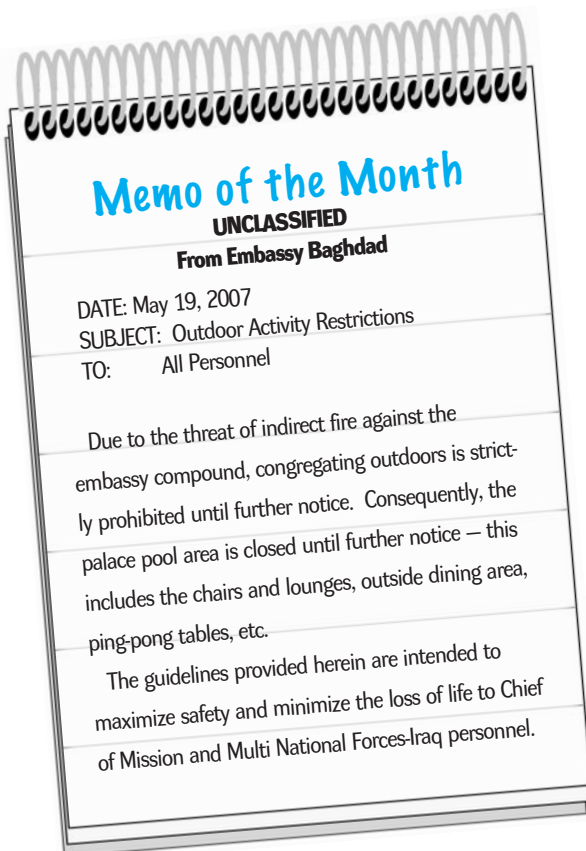
However, I have discovered that owning property and paying state income taxes is not necessarily enough to qualify for in-state residency. The emphasis in Michigan is on physical presence in the state. The University of Michigan Web site indicates that to qualify, members of the military, Peace Corps, etc., must have established residency before leaving the state to join their respective organization and maintained the residency throughout their service abroad. While I have spent most of my sum-

mer vacations in the state since childhood, I have never been a permanent resident. Thus, when I called the registrar's office, they explained that my children would not qualify for in-state tuition, even though I planned to pay at least four years of state income taxes before my oldest son would be eligible to attend the university.

From this experience, I would suggest if you plan to buy a residence somewhere, you research the regulations carefully before assuming that your children will meet the requirements to qualify as in-state residents. In addition, different universities in each state may have different policies. The best guide I found on this topic was [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), a Web site offering excellent one-page summaries of the policies of the largest universities in each state.

I would also recommend that you check the university's Web site and follow-up with a call to the registrar's office to confirm the residency requirements. [Note: The Web site [www.collegegold.com/applydecide/staterequirements](http://www.collegegold.com/applydecide/staterequirements) has links to each state's requirements.] □

*Robert "Bob" Wert is currently serving as a financial management officer in La Paz.*



## AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

### Seeking AFSA Reps

AFSA staff and officials in Washington are doing their best to confront the major challenges facing the Foreign Service today in a way that accurately reflects the thinking and concerns of our members. To do this most effectively, we need good AFSA post representatives to keep us connected to the 70 percent of our membership posted overseas.

If your post does not currently have an AFSA representative, we hope you will consider joining the AFSA team in this position. AFSA reps can play an important role in conveying vital information to members and soliciting member views concerning proposed changes in Foreign Service assignment rules, promotion precepts, allowances/differentials, FAM regulations, medical/security issues, annual/home leave, EFM employment possibilities, Member of Household status and a wide range of other matters that have a direct impact on Foreign Service members overseas. AFSA reps have the statutory right to deal with post management on behalf of members with regard to both individual and collective concerns. AFSA reps can help address any issues that relate to the conditions of work for our members at post. The authority and responsibilities of an AFSA post rep are spelled out in the AFSA Chapter manual ([www.afsa.org/postreps/manual.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/postreps/manual.cfm)).

If you would like more information, or if you do not know if your post has an AFSA rep, check in with the AFSA membership department at [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org). Thanks for considering taking on this important job at your post.

## AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

### USAID Changes at the Top

USAID Administrator Randall Tobias resigned on April 27, citing personal reasons. On May 7, President Bush announced his intention to nominate State Department Under Secretary for Management Henrietta Fore to be administrator for USAID and director of foreign assistance, the two posts held by Tobias. She was named acting administrator of USAID and acting director of foreign assistance on May 7, and is serving in those positions concurrently with her State Department position as under secretary for management.

In the days immediately following the Tobias resignation, USAID Deputy Administrator James Kunder served as acting administrator. During his first day in that position, he requested a meeting with AFSA, which was held on May 9. AFSA and Kunder had a thorough discussion of many issues important to AFSA members, including overseas comparability pay, the USAID operating budget, staffing, diversity and organizational changes.

AFSA also discussed the issue of the delay in Senior Foreign Service promotions for USAID candidates with Mr. Kunder. As the pay-for-performance system has been implemented at the foreign affairs agencies for Senior Foreign Service employees, USAID has been slow to process promotions. Senior USAID employees identified for promotion in September 2006 were still not approved by mid-May 2007. Mr. Kunder said that he too was concerned with the delay and had contacted the Senate staff in charge of scheduling the Senior Foreign Service promotion nominations for Senate approval and found them receptive to expediting the process.

AFSA looks forward to working with Ms. Fore in her new position, and to continuing work with Mr. Kunder, who has moved back to his position as deputy administrator.

### Iraqi Refugees • Continued from page 56

“Betrayed,” and editorials in the *Los Angeles Times*, as well as vocal criticism of the administration’s current Iraqi refugee policy from Amb. Richard Holbrooke and others.

In April, AFSA raised the issue of the safety and status of Iraqi staff with the director general, and discussions are continuing. AFSA’s statutory mandate does not extend to representing or providing assistance to Foreign Service Nationals, but AFSA recognizes the vital work done by these brave individuals in support of the Foreign Service. “We are keenly aware of our members’ passionate argument that Iraqi FSNs working for the mission often face dire life-and-death decisions and therefore deserve special treatment from the U. S. government,” says AFSA State Vice President Steve Kashkett.

In addition to stressing to management the need for passage of legislation to facilitate refugee processing for former Iraqi FSNs who fled Iraq and cannot return, AFSA has also urged that Embassy Baghdad adopt a more flexible approach to billeting trusted FSNs inside the International Zone, and that the State Department develop a forward-leaning policy for encouraging U.S. embassies and consulates in other countries to give favorable consideration to hiring qualified Iraqi FSNs who have been forced to flee.

Less than 1,300 Iraqi refugees have been resettled in the U.S. since 2001, but the need for resettlement of more refugees is growing more urgent and Iraqis with U.S. government ties are in a special category. The State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration—responsible for the U.S. Refugee Program—announced in February that the U.S. will be increasing the number of Iraqi refugees being resettled in 2007 to approximately 7,000, primarily Iraqis who have fled to Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon. However, the *Washington Post* reported on May 14 that

only one Iraqi refugee was resettled in the U.S. in April.

There is now, in fact, a program for embassy referrals of cases involving Iraqis with U.S. government ties to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, and it is described in detail in the Feb. 8, 2007,

### State 16383 spells out the process for referring an Iraqi refugee case to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

unclassified cable, State 16383. Because this cable was not widely distributed, AFSA would like to bring it to the attention of concerned Foreign Service members. State 16383 spells out the process for referring an Iraqi refugee case to USRAP. While most Iraqi refugee cases are referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the USRAP, a limited number of cases involving individuals with U.S. government ties can also be referred by U.S. embassies.

The key requirements for a referral are that there be compelling humanitarian reasons and that the applicant has suffered, or fears, serious harm in Iraq. Iraqis with a U.S. government connection can meet the first requirement by virtue of that connection. Cases can be referred both for Iraqis who have already fled Iraq and those planning to flee immediately. At this point, referrals are limited to cases about which a direct-hire employee has significant knowledge. The point of contact is the refugee coordinator at post.

Referral of a case will give the applicant access to an interview with a Department of Homeland Security officer, but does not guarantee approval. At this time, the USRAP does not process cases inside Iraq, so the individuals must be processed in another country. Damascus and Amman are currently the two cities allowing the best access for processing. Processing can take four to six months. Refugees accepted for admission to the U.S. are given permanent status and assistance with relocation in the U.S.

Questions may be directed to the PRM Near East/South Asia Program Office at (202) 663-1050 or the Overseas Processing Section at (202) 663-1051. □

## PIT Buyback Program Falls Short

BY BONNIE BROWN, RETIREE COORDINATOR

In 2002, after years of lobbying, AFSA and Foreign Service families welcomed the adoption of legislation authorizing the PIT buyback program. AFSA successfully argued that family members should be able to purchase credit toward retirement for their service as PIT employees (part-time, intermittent or temporary employees) at U.S. missions overseas between January 1989 and May 1998. Recently, problems in implementation have arisen as a new requirement for eligibility has been added.

Before 1989, PIT employees could buy Civil Service Retirement System credit for their service. A new Civil Service retirement system, the Federal Employees Retirement System, went into effect in 1989, but did not include employees who worked less than full time, which effectively excluded PIT employees. Then in 1998 the department created a new five-year limited appointment, the Family Member Appointment, which provided for retirement and Thrift Savings Plan benefits. This left a nearly 10-year gap in which family members could not get retirement credit for less than full-time service abroad.

According to the conference report for the PIT buyback legislation, the measure was intended to remedy an inequity by “permitting individuals with creditable service as PIT appointees between 1989 and 1998 to receive credit and make a deposit into the Federal Employees Retirement System for all or part of that period.” Both this legislation and the department’s implementing regulations provided that this relief be strictly limited to family members who had served at U.S. missions abroad.

Recently — without notice or explanation — the department quietly added an additional criterion. It denied PIT credit to a spouse who had creditable PIT service abroad on the grounds that she did not have existing FERS contributions to which her buyback credit could be added.

Although no legal or regulatory basis was given for the denial, our understanding is that this requirement is an administrative assumption employed by the Office of Personnel Management when combining military or other kinds of service credit with FERS credit to calculate a FERS benefit. (In the PIT buyback program, in contrast, PIT employees are purchasing FERS credit and not necessarily combining different kinds of service credit.)

The intent of Congress was clear: to permit family members with creditable PIT service abroad during a certain period to purchase retirement credit. The new requirement used by the department, however, denies credit to two kinds of buyback applicants, even though they both meet the criteria stated by Congress.

First, the department’s approach will have the greatest effect on spouses — such as USAID spouses — who spent all or nearly all their careers overseas and who did not have the opportunity to seek FERS employment. This would be particularly significant, as it is in the case of the denial mentioned above, where the spouse otherwise would have sufficient PIT service to qualify for a small annuity. Second, the approach precludes spouses from building on the PIT service they earned if they cannot begin FERS employment before the PIT buyback deadline of August 2008. The PIT service will be lost to them for retirement purposes, even if they come back to the U.S. and earn FERS service credit after 2008.

The department’s decision runs counter to congressional intent, basic fairness and appropriate administrative process. Rather than championing hard-earned spousal rights, the department has inexplicably limited them in a decision that gives no legal basis or explanation for the denial. The decision is now before the Merit System Protection Board on appeal. □

## AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

### Request for Photos from Embassy Rangoon

In August 2007, the U.S. embassy in Burma will move from its current chancery to a new embassy compound on the shores of Rangoon’s Inya Lake, the site of the former Washington Park housing compound.

Washington Park’s Teak House was preserved and will be used by the embassy for hosting meetings, receptions, training sessions and other public events. Embassy Rangoon is seeking photographs documenting the U.S. role in Burma that can be displayed inside the new Teak House as a reminder to visitors of America’s positive contributions to Burma’s development, the rich cultural ties that existed in the past and what the country has lost in more recent years due to the military regime’s abuses and isolationism.

If you have any photos to share, please contact Deputy Chief of Mission Karl Stoltz at [kstoltz@state.gov](mailto:kstoltz@state.gov). The embassy prefers to receive e-mailed digital photographs, but can also accept prints or negatives sent via surface mail to Karl Stoltz, U.S. Embassy Box B, APO AP 96546.

Your contributions will help turn the Teak House into a permanent gallery showcasing our positive contributions to the people of Burma, and will help inspire those trying to bring Burma back into the family of open, democratic nations. □

— *Chargé d’Affaires Shari Villarosa, Embassy Rangoon*

## THE AFSA MERIT AWARDS

## AFSA Lends a Hand to FS Students

BY DAVID JONES, MERIT AWARDS JUDGE

The U.S. foreign affairs community recognizes and rewards qualification through merit; the Foreign Service is, in effect, a meritocracy. The entrance examinations (both written and oral) are extended and demanding; all members of the Foreign Service community are repeatedly examined throughout their careers and are rewarded for outstanding performance.

Consequently, Foreign Service personnel seek out excellence and desire to recognize and encourage its development. It is particularly appropriate that, among its many activities, the American Foreign Service Association supports dependents of Foreign Service employees in their university education. Educational assistance is always devised to balance need and merit; AFSA's scholarship assistance is primarily directed toward four-year support of academically qualified students based on their requirements for financial aid.

There are, however, a substantial number of Foreign Service dependents who do not qualify for assistance based on need. AFSA recognizes such students through one-time merit awards offered to graduating high school seniors. Awards are offered for both academic and artistic merit.

The academic merit awards are based on a combination of academic excellence (measured by grade point average and SAT scores), extracurricular activity (particularly community service), and a short personal essay. The art merit award is granted to a student either intending to pursue a fine arts education or having a serious commitment to the fine arts through visual arts, musical arts, dance or creative writing.

The academic merit award essay is a special test of excellence. It is a significant element in the scoring for the award, and a serious candidate instantly appreciates it will not be possible just to retool a standard university essay. The topic of this

year's essay was "My Most Memorable Foreign Service Experience." Requiring all applicants to write on a single general topic directs the judging to the same areas for comparison. Although grammar is an element in the scoring, the judges mainly focus on coherence and evocative style.

As one might imagine,  
the merit award candidate  
essays reflect the candidates;  
they are intelligent  
and multifaceted;  
widely traveled and  
diversely experienced.

As one might imagine, the merit award candidate essays reflect the candidates; they are intelligent and multifaceted; widely traveled and diversely experienced. This year, many noted the effects of community service in Kenya, Jordan, Ecuador and China, inter alia, with the prediction that an initial experience would lead to a lifetime of such effort. (As one applicant wrote, "They were pushing boulders while I was only trying to move a pebble.") They wrote of the stress of evacuations and the ongoing anguish of family members separated by combat or the threat of terrorism. A few of the topics and themes covered by this year's candidates include:

- A physically exhausting trek to the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro that prompted a "Why am I doing this?" question and raised concerns about the consequences of climate change;

- A limble beggar on a Chinese bridge, seen as emblematic of those who desperately need help;

- The combination of curiosity and openness of Senegalese children, demonstrating that hospitality is the key to culture; and

- The global presence of baseball, which can be as simple as "play ball" in one country, but can illustrate bureaucratic manipulation and corruption in another.

In the essays, a reader sees the tension inflicted by new posts and reassignment ("At first I considered it a plague of some sort"), leading to adaptation ("Change to me is like breathing"), or to greater depths of insight ("With all this change, you need constants . . . being myself is one of my constants"), and the desire to share the specialized knowledge that comes from Foreign Service experience ("My knowledge was more like a unique piece to a giant puzzle of knowledge . . . I am unique but so is everyone"). And finally, "My entire life has been a Foreign Service experience."

This year there were 65 applicants for the academic merit award and 16 for the art merit award. For academic merit awards, the judges selected 15 winners and six honorable mentions. One winner was chosen by the judges for the art merit award, along with two honorable mentions.

The winner of the best essay is Emma Cunningham, who demonstrates with great sensitivity that service in a Mother Teresa-sponsored orphanage can affect the server perhaps as much as the served. The winning essay will be published in the July/August edition of the *Foreign Service Journal*, along with an article about all of the winners of the 2007 merit awards. More information about this year's winners and about the AFSA scholarship program can be found on the association's Web site at [www.afsa.org/scholar](http://www.afsa.org/scholar). □

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## Active Congressional Session Focuses on Foreign Policy

BY IAN HOUSTON, LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

The 110th Congress has been quite active on the foreign policy front over the last several months. Both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee have orchestrated an aggressive hearing schedule on a number of global hot spots. Congress is in a unique position to remind the American people of the sacrifices and courage of our nation's diplomatic corps, and AFSA works tirelessly to encourage members of Congress to do so.

The key constitutional duty of any Congress, of course, relates to the budget and passing legislation to fund agencies and programs. This process is in full swing. As always, achieving the highest and most effective levels of international affairs spending is a key priority for AFSA. There are real possibilities for reductions in the international affairs budget, the 150 Account. Various constituencies and stakeholders (including AFSA) are mobilized to address possible reductions. AFSA aims to have a seat at the table in the budget debate by establishing ourselves as a deep and thoughtful resource for policymakers. We are particularly focused on the foreign aid

delivery system and whether proposed reforms and bureaucratic reorganization will yield greater effectiveness.

A key priority for AFSA remains amending the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to permit the introduction of overseas comparability pay. We believe that the leaders of the last session of Congress missed an exceptional, perhaps unique, opportunity to resolve this pay equity issue. But we are looking ahead and are hopeful that our efforts, in conjunction with our allies, will bring about a legislative solution to the problem. A new bill will be offered in the House which will serve as a marker for the Foreign Affairs Committee on debating pay comparability. In addition, the State Department has included a request for the necessary funds to adjust the pay disparity as part of the overall Fiscal Year 2008 budget request. That request is critically important in moving the issue forward in this budget cycle.

In addition to pay comparability, AFSA is addressing other key issues such as raising death gratuity benefits for Foreign Service members killed in the line of duty and securing tax benefits for those serving in combat zones. The Foreign Service is accustomed to hardship assignments—which are now the norm in most of the world. These individuals are bravely supporting U.S. policy objectives in dangerous situations. Employee and retiree benefits, as well as tax policies, should reflect this reality. AFSA remains in close contact with State and USAID on these and other issues that require a legislative fix. □

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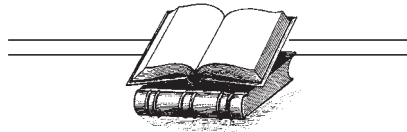


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# BOOKS

## Strength in Numbers

### **African Diplomacy: The U.N. Experience**

*Frederick S. Arkhurst, Author House, 2006, \$14.00, paperback, 271 pages.*

REVIEWED BY HERMAN J. COHEN

Between 1957 and 1964, most European colonies in sub-Saharan Africa achieved their independence, at the rate of about one per month. The Republic of Ghana, which is celebrating its golden jubilee this year, was the first one to gain sovereignty.

Ambassador Frederick S. Arkhurst, the author of this memoir, was one of the pioneers of African diplomacy as he rotated in the Ghanaian Foreign Service through New York, Washington, London and back home to Accra during the heady first decade of decolonization. Focusing on the United Nations, Arkhurst tells the story of how African nations exploited their strength in numbers to wield influence on some important policy issues in the General Assembly.

Of particular significance to the United States during that early period was the issue of Chinese representation in the U.N. after the communist takeover in 1949. Until the African delegations came on the scene, the United States was able to stave off demands for the seating of Beijing and the expulsion of Taipei from the Chinese seat on the Security Council. But by 1971, the pressure from Africa and the rest of the nonaligned movement became too great, and Beijing was voted in. (Another factor, of

course, was President Nixon's decision that it no longer made sense to ignore the PRC.) Still, the Africans had demonstrated that collectively, at least, they counted for something in multilateral organizations.

Working for their own high-priority cause, the Africans were able to engineer the revocation in 1966 of South Africa's League of Nations mandate to rule Namibia. This was effectively the first step in the eventual unraveling of the deeply racist South African apartheid system that came to an end in 1990. It should be noted that the Africans received a strong boost on the Namibia mandate issue from the U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. at that time, Ambassador Arthur Goldberg.

The author describes one problem at the United Nations that is still with us today to some extent. African foreign ministries are often too understaffed to deal with the many issues arising in the General Assembly and Security Council. As a result, there is a tendency for decisions to be made by delegations on the spot. This is a particular challenge for U.S. diplomacy because it traditionally concentrates on persuading policymakers in foreign capitals to support our positions. But while we are making demarches overseas, African delegations are gathering together in New York to determine their votes, sometimes with little more than demagoguery driving the deliberations. The U.S. mission to the United Nations is therefore wise to have a slot for an Africanist in its delegation.

Arkhurst's diplomatic career was cut short in 1966 when Ghanaian

President Kwame Nkrumah was ousted in a military coup as he was attending a state banquet in Beijing. Nkrumah's megalomania had grown to the extent that he traveled to Asia uninvited, and against the advice of the U.S. government, to unveil a plan to end the Vietnam War. Subsequently, the U.N. recruited Arkhurst to work for the secretariat in a variety of high-level posts in Africa, specializing in health, population and environmental issues, over a period of several decades.

Because his diplomatic career was so brief, Arkhurst's memoir is relatively succinct. It will be of interest mainly to U.N. junkies who relish analyzing General Assembly votes, abstentions and all, rather than general readers. The author ends by offering his views on some current issues, like globalization and economic development. And here it is refreshing to find an African intellectual and practitioner who declines to blame the outside world for the continent's chronic dependency. ■

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*Retired Career Ambassador Herman J. "Hank" Cohen, who entered the Foreign Service in 1955, was a labor-reporting officer at four African posts. He later served as ambassador to Senegal and the Gambia, and was assistant secretary for African affairs during the George H.W. Bush administration, among many other positions. Since retiring from the Foreign Service in 1993, he has worked as a senior adviser to the Global Coalition for Africa and is the author of *Intervening in Africa: Superpower Peacekeeping in a Troubled Continent* (St. Martin's Palgrave, 2000).*



## IN MEMORY

**Norman Cowell Barnes**, 83, a retired FSO, died peacefully in his sleep on March 8. He had Parkinson's disease.

Mr. Barnes was born in New York City. He attended elementary school in New Jersey and prep school at the Wooster School in Danbury, Conn. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1943 to 1945, in the Asiatic Pacific Theater aboard the USS *Biloxi*, a light cruiser, which earned the nickname "Busy Bee" because it joined all major battles from the Marshall Islands to Okinawa. After discharge, he married Jean-Marie Mahon on Dec. 27, 1946, and entered the University of North Carolina, graduating in June 1950 with a B.A. degree in communications.

With his wartime experience in Asia and his communications studies, he joined the Voice of America in New York City. There he produced the program "America Calling the Philippines." The experience whetted his appetite for foreign relations, and he joined the Foreign Service in 1954.

Mr. Barnes' first posting was to Manila; then, in 1957, he was assigned to Hong Kong. In 1959 he was detailed to Chinese-language area training at FSI, and in 1960 to Taipei for Chinese-language training. He subsequently served in Singapore, Malaysia, Laos (during the Vietnam War), Pakistan and Korea.

Despite the demands of diplomatic service, he still found time for his favorite sporting hobbies — auto rac-

ing, golf and sailing. He drove twice in the Macau Grand Prix and once in the Malaysian Grand Prix. While stationed in Laos, he drove in a U.N.-sponsored motor rally from Tehran to Dakha.

After 34 years in the Foreign Service, Mr. and Mrs. Barnes retired to Cape Cod, where they continued an active life in the mid-Cape area. The couple celebrated their 50th and 60th wedding anniversaries there.

Mr. Barnes became a member of the Yarmouth Planning Board and treasurer of the Democratic Town Committee, and followed his love of music and theater to the Cape Cod Retired Men's Chorus and the Barnstable Comedy Club. He was also a member of the Bray Farm Association and the Dennis Yacht Club.

While in Hong Kong he had sailed his Chinese junk in local waters; in retirement he enjoyed sailing his Marshall catboat with friends and family from Sesuit Harbor on Cape Cod Bay. Driving his classic 1963 Porsche and golfing with friends on the Brewster, Dennis and Yarmouth courses were favorite diversions.

In addition to his beloved wife, Jean-Marie, Mr. Barnes is survived by two sons, Anthony and Peter Barnes, and one daughter, Amanda Jacobsen; their spouses, Karen, Julie and Ken; four grandchildren, Christopher, Hunter and Isabella Barnes, and Jesse Jacobsen; and one sister, Barbara Roberts. A third son, Michael, is deceased.

**Alice Boynton**, 65, a career Foreign Service office management specialist, died on April 14 in Albuquerque, N.M., after a battle with lung cancer.

During a long career, Ms. Boynton was posted all over the world. She lived in Tunis, Seoul, Bangkok, Saigon, Nairobi, Riyadh, Bujumbura, Kinshasha and Lima, but her favorite tour of duty was Beirut in the early 1970s. She spent her summers in Wauwinet on Nantucket Island, Mass., as a child, and maintained her ties with the island throughout her life. An avid bridge player, Ms. Boynton graced the duplicate tables in Albuquerque, where she retired in late 1994. She contributed to many causes and was a member of many organizations.

Ms. Boynton is survived by her sister, Nora Keil of Worcester, Mass.; a brother, Woody Boynton of Old Saybrook, Conn.; two nieces; two nephews; two grandnieces, and friends and cousins. Memorial contributions may be made to Planned Parenthood of New Mexico, 701 San Mateo Blvd. NE, Albuquerque NM 87108.



**William Walton Duffy II**, 64, a former FSO with USIA, died on April 7 in Oxford, Pa.

Born on March 27, 1943, in Macon, Ga., Mr. Duffy was the son of the late Robert C. and Mary Fitzgerald Duffy. An expert and consultant

## IN MEMORY



in information and technology management, he had a bachelor's degree in political science from Providence College, R.I., and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University. His career included service in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Education, the White House (Executive Office of the President), the U.S. Information Agency and the Foreign Service, with diplomatic assignments in Poland, Argentina and Uruguay.

Until his death, Mr. Duffy was director of information management for the Department of Social Services in Cecil County, Md. He became a persistent and dedicated patient advocate for persons diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia and served on the board of directors of CLL Topics, a nonprofit group of volunteers drawn from the community of CLL patients and caregivers.

Mr. Duffy was a member of the Elkton Rotary Club and the American Legion. He also served on an advisory committee on gifted education for the Oxford Area School District and an auditor for East Nottingham Township, Pa.

Survivors include his wife of 24 years, Jennifer Salinger Duffy; children Christopher William Duffy of Ottawa, Canada, Mary Fitzgerald Duffy of South Hadley, Mass., and Caitlin Salinger Duffy and Liam Patrick Duffy, both of Oxford, Pa.; grandsons Anthony and Gregory Duffy; and sisters Mary R. "Jini" Fairley of Newton, Mass., and Kathleen E. Pannozzi of Providence, R.I. Mr. Duffy was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Robert C. Duffy Jr.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to CLL Topics ([www.clltopics.org/](http://www.clltopics.org/)) or the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

**Beverly Gerstein**, 77, a retired Foreign Service Reserve officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on April 9 at her sister's home in Scottsdale, Ariz. She had suffered from Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease.

Born in New York, Ms. Gerstein graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1950 and then worked in public relations in New York before joining the American National Theatre and Academy's International Division. At that time, ANTA administered the nation's cultural exchange program for the State Department. When the program was transferred to the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in 1967, Ms. Gerstein moved to Washington, D.C. (In 1978 the program became part of USIA.)

Ms. Gerstein arranged officially sponsored tours abroad for American artists as part of USIA's Arts America Program. She organized tours for the Paul Taylor Dancers, the Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey dance groups, the New York City Ballet, Charlie Byrd's jazz trio, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the National Theater of the Deaf, among others.

Ms. Gerstein retired in 1994. She subsequently volunteered with the Friends of the Kennedy Center and with Suited for Change, a program that provides professional clothing and vocational guidance to low-income women. In 2006, she moved to Tennessee to live with a niece, and then to Scottsdale to be with her sister, her only immediate survivor.



**Elizabeth J. "B.J." Harper**, 86, a retired FSO, died on April 22 in Dumfries, Va.

A native of Oklahoma, Ms. Harper

served in the Army Women's Air Corps during World War II. From the Philippines she went to Japan with U.S. occupation forces at the end of the war, serving there for two years.

Ms. Harper returned to the U.S. in 1949 to attend The George Washington University, graduating and joining the Foreign Service in 1952. Her first assignment was as a consular officer in Medan, Indonesia. From there she was sent to Japan, where she served for about 10 years, including language training, with postings in Tokyo, Osaka-Kobe and Naha.

In 1965, Ms. Harper transferred to the Visa Office in Washington as deputy chief of the Regulations and Legislation Division. There she prepared material on projected admissions under what became the 1965 Immigration Act; the legislation abolished the national origins quotas and established a worldwide system, a version of which we still have. In 1969, she became chief of the Field Operations Division, and within the next two years went to the VO front office as deputy director for policy. Barbara Watson, then head of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs (as CA was called at that time), relied on Ms. Harper's technical expertise; then and later she testified before congressional committees as an expert witness and as the principal State Department witness.

During this period, Ms. Harper also started her work on the third edition of *Immigration Laws of the United States* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1975), and became an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Among a handful of people who had a thorough understanding of the arcane intricacies of the system of numerical limitations on immigration, she was unique, friends recall, in her ability to make it com-

## IN MEMORY



prehensible to her listeners.

Toward the end of her tour in VO, Ms. Harper became a member of a departmental task force on the status of women in the Foreign Service. She helped establish, and was a strong advocate for, the concept of tandem assignments for Foreign Service couples.

In 1972, Ms. Harper attended the Senior Seminar. Subsequently, she was assigned as consul general to Montreal, where she served until 1979. She then returned to Washington, D.C., as deputy assistant secretary for visa services in the newly reorganized CA front office, where then-Assistant Secretary Watson continued to rely on her. In July 1980, when she turned 60, then the

mandatory retirement age, Ms. Harper was forced to retire, but she went directly into a When Actually Employed contract as an adviser without missing a day.

As a WAE, Ms. Harper played a key role in the work of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy established in 1979. As the staff representative for the Secretary of State, who was one of the commissioners, she went to all the commission meetings and wrote the briefing and position papers for the Secretary. In early 1980, in the wake of the seizure of Embassy Tehran, Ms. Harper helped draft the executive order that President Carter issued imposing additional restrictions on the entry of Iranians. She

handled its implementation at the department, and remained the key the U.S. government contact on Iranian immigration cases until 1985.

From then until her health declined in 2002, Ms. Harper served as a consultant to VO, drafting regulations, analyzing pending immigration legislation and rewriting portions of the Visa Manual.

An only child who never married, Ms. Harper leaves an elderly first cousin in the Chicago area.



**Edna Gutierrez Jones**, 83, a retired FSO with USAID, died under hospice care on March 3 in Rio Rancho, N.M. She had had a long



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## IN MEMORY



battle with gastric cancer.

Mrs. Jones began her career in Washington, D.C., working for the Office of the Quartermaster General. She had the sad and difficult job of calling the next of kin of those killed in World War II to ask if they wanted the remains of their loved ones brought home or left in their overseas resting place. She subsequently worked for the Air Force Office of Strategic Intelligence for 10 years, before joining the Foreign Service as a records supervisor for USAID.

With USAID, Mrs. Jones served in Ankara, Tegucigalpa, Saigon, Bogota and Washington, D.C. Her last assignment, where she met her husband, Sam Jones, was in La Paz. She retired from USAID in 1975. Mrs. Jones and her husband traveled and lived in various cities in the U.S., including Washington, D.C., where he was on assignment for the Federal Aviation Administration. There Mrs. Jones enjoyed visiting her World War II friends, as well as meeting Foreign Service friends passing through on home leave or transfer.

The couple moved to Botswana when Mr. Jones accepted a two-year assignment with the U.N. following his retirement from the FAA. They both enjoyed traveling throughout Southern Africa, visiting game parks as well as desert areas. Mrs. Jones also took advantage of the opportunity to visit several Foreign Service friends assigned to Africa.

Returning to the U.S., Mr. and Mrs. Jones divided their time between homes in Albuquerque and Siren, Wis. Their many close friends remember a warm, generous and hospitable woman who loved to entertain, was the first to make newcomers feel welcome at a new assignment, and was a wonderful cook.

Mrs. Jones is survived by her hus-

band of 32 years, Sam Jones of Siren, Wis.; sisters Lupe Gutierrez and Emma De Raad; stepdaughters Joy J. Meadows and Jackie J. Elliott; and eight nieces and nephews.



**Sarah Anne (Sally) Moore**, 84, a registered nurse and the widow of FSO George Curtis Moore, died on March 11 in Washington, D.C., of complications following surgery. An area resident since 1973, she lived in Bethesda, Md.

Mrs. Moore was born Sarah Anne Stewart in Medford, N. J. She was a graduate of Hahnemann Hospital School of Nursing in Philadelphia, UCLA, and Syracuse University. During World War II, she served as an Army nurse in England and Germany. In England, she met Private G. Curtis "Curt" Moore, then a Foreign Service officer with the Department of State, and in 1950 the couple married.

Mrs. Moore accompanied her husband on assignments to Germany, Egypt, Lebanon, Eritrea, Libya and the Sudan, in addition to tours in Washington, D.C. While overseas, she was active in postwar refugee work, care of international orphans, and in overseas American Schools. She served as a school board member and a principal's assistant in Libya and as principal of the Khartoum American School in Sudan. Her interest in young people included six years of service as a camping skills adviser with the Girl Scouts of America.

Mrs. Moore's life overseas ended abruptly, with her husband's death in the line of duty in 1973 in Khartoum. She returned to Washington, D.C., where she went to work for the Medical Division of the Department of State, focusing on the issues of over-

seas families.

On retiring from the State Department, Mrs. Moore earned a paralegal certificate at George Washington University and volunteered at the Legal Counsel for the Elderly in Washington, D.C. She became a volunteer with the Montgomery Hospice Association. She was active in the Tulip Hill Community Association in her neighborhood, recently as treasurer; and she volunteered regularly in the library at The Barrie School until her death.

In 1994, Mrs. Moore and her younger daughter's family moved into a new home, where she resided until her death. She was an enthusiastic patron of the arts, sharing her love of music, theater and art with her friends. Other interests included gardening, genealogy and politics. She was also a committed fan of the D.C. United soccer team.

Mrs. Moore is survived by her two daughters, Lucy Moore Wyatt of Kensington, Md., and Catherine Moore Bergesen of Bethesda, Md.; her son-in-law, Christopher A.E. Bergesen of Bethesda, Md.; and three beloved grandsons.



**William M. Owen**, 86, a retired FSO, died of congestive heart failure on April 6 at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Born in Manchester, England, into an Anglo-American family, Mr. Owen settled in the U.S. in 1939. A Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude graduate of Duke University, he also graduated from the NATO Defense College, then in Paris. A captain in the U.S. Army during World War II, he served overseas in England and France.

Mr. Owen entered the State De-



## IN MEMORY



partment as an intern in 1948, and was also an intern of the National Institute of Public Affairs. He went to France in 1951 as deputy special assistant for international relations to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, at NATO military headquarters. After duty at the embassies in Stockholm, Manila, London and Rangoon, where he was chargé d'affaires on occasion, he served in Bangkok as special assistant to the secretary general of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization until he retired in 1977.

At the State Department he served as officer-in-charge of Swedish and Finnish affairs, and as deputy director for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Island Affairs. He also served as an adviser to the U.S. delegation to the U.N. General Assembly in 1966. Following retirement, he did further work at the State Department.

In 1963, Mr. Owen had the unusual experience of delivering a speech in Wilmington, Del., in the name of then-Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson. Owen himself had written the first draft of the speech commemorating the 325th anniversary of the founding of the first Swedish colony in America. When the vice president was detained in Washington at a meeting of the National Security Council, he had to deliver it himself. (The episode was written up in the October 1963 *Foreign Service Journal*.)

Mr. Owen was a member of the Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church, the American Foreign Service Association and Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired, as well as the SHAPE Officers Association and the Reform Club in London.

He is survived by his wife, Adelaide, of Washington, D.C.

**Ruth Mortenson Sowash**, 86, the widow of FSO William Burton Sowash, died on Jan. 31 in Bath, Maine, following a stroke. Her daughter, Carolyn S. Mitchell, was at her side.

Mrs. Sowash was born of Swedish parents in Waukegan, Ill. She received a B.A. in English from the University of Chicago in 1942, and worked for several years as administrative assistant to Robert M. Hutchins, then president of the university and an innovative educator.

In 1945, she married William B. Sowash, also a University of Chicago graduate, and moved to the Washington, D.C., area when her husband joined the Foreign Service as a political officer. She accompanied her husband to postings in Spain, El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina and Honduras. Friends and colleagues remember the Sowashes for their gracious hospitality and many volunteer activities. Following her husband's retirement, Mrs. Sowash worked for several years as a proofreader for the Congressional Indexing Service, and volunteered to read for the blind.

The Sowashes moved to Maplewood Park Place in Bethesda, Md., in 1996, where they participated in many community activities and enjoyed new friendships as well as their continuing associations with former colleagues. Mrs. Sowash served as secretary for the Maryland Continuing Care Residents' Association, and her volunteer efforts included knitting infant wear for local charities and making surprise gifts for children hospitalized at the National Institutes for Health.

The University of Chicago's Great Books curriculum served Mrs. Sowash well: throughout her life she had wide interests and was an eager learner. She enjoyed book clubs, current events lectures and the rich cultural

offerings of the Washington, D.C., area. Other interests and accomplishments included painting, quilting, golf, bowling, bridge and playing the piano. Friends and family recall her lively intelligence, generous spirit, kind nature and gentle humor.

In retirement, the Sowashes continued to travel, and especially enjoyed their many trips to Maine. Mr. Sowash died in 2002 in Bethesda, and in the fall of 2005 Mrs. Sowash moved to Bath to be near her daughter.

Ruth Sowash is survived by her daughter, Carolyn S. Mitchell of Washington, D.C., and Portland, Maine; two grandchildren, Wyatt Mitchell of Chicago, Ill., and Emily Mitchell of New Orleans, La.; and six nephews and a niece. Her brother, Carl Walter Mortenson, of Newark, Del., died in 1996.



**Edith Eliza Van Hollen**, 79, the wife of retired FSO and former Ambassador Christopher Van Hollen, died of cancer Feb. 21 at George Washington University Hospital.

Mrs. Van Hollen was recognized as one of the top U.S. government foreign policy and intelligence analysts on Afghanistan and South Asia. A resident of Washington and a native of New York City, she was also the mother of U.S. Representative Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.

After graduating from Vassar College in 1949 with a major in Russian, Edith Eliza Farnsworth worked at the Central Intelligence Agency. She left to attend Harvard University's Russian studies program, earning a master's degree in 1953, and then married Christopher Van Hollen of Baltimore, a Foreign Service officer.

For 25 years, Mrs. Van Hollen served with her husband in countries

## IN MEMORY



around the world, including India, Pakistan, Turkey and Sri Lanka, where he was U.S. ambassador. At every post, she immersed herself in local history and culture and engaged in volunteer efforts. An accomplished linguist, she learned to speak French, Russian, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Turkish and Sinhala.

In 1978, Mrs. Van Hollen became the chief analyst for Afghanistan in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the State Department. With her background in Soviet affairs and knowledge of South Asia, she became an important asset to the department when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. One of the few to predict the invasion, she later warned the U.S. not to become too closely tied to the Taliban and extremist Islamic groups. She wrote articles on Afghanistan published by the State Department and later took three official trips to Moscow for discussions on Afghanistan and other South Asian issues.

Mrs. Van Hollen also served as the senior intelligence analyst for Pakistan and India, and in 1989 became chief of the South Asia division at INR. She frequently testified before Senate and House committees with jurisdiction over intelligence and foreign policy issues.

In 1992, she received the National Medal of Achievement from the director of Central Intelligence. She also received two Superior Honor awards, two Meritorious Honor awards and the Analyst of the Year award, among others.

After retiring from State in 1994, Mrs. Van Hollen maintained her interest in foreign affairs as a member of the McLean Foreign Policy Group. With her husband, she also became involved in son Chris Van Hollen's successful campaigns for the Maryland Senate in 1994 and the U.S.

House of Representatives in 2002, playing a key role in the grassroots, door-to-door efforts for the Democrat.

Mrs. Van Hollen was active in the Women's National Democratic Club and enjoyed other pursuits, including her book club, gardening, hiking and cooking. She and her husband also spent time at their family home in Vermont, where she served as one of three trustees of the Big Basin Forest, an organization that owns and manages a large tract of Green Mountain forestland.

In addition to her husband of 54 years, Amb. Christopher Van Hollen of Washington, D.C., and her son, Rep. Chris Van Hollen of Kensington, Md., survivors include two daughters, Caroline Van Hollen of Washington, D.C., and Cecilia Van Hollen of Fayetteville, N.Y.; a brother; and five grandchildren.



**Joseph A. Yager**, 90, a retired FSO and an expert on China and Asian strategic issues, died on April 5 of a swallowing disorder at Doctors Community Hospital in Lanham, Md. A former Bethesda, Md., resident, he had been living since 2000 at Collington Episcopal Life Care Community in Mitchellville, Md.

Mr. Yager was born in Owensville, Ind., and grew up in Toledo, Ohio, where he was an Eagle Scout. He received an undergraduate degree in 1937, a law degree in 1939 and a master's degree in economics in 1940, all from the University of Michigan.

During World War II, he worked in the Office of Price Administration, where he helped administer gas rationing. He also served in the U.S. Army in China. Working in collaboration with the Office of Strategic

Services, the wartime forerunner to the Central Intelligence Agency, he collected information about roads, bridges and infrastructure in those areas of southern China not controlled by the Japanese.

Mr. Yager joined the Foreign Service following the war, and in 1954 served as an adviser to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles at the Geneva conference that ended the French war in Indochina. He served in Taiwan from 1957 to 1961, where he was deputy chief of mission. He also directed the Office of East Asian Affairs and was vice chairman of the Policy Planning Council.

In 1968, Mr. Yager retired from the Foreign Service and joined the Institute for Defense Analysis as deputy director of the international and social studies division. In 1972, he became a senior fellow at The Brookings Institution, where he specialized in world food and energy supply and wrote several books on nuclear energy, nonproliferation and agriculture in China and Taiwan.

In 1986, he joined the Science Applications International Corp. as a senior fellow at the firm's Center for National Security Negotiations. He published a number of papers on nuclear nonproliferation before retiring again in 1996.

Survivors include his wife of 70 years, Virginia Beroset Yager of Mitchellville, Md.; and two children, Thomas Yager of New York City and Martha Yager of Hyattsville, Md. ■

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FOREIGN SERVICE TEENS CAN JUMP-START THEIR COLLEGE SEARCH WITH THIS HANDY GUIDE: HERE ARE ONE DOZEN QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF, PLUS A HALF-DOZEN WAYS TO RESEARCH YOUR CHOICES.

BY FRANCESCA HUEMER KELLY

It's never too early to reflect on where you'll go to college. But by 10th and 11th grade, reflecting is not enough: it's time to take action to ensure you have some great colleges to choose from in the spring of your senior year.

"Choose?" you might well ask. "What do you mean, choose? Aren't I going to be rejected by the Ivy League schools because I don't have straight As and perfect SAT scores? Or even if I do...?"

Fair enough. It's true that in the current climate of peak numbers of applicants and frenzied competition for the top colleges, the most selective schools are faced with turning down thousands of qualified students every year. Indeed, when it comes to universities like Harvard or Princeton, you may not have a choice.

However, here's the good news: schools that were once considered second-tier are now attracting more and brighter students. There are several hundred wonderful colleges out there that are still a bit of a secret, known only to their satisfied alumni. These are the schools you want to make up the bulk of your list, with a few "reach" schools and a few "safeties."

So, how do you begin? It's all about knowing yourself — and asking yourself the right questions.

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*Francesca Kelly, a freelance writer and FS spouse, is currently the high school guidance counselor at St. John's International School in Waterloo, Belgium.*

**1. Small and nurturing or big and stimulating?** Do you want to be the proverbial "big fish in a small pond" on a campus where professors know you by name? Or do you want a larger university where you may have many more activities and classes to choose from, but will never know everyone there? Small colleges often tout smaller class sizes and more in-class discussions. But they may not offer enough sections of popular classes to meet student demand. Larger universities can offer more classes, but sometimes these are taught by teaching assistants, some of whom may be international graduate students who don't speak English very well. And you can expect to have a hundred or more students alongside you in some lectures.

Of course, there are exceptions. For example, some large universities have a "no courses taught by TAs" policy, and offer many small classes. Be sure to ask admissions officers about class size and course registration.

**2. Snowshoes or sandals?** Consider if weather and climate affect you. Do you tend to get the winter blues? Or do you need to be where you can hit the slopes? Do you love the changing of the seasons, or do you prefer all sun, all the time? If you've been living in a small country, you may have forgotten about the size of America and its variations in climate and terrain.

**3. Urban? Suburban? Rural?** Large cities offer a stimulating, diverse environment with easy access to public transportation, as well as a wealth of internships and useful contacts. Many FS kids can't imagine living anywhere else.

However, life in a small college town can offer a lot, too. The school is often the center of the community and creates its own cultural world and close-knit society. Crime is usually much lower. Schools like Oberlin, Grinnell and St. Olaf offer a last chance to live in a “bubble” before moving on to graduate school or a job in a large city.

A suburban setting can be the ideal compromise. Drew University lies in the woodsy commuter town of Madison, N.J., where the train near campus gets you into the Big Apple in less than an hour.

**4. Do you wanna be... all by yourself?** If you are a Foreign Service dependent, your family home may be far away. The State Department will pay for one round-trip ticket per year under the educational travel allowance. That means you or your family will have to pay for

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any other holidays that you travel home, and that usually translates into international kids staying on campus or in the area during short holiday weekends or even during longer breaks. Find out when the dorm will be open and when it will be closed.

Plot the international and domestic routes, as well as the duration, of your trip between home and school. It's best to know in advance the cost and hassle of going home.

Choosing a college near relatives can be a win-win situation. Grandparents, in particular, are often thrilled to have a grandchild living nearby, and students who are a little homesick can get some TLC.

Not only that, but sometimes the unexpected happens. If your parents live halfway around the world, who will be nearby to help you through a hospital stay or other crisis? If you will not be living near friends and relatives, check the college's resources and support system for emergency situations.

Lastly, be sure to research how many undergraduates live on campus. Some colleges are known as “commuter schools,” where the place

## World Youth Headed to ‘Global Citizenship’

According to the 2006 World Youth Identity and Citizenship Survey, two-thirds of the 3,300 multinational, multiethnic respondents, aged 24 years or younger, described themselves, first and foremost, as moving toward global citizenship. They understand themselves in an international context and are concerned about the problems confronting the world they are to inherit.

Asked to rank the greatest problems currently facing the planet, the majority of respondents listed poverty, terrorism and disease, especially HIV/AIDS. The most serious security threats, in their view, are the inability of world leaders to reach consensus, unequal standards of living and insufficient opportunities to promote interpersonal understanding.

Survey results will be used to develop curricula and materials in the emerging field of global citizenship education, says Ron Israel, vice president of the international nonprofit Education Development Center, Inc. Founded in 1958, EDC supports the Our World Alliance mission to promote global citizenship education and build and support an international network of educators working on global citizenship education activities. EDC, the secretariat for Our World Alliance, worked with New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service to administer the survey.

The 2006 survey found that “global citizens” are overwhelmingly European. By virtue of the European Union experience, they are already accustomed to viewing themselves in a broader context than traditional nation-state boundaries. However, of respondents who considered themselves either “getting started” or “moving along” on the path to global citizenship, young people from Africa and the Middle East were the clear majority in both categories, followed in each case by youth from North America.

A global citizen is defined by the Our World Alliance as an individual who recognizes the interconnectedness of today's world and has as their ultimate goal the ideal of world peace. A global citizen has lived abroad and is multilingual. They are capable of not only appreciating, but identifying with, the peoples, cultures and humanistic products of other parts of the world. They would marry someone of a different cultural or religious background and are willing to travel abroad to work or study. They support international organizations such as the U.N. and advocate intergovernmental cooperation for the solution to global problems.

Go to [www.ourworldgce.net/currentactivities.htm](http://www.ourworldgce.net/currentactivities.htm) to take the 2007 survey and review the complete 2006 survey report.

— E. Margaret MacFarland, Spring 2007 Editorial Intern

empties out on evenings and weekends.

**5. Going straight to med school, or temporarily dabbling?** Do you have definite career plans, or do you want to take varied subjects before deciding on a path? What subjects are important to you? Do the colleges you're considering offer many specialized classes in these subjects? Can you have a double major?

One of the beauties of the American college system is that at most institutions, you do not need to declare a major course of study until the end of your sophomore year. That gives you time to "try on" certain subjects and see what appeals to you. Of course, colleges vary widely in requirements. Many will require you to stay within the bounds of a core curriculum for the first two years, and once you declare a major, you may well have more specialized require-

*Do political and religious diversity matter to you, or would you feel more comfortable with people, well, just like you?*

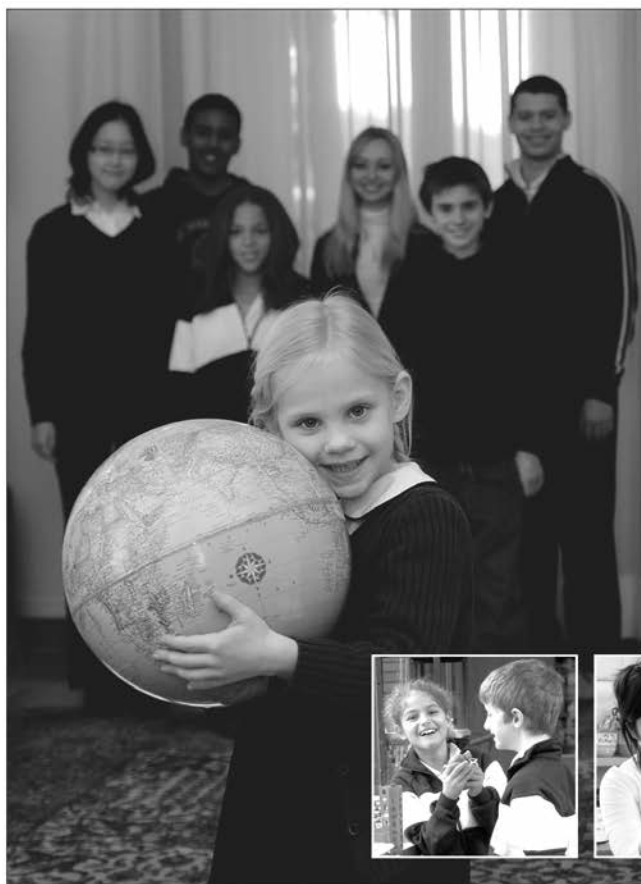
ments to fulfill. But for most American college students, there will be room for interesting electives.

If you know what career you want, start researching it. Ask professionals you admire where they went to school. Conversely, ask universities with these programs what their grad-

uates are doing now. In the case of visual or performing arts majors, you will have to put together a portfolio or arrange an audition. Check now on any unusual admissions requirements such as advanced high school courses, AP test scores or SAT subject tests.

**6. Co-ed or single sex?** The majority of college students nowadays attend school in a co-ed environment, and the number of same-sex colleges has dwindled. Still, a small contingent of all-women's and all-men's colleges is going strong. Those who advocate them point to sharper focus on academics and, particularly for women, the opportunity for leadership in traditionally male-dominated fields. Or maybe you just don't like sharing bathrooms with the opposite sex!

But just as often, gender has nothing to do with it. Nancy Huemer, a freshman at Barnard College, says,



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“The main reasons I chose Barnard were its location in New York City, its affiliation with Columbia, and its strong academic record.” And what U.S. college was ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as the most diverse college on the East Coast? Wellesley — an all-women’s college.

In addition, going to a women’s or men’s college doesn’t mean you will never see the opposite sex. Most single-sex colleges schedule regular intercollegiate social events, and many have a course-sharing arrangement with other colleges in the area. For example, Barnard and Columbia students share cross-registration. Smith and Mt. Holyoke students can take classes at Amherst, Hampshire and the University of Massachusetts, all part of the acclaimed five-college consortium in Massachusetts’s Pioneer Valley.

**7. Is it about the money?** Will financial aid factor heavily into your decision? Is admission need-blind at the colleges you’re considering? (“Need-blind” means that your financial need does not factor into the admissions decision.)

If financial aid is important to you, you may not want to apply on an early-decision basis anywhere. Why not? Because E.D. means that you are legally bound to attend that college if you are accepted, regardless of what financial aid offer they make. Although colleges pledge to meet your financial need even if you’ve applied E.D., the fact remains that financial aid offers vary from school to school. (Early Decision, however, does give you an edge in being admitted — so weigh your options accordingly.)

Early Action, on the other hand, is not binding. If you apply to 6 to 10 schools, both Early Action and Regular Decision, and you have chosen them well (so that you don’t have too many “reach” schools but more “match” and “safety” schools), you should have an array of financial aid offers to choose from.

Finally, your financial situation

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***Choosing a college  
near relatives can be  
a win-win situation.***

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may determine that you will apply only to those schools where you are considered an in-state resident. If your family has been living overseas, it’s very important to review state residency requirements carefully to avoid any nasty surprises (see Resources, p. 84).

Public universities often feature an honors program that has the atmosphere of a challenging small liberal arts college within a large state university — a great option for smart kids on a strict budget! And don’t forget the military service academies or ROTC, which pay your tuition in exchange for military service.

Also, even if you believe your family’s resources will only cover in-state tuition, consider adding some private colleges or universities to your list and applying for financial aid. Sometimes the difference in price tags is not as much as you might think after scholarships and loans are factored in.

**8. Are you quirky?** Four years of traditional liberal arts and sciences provide a great education for most students, but some people march to a different drummer. If you’re one of them, there are colleges out there just for you. How do you feel about taking one class at a time — living and breathing just one subject for a month of field trips, lectures, discussions and multi-media presentations? This is what a college with a “block plan,” such as Colorado College, offers.

Tired of people telling you what classes to take? Schools like Hampshire College and Sarah Lawrence

College let you design your own curriculum. At the other extreme, St. John’s University requires a classical education for all four years of college, where you will get to know the great minds throughout history through readings in humanities, sciences and music.

Are you way, way past high school and ready for college right now? Simon’s Rock College allows gifted high school students to start college early.

At Deep Springs College, a two-year school, members of the all-male student body (each of whom receive full scholarship) are up before dawn running a farm as part of their completely self-sustaining lifestyle, in addition to studying and taking classes.

In a nutshell — if you’re quirky, there’s a quirky school out there for you!

**9. Do you have special needs such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, dyslexia, processing issues or learning disabilities?** Most colleges and universities now have learning support programs for mainstream special needs, such as ADHD or dyslexia. To get full use of your college’s resources, you will need to supply the college with medical and psycho-educational reports. Unsupported special needs can detract from your college experience, so plan carefully. Make sure you not only have support on campus, but are prepared to use outside coaches, specialists and counseling if necessary to help you stay on track. Bear in mind that there may be more outside resources in urban or affluent areas.

Some colleges and universities are specifically geared toward special needs students, such as Landmark College in Vermont (a two-year program).

**10. Are you a super-jock?** Will you participate in college athletics? Schools are classified under Divisions 1, 2 and 3, with Division 1 generally being the most focused on recruiting star athletes. For full guidelines on

*Continued on page 80*



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A Half-Dozen Ways to Research Your Colleges and Universities

1. Books

There are so many college guides available that you'd probably never have time to read them all. Hopefully your guidance office or school library will have at least one large reference book or series such as the *Four-Year College Admissions Data Sourcebook* (Wintergreen Orchard House — four volumes of colleges listed by region).

You will want to study the statistics carefully. Most important are the stats of the entering freshman class: average high school class rank, average SAT and ACT scores, percentage of applicants admitted, percentage of international students and percentage of students who matriculate. Here's where you get a good idea of whether the students are at your level academically, if they like the school enough to stay there, and if you have a reasonable chance of getting in. (Because there's been a student population explosion in the last decade, make sure the stats you are reviewing are up to date!)

Then there are the more "fun" books, such as *Princeton Review's 361 Top Colleges* or *The Insiders' Guide to the Colleges*. In addition to statistics, these books quote students' honest opinions of the colleges they attend. They are the ones you may read and reread as you come up with a list of colleges to apply to.

A list of recommended books is in the Resources section, p. 84.

2. Web sites

You can learn a lot about colleges from their Web sites, as well as from more general sites about the college admissions process. Sites such as [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com) feature college rankings. For a variety of sites, see Resources, p. 84

When you visit a college Web site, explore the entire site. Don't just go to the admissions section and the virtual tour. Take a look at course offerings. Read biographies of professors. Check the calendar to see what's happening on campus, and read the college newspaper to see what students' issues are. You wouldn't marry someone after just one date, would you? Get to know your colleges in depth.

3. Chat rooms and notice boards

Putting aside for a moment the usual objections to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) regarding privacy and security issues, remember that Facebook started as a college-kid-only Web site, and that's still its primary focus. Now that high school students are allowed on the site, you can do a little networking with students attending the colleges you're interested in. As in any online venture, however, use caution. Don't give out your personal information, address or phone number.

Colleges themselves often set up chat rooms for admitted or prospective students. Be sure to ask the admissions office about this.

A group of admitted students on Wesleyan University's list-serv decided to read *A Clockwork Orange* over the summer and discuss it online. That was enough to convince my daughter that this was the school for her.

4. Brochures

As soon as you start taking standardized tests such as the PSAT, voila — college catalogs begin to magically show up in your mailbox. They feature happy, racially mixed groups of students studying together under a leafy tree. Yes, they're trying to sell the university to you — but despite a certain amount of hype, these brochures are helpful in pointing out special programs and any unique advantages to the college. They also contain contact information so that you can request course guides and information on special programs. Plus, photos help you visualize the campus.

5. Visits

Most students agree that visits are a very important part of the selection process. Sometimes you will have a gut reaction to a school within just the first few moments of being on campus. Visits give you a chance to get to know the school, to ask questions, and to let the school get to know you through interviews and casual conversations. Do a little research before any interviews so that

you can ask specific questions about academics programs, campus life, etc. Remember that you are the customer.

John Camarillo, who went to high school at St. John's International School in Belgium, feels that visiting college campuses was crucial in making his decision. "I was sent college packs from each university I was admitted to, which didn't help a whole lot because they all had the similar message of 'we are a diverse, academically and socially rich university.' The only way to honestly find out which university you prefer is by visiting," he says. "I wanted a blend of an academic and a social environment. Vanderbilt perfectly combines both."

6. Current students, alums and your guidance counselor

Do get input from your guidance counselor on your proposed list of colleges, and ask if any previous students from your high school are currently attending those colleges. Also contact the colleges directly to ask if they know of students in your area in attendance who would be willing to trade a few e-mails with you. Alumni clubs can also put you in contact with someone local. You can even do an Internet search with a phrase such as, "a graduate of XYZ University," and see whose name comes up — it may well be someone interesting who'd welcome hearing from you.

— Francesca Huemer Kelly

When you visit a college Web site, don't just go to the admissions section and the virtual tour.





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(Continued from page 76)

*Some colleges and universities make internationalism central to their identity.*

how it all works, go to [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org).

Keep in mind that while you may be a star on the playing field or court overseas, your skill level may not be competitive with high school players in the States. Your coach should be able to help you determine how you compare. Also, many summer sports camps in the U.S. offer a recruiting angle for serious athletes — this will also give you an idea of how you stack up.

If you simply enjoy playing your sport and want a low-pressure environment, then intramural or club sports might be the best way to go. In any case, because the majority of freshmen varsity athletes are not competing by their senior year for various reasons (injury, being cut from the team, finding participation too demanding, etc.), choose a college for its academics over its athletics.

**11. Someone to debate with ... or not?** Do political and religious diversity matter to you, or would you feel more comfortable with people, well, just like you? Many FS students welcome diverse viewpoints and lively debate. But here's a different story. Last year I counseled a high school senior who applied to only one school: a small Bible college where acceptance was more or less guaranteed and that everyone else in her family had attended. I urged her to look at a much wider diversity of schools, but she sat down, looked me in the eye, and

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said, "I appreciate what you're asking, but I have diversity in my life right here in this international high school, and I've never felt quite as if I fit in. It will be a relief for me to be with people to whom I don't have to explain my faith. I will finally feel I can be myself." Although this is not the usual viewpoint of many students, this young woman had obviously given the matter a lot of thought and knew just what she wanted.

Many college search guides will quote students describing the social, political and religious climate of the school. If you do your homework, you'll know if a school is full of animal-rights activists or no-gays-in-the-military activists — or no activists at all. You'll know if the fraternity and sorority scene dominates campus social life. You'll know if the school is founded or funded by a

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***If financial aid is important to you, you may not want to apply Early Decision to any college.***

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religious organization, and how that affects the atmosphere. Also bear in mind that the population in state schools may not be as generally wealthy as that in private schools. A school can be diverse in many ways and yet be economically homogeneous.

**12. Who moved my falafel?**  
Are you used to being surrounded by students from many nations? When FS kids experience culture shock upon returning to their own country for college, it's often because they are used to an overseas high school chock-full of international kids and cultures, and the college they've chosen is much more American. You may well want to check out the percentage of international students at the colleges you are considering. One experienced parent has suggested going further and asking the registrar what percentage of international students are undergraduates, as there are often many more international grad and postgrad students, who are not as likely to mix with undergrads.

Still, because of financial aid constraints for international students, wealthy international students often

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*Keeping your options open by applying to a wide range of colleges and universities will give you more choices.*

far outnumber those on scholarship. Some FS kids have reported difficulty in relating to international students who have late-model cars, luxury apartments, etc.

Some colleges and universities make internationalism central to their identity. For example, Macalester College has created a global focus to its programs and prides itself on being the alma mater of such international luminaries as Kofi Amman. Georgetown University takes advantage of its Washington, D.C., location to focus on international policy and politics. Some of the larger universities, such as the University of South Carolina, Purdue University, the University of Texas at Austin and New York University, have thousands of international students enrolled, according to the Institute of International Education. Ivy League schools seem to attract a large number of international students as well.

Study-abroad programs can be important to FS kids — because this is your first chance to go abroad without your family! You may well want to ask college officials what percentage of students end up studying abroad for a semester or year.

**And Now for the Research...**

Now that you know a little better what you want, it's time to find the  
*Continued on page 86*

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[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com) — Princeton Review’s “Counselor-o-Matic” helps you narrow down a list of choices.

[www.collegeconfidential.com](http://www.collegeconfidential.com) — interactive and entertaining site with tons of information and a Q&A feature called “Ask the Dean.”

<http://mycollegeguide.org/> — Submit questions to the “Admissions Guru.”

[www.ctcl.com](http://www.ctcl.com) — Author Loren Pope’s Web site, modeled after his book *Colleges That Change Lives*, makes the argument that a small, well-chosen liberal arts college may do more for you than a more prestigious “name” university.

[www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com) — Online tours of colleges and universities across America.

[www.collegegold.com/applydecide/statrequirements](http://www.collegegold.com/applydecide/statrequirements) — State residency require-

ments (for in-state tuition) at a glance.

<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=89251> — Statistics on the percentage of international students at universities.

**Web Sites — U.K. and Canada**

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) — The official gateway to applying online at U.K. universities.

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/netclass/parents/links/0,,70515,00.html> — A page of links to useful U.K. university-related Web sites.

[www.aucc.ca/can\\_uni/index\\_e.html](http://www.aucc.ca/can_uni/index_e.html) — A straightforward, informative Web site of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

[www.macleans.ca/education/index.jsp](http://www.macleans.ca/education/index.jsp) — A Web site for Canadian education that publishes *MacLean’s Guide to Canadian Universities* (available online through a link from the site).

[www.schoolfinder.com/](http://www.schoolfinder.com/) — A site for researching not only Canadian universities, but also those in other countries.

**Books**


Fiske, Edward. *Fiske Guide to Colleges 2007*, Sourcebooks, 2006 — This book also contains listings for some U.K. and Canadian universities.

Franek, Robert, et al. *Best 361 Colleges*, Princeton Review, 2007 — Excellent all-around guide that weeds out the top-10-percent universities for you, providing the usual statistics but also fun information from students.

Kaplan, ed. *Unofficial, Unbiased Guide to the 331 Most Interesting Colleges 2005*, Kaplan, 2004 — Perhaps a bit dated now, but one of the more “fun” guides, with snappy, informative commentary from writers “Trent and Seppy,” as well as useful information.


Yale Daily News et al. *The Insider’s Guide to the Colleges, 2008: 34th Edition*, St. Martin’s Griffin, 2007 — Note: Also contains reviews of Canadian universities.

Barron, ed. *Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges* with CD-Rom, Barron’s Educational Series, 2006 — A comprehensive reference book.




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*“60 Years of Excellence in Education”*

Rugg, Frederick E. *Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges*, Frederick Rugg, 2003 — This self-published book does something most other guidebooks do not: It divides colleges into lists such as recommended undergraduate programs; miscellaneous majors; average SAT and ACT scores recommended for different majors. If you are looking for the strongest colleges in a particular major, this is a good place to check, although you won't find every college and university listed here.

Grimes, Christine. *Student Athlete Handbook for the 21st Century: A Guide to Recruiting, Scholarships, and Prepping for College*, Lulu.com, 2006.

Kravets, Marybeth and Imy Wax. *The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Disorder*, Princeton Review, 2001.

Asher, Donald. *Cool Colleges for the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late Blooming and Just Plain Different*, Ten Speed Press, 2007.

Pope, Loren. *Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Colleges That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges*, Revised edition, Penguin, 2006.

Pope, Loren. *Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That's Right for You*, Revised edition, Penguin, 1995.

Mathews, Jay. *Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College that Is Best for You*, Three Rivers Press, 2003. (Look also for Jay's regular columns in the Education section of the *Washington Post*.)

**Books — U.K. and Canada**

O'Leary, John, editor, et al. *The Times Good University Guide 2007*, Times Books, division of HarperCollins, 2006 — An excellent, if dry, resource for choosing a U.K. university, with examination of the best British schools and their strengths and weaknesses in different programs.

Rich, Johnny. *The Push Guide to Choosing a University*, Rev. ed., 2006, Arnold Hodder in association with The Independent/Lloyds TSB — U.K. universities.

Leach, Jimmy, ed. *Guardian University Guide 2007: Where to Go, What to Study, How to Get There*, Guardian Newspapers, U.K., 2006 — U.K. universities.

Vis, Nancy. *Guide to College in Canada for American Students*, Knowledge Media International, 2003

— Francesca Huemer Kelly

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**Deadline for submissions is September 1.**



(Continued from page 82)

schools that match your criteria by doing some research. The vast amount of information out there can seem overwhelming and, at times, it is. But the process can be fun as well as useful.

When all is said and done, be aware that your decision is reversible, especially at North American schools. If you do end up choosing a college that later turns out not to be right for you, remember that you can transfer. Says Beloit College student Beth Hundley, "My first year was awesome and I loved it. However, now I'm thinking of transferring. People can change over the course of a year."

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choices in the spring.

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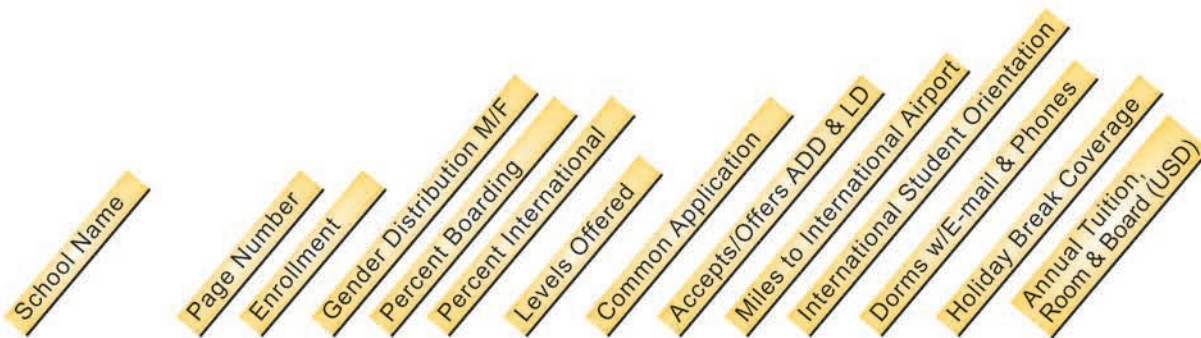


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# Schools at a Glance

Please visit [www.fsjournal.org](http://www.fsjournal.org) and click on the Marketplace tab for more information.



## ELEMENTARY / JUNIOR / SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Barrie School, The	101	380	51/49	NA	NA	PK-12	NA	Limited	31	NA	NA	NA	10,750 – 22,040
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart	80	740	All girls	NA	5	PK-12	N	N	15	N	NA	NA	10,000 – 19,275
Washington International School	80	885	48/52	NA	70	PK-12	N	Limited	8	Y	NA	NA	25,030

## JUNIOR / SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

COEUS International School	91	80	48/52	NA	50	5-12	N	Limited	25	N	NA	N	22,975
Dana Hall School	95	465	All girls	40	13	6-12	Y	Limited	12	Y	Y	N	42,163
Perkiomen School	91	265	60/40	60	20	5-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	N	36,000
Stony Brook School	91	350	52/48	60	23	7-12	Y	Limited	50	Y	Y	N	33,950

## SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Blue Ridge School	85	195	All boys	100	20	9-12	Y	N	120	Limited	Y	Limited	31,900
Foxcroft School	101	190	All girls	69	16	6-12	Y	Y	30	Y	Y	Y	39,375
Interlochen Arts Academy	87	475	40/60	89	18	9-12	N	N	16	Y	Y	N	35,850 – 37,450
Kents Hill School	98	230	60/40	75	20	9-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	Limited	39,400
King George School	91	72	60/40	100	5	9-12	Y	Y	60	N	N	Y	5,800/month
Mercersburg Academy	92	440	51/49	83	11	9-12, PG	Y	Y/N	90	Y	Y	N	39,100
Miss Hall's School	81	185	All girls	75	20	9-12	Y	NA	40	Y	Y	N	39,800
Oldfields School	86	185	All girls	70	15	8-12, PG	Y	Limited	35	N	Y	N	39,100
St. Timothy's School	88	155	All girls	60	19	9-12, PG	Y	Y	15	Y	Y	N	39,000
White Mountain School	82	100	50/50	80	14	9-12, PG	Y	Y	110	N	Y	N	39,100

## SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

Gow School, The	87	145	All boys	100	28	7-12, PG	N	Y	20	Y	Y	N	43,600
Landmark School	99	447	60/40	50	10	2-12	N	Y	25	N	Y	N	40,500*

Notes: ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder    LD - Learning Disability    NA - Not Applicable    PK - Pre-Kindergarten    PG - Postgraduate  
 \* Additional fees may apply

CONTINUED ON PAGE 93

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## The ABCs of Education Allowances

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By Pamela Ward

Employees of government agencies assigned overseas are granted allowances to help defray the cost of an education for their children in kindergarten through 12th grade, one equivalent to that provided by public school systems in the United States.

In most cases, posts abroad are served by one or more English-language schools with an American curriculum. The majority of these are nongovernmental, nonprofit, nondenominational, independent schools, usually with a board of directors establishing policy and a superintendent, headmaster or principal as the senior administrator. Even though these schools may be called American, they are not entities of the U.S. government. Some receive government grants for specific purposes, but these grants represent a small percentage of the overall budget. Children of many nationalities attend these schools, including, in most schools, a significant percentage of host-country students.

The allowances for a specific post are determined by the fees charged by a school identified as providing a basic U.S.-type education. Parents may use this allowance to send their children to a different school of their choice, say a parochial or foreign-language institution, as long as the cost does not exceed that of the "base" school. If the alternative school is more expensive than the "base" model, the difference would be an out-of-pocket expense for the parent.

An allowance covers only expenses for those services usually available without cost in American public schools, including tuition, transportation and textbooks. Fees for lunches, trips, computers and school uniforms are not covered, even if required by the school.

Parents may also elect to homeschool their children while at post, using a home

study program. They will receive an allowance to purchase materials and services while posted abroad, but this allowance will not be continued if they are reassigned to the U.S.

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*The allowances for a specific post are determined by the fees charged by a school identified as providing a basic U.S.-type education.*

---

If a foreign post does not have a secular, English-language school with an American curriculum, or has such a school that goes only through certain grades, an away-from-post or "boarding school" allowance is provided. A lump sum, varying from post to post, is allotted to cover the estimated cost of tuition, room, board and travel to post during school vacations. Parents are free to choose the boarding school they prefer. There is no special funding for parents or students to visit schools in advance of application or for an interview, even if one is required.

The U.S. government does not provide an allowance for college or other post-secondary education. However, one round-trip per year to post is provided for students studying at universities in the U.S. Recent legislation has also provided this allowance for students studying at universities abroad, and it is expected that this

will be in effect in the next few months. The Office of Allowances will issue official notification when this becomes effective. Also allowed is the shipment of 250 pounds of unaccompanied air baggage or the equivalent cost in storage for each college or boarding school student.

All funding for education is processed by the financial management officer at the post where the employee is assigned. At some posts the embassy or consulate works very closely with the school or schools, and the billing is handled directly. In other instances, the employee will pay a school fee, or pay for an airline ticket or storage, and then submit bills to the FMO for reimbursement. Although a student may start school at the beginning of a semester if a parent has been officially assigned to a post, the parent may not be reimbursed for any school expenses until he or she arrives at post.

There are several offices in the Department of State prepared to help you understand how the educational allowances work, and what choices you have for your children. These include the Office of Overseas Schools ([www.state.gov/m/a/os](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os)), the Office of Allowances ([www.state.gov/m/a/als](http://www.state.gov/m/a/als)) and the Family Liaison Office ([www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm)). We hope that you will get in touch with us if you have any questions about your situation. Although these offices are part of the Department of State, the same allowances apply to most civilian federal employees under chief-of-mission authority overseas. For information or assistance, e-mail [FLOAskEducation@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov) or call (202) 647-1076.

---

*Pamela Ward is the Education and Youth Officer in the State Department's Family Liaison Office.*



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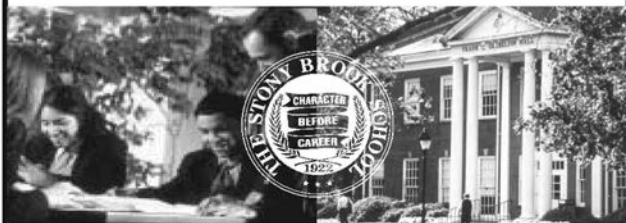
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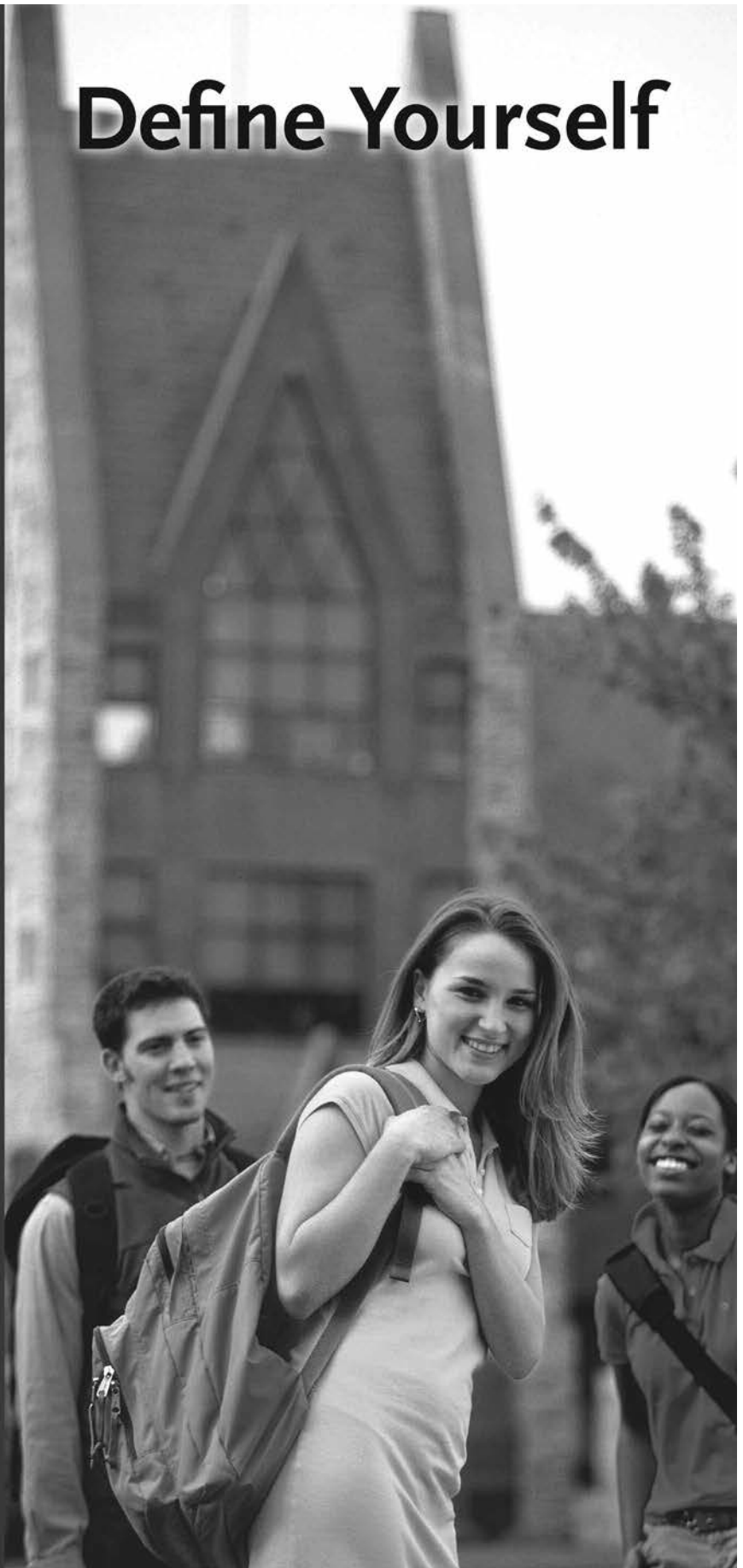
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# Define Yourself



# Schools at a Glance

Please visit [www.fsjournal.org](http://www.fsjournal.org) and click on the Marketplace tab for more information.

School Name
Page Number
Enrollment
Gender Distribution M/F
Percent Boarding
Percent International
Levels Offered
Common Application
Accepts/Offers ADD & LD
Miles to International Airport
International Student Orientation
Dorms w/E-mail & Phones
Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)

## OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

American International School of Rotterdam	88	240	50/50	NA	90	PK-12	N	Limited	45	Y	NA	N	15,270
American Overseas School of Rome	84	630	50/50	NA	65	PK-PG	N	Y	30	Y	N	N	12,750 – 21,500
CCI Renaissance School	86	120	40/60	100	5	10-12	N	N	175	Y	Y	N	26,500
Leysin American School in Switzerland	83	350	52/48	100	65	9-12, PG	Y	Limited	75	Y	Y	N	34,000
Marymount International School of Rome	75	750	49/51	NA	50	PK-12	N	Limited	15	Y	N	N	10,125 – 19,500
St. John's International School	77	898	51/49	NA	NA	PK-12	Y	Y	15	NA	NA	NA	9,000 – 32,000
St. Stephen's School	87	221	45/55	18	63	9-12, PG	N	N	12	NA	Y	N	39,981*

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Texas Tech University - Outreach & Distance	79	K-12 and accredited HS diploma; Bachelor's through graduate programs. Visit <a href="http://www.de.ttu.edu">www.de.ttu.edu</a>											
University of Missouri Center for Distance & Independent Study	82	Independent study: Grade 3 through University. Accredited HS diploma. Bachelor's degree completion. Visit <a href="http://cdis.missouri.edu/go/pFSJ7.asp">http://cdis.missouri.edu/go/pFSJ7.asp</a>											

## COLLEGES / UNIVERSITIES

Rutgers University	79	37,072	47/53	60	2	Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D.	N	Y	10 / 25**	Y	Y	Y	27,505
Western New England College	83	2,400	60/40	78	1	Bachelors, Masters, JD, Ph.D.	Y	Y	23	N	Y	Limited	35,940

## OTHER

AAFSW	96	<i>Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide</i> Go to <a href="http://www.aafsw.org">www.aafsw.org</a> Bringing the Foreign Service community together to promote a better quality of life.											
FSYF	95	<i>Foreign Service Youth Foundation</i> Go to <a href="http://www.fysf.org">www.fysf.org</a> Assisting Foreign Service Youth with coordination development programs.											
RNG International Educational Consultants	99	Specializing in comprehensive and personalized educational advising. Go to <a href="http://www.rebeccagrappo.com">www.rebeccagrappo.com</a>											

Notes: ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder    LD - Learning Disability    NA - Not Applicable    PK - Pre-Kindergarten    PG - Postgraduate  
\*29,500 Euros    \*\* Distance varies depending on campus

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 89

## What About Canada or the U.K.?

Foreign Service students tend to be attracted to international universities, particularly in the U.K. and Canada. With expanding educational travel allowances for FS dependents to international universities, as well as AFSA's new policy on scholarships that can be used at any university, American or international, Now is a good time to check out non-American college options.

FS student Gabi O'Connor, now in her final year at the University of York in England, wanted an excellent, highly-rated English program. She also knew that her family would be posted in Dublin. "America felt (and still feels) like a huge leap, a bit of a black hole compared to everything I knew and was comfortable with here in Europe," she says. Still, she applied to U.S. colleges, and was ready to go if a more enticing offer came. Ultimately, she decided York was the best place for her.

## Not Such a 'Huge Leap'

Students interested in studying in the U.K. can get more information from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)). UCAS is the central portal for applying to universities in the U.K. Unlike in the U.S. and Canada, you complete one application for admission to up to six universities (this may be changed to five in the near future). Deadlines are generally in October for Oxford, Cambridge and medical/dental/veterinary courses; January for all other universities and colleges. The usual course of study for an undergraduate degree takes three years, not four as in the U.S., unless you need to do a "foundation year" to catch up with British entrance requirements. It is also possible to do a combined bachelor's/master's program in four years.

British schools recognize the IB diploma as a valid substitute for British A-level exams. However, there are U.K. universities that will recognize AP exam scores, too (see list at

this link: [www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/intad.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/intad.html)).

There are plenty of British universities of extremely high quality that cost less than equivalent schools in the U.S. One FS parent reports, "My daughter's experience at the University of Glasgow has been incredible. She has relatively small courses, usually no more than 20 to 25 in a class, and yet she is being taught by name professors, not by grad students or teaching assistants. The feeling we have gotten from the school administration is that they truly know who she is and are concerned for her success."

Most schools in Britain expect you to know your course of study upon entry. Says York student Gabi O'Connor, "People considering doing their undergraduate studies in the U.K. should be prepared for a different type of education than what you would get in the States. You only study one subject, but with a wide choice of modules or combined studies. I recommend U.K. universities to anyone

## Resources for the College Application Process

### Web Sites

**[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)** (register here to take PSAT, SAT, and SAT II tests)  
**[www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)** (click here to fill out and submit the Common Application)  
**<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>** (most colleges will require you to apply for financial aid using this site)  
**<http://profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp>** (many will also want you to use this site)  
**[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)** (register here to get scholarship alerts via e-mail)  
**[www.kaplan.com](http://www.kaplan.com)** (helpful e-mail alerts for parents and students)  
**<http://www.afsa.org/scholar/index.cfm>** (AFSA scholarship information)  
**<http://www.aafsw.org/aafsw/awards.htm>** (AAFSW scholarship information)

### College Admissions Counselors

**[www.nacac.com](http://www.nacac.com)** National Association for College Admission Counseling  
**[www.educationalconsulting.org](http://www.educationalconsulting.org)** Independent Educational Consultants Association

### Books

- **Best 357 Colleges, 2005 Edition** (*Best Colleges*), by Robert Franek et. al. (*Princeton Review*, 2004)
- **Unofficial, Unbiased Guide to the 331 Most Interesting Colleges 2005**, by Kaplan (Kaplan, 2004)
- **A Is for Admission: The Insider's Guide to Getting into the Ivy League and Other Top Colleges**, by Michele A. Hernández (Warner Books, 1999)
- **The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College**, by Jacques Steinberg (Penguin Books, 2003)
- **The Insider's Guide to the Colleges, 2005 (31st Edition)**, by *Yale Daily News* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2004)
- **Fiske Guide to Colleges 2005**, by Edward Fiske (Sourcebooks, 2004)
- **How to Go to College (Almost) for Free**, by Ben Kaplan (Harper Resource, 2002)
- **Get Into Any College: Secrets of Harvard Students**, by Gen and Kelly Tanabe (Supercollege LLC, 2001)

- **Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College That is Best for You**, by Jay Mathews (Three Rivers Press, 2003)
- **Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even If You're Not a Straight-A Student**, by Loren Pope (Penguin, 2000)
- **The Ultimate College Survival Guide**, by Janet Farrar Worthington, Ronald Farrar (Peterson's Guides, 1998)
- **Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years** (fourth edition), by Karen Levin Coburn, Madge Lawrence Treeger (Perennial, 2003)

### Magazines

*Newsweek* puts out an annual issue called "America's Hottest Colleges," and *U.S. News & World Report* publishes an annual ranking of the most selective colleges and universities.

— Francesca Huemer Kelly



who has a solid idea of what they would like to study. People with a less definite idea would probably do better in a liberal arts university in America.”

**International Feel and a Lower Price Tag**

Schools in Canada are more like American institutions, but with a far lower price tag. Foreign Service kids are attracted to Canadian cities such as Montreal or Toronto because of their “foreign” or “European” feel. McGill University, a popular choice among Third Culture Kids, hosts an international student body that makes up 12 percent of its total student population — one of the highest percentages in North America. The University of Toronto’s three campuses feature an international student population of roughly 8 to 9 percent. While not as high as McGill’s, this is still considered quite high.

Why do non-Canadians choose Canadian universities? Luca Mantesi, who attends McGill, says “Montreal is the most interna-

tional city I have ever visited. Because of Quebec’s relaxed immigration policies, people from all over the world come to live here.” Luca, who graduated from the American Overseas School of Rome and fully expected to attend college in the U.K. or U.S., was surprised by how much more he liked McGill.

“Here, people will love you for who you are and will try to learn as much as possible about your background. In the U.S. you’re expected to rid yourself of your culture and become an ‘American.’ This fosters a negative environment that mainly affects international students and Americans who didn’t grow up in the U.S.” Although Luca’s university experience is a positive one, he has been less impressed with the Canadian health care system; he and his friends drive across the border when they need to see a doctor.

Canadian schools tend to have later application deadlines than American schools, almost always after New Year’s and sometimes not even until March. Some of the

more popular college search books include a write-up of at least a few Canadian institutions, but for more comprehensive information, *MacLean’s* weekly magazine has become the resident expert, and publishes an annual *Guide to Canadian Universities* (see Resources).

Universities in other foreign countries vary in their admissions procedures. Some simply allow prospective students to register a few weeks before classes start, perhaps with the added requirement of taking an entrance examination. Do not be fooled by this seemingly easy admissions policy, however: many top-notch universities’ selectivity comes after enrollment, not before. In the most elite Belgian universities, for example, you must have a higher-level high school diploma (or full IB diploma, or a minimum SAT score) to register. Even then, by the end of the first year, more than half of the students have dropped out.

— Francesca Huemer Kelly

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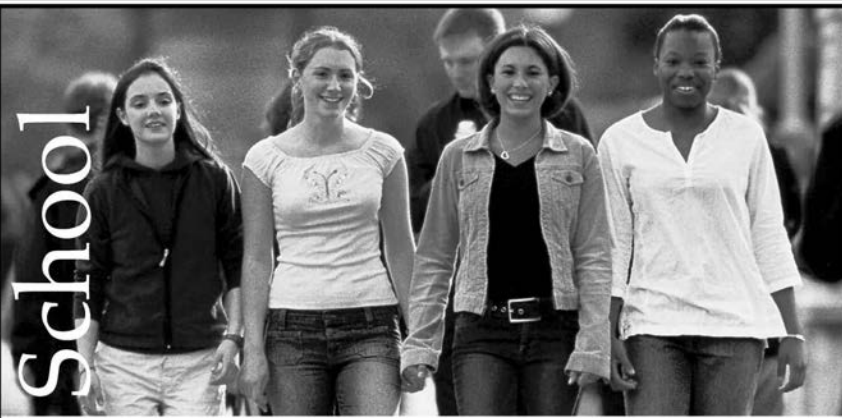
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FROM THE DECEMBER 2001 SCHOOL SUPPLEMENT  
Pia Schou Nielsen, "Looking for a Good School Abroad?"

According to the State Department's Family Liaison Office, there are approximately 10,000 children in Foreign Service families, of whom about 7,200 are school-age. Around 93 percent of those children attend local schools in the city of assignment. Five percent enroll in boarding schools, and the other 2 percent are homeschooled by their parents.

"Foreign Service life offers these children many rewards: excitement, diversity, intellectual stimulation and a sense of self-sufficiency. But it also poses many challenges, a major one being the identification of schools that nurture educational and social development rather than disrupting it. Even in developed nations, finding schools with high educational standards that also give American students the opportunity to interact with the local culture can be difficult. And the selection process must be repeated every few years, often in very different settings. Fortunately, help is available!"

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# LEARNING TO DRIVE AS AN FS KID

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HOW CAN FOREIGN SERVICE TEENS LEARN TO DRIVE IF THEIR PARENTS ARE POSTED OVERSEAS? HERE ARE SOME FIRST-PERSON TALES AND PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR KIDS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

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BY *INGRID AHLGREN*

**I**n America, driving is a rite of passage. Think about the iconic film “American Graffiti,” where teens cruise around in automobiles, or the “Greased Lightning” song in the musical *Grease*. Driving is also a useful skill to have, especially in America, where public transportation isn’t always as abundant as it can be abroad.

“Driving is a necessary skill in life, because of the way that America has been designed,” says Foreign Service officer and parent Benjamin Dille. “Even in countries with more developed public transportation, cars do not seem to be becoming obsolete.” Dille adds that knowing how to drive is a good skill to have in case of an emergency. Another parent, Elaine Lloyd, points out that a U.S. driver’s license is also an important form of identification.

How can Foreign Service teens learn to drive if their parents are posted overseas? This article looks at how some kids who grew up abroad have learned how to drive, as teens or later on, and also offers practical advice for families about how teenagers can learn to drive legally and safely.

## **Learning Overseas**

My oldest childhood friend, Jessica, whose parents were also in the Foreign Service, learned how to drive a stick-

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*Ingrid Ahlgren, a Foreign Service kid, is now a writer in New York. She knows how to drive, but she’s happy taking the subway to work.*

shift on the left-hand side of the road while she was in high school in Cyprus. Jessica’s mom made sure they did this as safely as possible by practicing in an empty sports stadium. Not all kids who grow up outside of the United States learn how to drive in such a safe way, however.

One young man now in his 30s, who learned to drive in Sri Lanka in the late 1980s, describes his first driving experiences as borderline dangerous. At the time, there were curfews. “My dad worked for the U.N., and had curfew passes and a big U.N. emblem on the sides and roof of the car,” he recalls. “I remember negotiating with my father’s driver so that he would let me learn to drive that Toyota on back streets [at night]. There was a slight chance we would be spotlighted by a helicopter and arrested (or worse) for breaking the curfew. My parents had no idea that we were breaking the law. Thankfully, we never got caught, though some helicopter search lights came awfully close.”

Faith Eidse, the daughter of a tropical-medicine nurse and a Canadian linguist, learned how to drive as a grade-school student in Africa. “There were no driving ages, permits, or traffic law enforcement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and consequently my dad put me behind the wheel when I was 11 — already older than he had been when he learned to drive on a farm in Manitoba,” she says.

When Eidse returned “home” to Canada at age 18, she was “a bit of a rough rider.” She recounts: “One night I led the cops on a chase, running stop signs, blinking one way, turning another, dodging through back roads, and trying to ditch them. Not only did I not recognize the

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**Should We Hire a College Admissions Counselor?**

If you lack a guidance department or if you're home-schooling, consider hiring a college admissions consultant. "I do think home-schooled students would benefit from hiring a college admissions consultant," stresses Judy Frohlich, partner of College Counseling Consultants, based in the Chicago area ([cccn@ameritech.net](mailto:cccn@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

unmarked car, but I treated them as friends out joy-riding; I didn't even know proper etiquette with cops. I not only got a ticket — but an education."

**Learning Later**

If some children who grow up abroad learn how to drive at age 16 (or younger in cases such as Eidse's), others learn later in life.

Anna Maripuu moved from India to North Carolina her senior year in high school. Maripuu says all the kids in her class already knew how to drive, and she was embarrassed that she didn't. "The seniors all had cars and would drive to school and park in the parking lot for seniors," she explains. "I had to take the yellow school bus to school every day with all the non-driving (and younger) kids! I ended up taking Driver's Ed class with all these 16-year-olds. I'll never forget learning how to drive on the little roads out in the woods around town in my parents' green Oldsmobile Cutlass, complete with white leatherette seats. At the time it was all kind of mortifying to me, and I wished I had learned to drive sooner."

Another friend of mine, Hoda Makar, grew up abroad and didn't learn to drive until the age of 21, when she was living in the U.S. "I was embarrassed that I was getting a college degree, and still didn't know how to drive," she says.

Mikkela Thompson, the daughter of a Foreign Service officer, got her learner's permit and took some driving lessons in college. But she did not actually get a license until she was in her late 20s and living in Denmark. "I think the U.S. system is not comprehensive enough, and the Danish one was a bit of an expensive racket," says Thompson. "People should learn to drive before they are too old. It's really hard to learn to drive when older."

However, Thompson adds that she thinks there are definite benefits to being older when you learn to

drive. "Driving is a huge responsibility," she says. "I probably had more of a phobia about driving than most people. But it saddens me that people think they can drink and drive. And young drivers (up until about 25) tend to be cocky, and not as responsible."

Some Foreign Service parents are also happy that their children are going to be behind the wheel at an older age. "They can wait until they live in the good old USA, and worry about it then," says Foreign Service spouse Mari O'Connor. "Four of our nephews have had terrible car accidents, all before the age of 20. I'm happy that our girls will not be so young when they begin driving."

### Learning (Legally) Before College

It's up to parents and their kids to figure out if (and when) children

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***It's up to parents  
and their kids to figure  
out if (and when)  
children should learn  
how to drive.***

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should learn how to drive. In some cases, teenagers might be able to get a driver's license abroad and later get a U.S. one, but the legal driving age varies from country to country. In much of Europe, for example, the minimum age for driving a car is 18, and getting a license can be time-consuming and expensive.

If parents who are posted over-

seas want their teenagers to get licenses in the U.S., it's often possible for teens to learn how to drive legally when they are back in the United States on home leave. The first step is taking driver's education online. After this, kids can practice driving with someone who has a license whenever they are in the United States.

One Foreign Service youth who is taking driver's education online is 16-year-old Arie Pittman, who lives in Beijing: "It's fast, and I did it in one day. And it goes at your own pace." Pittman would like to have a license before heading to college in a year and a half, and plans to take lessons during home leave. "I'd rather wait until I have the time, instead of driving illegally or in a dangerous city like Beijing."

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driver's education classes, available in book form and online, for students in all 50 states. In Minnesota, the course is available in book form for homeschooled students only. After passing driver's education, the minimum age for getting a permit and the required permit holding time before you can take a road test vary depending on the state.

If a teen can't take driver's education online, there are some other options. During the summer, some high schools offer driver's education programs. Although certain requirements need to be met, Fairfax County's public school system offers a summer driver's education program and behind-the-wheel training for high school students ([www.fcps.edu/DIS/OACE/DriversEd.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OACE/DriversEd.htm)). Colleges such as Indiana State University ([www.indstate.edu/driver/teen\\_drivered.htm](http://www.indstate.edu/driver/teen_drivered.htm)) and Cecil Community College in Maryland ([www.cecilcc.edu/programs/special-programs/youth-education/drivers-education.asp](http://www.cecilcc.edu/programs/special-programs/youth-education/drivers-education.asp)) also offer driver's education courses. These classes usually include classroom as well as hands-

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***If a teen can't take driver's education online, there are some other options — some high schools offer driver's education programs.***

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on instruction. The AAA also offers hands-on driver training programs ([www.aaamidatlantic.com/automotive/aaadriving/default.asp](http://www.aaamidatlantic.com/automotive/aaadriving/default.asp)).

### **Parent Involvement Is Key**

Parental involvement in teenagers' attempts to learn how to drive is very important. According to a 2005 SADD/Liberty Mutual study, "Teen drivers who report high levels of parental attention are significantly more likely than those who report low levels of parental attention to say they never speed (45 percent to 14 percent)." The study also found that these teens were more likely to wear seat belts and less likely to drive while impaired.

Of course, after your teenager learns to drive, whether in the U.S. or abroad, he or she is going to start asking for a car or want to borrow one from you. But that's another story. ■

## **Resources for Going to College in America**

### **Books:**

- Richard Kadison, M.D., and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo, *College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About It*, Jossey-Bass, 2004
- Suzette Tyler, *Been There, Should've Done That II: More Tips for Making the Most of College*, Front Porch Press, 2001
- Janet Farrar Worthington and Ronald Farrar, *The Ultimate College Survival Guide*, Peterson's Guides, 1998.
- David Pollock and Ruth Van Reyken, *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing up Among Worlds*, Nicholas Brealey, 2001
- Karen C. McCluskey, *Notes from a Traveling Childhood: Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents and Children*, Foreign Service Youth Foundation, 1994
- Carolyn D. Smith, *Strangers At Home: Essays on the Effects of Living Overseas and Coming "Home" to a Strange Land*, Aletheia Publications, 1996
- Linda Bell, *Hidden Immigrants: Legacies of Growing Up Abroad*, Cross Cultural Publications, 1997

### **Web Sites:**

- Foreign Service Youth Foundation* — [www.fsyf.org](http://www.fsyf.org) (clubs, support, resources, interactive opportunities for FS kids and teenagers)
- Third Culture Kid World* — [www.tckworld.com](http://www.tckworld.com) (resources for TCKs)
- The Interchange Institute* — [www.interchangeinstitute.org](http://www.interchangeinstitute.org) (resources for people moving to new cultures)
- U Magazine at colleges.com* — <http://www.colleges.com/Umagazine/> (college culture)
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— Francesca Huemer Kelly

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## How Can Foreign Service Parents Help?

Melanie Kerber, Ed.D., an educational consultant, has found that FS teens and TCKs vary tremendously in their adjustment to college. "Some kids who have lived their entire lives overseas go off to an American college with little to no difficulty, whereas others struggle with not fitting in and do not relate to the campus activities: drinking parties, carousing, etc. The same can be said for kids who have lived their entire lives in America.

"I always give parents three pieces of advice. Number one is to stay connected with their country. It is important that the child always feel as though he or she has a home country. This is particularly true regarding news, culture and current trends. Second, expect at least one semester of turmoil where kids want to come home or transfer. I urge parents to handle it accordingly, not by bringing them home but helping them through it at a distance. It undercuts kids' confidence to bring them home

*It is important that  
the child always feel  
as though he or she has  
a home country.*

unless they are on the verge of suicide.

"Finally, parents can be influential in steering their kids' college choices based on the type of child they have. For example, if the teen tended to be clingy as a child, he or she might revert back to that under the stress of college life, and it might be wise to select a college close to relatives or close family friends."

Becky Grappo, education and youth officer for the Family Liaison Office, agrees. "Don't be surprised if you get mixed mes-

sages when your kids call home. The idea of college being 'the best four years of your life' is sometimes misleading, and kids expect it to be great all the time. So they might call one time loving it, and the next time bemoaning the fact that they don't click with the other kids, it's not the right place for them, they want to transfer, etc. Sometimes that might be true, but they need to be encouraged to give it time, make the effort to get involved, and realize that their feelings are shared by many others."

She adds: "When selecting a college, Foreign Service kids sometimes have additional factors to consider other than those that are obvious. For example, if the parents are overseas, how easy is it to get to an airport? Where are other family members going to be who can offer help and support? Every student has a different comfort level with distance and their newly-found independence."

— Francesca Huemer Kelly

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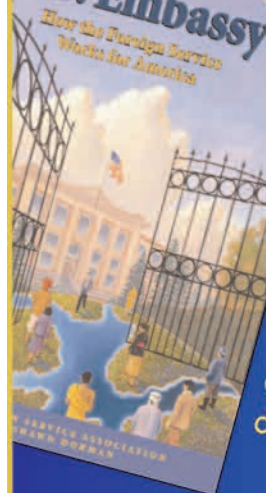


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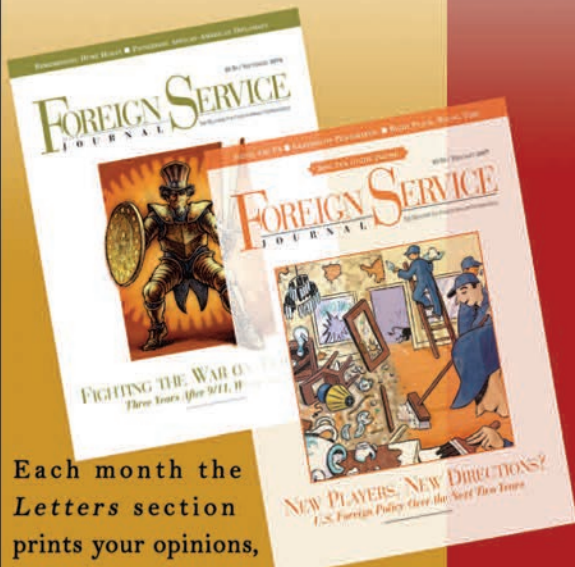
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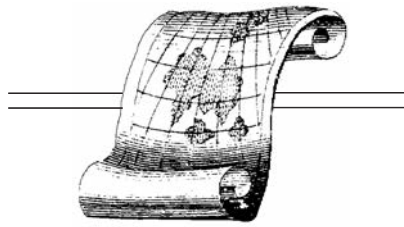
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# REFLECTIONS

## *One Year and Counting ...*

BY CAROLINE GREDLER

**M**y life changed dramatically a little over a year ago. I quit my job, found a new home for our dog and put the house up for rent — all to follow my husband, Dale, a contracting officer with USAID, around the world.

Even after intense discussion, the move hardly seemed possible when we received our post assignment, with language classes beginning that spring. Suddenly, we were looking for tenants, securing passports, making wills and finding a home for our 13-year-old dog, who simply couldn't make the trip.

I had a meltdown, even saw a counselor, thinking I had Attention Deficit Disorder. But really, I was just freaking out. Finally, my mother came. I got it together, we said our goodbyes, and I woke up one morning in Indonesia. Just like that. Well, not quite that easily.

The plane ride was grueling: 32 hours. Our sponsor met us at the gate, introducing herself as the Acting XO. What could *that* mean?

The masses of people, heat, noise and chaos of Jakarta were shocking.

Dale and I spent that first day together, at the pool, visiting grocery stores, exchanging currency and checking contact numbers. The next day, he went to work, and I looked out the window at the intimidating expanse of

---

*Caroline Gredler is posted in Jakarta with her family. Formerly a public servant, she is now a mother and active member of the Foreign Service community.*

*Our sponsor met  
us at the gate,  
introducing herself as  
the Acting XO. What  
could that mean?*



Jakarta.

Then, a few days later, I woke during the night, thinking about masked men busting into our apartment. What would I do? I'd be like Kung Fu Woman, and just start kicking butt. I would jump out the second-story window and sprint across the lawn. But to where?

I never could have imagined this, safe in my D.C. row house just one week before. Even more than my physical safety, my career was at stake here too. I had walked away from my dream job at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Surely in Indonesia, land of disaster, I could find a job with a bit of research.

What was most frustrating was the amount of time it took to get anything accomplished — from getting around town in the traffic to simply getting on the Internet. Finding a job moved lower and lower on my totem pole of priorities.

What I really needed was a cell phone: for security, to have a call-back number, and to send those nifty text messages it seemed just about everyone sent. But where to get one, and

just what was a SIM card?

On my calendar already, within days of our arrival, was some stupid coffee morning and dinner with Dale's boss. Oh, and I was told I needed to join the Indonesia Heritage Society. (Luckily, the American Women's Association proved to be too far away.)

Surprise, surprise! It was actually at the coffee morning where I learned all about cell phones. My fear it was going to be a sorority type of thing proved correct, but in a good, inclusive way.

I met the DCM's wife, who took extra time to speak with me and ensure I had resources. "If you want to go home and visit your family, do it!" she told me. "If your husband scoffs, tell him, 'Please, I am only going to be gone for two weeks, and when I come back I will be refreshed and happy.' Go often if you need to."

As it turned out, I didn't go home for 16 months. Within two months at post, I got a job as the mission's communication officer. But before starting work it was nice to have time to learn about my immediate environment and do some fun cultural activities — with the sorority, you know.

Now I have a baby, and have taken on the new position of "Mom." Once again, I am in a whole new environment, but learning to swim.

As we continue down this path in the Foreign Service, I proceed more confidently, realizing that my family is here, wherever we are; the sorority is all part of that; and we have to stick together. ■

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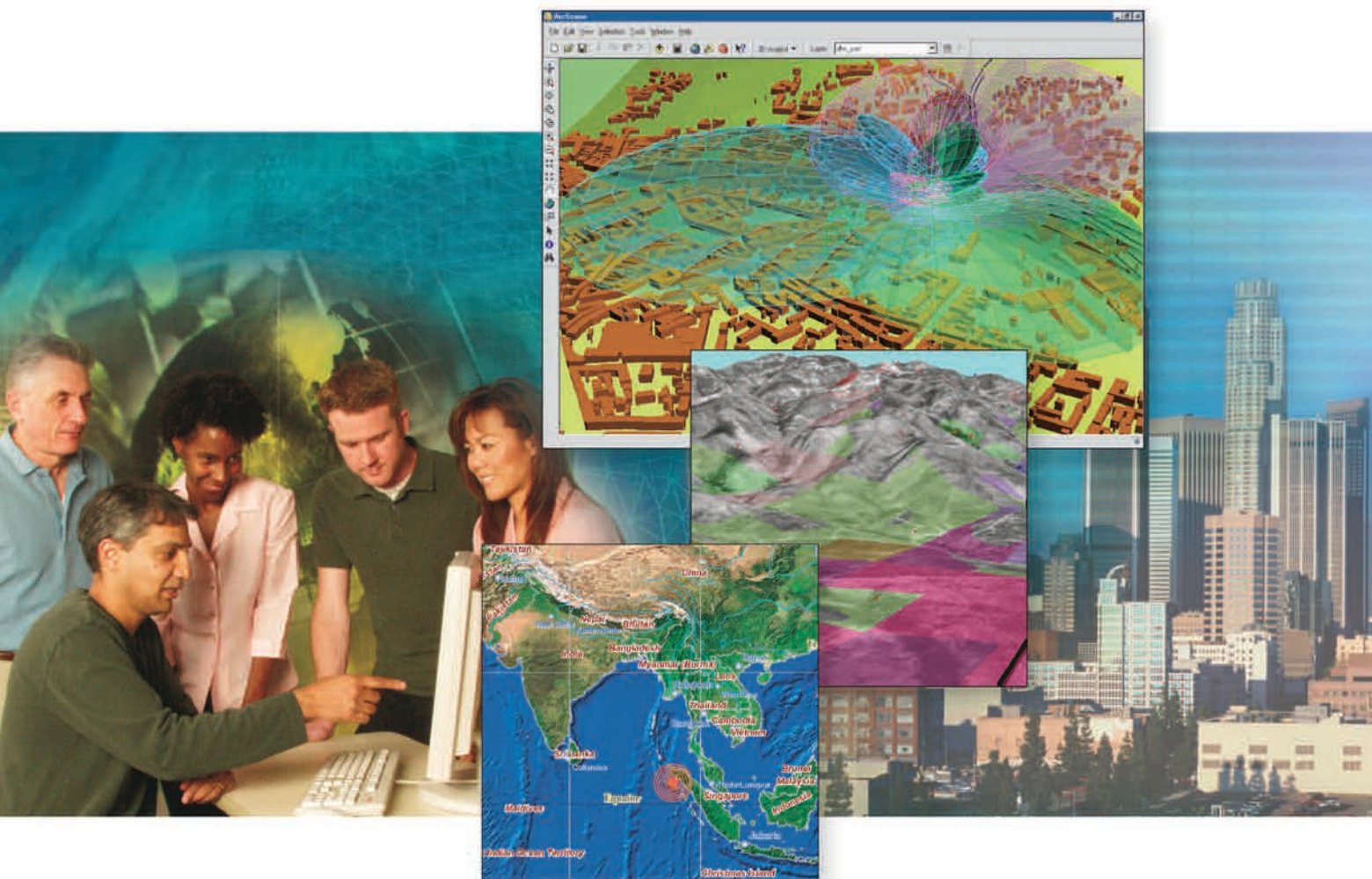
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