

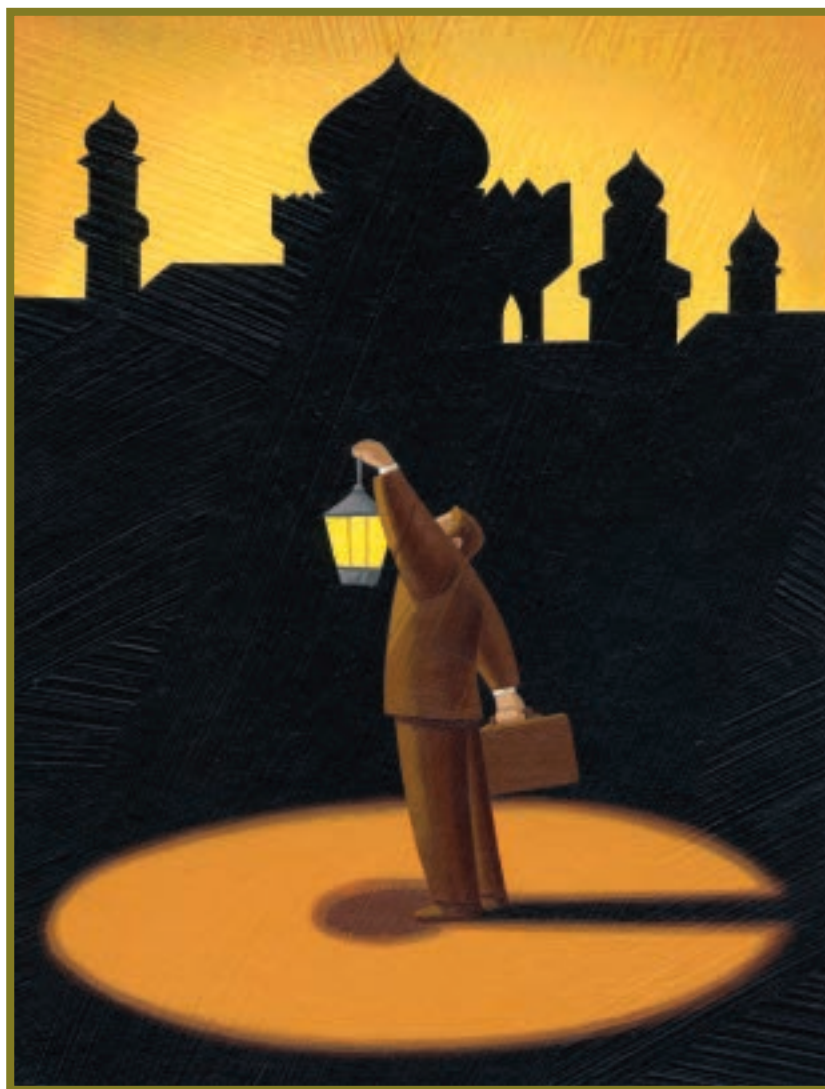
AFSA ANNUAL REPORT INSIDE

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FOREIGN SERVICE

JOURNAL

THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS



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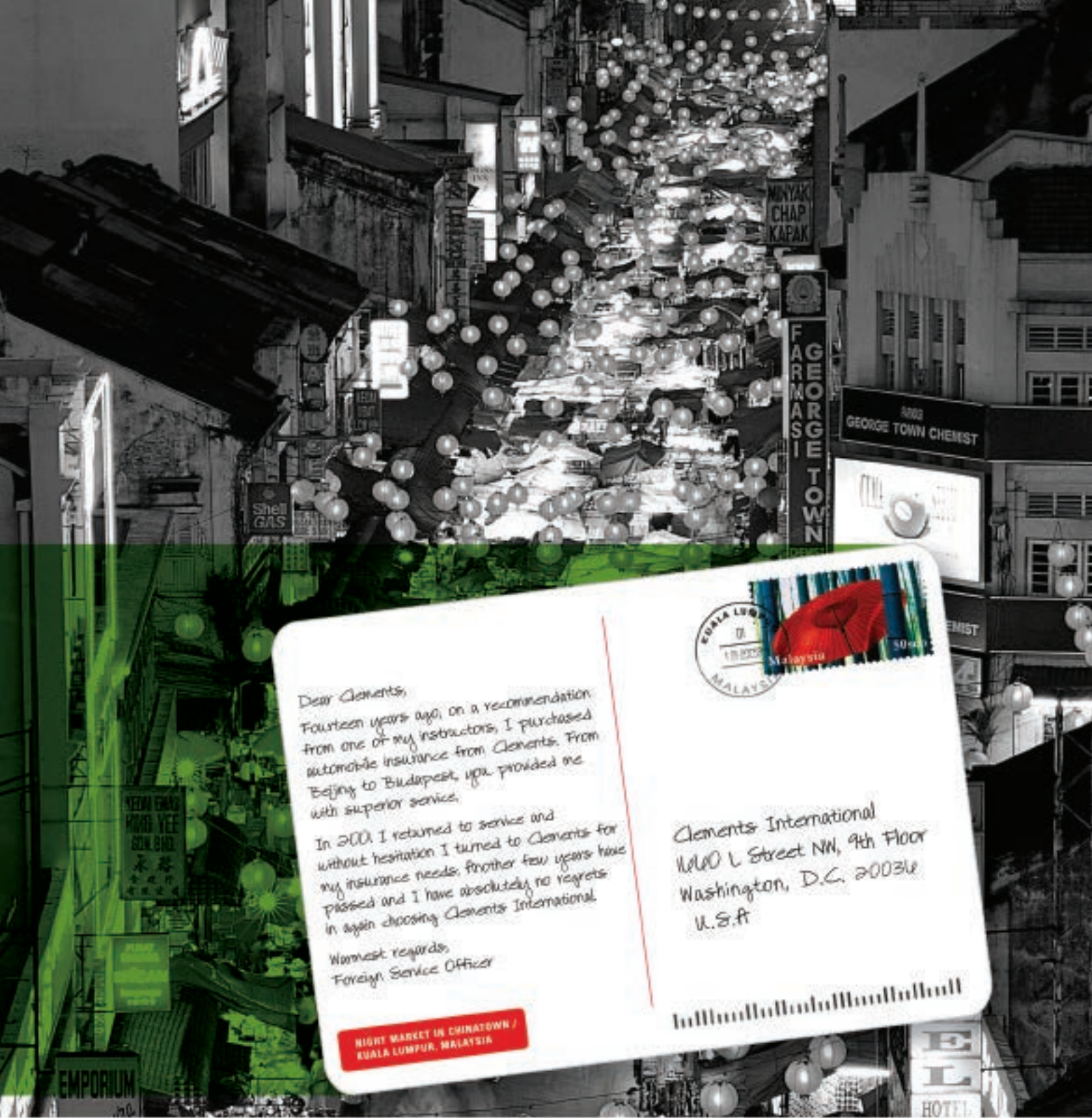
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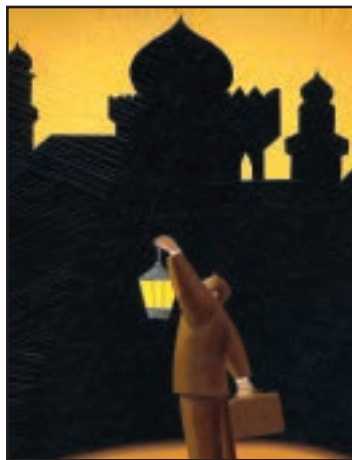
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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

Your Retirement Rights and Responsibilities

BY JOHN LIMBERT

We all have nightmares. Mine is that, when I am long retired and happily playing cards with fellow octogenarians, I receive a letter from the department saying, "We have examined your records and discovered that your annuity was erroneously calculated. We have determined that you owe us XX thousand dollars representing 20 years of overpayments plus interest and penalties. But because we are all heart, we will allow you to choose between repaying this amount in one lump sum or in three equal payments. Have a nice day."



My nightmare, or a variety of it, has become reality for too many colleagues. And it could become yours. Anyone retired or planning to retire (i.e., everybody) and who wants to stay out of the poorhouse should go immediately to Bonnie Brown's retirement issues column in this month's *AFSA News* ("Overpayments and the Department of State") and read it carefully. Then read it again. Then memorize it. What she describes has become bitter reality for too many of us.

AFSA believes that we all deserve a decent and dignified retirement after our years of loyal service to our country. But in all too many cases, retirement has become a bureaucratic swamp of miscalculations, misinforma-

tion, ambiguity, and officious demands for repayment of large sums of money from sick and elderly colleagues.

AFSA has taken up this cause. While our legal staff looks at resolving existing overpayment cases in accordance with equity and common sense (i.e., the retiree should not get stuck with the cost of the department's mistakes), we are also looking for long-term solutions for a system too long neglected and dysfunctional. The good news is that, with AFSA's encouragement, senior management officials are working hard to improve the way employees in the two responsible offices (HR/RET, the retirement branch, and RM/GFS/GC/APPO/RAD, accounts division, generally known to its friends as "RAD") deal with both accounts (i.e., accurately or inaccurately) and with individual employees, be they current or prospective retirees. To this end, AFSA and the retirement branch have agreed on a statement of mutual expectations and rights (see box).

As this second set of expectations sets forth, employees themselves bear much of the responsibility for making the system work. So please do your part and there will be no excuse for anyone to muck up your retirement accounts. And let us know, by e-mail (brown@afsa.org) or phone (202/944-5509), your experiences with the retirement branch, both good and bad. Keep us informed and we will continue to encourage the improvements that will keep the nightmares away. ■

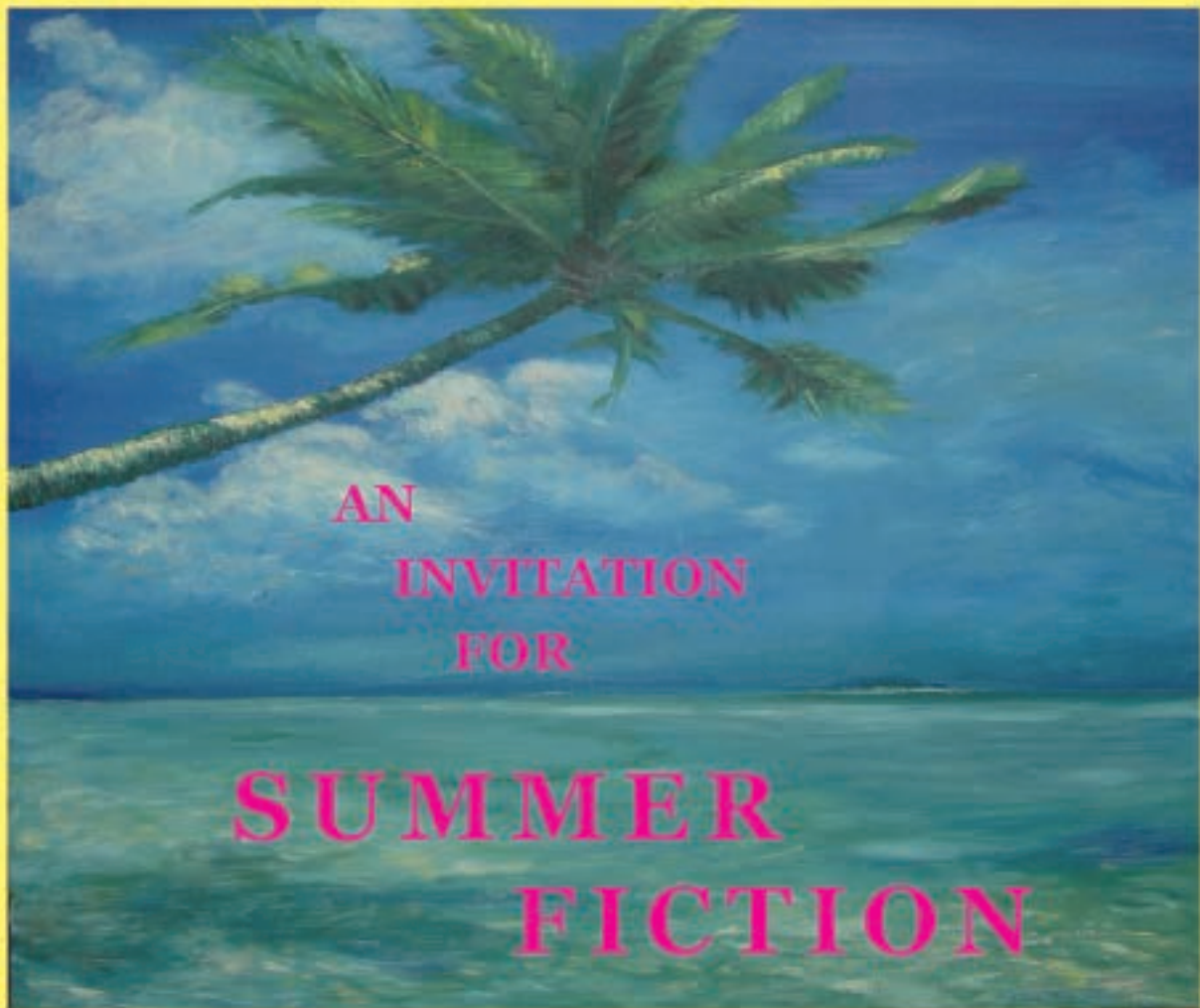
In dealing with the Retirement Branch, Foreign Service employees and retirees have the right to expect:

- Courteous and timely responses to inquiries and requests for assistance and calculations.
- Clear, accurate and consistent counseling about basic retirement processing and benefits.
- Referrals when issues cannot be resolved by retirement counselors.
- Timely and efficient delivery of retirement services and statements.
- An interactive, easy-to-use Web site that both provides annuity statement information and allows users to perform most transactions online.
- Access to retirement records that are accurate and complete.

HR/RET employees have the right to expect that Foreign Service employees and retirees will:

- Do their homework, reading and reviewing all pertinent information concerning their specific retirement system and benefits.
- Pursue inquiries and requests for consultations with courtesy, respect and appreciation for the time needed to resolve issues.
- Provide current, accurate and complete information to HR/RET, including timely notice of life changes (marriages, deaths, addresses).
- Ensure that all service is properly documented and credited well before retirement.
- (For FSPS — "new" system — employees) submit Social Security and TSP benefit information.
- Pay attention to communications from the department and HR/RET, including the annual newsletter.

John Limbert is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

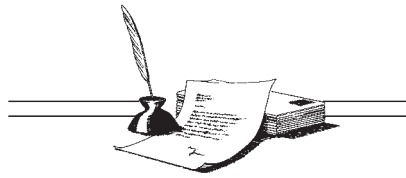


The *Foreign Service Journal* is seeking works of fiction of up to 3,000 words for its summer fiction issue. Story lines or characters involving the Foreign Service are preferred, but not required. The top stories, selected by the *Journal's* Editorial Board, will be published in the July/August issue; some of them will also be simultaneously posted on the *Journal's* Web site. The writer of each selected story will receive an honorarium of \$250, payable upon publication.

All stories must be previously unpublished. Limit one entry per author. Please send via e-mail including your contact information and a short bio. Submissions preferred copied into the body of the e-mail or as a Word attachment.

**Please send submissions (or questions) to
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LETTERS

Why Not Give Credit?

While I have not seen Ambassador Negroponte's message to which AFSA so strenuously objected, based on the account in the January *Foreign Service Journal*, I completely disagree with the AFSA position. Those willing to serve in the toughest, riskiest places without their families should be rewarded with more than a hardship differential and danger pay. And instructing the selection boards to take such service into account is hardly unprecedented. Those of us who served in Vietnam received such credit; I am unashamed to say that I was one who benefited.

In the same issue, on page 40, former AFSA president John Naland quotes from the 2004 precepts: "Boards are encouraged to weigh positively creditable performance at hardship and danger pay posts ... including ... Iraq and Afghanistan." Why all the fuss over the Negroponte telegram?

A case could probably be made that a large number of those who volunteered to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan are among our most dedicated and high-achieving officers who, one hopes, are always promoted at well above average rates. No one thinks being assigned to Baghdad or Kabul should mean an automatic promotion, but positive credit for such service is quite correctly encouraged.

Walter A. Lundy
FSO, retired
Arlington, Va.

FSJ: A Useful Tool

I want to thank the *Journal* for the breadth and depth of the articles published this past year. The variety of topics and the thoroughness with which they're presented have been really useful.

As a retired FSO (USIA) and American Studies professor, I've been developing and teaching "Dimensions of Diplomacy," "A Practical Guide to International Relations" and "The World View Factor in Politics and International Relations" as an adjunct at the University of California/Berkeley, Sonoma State University and University of Phoenix/Online. I build the need for public diplomacy into each course, and into my public speaking as well.

Jay Gurian
FSO, retired
Santa Rosa, Calif.

U.S. Colleges Abroad

I have particularly appreciated recent issues of the *Journal* and, now living and working in Greece, I find the *FSJ* an excellent vehicle for keeping in touch. Keep up the good work in 2005.

Tibor Nagy is absolutely right in his December letter that post-9/11 circumstances have resulted in a critical loss of international students for U.S. universities, and that European and Asian competitors have made gains, probably permanent, at our expense. From my perspective as president of Anatolia College and its higher division, the American College

of Thessaloniki, I would like to highlight the vital role of U.S.-accredited colleges and universities abroad.

Under secretaries for public diplomacy charged with repackaging the U.S. image abroad — like breakfast cereal or toothpaste — come and go. But these institutions — from Kyrgyzstan to Lebanon, Egypt, Greece, Spain, France and Britain — are there for the long haul, and their credibility is an overlooked and invaluable resource for the United States.

The Association of American International Colleges and Universities, with some 20 U.S.-accredited members, is the framework organization for U.S. institutions for higher education abroad. Its members have over many decades ensured the presence of an American-educated elite in cabinets and boardrooms across a wide and turbulent region.

If we are serious about reaching foreign opinion-makers, particularly in the Middle East, the U.S. should — directly and through foundations — reinforce the AAICU as a framework, sponsor top-quality visiting lecturers and, more significantly, contribute to making the existing infrastructure of U.S. universities abroad a bulwark of American values and education in critical regions of the world. The \$2 billion price tag for a single stealth bomber, for example, could cover a half-million scholarships around the world at colleges such as Anatolia. Until conditions in the U.S. again become customer-friendly for inter-



national students, AAICU institutions offer access to U.S. higher education and values for international students who are turned away or simply unwilling to face the harassment of trying to get into a college in the U.S.

Richard L. Jackson
FSO, retired
Thessaloniki, Greece

No Views Allowed?

I write with some hesitation, because I would not want to see the *FSJ* become a venue for partisan political commentary. Yet the January letter from Messrs. Burson and Farmer absolutely requires a response, which should be seen as non-partisan (despite my personal political views).

The letter claims that there is a “traditional Foreign Service code of neutrality” in an election year. I have never heard of such a “code.” I was not a signatory to the public expression of views concerning how the present administration is conducting its foreign policy, but readers should bear in mind that all the signatories were retired. (Of course, it would have been, at best, unseemly for active-duty individuals to be signatories.)

But is it illegal or improper for our retired colleagues to stand up and express their views, either individually or collectively? Would it have been illegal or improper for our retired colleagues to participate in election campaigns? Isn't that what our country is all about? Why should a specific, small element of the populace be denied that right?

Please bear in mind that the collective statement was based on many years of experience in world affairs, reflecting views that should not be discarded as biased. In fact, a number of the signatories had been regular supporters of the party in

power. There must have been a substantial impact on their political views to have brought them into an open disagreement with party leaders.

It is quite clear that the Burson-Farmer letter was politically motivated and not just a reflection on Foreign Service “traditions.”

Gilbert H. Sheinbaum
FSO, retired
Vienna, Va.

Why Bush Won

I was appalled to see that the *FSJ* printed a baldly pro-Bush/anti-Kerry letter in the January issue (“A Just Election Result”), with no opposing view. Encouraged by the editor's invitation to share our reactions to what we read each month, I offer a different explanation for Bush's victory.

The Republicans claim that Bush won because of his “values.” I certainly hope this is not true, since Bush's “values” appear to be deceit, arrogance, intolerance, bigotry and murder. Democratic values, on the other hand, are compassion, tolerance, inclusion, concern for the poor and the sick, and a reluctance to go to war unless the security of the country is really threatened. Anybody who can't decide which of those sets of values to support deserves the government he/she gets.

There are people in this country who believe that God is more upset over two men loving each other than over killing 100,000 innocent civilians in Iraq, or that a frozen embryo is more precious to God than the life of a little girl with diabetes, but surely this kind of benighted thinking cannot explain the Bush victory.

Bush's win can be attributed to the conjunction of the following five factors:

1) The country has never recov-

ered from the trauma of 9/11. Bush managed to persuade large numbers of people that he would be tougher on terrorism than his opponent. He did this by constantly reiterating that the war in Iraq was part of the “war on terrorism,” in spite of the fact that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and there is no evidence that Saddam had any connection whatever with al-Qaida.

2) Bush's strategy — described as “God, guns and gays” — cynically appealed to the basest instincts of the Christian right on gay marriage, stem cell research and abortion, while at the same time pandering to the NRA and the moneyed interests of this country. Every decision made and every law passed during the first Bush administration favored multinational corporations, insurance and drug companies at the expense of the environment, labor and the economy. Big business support for Bush produced an unholy alliance between the business community and the Christian right that guaranteed a slight majority for Bush.

3) Bush campaign managers did not hesitate to use slander and character assassination against Kerry and anyone else who opposed the administration. Kerry was successfully painted as vacillating, weak on terrorism, anti-military, and unfit to serve as commander-in-chief.

4) John Kerry's campaign was sabotaged by his own state of Massachusetts when it legalized gay marriage. This energized anti-gay sentiment and led to the placing of anti-gay marriage initiatives on the ballot in 11 states. When all those homophobic voters went to the polls to put gays in their place as sinners, they also voted for Bush.

5) John Kerry, with his patrician background and rather stiff personality, just couldn't connect with the voters in the way that George Bush

LETTERS



could with his “good old boy” persona, and his winks and smirks and sneers. John Kerry is an intelligent, honorable and articulate man, but the fact that he was unable to exploit the glaring failures of the Bush administration raises some question about his potential effectiveness as president.

Bush’s policies have resulted in the isolation of the U.S. and a quagmire in Iraq that has no honorable solution, no matter who is in the White House. There is, however, a silver lining: the Bush administration’s simple-minded approach to the war on terror guarantees its failure in the long run. You cannot defeat terrorism by killing terrorists. If Kerry had won the election, he would have been blamed for the inevitable disaster in Iraq, and the Republicans would have been poised for a comeback in 2008. Now Bush will have to accept the consequences of his own misguided actions. The country will then turn to the Democrats to rescue them from the disaster of the Bush administration, thus ushering in a more enlightened period of government in this country.

Frank Huffman
RSO, retired
Washington, D.C. ■

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CYBERNOTES

Former Diplomat Calls for "Open Source" Intelligence to Aid War on Terror

Former career minister Charles Hill calls for the opening of more consulates to aid the war on terror, in an interview in the Fall 2004 issue of the *Hoover Institution Newsletter*. In "Another Look at the 9/11 Report," Hill takes issue with the 9/11 Commission's major recommendations, in particular offering novel insights and suggestions on the collection and analysis of intelligence.

"The conventional wisdom — that collection is expensive while analysis is cheap — needs rethinking," Hill states. "An increasing amount of the information and intelligence that we need can be gained from open sources. Collection from open sources is cheap and needs new emphasis." In their recommendations to improve analytic capabilities, language skills and financial incentives, and ensure a "seamless relationship" between human and technical collection, Hill says, the commission misses what has actually gone wrong in recent decades.

Asked for examples of open sources, and how they could be enhanced, Hill says the commission ought to have urged Congress and the State Department to reverse the trend of closing American consulates around the world. "Opening small, inexpensive, three- or four-person offices staffed by Foreign Service officers with excellent language and cultural skills, operating wholly in the open, could give us a much better sense of what is really going on in vast

parts of the world where terrorists have taken up residence," Hill states.

"Analysis can't be considered cheap when a 'failure to connect the dots' has proved costly beyond our worst nightmares," Hill adds. "Such failures come when analysts do not fully understand what they are looking at." Analysis has faltered, he says, because the quality and availability of education in world history and politics — as opposed to "political science" — has declined in American higher education.

Presently a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, FSO Hill served formerly as executive aide to former Secretary of State George P. Shultz, as special consultant on policy to the secretary-general of the United Nations, and as diplomat-in-residence and a lecturer in international studies at Yale University.

The Focus Is on Freedom

President Bush's inaugural address on Jan. 20 celebrated America's dedication to freedom and liberty, and pledged his administration to spreading these universal values to every corner of the world. To grasp the possible implications on the ground, click on the Freedom House Web site (www.freedomhouse.org).

Freedom House's well-respected annual survey of the globe, *Freedom in the World*, is featured on the site's home page, along with a world map graphically identifying free and not-free areas. An annual comparative assessment of the state of political rights and civil liberties in 192 countries and 14 related and disputed territories, the survey has been published

since 1978. Individual countries are ranked on a scale of 1 to 7, one being the best. The 600-page report is widely used by policy-makers, journalists and scholars.

The site also contains updates on the status of battles for freedom and democracy around the world, and background reports on Afghanistan, the Palestinian Authority, Sudan and other key places.

Previewing the 2005 survey, Freedom House revealed on Dec. 20 that political rights and civil liberties have become so restricted in Russia that the country has been downgraded to "not free." The survey shows that Russia was the only country to register a negative category change in 2004, moving from partly free to not free.

However, Russia was not the only country in the former Soviet Union that experienced political and civic changes: setbacks took place in Belarus and Armenia, while freedom gained in the aftermath of civic protests in Georgia and Ukraine.

Complete survey results, including a package of charts and graphs, are available online. The ratings reflect global events from Dec. 1, 2003, through Nov. 30, 2004. Country narratives will be released in book form this spring.

Overall, freedom progressed worldwide in 2004, according to Freedom House, with 26 countries registering gains against 11 showing setbacks. Most gains and declines did not result in category shifts. Some potentially positive steps forward took place in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in the areas of women's rights and increased civic activism.



CYBERNOTES

The 2004 survey data reveal positive, albeit modest, trends in the Middle East and North Africa. While no countries in the region changed status, small gains were registered in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Qatar.

Among the study's other findings:

Of the world's 192 states, 119 are electoral democracies (89 free and 30 partly free), an increase of two since 2003. While these states are not all rated free, all provide considerable political space and media access for opposition movements and allow for elections that meet minimum international standards of ballot secrecy and vote tabulation.

Over the last 15 years, the number of electoral democracies has risen from 69 out of 167 (41 percent) to 119 out of 192 (62 percent). On average, during that time frame an additional three states have adopted minimal standards for free and fair elections each year.

Of the 49 countries rated not free, 19 received the worst possible numerical rating (7) for political rights. The broadest restrictions on political activity are found in Belarus, Burma, Cuba, China, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea,

Site of the Month: <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu>

At a time when the Middle East looms larger than ever among foreign policy priorities, *The Gulf/2000 Project* Web site is an excellent candidate for your favorites' list. It is a user-friendly portal to the best resources on the Persian Gulf and the Middle East on the Web.

For each of the eight countries of the Gulf, selected links are provided to resources in the following categories: general background, government, what's new on the Web, national press, demography, human rights, oil/energy and commerce, and bookstore. The country resources are supplemented by a References section containing collections of research links grouped under nine different headings, such as "9/11 Attack and the Iraqi War" and "Strategic Issues/Security." The Map Collections section contains links to regional maps, cultural and ethnographic maps, political maps and more. Finally, the Gulf News section contains links to eight key news resources on the Middle East, as well as links to CNN and the BBC.

The Gulf/2000 Project was created in 1993 at Columbia University's School of International Affairs and Public Policy as a service to scholars, government officials, business people, journalists and other specialists who have a professional association with the Persian Gulf and Gulf studies. The project is privately funded and not associated with any government. A network of specialists from the different countries has been created, and an electronic library and research service established. A series of conferences and workshops has been held to exchange ideas and discuss the longer-term trends affecting the stability and security of the region.

Haiti, Iraq, Laos, Libya, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam

and Zimbabwe. Four territories, Chechnya (Russia), Kashmir (Pakistan), Tibet (China) and Western Sahara (Morocco), also received the lowest political rights rating.

The broadest violations of civil liberties — including freedom of speech, rule of law and personal autonomy — take place in nine countries: Burma, Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Turkmenistan. Chechnya and Tibet are also included in this category.

Of these, eight countries — Burma, Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and

50 Years Ago...

Yet the very temper of our time, to begin with, reminds us often of Jefferson's day when the French Minister to the U.S. wrote to Paris: "Jefferson is an American, and as such he cannot sincerely be our friend. An American is the enemy of all the peoples of Europe." (One might say that in some ways a few of us on either side of the Atlantic have not much altered our 18th-century opinions.)



— Stuart L. Hannon, "The Mind of Thomas Jefferson," *FSJ*, March 1955.

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— Dr. Condoleezza Rice,
 Senate Foreign Relations
 Committee confirmation
 hearing, Jan. 18, 2005,
<http://foreign.senate.gov>

Turkmenistan — receive the lowest possible scores for both political rights and civil liberties, making them the most repressive regimes in the world. Chechnya and Tibet also fall into this category.

Professionals Call for Action on Public Diplomacy

Members of the non-partisan Public Diplomacy Council, in a white paper released Jan. 25, call on the administration and Congress to undertake a transformation of American public diplomacy to bring it into the 21st century. The “Call for Action on Public Diplomacy” notes that U.S. public diplomacy is in crisis. “If it is to remain a global leader,” the Council states, “the United States must significantly strengthen its public diplomacy programs around the world, and do so immediately.”

The report outlines the need for a more robust global communication strategy and puts forward five action recommendations: creation of a new agency within the State Department

to manage civilian international information and exchanges functions; a 300-percent increase in overseas staffing for public diplomacy; increases in funding and closer integration of international broadcasting; the establishment of a Cabinet-level interagency committee to coordinate and direct a national public diplomacy strategy; and a public-private sector partnership to provide permanent funding for international exchanges.

The full text of the “Call to Action,” as well as a thought-provoking statement of dissent titled “Transformation Not Restoration,” can be found at <http://www.pdi.gwu.edu>.

New and Noteworthy: Expat Web Directory

Another excellent Web site for expatriates of all varieties — *Expat Communities* (www.expattcommunities.com) — joined the list of online resources for citizens of the world in 2004.

Expat Communities, copyrighted by Mick Winter, is a directory of more than 110 countries with sizable English-speaking (and usually international as well) expatriate communities. Links to English-language Web sites, organizations, online forums, meet-ups and local newspapers are featured for each of the countries. Resource links for each country include “Real Post Reports,” country reviews from *Tales from a Small Planet*, the online expat resource founded by diplomatic spouses.

In addition, annotated links are provided to selected expatriate blogs, expat organizations, employment and insurance/medical resources, and to books of interest to current and potential expatriates. Books address the expatriate lifestyle generally, and include several focused particularly on retirement abroad. ■



SPEAKING OUT

In Defense of Foreign Service Reporting

BY NECIA QUAST

International understanding is a two-way street. Ever since the 9/11 attacks, we have become more aware of the importance of the U.S. image in the world. In particular, there has been a pronounced focus on how to better present our country and our foreign policy to the world.

As part of that effort, there is no question that we need more and better public diplomacy. This is broadly acknowledged. But we also need more and better analytical reporting. Yet this is not even discussed. If our public diplomacy and foreign policy are to be effective, we need to understand other countries better. We could spend far more money on public diplomacy and outreach, but if we misjudge our audience, those resources would be wasted. And if we misjudge other nations, our policy could be ineffective or worse. Thus, I present a plea that the Foreign Service acknowledge the continued importance of reporting.

I see the impact of our reporting from my current embassy all of the time. Cables that we send circle back to us in the form of instructions, requests, program proposals and policy decisions. Offices and agencies on the receiving end tell us — and tell us often — how useful our reporting has been in their work. This was intensely evident during the recent political events in Ukraine, when the embassy was providing 24/7 updates from officers stationed in parliament, the Supreme Court, the Central Election Commission, candidates'

There is no question that we need more and better public diplomacy. But we also need more and better analytical reporting.



campaign headquarters, the streets and the regions of Ukraine. Unclassified reporting was sent to the home e-mail addresses of top U.S. officials. We have a folder full of feedback from the White House, the Seventh Floor and top officials confirming that embassy reporting and policy recommendations were in constant demand as officials shaped their responses to unfolding events.

Reporting Under Siege

Over the last 10 to 15 years, the focus on reporting in the Foreign Service has been progressively undermined by a combination of factors. In addition to the effects of globalization (which began to accelerate as never before), the shortfalls in funding and staffing of the 1990s, and the damage that the "do more with less" ethic did to morale and effectiveness, are all well documented. After four years of the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative, we are basically just breaking even — and that is not counting the new

demands of staffing Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

Our need to track more issues in more places than ever before is ratcheting up the pressure on even the most obscure, remote posts to report more frequently on a greater range of topics, some of them highly technical.

Complicating matters further, there has been rapid growth in the number of federal agencies represented overseas to deal with the rising demand for U.S. government services in a globalized world. While many of those agencies carry out specialized reporting responsibilities, much of the burden still falls on the State Department. Each day in any embassy, even the most remote, brings an influx of e-mail, faxes, letters and phone calls, all demanding information and assistance. The number of visitors, official and unofficial, continues to grow. Foreign Service personnel could easily spend the bulk of their time just answering the mail and providing what I call constituent services.

I certainly do not discount the importance of those services; providing them is a vital part of our job. But resources that posts might otherwise have devoted to reporting are being shifted to manage programs, respond to requests for support and coordinate among the various agencies represented there.

More than Cables

The reduction in reporting caused by all these demands on limited resources has been exacerbated by

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SPEAKING OUT



*Almost any discussion of
how the Foreign Service
needs to transform itself
to meet new challenges
prompts remarks like:
“It’s not about writing
cables any more.”*

two common attitudes in the Foreign Service. The first is that the de-emphasis of reporting is natural, even desirable. Almost any discussion of how the Foreign Service needs to update and transform itself to meet new challenges prompts disparaging remarks about reporting: “It’s not about writing cables any more.” Program activities, public outreach, coordination and negotiation are all deemed to be much more exciting and important than doing “detailed analyses that only three people in a cubicle somewhere ever read.” I don’t dismiss the importance of these activities; among other things, they help staff gain knowledge and insight that can strengthen both the content and the relevance of reporting. Just because these things are important, however, does not mean that reporting is not.

The other attitude is that in these days of CNN and the Internet, offering ubiquitous 24-hour news coverage, embassy reporting is simply redundant and often passé. I would argue that the opposite is true. The Pew Group, among other organizations, has documented the steady decrease in the amount of both television and print news coverage of international events. TV coverage

SPEAKING OUT



Each post should make sure that its reporting needs are reflected in its Mission Program Plan and other planning documents.

tends to be focused on crises and breaking events, while policy-makers need more information about what is happening *before* a crisis breaks.

The Internet, on the one hand, offers fantastic amounts of international news. This has been a boon: now that people in Washington can directly access the news media of the countries they cover, embassies no longer have to summarize what is in the local papers, thereby permitting more focus on analysis. But the increase in available information has increased the demand for embassies and consulates to help sort through the mountains of information and identify what is significant, what is not, and why.

Toward a Renaissance of Reporting

In this world of competing demands and staffing shortfalls, we need to take steps to ensure that our ability to produce good and useful reporting is not the first thing to go. As government employees we do not determine the resources that Congress provides us, but we do have a say in how resources are allocated and on internal priorities. When we do budget planning, staff planning and strategic planning we can take account of reporting needs, including

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SPEAKING OUT



To make sure

that our reporting is
relevant, we should keep
in close contact with our
readers and respond
to their needs.

in the Mission Program Plan process. We can be sure that reporting is reflected in the MPP, in our tactics and in our position requests.

For example, the Kiev economic growth goal paper includes this objective: "Provide reporting, analysis and recommendations to Washington policy-makers that provide context for, and support the development of, effective U.S. economic policy advocacy and assistance. (EXEC, ECON, POL, FCS, FAS, AID)"

By our own attitudes and actions, we can nurture a culture that values reporting. To make sure that our reporting is relevant, we should keep in close contact with our readers and respond to their needs.

For the world to understand us, we need to understand the world. That is, after all, one reason that we are on the ground in over 200 posts around the world, large and small. We are developing that understanding, but it is most valuable when shared — and reporting is how we share. ■

Necia Quast, an FSO since 1985, has served in Georgetown, East Berlin, Lusaka, Bishkek, New Delhi and Washington, D.C. She is currently economic counselor in Kiev.

EXTREME DIPLOMACY: EVALUATING EMBASSY BAGHDAD



Adam Niklewicz

“IT WAS NEVER ordinary with Ed Seitz. It was never routine,” recalled State security specialist Harry Jacobson in his letter to the *Washington Times*. “It was always some prickly investigation. There were always feathers to be smoothed, and skids to be greased. Buckle your seat belts, everybody. Ed’s working another hot one.”

BY SHAWN ZELLER

It was never ordinary with Ed Seitz. It was never routine,” recalled State security specialist Harry Jacobson in his letter to the *Washington Times*. “It was always some prickly investigation. There were always feathers to be smoothed, and skids to be greased. Buckle your seat belts, everybody. Ed’s working another hot one.”

Edward J. Seitz, 41, had 16 years under his belt with State’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security when he volunteered to go to Baghdad last July. He’d just finished a four-year tour with a terrorism task force in Detroit. He died on

Oct. 24, 2004, leaving a wife behind, when a mortar or rocket hit his trailer at Camp Victory, the U.S. base next to Baghdad International Airport.

When Jacobson learned of his friend's death — the first of a State Department employee since the war began two years ago — his first reaction was despair: "Why did it have to happen? Why are we in that God-forsaken place? Why Ed?" he wrote. After reflecting on Seitz, and the State Department's efforts to bring peace and democracy to Iraq, Jacobson rested better. "Ed Seitz didn't go to Baghdad for the big oil companies, or to ensure President Bush's re-election, or all the other such nonsense uttered by newscasters and political pundits these days," Jacobson wrote. Rather, he went to help make the world a safer place.

State Department employees do similar work in many dangerous places around the world, many of which never make the headlines, and risk their lives every day. But as Seitz's death — and that of a second Foreign Service officer, James Mollen, on Nov. 24 — demonstrates starkly, nowhere are the risks greater right now than in Iraq. And nowhere are the stakes higher, not only for Iraq but for the State Department and its reputation.

More than 200 State and USAID employees are currently stationed in Iraq (compared with around 150,000 U.S. troops). Most of them serve in Baghdad, where the largest U.S. embassy in the world reopened last June, more than 13 years after it closed on the eve of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. (The political section alone has 17 officers.) About 50 others are assigned to outposts in Mosul, Kirkuk, Hillah and Basra. In addition, five smaller regional teams are working directly with military units, assisting in working with local Iraqi officials. Projections are that by the end of 2005, whoever is ambassador will oversee a mission of about 1,500 employees, including Foreign Service officers from the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, representatives of other

Shawn Zeller is a staff reporter for Government Executive magazine.

Embassy Baghdad's task would be a daunting one even under the best of conditions — let alone the ones that currently prevail there.

government agencies, and foreign nationals.

A Return to Diplomacy

All agree that the embassy's task would be a daunting one even under the best of conditions. It is helping to ensure security, shepherding the transition to a stable, democratically-elected government and rebuilding a wartorn country all at the same time. To pull off that

juggling act, says Francis J. Ricciardone, who left his post as ambassador to the Philippines to serve as Negroponte's deputy chief of mission and help guide the planning effort for the new embassy last year, State not only assembled its largest mission in the world, but its best. "This is an all-star team," he told reporters last June.

Most of the American diplomats in Iraq, like their military colleagues, remain committed to the cause and supremely confident that they can bring the stability to Iraq that the Coalition Provisional Authority, the U.S.-led military government that handed over power to the Iraqis last June, failed to achieve. But so far, Embassy Baghdad, like its predecessor, is struggling. The security situation remains untenable, and most diplomats rarely leave their compound, severely limiting their contact with Iraqis and making it very difficult to do their jobs. The only road to the airport is frequently closed, requiring travelers to use helicopters. Over 500 American soldiers have been killed since the CPA's June handover of power, while the total U.S. civilian death toll since the war began is nearly 100, and the ongoing insurrection has wreaked havoc on reconstruction efforts.

When the embassy opened last June, the Foreign Service was buzzing with anticipation. Ricciardone wasn't exaggerating about the prestige of those sent to run Embassy Baghdad. John Negroponte, a 37-year Foreign Service officer and previously the U.S. representative to the United Nations, was named ambassador. Between 1960 and 1997, he'd served in eight different posts in Asia, Latin America and Europe. He'd cut his teeth in Vietnam, where he worked on the Paris Peace Talks, and earned his first ambassadorship, to Honduras, in 1981. Controversy mired his stay

F O C U S

there, as some blamed him for looking the other way at human rights violations. Still, Negroponte went on to serve as ambassador to Mexico and the Philippines, where he burnished his reputation as a superb manager and discreet diplomat.

From the start of the postwar period, Foreign Service officers, current and former, had expressed skepticism about the military's pre-eminent role in the reconstruction. Before the embassy opened, many State officers working under the CPA confided in colleagues their frustration that they were not reporting first to State. The military did dominate the initial reconstruction efforts, agrees Princeton Lyman, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a former ambassador to Nigeria and South Africa. But, frustrated by the lack of progress of the military leadership under CPA head Paul Bremer,

Projections are that by the end of 2005, whoever is ambassador will oversee a mission of about 1,500 employees.

the administration belatedly returned to traditional diplomacy last summer in the hope that Foreign Service officers, with their persuasive skills and long-term commitment to solving problems, would help move Iraq toward democracy and peace. "The Foreign Service, having been largely shut out of the process, now has an opportunity to demonstrate what the State Department can do," Lyman points out.

Negroponte's top advisers clearly have the background and training for the task. Among the diplomats who've taken posts in the embassy are Jim Jeffrey, former ambassador to Turkey and Albania; Steve Browning, former ambassador to Malawi; Ron Neumann, former ambassador to Bahrain; and Bob Ford, Neumann's former deputy there, who's considered one of the department's smartest Middle East

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experts. The only question some skeptics raise is whether the former ambassadors in the group are adjusting well to their supporting roles. "It's not a traditionally-staffed post," says Mark Hambley, a former ambassador to Lebanon. "These are very dedicated professionals, but it might be a bit awkward, too."

Carrots and Sticks

At the same time, the burgeoning commitment to Iraq has begun to erode morale among Foreign Service officers worldwide, and sparked squabbling about how resources and accolades are being distributed.

Many in the Foreign Service question State's efforts to fill out the rank-and-file positions in Baghdad. Department officials say recruitment is going well, though public pronouncements on the subject have varied widely. At Amb. Negroponte's swearing-in last June, Secretary of State Colin Powell noted with pride that over 200 volunteers had already come forward, each submitting an average of seven bids for every position in the embassy. Later, in congressional testimony, DCM Ricciardone acknowledged that State was relying on new recruits brought on board through Powell's Diplomatic Readiness Initiative to staff Embassy Baghdad.

Coincidentally or not, in December, Foreign Service Director General Robert Pearson unveiled a new policy requiring new Foreign Service officers to serve in hardship posts in order to advance to the Senior Foreign Service. The policy change had been in the works for months, but the timing of the announcement fueled suspicions that it was tailored to signal that those who serve in Iraq (as opposed to other danger and hardship posts) will receive disproportionate rewards. One officer at an African post, who asked not to be named, comments: "There have been some strong feelings expressed about [the new State policy], whether or not it is true that Iraq service confers an advantage. Officers serving in other hardship or danger posts feel like Iraq is just another hard post, not the be-all and end-all." The officer added that he has heard that Foreign Service officers up for new assignments this winter have been told they must wait until

***The security situation
keeps most U.S.
diplomats confined to
their compound,
severely limiting their
contact with Iraqis.***

those coming off Iraq assignments have been placed. It "sounds like some nicer gigs will be off the table for the non-Iraq veterans," he said.

Reinforcing such concerns, a November cable from Foggy Bottom to all diplomatic and consular posts reported the promotions of over 50 Foreign Service personnel who either served or were serving in Iraq, including seven who crossed the threshold into the Senior Foreign Service. The cable repeat-

ed a message from Amb. Negroponte congratulating those who have served in Iraq on their high promotion rates and quoted approvingly Sec. Powell's earlier statement that he expected the promotion lists would reflect strong consideration given to service in places like Iraq.

In a message to AFSA members, Louise Crane, AFSA's State vice president, blasted the department for implying that Iraq service gives a boost for promotions. She repeated the association's traditional position that promotions should be based on performance, not on postings, and noted that many Foreign Service personnel serve under comparably dangerous or challenging conditions and should be eligible for similar consideration. She received over 200 responses to her message from employees around the world, almost all of which were in support of AFSA's position.

The promotion issue aside, the material inducements for assignment to Iraq are the best the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development have to offer. Incentives include danger pay and a hardship differential equivalent to a 50-percent salary increase (each is 25 percent), premium pay of 20 percent of salary for officers who don't receive overtime, two paid 15-day trips back to the United States per 12-month tour, three other five-day trips outside Iraq to surrounding countries per year, more annual leave, subsidized meals, and an additional 10 percent of base pay for Arabic speakers. (Despite such rewards, however, department officials acknowledge that Arabic speakers remain in short supply.) Officers are capped at \$175,700 per year, but can roll over their danger and hardship pay to the next calendar year. Premium pay cannot be rolled over.

F O C U S

Still, in late November, USAID head Andrew Natsios was forced to freeze the assignments process and call an all-hands meeting to ask volunteers to come forward to fill 23 high-priority posts in Iraq as well as Afghanistan and Sudan. "We're still recovering from the dark years of the 1990s," says Rebecca Cohn, who has overseen placement of USAID officers in Iraq. As a result of repeated budget cuts during that period, few new officers were hired, and the remaining work force is older and less interested in taking risky assignments. Some USAID veterans also complained that the security situation in Iraq was making development work too difficult. "Some USAID officers were saying, yes, we agree to worldwide availability, but only where we can do development, not where we are being shot at," says William Carter,

The burgeoning commitment to Iraq has begun to erode morale among Foreign Service officers worldwide.

AFSA's USAID vice president.

Since coming to the agency in 2001, Natsios has tried to win new hiring authority from Congress, and to develop a "surge capacity" of skilled development workers willing to take short-term assignments. The surge capacity would consist mostly of retired USAID officers. Neither of these efforts, however, has progressed enough to help with the Iraq hiring situation yet, says Carter. He estimates that it takes two years "to get a raw recruit brought in the door and actually functioning," given USAID's training requirements. So Natsios urged veteran employees to come forward, citing the growing importance of foreign aid in the post-9/11 world. "I thought it was just going through the motions," says Cohn, "and the next process was going to be forced placement." But Natsios' plea worked: by



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December, there were between 75 and 100 American USAID employees in Iraq, and all the priority slots had been filled. The total USAID mission in the country numbers about 200, Natsios said then, including Iraqi employees. Other USAID sources say that the number is somewhat smaller.

But some Foreign Service officers interviewed for this article still worry that the recruitment efforts have yielded an unrepresentative crop of officers in Iraq: younger than is typical, “cowboyish,” officers without families, or those going through divorces. Still, the assessment of most is that the overall team covers “the traditional spectrum: excellent, good, mediocre and bad,” according to one officer stationed in Canada, who previously spent 10 years working in hardship posts.

The Iraq Tax

The costs of the staffing are substantial. The State Department spent \$500 million setting up Embassy Baghdad and running it through the end of Fiscal Year 2004. It says it will spend about \$1 billion in the current fiscal year, though that estimate is widely believed to be low. Last year Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told Congress that State would handle its 2004 expenses with existing funds, but admitted — to the dismay of many Foreign Service officers — that it might require “robbing Peter to pay Paul.”

At the same time, the department has relied heavily on the Army for both security and cashiering services, a point of concern for State Department Inspector General Cameron Hume, who urged the department last September to come to an agreement with the Pentagon to pay for the services.

Meanwhile, many Foreign Service officers speak angrily of an “Iraq tax” being imposed on embassies worldwide. Specifically, in 2003 and again in 2004, State directed all bureau heads to “freeze” a certain percentage of their open positions (i.e., not hire anyone for those jobs) to allow Baghdad to be fully staffed.

There is a perception that “State is funding the largest embassy in the world using existing funds,” says the officer in Canada. “One wonders how DOD can go

***The material inducements
for assignment to Iraq are
the best the State
Department and the U.S.
Agency for International
Development have to offer.***

back again and again for more funding, while State makes do with the little it has.” Some Foreign Service personnel draw a parallel to former Secretary of State James Baker’s decision to open 15 posts throughout the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s without going back to Congress for supplemental funding.

Officers outside Iraq say that they were hit with 15-percent cuts in their security budgets for both 2004 and 2005. As a result, programs aimed at fighting terrorism were slashed. “This is my biggest concern,” says the officer in Canada. “If al-Qaida is going to go for the weakest point, ‘Hello, here we are.’”

Travel budgets have also suffered, with conferences that required travel being canceled and vacant positions left unfilled. One officer previously stationed at a medium-sized African post believes that his embassy’s failure to fill a General Services Officer position had contributed to “a breakdown/slow-down in services” that can “adversely impact morale, and U.S. contributions to the development of the country.”

“I think the department, in its zeal to attract staff to Baghdad, goofed by not imposing a firewall of protection around [Special Embassy Program] posts,” says one retired officer. “Both Djibouti and Niamey lost their management officers to Baghdad, leaving both embassies high and dry for some time.”

Lawmakers, ultimately, stepped in and provided some additional funding. Last year, Congress appropriated \$655 million to help cover the embassy costs. “We were tired of State going on bended knee to the Department of Defense and banging a tin cup with other agencies to get the money they needed for this embassy,” John Scofield, a spokesman for House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bill Young (R-Fla.), told the *Los Angeles Times* last June.

Stumbling Blocks

Even so, the embassy faced some stumbling blocks as it opened its doors. Supplies that should have been in place at the embassy’s opening were stuck in the United Arab Emirates, awaiting transfer to military

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transport planes small enough to land on the Baghdad Airport's runway, the *Los Angeles Times* reported last July, while in June insurgents made off with armored Toyota Land Cruisers bound for the embassy from Amman, Jordan.

Conditions at the embassy remain difficult. Officers are housed in makeshift trailers. Only recently has State identified a site for a new embassy compound and begun planning for its construction. Movement outside the "Green Zone," protected by U.S. forces, is dangerous. Because of the security threats posed by terrorists, new recruits undergo firearms training at a State Department facility in West Virginia before heading to Baghdad. (Only in a few previous instances have diplomats been required to learn to use guns.) In addition, they are learning

Some Foreign Service veterans wonder how their colleagues in Iraq can do their jobs under such heavy security restrictions.

about bombs, particularly the type that Iraqi insurgents have used so effectively along Baghdad's roadsides.

That's a situation that worries some Foreign Service veterans, who wonder whether America's diplomats will be perceived as part of the U.S. military. What makes American diplomacy successful, they say, is the ability of Foreign Service officers to gain the trust of the foreigners and governments they work with. Given security constraints, State officers "are not able to get out of the Green Zone very easily," says former U.S. ambassador Mark Hambley. "You need good political reporting, but if they can't get out and circulate amongst Iraqis, that's a situation to address very carefully."

Hambley recalls that during his time as chief of mis-

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sion in Lebanon, in a security environment reminiscent of that in Iraq today, he relied heavily on Foreign Service Nationals employed by the State Department to tap the pulse of the Lebanese people. But, he points out, Embassy Baghdad had been closed for so long that the institutional memory of its FSNs is attenuated.

When the embassy opened, for example, only one-sixth of the 581 Iraqis the State Department said it needed for logistical support had been hired. "One of the great under-reported stories of all this is the intimidation of everyone that works with us," Hambley says. Underscoring that point, one FSN working in the political section as an interpreter, Riyadh Wahiab Hamad, was assassinated on Jan. 10, 2005, on his way to work. After investigation, the embassy concluded that Hamad had been targeted because he worked for the U.S. government.

Partly as a result, reconstruction efforts have continued to stumble. Last June, before the embassy opened, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz painted an optimistic portrait of how well the \$18.4 billion in reconstruction funding appropriated by Congress in 2003 was being spent, telling the Senate Armed Services Committee that he expected that the "dam is starting to break" and that the amount spent was "going to grow very rapidly. We want to make sure it doesn't grow so rapidly that Amb. Negroponte has nothing left to work with."

Reprogramming Reconstruction

That turned out not to be much of a problem. In December, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios reported that of the \$18.4 billion, government agencies had slated \$11.8 billion for specific projects, but had only spent \$3.6 billion so far. Last year, Senate Foreign Relations Committee member Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., called the slow pace "beyond pitiful and embarrassing." To be fair, that represents a marked improvement over what the CPA had achieved: as of June 2004, when State opened Embassy Baghdad, only about \$366 million of the \$18.4 billion in reconstruction funds had been spent.

In September, State announced that it had decided to "reprogram" the \$18.4 billion, scrapping large infra-

The establishment of Embassy Baghdad was, in and of itself, highly symbolic.

structure projects scheduled to start in 2006 aimed at boosting wastewater processing and electricity production. Instead, State shifted \$3.4 billion for more immediate expenditure on improving security and law enforcement, oil production and export capacity, job creation and democratic governance.

The reprogramming means that there are now "more people to clean the irrigation canals, to pick up the garbage, to paint the schools, to do the simple things a community needs to put its people back to work," said Robin Raphel, State's director of Iraq reconstruction, during a briefing with reporters last year. She added that, "We need for Iraqis to believe that this assistance is really doing something for them, so to a degree, they have to be able to physically see it."

Natsios says that U.S. efforts to boost job creation have led to 90,000 new jobs as of December and yielded other significant successes as well. "You haven't heard anything about food riots from the beginning of this [effort] or major food shortages, and I think that's a testament to how well the system has worked," Natsios said during a briefing for reporters last December.

Natsios cited success stories ranging from the reconstruction of the port of Umm Qasr, which now offloads 50 ships a month, to upgrades to the electrical grid that have boosted megawattage by more than 10 percent; overhauls of nine sewage treatment plants; immunization of more than three million children; and repair of 2,500 schools.

Even so, an evaluation of the reconstruction efforts conducted by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, a nonpartisan think-tank, found that many aspects of the effort are not going well, and that the Iraqi public is growing increasingly angry with the U.S. presence there. The report, published late last year, looked at progress in six areas — security, governance, economic opportunity, services, education and health care — and found that "Iraq reconstruction continues to stagnate."

One of the principal goals of the reprogramming was to shift more of the responsibility for policing to Iraqis themselves. Toward that end, State indicated in September that it planned to increase the capacity

of police academies run by U.S. instructors from 2,300 to 5,300 people, with the eventual goal of putting 45,000 additional Iraqi police on the beat. The U.S. has made progress toward that goal, but has not yet reached it. The Iraqi police force had 53,000 trained and equipped police officers as of January, up from 26,000 last June.

The effort hasn't impressed Senate leaders, though. "They have no idea what these guys are going to turn into when they hit the street," says an aide to a top Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "If a guy shows up [for training], he's passing. This mission is production. It's not quality, it's quantity." Robin Raphel acknowledged last year that the U.S. instructors have been told to shorten the training schedules in an

Despite the best efforts of its staff, it may be a long time before Embassy Baghdad will be able to function as a traditional diplomatic mission.

effort to boost numbers quickly. "The object of this exercise is to get a credible Iraqi security presence — whether it's Army, police or border and facilities protection — in place, [and give them] increasingly more responsibility, as fast as possible," she said.

Security Straitjacket

Not all these problems should be blamed on the State Department, of course. Rick Barton, who served as director of the Office of Transition Initiatives at USAID in the 1990s, and who now heads the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, says that poor decisions made early on have tied the department's hands. Rather than focusing on large infrastructure projects, such as rebuilding electrical and sewage systems,

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and contracting them out to large American firms, Barton wishes the U.S. had struck the deals with capable Iraqis, and trusted them. But now, with insurgents engaging in intimidation campaigns against any Iraqis who work with the Americans, Barton says: "We can't find [capable Iraqis], and can't get out to find them. We missed the window."

The embassy continues to work with the military to help speed reconstruction. State has established a temporary program management staff under its Iraq Reconstruction Management Office that is charged with overseeing disbursement of the reconstruction funds. The office works closely with the Army's Project and Contracting Office.

A November 2004 report in the *Washington Post* indicated that the ranking Army general in Iraq, George W. Casey, and Amb. Negroponte have developed a close working relationship, contrasting with the strained relations that existed between CPA head Paul Bremer and Casey's predecessor, Gen. Ricardo Sanchez. The report said that senior embassy officials now attend Casey's morning briefing and are kept apprised of military operations. After the military assault on Fallujah last year, embassy officials have been deeply involved in coordinating the reconstruction, the *Post* report said. And in advance of the embassy's opening, seven joint State-Pentagon assessment teams went to Iraq to plan the transition from the CPA to the embassy.

Even so, security costs are eating into the reconstruction funds. Bechtel, the largest U.S. contractor, is spending 6 percent of its budget on security, and some of the grantees and contractors are spending as much as 20 percent of their budgets on it. State acknowledges that those numbers are rising.

Last December, Contrack International, an Arlington, Va.-based engineering and construction firm, abandoned a contract that could have been worth as much as \$325 million to rebuild Iraqi transportation systems, citing security concerns. It was the first U.S. contractor to withdraw from a contract.

Still, CSIS's Barton says the reprogramming showed "considerable wisdom." U.S. reconstruction funding, he says, "has to engage more Iraqis and have a more direct impact on their lives."

Barton argues that the U.S. needs to give more funding directly to responsible Iraqi groups and allow

them to take ownership of it. "There's this rhetoric of saying we love the Iraqis, but we aren't giving them any authority," he says. But Barton worries that the time when U.S. agencies could identify responsible Iraqi groups — who could use the funds wisely — has passed. At this point, he says, groups that partner with U.S. agencies "are so exposed that unless they have phenomenal private security, they're getting picked off, and that's a hugely irresponsible position for us to put them in."

The Power of Symbolism

The establishment of Embassy Baghdad was, in and of itself, highly symbolic. It marked the handover of power, at least in name, to the Iraqis themselves. The embassy would be there to support the efforts of the fledgling government, not to rule, as the CPA had. "We're making a bet here," said Deputy Secretary of State Armitage in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee last June. "The bet is that Iraqis are going to fight more enthusiastically for Iraq than they fight for occupiers."

But Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., who heads the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, says State had no fallback plan when Iraqis did not take charge as quickly as they hoped. "We're concerned that they are not thinking outside the box," Kolbe told the *Los Angeles Times* last year. "They are going about methodically setting up this embassy as they would set up an embassy in any country. ... They have got to have a system where they can move quickly, where they can adapt. Instead, they have charts with lines and boxes. ... Nobody has run an assistance program of \$18 billion ever in the world, and State is approaching this like it was an embassy in Kenya."

Despite concerted efforts by insurgents to force a cancellation, and the lack of enthusiasm of the Sunni population for participating, Iraq did manage to hold legislative elections on Jan. 30 and is in the process of forming a government. However, it is far too early to predict how much that accomplishment will go toward fostering political stability or improving the security situation. That being the case, despite the best efforts of its staff, it may be a long time before Embassy Baghdad will be able to function as a traditional diplomatic mission. ■

REALITY CHECK IN IRAQ



Adam Niklewicz

T 2005 PROMISES TO BE A FATEFUL YEAR FOR IRAQ. INSTEAD OF BUILDING UTOPIAN SANDCASTLES, THE U.S. SHOULD EMBRACE MODEST BUT ACHIEVABLE EXPECTATIONS.

By DAVID L. MACK

This year promises to be a fateful one for Iraq. It will almost certainly bring personal tragedy to thousands of Iraqis caught up in waves of violence, economic stagnation and crippled services. Painful numbers of American military and civilian personnel will probably also be casualties, bringing new names to the State Department's granite memorial plaques. It may also see Iraqis taking charge of their political destiny and the beginning of Iraq's economic recovery. A passable Iraqi state may struggle to its feet. But these positive outcomes are by no means certain, and will only be attainable with great sacrifice — and with greater realism in U.S. policy.

The invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime were the easy part. Shock and awe worked for the world's unrivaled military power against a second-rate military force greatly eroded by sanctions and demoralized by incompetent and despotic political leadership. The replacement of that leadership and the reconstruction of the Iraqi state have been far harder tasks. None of the easy answers — neither the alluring predictions of Iraqi opposition leaders nor the dazzling analytical confidence of imperial theorists along the banks of the Potomac and the Hudson — have fit the deadly and ambiguous realities that shape the political landscape on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Long-term success may be attainable, but it is not guaranteed.

What the Elections Mean

It is part of the American ideology that elections are the only route to political legitimacy. Elections in Iraq carry huge risks but are impelled by forces that go beyond democratic legitimacy. Some of these forces are of our own making — the messianic rhetoric of aggressive Wilsonianism, which the administration adopted to justify the war in Iraq despite the absence of hard indications of either an imminent or rapidly growing threat to U.S. national security. President Bush and others now proclaim democracy in Iraq as the test of our success. Other pressures for elections come from the very predictable motivations of various Iraqi political rivals and the understandable aspirations of the long-suffering Iraqi people.

Elections in Iraq are desirable and important, but it was predictable that those of Jan. 30 would not be considered legitimate by the large portions of the Iraqi population who did not participate. Their absence from the polls was due to a range of factors — hatred of anything connected with the U.S. occupation, the absence of campaigning in many regions, the security-driven lack of publicity for the many names of Sunni Arab politicians on various lists and, very often, a well-founded fear of death. But, except for a very few insurgency leaders, the failure to vote was not because particular classes of Iraqis “don't want democracy.” Whether meaningful elections

could be held in some governorates had long been in doubt, but disappointing turnouts in Mosul and in heavily Sunni quarters of the Iraqi capital, such as Adhamiya, were a genuinely serious setback. By contrast, preliminary results indicate that the successful get-out-the-vote campaigns in the Kurdish populated areas of northeast Iraq and in the largely Shi'a governorates of southern Iraq worked to the benefit of religiously guided Shi'as and Kurds. Both groups suffered greatly under the Saddam regime, and both are strongly motivated to ensure that there is no return to his style of rule. However, both groups are probably represented in the Iraqi National Assembly out of proportion to their share of the population.

The often breathtaking courage of Iraqi candidates and voters should not lead us to suspend political judgment about the outcome. Sunni Arabs were not the only losers in the election. The same is true of the large population of secular Shi'as who resisted the temptation to align themselves as either candidates or voters with the religiously dominated United Iraqi Alliance. Also noteworthy, the minority but politically important Turkmen population (mostly Sunni and often at odds with their Kurdish neighbors) do not feel adequately represented.

The dilemma for both Baghdad and Washington was that postponing the election would have been viewed as illegitimate by other sets of Iraqis. Fortunately, it is possible to craft some measures to assure more equitable representation in the institutions resulting from the election. The newly elected national assembly must name a three-person presidential council, which, in turn, will name a prime minister. A new Cabinet to replace the Iraqi Interim Government and a committee to draft a permanent constitution provide opportunities to include Sunni Arabs in the political process. Without their involvement, or without attention to Kurdish demands for autonomy, it is likely that the permanent constitution would fall short of approval in a referendum to take place no later than Oct. 15. There are still moderate and pragmatic Iraqis — Shi'a and Sunni, Arab and Kurd — who seem willing to make the necessary compromises. For the Sunni Arabs especially, but for other Iraqis as well, this requires great courage.

The burden is also heavy for the U.S. and other foreign military forces, diplomatic establishments and work-

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F O C U S

ers in the reconstruction effort. They are supporting a political process that is dangerous and marks an uncertain start on the road to greater political legitimacy and stability. At worst, the elections may bring a new tyranny to power and greatly complicate U.S. efforts to fight terror in Iraq and elsewhere. In the short term, greater security, basic services and jobs are more important for most Iraqis than notions of democracy.

In summary, there are no silver bullets. We only mislead Iraqis and ourselves by placing too much weight on individual events.

Realistic Objectives

Instead of building utopian sandcastles, the U.S. should embrace modest but achievable expectations for Iraq. It is still possible to help Iraqis make their coun-

Except for a very few insurgency leaders, the failure to vote was not because particular classes of Iraqis “don’t want democracy.”

try a better place for their children and a much safer place for Iraq’s neighbors, and it is imperative that we prevent Iraq from becoming the imminent danger to the U.S. that some argued it was at the beginning of the Bush administration.

Viewed another way, a realistic policy needs redlines for really dangerous Iraqi behavior, as distinct from behavior that is merely disappointing or annoying. The good news is that the Bush administration has, in fact, been moving in this direction on the ground, even while the rhetorical exuberance of the president and vice president in the last election campaign, and more recently the president’s State of the Union address, remained stuck in the time warp of the immediate postwar euphoria.

As nearly as this outsider can tell, the key goals of

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the emerging, non-rhetorical policy are as follows:

First: Iraqi cooperation in the war against terrorists bent on violence against Americans and our de facto allies in the governments of the region. Iraq was a theoretical safe haven for such terrorists before we invaded. Now it is much more likely to become a real one if a working relationship between governments in Washington and Baghdad were to collapse or, worse, if Iraq were to continue its slide into the failed-state category.

Second: Strict Iraqi adherence to U.N. resolutions prohibiting future efforts to reconstitute weapons of mass destruction or long-range missile programs.

If the new Iraqi political order fails to cooperate on those two points, they will have crossed redlines that I believe would be intolerable for any U.S. administration. These are not matters for partisan controversy. They are fundamental objectives for our national security.

There are two other objectives which are achievable, as well as necessary to sustain an Iraqi government that could deliver on the two primary American goals. The first is stabilization of Iraq under a constitutionally chosen leadership in order to ensure that it not become a breeding ground for a new generation of terrorist groups and a center for the recruitment of desperate and bitter young people. The immediate results of elections are less important than consensus-building and bargaining among Iraqi factions within a framework influenced by elections but not isolated from Iraqi political realities. The Transitional Administrative Law was designed to protect individuals by a bill of rights and minorities by a high degree of federalism. This “temporary constitution” avoided making Iraqi politics a zero-sum game.

The United Iraqi Alliance — comprising major Shi’a Islamist parties, along with some secular Shi’as, notably Hussain Shahrastani and Ahmed Chalabi, and a smattering of Kurds and Sunnis of no great reputation — may well have an absolute majority in the National Assembly, but this electoral list does not enjoy a national consensus to govern Iraq. It will require skillful compromises and political management to avoid excluding credible Kurdish and Sunni Arab representatives in the resulting institutions of government. Failure would be a recipe for continued insurgency and eventual civil war. Elected Iraqi leaders might turn out to show restraint and be capable negotiators, but they will need much support from the United States and

other members of the international community, including a strong role for the United Nations.

The second objective necessary to sustain the new Iraqi government is economic reconstruction that generates employment, delivers basic services and puts Iraqi oil production on a sound basis for gradual growth. Prior to Iraqi sovereignty in June, the U.S. used Iraqi funds for major infrastructure projects, usually awarding contracts to American firms and creating few local jobs. Now that we are starting to move more of the \$18-billion-plus U.S. aid program into the pipeline, we need to do better. Hopefully, most of the new Cabinet members, like the members of the Interim Iraqi Government, will be capable technocrats who can deliver, if they get basic security and funding.

Promises vs. Reality

It is worth reviewing how the U.S. got to where it now finds itself in Iraq. A decade of close American relationships with Iraqi opposition leaders failed both to unite them in exile and to extend their meaningful influence into the non-Kurdish parts of the country. The time was not wasted by the opposition, however. They became experts on U.S. domestic politics and honed their lobbying skills. The disparity between their claims and their capabilities did not escape the professionals in the State Department, CIA and Central Command. Some opposition leaders succeeded, nevertheless, in end-running the experts in the U.S. government and establishing strongholds in Congress, among out-of-office Republican leaders, think-tanks and the media. When the Bush administration came to office, some high officials were already convinced that the inability of the Clinton administration to make containment more effective and to ultimately force political change in Baghdad was due to a combination of lack of strategic imagination, political timidity and bureaucratic investment in the status quo. Transition briefings and a continuing flow of reports did not change that mind-set. To some degree, it just confirmed the Iraqi opposition’s complaints about the career officials.

In retrospect, this should not have been surprising. Two assignments in Baghdad impressed me with the depth of creativity and resilience of the Iraqi people. It made me admire a nation that could continue to produce talented elites, a burgeoning middle class and a disciplined rank-and-file despite the stultifying effects

of really bad governments. Following the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, I began over a decade of working closely with opposition leaders. As individuals, I admired them greatly for their courage, subtlety and persistence. Collectively, however, they mirrored many of the problems that had prevented Iraqi politics from evolving in a less authoritarian way, and they had, for the most part, failed to establish a broad popular base.

The State Department's Future of Iraq project recognized that reality. It was premised in part on the need to draw on a much wider circle of experts from both the Iraqi diaspora and from Iraqi Kurdistan than were represented by the small circle of leaders and limited professional cadres of the opposition movements. Despite State's

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insurgency started soon thereafter, and despite some setbacks, has continued to gain ground.

If the return of Ahmed Chalabi and other opposition leaders proved to be less effective than promised, the same has been true for the range of simple answers to

efforts, leading opposition parties tended to mistrust that inclusive process. The most agile eventually coalesced in a mutually distrustful partnership of convenience. They succeeded in convincing key centers of influence in Washington that they could provide a ready and reliable replacement for Saddam and his supporters. In the chaos of post-invasion Iraq, neither the U.S. nor its Iraqi allies were able to pick up the pieces in time to forestall widespread Iraqi anger and disillusionment. The

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Iraq's difficulties. The capture or elimination of nearly all of the top regime leaders was both a good thing and a great disappointment for those in Washington prone to describe the Iraqi resistance as a relatively small number of bitter-enders compromised by their past. The capture of Saddam Hussein alive was an incredible combination of relentless intelligence collection, skillful military operations and good luck. Its psychological effect, however, fell far short of the public hopes dramatized by the famous deck of cards. At least it should have ended the comforting myth that resistance is confined to a relatively limited circle of the former regime.

The second effort to wrest control of Fallujah from the insurgents was, in strictly military respects, a brilliant

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success. Politically, however, it accomplished few of the anticipated objectives. It did not pave the way for elections in the predominantly Sunni Arab governorates of western Iraq. Relatively few non-Iraqi terrorists were caught in the net around Fallujah. Even if insurgents had needed Fallujah for a safe haven, they seem to have found other ways of carrying out operations of growing intensity in Baghdad, Mosul and many other population centers.

What did happen was that the virtual leveling of Fallujah was added to the revelations about Abu Ghraib prison and other well-publicized events as a very effective recruiting tool for new militants in Iraq and many Muslim countries. Nor did the Fallujah operations establish the credibility of the Iraqi Interim Government

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An End to Illusions

It was an intoxicating idea — a liberal democracy embracing free markets, human rights and the rapid expansion of oil production to help fuel a global economic boom; a different kind of Arab country, one that would embrace Western values and peace close to Israeli terms. In fact, it never had much to do with Iraq.

But many U.S. government and opinion leaders, relying more on ideological fantasy than hard facts, bought the seductive notion that the conquest of Iraq offered huge potential benefits for modest inputs of force and money. Believing that such achievements were close at hand, the Bush administration reached for a quick and easy victory over the twin threats of terrorism and the proliferation of really nasty weapons. The long-term payoff promised to be great, and a deci-

sive president, a vice president of unprecedented influence and a forceful Secretary of Defense overrode the warnings of many experts in the CIA, the State Department and the uniformed military. After all, if Washington is the new Rome, it has only to lead and the rest of the world will follow or be crushed. It was visionary, all right. But it was also more than imprudent.

The architects of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and of the subsequent occupation were not evil men. In key respects, however, they were dead wrong. They sincerely believed that the American commitment would rapidly transform the Middle East for the better, and make Iraq a positive element in global security and the war against terrorism. They imagined that Iraq would readily become a model of democratic governance and free market economics — the Norway of the Middle East. Moreover, they thought this could be accomplished with a modest application of U.S. military force and a commitment to postwar stabilization



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F O C U S

and progress that would largely be financed by Iraqi oil revenues.

The promoters of Operation Iraqi Freedom were blinded by illusions based on an excess of ideological zeal and minimal regard for the hard realities of Iraq's troubled history and damaged social structure. They also minimized the importance of cultural differences between Americans and Iraqis in an atmosphere of intense nationalism. Just as remarkably, they overestimated the tolerance of the American public for sustained imperial adventurism. In short, the architects of U.S. strategy over-reached and underestimated the resources required to accomplish their ambitious objectives.

Now it is the morning after, and we are feeling the hangover. The re-election of President Bush guaranteed continued influence for neo-conservative ideologues in

There is a long list of things that Washington had in mind for Iraq that will be unattainable, at least in the near term.

the Bush administration — led by the vice president and top officials in the Defense Department. The recent departure from government of Secretary of State Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage has removed the two senior administration officials with the greatest personal experience of the human cost of war. Nonetheless, harsh realities on the ground in Iraq may instill a degree of hard-headed modesty that has been lacking.

The Cold Dawn of Realism?

U.S. domestic politics and strains on the armed forces provide arguments for Republican Party leaders in the Congress and elsewhere who might press the White House for an exit strategy. But we cannot simply walk away from the problems of Iraq, a country of vast strategic importance. Especially since we made

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some of the problems worse during the period of occupation, and they have not notably improved during the tenure of the Iraqi Interim Government. The verdict is still out for the officials of the new transitional government, but they face challenges much greater than the recent election. As a failed state, Iraq would rapidly become a black hole for efforts to fight international terrorism and proliferation of nasty weapons.

So far, there is no sign that the U.S. will cut and run, but there is a longer-term danger that we will walk away too quickly. Some people will be tempted to spin a setback for American strategic interests and misery for the Iraqi people into something that looks like a foreign policy success and, therefore, a domestic political success for either the current administration or the next one.

The dilemma of John Kerry and other mainstream Democratic Party leaders in the primary and general election campaigns was painful to watch. Resisting strong temptations to resort to populist demagoguery, they were unable to exploit the setbacks in Iraq for benefit at the polls. Political pundits may argue that this cost Kerry and Edwards the election, but the American people benefited from their restraint. At this point, there is still a fragile consensus among old fashioned Republican conservative internationalists, Democratic internationalists and responsible elements of the U.S. media that we must not forget the dangers to our national interests of unfinished business in Iraq, even if the neo-conservative and aggressive Wilsonian dreams for Iraq are now clearly out of reach. Hopefully, we have entered a period where realism will get new respect in Washington. We need to face up to hard facts and not rely on the comforting illusions still reflected in much of the assertive White House rhetoric that passes for public diplomacy.

A Wish List To Forget

There is a long list of things that Washington had in mind for Iraq that will be unattainable, at least in the near term. If we are wise, we will swallow our disappointment and be ready to accept compromises, even if they often seem cynical. The Iraqis will do many things that make us unhappy, even if they do not cross our redlines. We should expect, for example, that Iraqi foreign policy will be within the Arab consensus regarding the Palestine issue, and we should not be surprised if Baghdad also supports the Syrian demand for full with-

drawal of Israel from the occupied Golan. Many Americans will probably be uncomfortable with the role that Iraqi leaders give to Islam in social and educational affairs. But we need to accept that an Iraqi consensus on this point is far more important than some model the U.S. might prefer.

In dealing with economic matters, it would be surprising if the unbridled free-market, low-tax and low-tariff models the Bush administration prefers prevail in Iraq. My own prediction is that with much carping from second-guessers in Washington, the White House and the State Department and the Congress will adjust to the emerging realities. After all, Pakistan is now called a "major non-NATO ally," a step that few of us would have predicted in the summer of 2001. The events of 9/11 changed our priorities toward Pakistan, and the realities of the war on terrorism must affect our policy toward Iraq.

We had better hope that current trends in U.S. policy are successful. There are some administration officials, members of Congress and influential think-tanks all too ready to say that Bremer, Negroponte and the State Department sabotaged the policy of President Bush and "lost Iraq." As if Iraq was ever ours to lose.

Nearly two years after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, far too many Iraqis say their daily lives were better off before that event. If this belief remains widespread after three years, it will be a historic political defeat with implications extending far beyond the borders of Iraq. We must not keep our military forces in permanent occupation on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates because someone has decided we are the new Roman Empire and should act accordingly. We must not fritter away our multibillion-dollar aid program in ways that largely serve pet economic theories, the interests of a few American corporations and a relatively small number of favored Iraqi partners.

We should raise our sights beyond the old tolerance for an autocratic Iraqi government that is temporarily serving U.S. interests, but we should also be realistic in how we define the process of democratization. The key building blocks for democracy are basic security, the rule of law and institutions of civil society. Here is where it is most important that we do not promise too much but help meet those needs that Iraqis themselves identify. ■

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IRAQI JUDGES COME TO PRAGUE



Adam Niklewicz

M THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF U.S. DIPLOMATS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, IRAQ IS MAKING REAL PROGRESS IN PROMOTING THE RULE OF LAW.

BY BARBARA DILLON HILLAS

Most of the news that appears in the mainstream media about Iraq is depressing, centering on insurgent attacks on coalition forces and Iraqis at large. Encouraging developments seldom get any media exposure, although there are some interesting stories that ought to be shared.

In particular, there has been real progress in the area of justice sector reform. Despite the daily violence, many ordinary Iraqis are trying to build a new society completely different from the one they have known for decades. Prominent among them are the judges of Iraq.

As they well know, the rule of law is a prerequisite for political stability, economic development and public confidence in public institutions. In Iraq, the most important component in establishing the rule of law is reforming Iraq's judicial system so that it is fair and transparent. Given Iraq's troubled history, this will not be a simple or easy task, unfortunately.

By the time the Coalition Provisional Authority assumed temporary control of Iraq in 2003, the country had suffered under 35 years of increasingly corrupt and dictatorial rule by the Arab Socialist Revolutionary Party (Ba'ath Party), including 24 years under Saddam Hussein. The prison system in Iraq had effectively been destroyed and a criminal population of some 38,000 inmates had been released onto the streets following the U.S.-led invasion. Months after Hussein's regime was ousted in May 2003, most of the country's courts were not functioning, and most court facilities were destroyed or damaged. The judiciary included corrupt individuals, human rights violators and technically incompetent Ba'ath Party functionaries.

Nearly two years later, according to the Iraqi Interim Government, the Iraqi judiciary is now independent and the justice system is operational. The nation's courts are open, issuing judgments in civil cases and imposing punishment in criminal cases. Those convicted are serving their sentences. The Judicial Review Committee has reviewed all 860 judges and prosecutors in Iraq, removing 169 from the Iraqi judiciary for senior Ba'ath Party affiliation and corruption. The committee has also reinstated 72 judges who were wrongly removed by the former regime.

New rights, which did not exist under Saddam Hussein, and are similar to those American citizens

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In Iraq, the most important component in establishing the rule of law is reforming the country's judicial system.

enjoy, are now available to all defendants in Iraqi criminal courts. These include the right to a fair, expeditious and open trial; the right to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, regardless of whether the proceeding is civil or criminal; the right of all accused persons to legal counsel; and the right to remain silent. The defendant must be notified of these rights at the time of arrest. Furthermore, torture has been abolished as a means to extract evidence.

To ensure that Iraqi defendants are able to exercise those rights effectively, however, it is essential to train judges to administer their courts fairly and transparently. And that is where the Central European and Eurasian Law Institute came in.

The Training Begins

The CEELI Institute, or CEELI, as it is generally known, is a graduate-level legal and judicial education center based in the Czech Republic. A public benefit corporation, CEELI's principal mission since it was established in Prague in 1999 by the American Bar Association has been to assist post-communist governments throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It does so by providing intensive practical and skills-based training to help these countries reform and strengthen their judicial systems.

The CEELI Institute has its roots in the Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative, an ABA project begun in 1990 to bring law reform to some 30 countries in the region. CEELI receives support from the American Bar Association, USAID and a variety of other public and private sources. (For more details, please visit the institute's Web site, www.abanet.org/ceeli/special_projects/ceeli_inst/about.html.)

This past summer, I served as the institute's interim director for six weeks here in Prague. It was a unique experience in every sense of the word, but the opportunity to help Iraq stands out as one of the most fulfilling projects I've carried out.

Based on our track record, CEELI was selected to train a total of 200 Iraqi judges between now and 2006, drawing on approximately \$600,000 in support from the

British government's Department for International Development (given via the International Law Assistance Consortium, based in Sweden), as well as some financial assistance from the Czech government. The institute developed the course, titled "Judging in a Democratic Society," with the participation of an international group of experts, as part of a project to bring the rule of law to countries in transition. It emphasizes the skills and practices necessary for a court system to be accessible, efficient and fair. The course has been given many times, in several languages, to judges from over 20 countries. The version of the course for Iraqis adds to the core curriculum materials unique to that region and its legal history. The presentations and all written materials are translated into Arabic.

The two-week course is primarily participatory, although it combines some lecture-based information sharing and comparative best-practices presentations. It includes sessions on judicial ethics, relations with other branches of government, public access to the courts and judicial independence. As the Iraqi judges noted, the previous legal system primarily catered to the needs of a dictator. Yet because the country's legal system was based on French and Egyptian law, with a significant British legal influence as well, there was a strong foundation to work from in modifying their legal framework.

The faculty consisted of five dedicated professionals who each gave two weeks of their valuable time, pro bono. They were: Justice Robert Utter, a distinguished former chief justice of the Washington State Supreme Court, who was the designated "team leader;" Munter al Fadhal, an exiled Iraqi lawyer from Sweden, who is also a human rights specialist; Justice Ernst Markel, an Austrian Supreme Court justice; Judge Judith Chirlin, from the Los Angeles Superior Court; and Dr. Markus Zimmer, a federal court administrator from the state of Utah.

In September 2004, an initial group of 50 Iraqi judges (personally selected by the Iraqi Chief Justice, Madhat Al-Mahmood) landed in Prague for the two-week training course on basic principles of democratic justice. The

***Despite what appeared
to be insurmountable
obstacles, somehow we
bridged the barriers of
our respective cultures
and histories.***

course had been canceled twice because the participants' safe departure from Iraq could not be guaranteed, so it was a great relief when they finally arrived. (In November, CEELI trained the second group of 47 Iraqi judges, and during 2005 it will train an additional 100 Iraqi judges.)

It is worth noting that other groups of Iraqi judges have attended similar conferences on the role of the judiciary. For example, in May 2004, 28

Iraqi judges and Ministry of Justice officials traveled to The Hague for a two-day conference on the rule of law with their international counterparts, including U.S. Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy; the most senior judge in Britain; and judges attached to international tribunals based in The Hague. Conference participants discussed the importance of the rule of law and the role of the judiciary in securing fundamental rights. The conference was organized by the Coalition Provisional Authority's Ministry of Justice in Baghdad, along with the U.S. embassy in The Hague.

The judges in our group came from all parts of Iraq, from now-household names like Fallujah and Basra, and from less familiar places like Karrada or Diyalla. Some were victims of Saddam Hussein's regime, others were related to individuals who were tortured and murdered by Hussein, and still others were survivors of post-Saddam Hussein assassination attempts. There was even one judge whose bodyguards were killed while protecting him from assault.

Because of security concerns, news of the seminar was kept quiet. Nevertheless, the Iraqis were delighted to be visited by some important dignitaries over the course of the two weeks. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage assured them that the United States, Great Britain and the Czech Republic would not rest until they were "seated on the bench, making just and wise decisions for the Iraqi people." Czech Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda addressed the distinguished group of Iraqi judges at their graduation ceremony, emphasizing what both Iraq and his country had in common: a transition from a totalitarian regime to a democracy.

Transcending Barriers

All 50 participants were men, which is not surprising considering that out of a total of approximately 860 judges in Iraq, fewer than 15 are women. (There were three female participants in the second course held last November.) Initially, they had a difficult time relating to women in positions of authority. Welcoming the group that first day, I felt like a clear windowpane — there was no eye contact, no verbal connection. Only a couple of the judges even acknowledged my greetings. For the first time in my life I understood what many black South Africans had told me about their experiences under apartheid: they might as well have been invisible.

Yet, despite what appeared to be insurmountable obstacles, somehow we bridged the barriers of our respective cultures and histories over the next few days. A lot of the credit must go to the instructors themselves, of course, both for their enthusiasm to explain the current international practices of an independent judiciary, and their attention to developing a rapport within the religiously and ethnically diverse group to foster a genuine exchange of ideas.

If I had to identify a single “magic moment,” I might point to the attempt on the third day by the Utah court administrator, Dr. Markus Zimmer, to teach the participants how to say hello in the language of his parents (and the land of his birth): “Schwyzertüütsch.” Whether it was the sheer incongruity of that sound or the amusement value of trying to reproduce it, all of a sudden, there was laughter ... laughter that transcended the language barrier. And we continued to forge a stronger and stronger bond over the rest of our time together.

The two-week course was punctuated with poignant experiences. One judge ended up in the cardiology department of the Military Hospital in Prague just before he would have had a massive heart attack, where he discovered that the operating Czech doctor had been performing similar procedures in Basra. Then there was the Iraqi judge who broke down in tears during his speech at the residence of the U.S. ambassador, full of emotion at recalling what they all had experienced back home.

I also recall the quick response of the Czech police when we alerted them to the fact that a young “foreign” man was videotaping the institute — only to find out

that the young man was the brother of one of the judges. For many of these Iraqis, Prague was the place for family reunions, because so many of their kin had fled there under Saddam Hussein’s rule.

Finally, there was the emotional farewell speech given by the senior American judge, Justice Robert Utter, at the graduation ceremony, as he wished his band of “brother judges” well in their future endeavors, knowing that they were all returning to a dangerous uncertainty.

Tears streamed not only down his cheeks, but also down the cheeks of every single Iraqi judge.

A Return to Wise Rule

By the end of the two weeks I had received numerous invitations to visit Kurdistan and other places that, not too long ago, seemed so remote and alien. By the end of the workshop I was “Barbara, the one who brings good news,” or “Barbara, the treasuries,” or “Barbara, citizen of the planet,” or “Barbara, the special alloy that Allah did not include in the periodic table.” (In Arabic, these appellations are much shorter!)

But perhaps my favorite memory from that last day is when the two most senior judges, an Arab and a Kurd — who’d had an especially hard time accepting my leadership role — embraced me, each awkwardly planting three kisses on my cheeks.

The judges have returned to their everyday turmoil and ordeals, with “Personal Action Plans” they had developed with their instructors. These plans were realistic assessments of what the judges could begin to do back home, in their own courthouses. I still get an occasional e-mail from a few of them, inviting me to teach law at a university in Kurdistan, or visit the courts where they preside. I cannot yet respond, “Yes, with pleasure!” But I hope to do so soon. Tragically, one of the judges who was a key participant in our November 2004 course, the secretary general of the Judicial Council in Baghdad, Judge Qais Hashim al-Shammari, was brutally murdered, along with his brother-in-law, in January.

Justice Utter recounts a story the Iraqi judges had shared with him, of “a time when Iraq was ruled by a wise king. He was universally revered and well served by the judges of his kingdom, who were looked upon as God’s messengers on earth. So great was the respect of



Photo credit: Markus Zimmer

The author is sitting on the ground in the front row, fourth from the right.

the king for his judges that when he entered a room where they were seated, he remained standing and did not ask them to stand. When he left the room, as a sign

goal of rebuilding the Iraqi judiciary to the point of respect it reached in the story of the ancient king is fulfilled." Amen. ■

of respect he walked backwards so he would not turn his back on them."

Under Saddam Hussein, the birthplace of Hammurabi's Code was ravaged by abuse of the rule of law. Yet from the outset, the Iraqi judges taught us that the foundations of belief in that concept still run deep in Iraq. Whether the Iraqis can rebuild on these foundations remains to be seen. But, echoing the senior American judge's thoughts, "[We] can only hope their

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DOING DIPLOMACY DIFFERENTLY: THE CANADIAN FOREIGN SERVICE

OUR NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTH HAS LONG PUNCHED ABOVE ITS DIPLOMATIC WEIGHT.
BUT THERE ARE SIGNS THAT IT MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONTINUE DOING SO.

BY DAVID T. JONES

We all know Canadians. They are those mild-mannered, polite types to the north, who are “just like us” except for a few quaint customs and turns of phrase, eh?

In many ways, that generalization holds true (perhaps more so than either side really cares to admit). Canadians and Yanks both hail from a high-tech, free-market society, and share an Anglo-Saxon historical base. And like the U.S., Canada is graced by a vibrant, multi-party democratic system committed to the rights, freedoms and liberties that we tend to think of as “American.” Finally, Canadians also think of themselves as “Americans” — but North Americans.

In some important respects, however, that description does not fit reality. Thanks perhaps to its French heritage, Canada has generally placed a greater emphasis on evolving a multicultural/multiracial culture. Similarly, as a relatively small if wealthy nation, it has consistently endorsed the value of international cooperation over unilateral action.

So it should come as no surprise that when U.S. diplomats undergo area training prior to a Canadian assignment, they are invariably cautioned not to characterize the relationship as “You’re just like us,” for our neighbors to the north believe they are very different — and perhaps better.

The same mix of similarities and distinctions also applies

to Canadian diplomats. As of July 2004, the Canadian Foreign Service operated from a network of 164 missions accredited in 153 countries, with over 8,500 employees (including 4,890 local hires). For 2004, it projected hiring 75 individuals of “creativity, innovation and commitment to excellence” as trade commissioners, immigration officers, political/econ officers and management/consular affairs officers. The target for future years is expected to be similar.

Like U.S. Foreign Service personnel, Canadian diplomats are professional civil servants who operate within a labyrinth of bureaucratic rules and regulations. They even have comparable career frustrations: too many demands on their time; inadequate staffing; too few promotions.

But in some important respects, they do diplomacy differently. One of the most obvious differences is the role of the union that represents Canadian diplomats, the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers. PAFSO is akin to AFSA in being both a professional association and the designated bargaining agent for diplomats, since 1968; however, unlike AFSA, AFGE and other unions representing U.S. federal employees, PAFSO has the authority to strike. In this regard, it reflects Canadian society, where a greater percentage of the work force, particularly public service workers, is unionized than in the United States.

PAFSO can negotiate most professional issues except for pensions and staffing; most recently, its major concern was wages, and it led the first legal strike in Canadian diplomatic history last year. Because the Canadian government (unlike the NHL) cannot lock out its employees, its diplo-

David T. Jones is a retired Senior Foreign Service officer and frequent contributor to the Journal. He served in Ottawa from 1992 to 1996, and continues to study and write about Canadian issues.

mats were able to be innovative in arranging work stoppages and slow-downs over a three-week period without losing salary. Several times a week, PAFSO put up picket lines early in the morning and then took them down and reported to work just late enough to disrupt the workday.

The Making of a Canadian Diplomat

American diplomats were instrumental in our nation's founding: think of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in France during the Revolutionary War. Moreover, many of our early presidents — Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Van Buren and Buchanan — were diplomats or served as Secretary of State.

By contrast, Canadian diplomacy is a considerably more recent phenomenon, and only one Canadian foreign minister (Lester Pearson) has become prime minister. It has also been much more influenced by, and derived from, British tradition than the American system. Until the British North America Act of 1867, Canada was a British colony; and that act, while according the country domestic autonomy, left foreign affairs in British hands. Thus, Canada and the United States dealt with each other primarily through the British Embassy in Washington.

A Canadian agent dealing with immigration began operations in London in 1869; he reported to the Department of Agriculture in Ottawa. The first (part-time) commercial agents were not appointed until 1892, while the first full-time commercial agent was appointed to Australia (not the United States, interestingly) in 1894. By World War I, there were 26 full- or part-time Canadian agents in 16 countries. Quality was characterized by its absence. One contemporary Canadian observer described them as “political and other derelicts

... entirely unfitted by character or attainments for their position.”

The first two Canadian representatives (known initially as “agents of the Canadian government in France” and, eventually, as “ministers plenipotentiary and envoys extraordinary”) sent to France each lasted more than a quarter-century. The first, appointed in 1882, stayed 28 years; the second, 27. Each was a journalist, a member of the ruling Liberal Party and a former senator; each died in office. There was no question of Civil Service competition for the positions.

Following World War I, the British accepted the principle that dominions could be represented by their own diplomats. There already were competitive exams for Canadian commercial agents (a university education was expected) and for immigration service officials (the prerequisite was equivalent to high school graduation but with four years of practical farming experience in Canada). For the diplomatic service, however, standards were set so high (law degree, two years of postgraduate experience and bilinguality in French and English) that in 1925 only a single candidate was deemed qualified.

Subsequent requirements were less elevated, but until World War II, examinations were extended essays spread over several days. Successful candidates then faced a rather casual oral exam (basically an interview) that was designed mainly to ensure that prospective diplomats were, as a Canadian commentator described it, neither “rustic or colonial,” yet were also “proper but not stuffy.” That barrier surmounted, frequently they were introduced to the prime minister.

By the 1960s, the volume of applicants had driven the testing process increasingly toward objective, standardized exams; the hallowed essay first became a 90-minute effort and, in 1968, was completely eliminated.

These tests, combined with a subsequent short interview (and a review of the applicant's curriculum vitae) were the determining factors. At the same time, there was also a steady movement away from hiring pure “generalists” toward specialists, particularly in law and economics.

Primarily for fiscal reasons, during the 1980s recruitment became sporadic, and no entrance exam was administered in some years. In 1994, the official examination notice made clear that only graduates in economics, law or business administration would be considered — the only exception being experts in Mandarin, Arabic, Japanese, Russian or Korean. The notice was blunt: Candidates without these qualifications — even if they “attain the highest scores in the country” — would not make the cut. Predictable screams of academic anguish reversed these draconian restrictions, leading to the introduction of a battery of tests that would be familiar to U.S. candidates: a variety of knowledge-based timed tests for the “written” portion and an oral exam that includes a “group simulation exercise” and a written essay on a general socio-political topic.

Currently, while only a university degree is required to take the exam, most candidates have postgraduate degrees.

Structure of the System

The Canadian Foreign Service encompasses immigration and trade officers as well as political/economic officers. While the U.S. rank structure system is roughly parallel to that of our military establishment, with six officer ranks and three “flag ranks,” Canada's has three basic levels: developmental (non-tenured), working (mid-level) and executive (senior). Within each level, there are different salary levels but no formal gradations in rank.

New Entrants. Newly minted

Canadian diplomats must demonstrate proficiency in French and English. If they do not have sufficient bilingual expertise upon entry, they receive language training (while receiving only 80 percent of normal pay) and “will go no further” (a euphemism for firing) if they do not qualify linguistically within 12 months of entry. This probationary period includes professional and on-the-job training in Ottawa and a two- or three-year overseas posting. Employees bid on five assignments, but can be assigned to any Canadian mission.

There are evaluations at 18, 36, 48 and 60 months, and only those with “fully satisfactory” performance become career diplomats after five years, about 18 months longer than under the American system. On the other hand, nearly all of them achieve tenure and enter the next level.

Of course, there is an obvious downside to recruiting the most high-

***Unlike the U.S. system,
with six diplomatic ranks
and three “flag ranks,”
Canada’s Foreign
Service has just three
basic levels.***

ly qualified young Canadians and keeping them at the probationary level for so long, especially since the work is demanding and the pay is relatively low: they tend to quit. A 1998 study determined that approximately 25 percent of new diplomats resigned within seven or eight years, citing low

pay, poor advancement prospects and family/spouse constraints.

Mid-Level. After tenure, Canadian diplomats undergo annual employee evaluations as they strive to move up the career ladder, just as U.S. Foreign Service personnel do. Because promotions are severely restricted by the available number of positions at the top, most Canadian diplomats stagnate for years waiting to enter the Executive Service, often slogging through a succession of lateral assignments. Adding to their frustration, they are always assignable to positions lower than their current one, whereas U.S. diplomats at least have a sense of progress from FS-3 to 2 to 1.

Each year, PAFSO says, there are about 700 potential candidates for just 22 senior-level vacancies, but only about 400 actually apply. Thus, only about 5 percent of the applicants in any given year cross the senior threshold.

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In return, however, Canadian Foreign Service officers enjoy far greater job security than their American counterparts. Once over the mid-level “threshold,” Canadian diplomats do not face any barriers to an extended career. There is no “time in class,” no “up or out” requirement to enter the Senior Foreign Service, and no selection-out or low-ranking. Furthermore, unlike the American system, Canadian human rights legislation prevents compulsory retirement because of age or length of employment. To be sure, a diplomat can be terminated for cause, but such removals generally imply criminality rather than incompetence.

In regard to assignments, most Canadian diplomats are expected to spend about 60 percent of their time overseas, but (as is the case for U.S. diplomats) the system does take into account spousal and health issues in making assignments. As a result, personnel from outside the Foreign Service frequently fill overseas slots, which has generated another set of morale problems. To help address overseas staffing, there are reportedly plans to implement a “lateral entry” procedure to bring in officers at the mid-level without the stringent vetting that new hires undergo.

Executive Service. In any organization, particularly one based on demonstration of merit in competition against one’s peers, those who have made it to the top believe that the system works fine — after all, they are “the proof of the pudding.” The Canadian Foreign Service is certainly no exception to this principle. While senior diplomats may sometimes feel aggrieved about particular assignments, they generally have little sympathy for calls from below for systemic change.

They do, however, object strongly to the comprehensive reorganization the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently undergoing. In particular, they

regard the division between trade and foreign affairs (see “An Uncertain Future” below for details) as wrong-headed. Some oppose the restructuring mainly because they believe it will cost them senior positions, while others are concerned that it will weaken Canada’s diplomatic clout, turning it from a middle to a “muddle” power. However, their cries have fallen on deaf ears.

Minorities/Women. For Canadians, the most important minority has always been French-speakers in the province of Quebec (“Quebecois”), who make up approximately a quarter of the population. Although the earliest tranche of diplomats was predominantly English-speaking, by the 1950s, Francophones were well represented, constituting 36 of the 137 diplomats recruited between 1949 and 1957. During the 1960s, some two-thirds of successful Francophone candidates declined offers to join the Foreign Service, presumably due to better (or more timely) job proposals. However, it appears that this is no longer a concern.

The first woman officer in the Canadian diplomatic service did not enter until 1947; up to 1971, married women had to resign, and recruitment of women was sporadic. For example, between 1949 and 1957, 137 new officers joined, but only six were women. Although five women joined in 1976, there was none in the two years before or after that group. Currently, however, the entering class ratios are closer to 50-50 and are expected to remain at rough parity.

Political and Other Non-Career Appointees. Canadian diplomats echo the concerns of their U.S. colleagues over political appointees in senior diplomatic positions. But in real terms, they have virtually nothing to complain about. Following the initial years of the Foreign Service when, as was the case for the United States, all overseas appoint-

ments were made via political patronage, the overwhelming majority of Canadian ambassadors have been career officials. The sole exception has been their ambassador to the Court of St. James's (London), which for years was Canada's flagship appointment, and still is more likely than not to have a political appointee.

Otherwise, their record is one that U.S. diplomats would envy — at least until relatively recently. Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker (1957-1963) made only five political appointments. His Liberal successor Lester Pearson (1963-1968) also made only five. Pierre Trudeau (1968-1979; 1980-1984), who was demonstrably contemptuous of the career Foreign Service (and much else, including U.S. presidential leadership), made 17 political appointments in 16 years in power. His successor, Progressive Conservative Brian Mulroney, however, made 19 such appointments in his

***PAFSO is more
concerned about
competition for positions
from civil servants than
political appointees.***

first three years in office and stimulated a chorus of complaint. Today, although there is a steady stream of political appointees, including some to highly visible embassies (London, Paris), there was a career diplomat in Washington until very recently. PAFSO has indicated that the issue is not a primary concern.

Currently, the association is more concerned over the prospect of later-


al entry into both mid-career and executive levels for individuals who do not take the entry-level exams. In particular, significant numbers of positions overseas and in Ottawa are being filled by career civil servants who, in PAFSO's view, appear to land the better appointments.

**Not Well Paid —
or Promoted**

While it is the rare U.S. diplomat who would admit to being overpaid (indeed, we all think we are worth "more"), the Canadians have a more pointed gripe than most. The top mid-level base pay is \$85,000 Canadian (approximately U.S. \$65,000). One former Canadian Foreign Service officer, now working for the United States as a Foreign Service National, recently noted that he was making considerably more than his contemporaries who had remained as diplomats. In a more systematic study, a Price-

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waterhouseCoopers review of comparative wage compensation packages (minus overseas compensation) rated Canada 12th of 16 countries, including the United States and the U.K. (In addition, comparing the various professional groups within the Canadian Foreign Service, PAFSO rates diplomats as “among the lowest paid.”)

As noted above, the structure of the personnel system ensures that promotions will be few and far between. So instead of examining all members of the class for possible entry into the Executive Service, Canadians attempt to limit the group under consideration each year by administering a written examination. In 2004, candidates had to pass a four-question essay test made up of theoretical questions; even the most glowing performance appraisals were irrelevant unless the candidate passed this textbook-oriented exam. One of the four questions did not test what it purported to cover, however, so those who failed that portion of the exam were allowed to take it again. Those who were successful on the second try were allowed to take the oral, joining those who had initially passed the exam (despite the flawed parameters). Nevertheless, the experience left diplomats frustrated with the system.

The United States Is Canada's Primary Problem

While no U.S. leader goes to sleep worried about developments in Ottawa, such is not the case for Canadians regarding Washington. A decade ago a government “white paper” addressing Canadian foreign policy identified its principal international challenge as managing bilateral relations with the United States — that is, managing the relationship to Canada’s (not mutual) benefit. Nor was the objective to have “good” relations, because that might suggest subservience to Washington.

Instead, Canada has traditionally sought to avoid one-on-one confrontation with the United States. If we are the world’s 800-pound gorilla, then Canada qualifies as an 80-pound chimpanzee: smart, but no match for a larger opponent. Accordingly, rather than a wrestling match with Washington, Ottawa wants to charm it into pursuing common objectives — or at least to avoid its wrath. This process has become increasingly difficult for Canadian diplomats in the past few years, however, as the Internet has made Bush administration officials aware of the strident anti-Americanism now prevalent in mainline Canadian media.

Or, to put it another way: Canada views itself as a “middle power” that can “punch above its weight” with adroit diplomacy and, in the past, a small, but highly competent military particularly effective at “peacekeeping.” Canada persistently seeks rule-based multilateral forums where clever legalisms are able to negate massive economic, even military, power. Pursuing national objectives, it has joined virtually every international organization around, is a strong supporter of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and works assiduously on economic differences through World Trade Organization and NAFTA appeal panels.

To address its bilateral concerns with the United States, Ottawa maintains its largest embassy in Washington — and staffs it with an “A Team.” Canadian diplomats, including recently departed Ambassador Michael Kergin, frequently have served multiple tours in Washington or covered U.S.-related topics in Ottawa, qualifying them as “American handlers.” The current Canadian ambassador is a rare exception to the pattern of career appointments to Washington. Ambassador Frank McKenna, a former premier of New Brunswick, is more in the U.S. tradition of appointing a for-

mer governor (e.g., James Blanchard or Paul Celucci), to our embassy in Ottawa. McKenna, a senior member of the Liberal Party, has a close personal relationship with Prime Minister Paul Martin and at least a nodding familiarity with senior officials in the Bush administration.

Needless to say, we do not devote reciprocal attention to Canada. While, at 350 personnel, our embassy in Ottawa is large, and without question, our diplomatic representatives are able and active, we have not created a cadre of Canada specialists equivalent to those with career paths directed toward China, Japan, Russia or Arabic-speaking countries.

An Uncertain Future

While the longstanding trauma for the U.S. Foreign Service has been the McCarthy era of the 1950s and the related issue of dissent (e.g., Vietnam, former Yugoslavia, Iraq), the Canadian Foreign Service has endured nothing comparable. To be sure, there were security-related problems in the 1950s, resulting in what has been described as a purge that particularly targeted suspected homosexuals, but Canada’s level of domestic and/or internal controversy over its diplomats’ political or personal orientation has not matched that of the U.S.

Probably more important, however, was the disrespect that the long-ruling, iconic Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau directed toward the Foreign Service (akin perhaps to JFK describing the State Department as a bowl of jelly). In 1969 Trudeau suggested the extant version of diplomacy was “outmoded” and that foreign affairs topics could be read in a “good newspaper.” A decade later, Trudeau reiterated his view that instant global communication and personal contact between world leaders had reduced the relevance of traditional diplomacy.

Moreover, despite having elected

ministers as the heads of the foreign affairs establishment and other parliamentarians as “secretaries of state” (junior ministers) supervising several geographic areas, Canadian diplomats believe they lack political constituencies within the Ottawa political structure as well as throughout Canada. Some of their laments are familiar: the average citizen’s disdain for the stereotype of “pin-striped cookie pushers” with lavish cost-of-living allowances in posh capitals around the globe.

Thus, Canadian diplomats are struggling with the same variety of relevancy questions that afflict all 21st-century foreign affairs establishments: CNN instant news of any crisis; special envoys to address technical/economic issues; increasing (if still relatively minor in U.S. government terms) levels of political appointment to favored ambassadorships. Likewise, for day-to-day life both in Ottawa and in for-

eign postings, Canadian diplomats have familiar concerns: health and safety issues; adequate education for children; spousal employment; and recovery from the lingering effects of a hiring shortfall during the 1990s.

Additionally, today’s Canadian diplomats are grappling with an existential problem: what is the future of Canadian diplomacy? The foreign ministry was divided in December 2003 into “Foreign Affairs Canada” and “International Trade Canada” divisions, each led by powerful personalities. This move reportedly was directed by then-Prime Minister Jean Chretien without going through the standard practice of extensive internal discussion or consultation with career Foreign Service personnel. By any measure, this is not your standard bureaucratic reshuffle. For example, it poses a much greater institutional challenge for Canadian diplomats than what their American counter-

parts experienced when State spun off its trade officers to the Department of Commerce in 1980 or when State absorbed USIA and ACDA in the 1990s.

A year after the reorganization, officials are still unclear over how functions and funding are to be divided, whether additional Foreign Affairs economic and trade policy departments will move to the International Trade Ministry — and even, given the intimate association of trade and diplomacy for Canada, what Foreign Affairs Canada will have as its primary focus. This reorganization comes on top of a de facto transfer of the substantive elements of the U.S./Canada portfolio to the prime minister’s office.

Moreover, Canada is currently governed by an inherently unstable minority government; there is no assurance that should the opposition win the next election, it would not

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reassemble the foreign ministry as previously constituted. Indeed, that was the course followed 20 years ago when the foreign affairs ministry initially gathered up trade and commerce elements. Thus, many Canadian diplomats believe that the current reorganization has “fixed” something that wasn’t broken.

A recent book by Canadian journalist Andrew Cohen, *While We Slept: How We Lost Our Place in the World*, encapsulates many of these themes. Its thesis is that for a long time now, Canada has failed to pull its weight on the world stage, in terms of military affairs, foreign assistance levels and diplomatic presence. Instead, Ottawa has coasted on its past diplomatic accomplishments and refused to devote the financial resources necessary to continue to “punch above its weight” as a global power.

Cohen shares his compatriots’ nostalgia for Canada’s diplomatic glory

days during the Cold War and their respect for some of the country’s stellar figures from the past, but he recognizes that the unique historical circumstances associated with the end of World War II — in particular, the relative absence of global rivals — cannot be replicated. He also points out that while the U.S. was the most powerful Western state at that time, it was not at its current level of virtually unchallenged supremacy; consequently, it still needed allies, paving the way for Canada to play an important role as a power acceptable to both the West and the East. Whether Canadians like it or not, that is no longer the case.

Whatever the outcome of those issues, this is a time of troubles for Canadian diplomacy. If a nation’s foreign influence requires a combination of astute diplomacy, military strength and foreign aid, Ottawa has systematically undercut the latter two ele-

ments of the equation. While a long-pending new “white paper” on international security policy is supposed to address these concerns, whether what it (eventually) proposes can reverse this decline falls into the “remains to be seen” category. Indeed, Canadian diplomats not only have a weaker hand to play with their professional counterparts, but believe themselves increasingly disrespected domestically and fear they are about to become de facto subordinates to trade policy.

When those concerns are combined with the standard, garden-variety assortment of 21st-century frustrations involving family/spousal needs, noncompetitive pay levels, international terrorism and the like, it is the rare Canadian diplomat who does not conclude that he or she could do better in another career. Many still choose to stay, of course, but increasingly, they view doing so as a sacrifice. ■

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THE CUBAN THISTLE CRISIS: RETHINKING U.S. SANCTIONS

THE CUBAN EMBARGO IS OFTEN CITED ABROAD AS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF A U.S. UNILATERAL ECONOMIC SANCTIONS PROGRAM THAT HAS CLEARLY FAILED TO ACHIEVE ITS STATED AIMS, AND IS NOW MAINTAINED PURELY FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES.

BY PETER L. FITZGERALD

Last October, the third National Summit on Cuba was held in Tampa, Fla. Once again, those advocating abandoning policies and sanctions that have clearly failed to lead to political change in Cuba for more than 40 years faced those who argue for ever-tighter and more onerous sanctions to counter the human rights abuses and oppression of Fidel Castro's regime.

This is a dance with unique steps that is peculiar to Florida, but one that is particularly popular with both Democratic and Republican presidential candidates in election years. It is also a dance that highlights the misplaced focus of U.S. sanctions policy in an era of global terrorism.

A Question of Credibility

The Cuban embargo is often cited abroad as a prime example of a U.S. unilateral economic sanctions program that has clearly failed to achieve its stated aims, and is now maintained purely for domestic political purposes (while costing American

exporters an estimated \$3-4 billion annually). The embargo's extraterritorial application to ostensibly control the dealings of foreign commercial entities and transactions well removed from Cuba and Castro's government is a cause of friction with our nation's trading partners. And the periodic efforts to extend and tighten the controls' extraterritorial impact overseas, such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, are perceived as an affront to the sovereignty of our trading partners and undermine the credibility abroad of the U.S. sanctions programs generally — and not just with regard to Cuba.

U.S. insistence on applying these measures in third countries is problematic under international law and has prompted several foreign governments, along with the European Union, to pass laws prohibiting their nationals and companies from complying with the terms of the U.S. embargo. Ironically, these foreign "blocking measures" are partially patterned after the United States's own anti-boycott laws, prohibitions that are aimed at countering the extraterritorial application of the Arab League boycott of Israel to American nationals and companies.

It's one thing for the United States to declare that its citizens, residents and companies will not deal directly with a particular sanctions target, such as Cuba, but it's altogether another thing — both politically and under international law

The efforts to tighten the controls' extraterritorial impact overseas are perceived as an affront to the sovereignty of our trading partners.

Peter L. Fitzgerald is a professor of law at the Stetson University College of Law in Florida, and a recent Fulbright Distinguished Scholar to the United Kingdom. He also serves on the International Advisory Board of SanctionsWatch.com.

— for the U.S. to say that the citizens, residents and companies of another country may not do so. It may be entirely permissible for the U.S. to declare that its citizens, residents and companies are prohibited from engaging in indirect transactions with a sanctions target in a third country, for example, by buying Cuban cigars in Madrid. But that policy decision does not entitle the U.S. government to decree that Spanish citizens cannot purchase the same Cuban cigar in Madrid.

However, that is precisely what happens when the U.S. extends the reach of its controls, as it does with the Cuban sanctions, to cover not only the actions of U.S.-based companies but also the actions of foreign companies that are owned or controlled by those in the U.S. This, incidentally, illustrates why multilateral sanctions are inherently more effective — both politically and legally — than unilateral sanctions.

The “Cuban Thistle Crisis”

U.S. economic sanctions are also unique in effectively assigning “nationality” to objects and property instead of just targeting countries, people and companies. This is how the U.S. can declare that it is just as illegal for a U.S. citizen to buy a Spanish cigar in Madrid, when it is made with Cuban tobacco, as it is to buy a Cuban-origin cigar — a position that the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control reiterated last September. By defining “Cuban origin” to broadly include anything that is “made in whole or in part of any article which is the growth, produce or manufacture of Cuba,” the U.S. exponentially expands the breadth of its sanctions. Any person subject to U.S. jurisdiction who “engages in any transaction” involving such foreign merchandise, anywhere, violates the controls just as if buying Cuban

***U.S. economic sanctions
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effectively assigning
“nationality” to objects
and property instead of
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people and companies.***

goods in Havana.

These rules are not confined to cigars. Anything “made or derived in whole or in part” from any Cuban article is potentially within the sweep of the U.S. embargo. For example, at a distillery in Dufftown, in the Speyside region of the Scottish Highlands, William Grant & Sons finishes aging one of its special single-malt Scotch whiskeys in oak casks that once held Sancti Spiritus rum from Cuba. Interestingly, the malt master actually found that the original Cuban barrels weren’t suitable for aging Scotch. So the Cuban rum is first decanted into other casks in Scotland, before being removed once again, so that the whiskey can be placed in the Scottish casks to mature and obtain the desired rum finish.

Nevertheless, since its introduction in 2002, Glenfiddich Havana Reserve Single Malt Whiskey, a Scottish product produced by a British company, has not been marketed in the United States because it is temporarily held in casks that once contained Cuban rum. Although that decision was probably driven as much by canny

marketing as by any legal advice concerning the U.S. sanctions, the British press heralded the introduction of this new Scotch as “banned in America” and with quips about the “Cuban Thistle Crisis.”

Ironically, however, when OFAC issued its latest “Cuban Cigar Update Notice” in September, it showed that what is deemed to be of Cuban origin under the regulations not only warrants close examination, but is subject to change over time as the political will to enforce the letter of the controls changes. With its notice, OFAC reinterpreted the existing regulatory language and stated that the embargo controls are deemed to cover any cigars manufactured in a third country from tobacco grown in Cuba. At the same time, it generously stated that it was refraining from going so far as controlling foreign cigars produced using tobacco that is grown from Cuban seeds. This is the sort of fine distinction that might well make William Grant & Sons glad that their malt master decided not to use the original Cuban rum barrels.

The Bottom Line

In the absence of a commonly agreed approach among governments, differences in foreign policy can easily lead to the imposition of conflicting, and potentially irreconcilable, obligations on companies and commercial interests. A few years ago, for example, Wal-Mart’s Canadian subsidiary pulled pajamas off the shelves of all of its 136 stores when one shopper in Winnipeg noticed that they were labeled as “Made in Cuba.” This triggered an investigation by the Canadian government into whether Wal-Mart’s subsidiary had violated the Canadian “blocking measure,” the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act, and the pajamas were soon returned to the shelves.

That action, however, triggered an OFAC investigation into whether Wal-Mart was in violation of the embargo. Caught in the middle, Wal-Mart's parent company in the U.S. issued an extraordinary public announcement that its Canadian subsidiary had deliberately defied its instructions to comply with the terms of the Cuban embargo, at which point both governments decided not to pursue the matter further.

While that resolved the legal and diplomatic issues, Wal-Mart was left with a public relations nightmare, summed up by one letter to the editor that appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. It read: "My voice is just a small one in the vast wilderness; I hope others will hear it and join in. I will not be shopping in Wal-Mart anymore. It is over pajamas. I feel if Wal-Mart wants to do business in my country, then it must follow our laws. We do not have a trade embargo with Cuba; the United States does. That is its right as a country and I honor its decision. But this is Canada and if you do business here then you go by the rules. Perhaps it is only a small thing, but it can grow to larger issues. The few cents I may save by shopping at Wal-Mart is not worth the price of knowing I must have American laws control me. There is more at stake here than a pair of pajamas. It's called integrity."

If the Glenfiddich Scotch really were deemed to be derived from Cuban-origin articles, then not only would it require a special license to be imported into this country. U.S. citizens, residents, companies and all their foreign-owned or controlled subsidiaries abroad would also be prohibited from purchasing, transporting or "otherwise dealing" in the product anywhere in the world under the letter of the law and regulations. One might well question, however, whether these

Differences in foreign policy can easily lead to the imposition of conflicting, and potentially irreconcilable, obligations on companies and commercial interests.

controls are enforced as rigorously as they are written. Clearly they are not.

It is well known that there is a wide gap between the letter of the law, the resources devoted to enforcement, and sometimes even the political will to pursue all but the most egregious sanctions violators. Enforcement is the weak link in all of OFAC's economic sanctions programs. The perception that Cuban and other sanctions programs are neither enforced uniformly nor as widely as intended greatly undermines the credibility of all U.S. sanctions.

One might also question the way agency resources are allocated to enforcing the cases that are pursued. Since OFAC began posting summaries of civil enforcement actions on its Web site in April 2003, 35 percent of the reports — 118 cases — involved the Cuban sanctions. These resulted in an average settlement or penalty of a little over \$5,000. This compares with only three such cases under the now-expired Taliban sanctions, settled

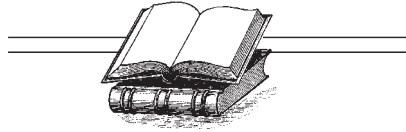
for amounts ranging from \$5,500 to \$10,000; one case under OFAC's Weapons of Mass Destruction Trade Control Regulations that led to a \$500 settlement; and one case under the Terrorism Sanctions Regulations that resulted in a \$2,925 penalty.

The World Has Changed

Traditionally, economic sanctions like those related to the Cuban embargo are foreign policy tools, used as much to express the U.S. government's political displeasure with the actions of the sanctions target as to actually affect the target's economy. As long as economic sanctions are confined to the foreign policy arena, the actual effectiveness and enforcement of the controls may well be secondary to the political statement made simply by imposing and maintaining a particular sanctions program.

Since the tragic events of 9/11, the world has changed. The tools that once merely augmented foreign policy objectives — such as asset/transaction blocking and blacklisting designated agents of sanctions targets — are being redirected. Economic sanctions are now among the primary tools being used to combat international criminality, such as narco-trafficking and terrorism. As such, the credibility of these programs, including their enforcement and their practical effectiveness, is more important than ever. Political statements alone are not sufficient to address these threats; nor are they adequate to deal with new types of sanctions targets that are not defined geographically.

The country can no longer afford to maintain failed sanctions policies that focus more on domestic politics than on achieving their stated aims, and expend resources addressing issues no more serious than cigars and the "Cuban Thistle Crisis." ■



BOOKS

Paranoia or Reality?

The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict between Iran and America

Kenneth M. Pollack, Random House, 2004, \$26.95, hardcover, 576 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOHN LIMBERT

This very readable and timely account of U.S.-Iranian relations has the great virtues of honesty and intellectual humility. When Ken Pollack, a former NSC director for Persian Gulf affairs, poses the question, "What is a reasonable U.S. policy toward Iran?" his frank answer is, "It beats the heck out of me."

But perhaps the book's key strength is its emphasis on history, the crucial element in understanding a country where competing versions of a very long and tragic past weigh heavily on the present. In the early chapters Pollack provides a very competent survey, moving from the formative role of the constitutional movement of 1906-1911 through the rise of Reza Shah and the tripartite (British-Soviet-American) occupation of Iran during World War II. After giving us a well-researched discussion of the Azerbaijan crisis of 1946 and American backing for the 1953 royalist coup, he carefully traces how Iran's oil bonanza of 1973 shattered the country's social and economic fabric and contributed directly to the revolutionary turmoil

*Given Pollack's grasp
of the country's
rich history, it is
surprising he is so
dismissive of Iranian
suspicions of foreign
meddling.*



of 1978-1979. And he provides a most readable and coherent account of the progress of the Iran-Iraq War and of Iran's disastrous decision to continue fighting after 1982.

Given his obvious grasp of that long, checkered history, one might expect Pollack to be sympathetic to Iranians' tendency to see foreign meddling as the cause of their nation's many problems. Instead, he dismisses such suspicions as paranoid conspiracy theories, ignoring the extent to which they have been rooted in truth — as Pollack might have discovered had he used a greater range of sources. Although he cites some excellent secondary works by Iranian and foreign writers, including Shaul Bakhash, James Bill and Mark Gasiorowski, I could find no evidence that he looked at Assadollah Alam's *The Shah and I*, an invaluable insider's account (by the shah's minister of court) of the

last years of the Pahlavi dynasty.

As Alam and others have documented, it seems likely that Mohammed Reza Pahlavi truly believed that his hold on power depended on pleasing his foreign patrons. (He was so insecure that he even capitulated when an American ambassador solicited a campaign contribution for President Nixon's re-election campaign.) Not only had the British helped install his father, Reza Shah, in 1921, then joined with the Russians to expel him in 1941 — but, along with the Americans, they had engineered a coup d'état and his victory over Prime Minister Mossadegh in 1953. (Curiously, I could find no reference to the 1921 British role in Pollack's account.) The lesson was clear: the shah owed his throne to the foreigners, who could dispose of him whenever he displeased them. Iranian popular opinion exaggerated this dependence, but it was still real — a fact unappreciated by most foreign observers at the time.

There has already been much discussion on the Internet about Pollack's use of the phrase, "the nation's traditional xenophobia." In fact, one key to Iran's survival as a distinct nation through centuries of invasion and upheaval has been its readiness to accept foreign ways and give them an Iranian flavor. Herodotus pointed to this practice among the Persians 2,500 years ago, and historians have long noted how Iranians enthusiastically accepted Islam (a foreign transplant) and used



their talents in government, science and the arts to create a universal Islamic civilization that broke the limitations of the religion's original ties to the Arabian Peninsula. More recent observers have noted how Iranians have applied their talents to cinema and the Internet and have, in the process, created something unique and powerful from these imported media.

So we should be wary of authors who seek an explanation for the excesses of the revolution and the Islamic republic in phrases such as "xenophobia" and "Shia martyr complex." Such explanations may not be entirely wrong, but they usually distort more than they clarify, implying that certain unchanging personal character traits will always explain Iran's political decisions.

One also wishes that Pollack had resisted the temptation to write about how the Iranians need to "change their behavior." Such phraseology connotes tutelage and suggests that we are dealing with a group of unruly children. If we and the Iranians are ever going to have serious conversations about our mutual concerns — a course of action the author urges — the first step will be to end the use of such phrases.

Such caveats aside, this book is a good addition to the discussion of the difficult U.S.-Iranian relationship. The reader should, however, read it in combination with other accounts by authors with more first-hand knowledge of the subject.

Ambassador John Limbert, the president of the American Foreign Service Association, served in Iran both as a Peace Corps Volunteer and an FSO in the 1970s (and was one of the diplomats held hostage from 1979 to 1981).

The Lessons of Jazz

Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War

Penny M. Von Eschen, Harvard University Press, 2004, \$29.95, hardcover, 329 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOHN BROWN

Between 1956 and 1978, at the height of the Cold War, the State Department sponsored U.S. musical groups to perform American music in socialist countries and the Third World. These "jam-bassadors" included some of the most talented musicians our country has produced: Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman, as well as lesser-known but still important performers such as Marion Williams and Randy Weston.

In her splendid *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*, Penny M. Von Eschen, an associate professor of history and African-American studies at the University of Michigan, tells the story of this all-too-rare example of American cultural diplomacy. She focuses on individual "goodwill" tours, the first being the excursion of Dizzy Gillespie's band through the Middle East and the last, trumpeter Clark Terry's tour (with his Jolly Giants) from Athens to India. She brings these events engagingly to life, using a variety of sources, including interviews and archival materials. (Regrettably, however, the book lacks a bibliography and its index is not entirely adequate.)

Von Eschen's book is much more than just a narrative history of the tours. She also makes important points about cultural diplomacy. Among her well-documented theses, two stand out. First, she says that "to

export American culture was to export its hybridity, its complexities, its tensions and contradictions." Second, she observes that "the export of America's conflicts and fissures was critical to the success of cultural exchange."

She reveals the tours' tensions in fascinating (and at times hilarious) detail, noting that stiff State Department personnel were often ill at ease with the *bons vivants* performers. Then there were the conflicts among the musicians themselves (who were expected to be on their best behavior, of course): During Benny Goodman's tour of the Soviet Union in 1962, *Life* magazine reported, "trumpeter Jimmie Maxwell went on a hunger strike, singer Joya Sherrill couldn't sleep, and alto sax Jerry Dodgion took sick for days."

The list of "ironies" (a favorite Von Eschen word) goes on and on, starting with the fact that the mostly black musicians were representing a country that discriminated against them. ("Forget Moscow," said Louis Armstrong. "When do we play in New Orleans!") Jazz was already largely passé in the U.S. but admired in many other countries, whether as art, entertainment, or both. (Of course, to the White Citizens Council of Alabama in 1956, jazz was a "plot to mongrelize America.") Even though foreign audiences loved the tours, the program was underfunded and criticized by Congress throughout its existence. Finally, the participants in what was billed as a goodwill program were for the most part unaware of what their government was doing to undermine the leadership of some of the very countries they visited.

Perhaps the greatest irony of the State Department tours — and the key to the jazz diplomats' success — was that they, "as vibrant representatives of the nation, refused to be exclusively defined by it." They were



Von Eschen notes that the key to the jazz diplomats' success was that they, "as vibrant representatives of the nation, refused to be exclusively defined by it."

successful — i.e., appreciated and remembered by audiences abroad — not because they made foreigners march to geopolitical decisions made in Washington, but because they represented “hope and possibility, not a smug claim to a perfected democracy.” The lesson to be drawn from Satchmo and his confreres, Von Eschen concludes in her memorable book, is that our government, whose official actions overseas have bred so much hostility, sorely needs “a jazz approach to foreign policy.” ■

John Brown, a former Foreign Service officer, compiles a daily "Public Diplomacy Press Review," available free by requesting it at johnhbrown30@hotmail.com.

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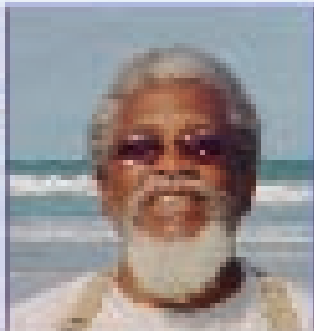
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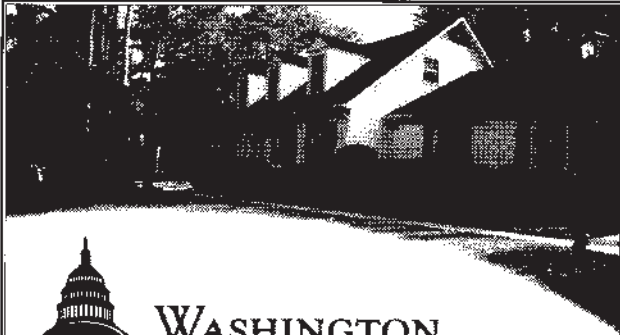




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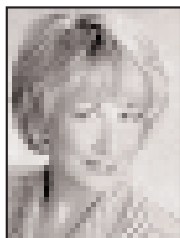
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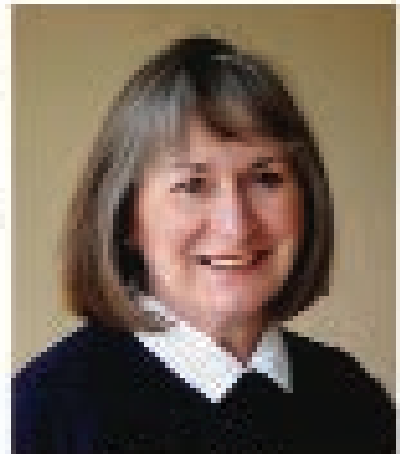
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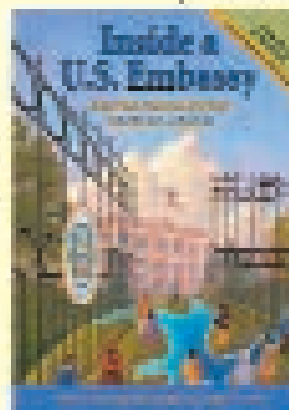
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REFLECTIONS

Sports Day

BY JOSH GLAZEROFF

The cliché about being alone but never really alone holds true in Zimbabwe. Serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer and science teacher in a small rural school, I was a visitor and a guest immersed in a different world with its own set of rules, not always to my liking. The work was challenging, an exercise in communicating across cultures — like figuring out how to teach the concept of electricity in the home to students who slept under thatch roofs and collected water in buckets from the nearest stream. Those students did not have the chance to experience the world outside their country, or really even outside the nearest town. Any school outing or event meant a break from the everyday.

Sports Day at Njedza Secondary School meant a friendly competition in track and field, soccer, volleyball or netball with neighboring schools. Our 60-plus students trekked from their homes on foot, some from five miles away, for the ride to the other schools. They wore school uniforms, button-down shirts and shorts or skirt, the only uniform some had. They brought the most “sporting” shoes

Josh Glazeroff left his teaching career to join the Foreign Service in 1997. He has served in Santo Domingo, Durban and Washington, D.C., where he currently works as a career development officer in the Human Resources Bureau. The stamp is courtesy of the AAFSW Bookfair “Stamp Corner.”

Whether we won or lost, a field trip was an adventure to be savored.



they could find, in a few cases going barefoot for better performance on the athletic fields.

Not having a bus, the school rented a big, loud, dirty flatbed truck ordinarily used to carry dozens of sacks of maize at harvest time. Picture it: six teachers and all those students climbing into the cab and stacking themselves in orderly rows on the back of the truck for the two-hour-long morning journey down rural dirt roads. Don't ask how we managed to get the sports equipment on, too! The students, if not the teachers, were no less energetic for being cramped. For them, this was an adventure to be savored.

Our school had the fewest students, so every victory was historic, while all losses were blamed on our small size. Eventually, hours in the hot sun running from field to field wore out even the most effervescent of our charges. As the sunlight faded and the day drew to a close, we would gather for the ride back to school with dusty uniforms and tired smiles.

On one trip the other schoolteachers chose that moment — with the

students lined up and the equipment stowed — to head to the local bar for a couple of beers. Thinking of the students' treks to their homes and my own hope for a bath when we finally got back to school, I became angry. I yelled to the driver to leave my carousing colleagues behind. But because he was waiting for them to bring him his own beer, he was in no hurry, and I was left to struggle with my own frustration (and perhaps my lack of cultural understanding).

For me, there was no excitement in seeing another small town. I could (and did) visit the capital city without any concern for the distance or the cost. Yet for many on that truck, the day could very well be one of only a few treasured trips, a precious opportunity to escape the routine and spend a whole day laughing and playing with their friends.

Half an hour later, after a bit more jostling and a couple of beers purchased for the road, we finally departed. As we made our way back, with everyone exhausted by the heat and excitement of the day, the students suddenly started to sing. It was a moment of transcendence: 60-plus voices called out into the silence and darkness of the rural areas with a message of strength and happiness and camaraderie. I realized that I, too, was experiencing something out of the ordinary, even extraordinary. How many times would I have a day like this one?

I leaned back and looked up at the stars. How did I get to be so lucky? ■

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • March 2005

Annual Report 2004

2004 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

NO MONKEY BUSINESS; LOTS OF CROWING

On Feb. 9, we ended the Year of the Monkey and began the Year of the Rooster. So it is time to end monkey business and crow about our achievements. This year we worked for you both retail and wholesale. We helped individuals caught in a system that sometimes makes "Dilbert" look benign; we supported others whose cases involved matters of principle; and we defended our profession against those who imagine that the men and women of the Foreign Service, like some unruly curs, need "taming" or "bringing to heel."

PRIDE OF PROFESSION

AFSA continued its zero-tolerance policy for cheap shots at the Foreign Service. We defended our consular colleagues in a July 2 letter to the *Washington Post*; we argued in a June 2 letter to the *Federal Times* that the American people deserve qualified and experienced representatives as ambassadors; and we countered the punditry nonsense that accompanied the nomination of Dr. Rice in November 2004.

Our AFSA award ceremony in June 2004 was our time to crow. We honored our best seniors, mid-levels, entry-levels and specialists who demonstrate creativity and the guts to ask the tough questions. We also honored the eminent scholar/diplomat Ambassador Richard Parker for his "lifetime contributions to American diplomacy." Judging by the hostile fire they drew from some commentators, our 2004 dissent awards were definitely on the mark.

HONOR OUR VETERANS

Retirees are our veterans. We have been pressing to ensure they receive the respect they deserve for honorable service to our country. We have waged this fight on many fronts. We are calling for desperately-needed improvements in how the State Department's retirement offices deal with

both active-duty and retired employees. Miscalculations, badly-worded letters and ham-handed recovery efforts are just part of the problem: the real issue is a lack of responsiveness, transparency and competence. We have been advising victims and have been relentless in keeping these issues in front of the director general and the chief financial officer, who, to their credit, are taking on these complex and sensitive problems.

GRIEVANCES

AFSA continues to provide first-rate legal counsel to members — at no cost. In certain cases where a grievant required outside counsel, AFSA provided financial assistance. AFSA also reacted decisively when USAID thought it could ignore decisions of the Foreign Service Grievance Board to reinstate employees the agency had wrongly separated. In response to agency stonewalling, AFSA both supported the grievants' legal cases and urged the Grievance Board to assert its authority as the final voice.

TRAVEL

AFSA officers have spent a lot of time on the road speaking to the public and our constituencies. The president and State vice president addressed entry-level generalists and specialists at EUR, EAP and AF regional conferences, where we reviewed AFSA's positions and undertook individual counseling. We also spoke to public audiences and the press in Texas, New Jersey, Massachusetts and California about how the Foreign Service serves the American people around the world.

LEGISLATION: A HARD SLOG

After our 2003 success with passage of the law allowing Foreign Service employees

serving overseas to benefit from tax exemptions on the sale of a principal residence, our legislative program ran into difficulty. For the second consecutive year, the State

authorization bill — containing personnel provisions of great interest to AFSA members — stalled in the Senate. Our efforts to push the process forward ran into a wall of partisan politics.

At the top of our to-do list remains the issue of pay equity — securing the equivalent of Washington base pay (locality pay) for all Foreign Service personnel. The gap reached 16 percent in 2005 and the collective penalty is about \$110 million. We have been adamant on this issue, and will remain so.



John Limbert

A PERSONAL NOTE: AFSA NEEDS YOU

I will be leaving the presidency this summer, and have been proud to serve our colleagues. AFSA is fortunate in having a devoted professional staff which publishes the *Foreign Service Journal*, advises members on grievances, handles congressional relations, deals with the press, administers our awards, assists retirees and keeps our accounts. We are also fortunate in having a committed membership on whom our ultimate success depends. It is our members who make AFSA powerful and effective. Your courage means we can honor our dissenters; your generosity nourishes our all-important funds; your writing talents make the *Journal* lively. Your willingness to communicate also keeps us honest and focused on what matters. Please stay involved in AFSA: serve on the Governing and Editorial Boards when you're in Washington; be an AFSA representative at post; visit us when you are here on consultations; and please tell me (limbert@afsa.org) what we are doing right or wrong. □

AFSA Annual Report 2004

YEAR IN REVIEW

January

Throughout the year, AFSA assists hundreds of Foreign Service employees with a wide range of concerns, including administrative issues, grievances, discipline cases, security and OIG investigations, and security clearance cases.

The fifth and final installment of the *Foreign Service Journal's* series profiling the various foreign affairs agencies spotlights the Voice of America and the International Broadcasting Bureau.

A \$15,000 perpetual scholarship in memory of Col. Richard D. Hallock is established by his widow, former FSO Myriam Johnston Hallock.

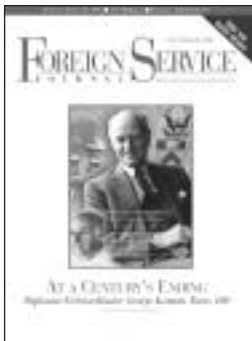
AFSA hosts a luncheon for the National Association of Retired Federal Employees president and legislative staff to discuss retirement and benefit issues of common interest.

AFSA joins the Coalition for Effective Change to follow federal employee issues including proposals on reforming the Civil Service.

February

AFSA President John Limbert attends the Africa Bureau's entry-level conference in Windhoek, Namibia, meeting with individual members throughout the event.

Participants in an AFSA Foreign Service Elderhostel program presented by Arizona retirees visit the American consulate in Nogales, Mexico.



For its symposium celebrating George Kennan's 100th birthday, Princeton University hands out several hundred copies of the *Foreign Service Journal's* February issue profiling Ambassador Kennan.

President John Limbert sends a letter to Assistant Secretary for Resource Management Christopher Burnham expressing AFSA's concerns about retiree annuity overpayment cases.

AFSA arranges for 12 retiree speakers for George Mason University's professional studies program to explain the critical role of the Foreign Service in defending U.S. interests around the world.

March

AFSA/USAID successfully negotiates a resolution of a grievance resulting in the payment of many thousands of dollars to a member who was improperly denied a Difficult-to-Staff Service Differential.

AFSA arranges a panel for five senior retiree speakers to explain Foreign Service careers to some 250 students at Georgetown University.

AFSA's FCS VP attends an annual meeting of Senior Commercial Officers in the Czech Republic and holds individual member meetings.

AFSA/State proposes a solution to the problem of the employment status of Eligible Family Members at AIT Taiwan. AFSA's advocacy prompts the department to add these family members into the Family Member Appointment program, enabling them to accumulate retirement and TSP benefits.

AFSA/State writes to the department concerning the poor service to retirees from the retirement office, especially regarding annuity calculation procedures.

AFSA State VP and AFSA staff participate in the annual Office Management Specialist Conference at the Foreign Service Institute.

April

President John Limbert meets with Assistant Secretary for Resource Management Christopher Burnham to discuss the operations of the Retirement Accounts Division in Charleston and the issue of overpayment-of-annuity cases, which has forced some retirees to pay back thousands of dollars.

State management agrees with AFSA's proposal that henceforth, "gap memos" inserted into Official Performance Files of Foreign Service reservists called to active-duty military service will note that the employee is on active military duty.

AFSA/USAID hosts a highly successful brown-bag lunch, meeting with members and answering their questions and concerns.

AFSA/FAS hosts a presentation on the Office of Personnel Management's core leadership competencies.



MIKKELA THOMPSON

AFSA awards 22 Academic Merit and Art Merit Awards totaling \$23,500 to 20 students.

Acting AFSA President Louise Crane and FCS VP Chuck Ford host a reception in honor of new US&FCS Director General Rhonda Keenum Newman.

AFSA sends a letter to M/MED concerning late settlement of bills for costs incurred during pre-entry physicals. M/MED revises its procedures to speed up processing.

May

The AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony is held on May 7 as part of Foreign Affairs Day. Secretary of State Colin Powell presides over the solemn ceremony honoring the men and women of the Foreign Service who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving their country abroad.



MIKKELA THOMPSON

AFSA staff and officers take 49 retirees to Capitol Hill to meet with 32 members of Congress during AFSA's "Day on the Hill" for discussions on issues affecting both active-duty and retired Foreign Service members.



MIKKELA THOMPSON

AFSA/USAID succeeds in persuading USAID management to offer an Immediate Benefit Plan to its employees. This plan helps cover immediate expenses, such as mortgage payments, funeral costs and final medical bills, among others, in case of the death of an employee.

AFSA Annual Report 2004

YEAR IN REVIEW

Participants in the AFSA Elderhostel program presented by Colorado retirees visit NORAD's facility inside Cheyenne Mountain.

AFSA holds a meeting with management and HR representatives from FAS and FCS to discuss a range of issues, including the need to tie individual performance to agency goals.

After three years of negotiation, AFSA and FCS agree to new policy guidance on overseas assignments.

AFSA/State completes negotiations on the 2004 promotion precepts. New provisions include removing time-in-grade requirements for tenured generalists seeking promotion from FS-4 to FS-3, and requiring leadership and management training as a prerequisite for promotion by 2007. The department agrees with AFSA that henceforth, Meritorious Service Increases will be given to the top 10 percent of those ranked for promotion but not promoted.

AFSA President John Limbert writes to USAA protesting the company's decision to exclude from membership Foreign Service personnel from USAID, Commerce and Agriculture.

At AFSA's behest, Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios and Commerce Secretary Donald Evans send letters to USAA advocating extension of USAA services to Foreign Service employees of FAS, FCS and USAID.

June



MIRKELA THOMPSON

AFSA holds a press conference, "Extreme Diplomacy in Iraq," at which AFSA President John Limbert and former

Baghdad consular officer Beth Payne exhort Congress to approve the full State Department authorization request in view of the dangerous working conditions in Iraq and other posts.

AFSA meets with Diplomatic Security officials for a briefing on security for embassy staff in Baghdad.

The June 24 AFSA Awards ceremony is held in the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room. AFSA presents four awards (\$2,500 each) for constructive dissent as well as awards for extraordinary contributions to effectiveness, professionalism and morale. The Lifetime Contribution to American

Diplomacy Award is presented to Ambassador Richard Parker.



JAY MALLIN

The *Foreign Service Journal* features an interview and profile of Lifetime Contribution

to American Diplomacy Award winner Amb. Parker.

AFSA USAID successfully lobbies USAID management to rethink the expense involved in moving offices to contiguous spaces, the so-called "re-blocking" plan. The resulting savings of millions are thereby freed up for use in more pressing programs.

At AFSA's insistence, the State Department agrees to revise the FAM to require DCMs to serve as mentors for all entry-level employees, not just generalists.

AFSA's ongoing effort to recruit new FAS members includes a recruitment luncheon held during the Global Lite Conference.

The AFSA/State team successfully negotiates new procedures for the operation of reconstituted promotion boards.

Two new-hire DS agents receive increases in their salaries because of AFSA intervention on their behalf to show they were hired at the wrong step level.

July



AUSTIN TRACY

AFSA's National High School Essay Contest winners are honored at the 2004 Youth Awards Ceremony.

AFSA President John Limbert and staff meet again with Assistant Secretary Burnham to talk about AFSA's continuing concerns about retiree overpayment cases.

AFSA proposes that all specialists should receive a certificate, signed by the Secretary of State, upon tenure.

August

A total of \$65,425 in AFSA financial aid awards for the 2004 fall semester is bestowed on 63 Foreign Service youth for undergraduate study. The total financial aid scholarship amount to be bestowed for the 2004-2005 academic year is \$130,300.



JOSH

AFSA/USAID argues successfully before the Foreign Service Grievance Board that an untenured USAID employee should be reinstated. However, the struggle between the FSGB and USAID continues as USAID refuses to implement the Board's judgment.

At AFSA's request, the State Department grants retirees unescorted access to the Federal Center Credit Union branch at SA-44.

AFSA and DACOR host one of many champagne receptions held throughout the year for graduates of the Job Search Program at FSI.

AFSA/State meets with Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Francis X. Taylor and staff to discuss, among other topics, assignments, contact reporting and procedures for suspension of security clearances and the subsequent investigations.

Letters from AFSA are sent to all executive directors of regional bureaus to remind them of the requirement to pay overtime to specialists and untenured officers. AFSA urges State management to send an ALDAC message on the topic, which it does.

September

AFSA State VP Louise Crane and AFSA staff appear on Federal News Radio's "Fed Talk" program to discuss Foreign Service issues, including the lack of locality pay for Foreign Service members serving abroad.

AFSA President John Limbert addresses 75 attendees at a D.C. Elderhostel program on the Middle East. The program set a new record for attendance among the 54 programs presented to date by D.C.-area retirees.

AFSA sends a memo to the FAS administrator encouraging a rigorous domestic review process to help ensure agency management has the necessary structure in place to meet cost-cutting targets.

AFSA attends four Combined Federal Campaign kick-off events to promote the

AFSA Annual Report 2004

YEAR IN REVIEW

AFSA Scholarship Fund (#2422) and the Fund for American Diplomacy (#2460).

AFSA arranges for four senior retirees to explain the role of U.S. diplomacy to audiences at Johns Hopkins University's "Evergreen" professional education program.

The AFSA State VP speaks to CDA assignment officers and career development officers on the topic, "Assignments from the Point of View of the Client," as part of the briefing for incoming CDA staff members. She stresses the necessity for the system to be as transparent as possible.

October

Retirees in Houston put on the first Foreign Service Elderhostel program there. Speakers include former AFSA president John Naland, now principal officer in Matamoros, Mexico. The program marks the 100th put on by AFSA retirees nationally since AFSA Elderhostels began in 1996.

AFSA/State joins in a discussion with the State Department's HR Bureau regarding management's proposal for a career development model for generalists. The model would require generalists to fulfill certain conditions in order to cross the senior threshold.

AFSA/FAS holds a "coffee hour" for new FAS lateral entrants to educate them on AFSA's role.

AFSA President John Limbert and staff meet with the new director of HR/RET, David Dlouhy, to discuss retirement office procedures.

John Limbert meets with Foreign Service retirees, students, university and civic leaders and the media during trips to Houston and San Angelo, Texas.

AFSA/State protests the department's practice of paying no salary to employees for a pay period when the Resource Management office cannot ascertain where an employee is located.

Election process for new AFSA Governing Board, 2005-2007 term, begins with a call for nominations.

November

AFSA press conference is held for the Foreign Affairs Council to roll out the task force report, "Secretary Colin Powell's State Department: An Independent Assessment."

The AFSA president sends a strong letter of support to the chairman of the Foreign Service

Grievance Board in reference to USAID's refusal to abide by the FSGB's final decisions in two cases.

AFSA writes to all regional assistant secretaries urging that they note the denial of Washington-level salaries for Foreign Service employees serving overseas in the briefing papers they prepare for Secretary-designate Condoleezza Rice as one of the challenges they face in their efforts to execute administration policy.

AFSA introduces a new retiree page on its Web site (www.afsa.org/rtvppage.cfm).

AFSA and FCS negotiate a new standard operating procedure to govern the notification of the decision to close overseas posts and/or designate a position to be left unfilled, including new procedures to insure that officers affected by these decisions receive fair and equitable consideration by the assignment panel.

December

During 2004, AFSA hosts 23 recruitment luncheons for incoming Foreign Service employees. An astonishing 91 percent of these employees join AFSA as full members in 2004. Membership stands at 12,852 at year's end.

AFSA welcomes 35 new lifetime members in 2004.

AFSA Public Affairs efforts place 82 articles advocating increased support for U.S. diplomacy in leading media outlets such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Associated Press*. AFSA statements were broadcast on NBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, Fox News, NPR, Bloomberg and AP-TV, among others.

AFSA arranges a record 442 speaker programs in 2004 to explain the importance of U.S. diplomacy to 26,500 attendees in 41 states and Washington, D.C.

AFSA presents the Sinclair Language Awards (\$1,000 each) for achievement in the study of hard languages and their cultures to five employees for the study of Azerbaijani, Dari, Greek, Japanese and Tagalog (2).

AFSA meets with a representative of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations to discuss the

Capital Security Cost Sharing Program and its impact on FAS, FCS and USAID.

The *Journal* sets an all-time record for total annual advertising revenue, topping \$493,000. In spite of a relatively difficult year for the advertising industry, the *FSJ* increased gross ad sales by more than 10 percent.

AFSA arranges for Saudi specialist Stephen Buck, a retired FSO and current *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Board member, to explain the key role of the Foreign Service in the war against terrorism on CNN's prime-time program "Now."

AFSA participates in the development and approval of an Iraq recognition package of benefits which would give FCS officers benefits and recognition equal to those afforded to employees from other foreign affairs agencies working in Iraq.

At AFSA's urging, State management agrees to allow reconstituted promotion boards for those employees omitted from consideration by the regular selection panels due to an administrative error.

Several Foreign Service employees in Africa lose several thousands of dollars after thieves copy their checks, then counterfeit and cash them. AFSA urges Citigroup to agree to reimburse the employees and cooperate with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security in its investigation. Citigroup agrees.

AFSA holds three champagne receptions for retiring members, and welcomes over 125 new and rejoining retired members.

By year's end, over 150 libraries and over 120 college career centers around the country have AFSA's book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, on their shelves. More than 15 universities have adopted the book for courses on diplomacy and international relations. A revised printing is released for 2005.

At the end of 2004, AFSA has 159 Post Representatives at our embassies and missions overseas. They serve as a liaison with AFSA and pass on the views of members at each post from all the foreign affairs agencies.



AFSA Annual Report 2004

Governing Board

From left: Sheldon Daitch (IBB Rep), Louise Crane (State VP), Bill Crawford (FCS Rep), Danny Hall (Treasurer), Michael Conlon (FAS Rep), John Sullivan (State Rep), Laura Scandurra (FAS VP), Chuck Ford (FCS VP), Bill Carter (USAID VP), John Limbert (President), Tuli Mushingi (State Rep), Ted Wilkinson (Retiree Rep), David Reuther (Retiree Rep), Jim Wagner (State Rep) and Stan Zuckerman (Retiree Rep).

Not Shown: Scot Folensbee (State Rep), Tex Harris (Secretary), Elizabeth Horst (State Rep), George Jones (Retiree VP), Todd Kushner (State Rep), Tom Olson (USAID Rep) and Gil Sheinbaum (Retiree Rep)



AUSTIN TRACY

The Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board



AUSTIN TRACY

From left: Kent C. Brokenshire, William W. Jordan, Laurie Kassman, Stephen W. Buck, Carol A. Giacomo, Governing Board Liaison Ted Wilkinson, Kay Webb Mayfield, Virginia F. Smith, Editorial Board Chair Hollis Summers and Christopher L. Teal. Not pictured: Patricia "Pati" Chaplin.

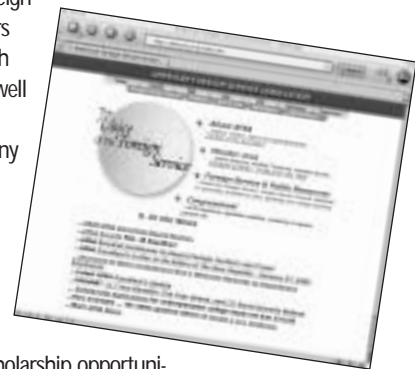
www.afsa.org

ON THE WEB at
www.afsa.org

The total number of visitors to the AFSA Web site increased steadily in 2004. The AFSA Web site is providing Foreign Service members with content-rich information as well as serving as a resource for many non-Foreign Service visitors. Our site continues to draw a large number of students interested in scholarship opportunities, internships, AFSA's national essay contest and the *Inside a U.S. Embassy* book.

The Foreign Service community looks to the AFSA Web site to provide information on labor-management issues such as current negotiations and employee guidance, legislative updates and AFSA membership. The *Foreign Service Journal* is also attracting a larger online audience, with nearly 20,000 visitors in the last quarter of 2004 and its own new address, www.fsjournal.org.

AFSA encourages all members to sign up for the AFSANET Listserv at www.afsa.org. The e-mail service provides weekly updates on items of interest to the foreign affairs community.



AFSA Annual Report 2004

Staff

Finance and Administration



AUSTIN TRACY

From left: Controller Kalpna Srimal, Accounting Assistant Steven Tipton and Executive Director Susan Reardon.

- Accounting
- Financial Management
- Staff Recruitment & Supervision
- Building Administration
- Board and Committee Support

Outreach Programs



AUSTIN TRACY

From left: Congressional Affairs Director Ken Nakamura, Executive Assistant Austin Tracy, Retiree Liaison Bonnie Brown, and Director of Communications Tom Switzer. Not pictured: Professional Issues Coordinator Barbara Berger and Elderhostel Coordinator Ward Thompson.

Public Outreach

- Speakers Bureau
- Elderhostel
- Memorial Plaque
- Foreign Service Day
- Diplomats Online
- AFSA Awards
- *Inside a U.S. Embassy* Book

Congressional Affairs

- Lobbying
- Tracking Legislation
- Hill Testimony
- Grassroots Campaigns

Retiree Services

- Member Inquiries
- Retiree Newsletter
- Retiree Directory

Foreign Service Journal



AUSTIN TRACY

From left: Associate Editor Shawn Dorman, Editor Steve Honley, Senior Editor Susan Maitra, Advertising & Circulation Manager Ed Miltenberger. Inset: Business Manager Mikkela Thompson. Not Pictured: Art Director Caryn Suko Smith.

- Editing
- Writing
- Design
- Advertising
- Subscriptions and Sales

Member Services



AUSTIN TRACY

From left: Membership Representative Cory Nishi, Database/Web Associate Meijing Shan, Administrative Assistant Ana Lopez and Membership Director Janet Hedrick.

- Member Recruitment
- Post Reps
- Insurance Programs
- Address Changes
- AFSANET
- AFSA Web Site

Labor Management



AUSTIN TRACY

From left: Grievance Attorney Josiah Slotnick, Office Manager Christine Warren, General Counsel Sharon Papp (in front), Labor Management Attorney Zlatana Badrich, Grievance Attorney Neera Parikh, Labor Management Specialist James Yorke. Not pictured: Senior Labor Management Advisor Doug Broome and Law Clerk Lindsay Kay.

- Negotiations
- Protecting Benefits
- Grievance Counseling
- OIG & DS Investigations
- Member Inquiries
- Informing the Field

Scholarships



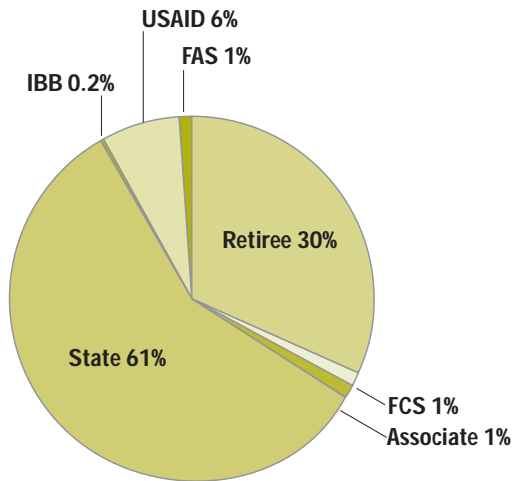
AUSTIN TRACY

Scholarship Administrator Lori Dec.

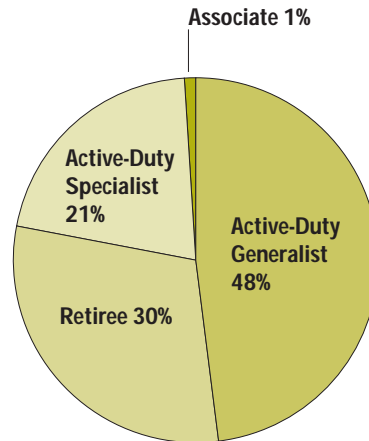
- Financial Aid
- Merit Awards
- Art Merit Awards
- Committee on Education

AFSA Annual Report 2004

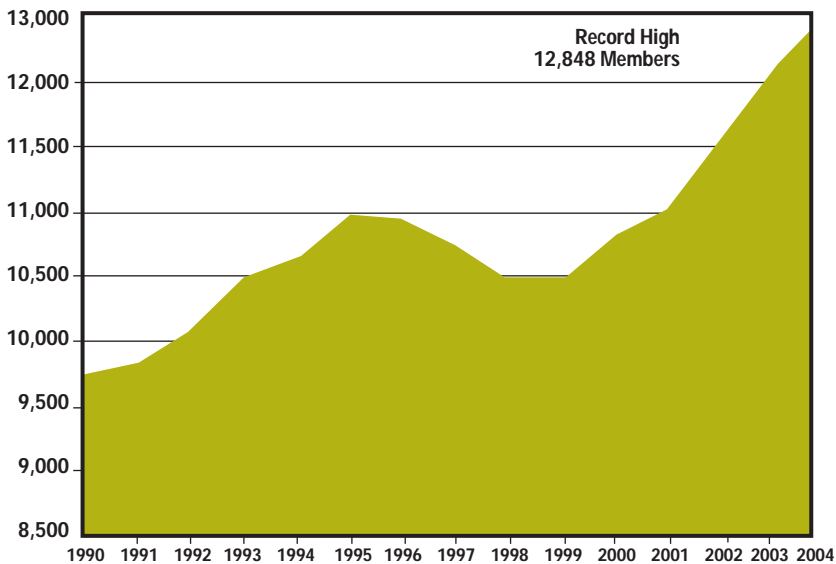
Membership by Constituency



Membership by Function



Total Membership 1990 to 2004



AUDIT REPORT for AFSA

AFSA's audited financial statements for 2004 will be available on the AFSA Web site (www.afsa.org) in May.

Budget in Brief

INCOME	\$	EXPENSES	\$
Dues	2,035,000	Membership Programs.....	1,144,626
Foreign Service Journal Advertising	493,000	Foreign Service Journal	781,652
Insurance Programs.....	25,000	Legislative Affairs.....	179,183
Legislative Action Fund	55,000	Professional Programs and Outreach	440,587
Other	69,000	Scholarships	358,952
Professional Programs and Outreach	326,430	Administration.....	441,382
Scholarships	363,840	Contribution to Endowment and Reserves.....	20,888
TOTAL	3,367,270	TOTAL	3,367,270

AFSA Annual Report 2004

AFSA BY THE NUMBERS IN 2004

15:	.....Number of one-week programs on the Foreign Service presented to public audiences by AFSA retirees through Elderhostel in 2004
35:	.....New Lifetime Members
82:	.....AFSA articles and letters placed in newspapers nationwide
125:	.....AFSANETs sent in 2004
442:	.....AFSA speaker programs nationwide
900:	.....Total attendance at AFSA Foreign Service Elderhostel programs, matching peak year of 2001
1,161:	.....New active-duty and retired members
6,114:	.....Subscribers to the AFSANET Listserve
12,852:	.....AFSA members at year's end
15,405:	.....Dollar amount raised in the 2004 Scholarship Fund appeal
23,475:	.....Dollar amount raised in the 2004 Fund for American Diplomacy appeal
23,500:	.....Academic and art merit award dollars bestowed on 22 Foreign Service high school seniors
26,500:	.....Attendees at AFSA speaker programs nationwide
49,544:	.....Dollar amount donated to the AFSA-PAC
130,300:	.....Scholarship dollars bestowed as part of AFSA's need-based Financial Aid program to 63 Foreign Service children
493,000:	.....Dollar amount of advertising in the <i>Foreign Service Journal</i>

Benefits of AFSA Membership

LABOR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS: AFSA negotiates the regulations affecting employees' careers. We work to make the Foreign Service a better place in which to work, live and raise a family. Our network of AFSA post representatives provides on-site assistance to overseas members.

CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY: AFSA is your advocate before Congress on issues affecting the careers of active members and the annuities of retired members.

OMBUDSMAN: We work to resolve member problems with pay, allowances, claims, annuities, health care, and many other issues.

VOICE OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE: As the professional association of the Foreign Service since 1924, AFSA works to strengthen our profession and is ever vigilant for threats to the career Foreign Service.

GRIEVANCE REPRESENTATION: AFSA's legal staff provides hands-on assistance with grievance proceedings when your rights are violated.

OUTREACH: AFSA communicates the views of the Foreign Service on professional issues to the news media and directly to the general public.

FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL: Our monthly magazine offers provocative articles that will keep you current on developments in the foreign affairs profession.

AFSA NEWS: AFSA's monthly newsletter, inside the *Foreign Service Journal*, highlights issues affecting your daily life.

AFSA WEB SITE: Our online member area includes a member directory and member forums.

AFSANET: Regular e-mail updates keep you current on issues of importance to the Foreign Service community.

LEGAL SERVICES: We offer free legal advice and representation on employment issues, including security and OIG investigations, discipline cases and security clearance proceedings.

INSURANCE PROGRAMS: You can choose among competitively priced insurance programs designed for the Foreign Service community, including professional liability insurance, accident, dental and personal property/transit.

RETIREE SKILLS DATABASE: Our online database lists AFSA members who are available for jobs, college teaching, and speaking engagements in a wide variety of areas.

AFSA SCHOLARSHIPS: Approximately 100 merit-based and financial-need scholarships are granted every year to Foreign Service family members. Since 1926, AFSA has awarded approximately \$4,450,000 in scholarships.

AFSA AWARDS: This unique awards program honors constructive dissent and outstanding performance.

RETIREE NEWSLETTER: This bimonthly <http://www.afsa.org/newsletters.html> newsletter is exclusively for retired members.

DIRECTORY OF RETIRED MEMBERS: This invaluable annual listing, by state, of contact information for retired members is provided to all retired AFSA members.

MAGAZINE DISCOUNTS: AFSA members are eligible for special discounts on subscriptions to major foreign affairs journals.

ESPRIT DE CORPS: We work to build a sense of common cause and professional pride among all Foreign Service members: active and retired; officers and specialists; entry-level and senior.

AFSA MEMORIAL PLAQUES: Established in 1933, and maintained by AFSA, these plaques in the Truman Building lobby honor members of the Foreign Service who lost their lives overseas in the line of duty.

AFSA Core Values

The American Foreign Service Association

Established in 1924

MISSION

To make the Foreign Service a more effective agent of United States international leadership.

VISION

We work to make the Foreign Service a better-supported, more respected, more satisfying place in which to spend a career and raise a family.



– **RESPONSIVENESS:** We listen to our members and actively promote their interests.

– **EFFECTIVENESS:** We act with a sense of urgency, get results and make a difference.

– **INTEGRITY:** We demonstrate openness, honesty and fairness in everything we do.

– **EFFICIENCY:** We carefully expend our resources where they can have maximum impact.

– **COMMUNITY:** We foster teamwork, respect each other, and enjoy our time together.

– **COURAGE:** We encourage responsible risk-taking in order to achieve results.

– **PATRIOTISM:** We are faithful to the grand and enduring ideals that gave our nation birth.

– **EMPOWERMENT:** We trust each other to give our best efforts guided by these core values. □

Welcoming a New Secretary

An Unprecedented Meeting with AFSA

On Jan. 5, several weeks before her confirmation as the new Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice met with representatives of AFSA — nine State active-duty AFSA Governing Board members, including President John Limbert and State Vice President Louise Crane — and colleagues from the Foreign Affairs Council, led by former AFSA president Ambassador Thomas Boyatt.

Amb. Limbert used the opportunity to make two key points: first, that the 11,000 Foreign Service employees at the Department of State are a loyal, talented and dedicated group of men and women who work for her and the commander-in-chief. “I urge you to make the best use of the talents and experience of this unique group,” he said. Second, he asked for her support on the key issue of “salary equity.” He pointed out that for members of the Foreign Service, moving from Washington to an overseas assignment today means taking a 16 percent pay cut.

In her remarks, Dr. Rice said she is

well-acquainted with AFSA and knows its importance, and wants to open a channel of communications. She said she is open to suggestions on personnel issues.

Dr. Rice emphasized her determination to make the best use of the Foreign Service, noting that now is a time to mobilize this enormously talented group in the interest of great causes. Her intention, she said, is to look to the people in the State Department not just to execute foreign policy but to shape it and give it the intellectual structure it needs.

Dr. Rice underlined her concern about the lives of the people who serve in the difficult places. She also emphasized her concern about the pay issue and security. Her first department briefing, she added, was on management issues. She said she shares Secretary Powell’s view that employees must be well-trained and that they must have access to the tools they need. She also promised, in return, to demand excellence from her people.

Focus on Diplomacy

The opening statement presented by Dr. Rice in her Jan. 18 confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee included the following remarks:

“In all that lies ahead, the primary instrument of American diplomacy will be the Department of State, and the men and women of its Foreign and Civil Services and Foreign Service Nationals. The time for diplomacy is now. ... We know from experience how hard they work, the risks they and their families take, and the hardships they endure. We will be asking even more of them. ... They will need to develop new skills, and rise to new challenges. This time of global transformation calls for transformational diplomacy. ... I will personally work to ensure that America’s diplomats have all the tools they need to do their jobs — from training to budgets to mentoring to embassy security. I also intend to strengthen the recruitment of new personnel, because American diplomacy needs to constantly hire and develop top talent. And I will seek to further diversify the State Department’s workforce.”

A Warm Reception for Secretary Condoleezza Rice

On Jan. 27, Condoleezza Rice received a warm welcome as she arrived for her first day on the job as Secretary of State. “This is a really remarkable time in our country’s history,” she told the crowd of several hundred. “The president has set forth a really bold agenda for American foreign policy and the State Department has got to be in the lead in this period in which diplomacy will be so important to solidifying the gains of the last few years and to pressing forward an agenda for a freer and more prosperous world.”

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AFSA Reaches a National Audience

BY TOM SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

A FSA enhanced its national outreach efforts in 2004 aimed at broadening and deepening public support for funding for diplomatic readiness. One of our most effective outreach elements is our **speakers program**, which deployed 442 Foreign Service speakers in 2004. They explained the importance of U.S. diplomacy for American national interests to more than 26,000 attendees in 42 states and Washington, D.C.

Audiences ranged from world affairs councils and universities to community-service organizations, “town meetings,” churches and high schools. Amb. Grant Smith, Stephen Buck and David Reuther elicited glowing reviews from attendees at the prestigious Johns Hopkins “Evergreen” adult education series for their presentations on U.S. policies in South Asia and the Middle East. These speakers also described the attractions and challenges of careers in the Foreign Service, including insightful considerations of family issues.

AFSA speakers addressed other topics including: counterterrorism; public diplomacy; U.S. initiatives in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia; United Nations peacekeeping; international crime, migration and environmental issues; and human rights.

All AFSA speakers were provided with talking points and issue updates from AFSA, as well as promotional material for AFSA’s excellent book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*.

Speakers stressed the critical role of diplomacy in advancing America’s vital security and economic interests around the globe. They also encouraged audience members to contact their congressional representa-

AFSA speakers explained the importance of U.S. diplomacy to more than 26,000 attendees in 42 states and Washington, DC.



tives to request increased funding for U.S. diplomatic readiness. Moreover, speakers reached out to talented youth — especially minority-group members — to encourage them to consider Foreign Service careers.

AFSA also held major **press conferences** to highlight the vital role of the Foreign Service. A June press conference, titled “Extreme Diplomacy,” featured AFSA President John Limbert and former Baghdad consular officer Beth Payne, who described their dangerous working conditions during recent tours in Iraq and appealed to Congress to approve the full State Department authorization bill. A November AFSA press conference presented the Foreign Affairs Council’s assessment of Secretary Colin Powell’s stewardship of the State Department since 2001. Both events generated heavy media coverage.

AFSA’s **media outreach** efforts were also intensive in 2004. We placed, either directly or through AFSA retirees, 83 op-eds, letters-to-the-editor, articles and press releases advocating increased public and congressional support for U.S.

diplomacy in leading media entities including the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Government Executive*, *Federal Times*, Associated Press, NPR and CNN. Our motto is: “No cheap shot against the Foreign Service will go unanswered.”

Among our most successful efforts was AFSA’s annual awards ceremony held at the State Department in June, which attracted several network TV cameras and some 20 journalists from major media. The result was in-depth treatment of this event via some 32 media outlets nationwide, including the *Washington Post*, NBC, CNN, ABC, the Associated Press and NPR.

AFSA outreach efforts have placed heavy emphasis on the vital role played by U.S. diplomacy in the struggle against terrorism. Since 9/11 we have deployed more than 450 AFSA retiree experts on Middle East and South Asian issues for speaker and media programs nationwide. We have held frequent discussions regarding AFSA issues with the more than 35 diplomatic correspondents attached to the State Department, as well as with editors and bureau chiefs of national media based in Washington.

These outreach programs have promoted three important AFSA goals: broadening the Foreign Service constituency through outreach to the public; enhancing public awareness of global affairs and of the key role of the Foreign Service and diplomacy; and activating the AFSA retiree constituency by involving it in significant programs that draw on their backgrounds and skills in telling our story to audiences nationwide.

If you want to be involved with AFSA outreach, contact me at Switzer@afsa.org, or call toll-free (800) 704-2372, ext. 501. □



AFSA — Foreign Affairs Council Press Conference.

AFSA Urges Better Treatment of Retirees

BY BONNIE BROWN, RETIREE ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR



Imagine settling into retirement with confidence that your pension will provide for your old age and that of your spouse. Then you receive a letter from the State Department informing you that a miscalculation has been made; your monthly pension will be reduced and you will have to return the overpayments. If the adjustments are modest, you can absorb the costs; but if they involve tens of thousands of dollars, say hello to the poorhouse and good-bye to your retirement security.

Retiree after retiree came to AFSA with this problem during the past year. Most retirees did not understand how the errors in calculation had been made. Others, particularly those elderly in reduced circumstances and in ill health, were frightened and unsure about the future. None felt that the department had given them sufficient information to understand exactly what had happened or how to contest the demand for repayment. As AFSA became involved, we not only saw the human dimension, but encountered a dysfunctional system. The matter of overpayment claims raised questions about the department's processes for making retirement calculations, communicating with retirees and using a transparent and fair procedure for granting waivers and compromise of claims.

After a recent audit of retirement accounts revealed errors, the department sent out an estimated 200 letters to retirees, explaining that they had been overpaid, their monthly annuities would be reduced and they would be required to refund the overpayments. To our knowledge, most errors involved the murky area of Social Security payments or entitlements when the new retirement system went into effect, as well as disability benefits and child survivor annuities. Most often, retirees explained that they had relied on department calculations and counsel and had expected the department to coordinate with the Social Security Administration.

Their reliance was misplaced. The department made mistakes and there was no internal procedure for correction or periodic review. Nevertheless, retirees were held strictly accountable. If the department decided a retiree "should have known" of an error, it held him or her accountable not for a simple mistake, but for a department lapse compounded by the passage of time, sometimes as much as 15 or 20 years.

Many retirees reported difficulty getting information from the department. (They had received a perfunctory initial notice and a follow-up letter stating the amount to repay, with limited information about how to document financial qualifications and pursue a request for waiver.) In many instances, their letters, e-mails and telephone calls went unanswered. At times they received contradictory communications. Months elapsed. Retirees told AFSA about the stress of the situation, not knowing how they would be able to get along financially and worrying about the effect of the prolonged waiver and grievance process on their health and financial planning. In the absence of adequate department guidance, AFSA advised annuitants to use the well-developed Office of Personnel Management financial qualifications form and waiver guidelines as a basis for requesting waivers.

In denying waiver requests, the department took a hard line and gave scant explanation. Noting that retirees are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of their retirement calculations, it found them at fault, saying they should have known of an error, even one the department had made years before. It found no financial hardship in instances when a retiree had to use funds put aside to provide care for a family member with a progressive illness or when repayment reduced the amount available for living expenses to a bare-bones level.

The length of time the department took to resolve cases also took its toll. By the time some retirees had begun the grievance

process and the department indicated it would consider a compromise, they were already exhausted by the process and in ill health.

Why does the department treat retirees this way? When it saw the results of the retirement accounts audit, why didn't it work with affected retirees in a humane, timely and transparent manner? Most affected retirees owed modest amounts and were willing to make the repayments, so the process could have been an easy one for all concerned. So why — given its ongoing failure to verify and correct miscalculations — did the department ask a few individuals to make catastrophic repayments? Like Police Inspector Javert in *Les Misérables*, the department was relentless in its pursuit of these retirees.

Responding to members' concerns, AFSA staff and labor-management lawyers have worked in a number of ways to assist retirees, helping them with financial showings, waiver requests, grievances and efforts to compromise claims. AFSA has sent letters on behalf of retirees to State management, and has had numerous meetings to discuss overpayment with State Department officials, including the director general, the chief financial officer, the head of the Retirement Accounts Division in Charleston, staff and the new director of the Retirement Office.

What should be done now? As a matter of equity and good conscience the department, in the longest-running overpayment cases, should limit its repayment requests to the amount overpaid during the last three years. Second, building on some recent improvements made in RAD and HR/RET, the department should commit the personnel, financial resources and information systems needed to create a retirement system that works for, rather than harasses, its retirees. They deserve no less for their many years of loyal service. □

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS UPDATE

In the waning days of the 108th Congress, lawmakers cleared and sent to the president two bills that affect the benefits of all federal employees, including the Foreign Service.

◆ **S. 2657** (signed by the president on Dec. 23, now designated as PL 108-496) establishes a voluntary program for federal employees and annuitants to purchase supplemental dental and vision insurance as part of their Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan. Like the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program, it is fully funded by the employee. However, the federal government can leverage its purchasing power and lower the costs for improved dental and vision benefits. Currently, federal health plans are viewed by many to have minimal dental and health benefits. The chief sponsors for S. 2657 were Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii).

◆ **H.R. 4324** (signed by the president on

Dec. 21, now designated as PL 108-469) allows Thrift Savings Plan participants to elect or modify their contributions in any pay period instead of having to wait until the designated semiannual “open season.” This bill will help new employees by eliminating current waiting periods for enrolling in TSP, and also provides programs to improve the investment and retirement planning skills of TSP participants. Sponsors of these positive changes were Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) on the Senate side, and Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.) in the House of Representatives.

◆ The \$388 billion omnibus spending bill (signed by the president on Dec. 8, now designated as PL 108-447) includes a 3.5-percent pay increase for both military and non-military federal employees. Members of the Senior Executive Service and Senior Foreign Service can receive the full increase based upon their income ceilings and the discretion of their agency. Because Foreign Service at the FS-1 level and below who are posted abroad do not qualify for locality pay, they will not receive that portion of the

increase and will see their income further disadvantaged for serving abroad.

On Jan. 4, the new 109th Congress convened. The president submitted his FY 2006 budget request in early February, and a new legislative session is under way. At the top of AFSA’s legislative agenda for 2005 is the expansion of “locality pay” for non-senior Foreign Service employees in the field. We are also carrying forward objectives — such as restoration of prescriptive relief, reduction in the low-ranking “quota,” and implementation of a PIT buy-back of contributions toward retirement — that we did not achieve during the 108th Congress.

There are many issues that AFSA has tackled based on concerns raised from the field, such as the change in the tax code on the sale of a principal residence, the amending of the Virginia Constitution to allow Foreign Service personnel outside the state to vote in state and local elections, enhanced ability to send children to school away from the local post facility, and many other provisions. More input is always welcome. Please contact AFSA to share your concerns. □

WORLDSPACE DONATES 15 RADIOS TO AFSA

AFSA Passes Along Satellite Radio Donations to Posts

AFSA received a donation of 15 satellite radios from WorldSpace Satellite Radio in December, and is passing them along to posts around the world that can make best use of them. To date, AFSA’s Advertising Manager Ed Miltenberger has sent eight receivers to CLO offices at posts chosen with the help of the Family Liaison Office. These posts are: Conakry, Malabo, Bangui, Khartoum, Monrovia, Praia, Yaounde and N’Djamena. The radios have been donated along with a one-year subscription to the radio service. Five radios will be donated by the AFSA membership department to the five AFSA representatives who help sign up the most new AFSA members

during the current membership drive.

We all heard about Howard Stern’s highly public defection to satellite radio in 2004. Satellite radio is gaining popularity as an alternative to commercial radio in the U.S. and now, overseas as well.

WorldSpace Satellite Radio was founded in 1990 “to create a new form of electronic media using satellites to broadcast directly to people across the globe” (as stated on www.worldspace.com). In June 2004, WorldSpace introduced a multinational satellite-radio subscription plan for \$10 per month.

WorldSpace Subscription Operations Director Bill Rock explains that his company chose to donate radios to AFSA because “the feedback we have received from Foreign Service members, NGOs and Peace Corps Volunteers, as well as U.S. and British military personnel abroad, has been great. We wanted to get more people exposed to the product and felt that AFSA could find places around



Susan Reardon and Bill Rock at WorldSpace.

the world where the WorldSpace service and receivers would get the most use. We have made similar donations to military service personnel abroad.”

WorldSpace currently rules the satellite radio market outside the U.S., but other companies, including Sirius Satellite Radio, will be trying to get in on the international market. So, for those of you in far-flung locales who have trouble getting along without Diane Rehm, country music or even Howard Stern, a satellite radio might be your answer. □

HAIL AND FAREWELL

AFSA Governing Board Change

In December, AFSA bid farewell to IBB Representative to the Governing Board Laurie Kassman, who has left the Foreign Service to take a position at the Middle East Institute as Director of Communications and Outreach. We are pleased to report that she will remain on the *Foreign Service Journal's* Editorial Board as a public member. Replacing Laurie as IBB rep is Sheldon Daitch, a Foreign Service engineer. He is reachable at sdaitch@ibb.gov.

AFSA Staff Change

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Ward Thompson for helping to create and ably directing the first AFSA Foreign Service Elderhostel programs for seven years. Ward is now fully retired from AFSA, although he has agreed to let us call on him for the Elderhostel and AFSA Speakers circuits on occasion.

We are happy to announce that Janice Bay has taken over from Ward as AFSA's Director of Elderhostel Programs. Janice retired from the State Department in 2003 after a 36-year Foreign Service career including assignments as Deputy Assistant Secretary in EB, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in HR and tours in Germany, France, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. She can be reached at (202) 944-5508 or at bay@afsa.org.

Foreign Affairs Day Set for May 6

Foreign Affairs Day, the annual homecoming for retired State Department employees, will be held this year on Friday, May 6. There will be a ceremony at the site of the AFSA Memorial Plaques.

More details will follow in April. Mark your calendars now so you can join AFSA for this important event. The guest list includes everyone invited last year and everyone newly retired. To make sure you're on the list, e-mail foreignaffairsday@state.gov.

AFSA's Day on the Hill 2005

On Thursday, May 5, AFSA will again lead a group of retired Foreign Service personnel to visit their senators and representatives on Capitol Hill. Please join AFSA in support of the Foreign Service and American diplomacy. Look for more information in next month's *AFSA News* and in your Foreign Affairs Day mailing. □

V.P. VOICE: STATE ■ BY LOUISE CRANE

Condi, the Foreign Service will walk on hot coals for you if ...

Some months ago I devoted one of these columns to locality pay, saying it is AFSA's Job Number One. It still is. Once the White House announced Dr. Condoleezza Rice's nomination to replace Secretary Powell, I wrote to the director general and to the assistant secretary for each regional bureau. I asked each of them to list the lack of locality pay for Foreign Service employees overseas in the new Secretary's briefing books as one of the major challenges they face. I urged them to put into their briefing books a note about the inequity of requiring members of the Foreign Service and their families to give up 16 percent of their pay when they go overseas, a gap between Washington salaries and overseas salaries that grows more punitive year by year.



Then, when the director general announced a town meeting in December, I told HR I would like to be the first person he called upon in the Q&A session. They agreed. I asked the director general for his position on locality pay. He replied that he is for it.

The first briefing for Dr. Rice was on management issues. Security, personnel, budget, buildings. I was assured by several who were present that locality pay was raised and the case was made for it to be an urgent priority. And yes, the fact that our CIA, NSA and DIA colleagues all receive Washington pay while overseas was mentioned.

Then, AFSA asked for a meeting with the Secretary-designate and it was scheduled. In our preparatory meetings with AFSA President John Limbert, the active-duty State members of the AFSA Governing Board insisted that for this meeting, the sole, single issue was asking her to get locality pay for everyone overseas. Locality pay was the one issue Ambassador Limbert mentioned in his introduction. AFSA understands that the new Secretary is well aware of the importance of this issue for the Foreign Service. She knows the gap only grows. She knows overseas service is harsher than ever. In her meeting with AFSA, she acknowledged the sacrifice our families are making accompanying us overseas or staying behind when 500 of us serve at one of the 15 unaccompanied posts.

What else can we do? AFSA will be writing to all U.S. ambassadors asking them to make a forceful case for locality pay when members of Congress, as well as staff delegations, visit.

AFSA is now updating our legislative agenda, and the top priority remains locality pay. We are currently calculating how much salary and how much in TSP you lose while overseas during an average career. It is a considerable sum. Now add to that the lack of employment for spouses in a dual-income, two-401(k), two-Social Security society and it is clear we are asked to bear a significant sacrifice.

What can you do? When a codel or staffdel visits your post, get this item on the agenda. At home, most of us are residents of the Maryland and Virginia suburbs and our congressional representatives are very senior members of both parties in each house of Congress. It will not hurt us to remind them that considerable numbers of their constituents are making a great financial sacrifice to serve our country, one which they are in a position to correct.

It won't be easy, but we must keep up the pressure. Even if rebuffed this year and next, we must keep reminding everyone of the sacrifices we willingly make for our country. Locality pay should not be one of them. □

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FOR THOSE WHO have lived in Chile or have any family ties, please join us at the Chilean-American Foundation in supporting charity work in Chile. For more information log on to www.chileusfoundation.org or contact us by e-mail at caf@chileusfoundation.org

GRADUATE RESEARCH

A DOCTORAL CANDIDATE at the University of Cambridge, U.K. (now resident at George Washington University), is conducting research on the involvement of Thailand in the Vietnam War, the Secret War in Laos, and conflicts in Cambodia. The student is interested in contacting federal gov. employees who worked in SE Asia, or whose job responsibilities included that region; i.e. Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam during the years 1962-1975. Please contact: Sutayut Osornprasop at e-mail: so220@cam.ac.uk.

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