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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

Exploring the New Frontiers of Diplomacy and Development

By SUSAN R. JOHNSON

The conventional diplomat is fast becoming an endangered species, one that may be teetering on the brink of irrelevance. It has become almost trite to talk about the new technologies, new players, new issues and the increasingly blurred lines between foreign and domestic policies — or whether today's foreign ministries and assistance agencies are relics of the past or the engines for a renaissance of diplomacy and development.



The forces for change are real; so is the need for radical reform of Foreign Service structures, culture, recruitment, training and professionalization. Yet while the debate over how best to reinvent the Foreign Service to meet the needs of the 21st century has generated a slew of articles, studies and books, today's active-duty diplomats have been relegated to the margins of the discussion.

If foreign affairs professionals want to be part of the process of developing the right blueprint, we must engage in it seriously. We can start by answering the question: What are the new and emerging requirements for effective diplomacy and development? Only through an open, inclusive discussion of those requirements can we intelligently ad-

dress the professional development and training requirements for diplomats and development officials.

Old-style diplomacy, with its venerable conventions and structural rigidities, continues to have some role in execut-

ing formal, state-to-state business, but its space is narrowing and its importance diminishing. To paraphrase a point Daryl Copeland makes eloquently in his book, *Guerrilla Diplomacy*, the new frontiers of diplomacy and development lie primarily in understanding and managing the effects of the colossal forces collectively known as globalization.

Yet paradoxically, all too often that phenomenon generates insecurity, splinters politics and deepens cultural divides. What was once fixed and predictable is becoming diffuse and dynamic. The business of diplomacy is done less and less in banquet halls, receptions and closed meeting rooms and more and more in barrios, villages, cafés and chatrooms.

Foreign Service recruitment is now finally on a fast upswing as we play catchup for years of below-attrition hiring. AFSA is proud to have actively supported the development of the "Foreign Affairs Budget of the Future," a blue-ribbon panel report issued in October 2008 by the American Academy of Diplomacy. It documents the need for addi-

tional State and USAID positions, both to carry out core diplomatic functions and to provide a training float. Attention is now rightly turning to the equally important related issue in which we all have a stake: updated and expanded professional development and training for our Foreign Service across the board.

AFSA supports and will participate in a new AAD study titled "Foreign Affairs Leadership in the 21st Century: Recalibrating the Diplomatic Profession." We plan to contribute to the development of this study in several ways: by acting as a conduit to our members to keep you informed about the issues that the study addresses; by seeking your input and perspectives on what sort of training and professional development you think is needed, and how and when it should be provided; and by working to see that the study considers what the new requirements are and what general training and professional development principles apply across the Foreign Service.

The world we knew is gone. The new world is increasingly complex and dynamic, and is coming at us fast. Is recalibrating the diplomatic profession enough, or do we need to be reinventing it?

If you would like to participate in the ongoing discussion of this issue and contribute to AFSA's participation in the AAD study on foreign affairs leadership in the 21st century, please contact me at President@afsa.org. All comments and suggestions are welcome. ■

Susan R. Johnson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.



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LETTERS

The Sky's Not Falling

Regarding AFSA's objection to the Senate's proposed excise tax on high-cost health plans ("Priorities and Surveys," January *AFSA News* Retiree VP column), I wonder if it polled its membership to find a substantial majority against the proposed excise tax. If so, I regret having missed the opportunity to register my own opinion, for I am apparently out of sync with my fellow AFSA members.

If it did not consult the membership, then I find it unacceptable that the AFSA Governing Board decided to join other unions in putting its narrow, parochial interests ahead of what I regard as the greater national goal of extending health coverage to all.

And believe me, those interests are *very* narrow. After spending some time on the Office of Personnel Management Web site (www.opm.gov), I found that fewer than 1 percent of the nearly 500 available family plans (matching my personal circumstances) would currently be subject to the excise tax. And for the 17 national plans that AFSA members are most likely to find suitable, the average total premium (government plus individual contributions) in 2010 is \$5,277 for singles and \$11,950 for families. These figures are well below the excise tax thresholds of \$8,000 and \$21,000 that would go into effect in 2013, if the legislation is passed.

Judging by the column in the November 2009 *Retiree Newsletter*, whose

conclusion is reiterated in the January *FSJ*, AFSA believes the sky is falling. This is based on a faulty assumption that premiums will immediately begin increasing at a projected 8-percent annual rate. In fact, the thresholds are adjusted upward by only 3 percent beginning in 2014.

Using the OPM figures, I calculate that it will not be until 2019 that the annual cost of the average national single plan reaches \$8,000, by which time the threshold will have risen to \$10,400. And the cost of the average family plan won't hit \$21,000 until 2022, when the threshold will have risen to \$29,900.

But if those assumptions are sustained through 2022, health costs will constitute more than 31 percent of our economy. Do we not believe — do we not consider it an absolute national priority if we are to remain economically competitive — that we must succeed in slowing, if not reversing, the growth of health costs relative to the rest of the economy?

Apart from the apparently very shaky factual basis upon which AFSA justifies its opposition to excise taxes, I'm particularly dismayed that it would want to obstruct this very viable way to finance the extension of health care to all Americans — even if it hits a small handful of us in the pocketbook.

Many of us have spent the greater part of our careers living in countries where no one goes bankrupt as a result of medical mishaps, some of us in

other developed countries where life expectancy is higher than ours and health costs a fraction of ours. If we're as exceptional a nation as our politicians constantly proclaim, then surely we can find some way to provide health care for all at less than \$21,000 per family or \$8,000 per individual.

I would very much like the Governing Board to justify its lobbying objective, both in terms of verifying that it was consistent with member preference and in terms of factual foundation. This is close to a membership-deciding situation for me. A *Journal* subscription is much cheaper than annual dues.

Brent Schaeffer

FSO, retired

*Gaborone, Botswana and
Hendersonville, N.C.*

Better Times for Public Affairs

I thought that Alexis Ludwig's December Speaking Out column, "Restore State's Office of Public Communications," was spot on. It certainly brought back memories of better times for public affairs: Upon returning from an overseas assignment back in the 1970s and 1980s, one could contact the Bureau of Public Affairs and volunteer for speaking engagements and interviews with the media.

Because Seattle was my home leave address, I volunteered for venues in Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Whether it was a Kiwanis dinner, a radio call-in show or a newspaper interview, my au-

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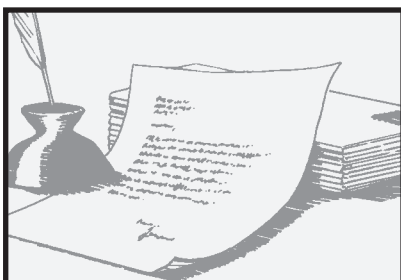
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LETTERS

dience always seemed interested in my experiences at posts where I had served. More importantly, however, on many occasions the people I met in the Pacific Northwest would remark that they were pleased to discover that one of their own was a member of the Foreign Service. They had always heard that only the sons and daughters of the East Coast elite were in the Service.

In recent years, the managers of State's public affairs program appear to have developed the attitude that it's okay for the Foreign Service to present America's policies to the world, but its members should be kept away from the American public. That may be why there is no budget to do public affairs the old-fashioned way.

David Reuther
FSO, retired
Fairfax, Va.

Remembering John Leavitt

I would like to inform readers of the death of John H. Leavitt, a colleague and friend to many of us in the Foreign Service community.

John died on Dec. 31 in New Hampshire at the age of 91. We knew him mainly from his 15 years of service at U.S. embassies in Tehran, Athens, Ankara and Tel Aviv during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Whether at a country team meeting, on the tennis court, at a diplomatic reception or at the bridge table, John was a formidable partner and opponent. He was also an excellent friend.

My wife, Anne, and I met John more than 40 years ago while serving in Ankara. There was a great difference in our respective ages: John had been a Royal Air Force bomber pilot — his targets included the battleship *Tirpitz* and the Eagle's Nest in Berchtesgaden — while I was still in diapers. There

was an even greater difference in our ranks: John was head of a very large and active CIA station, while I was a green third secretary on my first assignment with State. Somehow those differences did not matter. John and his wife immediately befriended us and included us in their family's many adventures. We remained close friends until his death.

At John's request, mourners ended his funeral service with a lively rendition of the British World War II song, "Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye." That was a classy exit for a very classy public servant, and a wonderful person.

James A. Williams
FE-MC, retired
Arlington, Va.

USAID Needs Language Training, Too

Thank you for the December President's Views column addressing Foreign Service readiness, especially the language shortfall.

I am a new FSO with USAID and have noticed that many USAID positions are not language-designated. I agree with AFSA President Susan Johnson that language proficiency is critical to the success of every Foreign Service member, since we all share some level of diplomatic duty and representation. For example, I am a technical officer who can expect to interact with government officials and folks in civil society.

I encourage AFSA to support the creation of more language-designated positions for USAID (accompanied by language training at FSI), in addition to what the association is already supporting for the State Department.

Palak Shah
FSO, USAID
Foreign Service Institute
Arlington, Va. ■



CYBERNOTES

A Thoughtful Survey

In the University of Pennsylvania's latest "Global Go-to Think-Tank Rankings," released Jan. 28, the Brookings Institution came in first among more than 6,300 think-tanks evaluated worldwide. The annual report, which began in 2006, places London-based Chatham House first among think-tanks outside the U.S.

James G. McGann, assistant director of the university's International Relations Program and director of the university's Think-Tanks and Civil Society Program, compiled the results from a global survey of 300 scholars and experts. The panel nominated and

ranked nearly 400 organizations.

"Policymakers in the legislative and executive branches of government throughout the developed and developing world face the common problem of bringing expert knowledge to bear on governmental decision-making," says McGann. "I am confident that the international experts group and peer nomination and selection process that was constituted for this study has enabled us to create the most authoritative list of high-performance think-tanks in the world."

Here is a sampling of the leading think-tanks for 2009 in various categories:

- Brookings Institution (top think-tank in the world)
- Fraser Institute (Canada and Mexico)
- Chatham House (Western Europe)
- Carnegie Moscow Center (Eastern and Central Europe)
- Fundación Getulio Vargas (Latin America)
- Carnegie Middle East Center (Middle East)
- South African Institute of International Affairs (Southern Africa)
- Japan Institute of International Affairs (Asia)

A copy of the full report is available for download at www.ony.unu.edu/.

50 Years Ago...

One may cite three reasons why the conduct of foreign relations has never been and is not today generally regarded in the United States, at least, as a genuine profession. The first is that throughout the greater part of our history foreign relations has, in contrast to the experience of most nations in the world, been essentially of secondary importance to the national interest. Secondly, our professional Foreign Service, developing under the shadow of this strong traditional attitude, has had to struggle against a built-in inferiority complex. We have instinctively felt that we were trying to corner the market on something that any Tom, Dick or Harry could do. This apologetic attitude has been aggravated by the third factor: the difficulty of describing clearly the professional nature of the profession. The conduct of foreign relations cannot be reduced to algebraic formulae or scientifically classifiable symptoms and remedies.



— From "Is the Foreign Service a Profession?" by James K. Penfield, *FSJ*, March 1960.

U.S. Iran Policy: Think Twice

In early February, on the eve of the 31st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, some voices urging caution and an alternate point of view were heard above the din of rocket-launchings and opposition demonstrations in Iran and the drumbeat of Western advocates of "regime change" and tough, new sanctions against Tehran in Washington.

The Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland issued the results of a study that shattered several widely held myths. PIPA sought to address the hypotheses that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad did not win the June 12 election and that the Iranian people



Site of the Month: A New Online Center for Foreign Policy Discussion

On Feb. 1, **WorldAffairsDaily.org**, a project of the *World Affairs* journal, debuted as an online center for discussion of foreign policy. As James Denton, publisher and editor of the online division, puts it, this is “a genuinely international site that allows any English-language reader to understand more fully the often unsettling events and complex issues that dominate the world’s headlines and debates.”

On a daily basis, this attractive and accessible site presents a selection of official statements, news stories and think-tank reports from around the world. Thus, on any given day, readers will be able to see how a particular story is reported and commented upon in, for example, the *Washington Post*, France 24, Al-Jazeera, RIA Novosti, the Islamic Republic News Agency, “Frontline,” Afghanistan’s *Quqnoos* Web site and other media. “We know there is a global community,” says Denton. “Our idea is to allow everyone to hear the conversations taking place in its various neighborhoods.”

In addition to selections from the bimonthly *World Affairs* journal, the site showcases American bloggers from across the political spectrum, as well as influential mainstream and dissident voices from Europe, the Middle East, Russia and elsewhere. The aim is to facilitate frank, real-time conversations among opinion-makers at home and abroad about the ideas and events that define our era. “If we succeed,” says Denton, “when our viewers go to www.worldaffairsdaily.org, they will be looking at a rough draft of history.”

World Affairs, the journal, is published in partnership with the American Peace Society. Issued intermittently since its founding in 1937, the publication was relaunched in a new format in 2008.

perceive their government as illegitimate. It also explored the assumption that the opposition represents a movement favoring a substantially different posture toward the United States.

The PIPA study analyzed multiple polls of the Iranian public from different sources conducted during the three months following the June election, including one poll conducted by WorldPublicOpinion.org, which is managed by PIPA.

The study did not prove that there were no election irregularities; but neither did it support the belief that a majority rejected Ahmadinejad. It also found little evidence to support the other assumptions. “Our analysis suggests that it would not be prudent to base U.S. policy on the assumption

that the Iranian public is in a pre-revolutionary state of mind,” says Steven Kull, director of PIPA.

The complete report is available online at www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/.

Another view of the situation in Tehran not often heard in the U.S. comes from veteran *New York Times* foreign correspondent, historian and Northwestern University professor Stephen Kinzer, who told a Philadelphia audience in late January that America’s ideal ally in the Middle East is not Jordan or a “new-and-improved” Iraq — and certainly not Saudi Arabia — but Iran.

Kinzer was interviewed by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (www.philly.com/inquirer/magazine). In his new

book, *Reset: Iran, Turkey and America’s Future*, due out in early June, he challenges the popular belief that it’s in our best interest to cultivate a weak, if not destabilized Iran.

Like Turkey, he argues, Iran shares long-term strategic interests as well as a democratic impulse with the U.S. Moreover, Kinzer points out, as a Shi-ite nation, Iran has a deep-seated aversion toward radical Sunni movements like the Taliban.

In his widely acclaimed 2003 political study, *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, Kinzer argued that the anti-American rage that consumes Iranian leaders was incited 50 years ago when the CIA destroyed the nation’s first — and so far, only — experiment with liberal democracy after less than a decade.

Democracy will flower again in Iran, Kinzer told the *Inquirer*, if only “the U.S. can resist the temptation to intervene and can allow events to take their own course.”

Google v. China: Tough Love?

A new row over Internet censorship in China erupted in mid-January with Google, Inc.’s announcement that it planned to stop censoring searches on its Google.cn network, and was considering leaving China altogether if the problem could not be resolved.

Only one of several disputes that have recently raised the temperature of Sino-American relations, this one has pushed the twin issues of cybersecurity and Internet freedom back up to the top of the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

In her Jan. 21 address on “Internet Freedom,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reiterated the Obama administration’s determination to “strengthen



Just as steel can be used to build hospitals or machine guns, or nuclear power can either energize a city or destroy it, modern information networks and the technologies they support can be harnessed for good or for ill. The same networks that help organize movements for freedom also enable al-Qaida to spew hatred and incite violence against the innocent. And technologies with the potential to open up access to government and promote transparency can also be hijacked by governments to crush dissent and deny human rights.

— Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, speaking on Internet freedom at The Newseum, Washington, D.C., Jan. 21, www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/135519.htm

global cybersecurity” and outlined a strategy for working with repressive regimes on the topic (www.state.gov). Clinton referred to the president’s appointment of a cyberspace policy coordinator, and the ongoing work of the State Department’s Global Internet Freedom Task Force, established in 2006, as well as initiatives at the United Nations and in other multilateral fora to put cybersecurity on the world’s agenda.

National Intelligence Director Eric Blair underlined the pervasive threat to critical computerized infrastructure in testimony to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in early February, emphasizing that both government and private industry networks are already “under persistent and subtle assault.” Among unclassified sources, the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ running compilation of cyberattack incidents, “Cyber Events Since 2006,” is an eye-opener (www.csis.org).

To examine the issues, no less than three sets of hearings have been scheduled: one by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which monitors human rights and the development of commercial law in the PRC; one by the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law

(“Technology Companies’ Business Practices in Internet-restricting Countries”); and one by the House Foreign Affairs Committee (“The Google Predicament: Transforming U.S. Cyberspace Policy to Advance Democracy, Security and Trade”).

Earlier, with an endorsement from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., called on Jan 14 for lawmakers to take up his “Global Online Freedom Act” — legislation that has been stalled in Congress for several years.

Meanwhile, Google has joined the National Security Agency in efforts to further analyze the cyberattacks from within China aimed at gaining access to the Gmail accounts of human rights activists that prompted the latest standoff with Beijing. The company is attempting to negotiate a resolution to the impasse as the stakes in China are large and complex. Beijing’s retreat in October on its “Green Dam” plan for mandatory built-in surveillance on all PCs sold in the country gives hope for progress (see “Story Not Available in China;” November Cybernotes). ■

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



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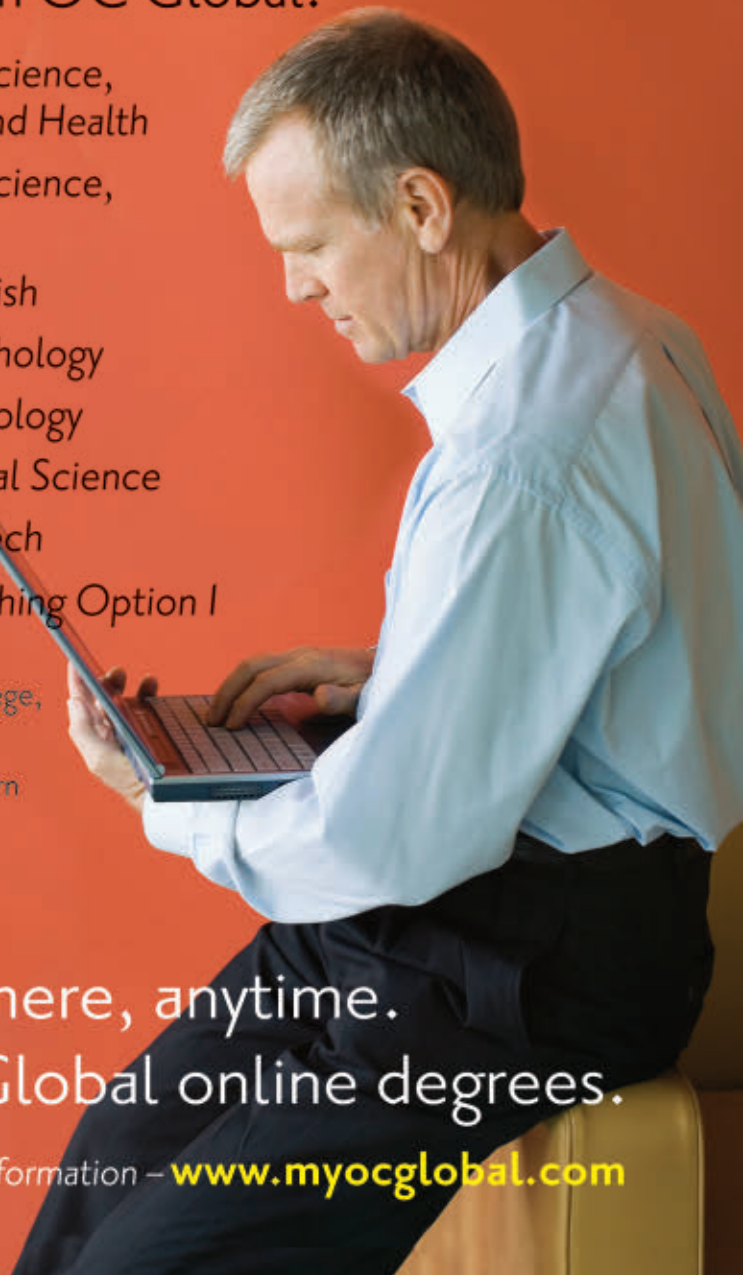
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SPEAKING OUT

A Real Reset Button for U.S.-Russian Relations

BY THOMPSON BUCHANAN

On March 6, 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton presented Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov with a token of her commitment to improving relations: a “reset” button. Although the word engraved on the gift, “peregruzka,” actually means “overcharge” or “overload” (depending on the context), Lavrov gamely pressed the button alongside Clinton.

Just four months later, however, Vice President Joe Biden used a speech to the Georgian Parliament to proclaim a U.S. commitment to bringing both Georgia and Ukraine into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In so doing, he may have intended to blunt attacks from Republicans by mimicking earlier denunciations of the “Evil Empire,” such as those former Vice President Richard Cheney and former President Ronald Reagan routinely delivered.

But while such rhetoric still resonates with much of the American public, it does not serve our larger national interests. At a minimum, the vice president reinforced the skepticism of nationalist Russians that America sincerely wants closer ties. He also complicated the task of our negotiators on a variety of critical issues by inducing Moscow to wonder who really speaks for the Obama administration.

Sec. Clinton performed deft dam-

It is imperative to devise a formula to insulate the Near Abroad from a damaging rivalry between Moscow and NATO.



age control, reassuring Russia that the United States still regards it as a great power and is not trying to use the newly independent states of the “Near Abroad” to contain it. But if this is some “good cop, bad cop” strategy for dealing with Moscow, it underestimates their intelligence and their visceral toughness. Speaking as a diplomat who spent nine years in Moscow, both before and after the collapse of communism, I can attest to the folly of assuming that we will get our way on these issues just because we’re the last superpower standing.

The Near Abroad and NATO

Words have consequences. Our pledge to help Georgia and Ukraine bring their military forces up to speed to qualify for NATO membership implies a commitment of support in the event of conflict with Russia in accor-

dance with Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. It also encourages the leadership of those nations to overestimate the support they can expect from the West for their own domestic agendas.

We may be sure that if Moscow perceives any state on its border to be closely allied with the West, it will do what it can to destabilize that state — and it is in a much better position to do so than we are to defend it. We are not dealing with the prostrate, relatively cooperative Russia led by Boris Yeltsin, but a bitter, much stronger power that feels the West took advantage of its weakness during the 1990s to extract concessions, without offering anything tangible in return. And it is fiercely determined to defend what it sees as its national security interests in the Near Abroad.

With this in mind, the Obama administration’s declarations and actions should explicitly reassure Moscow that:

- We are as concerned as Russia is about the prospect of instability in the region.
- The only interest Americans have in the Near Abroad is in promoting genuine sovereignty and prosperity.
- It is in Russia’s own interest to do everything it can to demonstrate that it wants to turn over a new leaf in relations with its neighbors.
- We want Moscow to play a major



role in ensuring peace and stability along its borders, and in helping us address major problems throughout the world.

The issue is not whether we support the sovereignty of these newly independent states. Of course we do. But let us identify the wisest ways to protect both their interests and ours.

Some Progress on Resetting Relations

A number of positive steps have been taken by both sides to “reset” relations, although each side’s understanding of what that means is rather different. For some Russians, at least, it means that the Americans should accept Moscow’s positions on a whole range of issues. And that is certainly not what we mean by the term.

A first positive step was President Barack Obama’s decision to rethink the policy of missile defense installations in Eastern Europe, one that lacked logic in the eyes of our NATO allies and many Americans. Inevitably, the Central Europeans accused us of giving in to Moscow, and the U.S. political opposition quickly labeled the administration “soft on national security.” But the decision contributed to the relative success of the U.S.-Russia summit in July 2009, and to Moscow’s more positive attitude since then.

On the issue of Iran, President Dmitry Medvedev has appeared more forthcoming than Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, accepting at least the possibility that sanctions may be necessary if Tehran continues to move ahead with its nuclear program. Moscow is also allowing U.S. troops and supplies to transit Russia in support of the war in Afghanistan, and

***Regrettably, Russia
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there has been some talk of broader cooperation there.

More discouraging, while the atmosphere for arms control negotiations has been positive, the two sides remain stymied by technical issues related to maintaining a balance of power — a consideration that has always bedeviled these talks.

Setting Realistic Priorities

Regrettably, Moscow shows no signs of abandoning its traditional belief that the only real security lies in domination of its neighbors. But that only makes it more imperative for us to devise a formula to insulate the border states from a damaging rivalry between Russia and NATO.

Formal arrangements that addressed the problem of conflicting territorial interests in the past — like Austrian neutrality, or the old Rapacki Plan for Central Europe — are probably non-starters. But we should at least try to come to some understanding with Moscow that the Near Abroad is not a sphere of influence for any single state, but a showcase for joint concern and mutual restraint.

It would be politically suicidal for the Obama administration to formally

withdraw its support for NATO expansion into Georgia and Ukraine, particularly in light of its decision to abandon plans to install missile defense systems in Central Europe. But we should at least stop talking about it and leave it to the Europeans to make clear that the idea is a non-starter.

At an appropriate moment in ongoing talks over some related issue like the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, perhaps our envoys could informally float the idea of neutralizing the Near Abroad as an area of competition, with a clear understanding that this would mean non-interference by either side in the domestic politics of the region.

Of course, we would need to persuade Tbilisi and Kyiv that their security would be best protected by an understanding between Moscow and Washington. Toward that end, Georgia, Ukraine and Russia should be encouraged to discuss their overall economic relations, which are in so many ways complementary and have been historically profitable.

As the dominant power in the region, Moscow should take the initiative in pursuit of better relations, removing obstacles it has imposed in areas like the import of Georgian wine and vegetables. Concessions are also needed on the part of both Gazprom and Kyiv regarding the transit of oil and gas through Ukraine.

In addition, the U.S. should provide targeted foreign assistance. The aim of these steps would be to demonstrate that there are concrete benefits to be gained from Russo-American cooperation in the region.

On the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, we need to encourage Tbilisi to recognize that it would re-



quire war to impose Georgian rule over the separate ethnic populations of the two enclaves, which already expelled local Georgians. Moreover, any effort to invade these territories would provide Russia with a pretext for destroying Georgia.

The realistic hope is that, over time, there can be a slow revival of commerce and dialogue among Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Tbilisi, possibly leading to some form of federation in the future. But this will only happen when Moscow decides that peace in the region serves its larger interests.

Critics of the administration will undoubtedly complain that America will lose face if it backs away from the commitment to support NATO membership for Tbilisi and Kyiv. But in

***The U.S. should
give priority to
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Moscow over sticking
with a dead-end,
dangerous policy.***

terms of the greater U.S. national interest, it is more important to improve relations with Russia than to insist on

a dead-end and dangerous policy in the Near Abroad. ■

Thompson Buchanan was a Foreign Service officer from 1955 to 1981, serving as deputy chief of mission in Burundi, Gabon and Norway, among other assignments. His Russian expertise dates from 1948, when he worked for the Office of Intelligence Research at State. He later served three tours in Russia, including assignments as political counselor and consul general in Leningrad. In post-communist Russia, he interviewed refugees for the Immigration and Naturalization Service and worked on aid projects. As a member of DACOR and the Cosmos Club, he has sponsored numerous lectures on Russia and Central Asia.

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IRAQ, IRAN AND THE UNITED STATES



Laszlo Kubinyi

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THE ROUTE TO DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND TEHRAN COULD RUN THROUGH BAGHDAD.

BY SELIG S. HARRISON

The 2003 American invasion of Iraq aroused both anxiety and hope in Iran. The advent of U.S. military forces and bases on its western border posed a potential threat to its security. At the same time, the destruction of the Sunni-dominated Saddam Hussein dictatorship stirred expectations that the Shiite majority in Iraq would come into its own, at last, after five centuries of Sunni minority rule, and that Iraq would tilt toward Iran after U.S. forces left.

Seven years later, the Obama administration remains committed to the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq by the end of 2011. However, major uncertainties remain concerning our future role there and how it will affect Iran.

Two key emerging issues have special importance in Iranian eyes. One is whether the U.S. Air Force will be able to continue using the bases it has developed in Iraq to deploy long-range bombers capable of striking Iran. The other is whether the United States will continue to tolerate the political dominance of Tehran-oriented Shiite political forces in Iraq, as it has done since the 2005 elections, or will work, instead, with Saudi Arabia to contain Iranian influence in Baghdad. Washington's position on these little-discussed issues could well prove to be of critical importance in its ongoing effort to negotiate a *modus vivendi* with Iran.

The centrality of Iraq in Iranian attitudes toward the United States was underlined to me repeatedly during three visits to Tehran in 2007 and 2008. On one of these trips, I attended a four-hour seminar with 15 Iranian specialists on Iraq from different government agencies, arranged at my request.

"You know, we've been waiting for this moment since 1639," commented Mahmoud Vaezi, a former deputy foreign minister who now directs the Center for Strategic Research, a think-tank affiliated with the Expediency Council, a government body headed by former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. I didn't know what had happened in 1639, but soon learned that it was the year in which the Treaty of Qasr-i-Shirin was signed. This was the

Selig S. Harrison visited Iran in June 2007 and in February and June 2008. As South Asia bureau chief of the Washington Post and, later, as a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, he did research there before the 1979 revolution and authored a study of its ethnic tensions, In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations (CEIP, 1980), as well as four other books on Asian affairs and U.S.-Asian relations. He is a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center and director of the Asia Program at the Center for International Policy.

*For nearly five centuries,
Iran has been hoping Sunni
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treaty that defined the boundary between Safavid Persia and the advancing Ottoman Turks, who pushed Persia out of what was to become the modern state of Iraq.

As Richard D. Frye observes in *The Golden Age of Persia*, "The separation of eastern and western Iran is evident, and throughout Iran's history the western part of the land has been frequently more closely connected with the lowlands of Mesopotamia than with the rest of

the plateau to the east of the central deserts."

Before 1639, Persia had extensive influence in Mesopotamia through local Shiite principalities. The Shia religious universe embraced parts of both Persia and Mesopotamia, and the Shia faithful commuted between religious centers on both sides, just as they do today. (An estimated four million Iranians visited Karbala and Najaf in Iraq last year and some two million Iraqis visited Qom in Iran.) After 1639, the Turks and, later, the British installed a succession of Sunni puppet regimes in Iraq. Then came Saddam Hussein's Sunni dictatorship and his invasion of Iran in 1980, launched with U.S. help and encouragement.

What Vaezi's reference to 1639 meant was that for nearly five centuries, Iran has been hoping the day would come when Sunni minority rule would end in Baghdad, and Tehran would get back some of its old influence.

In Friendly Hands?

During the Foreign Ministry seminar, S.A. Niknam, who had been *chargé d'affaires* in the Iranian embassy in Baghdad for five years during the Iran-Iraq War, exclaimed: "How can you accuse us of 'interfering' in Iraq? You have come from 6,000 miles away with 160,000 soldiers. We are an immediate neighbor with a 1,000-mile border and intimate historical, religious and economic ties going back centuries. You helped Saddam against us in a war that cost us more than 300,000 lives, so naturally we want to be sure that Iraq is in friendly hands."

By a "friendly" Iraq, Iran means one dominated by its Shiite co-religionists, who make up about 62 percent of the population. Thus, Tehran was delighted when the United States, prodded by United Nations mediator Lakhdar Brahimi and Iraq's pre-eminent Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali al-Sistani, bowed to demands

for elections in 2005 on terms that assured the victory of the Shiite majority.

Then and now, Iran has carefully avoided committing fully to any faction in Iraq's internal Shiite power struggles. The Ministry of Intelligence and Security, also known as VEVAK, and other Iranian intelligence agencies have assisted militias maintained by both the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, the vehicle of the Shiite mercantile and middle classes, and Moqtada al-Sadr's urban populist movement. They have also worked closely with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's smaller Daawa Party, and have gradually increased their influence in the internal security agencies of his ISCI-linked regime.

Soon after its 2003 invasion, the United States sponsored the creation of the National Intelligence Service, headed by a longtime anti-Saddam CIA ally, Mohammed Shahwani, a Sunni. Al-Maliki countered by installing an Iran-trained VEVAK protégé, Sheerwan al-Waeli, as head of the Ministry of National Security, and succeeded in replacing Shahwani with his own man in August 2009.

Iranian concerns about the direction of U.S. policy have focused on the so-called "Sunni Awakening" that the George W. Bush administration promoted after the 2005 parliamentary elections. This amounted to the employment of some 91,000 mercenaries in Sunni militias under U.S. control in a program aimed at improving security that cost an estimated \$150 million per year at its peak. Each fighter was nominally paid \$300 a month. But as Steven Simon points out in his article in the May/June 2008 *Foreign Affairs*, the Sunni tribal sheiks involved took "as much as 20 percent of every payment to a former insurgent," which meant that "commanding 200 fighters could be worth over a hundred thousand dollars a year for a tribal chief."

Because the Sunni militias posed a direct challenge to the predominantly Shiite army that al-Maliki was building up, ISCI leader Abdul Aziz al-Hakim complained that "weapons should be in the hands of the government only, and the government alone should decide who gets them. The alternative will be perpetual civil war."

Pressure from al-Maliki eventually led to the termination of the program in return for promises that the demobilized fighters would be absorbed into his army. But this has yet to happen on any significant scale. In Baghdad, the principal legacy of the program is Sunni outrage that

Tehran has carefully avoided committing to any single faction in Iraq's internal Shiite power struggles.

could lead to a rebirth of al-Qaida activity in Iraq. And in Iranian eyes, the Sunni Awakening has aroused deep suspicion that Washington is pursuing a conscious "divide and rule" strategy designed to build up a Sunni counterweight to Shiite power.

The death of Supreme Council leader al-Hakim on Aug. 26, 2009, accentuated a power struggle within the Shiite leadership that could affect the stability of the Baghdad government, but it is not likely to weaken Iran's political clout in Baghdad. Iran orchestrated the creation of a new Shiite coalition at a meeting last August that united the ISCI, al-Sadr's forces and the Tanzim-al-Iraq branch of Daawa in the new United Iraqi Alliance.

"A Disgraceful Pact"

Al-Maliki, like many other Shiite political leaders of his generation, spent the Iran-Iraq War years (1980-1988) in exile in Iran and has longstanding ties with VEVAK. Initially, he had Tehran's blessing when he became prime minister, but relations suffered during the protracted struggle with the Bush administration in 2007 and 2008 over the terms of the security agreement under which the United States has pledged to withdraw all of its combat forces.

When a draft U.S.-Iraq accord without a withdrawal timetable was signed on March 17, 2008, it remained a well-kept secret until nationalist critics within al-Maliki's inner circle leaked it to Iranian diplomats and to the Iraqi media. The reaction in Tehran was explosive. On May 11, 2008, Hossein Shariatmadari, editor of the hardline daily newspaper *Kayhan*, attacked the agreement in a vitriolic signed editorial titled "Iraq on the Edge." He handed a copy to me during an hourlong interview this past June.

"If you want to know what has been happening," he said, "I suggest you read this." Shariatmadari is the "Personal Representative of the Supreme Leader," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and is seen as his media spokesman.

"How is it," the editorial asked, "that the Maliki government took the first steps toward signing such a disgraceful pact in the first place?" The United States, it said, is using the treaty to "sow the seeds of discord" between al-Maliki and his coalition partner, al-Hakim, so that "the U.S. can put pro-American individuals in charge. It is amazing that al-Maliki failed to see such a conspiracy coming." In a clear warning to the prime minister, the editorial added that if

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the treaty is implemented, Iraqis would replace his government with “another Islamist government.”

Al-Maliki was summoned to Tehran for a three-day dressing-down (June 7-9, 2008) that led to his announcement, on June 13 in Amman, that negotiations with the United States had reached “a dead end and a deadlock.” Informants in government-affiliated think-tanks told me that he had had “difficult” meetings, as one put it, with Khamenei and with the Revolutionary Guard generals who oversee Iraqi policy. Soon thereafter, Iranian newspapers reported, al-Maliki’s defense minister signed a mutual security accord with his Iranian counterpart. It has never been made public.

The deadlock between Baghdad and Washington ended when the Bush administration agreed that the projected security agreement would have a “time horizon.”

What remains missing from the U.S. posture is a readiness to acknowledge that Tehran, too, has security concerns.

And on Nov. 18, 2008, after haggling over seven drafts, a final version of the agreement was adopted, providing for the full withdrawal of U.S. combat forces by Dec. 31, 2011. To cover its retreat, the White House maintained that the success of the “surge” policy had enabled Iraq to stand on its own, releasing pent-up nationalist opposition to the presence of foreign soldiers. This, in turn, had supposedly compelled al-Maliki to insist on a withdrawal timetable so that his opponents could not use nationalism against him in the forthcoming elections. But what this explanation omitted was the crucial role that Iran had played in al-Maliki’s conversion.

Alireza Sheikhattar, who was first deputy foreign minister when I visited Tehran in June 2008, told me that Iran would not allow the continued operation of U.S. air bases

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that could make Iraq “a platform for harming the security of Iran and other neighbors. Why should the U.S. have air bases in Iraq?” Baghdad can take care of its own defense, he said, “and the Iraqis should have a real air force of their own. Why are they prohibited from having more than token aircraft and related facilities, even for civil aviation? They are not poor. They can purchase fighters and have their own aircraft for both internal and external security.”

Addressing Security Concerns

Wouldn't this pose a potential security threat to Iran? Not if Iraq has a sovereign, democratic government, Sheikhattar said. “There is an absolute majority in favor of Iran” now that the Shiite government is in control, he assured me.

Iraq is now seeking to buy 108 aircraft through 2011, including 36 late-model F-16 fighter-bombers from the United States. So far the Pentagon has not made a decision on the F-16s, but it has agreed to sell 24 U.S. attack helicopters and six C-130 transport planes to Baghdad.

As if in reply to Sheikhattar, Admiral William J. Fallon, the former commander of the U.S. Central Command, emphasized in a July 20, 2008, *New York Times* article that “control of Iraqi airspace” would be an “important component of the security agreement that would require clear-headed negotiations.” The final draft of the agreement gave “surveillance and control over Iraqi air space” to Baghdad.

At the same time, Article 9, Section 2 of the accord permits U.S. aircraft “to overfly and conduct airborne refueling;” Articles 5 and 6 envisage the continued U.S. operation of bases by allowing U.S. forces the “access and use” of “some necessary facilities” after the withdrawal of combat forces; and Article 7 envisages the pre-positioning of equipment under U.S. control. The provision for airborne refueling was a major focus of contention in the negotiations on the accord, because it is viewed in Tehran as giving the U.S. Air Force unrestricted operational latitude that could be used for bombing or surveillance missions in Iran.

Sheikhattar, now the Iranian ambassador to Germany, points in particular to the giant Balad Air Base north of Baghdad, just 74 miles away from the Iranian border and 429 miles from Tehran, where the U.S. Air Force currently

The principal legacy of the U.S. surge in Iraq is Sunni outrage that could lead to a rebirth of al-Qaida activity there.

bases two squadrons of F-16 fighter-bombers, each capable of carrying 24 tons of bombs. Balad has also been a launching pad for Qatar-based B-1 bombers and Predator unmanned espionage surveillance aircraft.

Spread out over 15 square miles, Balad was second only to Heathrow Airport in London in the volume of its air traffic at the height of the war in Iraq. The expansion and modernization of the base has been steadily proceeding, with \$87 million allocated to new construction in the fiscal 2007 budget and \$58.3 million more in 2008. This has included hardening its two 11,000-foot runways, which will now be serviceable until 2014, and installing the latest lighting technology for night operations. “We’re good now for as long as we need to run it,” the Chief Air Force Engineer there, Lt. Col. Scott Hoover, told Associated Press correspondent Charles J. Hanley. “Ten years?” Hanley asked. “I’d say so,” he replied.

The master plan for Balad’s expansion has served as a model for three other air bases near the Iranian border: Al-Asad, where \$76 million in new construction is under way, Tallil and Al Kut.

While denying that the United States wants “permanent bases,” Defense Department officials acknowledge that they hope for “long-term access.” And Articles 5, 6 and 7 of the security accord explicitly envisage a substantial U.S. presence and pre-positioned equipment and weaponry. Iran, for its part, will no doubt be carefully monitoring the type of long-range aircraft and surveillance capabilities that turn up at the bases along its borders and whether they are deployed there on a regular basis.

The Iranians I met were reconciled to the continued presence of U.S. military personnel for training purposes following the withdrawal of combat forces, and even to U.S. participation in operations against al-Qaida and other Sunni extremist groups. But the future of the air bases will clearly be highly contentious and could well affect the Obama administration’s diplomatic effort to rule out an Iranian nuclear weapons capability.

Mutual Interests

What has been missing so far in the U.S. posture is a readiness to acknowledge that Tehran, too, has security concerns. This is especially clear in terms of the nuclear

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issue. It was a promise of security guarantees that led to Tehran's willingness to suspend all uranium enrichment in November 2004, at the start of talks with the European Union on a permanent ban. And it was the Bush administration's unwillingness to join in such guarantees that led to the breakdown of the talks and the resumption of enrichment.

The language of the joint declaration that launched the negotiations was unambiguous. "A mutually acceptable agreement," it said, would not only provide "objective guarantees" that Iran's nuclear program is "exclusively for peaceful purposes" but would "equally provide firm commitments on security issues."

In addition to security guarantees relating specifically to military issues, Iran would be likely to seek broader guarantees in future negotiations ruling out U.S. support for overthrow of its government. The Obama administration

Shared opposition to any breakup of Iraq could provide a basis for U.S.-Iranian cooperation in Baghdad.

has already sought to distance itself from the active support for "regime change" reflected in its predecessor's overt democracy promotion and its covert support of disaffected ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, Iranian leaders have continued to warn against U.S. support for a "Velvet Revolution" amid the unrest that

has followed the contested June 2009 elections. And it continues to accuse the United States of supporting Kurdish separatists as well as Jundullah, a Baluch separatist movement.

Speaking at Bijar in Iranian Kurdistan on May 12, 2009, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared that "unfortunately, across our borders, our western borders ... money, arms and organization are being used by the Americans in fighting the Islamic Republic's system." Many journalists have long reported that Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, gives arms to Pejak, an Iranian Kur-



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dish separatist group. And *New Yorker* reporter Jon Lee Anderson interviewed a senior Kurdish official in 2008 who said that Pejak operates out of bases in Iraqi Kurdistan with “covert U.S. support” to conduct raids in Iran.

Precisely because Tehran fears Kurdish separatism, Iran shares the goal of a unified Iraq with the United States. It does not want to see the Iraqi Kurds break away and link up with the Kurds in Iran and Turkey.

This shared opposition to the balkanization of Iraq and a mutual interest in promoting its economic stability provide the basis for U.S.-Iranian cooperation in Baghdad — but only if Washington is sensitive to Iranian security concerns and recognizes that Tehran views the maintenance of a “friendly” regime in Iraq as essential to its security.

George W. Bush sharply limited U.S. options when he ended five centuries of minority Sunni rule by deposing

Tehran does not want Iraqi Kurds to break away and link up with Kurds in Iran and Turkey.

Saddam Hussein. Iraq will now be, willy-nilly, closer to Iran than to any other external power, and it would be self-defeating for the United States to fly in the face of this reality by aligning with Sunni interests in Baghdad.

To be sure, the United States does have a moral obligation to do what it can to minimize persecution of Sunnis. But there is no escaping the hard reality that they will now have to adjust to Shia dominance, just as the Shias did for so long under Sunni rule.

Ray Takeyh, a leading Iran scholar who has advised the Obama administration, puts it well. “The door to walk into a larger negotiation between the United States and Iran would be through Iraq,” he said, “where there is some coincidence of interests. But you can’t do that if your declared policy is to prevent a country next door from having any influence in the country that is right there.” ■



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ACHIEVING CLOSURE ON IRAQ'S PREWAR WMD



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SADDAM HUSSEIN HAD NO WMD PROVIDES
INSIGHTS USEFUL IN OTHER SITUATIONS.

BY CHARLES A. DUELFER

even years after the United States removed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein from power, a wide range of accepted “truths” persist concerning whether Baghdad actually possessed weapons of mass destruction. Many of these are wrong; others are partially accurate, but represent little more than “bumper-sticker” characterization of a pivotal, but quite complicated, issue. In some ways, current misunderstandings about Iraq’s WMD are as off the mark as the prewar assumptions, but in different ways.

Many factors contribute to these persistent fallacies. Misconceptions and miscalculations evolve from mindsets and biases that grow over time — on all sides and for numerous reasons.

For example, Saddam himself deliberately projected alternative views of reality to keep his enemies (internal and external) confused, remaining ambiguous about his (lack of) WMD to keep Tehran off-balance. In his experience, WMD had been extremely useful. It had helped save him during the war with Iran in the 1980s and — as he saw it — deterred the United States from taking him out in 1991.

Saddam Hussein's leadership style also instilled uncertainty and fear among his minions concerning what they should do or report, especially regarding WMD. So he knew that he could not trust the reports of his own people. And if Saddam had doubts about what was going on in Iraq, how could outside analysts make accurate judgments founded on facts rather than expectations?

For the record: There were no militarily significant stocks of chemical or biological agents (much less nuclear weapons-related development programs) in Iraq when U.S. forces occupied Baghdad in April 2003. The country did have limited numbers of prohibited long-range ballistic missiles, however, giving Saddam the option of deploying WMD when circumstances permitted.

This "absence of WMD" is, however, only one point on the long curve of the Saddam regime's behavior. It is an important point, to be sure (especially for politicians), but it does not convey the regime's internal dynamics, nor its intentions for the future. And it certainly ignores important matters of context.

Charles A. Duelfer was the deputy executive chairman, and then acting chairman, of the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq from 1993 until its termination in 2000. He was in the country from April to August 2003 and later headed the Iraq Survey Group throughout 2004, producing the Comprehensive Report on Iraq WMD (known as the "Duelfer Report") for the Director of Central Intelligence. He now consults on a range of intelligence and security management topics with Omnis, Inc., and is the author of Hide and Seek: The Search for Truth in Iraq (Public Affairs, 2009).

*We now know that there
were no militarily significant
WMD stocks in Iraq when
U.S. forces occupied
Baghdad in April 2003.*

Unintended Consequences

When international inspections began in 1991, following the war to liberate Kuwait, neither Saddam Hussein nor anyone else had a clear idea of what to expect. The U.N. Security Council's resolution ending the war (UNSCR 687) linked the lifting of sanctions to Iraq's compliance with WMD disarmament, as verified by teams from the U.N. Special Com-

mission and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Saddam reasonably assumed that these inspectors would make some visits to Iraq and, in a fashion similar to previous IAEA inspectors, certify the absence of weapons of mass destruction. The process would then end. Other governments had similar expectations, reflecting the fact that policymakers in Washington and other capitals had taken a short-term view in crafting the resolutions.

In the wake of the surprisingly swift, low-cost victory, Washington's priority was to lock in the success and limit Baghdad's ability to re-emerge as an aggressive power. There was also an unspoken belief that Saddam's regime would soon fall due to internal instability, fueled by popular anger over the nation's military defeat. No one foresaw that the sanctions would be the root and branch of ongoing international conflict for over a decade.

The parallel with the punitive terms the Treaty of Versailles imposed on Germany following World War I — and their consequences — went unrecognized or ignored. Indeed, even sophisticated international policy analysts still miss the fact that the U.N. Iraq resolution constituted coercive disarmament, not an arms control accord.

Following the letter of the law, UNSCOM inspectors demanded that Iraq give up something it adamantly did not want to yield. Just as Germany had sought to thwart the Allied inspectors monitoring its disarmament, Saddam, we later learned, set as his highest priority the removal of sanctions, and at the lowest cost in terms of compliance and prestige. He therefore tested the process from the start, giving inspection teams minimal access and only turning over the most obvious Scud missiles and chemical weapons. In fact, just weeks after the inspections began, Baghdad blatantly denied inspectors access to locations known to contain weapons materials.

In response, the Security Council held emergency meetings but could only agree to send the heads of the

IAEA and UNSCOM to Baghdad to discuss the issue. Gifted with an exquisite talent for the use of power, Saddam correctly concluded that he could block inspections at a low cost — certainly nothing that would threaten his regime. This early lesson set the tone for years of growing friction with inspectors. The worst that would happen if he blocked or delayed inspectors for an hour or two while a site was “cleansed,” a favorite Iraqi tactic, was a continuation of sanctions and very limited military strikes.

Secure in that knowledge, Saddam worked to maneuver his way out of sanctions while conceding the least amount of access to the inspectors. The dogged persistence of UNSCOM and IAEA teams over the years eventually resulted in Iraq largely being disarmed of WMD — but no one outside Iraq was convinced of this. Indeed, U.S. analysts came to assume that the regime *always* disassembled — and that it did so precisely because it had something to hide: WMD.

The Problem of Sanctions

Gradually, Saddam also realized that the Security Council (most particularly, the U.S.) would not act to lift sanctions, no matter how much he did to comply with its terms. This, of course, touched on the basic fallacy in the West’s approach: No one really believed that if sanctions *were* lifted, Saddam would continue to comply with the disarmament goals. Moreover, it was highly improbable, once oil and commerce began flowing freely, that the Council would ever agree to reinstate sanctions. Saddam was astute in giving out oil contracts and too many Council members would have too great a stake in continuing the flow.

I discussed this dynamic candidly with many senior regime officials, both before and after the 2003 Iraq War. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz deftly used it to drive a wedge between Security Council members. Russia, France and China were inclined to relieve constraints on Saddam, while the U.S. and Britain remained determined to contain him.

Still, Saddam Hussein never lost sight of the fact that Washington was the major player. It was obvious that he derived prestige from being the only leader to stand up and confront the last superpower. Less obvious was his view that he would also attain such status by being allied with Washington. (A general note: We unnecessarily in-

*After 9/11,
Saddam was too slow to
understand that the world
had changed.*

flate these tyrants, raising them to our level, every time a president publicly denounces them.)

And until 1998, Saddam and other Iraqis clung to the belief that a softening of relations with Washington was possible. After all, during the 1980s the United States had stayed relatively close to Baghdad as it fought against

the common threat Tehran posed — even as Baghdad used chemical munitions against the Iranians (and the Kurds inside Iraq). Throughout the 1990s, senior Iraqis repeatedly asked me what it would take to re-engage with Washington. They requested that I convey to the White House their willingness to do almost anything — cooperate against fundamentalists, help in the Middle East peace process — if only Washington would talk to Baghdad. In the words of one official, Baghdad could be “the best friend of the United States in the region, bar none.”

There was never a direct response. Publicly, our position was consistent: Baghdad had to comply with all U.N. resolutions, and then relations could improve. At the same time, there were regular statements that the U.S. favored regime change and had no expectation that Saddam would comply with the U.N. resolutions.

Saddam did not know if these were just words, or more. To his highly honed sense of power and influence, it seemed inevitable that the U.S. and Iraq would reconcile. The two nations’ interests were congruent. Both were secular governments. Moreover, Iraq was *the* bulwark against the radicals in Iran. And as the most powerful Arab country, with great resources including skillful engineers and industrious people, Iraq was far more important than the tribes running the Gulf sheikdoms. Until 1998, Saddam calculated that Washington would eventually “get over” the invasion of Kuwait and resume close ties.

Regime officials never grasped that it would be political suicide for an American leader to open a dialogue with Saddam, no matter what the terms. Nor did they fully understand the uproar over Monica Lewinsky; to them it was inconceivable that a relationship with an intern could hobble a superpower. But once Baghdad realized how badly the Clinton administration had been weakened, it pressed the UNSCOM inspection issue to a conclusion.

Based on the judgment that inspectors could not function under the conditions Baghdad had imposed, the United States — supported only by the United Kingdom

— conducted four days of bombing in December 1998. The UNSCOM inspectors left and never returned, and the Security Council was mightily divided.

As Tariq Aziz later told me, Iraq had a choice of sanctions with inspectors or sanctions without them. No one should have been surprised when it chose the latter.

A Fateful Year

By the time President George W. Bush took office in 2001, a decade after his father's smashing military victory over Iraq, it was clear that the sanctions regime was crumbling. One of the first tasks of Secretary of State Colin Powell was to address this situation, which he did by proposing to the U.N. Security Council a radically reconfigured sanctions program dubbed "smart sanctions." (Tariq Aziz smugly dismissed them as "stupid sanctions.")

Up to this point, there had been a presumption that most exports to Iraq should be denied. Now there would be a list of prohibited items, while all other requests would normally be approved. This shift was intended, in part, to lessen the effect of sanctions on the Iraqi people — but its main goal was to retain support for *any* constraints on Saddam from Russia, France and other Security Council members. In the pre-9/11 world, this was considered to be the best way to accomplish that goal.

Even so, by that summer Saddam Hussein appeared to be on the verge of shedding U.N. sanctions — his highest priority — at a low cost in prestige and power. International commerce was returning to life, and its oil production was rising. At meetings of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the Iraqi delegation was the center of attention, with traders eagerly anticipating the full and unfettered return of Iraqi oil to the market. Saddam shrewdly doled out favors and oil contracts to build an international constituency. "If you wanted to be a friend of Iraq when sanctions were formally dropped, then you better be a friend of Iraq now" was an effective tactic, especially when combined with a moral argument that the sanctions were killing thousands of innocent Iraqis.

American control of substantial Iraqi airspace through the "no-fly" zones (patrolled at great expense and risk) was a matter of extreme annoyance, but it posed no immediate threat. Saddam had a very long time horizon unconstrained by the business, election or news cycles that compress Washington's thinking, and his perspective extended far beyond that of American politicians.

That calculation was not far off the mark — until 9/11.

But Saddam was too slow to understand that the world had changed. After all, he had no connection with the perpetrators or with al-Qaida generally, so he did not foresee that the U.S. would treat him as an equivalent emerging threat that had to be dealt with once and for all.

Only after President George W. Bush gave his 2002 State of the Union address denouncing Iraq as a member of the "Axis of Evil" did Saddam begin to appreciate the gravity of his position. But he was still unwilling to accept a resumption of inspections (without an explicit commitment by the Security Council to lift sanctions), and his obstinacy provided evidence to those concerned about the possibility that Iraq had begun rebuilding WMD as soon as U.N. inspectors had left Iraq three years earlier.

Ultimately, this was his fatal mistake. Had Saddam freely accepted the return of inspectors in 2002 rather than continuing to defy the Security Council, it is highly likely that the momentum for invasion would have dissipated. Saddam followed this course against the advice of both Tariq Aziz and Foreign Minister Najib Sabri, who understood the post-9/11 diplomatic climate.

However, Saddam knew the status of his WMD programs and felt that the U.S. must know it, as well. And having received assurances from Russia and France that they would block any U.S. proposal that the United Nations take military action, he may have anticipated that the Security Council would finally make a concrete promise to lift sanctions if inspectors found nothing within some defined period of time.

The Coefficient of WMD

To understand why it turned out that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in 2003 is to understand something that may be useful in other circumstances. It may also convey knowledge about where Saddam and his regime were headed.

Why did Saddam use weapons of mass destruction in certain situations and not in others? What were the underlying dynamics? The goal I set for the investigation of Iraqi WMD programs in 2004 was to understand all the factors involved, not just to discover the status of WMD inventories in 2003.

It is the difference between algebra and calculus. What equation was Saddam Hussein attempting to solve for which the coefficient of WMD was zero at certain points and greater than zero at other times? What were the factors and constants that comprised this equation? And

could the West have figured out how to affect Iraqi calculations?

Certainly we knew in the fall of 2002 that Saddam was not complying with the U.N. Security Council resolutions aimed at containing his regime. He had not allowed inspections for almost four years and was actively working on ballistic missiles (with assistance from Russian technicians, we learned after the war). It was clear that Iraq was importing conventional military equipment from suppliers willing to violate U.N. sanctions.

In post-9/11 Washington, Iraq was a problem to be solved, not managed. The Bush administration tried to address it through the United Nations — but only because it believed there was no way Saddam could (or would) comply with the U.N. resolutions. However, those who made that argument did not have much experience with inspec-

The 2003 war had nothing to do with intelligence failures about Iraq's WMD programs; it stemmed from errors of judgment in using intelligence.

tions on the ground. While U.N. inspectors may not have believed Saddam was compliant, they certainly knew that it would be extremely hard to prove he was not. And at the United Nations, process can be an end in itself, becoming an endless endeavor that never comes to resolution.

Among intelligence analysts, the predominant hypothesis was that in the absence of inspections during the previous years, Saddam would have been crazy not to rebuild his weapons.

The result was an extraordinary focus on WMD assessments and extremely limited supporting intelligence. (I would observe that the data supporting assessments about current Iranian nuclear efforts dwarf the tidbits underlying the estimates of Iraqi nuclear activity made in 2002.)

When the Iraq Survey Group completed its analysis of the regime and its relationship to weapons programs in

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2004, it was clear Saddam had anticipated that, once he returned to more normal relations with the rest of the world, he would be able to rebuild his arsenal, including WMD. But before the war, the picture was complicated and nuanced. We had no analogue in Washington for Saddam's thinking or the internal operations of his regime. For U.S. politicians, ignorant of the Baghdad mindset, it was impossible to have anything more than a cartoon image of Saddam Hussein.

Even many intelligence analysts found it difficult to fathom Baghdad, given the few opportunities to interact with Iraqis inside Iraq. As an intelligence analyst, how can you see or collect data about something for which you have no word or concept?

Likewise, Saddam had vast misperceptions about Washington. Among them, he and his government assumed that the last superpower must be well-informed. Baghdad made critical decisions in 1998 concerning inspectors under the assumption that the United States knew Iraq had eliminated its WMD systems.


Operating in the Dark

The combative interactions between U.N. weapons inspectors and Iraqi officials throughout the 1990s largely established the mindsets and biases that led to misapprehensions and miscalculations on both sides in 2000-2003. Once Baghdad was rid of all international inspectors in 1998, Washington lost virtually all knowledge of what was going on inside Iraq. The relatively detailed data UNSCOM had generated suddenly vanished, leaving the U.S. with no independent sources.

Our intelligence analysts nonetheless were obliged to make their best guesses about Iraq's WMD program. Based on previous experience with Saddam's behavior and their caution about underestimating his military might (as the West did prior to the 1991 war), there was an altogether natural tendency to presume Baghdad would reconstitute WMD in the absence of any inspectors — and be able to conceal such efforts under the cover of the renewed trade between Iraq and the outside world that was flourishing under the U.N. Oil-for-



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Iraqi leaders had informed UNSCOM that their possession and use of weapons of mass destruction were vital in the war against Iran in the 1980s. Later, they believed that the prospect of encountering WMD had deterred U.S. troops from driving all the way to Baghdad in 1991. Aware of this, Iraq analysts back in Washington figured Saddam would be missing a trick if he did *not* rebuild his WMD stockpiles. They were right about the plan, but not the timing. Saddam was going to wait until after the sanctions were lifted.

In conclusion, let me offer one more observation. It is true that our intelligence assessments concerning Iraqi WMD were largely wrong and mistakenly flaunted in the prewar political environment. However, our intelligence about the internal dynamics of Iraq and how the nation was held together was largely correct.

The real problem is that the Bush administration refused to tap those perspectives when it made major decisions about postwar governance. Prewar actions to

establish relations in ministries of Saddam's government were blocked. The refusal to use such knowledge and assessments led to monumental blunders such as de-Baathification and the decision to disband the Iraqi Army. Indeed, the White House refused to undertake even limited covert activities aimed at facilitating carefully limited immediate changes to the very top levels. Instead, it opted for the wholesale destruction of the existing apparatus of government.

In my opinion, the bulk of the resulting postwar chaos in Iraq was avoidable. While Saddam Hussein was a problem that had to be addressed one way or another, the tragedy was that it did not need to be done so badly. This costly miscalculation did not derive from mistakes about Iraq WMD inventories, but from ignoring readily available evidence about the internal dynamics of Iraq. On these points, the intelligence community (and some old hands in State) had far better knowledge. Yet for reasons best known to themselves, political leaders chose not to act on this intelligence. ■

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THE U.S. AND TURKEY: BACK FROM THE BRINK



R

AMERICAN, IRAQI AND TURKISH POLICYMAKERS SHOULD CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON PROMOTING DIALOGUE AND MAKING COMMON CAUSE.

By ROSS WILSON

elations between Turkey and the United States foundered between 2003 and 2007 over various issues, the most important of which was Iraq. Disagreement over the U.S.-led invasion diminished Ankara's standing in Washington, produced Turkish public antipathy toward American policy in the region and, most importantly, undermined our governments' ability to cooperate on Iraq and other issues.

Getting the nexus of Turkey-Iraq issues right was job number-one for U.S. Mission Turkey between 2005 and 2008.

Diplomacy and policy changes in both capitals successfully transformed perceptions of the Iraq problem and put U.S.-Turkish relations back on track. Given the challenges that lie ahead, American, Iraqi and Turkish policymakers should continue to focus on dialogue, achieving common cause, and addressing specific issues of concern.

Three Problems

Disagreement about Iraq provoked the worst downturn in U.S.-Turkish relations since the 1974 crisis over Cyprus. The issue had several components: the events of 2003 and their legacy, Turks' negative view of U.S. operations and tactics and, especially, the presence in northern Iraq of terrorists from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (known in English as the PKK). A significant ethnic minority in Turkey, the Kurds have fought for decades to maintain their cultural heritage and gain basic civil rights. In the late 1970s, the PKK launched an armed rebellion against Aukara for an independent Kurdish state.

As is well known, the Turkish Parliament failed on March 1, 2003, to pass a government-backed measure that would have allowed the U.S. Army 4th Infantry Division and other forces to enter Turkey and then invade Iraq from the south. The lack of support and disruption to U.S. plans were big setbacks for U.S.-Turkish relations.

High-level consultations, especially among senior defense officials, dried up. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld did not visit Ankara during his remaining three-and-one-half years in office. Our bilateral High-Level Defense Group virtually ceased to function and interactions among our militaries shriveled, reflecting estrangement as well as the exigencies of war. (U.S. use of Incirlik Air Base was a key survivor as our security relationship turned downhill. Along with arrangements to ship non-lethal supplies by ground across Turkey, it has remained an important link to U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.)

Ross Wilson was U.S. ambassador to Azerbaijan from 2000 to 2003 and to Turkey from 2005 to 2008. A career Foreign Service officer, he also served in Moscow, Prague, Melbourne and Washington, D.C. He retired in 2008 and is a visiting lecturer at The George Washington University.

Disagreements about Iraq provoked the worst downturn in U.S.-Turkish relations since the 1974

Cyprus crisis.

In addition, an economic aid package that would have sped recovery from Turkey's 2001 financial crisis died, as did talk about a possible Qualified Industrial Zone trade preference arrangement.

Other events reinforced the negatives.

- On July 4, 2003, U.S. forces detained and "hooded" a Turkish Special Forces contingent in Suley-

maniye. (Turkey has had many hundreds of troops stationed in northern Iraq since the 1990s, and it still does.) The details of the incident remain obscure. Whatever the cause and despite U.S. apologies, Turks saw it as a national humiliation. The chief of the Turkish General Staff declared a "crisis of confidence" with the United States. The act of revenge for Suleymaniye that opened the viciously anti-American film "Valley of the Wolves: Iraq" helped make it one of the most popular movies ever produced in Turkey.

- Sensationalist media coverage turned the November 2004 U.S. military operation to regain control of Fal-lujah into a horror story full of civilian casualties caused by our reported use of white phosphorus. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan called the victims "martyrs," and one of his party's parliamentarians denounced the operation as "genocide." A similar operation in 2005 at Tal Afar, home to a large number of ethnic kinsmen, the Turcomen, produced even more lurid headlines.

- Whether the picture was of Abu Ghraib or mosques bombed, whether the United States was responsible or not, everything in Iraq seemed to reflect badly on us, our role in the region and our relations with Turkey.

The PKK

The most intractable component of our problems with Turkey over Iraq was the PKK. After the 1999 capture and rendition to Turkey of its leader, Abdullah Ocalan, the group declared a ceasefire in its campaign. Attacks did not entirely stop, but calm returned to Turkey's southeast, and the state of emergency there ended. The PKK then regrouped at its northern Iraq camps just below the border and at Qandil Mountain, 100 kilometers to the south. Larger-scale terrorism resumed in 2005.

Whenever the PKK's northern Iraq presence got too irritating in the 1990s, Turkish troops had entered Iraq to

hit it — without objection from Saddam Hussein. After the U.S. invasion, however, cross-border action was no longer possible. Washington thought this might unhinge the Iraqi Kurds, potentially unsettle the most stable part of the country, and perhaps have other unintended consequences. And U.S. officials responsible for Iraq policy had more immediate concerns than 3,500-odd fighters located in remote border regions who, whatever their other sins, did not target Iraqis or Americans.

But as terrorist attacks in Turkey mounted, claiming hundreds of lives, Turks increasingly blamed the PKK's de facto sanctuary in northern Iraq. They demanded that either we or the Iraqis act, or that Turkish forces be allowed to do so. U.S. acquiescence to Israel's July 2006 cross-border invasion of Lebanon to fight Hezbollah accentuated these demands, especially when it was followed in August by at least 13 bomb attacks in Istanbul and other urban centers. Many Turks concluded that we and the Iraqi Kurds tacitly — or perhaps even actively — supported the PKK. Seizures from captured fighters of U.S.-origin small arms (provided to Iraq for security forces there) seemed to confirm this.

Our embrace of the Kurdistan Regional Government and calls by reputable figures outside the Bush administration to divide Iraq along ethnic lines added the specter of Kurdistan to Turks' angst. It seemed to some that our goals for Iraq included an independent Kurdistan that might even take in a chunk of Turkey's southeast as a reward for the Iraqi Kurds' support in deposing Saddam Hussein in 2003 — and retribution for Turkey's lack thereof.

In May 2007, a suicide bomber in Ankara targeted Turkey's military commander. More attacks followed, and matters came to a head when PKK attacks over three out of four consecutive weekends in September and October 2007 claimed dozens of casualties near the border in southeast Turkey. No democratically elected government could allow such violence to go unanswered, and Turkey's parliament passed a measure on Oct. 17 authorizing a cross-border operation. This was the picture when Prime Minister Erdogan arrived in Washington to meet President George W. Bush on Nov. 5 of that year.

*President George W. Bush's
Nov. 5, 2007, meeting with
Turkish Prime Minister
Recep Tayyip Erdogan
proved to be a turning point.*

Diplomacy and Decision

It seemed obvious in 2005 that getting the Iraq problem in U.S.-Turkish relations fixed was essential. Iraq was our nation's top foreign policy priority. We needed Turkey's help and cooperation there, as well as an end to the Iraq-related enmity that was degrading a decades-old alliance and undermining our work on terrorism, en-

ergy, Iran and other issues. So we increased our consultations with Ankara on Iraq, made common cause on several of those issues, and addressed specific problems, especially the PKK. Policy changes in both Washington and Ankara were essential.

Dialogue: Much of diplomacy consists of talking with and listening to others, so expanding our consultations with Turkey on Iraq was an obvious — and relatively easy — point of departure.

- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's coordinator for Iraq, Ambassador David Satterfield, became a frequent visitor to Ankara, and both he and his predecessor, Ambassador James Jeffrey (now ambassador to Turkey), as well as senior National Security Council staff responsible for Iraq, made plenty of time available for Turkish visitors to Washington.

- Multinational Force-Iraq Commanding Generals David Petraeus and Raymond Odierno initiated regular meetings with the Turkish deputy chiefs of the General Staff, Generals Ergin Saygun and Hasan Igsiz.

- U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad (later Ryan Crocker) visited Turkey, as well, and they and embassy staff met often with the Turkish ambassador to Iraq (first Ünal Çeviköz, then Derya Kanbay).

- Embassy Ankara staff were frequent guests of Turkish Foreign Ministry Iraq Coordinators Ambassadors Oguz Çelikkol and Murat Özçelik, briefing them on developments, identifying upcoming issues and soliciting Turkish views.

- Iraq usually headed the agenda when Sec. Rice and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns (later William Burns) met with their counterparts. And the "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue" initiative launched by Sec. Rice and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül in 2006 put Iraq in the middle of a comprehensive dialogue about the region.

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• Vice President Richard Cheney, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Peter Pace (later Admiral Michael Mullin), National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, and NATO Supreme Allied Commander General James Jones (later Bantz Craddock) played key roles, as well.

Common Cause: We also identified and pursued areas where we could cooperate. Foreign Minister Gül and Ambassador Khalilzad teamed up in December 2005 to cajole a public commitment from Sunni leaders (including Tariq al-Hashemi, later an Iraqi vice president) to abandon their boycott and join Iraqi politics. We consulted on further efforts in 2006 and 2007 to draw other disaffected Sunni groups into the political process. In support of Sec. Rice's interest in broadening our regional engagement on Iraq, Gül strongly backed efforts to stand up an Expanded Neighbors of Iraq forum in 2007 — helping to secure, among other things, the participation of Syria

The most intractable component of our Iraq problems with Turkey during this period was the PKK.

and Iran. Turkey hosted the second Expanded Neighbors ministerial in November 2007.

Addressing the PKK Issue: These necessary steps only marginally improved the atmosphere with Turkey, however, for the PKK problem remained a chronic and growing ache.

We tried several initiatives. A 2004-2005 effort to conduct trilateral diplomacy with Turkey and Iraq on the PKK wasn't taken seriously in Baghdad, and its lack of results disillusioned Ankara. State Department Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism Frank Urbancic led an effort to engage authorities in Europe on the PKK terrorist and criminal networks there that funded its operations in northern Iraq and elsewhere.

Though the Turks initially viewed this as window dressing, the results achieved in several European capitals eventually convinced them the effort had merit. Sec. Rice named retired U.S. Army General Joseph Ralston as

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a special representative to focus on the problem of the PKK presence in northern Iraq. Ralston's stature as a former NATO commander impressed Turkish leaders, but they never believed the United States had changed its policy against kinetic action on the PKK problem. They were right, but the Ralston mission did defuse tensions for a period and helped to catalyze a change in Washington's thinking.

The key action came from Pres. Bush. At his meeting with Prime Minister Erdogan on Nov. 5, 2007, the president did three things. First, he publicly declared the PKK to be "an enemy of the United States, of Turkey and of Iraq." These words replaced formulations about the problem that were more or less ardent depending on one's proximity to Ankara, but were never effective as rhetoric or policy. Second, he agreed with Erdogan that Turkey could conduct limited operations against PKK border encampments in northern Iraq. And third, he undertook to provide U.S. intelligence support for those efforts.

A Turning Point

Generals James Cartwright, the JCS vice chairman, Petraeus and Craddock visited Ankara days after the White House meeting to show we were serious and to discuss the practicalities. Details were worked out by the commander of U.S. Mission Turkey's Office of Defense Cooperation, Air Force Major General Eric Rosborg (in consultation with MNF-I and the U.S. European Command), and counterparts at the Turkish General Staff. Deconfliction arrangements were made to prevent unintended fire on friendly elements in northern Iraq, and a small center was established to facilitate the real-time sharing of actionable intelligence.

Turkey carried out its first cross-border artillery attack on PKK encampments on Dec. 1, 2007, followed by air strikes at Qandil Mountain and bases close to the border on Dec. 16-17. A relentless effort took place in the months that followed. By the summer of 2008, the PKK's safe haven in northern Iraq was no more. Its training and logistical capabilities had been significantly degraded, and developments in Turkey-Iraq and Turkey-Iraqi Kurd relations were isolating it politically, as well.

Turkey counseled the Iraqis during their 2008 negotiations of a status-of-forces agreement with us and tried to help on Kirkuk and election law issues.

There were hiccups, to be sure. Almost as soon as the smoke cleared from the first Turkish strikes in December, officials responsible for Iraq policy — worried, for good reason, about the additional strain such actions put on the Iraqi political system — said the Turks had made their point and should stop. This did not reflect the president's undertaking to Prime Minister Erdogan, but throughout the months that fol-

lowed, concerns were expressed at all levels that Turkey's actions posed too much risk to our overall effort in Iraq. Hard work by U.S. officials in Iraq helped maintain calm. A Turkish land incursion that began on Feb. 21, 2008, against PKK bases a few kilometers south of the border produced more strain. It lasted a week.

From roughly this point forward, Turkey-Iraq relations and American dealings with Ankara on Iraq began to improve. On March 7, 2008, Turkey hosted Iraqi President Jalal Talabani in Ankara — a long-encouraged and long-sought visit that hadn't been possible earlier. (That Talabani made the trip then seemed to indicate that he, too, saw this as exactly the time for Turkey to chart a new relationship with Iraq and Iraqi Kurds.) In July, Tayyip Erdogan made the first visit to Baghdad by a Turkish prime minister in 18 years, and he and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki energized efforts to normalize political, trade and other ties and to support the Iraqi government.

Turkey counseled the Iraqis during their 2008 negotiations of a status-of-forces agreement with Washington and tried to help on Kirkuk and election law issues. Doors opened for military exchanges and training. Later, Turkey's Iraq Coordinator Murat Özgelik initiated a dialogue with senior Kurdistan Regional Government officials. (This process got a boost when Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu met with KRG President Masud Barzani in Erbil in 2009.) U.S.-Turkish relations improved, including in the security arena.

What accounts for this shift? Our change of policy to allow counterstrikes against the PKK in northern Iraq was a key factor. Turkish authorities, now visibly protecting their citizens, felt politically able to upgrade their engagement with Iraq and the Iraqi Kurds. Our consultations had an effect, too, in helping Ankara look past

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immediate issues to the eventual drawdown of U.S. forces and influence in Iraq, which posed a problem — and an opportunity — for Turkey.

Various developments helped the Turks reconcile themselves to the prospect of an autonomous Iraqi Kurdish entity in the north. Parallel efforts by U.S. diplomats may have helped KRG leaders see that cultivating cooperation with Ankara could be important, perhaps vital, to their longer-term interests given other problems they faced. Mutual trade and investment interests furthered such thinking. A final factor may have been concern about Iranian ambitions in Iraq and regionally. While having no interest in confrontation with Iran, Turkish officials wanted to project more moderate and stability-oriented influences that would, inter alia, bolster the role of Turkey and like-minded countries in the region.

Although this article focuses on the problem of Iraq in

The eventual drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq poses a problem — and an opportunity — for Turkey.


U.S.-Turkish relations, it is worth noting that Pres. Bush's change of policy on the PKK also helped, at least indirectly, to unlock a new approach to Turkey's internal Kurdish issues in 2008-2009. The government's effort has been tentative and encountered setbacks, but hopefully will succeed in drawing more

Kurds into the mainstream.

Looking Forward

Potential problems lie ahead in Iraq, in Turkey-Iraq relations and in our own dealings with Turkey on Iraq.


- One issue is the U.S. redeployment out of Iraq. Transiting material through Turkey en route to Europe and the United States would save money and time.
- Elections and the formation of a new Iraqi government in 2010 will be difficult. Al-Qaida is still very active, even as problems in Kirkuk remain unresolved. Violent



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and centripetal forces lie, at best, just below the surface.

• Turkish-Iraqi border patrol and military contacts remain inadequate, especially with the Peshmerga in the north. The continued presence of hundreds of Turkish troops in northern Iraq could be a point of conflict — or an opportunity for constructive engagement on both sides.

• The PKK may stage its own flashpoint. It has no interest in promoting comity between Ankara and Baghdad or between Turks and Iraqi Kurds, or in the success of Ankara's initiatives to address popular grievances among Turkish Kurds — any or all of which would further isolate it and undermine its interests.

The United States should keep up a sustained conversation about Iraq with Turkey in 2010 and 2011. We should encourage Ankara's continued engagement across the Iraqi political spectrum, especially its efforts to bolster moder-

*Washington should
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Iraq with Turkey in
2010 and 2011.*

ates and work with the military.

We and Iraq should continue to cooperate with Turkey as its forces go after terrorists in remote border areas, and U.S. officials in Ankara, Baghdad and Erbil must do everything they can to ensure that the newly re-established U.S.-Turkey-Iraq trilateral forum on the PKK produces results.

Other ways to help include: encouraging trade and investment in border areas, through the kind of preferential trade arrangements proposed in 2008 for Afghanistan and Pakistan; facilitating Iraqi natural gas exports to Turkey and through it to Europe; and conditioning multilateral assistance on Iraqi steps to integrate economically with Turkey and other neighbors.

Iraq and Turkey can have a good future together, though that is by no means inevitable. Constructive efforts on all sides will contribute greatly to the chances of success. ■

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THE MIDDLE EAST: FORKS IN THE WAY FORWARD



Laszlo Kubinyi

THE STAKES FOR GETTING U.S. POLICY RIGHT IN THE REGION ARE HIGHER THAN EVER. HERE IS AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

BY CHAS W. FREEMAN JR.

When you look back, some years can be seen as having inflected history, moving men and events along paths they would otherwise not have taken. 2001 — the year of 9/11 — was such a time. 2009 shaped up as another, not just for the decisions that were made but for those that were not.

The second President Bush bequeathed his successor a set of thoroughly broken policies in the Middle East and the near-total estrangement of the United States from former allies and friends in the Arab and Muslim worlds. President

Barack Obama responded with rhetorical “change we” — or at least five Norwegians — “can believe in.” In his speech in Cairo last June, he clearly signaled that he recognizes the imperative of solving the Israel-Palestine conflict and repairing American relations with Arabs and Muslims if the U.S. is to enjoy peace abroad and tranquility at home.

Still, in the Middle East and elsewhere the Obama administration has made only minimal changes to longstanding American policies that are conspicuous failures. The short-term stakes in getting these policies right are large. The long-term stakes are vastly larger.

A Large National Blind Spot

When U.S. interrogators asked Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the confessed mastermind of the 9/11 atrocities, why al-Qaida had done the terrible things it did that day, he gave a straightforward answer. He said that the purpose was to focus “the American people ... on the atrocities that America is committing by supporting Israel against the Palestinian people and America’s self-serving foreign policy that corrupts Arab governments and leads to further exploitation of the Arab Muslim people.” In Osama bin Laden’s annual “address to the American people” on Sept. 11, 2009, he reiterated: “We have demonstrated and stated many times, for more than two-and-a-half-decades, that the cause of our disagreement with you is your support to your Israeli allies who occupy our land of Palestine.”

There is nothing at all ambiguous or unclear about these explanations of 9/11 by its planners and perpetrators. Few abroad dispute their essential validity. Yet here in America, they remain completely unreported outside the Internet. Any public reference to U.S. backing for Israel as a grievance that motivated the atrocities in New York and Washington eight years ago is vigorously disputed and suppressed as politically incorrect. This has created a large national blind spot to the seriousness of Arab Muslim re-

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*What began as a conflict
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action to a core American policy.

It has also left our country unable to analyze the very real threat to our domestic tranquility that intermittent terrorist attacks represent. By leaving such incidents unexplained, and disconnecting them from the trends and events in the Middle East that helped inspire them, we have imposed a mental block on ourselves that has distorted our threat perceptions and greatly hampered the development of a realistic

national security strategy.

So it is necessary to begin by recapitulating the obvious. The 9/11 assault on the United States was carried out by Muslim extremists, motivated in large measure by their resentment of U.S. support for Israel and its actions. The need to avenge 9/11 and deter a repetition of it led directly to the American invasion of Afghanistan. The so-called “global war on terrorism” that this invasion inaugurated provided a spurious but politically sufficient justification for the occupation of Iraq in 2003.

Our labeling of Hamas as a “terrorist organization” inspired the joint U.S.–Israeli effort to reject and overturn the results of the 2006 elections in the occupied territories, even though these elections were universally judged to be free and fair. A similar view of Hezbollah caused the U.S. to encourage Israel in its savage mauling of Lebanon and to protect it from the huge international backlash against its more recent assault on Arab civilians in Gaza.

Determination to avoid another 9/11 remains the strategic rationale for the ongoing war in Afghanistan and adjacent areas of Pakistan. Meanwhile, the insolent cruelties of the West Bank occupation and the siege of Gaza continue to inflame Arab and Muslim opinion.

Taken together, these developments have caused a growing number of Arabs and Muslims to perceive a broad American crusade to humiliate them and their religion. Their estrangement from the U.S. and other non-Islamic societies has deepened. Al-Qaida has discredited itself through its excesses, but Islamic extremism has continued to metastasize. In Gaza, for example, political forces far more fanatical than Hamas are beginning to emerge from massive suffering. What began as a conflict between Jewish colonists and indigenous Arabs has become a worldwide struggle between Jews, Muslims and their respective allies.

As Israel's sole protector, the United States has become the target of sustained asymmetric warfare by terrorists who espouse extremist Muslim agendas. Governments allied with the United States or dependent on it — especially those in Arab and Muslim countries — are targets, too. The threat we Americans now face derives less from al-Qaida than it does from widening Muslim rage at continuing humiliation and injustice.

A Central Strategic Task

A just and durable peace in the Holy Land that secures the state of Israel should be an end in itself for the United States. But the fact that the conflict there enrages and radicalizes the Islamic body politic worldwide should make the achievement of such a peace an inescapable, central task of United States strategy. This is why it was right for Pres. Obama to take time last June to deliver a message of reconciliation to Arabs and Muslims in Cairo. Despite all the other urgent tasks, he focused on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He has repeatedly expressed determination to stabilize Israel's relations with its Arab neighbors through a "two-state" solution. The administration's initial efforts have, however, met with contemptuous rejection from Israel, feckless dithering from the Palestinians and skepticism from other Arabs. This should not surprise us, even if it seems to have surprised our president.

The current government of Israel rejects trading land for peace. It sees itself as on the verge of achieving a level of colonization of Palestinian Arab land that will make anything resembling a Palestinian state physically impossible. In the exclusively Jewish state of Israel that its leading figures envisage, only Jews will be full citizens. Some Arabs will have limited rights, but most will live in an archipelago of checkpoint-ringed ghettos. They will be free, should they wish, to call these ghettos a "state;" but once they leave Palestine, Israel will not allow them to return.

Given this Israeli vision, the American attempt to arrange a settlement freeze so that negotiations can create a Palestinian state is, from the Israeli government point of view, at best an unwelcome distraction and at worst a hostile act. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not fear pressure from the U.S. to change course. He is confident that his American lobby will arrange for Congress to punish the president if he tries to punish Israel for its intransigence.

The Obama administration is unwilling, at least for now, to put pressure on Israel.

An Israeli Cabinet-directed assassination campaign has long worked to ensure that "there is no one to talk to" on the Palestinian side. With a little help from their Israeli conquerors and us Americans, surviving Palestinian politicians remain hope-

lessly divided. Israel has not presented a proposal for peace to the Palestinians. Sadly, if it now did so, there would be no one with the authority to accept on behalf of the Palestinian people.

The United States, meanwhile, is seeking to ease Palestinian suffering in ways that improve the political standing of collaborators with the Israeli occupation authorities. Will Palestinian leaders emerge who are willing to take whatever they can get from Israel and who are able, somehow, to call off the resistance to it? That seems to be the hope, if not the plan. It is not, of course, the trend.

The Obama administration is unwilling, at least for now, to put pressure on Israel. Instead, it has fallen back on the use of diplomacy as psychotherapy for Israel's political pathologies. It is trying to induce better behavior by arranging Arab gestures that appease Israeli apprehensions and signal acceptance of the Jewish state in their midst even before its borders are fixed, or the status of both its captive Arab population and those who fled to the refugee camps in neighboring countries is resolved.

American diplomats see these gestures as down payments on the normalization of relations with Israel that the Arab League proposed at Beirut in 2002 in the so-called "Arab Peace Initiative." But the Arabs premised their willingness to accept Israel on its reaching an acceptable agreement with the Palestinians. With Israel now neither doing nor promising anything that might lead to an acceptable status for the Palestinians, the Arabs see no reason to appease it. Nor do they any longer feel obligated by friendship to accommodate what they judge to be ill-considered American requests.

Two Dreadful Ironies

Adding poignancy to the impasse are two dreadful ironies. The state of Israel was established to provide the world's Jews with a homeland in which they might safely enjoy the pursuit of happiness free from continuing persecution by Gentiles. But the Jewish state has become the most dangerous place on the planet for Jews to live. And with anti-Semitism now universally rejected in its tradi-

tional Christian heartland, Israel's actions and policies have become the primary significant stimulus to anti-Jewish animus there and elsewhere. Meanwhile, the replacement of Zionist idealism, humanism and secularism with the cynicism, racism and religiosity of contemporary Israeli politics has precipitated a mounting moral crisis and loss of confidence among many committed to the Jewish state.

Although some settlers continue to arrive, one-fifth of Israelis now reside abroad. Jewish emigration is accelerating. Meanwhile, the Arab population of Israel and the occupied territories continues to grow, as does the size of the Palestinian diaspora. By 2015, barring mass deportation, half the people in Israel and the occupied territories will be Arabs. Thereafter, Jews will be a declining minority. The international community — including, I daresay, most of the Jewish diaspora — does not accept the settler propositions that Jews can and should by divine right entrench their rule over the Arabs of the Holy Land, or define them as morally inconvenient and deport them. An antiapartheid-style campaign of ostracism, boycott and disinvestment against this version of a Jewish state has already begun.

In combination, current trends portend the perpetuation of violent struggle by the Palestinians against their Israeli overlords, even as the Jewish state is isolated from without and corrodes from within. These trends lead to escalating antagonism between the United States and the Arab and Muslim worlds. Given the self-identification of many Jews with the state of Israel, these trends also risk a rebirth of anti-Semitism and a spillover of violence to the Jewish diaspora.

Peace — Or the Alternative

So where does this leave the Obama administration's peace project? In Israel's own estimation and that of the region, the Jewish state is at a turning point. Time is running out on the prospects for peaceful engagement between it, the Palestinians, other Arabs and non-Arab Muslims. No peace is conceivable without the full use of American moral and economic leverage to bring Israel to the negotiating table. A decision by Washington to compel Israel to make the choices necessary to achieve mutually respectful coex-

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istence with the Palestinians and other Arabs would, however, lead to immediate political crises in both Israel and the United States. The administration speaks with determination, but is it really prepared to risk this?

Peace with the Palestinians would enable Israel for the first time to be accepted by 340 million Arabs and 1.2 billion non-Arab Muslims as a legitimate part of the Middle East. It would thereby end the conflict in the Holy Land. The key to deradicalization of the Arab and Muslim

worlds, and to ending their violent backlash against the West, it is also the prerequisite for the restoration of peace within the realm of Islam.

The alternative is the current Israeli government's effort to impose a Jewish-dominated state dotted with little Arab ghettos. This is a "success" that Israelis would almost certainly come to regret bitterly. Would a state seen by the world as embodying racism and religious bigotry retain the support of the Jewish diaspora? Would the United States continue indefinitely to guarantee its security? The safety of such an Israel and its citizens would depend on the so-far undemonstrated ability of intimidation, ruthlessly sustained, to grind Arab resistance into acquiescence. Cairo and Amman would have to be kept within a Camp David framework that Egyptians and Jordanians, if allowed to vote, would even now overwhelmingly repudiate.

Israel's right to exist as a state in the Middle East would almost certainly be reviewed in intermittent tests of arms, conducted — as in the case of the Crusader kingdoms in Palestine — over decades, if not centuries. Israel would have to sustain military hegemony in perpetuity over larger, ever more populous and ever more modernized Arab and Muslim neighbors. If these conditions were not met, as they almost certainly could not be, this unilaterally imposed outcome would be an invitation to protracted Arab and Muslim struggle against Israel and its supporters abroad.

It is hard to see this as a formula that leads to anything but eventual disaster for Israel *and* its foreign backers, now essentially limited to the United States. Israel's nuclear doctrine — based as it is on an amalgam of Armageddon with the heroic suicide at Masada — seems to recognize this. On the whole, for sensible people in Israel and for Americans,

the peaceful emergence of a viable Palestinian state in the occupied territories and Gaza looks like a much better bet than self-isolation.

In the meantime, the region presents other challenges — even if none of them has the transformative potential of a peace or continued warfare in the Holy Land. Let me now turn briefly to these.

Iraq and Related Challenges

It is good that the end of the American misadventure in Iraq is in sight. But its termination is not likely to repair the injury it did to the standing of the United States in either the international or Muslim communities. The “surge” averted disaster; the withdrawal may yet bring it. The post-occupation order in Iraq is unlikely to emerge smoothly or without further stressing regional stability. In the land between the two rivers, the United States will leave behind a battleground of grievances. The Kurdish and Sunni Arab minorities, among others, must likely undergo still more suffering before things settle down. There will be no harvest of good will from the carnage in Iraq.

The same seems likely to be true of our eight-year intervention in Afghanistan. We began it with simple and straightforward goals — the apprehension of al-Qaida and the chastisement of its Afghan hosts. But these goals have been buried in a barrage of competing ideological and special-interest objectives. The result is combat in a political vacuum — a war whose only apparent theme is now Western hostility to militant Islam. This has destabilized Pakistan and nurtured a particularly virulent form of terrorism there and in the Pakistani diaspora. It has spurred a recent surge in financial contributions to the Taliban as an apparently heroic resistance to infidel trespasses on Islam.

What then to do about Afghanistan, where everyone admits the most likely outcome is now failure? If you ask a religious scholar or ideologue, you will hear a sermon. From an economist, expect a development scheme. Ask a non-governmental organization, and prepare to receive a program proposal. Ask a general what must be done, and you will get a crisp salute and the best campaign plan military science can devise. People come up with the solutions they know how to put together.

The Obama administration briefly showed signs that it was taking charge of policy rather than — in a strange eva-

The best thing the United States could do for Iraq now is to engage Baghdad's neighbors.

sion of civilian control of the military — delegating its formulation to the generals. It did not follow through. It ended up adopting yet another military-proposed campaign plan. This one features a pacification effort extending over as much as another decade. But al-Qaida has relocated to Pakistan from Afghanistan.

Neither the Taliban leadership nor anyone else in Afghanistan seems to want it to come back.

The proposed pacification campaign is called a “strategy,” but it is not. It strains to find a military way to transform Afghanistan, even though its authors — who are very smart soldiers — recognize there is none. We are still looking for a strategy backed by force. In the meantime, we continue the use of force as a very inadequate substitute for strategy.

Iranian Gains

This brings me, at last, to Iran. Tehran had nothing to do with the assault on America on 9/11, but no nation has benefited more from the American reaction to it than the Islamic Republic. Its revolution seemed to be flickering out when 9/11 happened. In short order, its greatest enemy, the United States, then eliminated its other enemies in both Kabul and Baghdad and embarked on a military rampage through the Islamic world that estranged Americans from our traditional allies there. But wait! It gets even better from the Iranian point of view.

In Afghanistan, the Iranians have been able to sit on the sidelines and watch us exhaust ourselves in inconclusive warfare. In Iraq, Iran is the dominant foreign influence in the country's newly sectarian politics. (Of course, no one can say whether Baghdad will continue its de facto alliance with Tehran after the United States withdraws.) Israel and the United States brushed aside efforts by Damascus to dilute its longstanding dependence on Tehran, thus cementing rather than eroding Iran's influence in Syria.

The 2006 Israeli savaging of Lebanon drove Iran's client movement, Hezbollah, onto the commanding heights of Lebanese politics. This reduced Tehran's need to go through Damascus to affect events in Lebanon or to reach northern Israel. Meanwhile, Israeli and American efforts to ostracize and overthrow the elected Hamas government in Palestine left it nowhere to go but into the arms of Iran. Assertively Shiite Iran has, for the first time, acquired the Sunni Arab

following it had long sought. Current American policy seems clueless about how to reverse these Iranian gains.

Meanwhile, Tehran seems on track to acquire the ability to field its own deterrent to the threats of nuclear attack. Iranians have serially heard from Saddam's Iraq, successive Israeli governments and George W. Bush's America. David Ben-Gurion wrote the book on how to build a clandestine nuclear weapons capability. He skillfully appeased President John F. Kennedy's passion for nonproliferation even as his government subverted and circumvented it. The ayatollahs have read and absorbed the Israeli playbook, minus — one hopes — the bit about Masada. Israelis, better than anyone, know how this script ends — *not* in a war that secures their nuclear monopoly in the region. It is time to start thinking about how to mitigate the undeniable dangers of an Iranian, as well as an Israeli, nuclear arsenal.

I must not close without a brief mention of the long-standing Arab friends of the United States and the West in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea regions. Despite welcome new activism on the part of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council have to a great extent been bystanders as a strange combination of American diplomatic default and military activism has dismantled the regional order that once protected them. Iraq no longer balances Iran. The United States no longer constrains Israel, which has never behaved more belligerently. Iran has acquired unprecedented prestige and influence among Arabs and Muslims. The next stage of nuclear proliferation is upon the region. For the first time ever, Shiism dominates the politics of Arab states traditionally ruled by Sunnis. Islamist terrorism menaces Egyptian and Gulf Arab domestic tranquility, as well as that of the West. The United States, once attentive to Arab security and other concerns, is now obsessed with its own issues and objectives in the region.

The Persian Gulf Arabs have the financial resources but neither the institutions nor the will to mount the unified effort needed to cope with these challenges. They are adrift, not sailing to a new strategic strong point. The drift is taking them away from their traditional reliance on America and toward new partners. These are mainly the so-called BRIC countries of Brazil, Russia, India and China, plus South Africa. But Egypt and the Gulf Arab states seem destined to remain on the strategic sidelines,

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not in the game. They will not step forward to take the lead in addressing the disputes of which I have been speaking. Hence the need for continuing American leadership.

Iraq and the Region

So what is to be done? In the case of Israel and Palestine, a failure to decide is, in fact, a fateful decision. The avoidance of choice risks future tragedy for America, as well as for Israel and the Arabs.

The best thing the United States could do for Iraq now is to engage Baghdad's neighbors. All should share our interest in supporting non-violent Iraqi solutions to Iraqi problems. We need to work with Turkey and Arab allies to enlist Syria, Iran and others in this task and hold them to it.

In the region as a whole, the American effort to build a coalition of opposition to Iran has failed. We must now join our allies and friends in offering those who have come to depend on Tehran alternatives to doing so. Iran is a proud country that will not surrender to threats. Its people remain obsessed with the affront they believe we pose to their national identity, independence and honor among nations. Without a parallel normalization of U.S.-Iranian relations, there is no hope of resolving the nuclear issue in a way that mitigates its menace. Pres. Obama's several messages to the Iranian people have opened a path to respectful Iranian-American dialogue that might lead to this. We must persist in inviting Tehran to walk this path with us.

Finally, in Afghanistan, we continue to lack a comprehensive strategy. We must leverage religious and tribal realities rather than seeking to overturn them. Our objective should be to consolidate the exclusion of al-Qaida from Afghan territory. To do this, we must work with Pakistan and in partnership with friendly Arab and Muslim countries, not at cross-purposes with them; and we must support, not undercut, the Pashtun tribes. This, not a Western military presence on Afghan soil, is how we helped Afghans expel the Soviets from their homeland. This, ratified by a reconvened loya jirga and supported with generous economic assistance, is how we can keep al-Qaida out of Afghanistan while we work to expel it from Pakistan.

Pres. Obama's message to the world's Muslims in Cairo last June illuminated a different way forward than the road we appear to be on. We can yet take that path. It is time to do so. ■

DIPLOMACY REBOOTED: MAKING DIGITAL STATECRAFT A REALITY

THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS NOW IN A POSITION TO BUILD NOVEL APPLICATIONS TO SUPPORT THE MISSION OF DIPLOMACY.

By CHRIS BRONK

Incredibly heartening is the news that at the close of this decade, the State Department's top leadership is once again taking a serious look at the role of information technology in the mission of diplomacy. But the challenges will be very different than 10 years ago, when making the department a "wired" organization involved the deployment of digital infrastructure — mostly computer and networking hardware. The new thrust of digitized diplomacy will primarily involve software, which will likely stand at odds with State's current processes and culture.

New applications and structures are now changing the face of IT. Cloud and mobile computing, browser-based applications, weblogs and social media will change the way almost all information workers (including diplomats) do their jobs, and may challenge the method by which the entire department functions.

State is now connected, but must take stock and determine the best avenues for building on the digital foundation constructed nearly a decade ago. The most significant change in diplomacy since the advent of the telegram is at hand.

Opening the Net

Wiring State was a project given highest priority by former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who doggedly pursued the goal of getting Internet computers on the desktop of each em-

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ployee and deploying OpenNet Plus, not only inside the Harry S Truman Building but also in the hundreds of missions around the globe. Admirably, the project was completed in roughly 18 months and deepened linkages between Main State and overseas posts, as well as digitally connecting the department to the world.

Fernando Burbano, State's first chief information officer, prepared the foundation for what the late USIA-hand Wilson Dizard Jr. had begun to illuminate in his *Meganet* (Westview Press, 1998) and fleshed out in *Digital Diplomacy — U.S. Foreign Policy in the Information Age* (Praeger, 2001). As Dizard opined, "Digital diplomacy issues and techniques have had to be shoehorned into a policymaking system run by officials who were initially uninterested in and often suspicious of the subject." Nonetheless, Sec. Powell recognized that foreign affairs would have to go digital, and ordered that the infrastructure for making that transition be constructed at breakneck speed. Thanks to this executive interest, Burbano got the Internet onto the department's desktops, and did it quickly.

State is now in a position to build novel applications to support the mission of diplomacy. It does so in interesting times. After a few years of post-Internet bubble reflection, the pace of change and development in the IT sector is once again surging. While some technologies will fall into what IT consultancy Gartner, Inc., labels "the trough of disillusionment," many will thrive, becoming de facto standards for organizational communications and productivity. The department will need to make wise bets on what standards it can accept and which ones it should ignore.

In doing so, its leadership must stay focused on the information piece of IT, adopting technologies that more effectively accommodate the complexity of international affairs and man-

age the “information tsunami” that flows through the organization daily, threatening to swamp those charged with crafting our nation’s foreign policy.

IT and the Mission of Diplomacy

We live at a time when half the planet is able to log on to a communications medium where there are almost no barriers to international exchange of information — the Internet. This connectivity, of course, has already changed the practice of diplomacy. For nearly a century we relied upon trusted envoys to serve the national interest in distant foreign capitals, employing the telegraph to stay in touch with the mother country, usually via the briefest of messages. Today, communications may flow from a BlackBerry to Berlin, Bamako or Baghdad instantaneously.

Yet though the department is connected, wired and wirelessly, by fiber and satellite, its official communication channel remains the same telegraphically-based cable format that George Kennan used to send his prescient analysis from Moscow in 1946. E-mail has replaced the telegraph, of course; but the organizational process built around it has yet to leave the building. For all the discussion of technology, ultimately its adoption and use are largely dependent upon how well it fits an organization’s process.

Organizational change rarely comes easily, and is often prompted by crisis. In industry, if companies fail to innovate or adapt, they soon decline and fade away, but government is different. Without a balance sheet by which to measure effectiveness, identifying metrics to evaluate the performance of an agency can prove elusive.

At the IRS or U.S. Postal Service, benchmarking efficiency can be as straightforward as counting tax returns or pieces of mail. And at NASA and the National Institutes of Health, success can be identified by scientific or tech-

The most significant change in diplomacy since the advent of the telegram is likely at hand.

nical breakthroughs.

Diplomacy is harder to categorize in a spreadsheet or win-loss columns. We know that diplomacy is an information-intensive business, but we have not entirely figured out how to apply technology to meet the mission of statecraft, an area populated by an ever-increasing number of actors, many of whom are not states.

Getting the Balance Right

Today, IT is the State Department’s electronic nervous system. Where it was once viewed as a career-enhancing skill to learn how paper moved around the department, it is probably more useful today to understand where the bits flow. E-mail is the overwhelmingly dominant form of communication, likely making up more than half of the digital traffic across the department’s network. Entrusted with delivery and storage of the bits is State’s IT organ, the Bureau of Information Resource Management, which runs the enterprise network that delivers cables and e-mail, accesses Web pages and completes telephone calls. IRM is the physical apparatus of the department’s digital nervous system, its interconnected system of links and nodes. But there’s a lot of IT at State that’s not in IRM; perhaps as much as half of the department’s \$1.2 billion IT budget resides in other bureaus.

Across the department, information technology is employed to transmit, process, digest and disseminate infor-

mation. IT facilitates political and economic reporting, is key to visa adjudication, and delivers new media for public diplomacy. Nearly a decade later, the words of former Director General of the Foreign Service and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman at the Net Diplomacy conference in 2001 remain true: “Vital to our ability to achieve [our diplomatic] goals will be an ability to create and, if we are lucky, lead a diplomacy for the 21st century. The ability to manage and master information technology will be vital if we are to succeed.”

So how well has State done at meeting Grossman’s mandate? I would argue that it has achieved what most government organizations have, in roughly the same period of time. It has implemented an IT strategic plan, with the emphasis on the capital T. That has brought a rise in data traffic and the need for larger digital “pipes” connecting Washington to the world.

Day-to-day expectations of big “T,” which falls under the auspices of the deputy chief information officer for operations, are straightforward, but daunting: keep the networks up and running 24/7, year-round; make sure no data are lost or corrupted; and strive for increased efficiency and declining cost.

The other side of IT in the mission of diplomacy is the big “I,” or information. As hard as IRM’s operations job may be, the information or knowledge piece requires not only an eye for efficiency, but a vision for the future of diplomacy. “Will Twitter be a good public diplomacy tool?” “Can blogs supplement cables?” “Is e-mail overloading desk officers?” These are just some of the many questions to be considered.

An organization can spend all the money in the world on hardware, but without ideas on how to adopt and harness game-changing technologies to distill a more useful information picture or manage relationships, that investment will produce scant returns.

As a key component of the nation's "soft power," diplomacy will need to harness the potential of big "I" technologies if Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's vision of "smart power" is to be realized. We know there is no reason for U.S. diplomats not to be the best-informed on the planet. The challenge is in finding new applications, ways of working and skill sets to do that. For the department, the information resources available must not only facilitate communication, but intense and rapid learning.

Getting the Size Right

In computing, government has been present from the beginning. In 1946, the same year that Kennan transmitted his famous "Long Telegram," the University of Pennsylvania built ENIAC, the world's first true digital computer, for the United States Army. For every large mainframe that IBM or the Digital Equipment Corp. designed, Uncle Sam could be counted on as a major customer. From the 1950s through the 1980s, the U.S. government bought big systems, usually composed of large computing cores connected to large numbers of "dumb" terminals.

State was no different than the Department of Defense or the Federal Aviation Administration in seeing merit in automation. It rolled out the Foreign Affairs Information Management Effort, the first of many information management plans, in 1964. FAIME was an interagency effort, aimed at modernizing "the flow and handling of information within and among the Department of State, the Agency for International Development, the United States Information Agency, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency." Though well intended, it died quietly a few years later.

After significant investment in Wang hardware and software, the department eventually made its way to the same

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Windows-based personal computers just about everyone else in America was buying in the 1990s. This did not mean that State's big-project mindset had been relegated to the dustbin, however. Indeed, for most of the past decade, IRM has put considerable effort into SMART — the Department of State's Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset.

SMART represents an increasingly obsolescent orthodoxy of computer-driven productivity designed around applications on each user's PC and servers. When complete, SMART will probably be the last big IT project of its kind to be undertaken at the department, and probably the last one to cater to the networked personal computer, as well.

Three "Cs" conspire against such future projects: collaboration software, cybersecurity concerns and, finally, the potential of the computing cloud. Collaboration software is a necessity for work with other agencies, nongovernmental organizations, industry and academia, but it is confounded by many barriers to use, such as large on-computer software downloads or license costs. The vehicle for collaboration is the Internet browser, not something that comes in a box. Cybersecurity, for its part, will require more robust network controls, increased simplicity and limited functionality in which the browser replaces many client programs on each desktop PC.

The third "C" — the "cloud" — is a label for always-on networked resources, from spreadsheets and word processors to storage and e-mail. Cloud computing — what we thought of a few years back as "service-oriented architecture" — will exert a powerful force on government IT. It is back to the future, with massive server farms, the new mainframes of the day, supporting Web-connected smartphones, BlackBerrys and, the latest rage, netbooks, as well as desktops and laptops.

While State employees will proba-

*SMART will probably be
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to cater to the networked
personal computer.*

bly still want computers and monitors back at the office, the expectation is that wherever they go, their data will go with them. As anyone who has settled a trivia debate with an iPhone can tell you, we are moving toward a time of device-based augmented cognition (and distraction). In this environment, tools that quickly connect users to valuable information with minimal sorting and sifting are desirable. Users want programs that will tell them what they may want to read or watch based on prior-usage behavior and interests — which Amazon is already doing with its customer data. For the desk officer or press attaché, wouldn't it be nice to have machines doing some of the reading and flagging before messages hit the inbox?

An Information Plan

News of the creation of innovation adviser positions at State is heartening, as well. It is already working with social media — Facebook, Twitter and YouTube — and strategies for engaging in many-to-many dialogue with foreign publics, revolutionizing the business of public diplomacy.

Also vital is adoption of this technology by the department's entire work force. IT is no longer simply the domain of the embassy communicator, toiling in some vault somewhere to

send and receive the day's cable traffic. All department employees should see their responsibilities and capabilities change due to the continuing march of progress, if they haven't already. If this means that each FS member should be a blogger for the department at one point or another, so much the better.

While State has made significant strides in the adoption of IT to perform the mission of diplomacy, they are modest in comparison with the investment the Pentagon has made in applying information technology to its missions under the "Revolution in Military Affairs" banner. An IT-driven overhaul of diplomacy will require still greater investment, outreach and acceptance of culture change.

On that last point, the stark reality remains that the transition at State from a Cold War posture to one able to cope with the multilayered contemporary international system is incomplete. The department will need to look more closely at multilateral diplomacy and the value of "intermestic" relations, where allegiance to country is on a relatively low rung.

To tackle this, a bulking-up of the department's big "I," little "t" components is needed. A revitalized information skunkworks built on the model of IRM's Office of eDiplomacy — preferably reporting high up the administrative chain, perhaps directly to the Deputy Secretary of State — would send an important message on efforts to infuse innovation into the practice of diplomacy. In addition, the department's CIO needs to become a *true* chief, not just the person at the helm of IRM.

Finally, career tracks that reward IT-savvy generalists and recruitment efforts designed to draw more technical and engineering graduates into the the department ought to be considered.

Tempering any vision for IT at State, we must recognize that science and technology have a somewhat tarnished history there. James E. Webb,

We must recognize that science and technology have a somewhat tarnished history at State.

who served as under secretary of State under Dean Acheson, devoted considerable effort to allocating additional resources to science and technology in diplomacy. But those pursuits took a back seat to the Cold War. Outmaneuvered by Paul Nitze, Webb abandoned this work and stepped down, eventually becoming President John F. Kennedy's pick to lead NASA through the run-up to the Apollo moon landings.

Now we are again at a pivotal point for diplomacy. The leaders of State and Defense recognize that soft power, engagement and options other than force are all vital to the U.S. position in the world. Sec. Clinton is not only firmly engaged in the business of diplomacy but attentive to the needs of the department. She has, in the words of David Rothkopf, "defined a role for herself in the Obamaverse: often bad cop to his good cop, spine stiffener when it comes to tough adversaries and nurturer of new strategies."

The department's IT leaders should do everything possible to see that advances in State's digital domain get a prominent place under the "new strategies" heading.

To meet its most important strategic goals — on global warming, the continuing economic crisis, nonproliferation and a host of regional issues — the department will require a practical, pragmatic digital strategy of the sort that Barack Obama employed to win the presidency. ■

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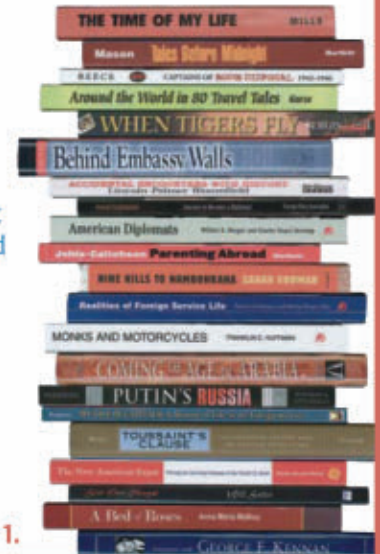
Calling All Foreign Service Authors!

The November 2010 issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* will include a list of recently published books written by Foreign Service-affiliated authors.

FS authors whose books have been published in 2009 or 2010, and have not been featured in the roundup, are invited to send a copy of the book, along with a press release or backgrounder on the book and author to:

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AFSA

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ANNUAL REPORT

2009

Working for a Stronger AFSA

BY SUSAN R. JOHNSON, PRESIDENT

The past year marked the 85th anniversary of AFSA's creation as a professional association. Overall, it was an eventful year. AFSA's longstanding effort to close the overseas pay gap for entry and mid-level Foreign Service employees, energetically pursued by former AFSA Presidents Tony Holmes and John Naland, State Vice President Steve Kashkett and AFSA professional staff, finally met with at least temporary success, supported by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. With the help of key members of Congress, this inequity should be eliminated by 2011 through three successive pay increases. State and USAID implemented the pay-gap fix immediately and were soon joined by FAS and FCS. IBB needed extra "encouragement" but the issue is largely resolved there, as well.

This success demonstrates how the interests of the Foreign Service are best served

when management and labor work together, across all FS agencies, to improve policies and promote equity for all.

The project to renovate AFSA's long-neglected headquarters was successfully completed and the displaced professional staff moved back last spring. The modernized office space now offers new facilities to expand outreach, build alliances, improve operations and better serve and support our members and their families. Our upgraded building provides a strong foundation for bringing our Web site and IT infrastructure into line with the times — a Governing Board priority. AFSA's former legislative director, Ian Houston, whose dedicated work on the overseas comparability pay issue contributed directly to our success, was selected as our new executive director and is working to improve internal structure and operations.

The 2009 AFSA Governing Board elections were strongly contested and highlighted the pressing need for reform of our election procedures — particularly as they relate to candidates' means of communication with voters. Voters elected a mix of the two competing slates, and the new Governing Board quickly came together to work for the interests of AFSA and the Foreign Service.

Several candidates filed



AUSTIN TRACY

complaints with the AFSA Elections Committee, which determined that violations had occurred, but lacked the resources to determine whether the violations affected the outcome of the election. The committee certified the results of the election and advised the complainants that they had the

right to file a complaint with the Department of Labor. Several did so.

AFSA is working with the Department of Labor to clarify and streamline our election procedures.

The Governing Board held a strategic planning retreat in early November and identified four overarching goals, with key deliverables under each: (1) securing resources, improving operations and protecting benefits; (2) increasing cooperation with management and presence in policy development; (3) improving the image and outreach of the Foreign Service; and (4) improving internal AFSA organization. For details, refer to the January issue of *AFSA News*.

AFSA is reaching out to management across all five Foreign Service agencies. At the State Department we are talking to the Office of Policy Planning about how to revive the Open Forum and encourage productive use of the Dissent Channel. With the Human Resources Bureau, we have stressed the value of AFSA participation in important processes such as the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review and Secretary Clinton's Diplomacy 3.0 program. Beyond the foreign affairs agencies,



MICHAEL LIAACOVA

AFSA State VP Steve Kashkett (right) officially welcomes Secretary Clinton on her first day at the State Department, Jan. 22, 2009, while AFSA President John Naland (left) and audio technician Travis Lightfoot look on.

AFSA is also seeking a more institutionalized role in the preparation of studies and reports such as “A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future,” the joint American Academy of Diplomacy-Stimson Center study that paved the way to increased resources for the five foreign affairs agencies, and the Academy of American Diplomacy’s proposed analysis of the training and professional development needed by the Foreign Service of the 21st century.

Demand for the services of AFSA’s grievance attorneys has grown steadily in recent years and we continue to seek constructive engagement with management.

Key committees in the House and Senate invited AFSA to testify in hearings concerning Government Accountability Office reports, addressing issues such as mid-level staffing gaps and up-stretches, especially in hard-to-fill posts; deficiencies in language capability and training capacity; the exponential growth in requirements for diplomatic security; and gaps in benefits for civilian federal employees deployed in conflict zones. Testimony is posted on our Web site (www.afsa.org).

2010 promises to be a year of opportunities. Your Governing Board is committed to strengthening AFSA’s capacity, seeking more productive cooperation with management in all five of our agencies and fostering a culture of excellence, teamwork and professionalism. We want to make our Foreign Service the effective agent of U.S. international leadership that our nation requires, by working to make it better supported, more respected and a more satisfying career choice. Please let us hear from you during this coming year. Engaged members make AFSA’s voice stronger. □

A Message from Executive Director Ian Houston

The AFSA Annual Report keeps you, our “shareholders,” informed of our overall activities, membership trends and financial health. Our intent is to spotlight key matters of interest to you.

2009 marked the return of AFSA staff, at long last, to the freshly renovated headquarters. Soon after, AFSA said farewell to an excellent Governing Board under the leadership of John Naland, and we welcomed a newly elected and vibrant board under the direction of Susan Johnson.

Throughout the changes, our leadership (both the former and the new) and the AFSA staff remained extraordinarily dedicated to serving our unique membership. This spirit of commitment and volunteerism extends to the many standing committees of AFSA, as well.

As always, we are very grateful for our members’ support on many levels, and the staff looks forward to serving you in 2010. Please feel free to contact me at houston@afsa.org anytime. □

Life in the Foreign Service

BY BRIAN AGGELER



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David Passage, Molly Williamson

Labor Management: Steady Representation and Far-Reaching Victories

In 2009, the AFSA Labor Management office provided timely guidance, assistance and representation on a vast array of employment and retirement-related issues to literally thousands of our State, USAID, Commerce, Agriculture, IBB and retiree members.

AFSA scored an important victory in June, when the Foreign Service Grievance Board found that the Department of State had violated the Foreign Affairs Manual by failing to consider 68 recently promoted members of the Senior Foreign Service for performance pay in 2007. The FSGB ordered State to convene performance review boards to determine whether the grievants would have been awarded performance pay had they been properly reviewed. The department will review all SFS members who should have been eligible for performance pay (not just the 68 parties to the grievance) for the years 2007 and 2008.

Another success came in April, when the Grievance Board found that the Foreign Agricultural Service had assigned three Civil Service employees abroad without properly advertising the position to FS employees, in violation of the AFSA/FAS collective bargaining agreement. FAS appealed the ruling to the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board. In December, the FSLRB denied the appeal and upheld the Grievance Board's decision.

In addition to these far-reaching cases, AFSA assisted hundreds of employees with grievances over false and prejudicial evaluations, denial of tenure or promotion, low ranking and referral to the Performance Standards Board; disciplinary actions ranging from reprimands and suspensions without pay to separation for cause; entry-level salaries, skill code changes, allowances, Rehabilitation Act violations and many

other issues.

Two significant victories involved the Foreign Commercial Service. In one case, the Grievance Board ordered FCS to pay an employee a Residence Transaction Allowance covering closing costs and fees that could amount to as much as \$25,000. In another case, the board ordered FCS to issue a language incentive payment that the grievant was entitled to for service between 2001 and 2004. The employee received a check for more than \$25,000.

In another important development, AFSA's Legal Defense Fund provided \$5,000 to an FCS employee for retention of a private attorney (an expert in security clearances) in an appeal of the revocation of his security clearance. The Office of Security alleged that the employee had made inconsistent statements to Commerce Department security agents during several interviews yet denied the employee access to the agents' reports of those interviews, thus depriving him of due process. At press time, a decision had not been made.

Labor Management attorneys and other professional staff also assisted hundreds of members with assignment issues, including appealing Diplomatic Security Bureau assignment restrictions; security and cybersecurity infractions and violations; DS, Office of the Inspector General and Office of Civil Rights investigations, including the investigation of scores of FS employees for alleged Passport Information Electronic Records System violations; congressional staff inquiries; and many other issues, including credit for prior military service, in-state tuition rates for children of FS members, language incentive pay, R&R, allowances and reimbursement of medical expenses. We were handed a favorable ruling for two DS candidates facing expulsion, after our attorneys traveled to the Federal Law

Enforcement Training Center in Georgia to represent them.

In addition to our representation of individual employees, AFSA negotiated or consulted with the Department of State on a wide variety of issues, including caps on the number of linked onward assignments at 170 for employees volunteering for Iraq and Afghanistan in 2010; basic special agent course training requirements and fitness-for-duty examination regulations for DS agents; new foreign contact reporting and intent-to-marry regulations extending certain benefits to domestic partners; and annual promotion precepts.

— Sharon Papp, General Counsel

Member Services: Reaching Out in 2009

AFSA welcomed 1,193 new members in 2009. Twenty-seven of those invested in the association as lifetime members, and an additional 32 existing members converted to lifetime membership.

AFSA continues its tradition of welcoming incoming officers and specialists to lunch to inform them of the benefits of membership, and the association's history, achievements and goals. In 2009, AFSA hosted 1,326 students in 18 A-100, specialist and Development Leadership Initiative classes. Additionally, AFSA hosted three hail-and-farewell receptions for employees participating in the retirement seminars at FSI.

More than 1,900 members participated in AFSA's six insurance plans in 2009.

— Janet Hedrick, Director,
Member Services

Legislative Affairs: A Rewarding Year

The year began on an upbeat note. The State Department and USAID budgets called for a significant increase in both personnel and funding. AFSA was able to achieve, for all branches that we represent, many of our long-sought legislative goals, including comparability pay, funding and equality for members of the Foreign Service.

Overseas Comparability Pay

AFSA's long-term fight to end the Foreign Service overseas pay gap took a major step forward with inclusion of key language in the Fiscal Year 2009 Supplemental Appropriations bill, signed into law in June (P.L. 111-32). Additional language was included that ended the gap for FY 2010, in a provision signed into law as part of the FY 2010 Omnibus Appropriations bill (P.L. 111-117) in December. AFSA made special efforts to be certain that these fixes applied to all FS agencies. We thank our members, key supporters on Capitol Hill, and many colleagues at the State Department and other agencies who helped make this long-term goal possible. We will continue to advocate a permanent fix.

Funding

The Foreign Service agencies all saw an increase in funding this year, which will help bring our diplomatic corps to full capacity, after many years of insufficient resources. Only the Agriculture Appropriations Bill (P.L. 111-80) was passed and signed into law on its own; all other funding increases were part of the FY 2010 omnibus appropriations bill.

The diplomatic and consular programs for State received funding to hire more than 700 new Foreign Service personnel. USAID received funding for operating expenses and to hire 300 additional Foreign Service employees.

The Foreign Commercial Service, the Foreign Agricultural Service and the International Broadcasting Bureau received additional funding, as well, to support increases of American and locally-engaged staff and FS comparability costs.

Unused Sick Leave

On Oct. 28, President Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 111-84). This contained provisions that will benefit federal employees in several ways, two of which are particularly important for the Foreign Service. First, the bill permits employees in the Federal Employee Retirement System and Foreign Service Pension System to count unused sick leave toward years of service when calculating their annuities. Second, employees who had previously retired under FERS and FSPS, and had waived retirement credit for their years of federal service, can now, upon re-employment with the federal government, redeposit the annuity contributions they had withdrawn, plus interest.

First-Time Homebuyer Tax Credit

AFSA worked with Congress to help bring about another victory, ensuring that the Foreign Service community is treated

fairly and equally under the law. On Nov. 6, the president signed into law the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-92), allowing members of the Foreign Service to take advantage of the \$8,000 first-time homebuyer tax credit.

Domestic Partners

Following a June 17 announcement by President Barack Obama extending certain federal benefits to same-sex domestic partners, Sec. Clinton announced an additional list of benefits that would be extended to the same-sex partners of members of the Foreign Service. These include diplomatic passports, inclusion on employee travel orders, use of medical facilities and other benefits. Although this did not require a change in federal law, several members of Congress were key in forging discussions with the Secretary on this long-overdue change.

AFSA on Capitol Hill

AFSA continued to have a strong presence on Capitol Hill during 2009, meeting with key members and congressional staff to brief them on issues critical to the Foreign Service. AFSA was also invited to

testify at several congressional hearings. Former President John Naland appeared before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State/Foreign Operations to speak about resources needed to build the work force, as well as FY 2010 funding. Current President Susan Johnson testified several times before congressional subcommittees on diplomatic readiness and security.

— Casey Frary,
Legislative Director



AFSA President Susan R. Johnson (right) and Amb. Ron Neumann prepare to testify before the Senate on Sept. 24.

AUSTIN TRACY

Outreach and Media: Getting the Word Out

AFSA's 2009 outreach initiatives promoted three important goals: broadening the Foreign Service constituency; 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 retirees' backgrounds and skills in telling our story to audiences nationwide.

Speakers Program

One of AFSA's most effective outreach elements is our Speakers Program, which deployed nearly 500 Foreign Service retiree speakers during the year to explain the importance of U.S. diplomacy for American national interests to more than 30,000 attendees in 44 states and Washington, D.C. Audiences ranged from world affairs councils and universities to civic organizations, "town meetings" and high schools.

Of particular note: former Director General of the Foreign Service and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Ambassador Marc Grossman enthralled some 400 faculty and students at American University's annual Caroline and Ambassador Charles Adair Memorial Lecture, sponsored by AFSA, on "The Challenges Facing the Foreign Service" on Sept. 2.

Speakers were provided with issue updates from AFSA, and were also encouraged to exhort audience members to contact their congressional representatives to request sustained funding for U.S. diplomatic readiness.

Media

AFSA's media outreach efforts remained intensive in 2009. Either directly or through AFSA retirees, we placed 62 interviews, letters to the editor, articles and press releases advocating increased public and congressional support for U.S. diplomacy in lead-



Amb. Marc Grossman, left, delivers Adair lecture while AFSA Communications Director Tom Switzer and A.U. Washington Semester Program Dean David Brown (right) look on.

ing media entities including the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the Associated Press, NPR and CNN, among others.

AFSA's Memorial Plaque Ceremony drew the heaviest media coverage in its history. Held at the State Department on Foreign Affairs Day (May 1), and featuring Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, it was covered by five network TV cameras and some 10 journalists from major media. The result was in-depth treatment of this event via some 33 media outlets nationwide, including NBC, CNN, ABC, the Associated Press and NPR.

Outreach

AFSA expanded its outreach efforts in 2009 in an ever-evolving strategy to tell the story of the Foreign Service to the American public. The Fund for American Diplomacy is our primary vehicle for public outreach, and continues to support such outstanding programs as the AFSA dissent awards and memorial plaques; our book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*; and our minority intern program. One of these initiatives, the AFSA/Thursday Lunch Group internship program, inspired 2005 intern Stacy Sessions to take the Foreign Service exam. She began her diplomatic career in June as one of 98 individuals in the 146th A-100 class.

We also revived a corporate relations initiative that aims to engage the private sec-

tor in supporting AFSA programs around the country. This effort is already taking off, and AFSA members will see an increase in programs in 2010 as a result of newly forged partnerships.

Another highlight from among our expanded outreach programs is AFSA's recently established presence on Facebook (www.facebook.com/afsapage), which to date has garnered more than 1,200 fans. We urge you to become a Facebook fan of AFSA if you have not done so already.

Exploritas

The year saw big changes in the Elderhostel program, most notably its adoption of a new name — Exploritas — and the opening of enrollment to anyone over the age of 21. The AFSA Exploritas program also came under new leadership, as retired FSO Bernie Alter took over the portfolio from Janice Bay. The AFSA programs remain highly popular, following the time-tested model of using retired FSOs to explain current issues in foreign policy from a Foreign Service perspective. More than 700 people participated in AFSA's programs in 2009, which took place in Washington, D.C., Chautauqua, N.Y., St. Petersburg, Fla. and Tucson, Ariz.

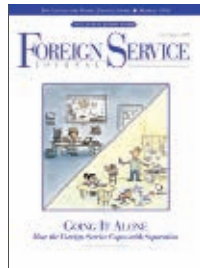
— Tom Switzer, Communications Director, and Asgeir Sigfusson, Marketing/Outreach Manager

Foreign Service Journal: A More Accessible Web Presence

Despite operating without office space or access to its archives for the first three months of the year, the *Foreign Service Journal* continued to produce monthly issues without interruption.

The *Journal* took a significant step forward in upgrading its Web presence by contracting with a local company, Texterity, to put each issue in a format that is much easier to use and search, and is also more attractive. Partly as a result of our enhanced digital capabilities, we more than doubled the amount of online advertising we had projected for 2009, a trend we hope to build on in the new year.

During 2009, 18,773 unique visitors, or an average of 1,800 per issue, sought out the new-format *FSJ* online. They read, on average, 11 pages per visitor. Given that, in general, 15 percent of the visitors each month were returnees, we estimate that the *Journal* has a core online readership of between 250 and 300.



Among e-readers, the most popular issue, by far, was the March issue on coping with unaccompanied assignments, with 2,826 unique visitors. Next in popularity was the July-August issue featuring summer fiction, with 2,658 viewers, followed by

the May issue on FAS and FCS with 2,352. The April focus on “NATO at 60” and the October issue on public diplomacy each had more than 2,000 viewers.

One goal in upgrading our online presence is to make the *FSJ*'s resources on the Foreign Service and the practice of American diplomacy more accessible to the broader public. So we are happy to note that by the end of the year, approximately 17 percent of our e-readers came to the *FSJ* via the major search engines — looking for information on “USAID foreign service” or “foreign service,” to cite two of the top search terms. We look forward to pushing that number up in 2010.

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor

Foreign Service Books: Inside a U.S. Embassy

Sales of AFSA's popular introduction to the Foreign Service, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, were strong in 2009. Rising interest in Foreign Service careers, coupled with renewed enthusiasm for public service sparked by President Barack Obama's election, has boosted book sales for the year to 6,400. This brings the total number of books sold since its 2003 debut to about 73,000. *Inside a U.S. Embassy* has been adopted for more than 40 university courses, and a Chinese publisher is translating the book into Simple Chinese.

An all-new edition of *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, subtitled *Diplomacy at Work*, will be published in the fall of 2010. AFSA received four offers from publishers for the new edition, but determined that the best path was to maintain our own role as the publisher. In connection with this decision, this year AFSA has partnered with Potomac Books for distribution of *Inside a U.S. Embassy* and established Foreign Service Books as the book publishing division of the association.

— Shawn Dorman, Editor/Publisher, Foreign Service Books



AFSA student merit award winners at the Foreign Affairs Day merit awards reception, AFSA HQ, May 1. Back row (left to right): Amb. C. Edward Dillery, Chairman of AFSA Committee on Education; Adam Scott, Zachary Charles, Joshua Downes, Arjun Dheer, Christopher Wilson, Joseph Kenny and AFSA President John Naland. Front row (left to right): Stephanie Hunt, Rachel Midura, Megan Tribble, Tomir Marquardt, Katherine Neitzke and Anna Leah Berstein-Simpson.

Scholarship Program Highlights

Under the oversight of the AFSA Committee on Education, the Scholarship Program bestowed \$35,700 in Academic and Art Merit Awards to 25 Foreign Service high school seniors in 2009.

Meanwhile, 74 children of Foreign Service employees received AFSA need-based Financial Aid Scholarships for undergraduate college study in the 2009-2010 school year, totaling \$160,050.

Between these two programs, AFSA has been privileged to assist 99 students in 2009 with aid totaling \$195,750 — the most AFSA has ever bestowed.

In 2009, Ambassador Rozanne L. (Roz) Ridgway established a Perpetual Financial Aid scholarship, and Mr. Stephen Hubler renewed his scholarship. Mr. Norton W. Bell added to his scholarship, and Mr. Eric Melby increased a scholarship honoring his parents.

DACOR increased its Financial Aid Scholarship support by \$5,000 to offer a total of \$40,000 in scholarships in its name. Finally, AFSA continues to participate in the Combined Federal Campaign and United Way.

— Lori Dec, Scholarship Director

AFSA Plays Crucial Role in Landmark AAD Report: “A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future”

AFSA was a primary collaborator in a critical study, first launched in the fall of 2008, and then promoted and utilized throughout 2009, by the American Academy of Diplomacy and the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington, D.C.

The report, “A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future: Fixing the Crisis in Diplomatic Readiness,” found that the State Department, USAID and the other foreign affairs agencies will continue to lack the tools to meet today’s complex global challenges unless major increases in resources and personnel occur over the next five years. It called for substantial investments in diplomatic and development assistance to rebuild America’s foreign affairs capability, including a nearly 50-percent increase in Foreign Service personnel.

A failure to act on these urgent needs, according to the study, would leave our nation ill-equipped to carry out a global leadership role or respond to problems such as terrorism, natural disasters and other situations that demand a U.S. presence.

The report made recommendations in the four major categories of foreign affairs activity — core diplomacy, public diplomacy, economic assistance and recon-

struction/stabilization — and provided Congress and the new president with a blueprint for fixing the human capital crisis that has hobbled diplomacy worldwide, crippled its response to emergencies and inappropriately thrown additional foreign policy burdens onto the military in recent years.

In 2009, then-AFSA President John Naland joined study leaders such as Amb. Thomas Boyatt, Amb. Ronald Neumann, Amb. Thomas Pickering and others, in bringing the study’s message to lawmakers, prominent civic leaders and the general public, with positive results: additional resources, including new positions, have been allocated to the foreign affairs agencies.

“This historic study made a genuine difference in shaping views and bringing about real change,” says AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston.

Pushing for Results

AFSA facilitated the AAD/Stimson Center’s efforts through the following actions:

- AFSA President John Naland provided input and helped introduce the report at its public and congressional launch, beginning in the fall of 2008 and continuing

through 2009.

- AFSA arranged press releases and article placements for the report’s rollout in leading media, including the *Washington Post*, and facilitated follow-on discussions with other media nationwide.

- After the report’s release, the American Academy of Diplomacy conducted a nationwide public education program to explain the realities of the Foreign Service today, and how those institutions can be strengthened to make our diplomacy more effective. One part of that effort was to organize small groups of FS retirees to meet with key lawmakers in their home districts. AFSA provided the names of (and mailed invitations to) Foreign Service retiree activists around the U.S. Many of them contacted their members of Congress advocating support for this critical resource increase, and they also participated in AAD’s outreach programs.

Project Chairman Amb. Thomas Boyatt points to two things that distinguished the “FAB” project from the beginning. “First, we saw the publication of the report as the start, not the end, of the process. We spent as much money, sweat and tears lobbying for our recommendations within the executive and legislative branches as we did producing the report.”

“Second,” Boyatt continues, “we did not engage in pre-emptive capitulation. When our recommendation for the addition of 4,735 new positions was published, most colleagues reacted along the lines of ‘non-starter,’ ‘no way’ and ‘ridiculous.’ But in the last 15 months about 3,500 of those positions have been authorized and funded.”

The report can be found at www.academyofdiplomacy.org/programs/fab_project.html

— Tom Switzer,
Communications Director

AFSA Headquarters Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

Left to right: AFSA President John Naland, former President Tony Holmes, Executive Director Ian Houston, Treasurer Andrew Winter and former President John Limbert cut the ribbon to officially mark AFSA headquarters’ reopening, May 28.



CHRISTINE WARREN

AFSA Awards: A Unique Tradition

The annual awards ceremony took place at the State Department on June 18. Senator Sam Nunn, the recipient of AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award, was introduced by the 2005 winner, Senator Richard Lugar, R-Ind.

Three members of the Foreign Service took home awards for constructive dissent: Barron Rosen (the Tex Harris Award for an FS specialist), Jeffrey Collins (the William R. Rivkin Award for a mid-level officer) and Michael Gonzales (the William R. Rivkin Award for a mid-level officer).

The AFSA Constructive Dissent Awards are unique in the U.S. government; no other organization recognizes its federal employees for voicing a dissenting opinion. Yet it is constructive dissent that causes foreign policy to be reworked and improved. So it is no coincidence that the award cere-



MIKELA THOMPSON

The AFSA award winners get to know each other before the June 18 ceremony at the State Department. Left to right: Ken Kero-Mentz, Lily Hightower, Megan Gallardo, Barron Rosen, Jeff Collins and Michael Gonzales. (Absent: Erica Krug)

mony at State is held in the Benjamin Franklin Room, where participants are surrounded by paintings of America's original constructive dissenters: the Founding Fathers.

At the same annual ceremony, AFSA presents awards for outstanding performance. In 2009, the winners of these awards were: Erica Krug (the Avis Bohlen Award for a Foreign Service Family Member), Lily Hightower (the M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Officer) and Megan Gallardo (the Delavan Award

for a Foreign Service Office Management Specialist). In addition, Ken Kero-Mentz was named AFSA Representative of the Year.

AFSA also presents other awards throughout the year, such as the Sinclair Language Awards, an AFSA program based on a bequest from Matilda W. Sinclair, a former Foreign Service officer. Last year, 11 foreign language students were honored for outstanding accomplishment in the study of a "hard" language and its associated culture.

The 2009 winners were Anthony Baird (Albanian), Monica Boduszynski (Vietnamese), Candace Lynn Faber (Polish), Sandrine Goffard (Mandarin Chinese), Timothy Kraemer (Korean), Patrick McNeil (Estonian), Dewey Moore (Korean), Rachel Lucille Mueller (Vietnamese), Lindsey L. Rothenberg (Arabic), Brooke Spelman (Mandarin Chinese) and Gary Westfall (Tagalog).

AFSA also sponsors the George Kennan Writing Award, given each year in honor of the best paper by a State Department employee enrolled at the National War College. This year's winner was Patricia Mahoney, writing on "The Serbian Orthodox Church and Serb Identity."

— Francesca Kelly, AFSA News Editor

National High School Essay Contest

On June 14, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton presented the first-place award for AFSA's 2009 National High School Essay Contest to Brian Parker. Parker, a 12th-grader at Springbrook High School in Silver Spring, Md., wrote his winning essay on "Challenges to the U.S. Foreign Service: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." Thirty finalists received honorable mention certificates for their essays. An AFSA advisory panel of judges selected the winner and finalists, deeming Parker's essay one of the most outstanding submissions in the history of the contest.

The goal of AFSA's High School Essay Contest, now entering its 11th year, is to stimulate interest in a Foreign Service career among high school students nationwide. (Foreign Service dependents are not eligible to enter.) The winner receives a check for \$2,500.

To read this year's winning essay, please go to www.afsa.org/essaycontest.

— Tom Switzer, Communications Director



MICHAEL GROSS

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton (left) presents the first-place 2009 National High School Essay Contest award to Brian Parker, on June 14. AFSA President Susan Johnson is at right.

AFSA's Nifty Ambassador Tracker

A new presidential administration came to town in 2009, and we all know what that means: a slew of new ambassadorial nominations. AFSA keeps a close eye on these appointments with our online Ambassador Tracker at www.afsa.org/ambassadorlist.cfm. You can find out who's been nominated and/or confirmed, and see the percentage of political versus career appointments. The list is updated on the first day of each month.

Please send nomination news to Marketing and Outreach Manager Asgeir Sigfusson at sigfusson@afsa.org.

State Department: A Year of Transition

Last year was a time of transition for AFSA, for the department and for our country. It began with the inauguration of a president committed to expanding the role of the Foreign Service in both national security and policy initiatives, and the naming of a new Secretary of State with a management philosophy favoring greater communication with, and support for, the people who perform State's many functions. Both brought an appreciable surge in Foreign Service morale, and with it, high expectations for a revitalized Foreign Service. AFSA was proactive in briefing Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton early and working with the transition team to share our members' views.

The outgoing administration had left a number of issues pending, particularly with respect to Iraq and Afghanistan, so much of the first half of the year was spent working with management on these issues: staffing of our embassies, offices and provincial reconstruction teams; incentives for service at those posts that did not prejudice other members in promotions or assignments; departmental follow-through on linked assignments, training and treatment (both administrative and medical) afforded to returnees; the safety of FS members at those posts; and the balance between protecting employees' well-being and allowing those employees the freedom necessary to perform their duties.

During this period, AFSA continued to lobby heavily on issues related to funding and salaries, with particular attention to the overseas pay gap. The Foreign Relations Authorization Act for 2010 and 2011, containing language enabling State to address this inequity, passed in June — culminating years of AFSA effort.

New Initiatives

June also brought the announcement by Secretary Clinton of a significant extension of benefits to same-sex partners of Foreign Service members, including status as Eligible Family Members and all benefits offered to EFMs, except pension and health-care beneficiary rights constrained by law. AFSA has worked for years with the organization Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies to support more equal treatment for same-sex partners of FS personnel.

A new AFSA Governing Board took office in July, with a clear mandate to increase communication and dialogue with our members, to increase transparency in operations and to be more responsive to the full range of Foreign Service members.

To facilitate that communication, AFSA revived the State Standing Committee and established advisory committees addressing issues of particular concern to large segments of our membership.

The summer rotation cycle continued the transition, bringing

new directors into nearly every office with which AFSA's Labor Management team interacts. Most significant: the early August swearing-in of a dynamic and experienced front office in the Bureau of Human Resources — Director General of the Foreign Service Ambassador Nancy Powell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Steven Browning and Deputy Assistant Secretary Robert Manzanara — brought deeper and broader management experience to those positions than we've seen in many years.

A Range of Issues on the Table

During this year of transition, AFSA's State Labor Management Office, in addition to constantly promoting greater fairness and transparency in assignment/promotion processes and disciplinary decisions, advanced the following issues:

- Developing maternity and paternity leave procedures that do not involve annual or sick leave.
- Ensuring that Washington assignments of untenured officers include opportunities to display all skills necessary to obtain tenure.
- Improving coordination of the many factors affecting the ability of employees with disabilities to perform at full potential, including timely placement of required accommodation materials, appropriate consideration in the assignments process and equal access to career-enhancing positions.
- Urging implementation of a Home Marketing Incentive Program to reduce employee losses due to the sale of a residence forced by a change in domestic assignments.
- Increasing career mobility options for specialists, and promoting opportunities for specialist-to-generalist or generalist-to-specialist conversions that do not imply a loss of seniority.
- Ensuring FS employees unimpeded access to AFSA when advice, counsel or representation might be required.
- Weighing in on new MED policies regarding medical clearances, housing while in Washington, D.C. following medical evacuation, payment of insurance deductibles and distribution of H1N1 vaccines.
- Promoting greater quality control of investigations, and compliance with governmentwide norms in adverse-action security clearance adjudications.
- Addressing issues related to state or local residence, in-state tuition, housing loans and other issues where overseas service can be a negative factor.

AFSA's mission is to serve and represent the members of the Foreign Service. We urge you to weigh in with issues of importance to you, and to join the State Standing Committee or an advisory committee when you are posted to Washington.

— Daniel M. Hirsch, State VP

USAID VP: Achievements, Big and Small

It was a pleasure to work for you last year. Many members visited me at the USAID AFSA office, and I came to know more of you personally. We achieved many successes, but the one major accomplishment we are most proud of is, of course, obtaining overseas comparability pay. This is now being phased in, at last, to end a longstanding unfair burden on our officers. Many people from the AFSA staff, as well as Governing Board members past and present, deserve credit for lobbying Congress and building support from various organizations to accomplish this.

I am delighted that, in addition to Michael Henning, we now have a second USAID representative, Glenn Rogers, on the AFSA Governing Board as a result of reaching the 1,000 mark in AFSA members.

Solving problems, both serious and routine, for hundreds of our members does not get wide publicity due to the personal nature of the cases, but it is as valuable as our more prominent achievements.

For example, we helped acquire donated annual leave for several members facing critical family problems, allowing them to extend their sick leave significantly. Likewise, our counseling and advice have



AFSA USAID VP Francisco Zamora (left) welcomes Sec. Clinton (center), as USAID Acting Administrator Kent Hill (right) looks on.

assisted several junior officers in obtaining tenure, as well as fair performance evaluations. We have also worked with management to create assignments that are in the best interest of particular members.

We have successfully resolved multiple formal disciplinary cases with lesser penalties than proposed — in some cases winning total abolition. Numerous potential grievances were resolved without filing formal litigation at the agency level. For the small number of grievances that were appealed to the Grievance

Board, the satisfactory resolution rate was, on average, about 85 percent.

We believe our interventions on your behalf have positively affected everyone from entry-level officers to members of the Senior Foreign Service. We eagerly anticipate working with new USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah, who will hear, through AFSA representatives and leadership, your major concerns as expressed in our recent member survey. We are listening to you, and we look forward to hearing more from you.

— Francisco Zamora, USAID VP

YEAR IN REVIEW

The Memorial Plaques

The first AFSA Memorial Plaque was unveiled in 1933 by Secretary of State Henry Stimson. There are now two plaques in the C Street lobby of the State Department honoring 231 members of the Foreign Service who have died in the line of duty.

New names were unveiled during an emotional ceremony on May 1, at which Sec. Clinton eulogized Brian Daniel Adkins, a 25-year-old first-tour officer murdered in his home in Addis Ababa. The other names added were of diplomats from the past: Felix Russell Engdahl died in a Japanese prisoner-

of-war camp in Hong Kong in 1942; Thomas W. Waldron, the first U.S. consul to Hong Kong, died of cholera while on an official visit to Macau in 1844; and

Edmund Roberts, a special envoy sent by President Andrew Jackson in 1832 to negotiate treaties in Asia, died in Macau of dysentery while en route from Siam to Japan.



Secretary Hillary Clinton speaks at the AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony, flanked by the U.S. Armed Forces Color Guard (right), as AFSA President John Naland looks on, May 1.

Foreign Commercial Service: Welcome Engagement

The focus for our efforts in 2009 was first on rescuing the Commercial Service from fiscal disaster, and then on restoring its strength. This involved extensive lobbying on the Hill, “in the building” and with our friends. We contacted every legislator on our appropriations committee and organized letters of support from the National Association of Manufacturers,

[For the first time in our history, AFSA President John Naland met with the Secretary of Commerce, welcoming him to the new job, introducing the importance of our activities and pushing for more resources.](#)

the Business Council for International Understanding, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other allies. Officers overseas did their part to brief visitors, and our ambassadors also weighed in on our behalf.

We did not get the immediate boost from the incoming admin-

istration that our State colleagues did, but we now feel that Commerce management is fully engaged, especially Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke and our congressional liaison offices. Our senior officials have put their hearts into it, testifying on the Hill and “shaking the trees” in the building. AFSA lobbying power has been especially effective under new President Susan Johnson. And, for the first time in our history, an AFSA president (John Naland) met with the Secretary of Commerce, welcoming him to the new job, introducing the importance of our activities and pushing for more resources.

On other fronts, we helped secure and implement locality pay and same-sex partner benefits, made progress in streamlining senior pay processing, and turned back unwise changes in drug testing and Senior Foreign Service promotions. We are still working to effect change in the broken-down seven-year rule — so far without success.

Finally, the AFSA Political Action Committee and its connections have been very valuable. We were finally able to obtain an additional \$10 million in funding in Fiscal Year 2010 and, thanks to the support of our management, it looks as though we will have a substantial request for FY 2011, as well. This is good news, indeed.

— Keith Curtis, FCS VP

Foreign Agricultural Service: Into a New Decade

It has been a tough decade for many U.S. companies, employees and the economy. AFSA/FAS is also happy to see the end of the 2000-2009 decade, and to launch into a new one with many educational, new and ongoing opportunities to address our dual personnel systems.

Contract: Despite our best AFSA team efforts, we did not make any real progress revising our contract in 2009. Now that the new FAS management team is (mostly) in place, we will make a concentrated effort, starting with our core concern: Article 25 on performance management.

Washington Placement Plan: The WPP must focus on finding good jobs for returning Foreign Service officers. Meanwhile, our colleagues of the American Federation of State,



FAS VP Henry Schmick updates board members on the Foreign Agricultural Service at the Governing Board retreat on Nov. 7.

County and Municipal Employees are interested in a Civil Service promotion process. So tri-lateral interest-based bargaining looms — providing an opportunity for the new FAS administrators and AFSA/FAS to relearn the “whys” and “hows” of the Foreign Service personnel system.

ATO Grievance: The Foreign Service Labor Relations Board gave us a great holiday present by upholding the findings of the Foreign Service Grievance Board that the 2008 assignment of three Civil Service employees to Agricultural Trade Office positions in the first bidding round was inconsistent with the Foreign Service Act and our contract. Thanks to all the hard work of the AFSA legal staff, we may be able to negotiate a solution.

— Henry Schmick, FAS VP

Retirees: Serving Our Members

“Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose” best encapsulates activity on the retiree account in 2009. Members called on the services of Retiree Coordinator Bonnie Brown

for help more than 400 times in the past year, an increase of more than 15 percent over 2008. The most common concerns were Federal Employees Health Benefits Program benefits, annuities, Medicare B and, increasingly, When Actually Employed caps on hours and pay.

The almost-daily changes to the health care reform legislation have required constant monitoring, as well as frequent consultation with other public employee associations and unions. The alert sent to members at the end of the year regarding the implications of the potential 40-percent excise tax is an example of our efforts to keep abreast of this issue for our members.

The Retiree Task Force meets each month to coordinate the retiree perspective on issues appearing on the Governing Board agenda. We will launch a telephone campaign soon to reach out to our colleagues whose memberships need updating. (By the way, I am pleased to report that there is no dues increase for AFSA membership in 2010.)

The retiree survey proved that you are more Internet-savvy than we had realized.

During 2009 we co-sponsored, along with DACOR, three job transition seminars for retirees at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. We also conducted lunchtime programs during the seminars.

Susan Johnson has addressed retiree groups in San Diego and San Francisco, as has retiree GB member Molly Williamson in Nebraska, in conjunction with private travel to the area.

WAE restrictions have become a major issue. Retiree Reps Bill Farrand and Janice Bay sent a letter to Under Secretary for Management and Resources Jacob Lew in June on the issue, including suggestions for a legislative fix, but have received no response to date. Susan Johnson and I have followed up with the director general’s office, but beyond promises to look into it, there has been no action so far. This is an issue from which we will not back off, as lifting the caps is so clearly in the interest of both the Department of State and our retirees.

Finally, the retiree survey we conducted in the fall proved that you are more Internet-savvy than we had realized, and are closely watching what we are doing. Serving such an active and engaged retiree community is a pleasure and challenge.

— Robert Houdek, Retiree VP

International Broadcasting Bureau: Closing the Pay Gap

AFSA’s main concern for IBB members last year was to ensure that the agency provided the first third of overseas comparability pay, as other agencies began to do around Oct. 1. After some frustration in the fall, we believe at this writing (January) that IBB will improve its offer to start OCP in April. This is being made possible by AFSA and IBB lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill, which led to funding in the omnibus spending bill signed by the president in December, and specific language in the conference report calling for the funds to be used for this purpose. I want to thank the AFSA Governing Board and staff for their help and support throughout this process. With that issue hopefully behind us, we plan to raise others in the coming year, including the stalled expansion of the FS correspondent corps.

The agency launched monthly labor-management meetings, which I attend along with other IBB union reps. This has proved to be a good channel for raising issues of mutual concern, such as staff morale, employee evaluation procedures, and time and attendance concerns, among others. Again this year, there were no group issues involving the FS technicians. As always, I stand ready to help with individual or group concerns. Please contact me at apessin@voanews.com.

— Al Pessin, IBB Representative



Bagpiper Tim Carey sets the tone for the annual board and staff holiday lunch, Dec. 18, at AFSA headquarters.

FRANCESCA KELLY

AFSA Board of Governors

Back row (left to right): Tex Harris, Henry Schmick, Andrew Winter.

Middle row (left to right): Mike Unglesbee, Sharon White, Keith Curtis, Julia Stewart, Daniel Hirsch, Francisco Zamora, Glenn Rogers, Les Hickman.

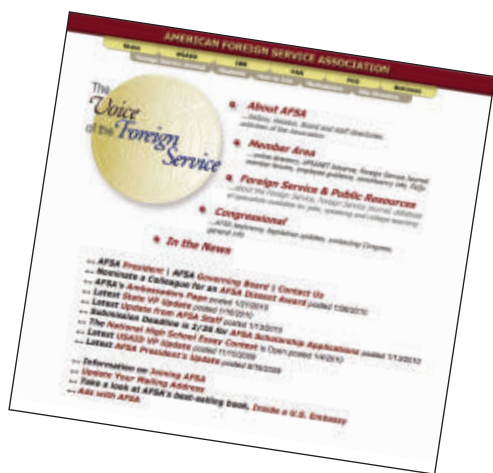
Front row (left to right): Carleton Bulkin, Bill Farrand, Susan R. Johnson, Janice Bay, Mary E. Glantz and Teresa Yata.



FRANCESCA KELLY

(Not pictured: Rebecca Balogh, Jorge Delfin, Robert Houdek, Joyce Namde, David Passage, Melinda Sallyards and Molly Williamson.)

www.afsa.org



AFSA ON THE WEB

The AFSA Web site (www.afsa.org) continues to be one of the most effective ways of increasing AFSA's visibility and outreach. 2009 saw almost 857,000 unique visitors to the site, with readers' page visits increasing by 13 percent over 2008. As in previous years, our most popular pages include the National High School Essay Contest, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, scholarships, the *Foreign Service Journal*, the annual Tax Guide and the constituency pages. This year a new favorite emerged: the re-energized Ambassador Project pages.

Our AFSAnet listserv, which had 9,635 subscribers at year's end, also continues to be a vital avenue of communication with our members. To that end, we sent 68 AFSAnet messages in 2009.

We are planning big changes to the AFSA Web site in 2010, and we look forward to sharing a new online experience with our membership later in the year. Stay tuned!

— Asgeir Sigfusson, Marketing/Outreach Manager

The Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board



FRANCESCA KELLY

Left to right, back row: Chairman Ted Wilkinson, George Jones, Jeff Giauque; Front row: Stephen W. Buck, May G. Baptista, Lynn W. Roche, Rima J. Vydmantas, Julie Gianelloni Connor, D. Ian Hopper and Joseph Bruns.

(Not pictured: Mary E. Glantz.)

AFSA Annual Report 2009

Staff



Executive Director

Ian Houston

AUSTIN TRACY

Finance

- Accounting
- Financial Management



FRANCESCA KELLY

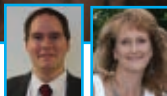
Left to right: Controller Kalpna Simal, Accounting Assistant Cory Nishi, Accounting & Administration Assistant Alicia Campi.

Foreign Service Journal



- Editing
- Writing
- Design
- Advertising
- Subscriptions and Sales
- *Inside a U.S. Embassy*

LOTTE REUMER



Left to right: Editor Steven Alan Honley, Associate Editor Shawn Doman, AFSA News Editor Francesca Kelly, Senior Editor Susan B. Maitra. Inset photos: Advertising and Circulation Manager Ed Miltenberger, left, and Art Director Caryn Suko Smith, right.

Labor Management

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



TERESA YATA

Left to right: Labor Management Specialist James Yorke, Senior Staff Attorney Neera Parikh, Deputy General Counsel Zlatana Badrich, General Counsel Sharon Papp, Office Manager Christine Warren, Staff Attorney Michael Willats. (Not pictured: USAID Senior Labor Management Adviser Douglas Broome.)

Marketing & Outreach Programs



FRANCESCA KELLY

- Speakers Bureau
- Exploritas
- Memorial Plaques
- Foreign Service Day
- AFSA Awards
- AFSA Web site
- National High School Essay Contest

Left to right: Marketing & Outreach Manager Asgeir Sigfusson, Special Awards & Outreach Coordinator Perri Green, Director of Communications Thomas Switzer. (Not pictured: Exploritas Administrator Bernard Alter.)

Member Services

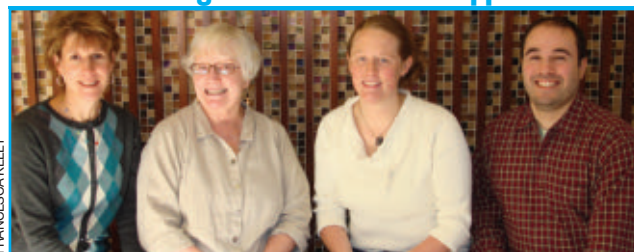
- Member Recruitment
- Post Reps
- Insurance Programs
- Address Changes
- AFSA.net Listserv
- Member Inquiries
- Member Records
- Fundraising



FRANCESCA KELLY

Left to right: Administrative Assistant and Office Manager Ana Lopez, Member Services Representative Michael Laiacona, Member Services Director Janet Hedrick.

Professional Programs and Executive Support

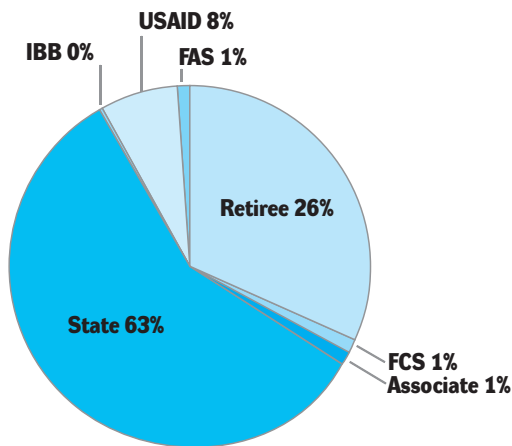


FRANCESCA KELLY

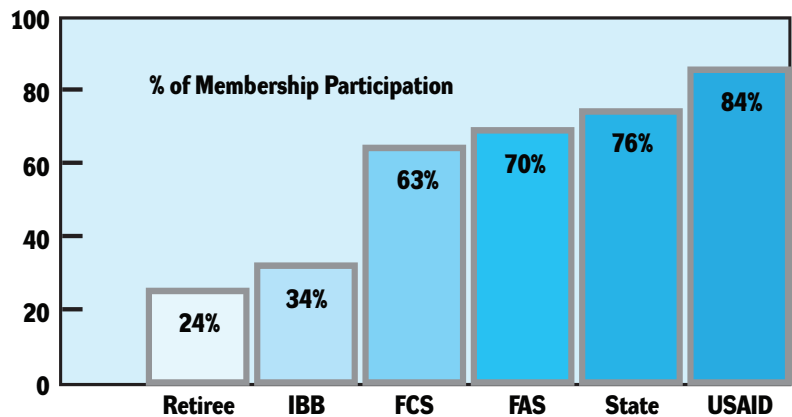
- Left to right:
- Scholarship Director Lori Dec
 - Financial Aid, Merit and Art Scholarships
 - Coordinator for Retiree Counseling & Legislation Bonnie Brown
 - Retiree Services,
 - Retiree Newsletter
 - Retiree Directory
 - Legislative Director Casey Fray
 - Lobbying
 - Tracking Legislation
 - Hill Testimony
 - Executive Assistant to the President Austin Tracy
 - Governing Board & Executive Support
 - Special Projects

AFSA Annual Report 2009

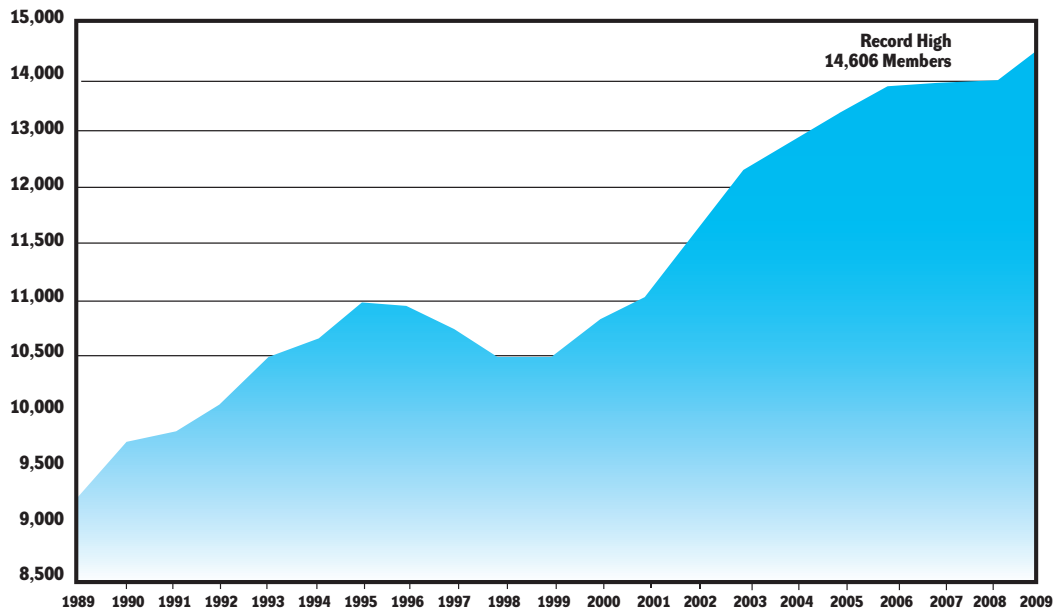
Membership by Constituency December 2009



Membership Participation by Constituency December 2009



Total Membership 1989 to 2009



2009 Budget in Brief*

INCOME	EXPENSES
Dues.....\$ 2,881,000	Membership Programs\$ 1,484,444
Foreign Service Journal Advertising.....\$ 511,000	Foreign Service Journal\$ 942,922
Insurance Programs\$ 22,000	Legislative Affairs\$ 169,970
Legislative Action Fund.....\$ 34,000	Professional Programs and Outreach.....\$ 476,333
Other.....\$ 25,500	Scholarships\$ 477,657
Professional Programs and Outreach.....\$ 280,705	Administration\$ 586,984
Scholarships\$ 476,725	Contributions to Endowment and Reserves\$ 92,620
TOTAL\$ 4,230,930	TOTAL\$ 4,230,930

* Approved figures. Actual audited financial statements for 2009 will be available on the AFSA Web site (www.afsa.org) in May.

AFSA Annual Report 2009

AFSA BY THE NUMBERS: What Happened in 2009?

13	AFSA press releases went out
17	major TV-radio-print journalists covered Foreign Affairs Day
44	states hosted AFSA speakers
49	AFSA-related letters, interviews and articles appeared in U.S. media
80	percent of overseas posts have an AFSA representative
99	students received AFSA scholarship aid
300	people are regular online readers of the <i>Foreign Service Journal</i>
473	FS community members are AFSA lifetime members
480	AFSA speaker events took place across the country
850	people attended AFSA Exploritas programs
1,000	is the number of USAID members, leading to a second AFSA board rep
1,232	fans joined AFSA's Facebook page by year's end
2,293	people read <i>FSJ</i> 's October "Public Diplomacy" issue online
9,635	members subscribe to AFSA.net, regularly receiving news updates
14,606	individuals are AFSA members
30,000	citizens attended Speakers Program events nationwide
195, 750	dollars were bestowed in AFSA student awards and scholarships

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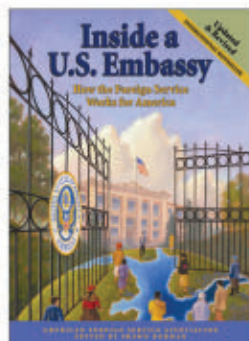
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BOOKS

Tehran Incognita

Understanding Iran: Everything You Need to Know, From Persia to the Islamic Republic, From Cyrus to Ahmadinejad

William R. Polk, *Palgrave Macmillan*, 2009, \$25, hardcover, 272 pages.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT V. KEELEY

William R. Polk is a prolific writer on international affairs, diplomacy and domestic politics. In the past five years alone, he has published four books that could constitute a graduate course on the contemporary and historical Middle East (two of which I have previously reviewed for the *Foreign Service Journal*):

Understanding Iraq: The Whole Sweep of Iraqi History, from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British Mandate to the American Occupation (Harper Collins, 2005)

Out of Iraq: A Practical Plan for Withdrawal Now, with George McGovern (Simon & Schuster, 2006)

Violent Politics: A History of Insurgency, Terrorism & Guerrilla War, from the American Revolution to Iraq (Harper Collins, 2007)

And now, *Understanding Iran*. I have just checked with Amazon.com, and your total tuition will be a mere \$51.85 (plus shipping and handling).

Understanding Iran fully lives up to the promise of its title.



In addition to a long career as a historian, much of it spent as a professor of Middle Eastern studies at the University of Chicago, Polk was a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Office responsible for the Middle East and Central Asia during the Kennedy administration. He was also on the Crisis Management Committee during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

This kind of background permits him to understand the perspectives of policymakers and those who implement their decisions.

Understanding Iran fully lives up to the promise of its title, giving us a thorough yet lively survey of a society that is moving quickly toward becoming the dominant power in the region. Polk reminds us that as much as Iranians chafe under the yoke of their current leaders, they still have bitter memories of generations of British, Russian and American espionage, invasion and dominance.

There are important lessons to be learned from the mistakes of the past, and Polk teases them out of Iran's long,

rich history. In the process, he makes a strong case that it is not just now, but for decades to come that a true understanding of Iran will be essential.

Back in 2006, I attempted to persuade the management of the Foreign Service Institute to give all employees receiving training en route to Baghdad a copy of Polk's *Understanding Iraq*. I suggested that they could at least read some of its 213 pages during the flight there. My effort was predictably futile, but I stand by the suggestion.

Similarly, while there is no imminent prospect of a resumption of diplomatic relations, I would still urge FSI to buy copies of *Understanding Iran* for all employees who have any connection with U.S. policy toward Tehran.

A final note: Your graduate course about the Middle East will not be complete until you have also covered Afghanistan and South Asia. Fortunately, William Polk is currently working on a book on that subject, tentatively titled *Understanding Afghanistan*, set for publication later this year.

Three-time ambassador and retired Foreign Service officer Robert V. Keeley operates Five and Ten Press, an independent publishing company he founded to bring out original articles, essays and other short works of fiction and nonfiction that have been rejected or ignored by mainstream outlets.



An Eyewitness Account

The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan

Ronald E. Neumann, Potomac Books, 2009, \$27.50, hardcover, 270 pages.

REVIEWED BY ROGER DANKERT

In the spring of 2005, just before Iraq imploded, virtually compelling a U.S. military surge, the senior U.S. diplomat for political-military affairs in the country, Ambassador Ronald Neumann, was asked to become ambassador to Kabul. He took charge there just as that country, too, began descending into a spiral of stronger insurgency and failing central government control. Until that point, Afghanistan had been “the other war” of his book’s title — largely ignored and conducted with the minimum possible U.S. military effort.

As former National Security Council Near East Affairs Director Bruce Riedel reminds us in his foreword, Washington supported the mujahedeen as they liberated their country from the Soviet Union in the 1980s — but then walked away, allowing a Taliban takeover. Now, after being toppled for their role in allowing al-Qaida to foment 9/11, Taliban leaders exiled in Pakistan are striving to push the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force out of Afghanistan. Thus, the current crisis could represent the second time in the last quarter-century that the U.S. has squandered victory in Afghanistan by failing to follow through.

In this account, Neumann — now president of the American Academy of Diplomacy — records his observations

In the book, Neumann recalls his efforts to manage a host of complex issues that still plague Afghanistan.

from August 2005 to April 2007, as the problems for the ISAF and Afghan President Hamid Karzai’s government came into focus.

Neumann brought 40 years of experience to his posting, starting with three months of rambling all over Afghanistan in 1967 when his father was ambassador. After joining the Foreign Service, he studied Persian and Arabic, and later served as a deputy assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs and as ambassador to Algeria and Bahrain.

In the book, Neumann recalls his efforts to manage a host of complex issues that still plague Afghanistan: civilian-military relations, counternarcotics programs, unity of command, rules of engagement for U.S. and NATO forces, civilian casualties, staffing and management of provincial reconstruction teams, coordination of international aid, and trilateral ISAF-Afghanistan-Pakistan coordination.

As the ambassador worked his way through “the fourth war he had experienced up close,” he came to a new appreciation of the frequent disconnect between policy formulation and implementation. (In particular, decision-makers repeatedly fail to secure the

resources necessary to carry out their objectives.) However, he notes that this lapse is neither partisan nor ideological, but generally stems from a lack of information and experience. He also cites many examples where Washington did not act with appropriate timing or flexibility.

In that regard, the author credits Anthony Cordesman with the term “armed nationbuilding,” which he says captures what the U.S. is doing in Afghanistan far better than “counterinsurgency” or “nationbuilding.” For instance, Pres. Karzai repeatedly raised the idea of rearming tribal forces, as have many other Afghans. But Neumann and Coalition Forces Commander General Karl Eikenberry (now ambassador to Kabul) resisted this approach on the grounds that even if it worked, the U.S. would be strengthening forces inimical to central government. Since then, police force creation has lagged and, remarkably, the idea of local militias is still on the table in 2010.

Amb. Neumann notes that the U.S. has established armies in many countries, but building a competent police force on the ruins of a destroyed country in the middle of an escalating insurgency was new to everyone. The failure he saw in Iraq — training only low-level members of a corrupt force — helped him to understand similar problems in Afghanistan. Regrettably, the resources directed to Baghdad were unavailable to Kabul.

When the ambassador departed Kabul in April 2007, his final report said the U.S. was “on solid policy grounds, but we are still on a very, very thin margin. We do not need new policies; we need the resources and support to implement effectively what we have decided to do.”



Amb. Neumann's perspective as a distinguished statesman with multiple layers of political-military experience makes this book one that should be on the list for all assignees to the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater. "Read this book, learn the lessons therein, or fail in Afghanistan," concludes former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage.

Roger Dankert, a Foreign Service officer from 1970 to 1996, is a former member of the AFSA Governing Board. In retirement, he has worked as a When Actually Employed annuitant for the State Department in various capacities.

Close Call

The Dead Hand: The Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race and Its Dangerous Legacy

David E. Hoffman, Doubleday, 2009, \$35, hardcover, 577 pages.

REVIEWED BY KEMPTON JENKINS

David E. Hoffman, a former *Washington Post* correspondent, has produced an eye-opening account of a little-known piece of unfinished business from the Cold War that threatened to turn our planet into an unpopulated desert.

The Soviet Union's super-secret biological weapons program, approved by Premier Leonid Brezhnev, produced a terrifying inventory of toxins in direct violation of the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention. The Kremlin insisted that it had no choice but to match a parallel U.S. program that predated the treaty, but failed to acknowledge that Washington was winding down its research, even as Moscow

ramped up its own initiative. Moreover, while the U.S. research (based at Fort Dietrich, Md.) remained largely within the scope of the BWC, the Soviets conducted their program at secret sites in what is now Ukraine, producing and stockpiling weaponized biological ingredients of devastating potential.

Hoffman has conducted outstanding research, interviewing several top Soviet officials, largely chemists, who led the program. His efforts to uncover a convincing rationale for the work are fascinating but for the most part unsatisfying. They reminded this reader of the "following orders" excuse offered by the many Nazi officials who felt obliged to participate in Hitler's "Final Solution."

His title references the fact that at about the same time, Soviet leaders invented a doomsday program dubbed the "Dead Hand." If communist officials were killed in a first nuclear strike by the United States, then a "small crew of duty officers surviving deep underground" would still be able to retaliate. A similar commitment to mutual assured destruction and disproportionate response underlay the USSR's biological weapons program.

The first serious evidence of the program appeared in 1979, when a major accident at the Sverdlovsk anthrax plant in the Ural Mountains killed 64 workers and residents and hospitalized 30 more. At the time, Moscow blamed the incident on tainted meat, but the explanation was not persuasive.

Over time, Soviet scientists began to awaken to the insanity of their work. Once Premier Mikhail Gorbachev's "glasnost" reforms took hold in the 1980s, more and more researchers co-

operated in opening up their records to American and British inspectors. But the key breakthrough came in 1989, when Vladimir Pasechnik defected and revealed the scope of the biological weapons program. The next year, Gorbachev shut it down.

The collapse of the Soviet Union posed the question: How could Moscow destroy the weapons that posed such a terrifying threat to civilization? The U.S.-led effort to help do just that is at the heart of Hoffman's book.

The Dead Hand celebrates many heroes on both sides, ranging from President Ronald Reagan and Premier Mikhail Gorbachev to Senators Sam Nunn, D-Ga., and Richard Lugar, R-Ind. — who took the lead within Congress to pass what would become the 1992 Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program. Equally important, if less well known, was Andy Weber, who led the U.S.-British team that, with Russian President Boris Yeltsin's support, searched for anthrax spores and other biological agents at facilities throughout the former Soviet Union.

The Cold War resulted, of course, in a dramatic victory for the free world, and nearly 20 years later, we are right to celebrate that achievement. But it is chilling to reflect on the dimensions of the threat from the nuclear, chemical and biological weapons that each party to that global conflict accumulated. It is also sobering that such weapons still pose harrowing dangers in the hands of not just a few nations but countless terrorists, as well. ■

Kempton Jenkins was a Foreign Service officer for 30 years, serving in Bangkok, Berlin, Moscow, Caracas and Washington, D.C. His memoir, Cold War Saga, will be published later this year.



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William Belton, 95, a retired FSO and accomplished ornithologist, died on Oct. 25 at his home in Great Cacapon, W. Va., from congestive heart failure.

Mr. Belton was born in Portland, Ore., and graduated from Stanford University in 1935. He joined the Foreign Service in 1938 and, during a 32-year career, served in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Canada, Chile, Australia, Panama and Brazil.

Among other positions in Washington, D.C., he served as the officer in charge of Mexican affairs, deputy director of the Office of South American Affairs and deputy Foreign Service inspector for missions in 12 North African, European and Middle Eastern countries.

In 1958, Mr. Belton was detailed to the National War College. Five years later, he was assigned as political adviser to the commander-in-chief of the U.S. Southern Command in Panama, with the rank of minister. He then served as deputy chief of mission in Santiago and Canberra, retiring in 1970 as DCM in Rio de Janeiro.

In retirement, Mr. Belton turned his hobby of birdwatching into a more than 30-year second career, becoming an internationally recognized ornithol-

ogist. He was responsible — almost singlehandedly — for the current body of knowledge regarding the bird life of southern Brazil.

Completely self-taught, Mr. Belton traveled during the 1970s in a Jeep with a small house trailer attached, taking notes that he developed into a two-volume report, *Birds of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil* (1984). Carrying a heavy reel-to-reel tape recorder and directional microphone, he made field recordings over a period of 20 years of more than 1,000 birds, mostly in Rio Grande do Sul. These are now housed in the Macaulay Library at Cornell University's ornithology lab.

Mr. Belton's work was particularly noteworthy for its methodical approach, its comprehensiveness and the sheer length of time he devoted to it, his associates told the *New York Times*. Each recording was the product of hours of standing stock-still in the wild at dawn, with swarms of biting insects for company. But over the years, Mr. Belton captured many bird songs that had never before been documented.

Besides his own book, which remains a standard text, he prepared a pocket-size Portuguese-language version with 100 color photos, *Aves Silvestres do Rio Grande do Sul*, which is

in its fourth printing. He also translated the foundational *Ornitologia Brasileira*, by ornithologist Helmut Sick, from Portuguese into English (*Birds in Brazil*, Princeton University Press, 1993).

The American Bird Conservancy, which Mr. Belton helped found, has named its grants program in his honor.

Mr. Belton's first wife, the former Julia Hyslop, whom he married in 1939, died in 2003. He is survived by his second wife, Cornelia Brouwer Lett Belton of Great Cacapon, W. Va.; three children from his first marriage, Barbara Yngvesson of Amherst, Mass., Hugh Belton of McLean, Va., and Timothy Belton of Sheridan, Wyo.; eight grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.



Helen B. Eilts, 87, wife of the late FSO Hermann Frederick Eilts, died on Nov. 23 in Benton, Kan., following a long illness.

Mrs. Eilts was born in New York City, N.Y., on Nov. 20, 1922, the daughter of Josephine (Freund) Richards and stepdaughter of Theodore Richards. She was a 1944 graduate of Wellesley College and received a master's degree in 1947 from The Johns Hopkins Uni-

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versity's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C.

During World War II, she joined the U.S. Navy WAVES and served as an officer from 1944 to 1946. On June 12, 1948, she married FSO Hermann Frederick Eilts in Tehran. For the following 30 years, Mr. and Mrs. Eilts represented the United States around the world: in Iran, Yemen, Saudi Arabia (twice), Iraq, England, Libya and Egypt, in addition to tours in Washington, D.C.

When Mr. Eilts retired from the Foreign Service in 1979, Mrs. Eilt's service on behalf of the country was also noted by then-U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who stated: "Her quiet, gracious warmth, her fluency in Arabic and profound interest in the Middle East earned her the respect, admiration and confidence of peoples whose cultures are far different from our own. She exemplified the finest qualities of the American woman who serves abroad."

After retirement, the couple settled in Wellesley, Mass., joining the Boston University community.

Mrs. Eilts was preceded in death by her husband, her brother, Donald Brew, and her parents. She is survived by her sons, Conrad M. Eilts of Bahrain and Frederick L. Eilts of Benton, Kan., and their families.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Helen Brew and Hermann Eilts scholarship fund at Wellesley College in Wellesley, Mass.



Terence Flannery, a retired Foreign Commercial Service officer, passed away on Oct. 28 in Paris, France, after a short illness.

Mr. Flannery was born in Balti-

more, Md., and raised in Virginia. He attended Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., and the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, Calif.

Prior to his Foreign Service career, Mr. Flannery served in the Air Force and then worked in the private sector for Link, a flight simulator company in Binghamton, N.Y. This company transferred him to Paris, where he settled in 1967, subsequently working for a French engineering firm for several years.

In 1984, Mr. Flannery joined the Foreign Commercial Service. His first overseas posting was Paris, where he served from 1984 to 1988. His next tours were in Algiers, London and Brussels. He retired from the Foreign Commercial Service at the end of 1997, and returned to Paris.

After retirement from the Foreign Service, Mr. Flannery resumed a career in the private sector, working first for a consulting firm, APCO, in Paris, and then on different projects for The Wall Street Journal Europe Future Leadership Institute in Brussels.

He is survived by his wife, Laurence Flannery of Paris.



James Wiley Habron Sr., 76, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer with USAID, died on Dec. 16 at his home in Pleasantville, N.J.

Mr. Habron was born and raised in Pleasantville. He served in the U.S. Army as a member of the 63rd Army Band, reaching the rank of sergeant first class. Following military service, he attended Howard University, graduating in 1958 with a degree in civil engineering. At Howard, Mr. Habron was a member of the cross-country,

track and football teams, winning championships in the quarter mile and pole vault. He was later selected as captain of the track team. He was also a member of the national service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega.

At Howard, he met fellow student Thelma Juanita Ray of East Orange, N.J. In 1959, the couple married, teaming up for a 50-year journey that criss-crossed the globe. Immediately after college graduation, Mr. Habron joined the New Jersey Highway Department as a location and design engineer, receiving a promotion to senior engineer in 1964. Looking for new challenges, he joined the U.S. Agency for International Development the following year. His first assignment was as a highway engineering adviser in Saigon during the height of the Vietnam War.

Next came postings for Mr. Habron and his family to Thailand, where he worked on rural and urban development projects, and to Nicaragua, where he worked to rebuild the country after the 1972 earthquake. He volunteered to stay behind after his family was evacuated to ensure that others also reached safety, and was on one of the last flights out of Managua as the capital city fell to the rebels. He later returned to assist with aid efforts under difficult circumstances.

In Grenada, he helped rebuild the international airport; as USAID chief in Sierra Leone, he oversaw the distribution of food aid; and in El Salvador, he was instrumental in rehabilitating the country's water system.

Mr. Habron was selected for advanced training at the University of Pittsburgh, receiving a master of public works degree, and in 1980 was detailed to the National War College. He was promoted to the Senior Foreign

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Service in 1983. Mr. Habron won numerous awards and citations, including: the Medal for Civilian Service in Vietnam, Superior Unit citations, a Distinguished Achievement Award and several Senior Foreign Service performance awards, as well as a Special Recognition Award from the government of El Salvador. He spoke Thai, Vietnamese and Spanish.

In 1989, Mr. Habron retired from USAID — six months after his son James joined the Foreign Service — and returned to Pleasantville, where he was active in civic and community life, enjoying the opportunity to give back to his hometown. There he began a second career as a project coordinator in the Pleasantville Urban Enterprise Zone office, and was instrumental in renovating the town bus station and bringing a new bookkeeping system to the State of New Jersey.

He also served on the board of directors for the “Miss Pleasantville Contest” and as a member of the Planning Commission. He received the 2007 City of Pleasantville Employee of the Year Award and the Pleasantville High School PTA Alumni Recognition Award. His tenure at the UEZ was broken in 2009 by the illness that ultimately claimed his life.

Mr. Habron’s interests were broad. He loved playing the trumpet, double-bell euphonium, valve trombone, tuba, sousaphone and double bass, and was a ham radio operator, golfer, heavy reader and history buff. An avid fisherman and boat owner, his car was always filled with fishing gear. He was a member of the American Legion, the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, the American Foreign Service Association and the United States Power Boat Squadron.

Family and friends recall Mr. Habron’s love for his family, his

warmth and charm, and his ability to interact with people from all walks of life — from prime ministers to the man-in-the-street — and from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Mr. Habron is survived by his wife, Thelma Juanita Habron, of Pleasantville; two sons, James Jr. (and his wife, Angela Anderson), of Sewell, N.J., and Geoffrey (and his wife, Kate Glynn) of East Lansing, Mich.; two grandsons, Shane and Gabriel; a sister, Pauline Thomas (and her husband, Robert) of Philadelphia, Pa.; two aunts; and two godchildren.



William Kenneth Hitchcock, 90, a retired FSO, died on Nov. 8 in Boulder, Colo.

Mr. Hitchcock attended the University of Colorado, where he received his bachelor’s degree in 1941. Following a graduate fellowship at the National Institute of Public Affairs in Washington and graduate work at American University, Mr. Hitchcock entered the Army Air Corps during World War II. He completed 34 missions as a heavy bomber pilot out of England and was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross. At the end of the war, while still in London, he married Maxine Miller of Glendale, Calif. They divorced in 1981.

In 1947, Mr. Hitchcock joined the State Department. He served in London, Paris, Madrid, Calcutta, Saigon and Washington, D.C. Early in his career, he was in charge of the State Department’s disarmament research program. As consul general in Calcutta from 1964 to 1968, he administered one of the largest consulates in the world, whose district included the Himalayan regions of Sikkim and Bhutan.

And in Saigon, toward the end of the Vietnam War, he directed the refugee program and served as minister for political affairs.

Mr. Hitchcock’s last assignment was as deputy assistant secretary of State for educational and cultural affairs. In 1977, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Colorado “in recognition of his accomplishments in the world of diplomatic affairs, and for his commitment to humane and compassionate diplomacy.”

In 1978, he retired from the Foreign Service and settled in Boulder, Colo., where he married Diane Bartlett Weller in 1987. Mr. Hitchcock served on Denver’s Council on Foreign Relations and World Affairs and on the University of Denver’s Social Science Foundation. Friends and family members recall how he always enjoyed a lively discussion of world events.

Mr. Hitchcock is survived by his wife, Diane, of Boulder; stepsons Cody and Doug Weller, and Doug’s daughter, Adee Rose, all of Boulder; a daughter, Victress Hitchcock of Crestone, Colo.; a grandson, Nick Sitko, and his wife, Michelle, of Lusaka, Zambia; a granddaughter, Julia Sitko, of Guatemala; and a nephew, Bill Hitchcock and his wife, Rhonda, of Ft. Collins, Colo.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Social Science Foundation at the University of Denver.



William E. Hutchinson, 92, a retired FSO with the U.S. Information Agency, died on June 20 at his home in Gaithersburg, Md., of bladder cancer.

Mr. Hutchinson was born in Melrose, Mass. He worked for the *Boston Evening Transcript* as a youth, before

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moving to Hawaii in 1933. He was a news editor at the *Honolulu Advertiser* through 1944. There he designed several front pages that warned of growing tension between Japan and the U.S., including the Nov. 30, 1941, edition that reflected a wire service report speculating on a possible Japanese strike in the next week. A week later, Japan attacked the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor.

During his tenure with the *Advertiser*, Mr. Hutchinson served occasionally as a war correspondent for the Overseas News Agency and the United Press wire service. He was then recruited by the Office of Strategic Services and sent to Calcutta to work with members of resistance movements in Burma, Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries.

After World War II, he joined Gen. Douglas MacArthur's headquarters command in Tokyo, editing the general's monthly reports on nonmilitary activities during the occupation of Japan until 1952. He was also editor of the official U.S. Army history of nonmilitary activities during the occupation.

In 1952, Mr. Hutchinson joined the Foreign Service. His first posting was to Tokyo as publications officer. He then returned to Washington, D.C., where he became deputy director of USIA's international press service and, later, inspector general. He also served in Pakistan, Libya and Nigeria. In 1970, when President Richard Nixon began planning his overture to China, Mr. Hutchinson was sent to Hong Kong to head the USIA office there. He retired in 1973, returning to the Washington, D.C., area.

In retirement, Mr. Hutchinson wrote his memoirs, several papers on local history and helped prepare a his-

tory of Gaithersburg. He was president of the Appalachian Trail Club in the early 1980s and enjoyed hiking on that trail. He also enjoyed hiking in the United Kingdom, Norway, Italy, Costa Rica and Eastern Europe.

Mr. Hutchinson's first wife, Jean Helen Meyasaki, died in 1939.

Survivors include his wife of 68 years, Kimiyo Funamori Hutchinson of Gaithersburg, Md.; a daughter from his first marriage, Pamela Murphy of Okmulgee, Okla.; three children from his second marriage, William E. Hutchison III of Junction City, Kan., Penelope E. Cochran of Germantown, Md., and Harvey A. Hutchinson II of Mobile, Ala.; 16 grandchildren; and 35 great-grandchildren.

Michael T.F. Pistor, 79, a retired FSO with the U.S. Information Agency and a former ambassador, died on Dec. 24 at his home in Bethesda, Md.

Mr. Pistor was born in Portland, Ore., but grew up in Tucson, Ariz., and graduated from the University of Arizona in 1952. He served in the U.S. Army from 1952 to 1954, achieving the rank of first lieutenant. He began his professional life in the private sector in 1956, working in New York City as a writer with a consumer magazine, *Car Life*. Within three years he became its editor, the position he held when he joined USIA in 1959.

In a 36-year career with USIA, Mr. Pistor rose to the position of counselor, directing many of the major elements of the agency. In his years of government service he played a key role in explaining to audiences around the world many of the most complicated and controversial events affecting American life and policies in the latter half of

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the 20th century.

His first foreign assignment, in 1959, was to training positions in Uganda and Iran, after which he was made public affairs officer in Douala, Cameroon. For the next five years (1964-1969), he filled a position in London that was a Kennedy-era innovation — Youth Officer. There he worked with international student leaders in Great Britain, as well as academics, politicians and journalists, explaining the U.S. role in Vietnam and the civil rights struggle at home.

From 1973 to 1977, he served as counselor for public affairs in London, endeavoring to explain American events and policy to mostly friendly but skeptical journalists and intellectuals. The Watergate scandal and President

Richard Nixon's resignation usually led the discussions.

In 1977, Mr. Pistor took on the job of directing USIA's Office of Congressional and Public Liaison. That year USIA was reorganized, incorporating the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, a change that caused serious concern in Congress. Mr. Pistor immediately found himself deep in the task of formulating testimony for top government officials to give on the Hill, explaining how an educational and cultural bureau could work successfully in the media-oriented USIA. At the same time, he used his new position to launch programs in major U.S. cities explaining the role and purpose of USIA to the American public,

which was largely ignorant even of its existence.

From 1980 to 1984, Mr. Pistor was posted overseas as minister-counselor for public affairs in New Delhi, where he ran the largest USIA program in any country abroad. The agency's facilities included prominent information and cultural centers in New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

In 1985, he was back in Washington, D.C., directing USIA's Press and Publications Service. The service provided public affairs material to embassies around the world on a daily basis, in addition to publishing six magazines in 12 languages and operating production and printing centers in Manila and Mexico City. The assignment was a stark change from a year of

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discussion and theorizing about foreign affairs with graduate students at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, where he had been sent as an Edward R. Murrow Fellow in 1984.

From 1986 to 1988, Mr. Pistor headed USIA's Office of North African, Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, overseeing the work of 21 public affairs officers in embassies throughout the region. In that role, he revised and reshaped the agency's programs to take account of major developments in the area, including Russia's war in Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War and the spread of Islamic militancy.

He became USIA's counselor in 1988, a position he held until 1991, when he was named ambassador to Malawi, where he served until 1994. He was the man on the spot there in curtailing an annual \$50 million aid program because of U.S. displeasure over what he termed the country's "abysmal human rights record." With the subsequent collapse of the country's dictatorship, he joined international agencies and other donor countries in helping Malawi move to a democratically elected government with a multiparty system.

Upon his return to Washington, Ambassador Pistor spent a year as senior adviser to then-USIA Director Joseph Duffy, before retiring in 1995. He coordinated the agency's role in President Bill Clinton's Summit of the Americas in Miami and directed the International Communication Studies Program at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies.

During retirement, Amb. Pistor continued working in the field of foreign affairs. Serving as a senior inspector in the State Department's Office of the Inspector General, he

looked into policy, management and personnel issues at the American embassies in Germany and France and at the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris. He then led an inspection team to examine the State Department's training organization, the Foreign Service Institute.

In 2003, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, which over the years increasingly crippled him but seemed unable to impair his highly active social life and unfailing *joie de vivre*. Friends and family recall that he always enjoyed enormous popularity among his government colleagues and within a large circle of friends in retirement. He was valued, among other things, for his unfailing and trenchant sense of humor, which he combined with a constant interest in current affairs.

Amb. Pistor was predeceased by his wife of 45 years, the former Shirley Scott, who died in 2002.

He is survived by his daughter, Julia Pistor, who lives with her husband, David, and their three children in Los Angeles, Calif., and his son, William, who lives with his wife, Heather, in San Francisco, Calif.



Eleanor Woodward Sandford, 95, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Jan. 10 in Williamsburg, Va.

Ms. Sandford was born in Ware, Mass. She was a 1931 graduate of Ware High School and a 1932 post-graduate of Northhampton School for Girls. She attended Wellesley College, where she received a degree in music theory and history in 1936. Thereafter, Ms. Sandford taught music in Massachusetts and Louisiana for five years.

In 1943, she joined the Department of State, where she held a series of administrative positions in Washington, D.C., and abroad, joining the Foreign Service in 1955. Ms. Sandford served overseas in Bonn, Helsinki, Tokyo and Bangkok.

After retiring in 1975, Ms. Sandford settled in Williamsburg, Va., where she became active in the music community, performing regularly on the piano, recorder and flute. She was elected president of the Wednesday Morning Music Club and became an accompanist for the Women's Community Chorus. She was also a member of Bruton Parish Episcopal Church, and loved playing bridge and traveling with friends.

Ms. Sandford is survived by two nieces, Carolyn S. Scattergood of Gileford, N.H., and Marcia S. Wilkins of Hanover, N.H.; one grandniece, Deborah S. Clough of Acton, Mass.; and two grandnephews, Joseph A. Scattergood of Derry, N.H., and Paul S. Wilkins of Weston, Mass.; and five great-grandnieces and nephews.

Memorial donations may be made to the Williamsburg Landing Benevolent Fund. Online condolences may be registered at www.bucktroutfuneralhome.net.



James Frederick "Jim" Smith, 81, a retired FSO with USAID, died on Dec. 27 in Tucson, Ariz.

Mr. Smith grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, where he graduated from Shaker Heights High School. He then attended the University of Michigan, where he was a four-year letter winner in varsity wrestling and team captain under his coach, friend and mentor, Cliff Keen. While at the University of

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Michigan, he helped found and volunteered on the Joint Student Judiciary Council.

In 1950, Mr. Smith earned his undergraduate degree and then attended the University of Michigan Law School. His law school studies were interrupted by military service in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War. After receiving his LLB in 1954, he did post-graduate legal studies at the London School of Economics. Later in life, he received a doctorate in education from Syracuse University.

After a short period in private legal practice in Cleveland, Mr. Smith joined the Foreign Service, where he truly found his passion. He spent the initial portion of his FS career work-

ing for the U.S. Information Agency. Later he joined the U.S. Agency for International Development. Mr. Smith and his family were posted overseas to Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru and Morocco. His last posting was as mission director in Colombia.

Upon retirement from the Foreign Service in 1992, Mr. Smith received the USAID Administrator's Distinguished Career Service Award, the agency's highest award for career service.

He then settled in Tucson, Ariz., but continued to work on international matters, teaching and consulting with the University of Arizona, Pima County Community College and other organizations. He also became certified to teach in the Tucson public

school system and taught in a variety of schools there.

Family and friends remember Mr. Smith as a consummate gentleman, a loving husband and father, and a believer in living a full life and in striving to achieve and achieving one's full potential. He was passionate about his work in international development and dedicated most of his life to this worthwhile cause.

Mr. Smith was formerly married to Elise Fiber Smith, who survives him, and later to Luz Marina Gomez de Smith, who predeceased him.

He is survived by his wife, Beatriz Montijo Smith, of Tucson, Ariz.; his brother, Doug Smith of Crystal River, Fla.; his sons, Greg Smith (and his wife, Linda) of Beaufort, S.C., and Guy



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Smith (and his wife, Alison) of Minneapolis, Minn.; two grandchildren, Molly Smith and Dillon Smith; a niece, Vicky Tourbin; and a nephew, Brian Smith.

Donations in Jim Smith's name may be made to the University of Michigan Wrestling Program, c/o The Victor's Club, 1000 South State Street, Ann Arbor MI 48109, or to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, 1359 Broadway, Suite 1509, New York NY 10018.



Wells Stabler, 90, a retired FSO and former ambassador, died on Nov. 13 at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C., of heart failure.

Mr. Stabler was born in Boston, Mass. He attended The Fay School in Southboro, Mass., and graduated from Brooks School in North Andover, Mass., in 1937. He then attended Harvard University, graduating in 1941 and joining the Foreign Service later that year.

In 1942, Mr. Stabler was posted to Jerusalem as a vice consul. He was then sent to open the first American mission in Amman, where he became chargé d'affaires and a close friend of King Abdullah, great-grandfather of King Abdullah II of Jordan.

Israel's declaration of independence in 1948 had provoked turmoil and bloodshed, including the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte, a United Nations mediator, and the murder of U.S. Consul General Thomas C. Wasson. During this tense period, Mr. Stabler was praised for his heroism in protecting American lives and property. Later in his career, Mr. Stabler was the first American diplomat to visit Sudan after that country won its

independence in 1954 from Britain and Egypt.

Other assignments took Mr. Stabler to Rome, Paris and posts in the European Bureau of the State Department in Washington, D.C. In 1972, he became the principal deputy in the European Bureau, where he carried out special missions for Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, including one involving Cyprus.

As a result of this, Sec. Kissinger persuaded President Gerald Ford to name Mr. Stabler ambassador to Spain. He arrived in Madrid in 1975, a critical time for Spain, with the end of the Franco era and the transition to King Juan Carlos. Ambassador Stabler was instrumental in helping steer Spain toward democracy and membership in NATO, and eventually the European Union.

After retiring in the fall of 1978, Amb. Stabler worked for the German Marshall Fund in Washington, D.C., and carried out several important inspections for the State Department. He received the prestigious Wilbur Carr Award from the State Department, as well as many decorations from countries where he served. He was also a member of the Metropolitan and Chevy Chase Clubs and a Knight of Justice in The Venerable Order of The Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, where he also served as vice chancellor.

Survivors include his wife of 56 years, Emily Atkinson Stabler of Washington, D.C.; two daughters, Elizabeth Wells Stabler of Annapolis, Md., and Susan Paneyko (and her husband, Stephen) of Princeton, N.J.; two sons, Edward (and his wife, Anne) of Manchester-by-the-Sea, Mass., and Eric (and his wife, Tracy) of Summit, N.J.; and 12 grandchildren. ■

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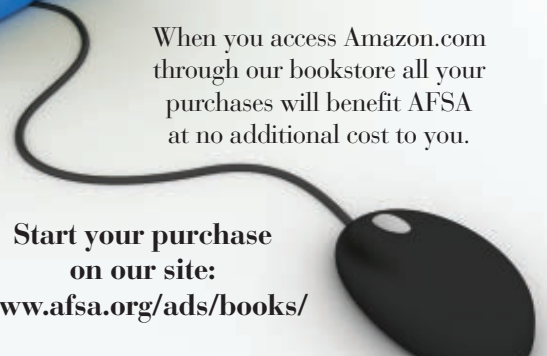
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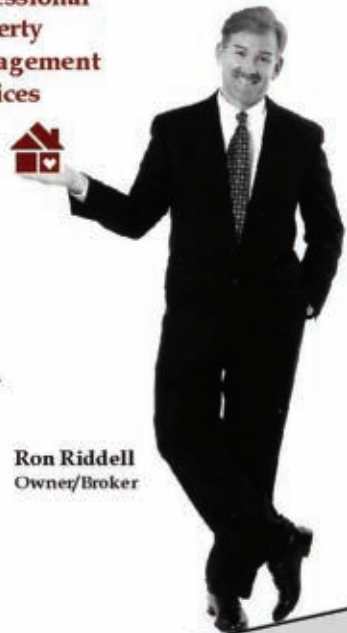


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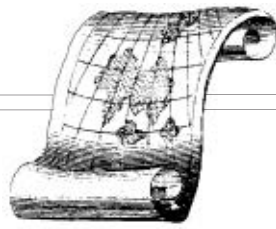


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REFLECTIONS

A-100, Past and Present

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

As I write these words in January, I've been thinking a lot about my A-100 class, the 25th, which gathered in Rosslyn exactly 25 years ago this month. The temptation to seek deeper meaning in that milestone only grew when I recently calculated that my exit from the Foreign Service in August 1997 occurred almost precisely at the midpoint of what would otherwise have been a 25-year career (so far).

But it is the fact that I will turn 50 this summer that makes the urge to reflect on those first weeks of orientation and training well-nigh irresistible — particularly when one doesn't resist it!

AFSA hosts recruitment lunches for each entering class of generalists and specialists, for which I am generally one of the charming and talented table hosts. They've usually just had their "flag day" ceremony, so as part of our informal discussion before the presentations get under way, I enjoy finding out where the six to eight folks in my group will be heading on their first assignment. They are almost always full of enthusiasm and idealism, qualities I hope they never lose.

Sometimes they ask me about my own FS career, which shows that they, too, have absorbed a lesson I picked up during the Foreign Service Institute unit on public speaking: The best way to ingratiate yourself with contacts is to ask them questions about themselves.

Still, I notice that many A-100 classes prefer to talk to each other. In fact, if the format for the recruitment lunches allowed table-hopping, I'm sure some

*Instead of
struggling to promote
esprit de corps,
I decided to put that
energy into nurturing
the close friendships
I had made.*



of them would do that.

In contrast, my own A-100 cohort did not have much esprit de corps. Our class motto, probably taken from the 1984 film "The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension," was "Wherever you go, there you are." But at least some of my colleagues followed another adage: "It is not enough for me to succeed. My enemies must fail!"

Unlike most other incoming classes, we never had a newsletter, and have only held a couple of reunions. Admittedly, e-mail was still quite exotic in 1985, and of course Facebook and other social networking sites were decades away. But somehow, I don't think technology was the problem.

Disregarding the advice of a veteran FSO that "an action transferred is an action completed," I seriously considered volunteering to produce a newsletter — at least until the holiday season of 1985. That year, to test the idea, I wrote all 51 of my A-100 colleagues, asking how they were settling

into their far-flung posts. I also let them know I'd made it through the massive earthquake that leveled much of Mexico City in September 1985 — during which I was the embassy's deaths and estates officer.

About half of my classmates wrote back that first year, but the number of correspondents fell over the years. So I decided to put my energy into nurturing the close friendships I had made during orientation (two in particular), and elsewhere in the Foreign Service.

Perhaps that is the most important lesson I've learned from my A-100 experience. Ultimately, all members of our profession have to look out for themselves as they forge their careers. But if we're lucky, at least a few treasured friends and colleagues will have our backs along the way.

Whenever A-100 classes ask me if I regret my decision to leave the Foreign Service relatively early, I assure them that I don't. Despite some disappointments, I did something that *matters*, and packed a lot of truly marvelous experiences into my 12 years as an FSO.

What's more, it paved the way for me to work for AFSA, which — like joining the Service all those years ago — has proved to be one of the best decisions I've ever made. ■

Steven Alan Honley was a Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997, serving in Mexico City, Wellington and Washington, D.C. He has been editor of the Foreign Service Journal since 2001.



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