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THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS



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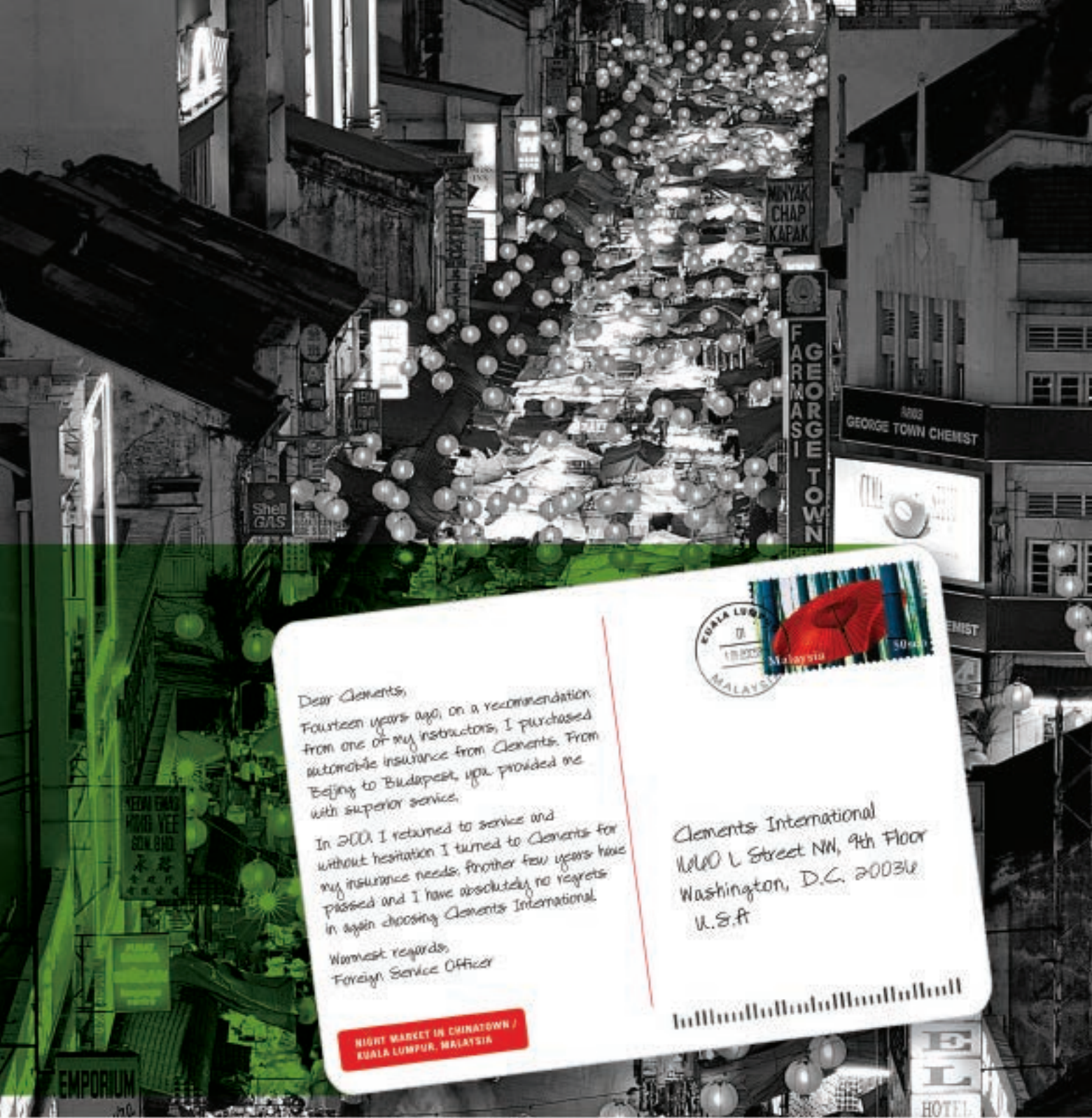


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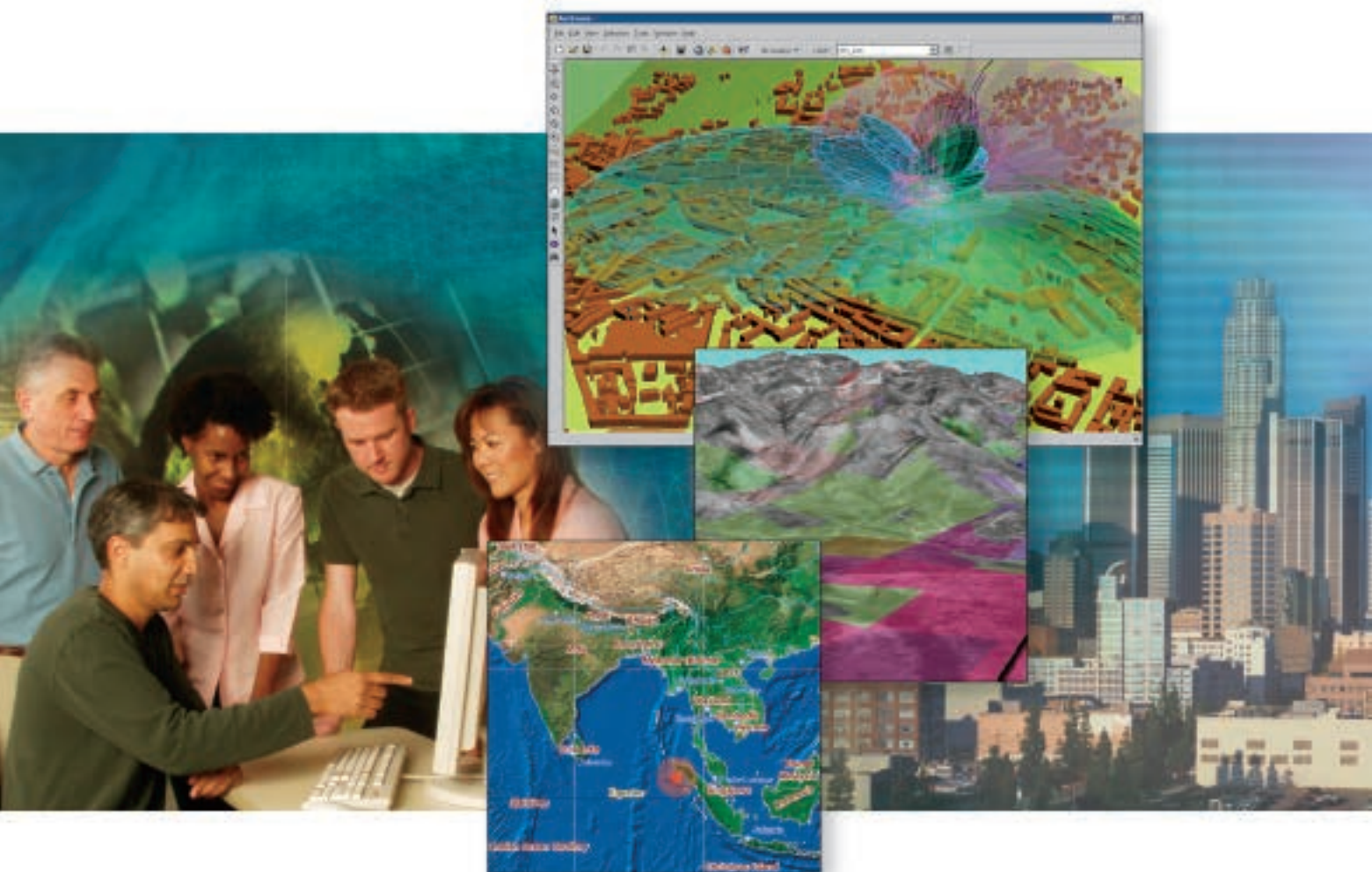
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# PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

## *Ensuring the Foreign Service's Relevance: The Baby or the Bathwater*

By J. ANTHONY HOLMES

The persistent calls to militarize the Foreign Service have grown more frequent and shrill since Secretary Rice outlined her vision of "transformational diplomacy" in January. For the FS to be relevant to the conduct of post-9/11 American foreign policy, we are told, it must stand side-by-side with our military in combat zones and immediate post-conflict situations and be transformed into practitioners of "extreme diplomacy." The litmus test for its relevance is apparently directed assignments to war zones.



The existing construct of embassy security preparedness, based on the premise that our diplomatic staff must be protected and posts drawn down or closed according to sober assessments of pre-approved "trip wire" scenarios and related risk, is apparently considered a relic of the pre-"long war" past. Failing such a radical overhaul, we are warned, the military will dominate American foreign policy. The critics appear less concerned by the implications of this than by fear that the military can't do everything by itself. The extent of the overhaul needed and the degree to which working seamlessly with our military should replace traditional diplomatic work seems directly related to the degree one views pre-emptive war as being the central element of American foreign policy in the future.

---

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

There is little doubt that the Foreign Service can be better positioned to advance U.S. interests overseas. Reaction in the FS has been overwhelmingly positive to transformational diplomacy and the shifting of positions to key developing countries. However, there is also little doubt that the biggest threat to the success of the transformational diplomacy initiative is inadequate funding, and in this business funding levels are the only true indicator of our leaders' real priorities. Virtually everyone agrees that the State Department has an important role to play in bringing "stability and reconstruction" to post-conflict situations where the U. S. has direct interests around the world. However, the paltry level of funding appropriated to date to develop the envisioned, already legislated FSO rapid reaction force speaks for itself.

The cold, hard reality is that the United States is conducting its foreign policy within the constraints of a static to slightly expanding budget. Another reality is that after deployment, a stabilization and reconstruction corps will need sizable programs to have any impact beyond symbolism. To transform, these FSOs must have the means to engage the target population, means that do not presently exist. The prospects for meaningful levels of such funding are negligible. Even with streamlined USAID funding categories, the fact is that we have minimal or no AID presence at all in a number of key TD countries (e.g., China). So if the Secretary's point of departure for transformational diplo-

macy is more "hands-on" activism and program management and less observation and reporting, then the key ingredient to success isn't even on the table yet.

But even with all the FSOs and funding one could dream of, the sine qua non for transformational success is peace and stability. If FSOs cannot do their jobs for fear of their lives, if the physical infrastructure and institutional basis of transformed states cannot be built before being destroyed again, the notion that directed assignments to war zones is the litmus test for FS relevance is a fat canard.

If the FS is to be militarized in the context of static budgets, what price is the United States willing to pay? What is presently being done that should be dropped because already inadequate resources are shifted elsewhere? The distinguishing feature of the Foreign Service is its unparalleled foreign area expertise. Its vast knowledge of the politics, economies, and cultures of remote parts of the globe make the State Department indispensable in preventing war and winning peace — if it is heeded. Reducing this strength and shifting the focus of American diplomacy from preventing war to picking up the pieces afterward would be utterly profound. Is that what transformational diplomacy is all about? That's not the way I've read the Secretary's intent on TD. Those who advocate militarizing the FS should not confuse U.S. long-term national interests with their personal political agendas, and should avoid throwing the baby out with the bathwater. ■



# LETTERS

## A Needed Discussion

I commend the *Foreign Service Journal* for the outstanding March issue devoted to analyzing the implications of the war in Iraq on the Foreign Service. I was particularly impressed by AFSA's decision to give people serving in Iraq the opportunity to voice their opinions. The only way to truly understand the impact of this war is to hear from the people on the ground.

I hope you will devote future issues to analyzing the longer-term impact of the war in Iraq and the war on terror on the Foreign Service. The talk of directed assignments, the new precepts for promotion, the "Iraq tax" and the goals of "transformational diplomacy" all seem to point in one direction. Adventure seekers who are attracted to conflict situations will be rewarded. Those who are motivated to transform the world will hold sway over those motivated to understand it.

While intended to meet the foreign policy goals of the current administration, the challenges inevitably will transform the overall character of the Foreign Service. For example, FSOs increasingly will have to choose between family and career because there will be fewer assignments that will accommodate both. Some may argue that this type of change is necessary to meet the challenges of what is now being called the "long war." Others may counter that the value of a diplomatic corps is to prevent conflict, not to adapt to it. The *FSJ* is well posi-

tioned to host this debate and I encourage you to do so.

*Kathleen Sheehan  
Former FSO  
Arlington, Va.*

(*Ms. Sheehan resigned in 2005 to take a Civil Service position in the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.*)

## Iraq Challenges

Shawn Dorman's "Iraq Service and Beyond" (March) is a landmark piece that will hopefully prompt close scrutiny by policy-makers and managers now and in the future. Only such a piece, drawing on direct observations by those engaged in this project, could reveal the extraordinary challenges posed by this posting.

The candor and deep concerns expressed by respondents provide a perspective that bureaucratic department analyses and reviews obscure. Of particular note was the concern expressed by several respondents that the Iraq project could be having as destructive an impact on the Foreign Service as it is having on the military; i.e., debilitating under-resourcing and lasting harm done to America's international reputation.

Having witnessed the stress and long-term damage inflicted on both the U.S. military and the Foreign Service by our Vietnam experience (as an Army enlisted man there and, briefly, as part of the Defense Attaché's Office in Phnom Penh), I would draw one parallel. As in Vietnam, so in Iraq, too few participants have voiced timely, fundamen-

tal policy critiques — either through the formal Dissent Channel or by going public (which is often more effective, but even more career-endangering).

I am aware of the criticism and consequences meted out to those who challenge policy from within the Service. Better to hold your tongue and offer your bold, post-facto assessments through too-late but lucrative book contracts and professional punditry. But with the stakes so dire and costs so debilitating, dissent, notwithstanding the formal and informal retribution, becomes an undeniable burden of conscience.

*Edmund McWilliams  
Senior FSO, retired  
Carrizozo, N.M.*

## Generals and Ambassadors

AFSA President Anthony Holmes' views on Iraq service expressed in the March *Foreign Service Journal* remind me of an insurgent mortar attack: hastily prepared, with lots of noise but little accuracy. Admittedly, being simply one of the many "TDYers who served in the CPA," my own judgments about Iraq may be clouded by "outdated information," while Ambassador Holmes has the kind of hard-won, first-hand knowledge that comes with access to raw survey data.

Amb. Holmes admits that AFSA's Iraq survey — in which a mere 57 employees currently or previously posted to Iraq participated — cannot be used to "draw statistically valid conclusions." Yet, with some un-





known, but perhaps even smaller, number of these survey respondents emphasizing that Iraq is, indeed, a very difficult and dangerous environment in which to work, Amb. Holmes has decided to “define the issues most pressing” about the role of the Foreign Service in Iraq. Apparently, those issues boil down to establishing that Iraq is just a bit too difficult and dangerous a place for the Foreign Service to have a significant role.

Ironically, the March issue also carries a reprint of Amb. Holmes’ own letter to the editor of the *Washington Times* praising “Foreign Service professionals faithfully carrying out the president’s foreign policy, often at great personal risk, in the most dangerous and difficult places in the world,” and lamenting the fact that “more ambassadors have been killed in the line of duty since Vietnam than generals or admirals.”

Along with ceasing to crow about ambassadorial body counts while the military death toll in Iraq and Afghanistan rises daily — while yet another Foreign Service member far below ambassadorial rank has recently been killed in a terrorist attack — Amb. Holmes and others need to quit spreading their own misinformation about how expecting members of the Foreign Service to serve in Iraq is tantamount to using them as “cannon fodder” or treating them as if they had “joined ... the military.” Yes, Iraq is a war zone; but I’m guessing that we’ve still probably lost more colleagues to motor vehicle accidents in the last three years than in combat. Dealing with the “Iraq tax” is one thing — but let’s not overtax ourselves about Iraq in ways that aren’t productive.

While it sounds a bit disingenuous in the face of his other pronouncements, Amb. Holmes is correct that the “Foreign Service has a clear and vital role to play” in Iraq. Fortunately, in the same issue (“Staffing Baghdad:

Time for Directed Assignments”), Henry Ensher explains not only what that role is, but also why it’s important that we fulfill it. Amb. Holmes should take heed of Ensher’s warning about heading for “irrelevancy” if we show ourselves unwilling or unable to do so. Otherwise, he should prepare for the prospect that there will be more generals and admirals shaping our foreign policy than ambassadors.

*Darian Arky*

*GSO*

*Embassy Bratislava*

### Couldn’t Put It Down

Heartfelt congratulations for the impressive March issue. It was almost impossible to stop reading: Speaking Out, the focus section and the AFSA Annual Report. Books, In Memory and Reflections were good endings. How fortunate retirees are to be brought so close to the present day!

*Mary Owen*

*Widow of the late*

*Robert Owen, FSO*

*Red Bank, N.J.*

### CORDS’ Lesson for Iraq?

It may be too early to use Mitchell Thompson’s proposal to apply our CORDS/Vietnam experience in Iraq (“PRTs in Afghanistan: Model or Muddle?,” March). Thompson is wrong to state that the CORDS pacification effort failed because it came too late (Lewis Sorley writes in *A Better War* that Vietnam was effectively pacified by late 1970). He also leaves out the main circumstance that contributed to those years of success before the conventional attack by the North Vietnamese Army in 1975.

Several organizational attempts at pacification were tried and failed before Robert Komer and CORDS arrived on the scene in 1967. But the turning point in the pacification campaign was the suicidal Tet offensive,

which broke the back of the Viet Cong insurgency in 1968. CORDS was able to push a successful pacification campaign into the vacuum left by the thousands of dead and captured VC. The answer to successful pacification, we found, was security, security, security. Although CORDS does seem to have been an excellent organizational approach, we do not know if it would have been so successful in the face of a continuing strong and vicious VC insurgency.

In Iraq, it does not seem that we have yet broken the back of the insurgency. From reading the Iraq *FSJ* issue, I have the impression that I enjoyed much more security serving with CORDS in rural Vietnam from 1969 to 1971 than my present-day FSO colleagues have in Iraq. And without good security, one must question how much impact the Foreign Service can have with the Provincial Reconstruction Team approach. Certainly, as Henry Ensher writes, there has been some success and there is much need, but how much reconstruction (pacification) can be done if the insurgency retains the capacity to blow it up? The primary lesson from Vietnam for Iraq is security first, and that was accomplished by boots on the ground.

*Alfred R. Barr*

*FSO, retired*

*Washington, D.C.*

### Language Expertise & Population

Thanks for another informative and interesting issue of the *FSJ* in March. However, I read with just a tad of cynicism the report on the 2005 Sinclair Language Award Winners. I salute the diligence and energy of the winners; gaining proficiency in other languages is no small achievement. But, like the selection committee, I was disappointed by



the absence of high-priority languages.

Here are some population comparisons (in millions). The first country in each pair got at least one new outstanding State Department language expert; the second country apparently did not:

Finland: 5.2/Iraq: 26  
 Albania: 3.6/Turkey: 70  
 Poland: 38.6/Brazil: 186  
 Estonia: 1.3/Tanzania: 36.8  
 Lithuania: 3.6/Tokyo: 10  
 Korea: 48.4 (no complaint here)  
 Israel: 6.3/Iran: 68  
 Bulgaria: 7.4/Kenya: 33.8  
 Philippines: 87.9/Indonesia: 240

I did not bring into the comparison nations such as Bangladesh, India, China, Morocco, Egypt, etc. Perhaps the *FSJ* and *AFSA* could do a follow-up report on how many people are now in what language training programs? Shine more light in such places!

*David Fredrick*  
*USAID, retired*  
*Waverly, Iowa*

### Seeing the Light?

Ambassador L. Paul (“Jerry”) Bremer has repeatedly talked about the “situation on the ground” in Iraq. Presumably that is different from the situation up in the air? Now I am waiting for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to say he can see the “light at the end of the tunnel.”

*David Henderson*  
*FSO, retired*  
*El Paso, Texas*

### On Diversity

Catching up on my reading of the *Journal*, I note that Secretary Rice has set forth increased diversity hiring as her first priority (administratively, I hope).

I happen to think that Sec. Rice is a cut above her last few predecessors, but after about four decades of

diversity in all its guises, and the increasingly serious challenges of today’s world, isn’t it about time we tried meritocracy?

*Albert Krehbiel*  
*FSO, retired*  
*Fredericksburg, Va.*

### Pay Discrimination Case

Several months ago the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit heard a case in which I alleged that the State Department’s mid-level minority recruitment program unlawfully discriminated in pay against me, as a non-minority, when I started with the department in 1992, and that the department continues to unlawfully discriminate with each paycheck. The department claimed that the complaint of discrimination was untimely, as the complaint was based on its actions in 1992.

The court decided that the pay discrimination complaint was timely, finding that each week’s paycheck that delivers less to one person than a similarly-situated person of another race is a violation of law, regardless of the fact that this pattern of discriminatory pay was begun years before a complaint was filed.

The decision of the Court of Appeals sends the case back to the lower court for trial. Anyone who believes he is today receiving less pay than he would be receiving if he had been eligible for the minority mid-level hiring program should seek the services of an attorney if considering joining the case as a plaintiff. This letter is not intended as legal advice.

You may find the decision, *Shea v. Rice*, 409 F.3d 448, at: <http://pacer.cadc.uscourts.gov/docs/common/opinions/200506/03-5325a.pdf>

*William Shea*  
*FSO*  
*Consulate Matamoros*

### What’s in a Name?

Americans seem to have an irresistible urge to adopt doctrines and slogans, and now it appears the Department of State has joined the throng with “Transformational Diplomacy.” Like slogans of the past, from the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny on, it will probably peter out in time, but it is still discouraging to see the practice taken up by an institution that has been relatively immune to the ailment. This is particularly so because the new slogan has a slightly imperialist-interventionist — even messianic — edge to it: we are going out to slay dragons, to “transform” others by our diplomacy. This is especially the case in light of Iraq, where our justification for invasion is now retroactively reduced to the problematic objective of establishing Western-style democracy in the country.

As I read it, transformational diplomacy is just a high-sounding name for doing what we have always done: adjusting our posts and our allocation of personnel and resources to meet changing circumstances and needs. During my five-plus years as management under secretary (the first, and I guess the last, career officer to have the position), my staff and I closed and created posts and new missions continually. We conceived the mini-embassy idea. We strove for, but were never able to get, funds, personnel or space to finance the language and leadership training we knew we needed.

We always envied the ability of the Department of Defense to find ways to finance and create space for training in its large resource base. We always needed our people on the front lines, and ballooning security requirements time after time pre-empted our resources. Also, it seems to me that the idea of a plethora of one-person posts ignores



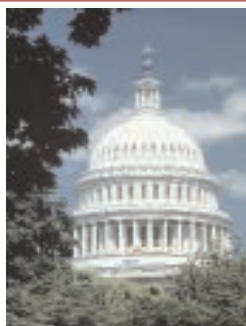
## LETTERS



the high security and communications costs that would have to go with it.

I have the sense from reading the *FSJ* that the department is not faring any better these days resourcewise, and the administration is not really trying to reverse the adverse budgetary trends. Reading Brandon Grove's superb *Behind Embassy Walls*, I understand that my successor denigrated and tried to reverse policies we in M had expended great time and effort in getting adopted, like building the new FSI facility at Arlington Hall, improving training and expanding our ability to deploy personnel overseas. When our budget was threatened in OMB, the White House or in Congress — as it regularly was — we had a Secretary of State with the willingness and heft to take the problem on frontally. Several times the Secretary and I went directly to OMB Director Stockman and/or presidential assistant Ed Meese to get decisions changed. I personally spent long days on the Hill, or traveling with congressional appropriators and authorizers to get our message across.

I think career people also must be concerned about how many senior posts, to which career people can reasonably aspire, seem to be packed with non-career appointees. I remember what it does to the outlook and motivation of junior officers to see their future prospects foreclosed by others new or without long-term commitment to the Service. If we are serious about the quality of our diplomatic staff, this is no way to go about creating optimism about the Foreign Service as a career and retaining our capabilities to meet demands when these appointees move on, as they surely will. Other serious diplomatic services continue to look on our practices with astonishment.



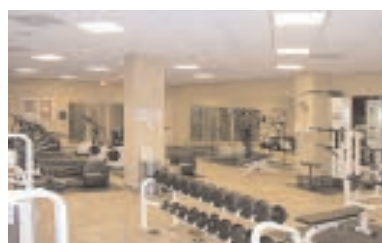
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## LETTERS



All this just involves common sense — though, of course, that, too, may be “transformational.”

*Ronald Spiers*

*Career Ambassador,  
retired*

*S. Londonderry, Vt. ■*

### CORRECTION

We regret a copyediting error in the opening paragraph of “Sensing Sensibility in the Falkland Islands” by Jim Dorschner (April), where the Falkland Islands Development Corporation is referred to as “part of the colony’s government.” The Falkland Islands is not a colony. As stated later in the text, the Falklands is an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom and Falkland Islanders are U.K. citizens.

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# CYBERNOTES

## Human Rights: Questions of Credibility

The State Department released its “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2005” on March 8 (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61550.htm>). The annual reporting exercise, which began in 1977 in accordance with a congressional mandate, describes the performance of 196 countries in putting into practice the basic rights reflected in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

According to the report, the human rights record grew worse during 2005 in North Korea, Cuba, Iran, Zimbabwe and Burma. In China, government censorship of the press, radio, television and the Internet increased, as did suppression of protests of those seeking to redress grievances. Russia was named for increasing “erosion of the accountability of government leaders to the people.” The United Arab Emirates, a U.S. ally, was targeted for curtailing personal liberties and having no democratic institutions or general elections. Pakistan, too, was strongly censured for the depredations of its security forces.

While lauding the State Department report for its frank and detailed, yet nuanced, appraisals, foreign and U.S. experts are asking to what extent its effectiveness has been compromised by U.S. silence on its own abuses at Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and in connection with renditions (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/>

[library/news/2005/03/wwwwh50308.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/03/wwwwh50308.htm)).

“The State Department’s annual human rights report was once a beacon of truth for American policy-makers as well as the rest of the world,” Patricia Kushlis, a retired USIA FSO, told *The Free Press*, an independent online publication based in Ohio. “But how can it now be seen as any-

thing more than a sham when the Bush administration consistently breaks our own laws — from illegal wiretaps at home to renditions abroad — yet still tries to portray itself as the protector of freedom, democracy and liberty for all?” (<http://www.freepress.org/departments/display/9/2006>).

However unprecedented, the one-

## Site of the Month: [www.mipt.org](http://www.mipt.org)

The National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (<http://www.mipt.org>) is a nonprofit organization incorporated in 1999 as a living memorial to the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing tragedy of April 1995. Partly funded by the Department of Homeland Security, MIPT envisions a world in which terrorism is universally recognized as a tactic that is *reputated, resisted* and thereby *reduced*.”

In January, retired FSO Donald R. Hamilton was named executive director of the institute. A veteran of the Counterterrorism Office at State, who has served as a senior adviser to the National Commission on Terrorism and to CPA Administrator L. Paul Bremer in Iraq, Hamilton aims to increase the institute’s national and international profile. “The MIPT has created the world’s best specialized library on terrorism,” he says. “We need to make sure that people know these resources are there and how easy it is to take advantage of them.”

MIPT.org is the go-to place for information on terrorism, whether you are a government servant directly involved in the war on terrorism or simply a concerned or citizen. The user-friendly Web site includes two especially useful databases. The first is a detailed listing of known terrorist incidents, groups, and perpetrators (<http://www.tkb.org/Home.jsp>). The second features news articles that are relevant to “first responders” to terrorism, such as firefighters, police and emergency workers (<http://www.rkb.mipt.org/index.cfm?>). The site also has a feature for e-mailing terrorism-related questions to the MIPT’s experts but, like the database for first responders, this requires (free) registration.

There is also a directory of training programs held by other organizations on terrorism-related topics and a listing of conferences on terrorism. Finally, the MIPT features a large bibliography of terrorism-related books.

— Shawn Guan, Editorial Intern

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## CYBERNOTES



### 50 Years Ago...

There is no single post today that is not of great importance. ... As things are now, on the basis of my observation, the personal qualities of the members of our Foreign Service are often the decisive element.

— Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, from a speech at the Foreign Service Institute on March 29, in “News to the Field,” *FSJ*, May 1956.



sentence disclaimer in the report’s introduction — “The United States’ own journey toward liberty and justice for all has been long and difficult, and it is still far from complete” — is unlikely to quiet the criticism (<http://news.independent.co.uk/world/americas/article350100.ece>).

At hearings on March 16, convened by the House International Relations Committee’s Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations, Elisa Massimino, Washington director of Human Rights First, drew the legislators’ attention to “a substantial blind spot” in this year’s report: omissions and inaccuracies regarding secret detentions and renditions ([http://www.house.gov/international\\_relations/109/mas031606.pdf](http://www.house.gov/international_relations/109/mas031606.pdf)).

The report includes criticism of a number of countries for engaging in a range of prisoner interrogation methods that are similar to methods once approved by the Bush administration for use on detainees in U.S. custody. At the same time, it includes little or no discussion of the practice of rendition. Human Rights Watch has documented the citations concerning “disappearances” and secret detentions ([http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/03/20/usint13038\\_txt.htm](http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/03/20/usint13038_txt.htm)).

Massimino asked the committee to review the State Department’s guidelines for drafting the reports. She noted that the 2002 HRR guidelines stated that actions by governments taken at the request of the U.S. or with its expressed support were not to be included in the report, adding that Human Rights First had been unable to see subsequent guidelines despite repeated requests.

The country reports are “admirable and comprehensive,” Neil Hicks, the director of international programs for Human Rights First, told *The Free Press*. But, he added, it is “regrettable that U.S. violations of human rights ... make it easy for governments rightly criticized in the reports to point the finger back at the U.S.”

In a related development, on March 15 the United Nations established a new Human Rights Council by an overwhelming vote, with the U.S. in almost lone opposition ([http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hr\\_council/](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hr_council/)). The old Human Rights Commission had its own serious credibility problems. Dictatorial and abusive regimes were members of the commission and used their votes to avoid censure. In the vote on the new council, the U.S. held out, among other things, for “hard” crite-





ria to deny membership to human rights violators.

It remains to be seen whether the council can establish a new legitimacy for human rights concerns (<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/03/16/global13053.htm>).

New members are to be elected May 9 by the General Assembly, with the council's first meeting set for June 19. The Bush administration has announced that the U.S. will not seek a seat on the council this year. Seven seats are reserved for Western governments.

Apart from the council's own Web site, there are a number of good online resources for following the unfolding developments, among them the Human Rights Watch Web site ([http://hrw.org/doc/?t=united\\_nations](http://hrw.org/doc/?t=united_nations)).

— Susan Maitra

### Special Ops Crowding Out Diplomacy?

A March 8 report in the *New York Times* that did not get wider media coverage points to an issue that is no doubt giving many ambassadors and DCMs pause (<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article12253.htm>).

According to the report, military officials acknowledge that small teams of special operations troops have been placed in more than a dozen embassies in Africa, Southeast Asia and South America, where terrorists are thought to be operating. However, Special Operations Command officials insist that every team's placement is contingent on approval by the local U.S. ambassador and that the soldiers are trained to avoid high-profile missteps.

Defense Secretary Donald Rums-

feld's effort to establish a covert military human intelligence operation with complete independence of action as part of the war on terrorism has surfaced in the press off and on over the past several years. But to date, SOCOM had not publicly acknowledged the so-called Military Liaison Elements.

"MLEs play a key role in enhancing military, interagency and host nation coordination and planning," SOCOM spokesman Kenneth S. McGraw told *New York Times* reporters Thom Shanker and Scott Shane, adding that the special ops personnel work "with the U.S. ambassador and country team's knowledge to plan and coordinate activities." The focus is on intelligence and planning and not on conducting combat missions, officials say.

Although the 9/11 Commission had recommended that defense be given lead responsibility in the war on terrorism (a change codified in the Unified Command Plan signed by President Bush in 2004), the SOCOM program has run afoul of the CIA and office of the Director of National Intelligence, both of whom are sidelined in the process.

It has also presented real problems for the State Department. As 9/11 Commission Chairman Lee Hamilton adds, the embassy program raises a different issue. "If you have two or three DOD guys wandering around a country, it could certainly cause some problems," Mr. Hamilton said.

Indeed, the kind of thing that gives ambassadors nightmares occurred in October 2004 in Paraguay, when members of an MLE team shot and killed a would-be robber on a downtown street. It turned out that the U.S. ambassador had not been in-

formed of their presence in the country, leading to embarrassment for the embassy and its senior officials. Earlier in 2004, reports of tension between State and DOD over ambassadors attempting to limit SOCOM-directed activities at embassies in Africa surfaced.

If the March 8 report is to be believed, however, the problem is a thing of the past. "We don't have any issue with DOD concerning this," an unnamed State Department official told *The New York Times*, adding that the MLE program was set up so that "authority is preserved" for the ambassador or the head of the embassy. A political adviser on full-time assignment from the State Department joined SOCOM commander Gen. Bryan D. Brown earlier this year for a world tour to explain the program to CIA and FBI officials based at embassies.

— Susan Maitra

### National Security Strategy 2006: A Step Forward?

The Bush Administration recently published its updated National Security Strategy for 2006 ([www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/index.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/index.html)). The document has drawn mixed reactions from pundits. With democratization and multilateralism as its two primary pillars, it places more emphasis on soft power than its 2002 counterpart. During a March 16 speech at the United States Institute of Peace, National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley remarked that the goal of the new NSS is to "seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" (<http://www.usip.org/events/2006/>



### 0316\_hadley\_transcript.html).

The doctrine of pre-emption, the centerpiece of the 2002 strategy, is retained as an option, albeit relegated to usage in situations where diplomacy has failed. In particular, stern warnings are issued on the topic of weapons of mass destruction. The document, however, reaffirms the role of nuclear deterrence that was all but abandoned in 2002, stating: "Safe, credible and reliable nuclear forces continue to play a critical role." Overall, the new national security strategy is closer to historical strategies than it is to the 2002 version. But the question remains: how much of a departure from the 2002 strategy is it?

In some quarters, the 2006 strategy is seen as reflecting a shift in U.S. foreign policy that coincides with Condoleezza Rice's appointment as Secretary of State. Alec Russell of the *Telegraph* writes that the "tone of yesterday's statement is more measured and even more multilateral than its predecessor. It is unmistakably the work of Ms. Rice" (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/03/17/wstrat17.xml&Sheet=/news/2006/03/17/ixnewstop.html>).

Supporters of the NSS emphasize its relative moderation. Dr. Ivo Daalder, a foreign policy expert at the Brookings Institution, defended the new strategy in a recent discussion held by the institution. "We don't have a regime-change strategy anymore; we have a pro-democracy strategy, and that is very different. There is a recognition that it isn't enough to get rid of tyrannies; that you, in fact, also have to build democracies," Daalder states. He concludes that the strategy "is more in keeping with where I think we should have been in

**W**e support democracy, but that doesn't mean we have to support governments that get elected as a result of democracy.

— President George W. Bush, following a speech at Freedom House, March 29, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060329-6.html>.

the first term, and we are now seeing it moving into the second term" (transcript available at <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20060321.pdf>).

However, during the same panel, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk pointed to the conundrum presented by the Hamas electoral victory in the Palestinian parliamentary election: "Democracy cannot be the antidote to terror if the terrorists use democracy to gain advantages against us."

Criticism came from several analysts on account of the doctrine's retention of pre-emption as an option, and its renewed emphasis on nuclear deterrence. In particular, the Federation of American Scientists expressed its concern over the inclusion of nuclear deterrence as a strategy. Hans M. Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the FAS, warns, "The National Security Strategy was the Bush administration's last opportunity to demonstrate that it has reduced the role of nuclear weapons after the Cold War. Instead it has chosen to reaffirm their importance, and in the most troubling way

possible: pre-emption" (<http://www.fas.org>).

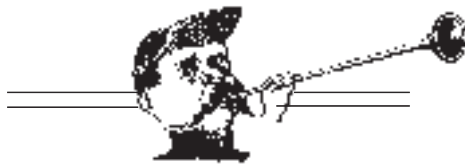
Gordon Adams, director of security policy studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University, maintains that the new NSS is merely a rehash of the previous edition and questions the depth of the commitment to multilateral efforts. "Yes, there is a call for greater international cooperation, but the doctrinal basis of the document suggests that cooperation is largely still based on the notion that leadership consists of the U.S. setting the strategy and goals, and the others come along for the ride," he writes ([http://www.democracyarsenal.org/2006/03/the\\_same\\_old\\_so.html](http://www.democracyarsenal.org/2006/03/the_same_old_so.html)).

Dr. Michael Weinstein of the *Power and Interest News Report* offers another viewpoint, arguing that the report perpetuates the lack of a coherent vision in the administration's foreign and national security policy. "Rather than resolving the differences between the unipolarists and the multipolarists, the new NSS incorporates both perspectives without synthesizing them, so that the report confirms a continuing policy void at the highest levels of Washington's power structure," he states ([http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view\\_report&report\\_id=462&language\\_id=1](http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=462&language_id=1)).

Though it has received its share of criticism, pundits generally expect this document to have greater global acceptance due to its more moderate tone by comparison with the 2002 version. However, it remains to be seen whether the ideas it puts forth are actually implemented, or its words end up ringing hollow.

— *Shawn Guan, Editorial Intern* ■





# SPEAKING OUT

## *What Are We Training IMSers to Do?*

BY CARL E. STEFAN

I am sure Information Management Officers can relate to the following scenario: Washington informs you that you are getting an entry-level Information Management Specialist to replace your current IMS, who is transferring to an onward assignment. You sometimes participate in the training work-up for the incoming IMS, which is usually tailored to the kind of post to which they're going, and carefully describes the position's duties and the level of training required to carry them out. So far, so good, you think.

When the employee arrives at post, you discover during your initial interview that he or she is certified in A+, Windows 2000 or 2003, Windows XP and a plethora of other Microsoft operating systems and applications. They may have even attained the level of a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer. You will also find a little bit of telephone and radio training in this mix, but it's overshadowed by the IT courses in the aggregate scheme of things. So then you think, "Wow, this is great; I have this highly skilled person on my staff!"

You establish the position's work requirements, voice your expectations, set goals and send your new IMS off into the cruel, cruel world of Embassy Help Desk 101. There one quickly learns that no good deed goes

*For days on end the instructors basically ran "study halls" to prepare us for certification — not for our day-to-day duties.*

unpunished when working with high-maintenance users, and people with egos as big as their desks.

But it doesn't take long for the senior IMS, or the Information Programs Officer, to let you know that the new employee arrived with minimal knowledge of how to perform core IRM duties; e.g. handling the diplomatic pouch, attending to radio and telephone issues, keeping adequate documentation, etc. Soon after that, you hear through the grapevine that there is some friction between the new IMS and the rest of the IRM staff because the employee is primarily concentrating on his or her IT-related duties, treating the other duties as a lower priority.

To confirm this situation, you walk over to the Information Processing Center and find a slew of neglected tasks: equipment to be pouched up and sent out, shipping cables to be

sent, radio equipment awaiting disposition and lights to be changed. In addition, the COMSEC account needs to be brought up to date and the mailroom is experiencing horrendous incidents with customers.

Even if you have enough staff to pick up the slack until the new hire gets up to speed on his or her responsibilities — which is often not the case — they are likely to resent having to do so. Similarly, a counseling session for the new employee and the supervisor may help reinforce attention to goals and objectives, but the damage has already been done in the form of a demoralized information management staff that performs at less than peak levels. And that is a situation which adversely affects everyone in the mission, whether or not they have a clue about what specialists actually do. After all, how can anyone function without mail and telephones, for starters? In an emergency, what would you do if you didn't have your cell phone and your radio did not work?

### **Certification Fever**

How could a scenario like this happen? I think that for the most part, it stems from attitudes formed during the entry-level process in Washington. Specifically, the training regimen for Information Management Specialists — both at the

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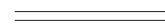


FS authors who have had a book published in 2005 or 2006 that has not previously been featured in the roundup, are invited to send a copy of the book, along with a press release or backgrounder on the book and author, to:

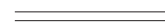
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## SPEAKING OUT



*Some IRM professionals leave after one or two tours, having acquired their IT certifications and marketable work experience at U.S. government expense.*



School of Applied Information Technology in Warrenton, Va., and at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Va. — tends to emphasize the goal of “getting certified” above all other objectives.

During my two months of mid-level IRM training at SAIT in 2004, I observed the entry-level folks, as well as seasoned specialists, downloading countless sample test questions for the upcoming examinations. We all, myself included, insisted that we had to stay home every night and weekend to study our “test kings” and other commercial tools (as well as free ones) for certification — not our Windows XP course books. Some actually swore that if they paid for test questions, they would have a better result on the exam. Yes, we had all caught that dread disease known as “certification fever.”

To be fair, there was basic instruction, but it went at 100 miles per hour — and God help you if you held up the timeline. There were whole days when all we did was review test-preparation materials provided by SAIT. For days on end the instructors basically ran “study halls.” Did the students learn any-



## SPEAKING OUT



*What I really needed the instructors to provide, and they did not, was hands-on experience with the operating systems I would be working on at post.*

thing from going over these test questions? Maybe, but my perception was that we got very little out of that approach. The courses were all geared to “passing the test” with no real learning going on.

When test day came, some students would strut out of the exam room while others, such as me, would exit with shoulders bent and feeling demoralized. If you passed, you were “certified.” If you did not, you had a stamp upon your head, figuratively. Once everyone found out that you had not passed, nobody said much to you any more.

You often had another chance to take the exam on Uncle Sam’s dime, but if you did not pass this second time, you had two stamps on your head. You felt that you wasted all your time studying every night and weekend, with nothing to show for it. I am sure I’m not the only IMSer who experienced this intense peer pressure, but I don’t understand why the teaching staff also went along with it.

What I really needed the instructors to provide, and they did not, was hands-on experience with the operating systems I would be working on

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at post. As a mid-level IMSer going to post as the IMO, I did not need to certify in anything. So I placed more emphasis on being able to keep basic infrastructure running than on explaining to a user why his or her Hotmail inbox opens slowly on some days.

### **No Need for Boot Camp**

Don't get me wrong: I did manage to learn something at SAIT and FSI, but mostly on my own time, with some few and far-between dedicated instructors, and by studying the textbooks. And yes, it is great to be a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer — but not at the expense of being able to keep an embassy's day-to-day operations running smoothly.

As it is, we are sending folks out to their first Foreign Service assignments who have “paper MCSEs” but cannot even rebuild our production servers (Cable Express, etc.). Even worse, some of their more experienced colleagues at post lack those basic skills, as well. It appears to me that the only ones really benefiting from this are the contractors who provide the instructors coaching us to study the test questions.

There is something to be said about the time it takes to really master an operating system or application. In private industry, IT professionals have two types of training. One is the boot-camp approach and the other is the university or community-college approach. The boot camps get people “certified.” The universities and colleges educate and train people methodically.

Our agency is set up for boot-camp training, in my opinion, which does our organization little good. Instead of concentrating on passing tests, SAIT needs to get its entry-level students to focus on mastering the corporate work environment they will encounter when they get to

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***Programs such as  
Global Information  
Management Technology  
have helped to  
standardize the IRM  
infrastructure at  
many embassies.***

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post. There should be well-thought-out, structured courses that will prepare students to perform real-world IRM operations at any size embassy in the world.

State Department programs such as Global Information Management Technology have helped to standardize the IRM infrastructure at many embassies around the world. Taking advantage of that fact, small, embassy-like production centers — as much as possible like an embassy — should be built at SAIT and FSI, and the new IMSers should be trained on these mock-ups. After all, FSI already does this for its “Congen Rosslyn” training, going as far as having a mock jail where new consular officers role-play visiting prisoners.

In that spirit, I would like to see the training for IRM professionals tailored to the real-life needs of the career track. Can you imagine being sent to your first post and walking into an Information Processing Center to see something nearly identical to what you encountered in training? I know I'd be really happy, and would definitely feel more confident in my ability to do my job.

Do programs such as FASTRAC, really, practically, prepare someone for work in an embassy? To me, it just sounds like a bunch of “ticket punching” to get up to the next level. Once we pass the exam, we have little incentive to retain much of what we learned in an online testing environment, much less practice the things daily.

I suspect that many IRM professionals leave the Service after one or two tours, having acquired their IT certifications and marketable work experience at U.S. government expense! Instead of wasting resources on such opportunists, we need to attract individuals who will familiarize themselves with State's systems and procedures — not prepare themselves to go to work for the IT departments of General Motors, ExxonMobil, etc. Surely there must be a large pool of people out there who are already “certified” to work in those jobs.

### **20 Questions**

Here are some questions I would like all information management personnel to consider, along with my answers:

*How many Information Management Specialists are there who can rebuild a Cable Express server, something they should all be capable of doing?* Not as many as there should be. Often there is an army of contractors only too happy to bill hundreds of dollars per hour to help us with simple tasks that we ought to be expected to know.

*How many IRM personnel are totally reliant on expert contractors back in Washington to help them repair systems?* Far too many.

*Does the current training regimen really give the U.S. taxpayer as much return on investment as it could?* No, especially with all the per diem SAIT spends on “paper” MCSEs.

*Does our current training fit with*



## SPEAKING OUT



and support transformational diplomacy? No, many IRMers are becoming too specialized and ignore other core duties of the position.

Does the current "certification" process just build good résumés? Yes, basically. It leaves a lot to be desired.

With this in mind, here's hoping State management will retool its training regimen for IRM professionals to make it more useful in the field. ■

*Carl E. Stefan entered the Foreign Service in 1990 as an Information Management Specialist, after 21 years with the U.S. Coast Guard. His overseas postings include New Delhi, Brussels (USNATO), Djibouti, Warsaw and Manama. In Washington, he has served as an FSI instructor and is currently a desk officer in the Bureau of Information Resource Management, among other assignments.*

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# SPECIALIST CAREERS: ONWARD AND UPWARD?



Yvetta Fedorova

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MEANINGFUL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ARE NEEDED TO CONVINCe SPECIALISTS THAT CAREER DEVELOPMENT IS NO LONGER A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS.

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*By STEVEN ALAN HONLEY*

ntil recently, many Foreign Service specialists felt that the State Department viewed the concept of career development for them as an oxymoron. To the extent State offered specialists opportunities for advancement, its main focus was on rewarding them for sharpening their technical skills and acquiring new ones, not on teaching them leadership and management skills required to compete for entry into the Senior Foreign Service. Opportunities to take language training were few and far between, and the “glass ceiling” for some cohorts,



such as Office Management Specialists, was set extremely low.

Then, in December 2005 and January 2006, Director General W. Robert Pearson sent out a series of 17 cables detailing Career Development Program guidelines for FS specialists. (The State Department actually employs 20 types of specialists, but because several categories cover only a handful of personnel, they were subsumed within others. See p. 24 for a full listing.)

These guidelines are broadly similar in format to those sent out last year promulgating CDP requirements for consular, economic, public diplomacy, economic and political generalists. While the details for each FS specialty obviously vary, both in terms of the specific technical and language proficiency to be acquired and the number of mandatory and elective criteria to be fulfilled, the fundamental principles are similar across the board.

In order to be eligible for consideration for promotion, the employee must demonstrate over the course of his or her career from entry through tenure, and up to consideration for promotion at each relevant threshold, the following characteristics:

- 1) Operational effectiveness, including a breadth of experience over several regions and functions;
- 2) Leadership and management effectiveness;
- 3) Sustained professional, technical and language proficiency; and
- 4) Responsiveness to Service needs.

(See p. 26 for a more detailed description of the individual requirements for the Career Development Program.)

There are two key differences between the Career Development Program guidelines for generalists and those for specialists. While all generalists covered by the new rules are required to identify regional or functional majors and minors, specialists have no such requirement. Second, while all generalists are eligible to compete for promotion into the Senior Foreign Service, not all FS specialties are able to do so. In fact, a number of specialist CDPs stop short of the SFS mark (well short in several cases), and even some of those which include SFS slots offer only a handful of them.

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*Steven Alan Honley, a Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997, is the editor of the Journal.*

*Specialties with Upward Mobility into the Senior Foreign Service:*

Construction Engineers  
Financial Management Officers  
Regional Medical Officers  
Regional Medical Officer/Psychiatrists  
Information Technical Managers  
Diplomatic Security Officers  
Diplomatic Couriers  
Health Practitioners  
Security Engineers  
English Language Officers  
Information Resource Officers  
Human Resource Officers

*Specialties with Limited Upward Mobility:*

General Services Officers: up to FS-1  
Facility Management Specialists: up to FS-1  
Regional Medical Technologists: up to FS-2  
Office Management Specialists: up to FS-3  
Security Technical Specialists: up to FS-3

**Initial Reaction from the Field**

The *Journal* sent out an AFSANET message in January soliciting FS specialists' reactions to the guidelines and posing several general questions: Is the career path [for your specialty] viable? Are the requirements for promotion to more senior ranks realistic, both in terms of the levels of professional, technical and language proficiency specified, and the time allotted to attain them? If not, what specific advice would you give the department as it prepares to move into the implementation phase of the program for your specialty? Has the promulgation of these principles affected your willingness to compete for promotion to senior ranks?

We heard back from several dozen members, mostly in the office management and information management specialties. (See p. 27 for a roundup of some of the responses.) While that small a sample is obviously not statistically valid, it does offer some insights.

Some respondents see the Career Development Program as a useful, if limited, step forward. Ken Myrick, an Office Management Specialist in Managua, writes "The new CDP is very robust. ... It gives everyone goals to strive toward and clear-cut guidance as to experience and skills that will make them competitive for promotion. ... The downside is that the career opportunities for OMSs

## F O C U S

do not equate with the skills and experience required to be competitive.”

Ryan Rhea, an Information Systems Officer in Tel Aviv, agrees: “Overall, [the CDP] looks fine. At least it is a step in the right direction, although I would question a few things.”

One General Services Officer, who spoke on background, also endorses the new CDP: “I think the career path is viable and the requirements for promotion to FS-1 are realistic, both in terms of professional and technical proficiencies specified and the time allotted to attain them. I am an FP-2 and I have already met all of the CDP requirements for promotion to FP-1. I am not the brightest star in the firmament, so I think my experience is a good gauge of the reasonableness of the new requirements.”

Other specialists are less sanguine. Robert Loveless, a

### ***A number of specialist career paths stop short of the Senior Foreign Service mark (well short in several cases).***

GSO in Montevideo, points out that he and his colleagues “compete for positions against generalists, specialists and, in D.C., civil servants. [Yet a] recent requirement for acquisition certification for all domestic contracting officers (usually Civil Service) has been waived for GSO specialists and is not included in the CDP. What this means for GSO specialists bidding

later in their career on Civil Service jobs in the Procurement Executive is that we will not have the required certification for domestic contracting, [leading] to a complete inability to compete for those positions.”

### **The Training Hurdle**

Unhappiness about the lack of dependable access to training cuts across specialties (and is shared by many generalists, as well.) One of the many benefits the Diplomatic

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### Foreign Service Specialties

Foreign Service specialists work in U.S. government posts around the world. As of Dec. 31, 2005, there were over 4,700 specialists in the employ of the Department of State, as well as much smaller numbers in the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Wherever they work, Foreign Service specialists do a great variety of jobs — some highly professional, like doctors and psychiatrists, and others more technical and administrative (like the many who keep computers and communications equipment running). By far the largest categories of State Department specialists are Diplomatic Security, Information Management and Office Management. USAID Foreign Service specialists include economists, contracting officers and lawyers; those employed by the Foreign Agricultural Service are veterinarians.

As part of its Diplomatic Readiness Initiative, the State Department for the past five years has emphasized recruiting, both of Foreign Service specialists and generalists, above attrition levels to make up for severe hiring shortfalls in the 1990s.

The State Department employs 20 categories of specialists, but only recruits for 19 because information technology managers are promoted from within the department. In addition, there are a number of “miscellaneous” employees who perform similar functions. They are

usually limited, non-career appointees (LNAs); they are not part of the Foreign Service and are not included in the career development structure.

<i>Specialist Skill Group</i>	<i>Total</i>
Financial Management Officer	176
Human Resources Officer	99
General Services Officer	197
Information Management Specialist	762
Information Management Technical Specialist	153
Information Technology Manager	301
Diplomatic Courier	88
Psychiatrist	16
Diplomatic Security Special Agent	1,384
Security Engineering Officer	195
Security Technical Specialist	89
Construction Engineer	72
Facilities Maintenance Specialist	166
English Language Officer	23
Information Resource Officer	27
Medical Officer	46
Medical Technologist	10
Health Practitioner	79
Printing Specialist	5
Office Management Specialist	845
<i>Total</i>	<i>4,733</i>

Readiness Initiative of the past few years brought with it was restoration of the “training float,” which increased overall staffing to the point that many FS personnel could take long-term training instead of doing direct transfers between posts. But in an increasingly austere budget climate, few observers expect current levels of funding for State to continue, threatening those gains.

The CDP cable for Office Management Specialists (State 9014, sent Jan. 18, 2006) explicitly acknowledges widespread concerns about “time for training, scheduling training at times other than home leave, and who’d pay for commercially provided training. We’ve heard you loud and clear on these and will work on these issues during the implementation phase. [We] recognize that most specialists, and especially OMSs, have had a hard time getting training. This has been shortsighted on the part of the department. By underlining the importance

of training, the CDP will induce needed change. In regard to the costs of training, it was never our intention to push the costs of required training onto employees. FSI is our pre-eminent training facility, with an ever-increasing number of innovative courses and online coursework. If more is needed, we will ensure that the required training is available.”

Still, even if funding remains robust, many respondents to our survey expressed the concern that unless language proficiency is made mandatory for promotion, rather than remaining an elective, specialists will continue to sit at the bottom of the priority list for FSI instruction. Caryn Cornett, an OMS in Nicosia, asks: “Will we actually receive the full six to eight months of training time needed to get a 2/2 in any language, or will those bidding on those types of jobs be passed over for not having the language? Will early departures or late



arrivals be accepted or looked upon as negative when the OMS wants the language?"

Nor is access to language instruction the only issue in this regard. One Information Management Officer who spoke on background says, "My concern with the criteria for promotion to the Senior Foreign Service concerns the mandatory senior training requirement. The only one that appears that you don't have to be nominated and approved by Washington [to take] is the Certified Information Systems Security Professional certification. All the rest of the War College-type training and other college courses are long-term training, to be approved by the Bureau of Information Resource Management back in D.C. This has a hint of the old-boy network in it. We should have local access to mandatory training that does not have to be approved by the bureau."

Another IRM specialist who asked not to be identified points out that while the career track "increases the requirements for promotion to the Senior Foreign Service, there is a reduction of incentives to achieve this.

Now that SFS personnel lose their Skills Incentive Pay, this equates to a loss of about 9 percent in salary if you receive the 15-percent SIP and are then promoted to the Senior Foreign Service. It is hard to understand why someone who maintains certificates in specialized areas of knowledge should be disadvantaged by getting promoted and accepting greater responsibilities."

### Office Management Specialists

The chief bone of contention for OMSs is the fact that their Career Development Program forces even top performers to end their careers at the FS-3 level, while many highly successful specialists will end their careers as FS-4s.

One OMS who asked not to be identified says, "Although I agree with the idea behind the new rules, I fear that the promotion rates for us will slow even more and cause many of us to leave the Foreign Service. Why should we serve 20 years and only reach the FS-5 or FS-4 level? ... I came into the Foreign Service four years

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### A Specialist CDP Template

1) OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:

Mandatory requirement(s):

Example: For most specialties, a tour in Washington following tenure.

Elective requirement(s):

Example: Serve tours at posts from at least two different regions within 10 years of service.

2) LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS:

Leadership and management training at each grade.

3) TECHNICAL AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

Mandatory requirement(s):

Example: Maintain registration with a national certifying agency throughout his/her career.

Elective requirement(s):

Examples: FSI or commercial training to hone technical/analytical skills.

Note: Fluency in one foreign language at the 2/2 level, as tested by FSI, is mandatory for promotion in some specialties (e.g. DS agents) but is an elective in others (e.g., OMS).

4) SERVICE NEEDS:

Mandatory requirement(s):

Example: Service at a 15-percent or greater (hardship) differential/danger pay post (one tour, after tenure).

Elective requirement(s):

Example: One tour in an officially designated Critical Needs assignment, after tenure.

ago with 11 OMS classmates. There are only four of us left.”

Another widespread concern is the fact that for many specialties, language proficiency is an elective, not a mandatory requirement. The same OMS continues: “I agree that everyone should be able to learn a foreign language. Many OMSs today are the first line of communication to the outside. In an emergency situation, how are we to communicate? ... For my first tour, I was not allowed any language training, because everyone at FSI told me that ‘everyone [at post] speaks English.’ How untrue this statement was! I am now heading to yet another post where no one speaks English, and has a completely different alphabet, yet again I have been denied any form of language training.

“The fact that we are only allowed training opportunities during post-to-post transfers and R&R means that training is heavily restricted. ... Here’s what an OMS file may look like when being reviewed by the promotion panel: ‘Let’s see. Employee has been an OMS for six years, direct transfer twice due to needs of posts. Served hardship duty for needs of the Service. No training opportunity for six years. Bottom line: Not eligible for promotion at this time.’ Someone tell me why anyone should stay?”

### The Devil Is in the Details

The implementation schedule for the 17 specialist Career Development Programs varies, but in general, specialists tenured after Jan. 1, 2006, must fulfill all mandatory requirements and a majority of the elective requirements in each section of their particular CDP. (The exact number of electives needed varies according to the specialty and the individual’s grade.) All those who reached a rank one level below the maximum for their specialty by that date will continue to be covered by the previous rules.

The Bureau of Human Resources is in the process of putting together a “Playbook” for each FS specialty, answering frequently asked questions and containing more detailed guidance about how to satisfy the various requirements. Fairly or not, judging from the initial feedback AFSA has received, there are a lot of skeptics out there about the program’s feasibility.

But if, for example, the department does provide sufficient training opportunities for all specialists who desire them — both so they can do their jobs better and so they can compete effectively for promotion — that will go a long way toward convincing them that career development is no longer a contradiction in terms. ■

# SPECIALISTS SPEAK OUT ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## SOME REACTIONS FROM THE FIELD TO THE NEWLY-ISSUED CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR FS SPECIALISTS.

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**I**n January, we sent an e-mail via our AFSANET listserv inviting specialist members to comment on the newly-issued Career Development Program guidelines. We posed the following questions:

*Is the career path for your specialty viable?*

*Are the requirements for promotion to more senior ranks realistic, both in terms of the levels of professional, technical and language proficiency specified, and the time allotted to attain them? If not, what specific advice would you give the department as it prepares to move into the implementation phase of the program for your specialty?*

*Has the promulgation of these principles affected your willingness to compete for promotion to senior ranks?*

*Our thanks to all who responded; here are some of the observations we received.*

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor

### **The Glass Is Half-Full**

The Office Management Specialist Career Development Program (State 9014, sent Jan. 18, 2006) received mixed reviews. To some OMSs, the arrival of this cable felt like a nail being driven into a coffin. To others, it represented the hammer that they could use to finally demand training.

Many OMSs found the CDP requirements overwhelming — I include myself in this category, even after 17 years in the Foreign Service. I have always considered

myself somewhat fearless, and my initial reaction to the CDP was “Yikes!”

The CDP ambitiously lays out a plan for professional development over the full course of a career, and that means there are plenty of boxes to check. The first time I read the plan, each box represented a hurdle to promotion. The more I read the document, however, and focused on mandatory versus elective requirements, the more I came to see that these goals were possible. Not altogether pleasant, some of them — but attainable.



I suspect CDP requirements mean the end of an era where an employee can roll into work, put in eight (or 10) hours, and roll back home. Doing the job — even doing it very well — is no longer enough if an OMS wants to be promoted to our most senior ranks. The CDP calls for us to proactively manage our own careers, to set tangible goals for self-improvement, and to work to achieve those goals. No resting on our laurels!

Some might describe this as a “parallel job.” We’ll not only work to support our supervisors, but now we must work to strategize and achieve our own professional development. A middle-aged part of me groaned at the size of the task, but another almost-forgotten part of me ignited at the thought of challenging myself and obtaining more training.

Since the January arrival of the CDP, OMSs at Embassy Pretoria have successfully argued for post funding of local training courses that led to numerous Microsoft certifications in Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Outlook — mandatory requirements. We also successfully argued for including FSI courses into home leave and transfer travel plans. Some officers grouched (“Is this really necessary?”) and some were exceptionally supportive — isn’t that human nature? It would be naïve to expect anything different.

The nature of an OMS’s job is to pay attention to someone else: to meet the needs of our supervisors, help them reach their professional goals (daily or long-term), and to organize them in ways that ensure their success.

The CDP provides us with the motivation to pay attention *to ourselves*. We now must strategize about how we’ll meet our own professional goals, how we’ll get the training we need, how we’ll expand our roles in missions to fulfill leadership requirements, and meet all the other CDP requirements.

I’ve noticed another positive side effect of the CDP: previously mild-mannered colleagues have found real backbone. They are firm, but insistent, in seeking professional development, which is a win-win scenario: OMSs meeting CDP goals make themselves more attractive to a promotion panel, and the department nets OMSs who are better trained than ever before.

Initially, I wasn’t sure if the CDP represented a glass that was half-empty or half-full. Now I’m sure.

*Linda Ingalls*  
*Office Management Specialist*  
*Pretoria*

### **Realistic Expectations**

“Do you believe the career path is viable?” While it is my intention to strive to make the Senior Foreign Service, I would probably have to answer no to this question. When I was in the Navy, they developed a program whereby a seaman could actually go up through the ranks to admiral. They laid out what you needed to know and do every step of the way. The criteria for making the next pay grade were explained and easily understood.

The State Department’s approach is to tell me what I need to know or accomplish to make it into the Senior Foreign Service. But with over 1,000 Information Management Specialists and only about 15 IMS SFS positions, I’d rather they tell me what I need to know and do to make FS-3, FS-2 and FS-1. It should be spelled out what an individual should know, what they should be able to do, and where they should have served to rise to the next pay grade.

As for the requirements for professional, technical and language proficiency, it’s been my experience that most IMSers are lucky if they get any language training at all. And I’m not sure how easy it is going to be to get a position at one of the schools mentioned in the IMS Career Development Program. I still do not understand why the department is enamored enough with the Certified Information Systems Security Professional certification to include it in the CDP, but not the Microsoft Certified Security Engineer certification. Could it be that more of the senior IMSers back in D.C. have that certification than the MCSE? CISSP is a nice certification but it is very specialized, whereas the MCSE covers what we in the field do on a daily basis.

I realize that as IMSers move up to FS-2 and above, they become managers. But if you don’t stay current with the technology, you’re not going to be a very good manager, and the department will suffer.

*Dennis D. Graves*  
*Information Management*  
*Specialist*  
*Vientiane*



### **The Importance of Training**

As a GSO specialist I feel that I am inherently disadvantaged by the CDP. GSO specialists are in a somewhat unique situation because we compete for positions against generalists, specialists and, in D.C., Civil Service employ-

## F O C U S

ees. A recent requirement for acquisition certification for all domestic contracting officers (usually Civil Service) has been waived for GSO specialists and is not included in the CDP. What this means is that GSO specialists who bid on Civil Service jobs in the Procurement Executive later in their careers will not have the required certification for domestic contracting. This leaves them completely unable to compete for domestic procurement positions.

I personally requested authorization to attend certification training at Defense Acquisition University (where Civil Service contracting officers now go), but was told that it is not a requirement and therefore I could not be allotted time or funding to attend. Furthermore, I was informed that while my FSI acquisitions training is recognized for a standard overseas contracting warrant, none of the same courses would be recognized for the certification and that I would have to retake the courses at DAU. My first question is why, for the same warrant, the same training is not recognized by the department? Again, if certification is required for domestic contracting, then FSI

training that is equivalent should be considered valid.

I strongly believe that the required contracting certification should be a part of the CDP so that HR will support the required classes when we are between tours.

Another issue I have as a GSO is that we are required to have six years of specialized related training and a college degree when applying for the position. It is frustrating to compete for many jobs at the FS-3 level against first- and second-tour generalists who have no related experience, yet at times seem to actually receive preference. For instance, I replaced a fresh-out-of-college JO for my current position even though I have 10 years of experience. By assigning such positions to inexperienced, entry-level generalists, the department effectively devalues them. The Career Development Program should address the fact that GSO specialists are coming into the Service with a higher degree of education and experience than their generalist management-cone counterparts, and in some way reflect that we are coming from that higher level.

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Our CDP should also require training in specific systems that need to be mastered, such as ILMS, a world-standard application that all GSO functions revolve around. How can one advance professionally without mastering such applications?

*Robert F. Loveless  
General Services Officer  
Montevideo*



### **Remember the LNAs**

I've been with the State Department here in Afghanistan for almost two years, and before that I was posted with USAID here. Since the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, I've been fortunate enough to serve in both short- and long-term State Department assignments — always in transitional countries (either post-conflict or post-communist) — and most often in some kind of State-supported “nationbuilding” work: political development, electoral and governance capacity-building, media and message creation, etc.

As Secretary Rice and others contemplate the personnel needs and career development challenges for the Global Diplomatic Repositioning Initiative and “transformational diplomatic” missions, I encourage State to be creative and novel in its recruitment of personnel. There are many specialists such as myself who have served State repeatedly as Limited Non-Career Appointees and would love to continue our work with the department. For example, I'd like to convert my LNA time (as an FS-1 political officer) into a position as an FSO — but no such opportunity exists for me.

There is also no database of people like myself who could be deployed in some of these circumstances. After each of our major “foreign policy interventions” (Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq ...), the department loses the expertise of LNAs. These employees have substantial experience in foreign policy — particularly in the new transitional, post-conflict statebuilding and counterterrorism arena — but their time and talents are lost to State once the appointment ends.

Most traditional FSOs do not have that specialized depth of expertise but are great political generalists. Their

**“As a GSO specialist  
I feel that I am inherently  
disadvantaged by  
the CDP.”**

— **Robert Loveless, GSO**

skills, however, will not be sufficient for the Global Repositioning Initiative or for our democracy and counterterrorism needs. Taking the Foreign Service exam to start out as a junior officer is not the answer to filling the HR openings for political specialists needed in our new world. I urge State to create a mechanism to hire back or retain LNAs as full-fledged

Foreign Service Specialists — particularly those who have the skills to conduct transformational diplomacy.

*Deborah Alexander  
Senior Political/Election Adviser/SCA  
Kabul*



### **Causes for Concern**

Here are some of my concerns about the new Office Management Specialist CDP.

Will OMSs actually receive the full six to eight months of training time needed to get a 2/2 in any language, or will those bidding on those types of jobs be passed over for not having the language? Will early departures or late arrivals to post be accepted or looked upon as negative when the OMS wants the language?

Maybe all posts requiring 2/2 fluency should be advertised one year in advance. That way, anyone wanting that position would have ample time to get the training, as happens with generalists. This would make the selection process more equal instead of taking only the person who already has the language so the post doesn't have to do without an OMS.

The department says, “A fully successful OMS career can culminate at FS-4, and this rank at retirement represents real achievement and service to the United States.” But how many people will take our CDP seriously? I mean, you really can't say that if I don't get the training I won't get promoted, because we are only expected to move up two grade levels over a 20- to 30-year career.

My biggest complaint, and again I quote the department, is that OMSs must “obtain MOS certification, Specialist level, in all of the following: MS Word 2003; MS Outlook 2003; MS Excel 2003; MS PowerPoint 2003; and completion of CableXpress training for end-users. (Note:



## F O C U S

As technology progresses, OMSs will be required to obtain and maintain proficiency in new software applications as determined by Service needs.)” We are not going to receive any extra pay for these certifications, unlike other specialists who receive extra pay for every certification. I also think OMSs should be allowed to go TDY to take these certification classes and not always have to work them around R&R or home leave. No other specialist group has to do this; OMSs should be given equal treatment to advance our careers.

*Caren Cornett  
Office Management Specialist  
Nicosia*



### **Different Goals**

As an Information Management Specialist, I’ve had a difficult time finding accurate career development information that applies to me. First of all, most information like this is geared toward generalists. Also, as an IMS,

some things just don’t apply to me. Language training is not required, for example.

I’m also an untenured FP-4. Most of the career development information only applies to tenured FP-3s or higher grades. That’s still a few years down the road for me.

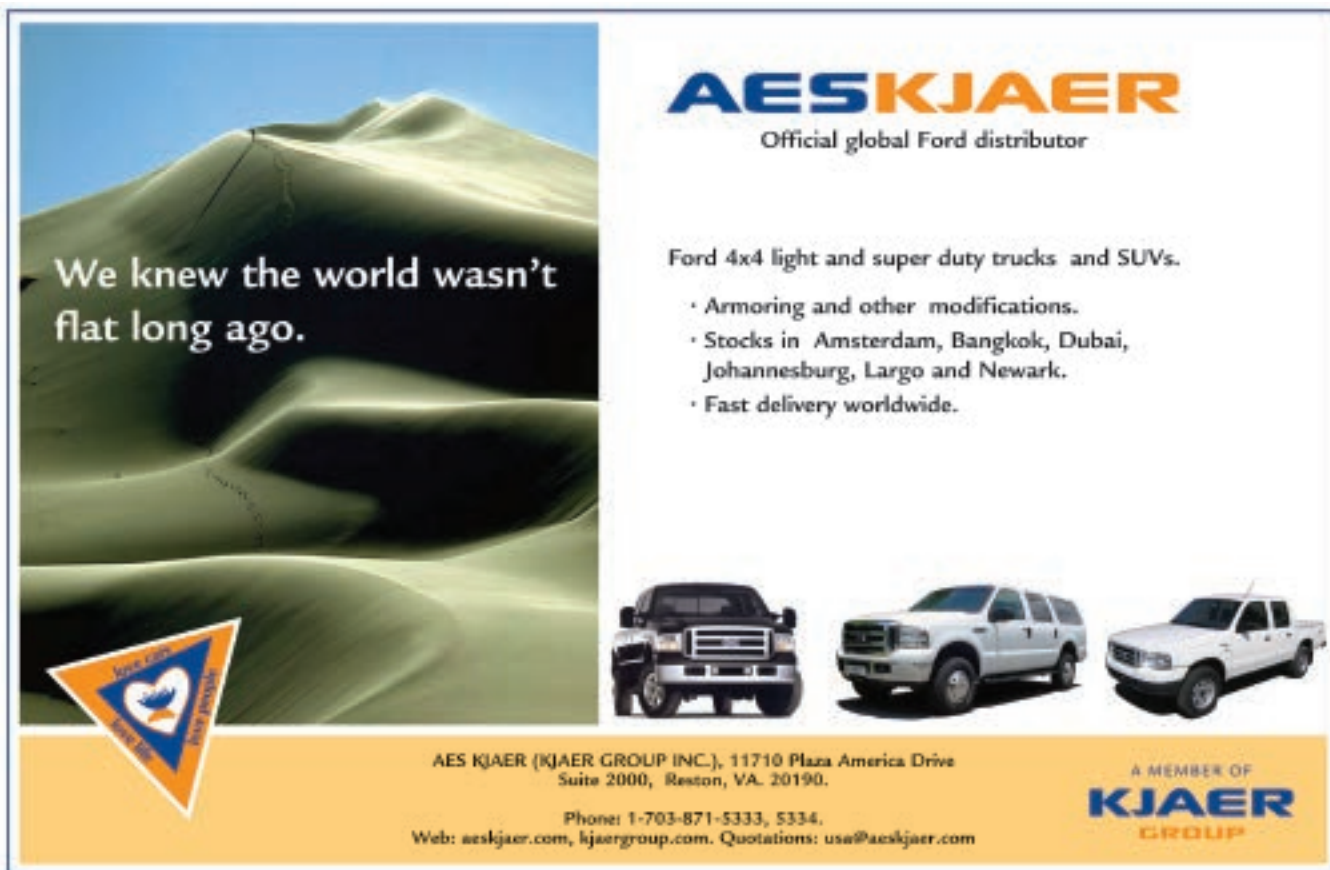
Also, most career development information is geared toward getting into the Senior Foreign Service. I’ll probably reach mandatory retirement age before I’m eligible for that. To be honest, my career goals are quite a bit different than the ones in the guidelines.

*Paul Berry  
Information Management Specialist  
Hong Kong*



### **Readjustments Needed**

The OMS career path is certainly viable for those new to the Foreign Service. However, for us “old-timers” who have been trying to get promoted and are



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beginning to round the corner to retirement, it's a bit much to put on our plates.

Similarly, the specific requirements for promotion to more senior ranks are realistic for new staff in terms of professional, technical and language proficiency, and the time allotted to attain them. But they are unrealistic for staff such as myself who have been in the Foreign Service for over 20 years. If the requirements can't be made less stringent, then it would be good if the department could phase in the program in bits and pieces.

The promulgation of these requirements doesn't affect my willingness to compete for promotion, but it will make doing so even more difficult. I only have a few years left in the FS, and would like to be promot-

***“Promotions in the FS should be based on performance, not the number of slots available to a few people.”***

— Michele Willoughby, OMS

ed one more time before retirement.

The Foreign Service should readjust how it promotes specialists. We can be placed in any job at any grade, yet we must wait for a “slot” to open before being considered for promotion. This does not make sense. I understand the concept for Civil Service, because if they are put in a higher-graded job, they will receive that salary. However, in the Foreign Service, that is not the case. Promotions in the FS should be based on performance, not the number of slots available to a few people.

That's my two cents. Thanks for asking.

*Michele L. Willoughby*  
Office Management Specialist  
Cairo ■

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# MANY PATHS, ONE GOAL

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THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALISTS EMPHASIZES TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION TO ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS.

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BY J. CHRISTIAN KENNEDY

Two years in the making, the Career Development Program aims to create a senior corps of specialists and generalists whose experience and training will enable them to grasp the “big picture” of the foreign policy challenges the United States faces. Their expertise will grow from several assignments in a geographic area or within a thematic focus. The CDP also emphasizes language training, enhancing professional skills, leadership training, and requires a commitment to service in hardship posts.

The CDP for generalists was launched on Jan. 1, 2005, and the one for specialists on Jan. 1, 2006. Because the program stresses commitment to serve in difficult parts of the world, using foreign languages and deep regional and functional expertise, it dovetails with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s ongoing transformational diplomacy initiative.

The CDPs for the 17 specialist career paths were primarily developed by drafting committees, called Contact Groups, drawn from the various specialties. These groups received support from several HR offices, as well.

AFSA was a constant partner in the development of the career paths, and all regional and functional bureaus were consistently briefed during its development phase. When a draft career path was ready for consideration by the specialist group in question, it was sent to the field as an ALDAC message, with the request that comments and suggestions be sent back to the department by a certain date. (HR/PE maintained an e-mail box for these replies.)

This feedback from the field provided invaluable guidance as we finalized the draft career paths. Many GSOs and OMSs, for example, felt that it should be mandatory to demonstrate foreign language proficiency. Their respective career paths now reflect the feedback we received. Many Diplomatic Security Special Agents noted that the unique requirements of their work made participation in a physical fitness program highly desirable; this mandatory requirement was added to their CDP career path.

Director General W. Robert Pearson held a series of town hall meetings about the CDP in Washington in



2004 and 2005 as the process unfolded, and also took advantage of meetings like the annual OMS conference and regional meetings of specialists (which he addressed via videoconference).

### **A CDP Primer**

Both for specialists and generalists, the Career Development Program draws on four overarching principles: operational effectiveness; leadership and management effectiveness; language and technical proficiency; and responsiveness to Service needs. All members of the Foreign Service seeking eligibility for promotion must meet a set number of mandatory requirements that correspond to these four principles, as they apply to their functional skill groups. The only difference between the principles for specialists and generalists lies in the third principle. All generalists have a mandatory requirement to demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language as tested by FSI at the 3/3 level. The contact groups and State Department management thought it was more important that specialists build throughout their careers upon the professional skills that brought them into the Foreign Service. Thus, their CDP emphasizes enhancing technical qualifications through training and certification.

Still, as we all know from working overseas, foreign-language proficiency usually helps anyone do a job better. Consequently, most of the specialist groups, 12 of the 17, have an elective requirement in foreign language proficiency, usually at the 2/2 level. Four other groups have a mandatory language requirement, usually at the 2/2 level: DS agents, OMSs, GSOs and ELOs. Couriers must complete a FAST course at FSI in a language appropriate to one of their assignments.

There were certain things the drafting groups felt everyone in a given skill group must do, which became the mandatory requirements for that specialty. As for the “electives,” the concept was to encourage the widest range of experience possible among the highest-ranking members of each skill group. Toward that end, each CDP offers a menu of things that officers should be able to accomplish over the course of a career.

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*J. Christian Kennedy, a Senior Foreign Service officer, has served in Panama, Hermosillo, Poznan, Georgetown, Mexico City and Washington, D.C. He is currently the senior adviser for the State Department's Career Development Program for Specialists.*

Meeting the mandatory and elective CDP requirements for a skill group opens the gateway to the top levels of our professional corps. For generalists and some specialists, this gateway is the Senior Threshold Window. For other specialist skill codes, the gateway gives access to the pinnacle for a specific group, ranging from FS-1 to FS-4.

Let's look at what the four principles mean in practice.

*Operational Effectiveness.* In the Contact Groups, all of the specialists believed that a series of tours in their specialized fields, regardless of geographic location, represented a better means of showing an individual's increasing competence. Because we have 17 different specialist CDP career paths, the variety of assignments is huge when taken together, though straightforward when broken down by specialty. For example, Financial Management Officers have a specific menu of domestic and overseas assignments at specific grade levels that they must meet to prepare for the Senior FS.

*Leadership and Management Effectiveness.* The mandatory requirement under this rubric says that all members of the Foreign Service will take the FSI leadership courses appropriate to their grades, beginning at the FS-3 level. However, Office Management Specialists and Security Technicians will not reach FS-3 until they have completed their CDP requirements. Until then, therefore, they must choose other leadership courses to fulfill a mandatory requirement under this principle.

*Language and Technical Knowledge Proficiency.* There are some differences between how generalists and specialists fulfill their requirements under this principle. For example, all generalists must have an FSI language score of at least 3/3 that is no older than seven years when they open their Senior Threshold Window. As noted above, some specialist groups also have a mandatory language requirement, but most may choose it as an elective.

The technical knowledge proficiency aspect of this requirement pertains only to specialists. It is always professionally-related, building on the skill set that brought an individual into the Service in the first place. The 17 different specialist groups or skill codes have a wide range of requirements under this principle. For example, Information Resource Management personnel must obtain advanced certification recognized by an outside IT specialists' organization, such as the Chief Information Officers Association. Foreign Service physicians and psychiatrists must maintain membership in a specialized professional society.

*Responsiveness to Service Needs.* This CDP require-

## F O C U S

ment means serving at a hardship post for a full tour. A frequent question the drafting committees received from the field was how this differs from the fair-share bidding requirement. Whereas fair share requires only that a liable bidder put down hardship posts on a bid list, the CDP requires *going* to a hardship post for a full tour.

Specifically, the CDP requires that the members of nearly every Foreign Service skill group serve a minimum of one tour after tenure at a post where the post differential (or hardship differential, as many call it), and the applicable danger pay, if any, amount to at least 15 percent.

There are three exceptions. Physicians must serve at a 20-percent hardship post. They actually made that choice themselves, recognizing that nearly all their posts are at least the 15-percent level, and 20 percent is the minimal rating for their unusually-hard posts list. The Security Engineering Officers have relatively few posts of assignment where the differential is 15 percent and the Diplomatic Couriers have no such posts of assignment. Instead of developing a separate criterion for these two groups,

they were exempted from 15-percent tours. Members of both skill groups do, however, travel extensively and for long periods of time in regions characterized by harsh and difficult conditions.

### Counting Requirements

All generalists and most specialists have four mandatory requirements, one for each of the CDP principles. GSOs and OMSs have five mandatory requirements to fulfill, while Diplomatic Security Special Agents have six.

The range of electives goes from five to 10, depending on the skill group. Foreign Service Construction Engineers are at the low end of the scale, with Financial Management Officers at the high end. Typically, the CDP will ask that a relatively new member of the Foreign Service choose and meet between 60 percent and 70 percent of the elective requirements available to that skill group.

For those people who have a longer trajectory in the Service, there is a grandfathering schedule for each skill group, which they should read carefully. (ALDAC cables

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went out to members of every specialty detailing the requirements.) All these schedules operate on the principle that the longer a person has been in the Foreign Service, the fewer mandatory and elective requirements he or she must meet before reaching the gateway that marks the pinnacle of the profession for that group.

There is a waiver policy in place regarding hardship service, largely for medical or compassionate reasons. The director general may approve these waivers on a case-by-case basis. There will also be a waiver available for members of those groups with a mandatory language requirement. That has not yet been fully developed, however.

### **Implementing the Specialist CDP**

For generalists, whose Career Development Program was announced more than a year ago, we have already developed and launched **Career Tracker**, an online, self-certifying inventory of CDP requirements and how each individual is meeting them that is accessible through HR Online and other HR Web sites. Career Tracker draws data from **Employee Profile** and makes it available on any of the 14 screens the user chooses to apply the data. For example, an employee's tour history will show up on the major/minor screens that correspond to this generalist requirement, but will also show up on the hardship tour screen.

We plan to launch the Career Tracker for specialist skill groups in time for the 2007 open assignments cycle that begins this fall. The person will choose by a mouse-click which tour he or she wants to use toward fulfilling a requirement. The need to choose makes the person self-certify that a given tour, in these examples, meets the requirement for a professionally-related tour, a leadership course or a hardship tour. In short, each member of the Foreign Service is responsible for showing that a career-related event or training meets a CDP requirement. Although the large number of specialist requirements and the sheer variety of specialist career paths make designing Career Tracker for them a more complex undertaking than for the generalists, we believe that the project is manageable and will be ready on time.

We have already developed for generalists, and are putting together for specialists, a document called the **Playbook**. Though it has nothing to do with football, the sports analogy is apt. There are many ways to get to the end zone, and the Playbook tries to outline as many of

them as possible. Available through HR Online and the HR/CDA Web site, the Playbook has illustrative career histories that meet the CDP requirements for the five generalist skill groups (cones). The individual specialist groups will each have a Playbook, too, setting forth the principles and the requirements that meet them, along with illustrative commentary. Our goal is to have drafts of these new Playbooks ready for mid-summer access online, so that bidders in this fall's assignments cycle will have them as guidebooks.

The Playbook will also have an extensive set of Frequently Asked Questions drawn from the e-mails sent to the Career Development Help Desk ([careerdevhelpdesk@state.gov](mailto:careerdevhelpdesk@state.gov)). The **Help Desk** deals with individual questions that employees feel are not covered in the Playbook; there a knowledgeable When Actually Employed annuitant drafts responses for clearance with a small group of CDP experts. The answers then go back to the respondent. Career Development Officers may also forward questions from their clients. Both the Playbook and Career Tracker, which CDOs can access, also serve as important tools for dialogue between HR/CDA and its clients, especially those who are in time zones that make real-time communication with Washington difficult.

During a videoconference earlier this year, a very senior Foreign Service specialist told Acting Director General O'Keefe that the Career Development Program made him feel like part of the Foreign Service for the first time in his career, because generalists and specialists were now being measured by the same principles. Increasing our esprit de corps is always important, because every member of the Foreign Service faces the emerging challenges of 21st-century diplomacy. Enhancing our skill sets, collectively and individually, and ensuring that we all have the widest range of experience possible is the best preparation for meeting the new demands of our profession. The CDP offers specialists and generalists alike the most comprehensive mechanism yet to do this.

The tasks will be as varied as creating the best IT system possible in each country; maintaining the all-important contacts with staff in different ministries; or protecting Foreign Service families and the United States from pandemic disease threats abroad. But, in the end, the CDP will ensure that the Service is prepared to meet today's challenges and the unforeseen crises that are sure to arise in the future, because individual Service members will be prepared and experienced. ■



# “SEPARATE BUT UNEQUAL”: THE IRM CAREER PATH

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THE CDP FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL IS A GOOD START, BUT NEEDS TO RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE IRM SPECIALTY.

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BY DAVID FIERSTINE

The Career Development Program for the Information Resource Management specialties is a brave and innovative initiative by the Bureau of Human Resources. I applaud several parts of the CDP. For instance, I agree completely that all IRM officers who reach the level of the Senior Foreign Service should have a diverse and exceptional career history and strong information technology qualifications. After all, they represent the U.S. Department of State's IRM profession to the world.

But how realistic is the career path outlined in our CDP? I consider my Foreign Service career as a digital systems specialist (IMTS/D) to be typical. I have been promoted at the average time in service and time in grade for my specialty, so I ought to be in a position to embrace the CDP with full confidence that a fulfilling career is in sight. But in my view, there are several serious problems with the IRM specialist career path into the Senior Foreign Service as it stands.

Fundamentally, State is operating under the assumption that the career paths for Information Management

Technical Specialists (2882 skill code) and Information Management Specialists (2880 skill code) are equal and afford the same opportunities to reach the Senior Foreign Service level. This could not be further from the truth.

### **Institutional Segregation**

A twist on the famous phrase from *Brown v. Board of Education* comes to mind in this regard: “separate but unequal.” Unfortunately, in not acknowledging the basic differences in the work experience of an IMTS and an IMS throughout their careers, the Career Development Program perpetuates the institutional segregation that favors the IMS for advancement.

The IRM “ticket punch” list of both mandatory and elective requirements is unevenly tilted in favor of the IMS skill code, and ignores the special circumstances encountered during the IMTS career. The following six points of the CDP requirements are not equally obtainable “after tenure/entry into Service,” as I shall explain.

***Operational Effectiveness, RIMC Branch Chief.***



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First, not all Regional Information Management Centers have graded or scored their branch chief positions at the FS-2 level. Second, in each IMTS discipline — telephone, radio and digital — how many branch chief or supervisory positions are available relative to the number of technicians worldwide? Now compare the number of Information Program Officers, Information System Officers and other supervisory positions to the number of 2880s worldwide. There is clearly a disparity.

**Operational/Crisis Response.** This elective is not

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*David Fierstine joined the Foreign Service as a digital systems specialist (IMTS/D) in 1990. Following a tour in Washington, he had four consecutive tours at the regional information management centers in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Abidjan, Frankfurt and Tokyo. He is currently serving as an information management technical specialist at the Regional Information Management Center in Bangkok. This article is adapted from a letter he wrote to HR/PE last year.*

clearly defined. For instance, does a TDY to critical-needs posts in evacuation status count?

**One foreign language at the 2/2 level, as tested by FSI.** Unless the IMTS enters the Foreign Service fluent in a foreign language, the fact that the work demands constant travel makes obtaining the foreign language education required for a 2/2 nearly impossible. Non-traveling IMS personnel are favored from their entry into the department by being able to steadily attend language training at post.

**Service in an officially designated, critical-needs position.** Only a limited number of RIMC offices are located in 15-percent or greater (hardship) differential and danger pay posts. Again, compare the complement of technicians to critical-needs RIMCs, and compare the complement of operations personnel to critical-needs posts. They don't balance. In addition, any person or family member with less than a Class 1 medical clearance will not be able to fulfill this requirement.

**Service at an unaccompanied post.** There are no

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permanent RIMC positions located at unaccompanied posts. By contrast with the IMS career, this elective is not available to those in the IMTS career. (As of this writing, Kabul does have a resident RIMC IMTS/D position.)

**IPO or ISO Overseas at FS-2.**

You can count on the fingers of one hand the number of FS-2 Information Program Officer and Information System Officer slots that go to equal-ranked IMTS specialists. Again, the IMTS (2882) career is different than the IMS (2880) career from the beginning of the career path up to where both get combined at the FS-2 level (2884). These differences should be taken into account when a system is devised for selection into the highest rank of service.

**Two Recommendations**

I would recommend either creation of separate Career

***The “ticket punch” list  
of both mandatory and  
elective requirements  
is unevenly tilted in favor  
of the IMS skill code.***

Development Programs for IMTS and IMS personnel or, at a minimum, the inclusion of the following items in their CDP requirements for the Senior Foreign Service.

**TDY status should count.** If language and community service are to be considered, so should the credits of the TDY traveler. In more than 13 years with the Foreign Service, I can conservatively

say that I have traveled over 100 days every year. The math says I have completed the equivalent of a 3-1/2 year tour. So our TDYs to differential or danger-pay posts should count. My combined TDYs to Kabul alone over the past year add up to the equivalent of a fourth of a standard unaccompanied tour.

**Project Management.** RIMCs are all about knowledge and project management. Technicians are heavily experienced in these areas. They perform team-leader functions on major installations or projects at least three or four times a year. This experience offers major leadership and supervisory on-the-job training. IMTS team leaders learn to handle great stress and pressure from the responsibility of system installations and equipment upgrades. During these projects we learn how to diplomatically work with all customers, from FSNs and other agency directors to ambassadors. Yet that work is not counted as supervisory responsibility because the technicians do not write EERs.

Again, the CDP's pitfall is that it does not take into consideration the very different careers of the 2880 and the 2882 skill codes. We may be incestuously related in our mission and training, but from new-hire qualifications to FS-2 responsibilities we are apples and oranges. You cannot interchange a fully qualified mid-grade IMTS with a fully qualified mid-grade IMS.

The CDP demands that once the IMTS reaches the FS-2 level, he or she must play major “catch up” to their IMS counterparts. But from the beginning, our career paths are separate and not equal. To lump these mandatory and elective requirements into one CDP simply because both career paths converge at the FS-2/2884 skill code does a disservice to both skill codes.

In short, this CDP is a good start, but it needs to take account of these problems to ensure an optimal future for all Information Resource Management employees. ■

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# TAKING OMS TRAINING SERIOUSLY

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INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TRAINING IS INTEGRAL TO THE EVOLVING OMS SKILL CODE, BUT ADDITIONAL FUNDING IS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT IT.

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BY ELIZEBETH E. VEGHTE

The Office Management Specialist skill code is steadily changing as a result of the increasing demand and rapidly changing requirements for information management throughout the Department of State. So far, however, this change is taking place unofficially at the operational level and, in my view, in a form that is sometimes to the disadvantage of the OMS corps (formerly known as Foreign Service secretaries).

Information management has emerged over the past decade as a separate professional discipline that has become increasingly stratified, with sub-specializations and different levels of expertise. The Foreign Service has a tremendous demand for IT professionals with skills at both higher and lower levels, but doesn't have the budget to hire both. As a result, lower-level tasks that would be done in the private sector by hiring extra entry-level information technicians are being transferred to OMSs here at State, so that the department can concentrate on recruitment of higher-level IT professionals. The real truth is that federal resources are

not sufficient to match salary rates the private sector pays IT professionals. Given this reality, a shift of some of these responsibilities to the OMS portfolio represents an efficient use of human resources.

However, this adjustment of the OMS skill code — which now requires certification in four out of five of the programs within the Microsoft Office Suite as one of the mandatory requirements in the new Career Development Program for promotion to the FP-4 level — constitutes an unfunded mandate. Here is my perception of the problem, and some possible solutions.

## **Where's the Incentive?**

Today, OMSs are being asked to do more IT-related work, particularly with the added responsibility of maintaining the SIPR-Net via the Portal-X Program. Some folks like this, but some of us who have a longer institutional memory are dissatisfied with how the implementation is taking place, particularly with regard to the ability to get training. This doesn't reflect resistance to

new technology, but an acknowledgement of the fact that many missions are already understaffed and underfunded. Unlike our IRM specialist colleagues, who receive a 5-to-15-percent pay incentive for taking mandated training, OMSs have no financial incentive to get certified in the four mandated programs in the MS Office Suite. Our “reward” for this is just to be eligible for promotion to the FP-4 level. It’s important to keep up one’s skills, of course; but if we are being mandated to get certified, why don’t we also have some pay incentive as do our other specialist colleagues — at least if we get certified in MS Access, which is currently an elective?

It’s an unfortunate fact that many posts hardly have enough funds to meet many of their basic requirements, or even to purchase upgraded office equipment. So getting funding to send someone to the U.S. to take a course is not feasible for them. Moreover, OMSs are generally not informed that if they are to have any chance at all of obtaining training in Washington, funds need to be allocated in the post’s yearly budget. If the funds are not approved, this leaves the OMS with no option but to hope to get into a class sometime between assignments, on home leave or on R&R. This works fine for leadership courses, but it is not a smart option for the development and retention of computer skills.

Assuming that per diem funds are available from the bureau or post, Office Management Specialists are expected to somehow fit this training into our jam-

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*Elizebeth E. Veghte joined the Department of State in 1984 as a Civil Service clerk. After four years in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and nearly 10 years in the Operations Center, where she worked as the administrative assistant to the deputy director, she was accepted into the Civil Service Hard-to-Fill Program, serving from 1998 to 2003 in Bogotá and Nairobi.*

*After those two excursion tours, she converted to the Foreign Service. Now, in her first tour following tenure, she serves as the office manager for political affairs in Tegucigalpa. She was a panelist at the OMS conference in Washington, D.C., last October.*

***The adjustment of the  
OMS skill code to require  
certification in various  
Microsoft programs  
constitutes an  
unfunded mandate.***

packed schedules while we’re in the U.S. during these times. For those with residences in the Washington, D.C. area, this might not present a major problem, but for those of us who call other parts of the U.S. home, such arrangements are problematic. If a course at FSI, for example, is only offered during a certain time and this happens to be at the beginning of the R&R or home leave, much will be forgotten before the trainee gets back to post. Is this really a good

use of our training funds?

Is online training with Fastrac an option? Yes and no. In the first place, many of us work at posts where payment of overtime is prohibitively costly. The department often functions under continuing resolutions that do not have any provision for overtime pay. In such cases, the only option is to take comp time, but at busy posts (which most are) we run the risk of losing it if we cannot take time off before the comp time earned is lost. Even if overtime pay is available, not all workspaces offer facilities to take such instruction during the regular workday. Working from home, or at the office in one’s “off” hours, is not always practical, either, particularly for families.

Even if the employee manages to get the training, he or she still has to take the certification exam as soon as possible after taking the actual course — and pay his or her own way to Washington, D.C., or Warrenton, Va., to do it. This is the part of the Career Development Program that could be defined as an unfunded mandate. While it’s good that these two facilities accept payment vouchers for certification exams after an employee takes a course via Fastrac, it doesn’t include transportation costs. Unfortunately, the Florida Regional Center in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., does not have a certified tester; nor does it offer the 2003 version of MS Word, and possibly no other 2003 versions either.

What’s even more frustrating is that there is at least the perception that newer employees coming into the corps already have these certifications. That puts them well on the way to eligibility for promotion to the FS-4 level without having to contend with all the budget, time and travel constraints the State bureaucracy puts in the way of longtime employees. Although there is a “grand-



father clause” built into the new CDP, which is admirable, computer training is so important that even those who can opt not to fulfill this mandate would still be better off if they did. So how do we make that happen?

### **Let’s Level the Playing Field**

In contrast to specialists, generalists of all cones are routinely sent to Washington at the government’s expense for political tradecraft, economic courses, etc., to further their careers. Often there is an arrangement for the post to pay for the ticket and the bureau to pay the per diem; in some cases, the bureau pays for it all. Officers who need training will often get the relevant regional or functional bureau to pay for it, so the post expenditure for travel is manageable. For example, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor will fund labor officer training. If the post needs to pay for anything at all, it might only be the airfare; often the training is fully funded by the functional bureau. Unfortunately, OMSs don’t have the option of their computer training being funded in a similar manner. Why not?

What is perceived as somewhat unfair to those of us having some years in the Service is the difficulty in getting training when and where we need it. According to various people I spoke with at the OMS conference last fall and subsequently, there are only two places where the certification tests can be taken: the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Va., and the School of Applied Information Technology in Warrenton, Va. It would be helpful if more regional training and testing were offered. The two advantages are that it would save money, and the newly trained would be able to return immediately to their offices to implement their new skills. As I mentioned previously, this is crucial to ensure the investment in training is not wasted, because retention goes down exponentially the longer the gap is between training and application of that training in the work place.

Ideally, certification exams could be taken at local Microsoft-certified training centers. An exam is an exam, and even if an OMS takes a certification course via

***It would be helpful if more regional training were offered. Ideally, certification exams could be taken at local Microsoft-certified training centers.***

Fastrac, why shouldn’t he or she be permitted to pay for a certification exam locally and then have that certification accepted — and be reimbursed for the fee? State could also work out a liaison with a local testing center to accept the voucher from Fastrac for the exam. Currently, if an employee pays his or her own examination fee, they are not reimbursed, yet a second example of an employee meeting a mandate that is not funded. If it’s not funded, it’s not fair.

Some posts are being very proactive in helping OMSs achieve their career goals. Pretoria, for example, pays for OMSs to go to a certified training center and also pays for their exams. Other posts would benefit greatly by following this excellent example of investment in human resources and proactive management. In fact, making this a policy for all posts where possible would be the best solution overall.

In closing, information management training is integral to the evolving OMS skill code, but additional funding to adopt best practices with regard to logistical management is necessary to implement it. For example, wouldn’t it make more sense to offer regionally based computer courses and allow OMSs to take certification exams locally? Or, if testing at post is not possible, could it at least be done at a new and improved State Department-run Florida regional facility? This would, in my view, provide a good compromise for those of us who need to get the Microsoft Office Suite of professional certifications as quickly as possible.

My intention in writing this article has been to stimulate more people to discuss viable options that would help Office Management Specialists in a manner that benefits not only them, but the department as well. I am, overall, very pleased with the new Career Development Program for the OMS specialty. But with regard to training issues, we still have some ground to cover to minimize bureaucratic roadblocks. Office Management Specialists should be able to get the training we need to be the best we can be in our jobs, and do what we all want to do: excel in our careers. ■

# STATE'S GENERATION X WORK FORCE

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BY RECOGNIZING THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG IT SPECIALISTS, THE FOREIGN SERVICE CAN DEVISE STRATEGIES TO CAPITALIZE ON THEIR SKILLS.

BY ALAN ROECKS

hen I was 5 years old, my grandfather shared with me his conviction that the younger generation just didn't measure up. When I was 20, and had all the answers, my frustrated father wondered what would become of my generation. Now I am in my 50s, and wonder whether today's youth will be able to meet the challenges ahead — and whether the State Department and other employers are prepared to make the best use of their abilities and interests.

From 1998 to 2005, I was the chief technology officer at two large U.S. embassies, where I directed the work of Information Resource Management specialists. These groups, about half of whom were new hires under 35 years of age, were technology whizzes: you told them your needs and they met them, often in a matter of minutes. However, one problem repeatedly surfaced: The young employees invariably questioned authority — an irritating behavior that limited their integration into the hierarchical embassy workplace.

For example, we all know that at any diplomatic mission, you do what the ambassador says. Period. If he

instructs you to attend a social function, you go. If she asks for a new computer, printer or satellite phone, you provide it without asking why. That was not how most of these young specialists saw things, however.

Two employees who had worked five years in industry before joining State saw no need to call the head of the mission “Madam Ambassador,” and felt her first name would do. Others, who were recent computer-networking graduates from the University of Maryland, did not want to go to the ambassador's social events, where they “would just have to make conversation with others whom they did not know.” Another new hire felt it was more important for the junior officer in the political section to have a new computer than the front office. As you can imagine, I had to frequently redirect their actions.

There were other differences, as well. The younger specialists were reluctant to work overtime, claiming they had better things to do with their free time. They all demanded feedback on their performance — instant feedback. And they were bold. Two who were in the

middle of their second overseas assignment requested I write them letters of reference so they could get a job outside of the department after they completed their overseas tour. They also demanded additional computer training, contending they could not do their jobs without it.

At the time, I was perplexed by the behavior of my young staff. I wasn't prepared to deal with this newest group of workers, commonly called Generation X, and did not know how to handle their needs and temperament. Because State elected to put me into a year of senior training at the Army War College after I came back from overseas last year, and part of this training involved conducting research, I began to study the characteristics of Generation X workers, focusing on IRM specialists. In addition to evaluating the workplace characteristics of Gen Xers, I identified strategies for capitalizing on their skills. This article summarizes my findings.

## **Introducing Generation X**

What distinguishes Generation X, the least populous generation in the U.S. work force today, from its predecessors? Born between 1965 and 1980 they were the first American children whose mothers typically worked outside the home, creating new, unfamiliar roles for overstressed parents. Many Gen Xers were latchkey children, with parents whose marriages more often than not ended in divorce. To cope, they often sought a sense of family by engaging in multiple friendships among their peers (as in the TV sitcom "Friends").

How do Xers fare in the workplace? The results to date are not encouraging. They tend to experience difficulties with bureaucracies due to their mistrust of organizations and the authority figures leading them. While highly computer-literate, they frequently lack people skills.

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*Since joining the State Department in 1990 as an Information Technology Specialist, Alan Roecks has served in the Congo, India and Washington, D.C. He was Information Management Officer from 1998 to 2001 in Brasilia and from 2001 to 2005 in Ankara. He is currently completing senior training at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa.; this article is abstracted from original research he did there. Roecks has been a regular contributor to diplomatic publications on information technology, mission evacuations and international adoption.*

Generation Xers are typically unimpressed by authority and often treat the company president just as they would the front-desk receptionist. Due to their negative experiences with parents and other authority figures in their early years, Xers are inherently skeptical, and reluctant to place their trust in others. They hesitate to follow orders unless they understand what is in it for them, and believe that leaders must earn their respect. They often ask "Why?" when they are told to do something, and want to know "What's in it for me?" Yet despite their lack of respect for others' authority, Xers want to be respected immediately and unconditionally.

Many Xers avoid working on weekends and do not volunteer for overtime. To them, the object is to meet the deadline for work, not to seek more responsibility. They want to do things "their way" and not be told how to get the job done by their supervisors. They also expect the workplace to be casual, contending that being able to work in jeans and T-shirts makes them more productive.

Some Xers want to move into top positions without delay. Climbing the corporate ladder patiently and waiting for a management position to open up is not part of their career plan. Other members of this cohort don't want to be managers at all, preferring to maintain their freedom and put their time and energy into other pursuits. They cannot be enticed into management, even with financial and other incentives.

Generation X managers can be effective in a team setting, but their pessimism toward senior management must be muted. Many of them will avoid personal contact with their peers whenever possible, relying on more informal means of communication such as e-mail, telephone or videoconferencing.

The generational attributes I have identified suggest that Generation Xers are high-maintenance, making them very time-consuming employees to supervise.

## **Preparing for Turnover**

Any organization must have capable professionals to keep its information technology assets operational. This is definitely true for the Department of State, whose professionals must maintain computer and communications networks throughout the world. In order to avert staffing gaps at the turn of the century and bring in personnel familiar with current IT practices and standards, the department has been replenishing its Foreign Service work force through the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative.



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Approximately 60 percent of the new hires are from Generation X, having been born between 1965 and 1980.

Another factor driving the hiring is the recognition that as early as 2010 the Bureau of Information Resource Management will begin to face significant turnover with the retirement of 270 of its mid- and senior-level managers. In 2004 then-Chief Information Officer Bruce Morrison shared with me his concern about this problem. The number of management positions in 2006 — those in grades FS-2 through MC — is 274. This group is predominately Baby Boomers (born between 1945 and 1965) or Veterans (born before 1945), with a few recently-promoted FS-2 Generation Xers. Because State's mandatory retirement age is 65, by 2010 all veterans and those Baby Boomers born in 1945 will have been forced to retire.

But given that FS personnel can retire at 50 years of age, and many elect to leave the work force well before turning 65, IRM can expect its managers to begin retiring in large numbers even before 2010. Exacerbating the problem, the pool of employable Generation Xers is 15

percent smaller than any generation since World War II, making it that much harder to find new managers to fill those slots. Members of the current group of new hires are slated to replace these retirees, yet retention of Gen Xers is a pervasive problem in the U.S. workplace. One in three Gen Xers change jobs annually, and their average organizational tenure is three years.

Accordingly, IRM and other IT organizations will have to modify the workplace environment and offer their high-technology workers perks in order to retain them. But such changes represent only a patch, not a solution: Most information technology entities can expect annual Gen X turnover of at least 20 percent.

The challenge for State is even more daunting than the sheer numbers involved: Compared to other Foreign Service personnel, an IRM specialist is more likely to leave the department. First, specialists tend to have more job options outside State than their Foreign Service generalist colleagues. A specialist with overseas experience, current IT training and a security clearance is an

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increasingly valuable commodity who will likely have employment options with other U.S. government agencies and industry. Second, among specialists only a few officers represent the second- and third-generations of families who served in the department. As a result, they do not embrace the same long-established ties that can link their officer colleagues to the Foreign Service.

Losing a Foreign Service IRM specialist is expensive: State's typical investment in such an employee is on the order of \$200,000. Then there are the replacement costs, such as severance pay, opportunity time lost, interviewing time, travel expenses, testing costs and the learning curve for the replacement employee. The loss of corporate knowledge is especially devastating if replacements are not quickly forthcoming.

As the smallest U.S. Cabinet agency, State is inherently vulnerable to attrition, particularly in regard to personnel with critical skills such as IT management. Recruiting can be difficult due to the relatively low pay and the hardships and danger associated with many top-priority postings. It can take one to two years just to bring a new specialist through the pipeline, after which the employee must complete four to six months of specialized training. (Another two years are required to master IRM's business systems.) For a manager, an additional two years are needed before it is possible to fully understand the department's political and cultural nuances, including comprehending the ins and outs of headquarters. Thus, the average lead time for replacing an IRM specialist is three to five years.

If those being groomed to be IRM managers do not intend to remain with the bureau, or at least with State, then the organization faces a serious crisis. Effective management practices can mitigate attrition, to be sure. But employees new to the work force may see service in the sometimes-turbulent computers and communications groups as inhibiting their professional advancement — a national trend that is not limited to the U.S. government — and they may campaign to work with other corporate entities. To prevent migration, it is crucial to retain strong IRM managers.

### ***Losing a Foreign Service***

#### ***IRM specialist is***

***expensive: State's typical***

***investment in such an***

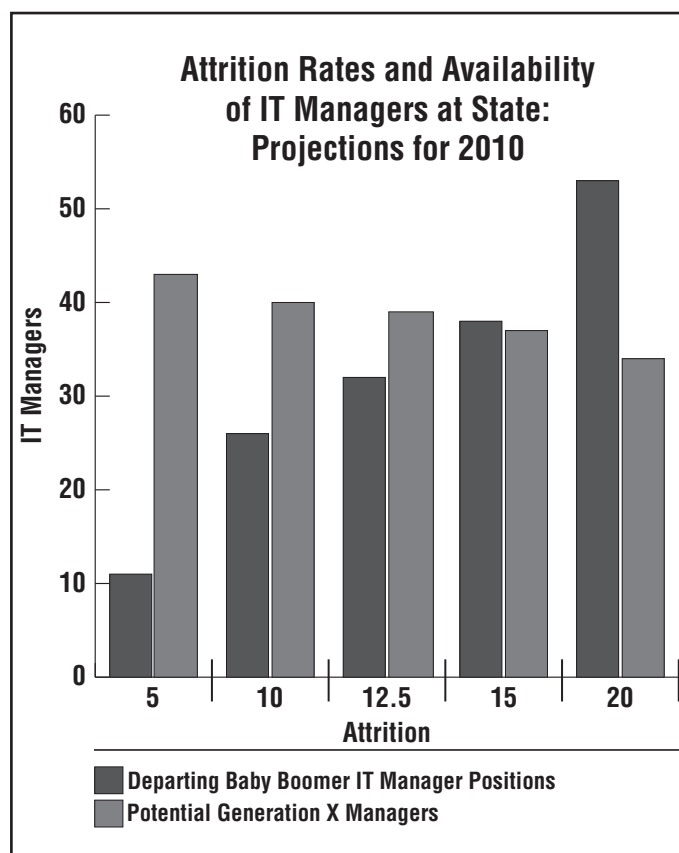
***employee is on the order***

***of \$200,000.***

### **Future Managers**

Will there be enough Generation X specialists to replace departing Boomer IRM managers? Disappointingly, the department has not kept sufficient attrition data on its newly-hired Foreign Service Gen X work force, so no baseline data was available. In order to forecast the number of specialists required, I based my estimates on current research trends and State's 2006 staffing profiles. The 2010

projections indicate that if at least 14 percent of the Boomer managers depart, there will not be enough qualified Generation X IRM specialists (see bar chart below). Correspondingly, if the attrition rate for specialists is at least 15 percent, the number of specialists will be insufficient to replace departing managers. (If the attrition rate either for departing managers or specialists is below 13 percent, there should be sufficient specialists to replace departing managers.)



Given projected trends, we expect the Xers' attrition rate to exceed 15 percent annually. We must conclude that, starting as early as 2010, there will likely not be enough specialists to move into management.

Considering generational demographics, the future becomes bleaker. Given the five-year lag time to train a specialist to be a manager, State will keep falling farther behind. The problem is intensified by the size of the Generation X cohort, 15 percent smaller than any other since the end of World War II. This means there will be too few Generation Xers to replace retiring Baby Boomer managers generally, not just at State.

Even if there were sufficient numbers of Generation X employees available, there are additional generational concerns that constrain their movement into management. A significant portion of the Generation X cohort demonstrates undesirable personal characteristics that limit their upward mobility. Compared to other generations, Gen X has the highest levels of drug and alcohol abuse, homicide, suicide and teenage pregnancy. That less-than-stellar generational pedigree severely limits their advancement into management. Will the employee have a stable enough personality to be effective in a high-pressure management role? Will there be problems with the employee getting and maintaining a security clearance? Will he or she be able to function successfully on a team? If not, will the Gen Xer's personality cause other productive team members to depart?

### **Recommendations**

The Department of State should target Foreign Service Generation X IRM specialists who are likely to remain with the organization and whose leadership characteristics will allow them to move into management within five years. To do this, Human Resources should look carefully at each Xer's work history to confirm that the employee is not a "job hopper." An earlier study evaluated three alternatives to meet the staffing gap — rehiring retired State IRM managers, recruiting IRM specialists with prior government management experience and using remote contracting for IRM management, with the contractor based in the D.C. area. The analysis revealed that the department would be best served by recruiting more retired military officers with an IRM management background. They have already developed leadership skills and are accustomed to hierarchical organizations and chains of command, so are

more likely to stay put.

Initially, the new hires would be Baby Boomers, but over the next decade, the group's members would gradually become Generation Xers. The study did identify two potential downsides to taking this route: Entry-level salaries will need to go up to attract such specialists, who are highly sought after; and newly hired military personnel need at least two years to learn State's culture.

IRM should identify potential managers among its Generation X labor force and help them augment their people and leadership skills. This recommendation is two-pronged. First, it is important to identify those Generation X employees who have *no* interest in management and take their presence into account in the bureau's strategic planning. Once potential managers have been identified, they should be encouraged to take leadership and management courses at the Foreign Service Institute — recognizing that many Foreign Service managers of that generation (not just those working in IRM) need to develop aspects of their personalities to become successful leaders.

FSI should structure entry-level training to more effectively integrate Generation X IRM employees into the department's culture. This is a two-way street. Teaching Baby Boomer managers appropriate ways to respond to Generation X employees' concerns and attitudes could have important long-term benefits. In particular, State's Chief Information Officer should brief all ambassadors and other senior staff during their FSI-sponsored orientation. Second, new hires need to understand State's culture more quickly. Perhaps more time needs to be set aside for IRM employees at FSI's Overseas Briefing Center, encouraging them to participate in courses and activities relevant to their future assignment. Reducing the time needed to become acclimated to the department's structure and operating style will free up valuable employee time that can be redirected to workplace issues.

Given the job-hopping predisposition of employees under 40 years old, the department must begin collecting data so it can track attrition. Although different in many ways from their older Generation X colleagues, the newest generation of workers, the Millennials — those born since 1981 — are also job hoppers. Because employees under 40 years old — a group encompassing Generation X and Millennials — tend to switch employers often, we can expect a higher level of employee attri-



## F O C U S

tion than with previous generations. Knowing how many employees hired in a given year have left and when they departed is simply good business: State could predict employee attrition and better anticipate staffing gaps if it had additional information.

Some key questions the department should ask when an employee departs include: Were there specific actions that State could have taken to prevent the employee from departing? Did the employee depart to become a Civil Service employee with the department, to work for another federal government agency, or to work for a corporation? If he or she left to work for a corporation, was it one that contracts with the State Department?

The scope of the research should be expanded to include *all* Generation X employees at State, including generalists, concentrating on ways to optimize the talents

***The newest  
generation of workers,  
the Millennials —  
those born since 1981  
— are also job hoppers.***

of this often misunderstood generation. Future inquiries should seek answers to the following questions: In what ways do State's Foreign Service and other groups differ, and in what ways are they alike? Are employees who are married to foreign-born spouses more or less likely to remain with State? How many employees have at least 10

years of military experience? Do naturalized Americans tend to remain a longer or shorter time than U.S.-born Americans?

By gathering answers to questions like these, the department will be able to identify the salient characteristics of the employees it wants to retain. This information would also be invaluable for future recruiting, conducting strategic and long-range planning, and integrating these employees more effectively into the Foreign Service. ■

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# PEACE OPERATIONS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF U.S. POLICY

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NEARLY A QUARTER-CENTURY AFTER ITS CREATION, THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE AND OBSERVERS IN THE SINAI IS A MODEL WORTH ADAPTING FOR OTHER PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS.

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BY ARTHUR HUGHES

**I**srael's withdrawal from Gaza this past August has only sharpened the debate about overall security arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians, who took control of the strip. Israeli fears that the area would be a launching pad for terrorism against Israeli civilians have to some extent been realized. At the same time, Palestinian fears that Gaza would become a prison of sorts, cut off from the West Bank and a much-needed Israeli market, have also become reality. Complicating matters, Tel Aviv has long resisted third party involvement in its security affairs (though in 1997, it reluctantly accepted international peace monitors in Hebron), while Palestinians have consistently called for United Nations or other foreign peacekeepers.

While it is too early to know how these matters will play out, further burdened by Hamas' recent victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections, it is not too early to

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consider how security requirements can be supported under an eventual comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. In that regard, the Multinational Force and Observers is a model worth considering.

The MFO came about in 1982 as a mechanism for implementing the 1979 Egypt-Israeli Peace Treaty, the cornerstone of peace agreements in the Middle East. For nearly a quarter-century, the force and observers have quietly and effectively supervised the treaty's security arrangements and employed best efforts to prevent violations of its terms. By taking the Sinai battleground "off the table," it has played an essential partnership role in helping to build confidence, stability and peace between Egypt and Israel, and thereby served as a useful policy tool for the United States.

## Peacekeepers, Not Peacemakers

It is important to note that the Multinational Force and Observers is a peacekeeping operation, not a peacemaker. It is not an instrument for stopping international war, civil war, insurrection, genocide or ethnic cleansing. Also, the MFO is not affiliated with the United Nations or any regional organization. Rather, Egypt and Israel created the organization (with essential U.S. assistance) to help build, consolidate and sustain a climate in which a wider regional peace could be achieved. Thus, the MFO is their creation. It belongs to them.

The MFO's uniqueness and strengths include its inde-

pendence, which insulates it from politics; its precisely drawn mandate and strong leadership that has made full use of the mandate's authorities; its evenhandedness and professionalism; and a reputation for probity in all areas, including use of resources. Of fundamental importance, both parties are committed to their treaty and want the MFO to be effective.

The core of the 1979 Peace Treaty is a tradeoff between Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai and security provided by a Sinai demilitarization/limited armaments regime closely supervised by an international operation. The treaty actually stipulates that the United Nations would perform this peacekeeping role. But because of opposition from the Soviet Union and most of the Arab world, agreement in the Security Council on a mandate was not possible. This inability became final in May 1981, when the president of the Security Council made a formal announcement of impasse. Without a peacekeeping operation there, Israel would not withdraw from the Sinai. The treaty was in danger of collapse.

Fast action to arrange peacekeepers was essential. Fortunately, Soviet and Arab opposition had been foreseen and, at Israeli insistence, President Carter had agreed "to ensure the establishment and maintenance of an acceptable alternative multinational force." Together, Egypt and Israel, supported by Washington, proceeded to create the MFO. Drafters from the three states quickly completed the protocol that was signed by the parties and witnessed by the United States, on Aug. 3, 1981.

The protocol is an unusual document. Functioning as the "constitution" of the MFO, it sets out its mission and organization, including funding parameters. It is also a status-of-forces agreement that establishes the authorities of the director general and codifies the rights of the MFO to carry out its mandate in Egypt and Israel.

Beyond the practical difficulties of creating a new civilian and military peacekeeping organization from whole cloth and having it operational in the Sinai within seven months, other countries were not enthusiastic about participating in the enterprise. With strong congressional support, the U.S. administration set a positive example by

committing an infantry battalion, a logistics unit and a civilian observer (treaty verification) unit. The United States also agreed to provide the director general, as strongly desired by both parties, and to cover one-third of the organization's total operating costs.

On that basis, the MFO deployed to the Sinai in March 1982 and Israel completed its withdrawal on schedule by April 25, except for a small area around Taba in the south at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. This was resolved by arbitration to Egyptian satisfaction in 1988.

### **How It Works**

The MFO was set up as a deployed composite military force, commanded by a general officer force commander, with support units and a civilian verification component, all under the authority of a director general with headquarters in Rome. (Israel and Egypt both balked at setting up headquarters in the other country.) The director general established representative offices in Cairo and Tel Aviv to perform coordination and political representation and to serve as

purchasing offices.

Total MFO strength, including support services contractors, is 2,344, with 23 civilians at Rome headquarters, 19 at the Tel Aviv office and 14 in Cairo and 2,288 military and civilians in the Sinai. Military staffing is down over 40 percent since the level at the force's inception, and headquarters numbers have dropped by over 55 percent.

In 2001, the Department of Defense began urging major cuts in U.S. military participation in the MFO. Fearing that such cuts could unravel the force and create instability, Egypt and Israel strongly resisted. Finally, in 2003, a reasonable U.S. Army reduction package was approved.

Nearly 1,700 soldiers from 11 countries serve in the force. U.S. Army troops are still the largest contingent, representing 41 percent of the MFO's complement; Colombia is next with 21 percent. These soldiers operate checkpoints, observation points and control centers and perform verifications on the ground in the Sinai to implement the 1981 peace treaty's demilitarization and limited armaments regime.

The force commander's staff has branches dealing with

***The MFO has played an essential partnership role in helping to build confidence, stability and peace between Egypt and Israel.***



operations, liaison, engineering, support, personnel and information systems. Operational elements consist of Colombian, Fijian and American infantry battalions based in Egypt along the border and Gulf of Aqaba, and an Italian coastal patrol unit with three patrol boats based at Sharm al Sheikh. This unit ensures freedom of navigation through the Strait of Tiran.

A 15-member Civilian Observer Unit performs intrusive verification inspections in the Sinai and in Israel along the border. The COU is not a part of the force commander's "staff," but is directly under his authority. All 15 observers are Americans, about half seconded from the Foreign Service and the other half direct hire former military personnel. They conduct highly detailed and intrusive reconnaissance and on-site verification of the forces and military activities of the

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***Nearly 1,700 soldiers  
from 11 countries  
serve in the force.***

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parties in the treaty limitation zones in the Sinai and in Israel along the border.

The COU possesses a wealth of military and political expertise and has been critical in building confidence and providing assurance to each party. The key to its success has been a relationship of trust that flows from the interactions of COU members with Egyptian and Israeli officers who accompany the missions in their own countries.

The MFO's liaison system constitutes a structured military link to the Egyptian and Israeli counterpart organizations established under the protocol. Although in military terms the Liaison Branch is a staff and support element, in practice it is highly operational, representing the focal point of the MFO's mandate "to employ its best efforts" to sustain the treaty. Specifically, it assesses progress in treaty implementation, prevents situations that could result from errors or misinterpretations by either party and works to resolve any problems that might arise.

The force's military elements include a U.S. support battalion (with medical, helicopter, explosive ordnance disposal, and headquarters and services units), Uruguayan engineers, French fixed-wing aviation, Hungarian military police, New Zealand training team, New Zealand/Uruguayan transportation, Canadian

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flight-following, and Australian headquarters staff. Civilian personnel include international and Egyptian staff as well as contractors.

### **An Adaptable Framework**

Initial MFO operations were not without problems, including violations by both parties; but there were no crises. Issues were sorted out without delay. It quickly became clear that the MFO would be tenacious, tough and evenhanded in applying the treaty and its own mandate consistently and reasonably. While some violations continue to occur, regrettably, none has ever threatened the fabric of the peace nor called into question the fundamental commitments of Israel and Egypt.

The MFO has a rigorous procedure for determining violations and reporting them directly to both governments, never publicly or to a

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*As it gained the confidence of the parties, the MFO evolved from a supervisory role monitoring compliance into an active partner in application of the treaty's provisions.*

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third party. This has ensured that occasional issues are contained, managed and resolved without

becoming public disputes involving questions of prestige, honor or "right," with the attendant public pressures.

As it gained the confidence of the parties, the MFO evolved from a supervisory role monitoring compliance into an active partner in application of the treaty's provisions. From the start the MFO made full use of its authorities and drew liberally from the positive and negative experiences of earlier peacekeeping operations in the area, including the United Nations Emergency Force and the Sinai Field Mission. Headed by a strong director general answerable to the parties themselves, the MFO is agile and flexible and has easily adapted to the changes in Egyptian-Israeli relations over the past quarter century.

The strong liaison system has developed into a key to the MFO's effectiveness, often working in infor-

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mal ways. It is the lifeline of communication, a model structure of cooperation and problem solving, a means of addressing new situations and consolidating the successes of the treaty amidst the flux of political events in the region. It operates at multiple levels. From the director general, to his representatives in Cairo and Tel Aviv, to the force commander and his liaison staff, the MFO is in daily contact in multiple places with Egyptian and Israeli counterparts, and is often the "honest broker" in resolving disputes. For example, did military aircraft actually penetrate the border? Were there military personnel or equipment in the wrong place? Were there too many in an area of limitation?

The intrusive and detailed verifications carried out by the Civilian Observer Unit have resolved questions and built confidence. Both sides voice appreciation for the COU's military knowledge, capabilities and professionalism.

The MFO's ability to use small contingents enables participation by armies not able to send large numbers and provides the force with skills in short supply, such as engineers and police. Importantly, this also broadens political support for the mission.

### **Controlling Costs**

Traditionally, the MFO has been able to keep operating costs basically flat. In a July 1981 congressional presentation, the State Department estimated that annual ongoing expenses would be over \$100 million. In fact, the MFO successfully operated for 10 straight years through 2004 on a \$51 million annual budget, half that figure.

For the first time ever, the MFO ran a deficit (\$418,000) in its Fiscal Year 2005 budget of \$51 million. This was due to a combination of inflation-

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***From the start the MFO  
made full use of its  
authorities and drew  
liberally from the  
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peacekeeping operations.***

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ary, exchange rate and petroleum cost pressures. These, along with higher costs for new Black Hawk helicopters to replace the venerable Hueys and heightened operations as a result of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the stationing of Egyptian border guards in the Sinai opposite Gaza, have caused an increase to \$59 million in the 2006 budget. The protocol provides that Egypt, Israel and the United States each cover one third of those expenses which cannot be covered by other means — e.g., through annual donations from Japan, Germany and Switzerland. To cover the \$59 million budget, Egypt, Israel and the United States each have increased their contributions from the FY 2005 level of \$16.4 million to \$19 million for 2006. No budget numbers have yet been fixed for FY 07, but there will continue to be upward pressure, mainly caused by the deployment of UH-60 helicopters to replace the Hueys.

Also, for this fiscal year the United States made an unprecedented donation of \$3.5 million, both for new force protection needs and to cover partially the enhanced MFO operations noted above. The Netherlands made a one-time dona-

tion of \$644,000 to cover some of these operational costs.

The key to the MFO's traditional low cost basis is its particular business model, a kind of public-private partnership. Beginning in the late 1980s, the MFO began to shift its procurement away from military channels except for those few items not available elsewhere. It vigorously seeks to fulfill all other requirements in the private sector, mainly through its purchasing offices in Cairo and Tel Aviv but also through its force and headquarters staffs.

Initially, as a "temporary" organization with no predetermined length of mandate, the MFO hired qualified civilians into specific jobs, did no training and expected high turnover. As the mission continued, it became clear that employee stability could be a strength, so the MFO began to offer training to enhance performance for efficiency, for employee satisfaction and for upward mobility. The MFO has also implemented an incentive system to reward and help retain strong performers.

Staffing is continuously reviewed to determine the best way to meet the force's needs, whether through military personnel, direct hire international staff, direct hire national staff, support contractor international staff, or support contractor national staff. A rather recent initiative has been engagement of additional professional-level Egyptian staff. This has provided skilled jobs for the local work force and has enabled the MFO to forgo hiring relatively expensive international staff.

From its beginnings, the MFO also has held down costs by using off-the-shelf equipment and technology. It thus has a strong record of cost containment and financial management to match its strong record of mission execution.



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*The MFO today is  
not the peacekeeping  
operation that  
deployed to the Sinai  
in March 1982.*

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IE BW

### **Still a Good Deal**

The MFO today is not the peacekeeping operation that deployed to the Sinai in March 1982. It has changed and adapted and is considerably smaller. It has built a record of professionalism in operations and management and of evenhanded impartiality that has made it a credible partner with Egypt and Israel.

Underlying all this is one key factor: the MFO belongs to Egypt and Israel, and they want it to succeed. They want the security provisions of their treaty to work. Both have identified this as important to their national interests. The MFO is a witness for each, a facilitator, a problem solver and a partner in building confidence, stability and peace.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has said that the MFO "is a good deal" for Egypt and Israel. In fact, it is also a good deal for the United States and for all countries that want a stable and peaceful Middle East. Acting as a de facto "third party" to the treaty through its robust liaison system, the MFO has precluded and resolved problems and built confidence between the parties at very modest cost.

The MFO also is focused on protecting its own forces. Special measures were in place during monitoring near the southern portion of



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occupied Gaza because of the violence that occasionally spilled over into the MFO operational area in Egypt. More recently, the several terrorist bombings in the Sinai have presented new force protection challenges.

The clear American national interest in maintaining the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty is reflected in strong bipartisan domestic support, including on Capitol Hill, for the MFO mission. This reflects a welcome consensus that peacekeeping operations are a useful tool to achieve important national interests. After all, without U.S. leadership and commitment, there would have been no MFO. And without a peacekeeping operation, the 1979 Peace Treaty would never have gone into effect.

In 2006, American interests in the Middle East are greater and the situation more complex than when

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***The force's Civilian  
Observer Unit possesses  
a wealth of military and  
political expertise.***

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Washington took decisive action to create the MFO 25 years ago. It is logical for the U.S. to maintain its support for the cornerstone of peace in the area, the 1979 Egypt-Israel Treaty, and to continue its military, political and financial commitments to the MFO. The Bush administration's decision in 2003 to do so, its current increased budgetary and extraordinary financial contribution,

and the helicopter upgrade to Black Hawks all in the face of the critical demands of the Iraq War, are an acknowledgement that the MFO continues to merit its relatively small costs as a useful instrument of American policy.

The MFO was created in exceptional circumstances for a special purpose, but its effectiveness and the confidence it builds between the two parties make it a peacekeeping model worth considering for an eventual comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian agreement. The underlying reason for the MFO's success is that Israel and Egypt, each for own national reasons, are committed to the treaty and each has both the intention and the capability to comply with its terms. Using that yardstick, the MFO model would be relevant whenever and wherever two parties have reached a similar commitment. ■



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# APPRECIATION

*Editor, Mentor, Friend of the Foreign Service*

**Shirley R. Newhall**

**1921 – 2006**

**S**hirley R. Newhall, editor of the *Foreign Service Journal* from 1968 to 1981, died on Feb. 2 at her home in Londonderry, Vt., after a long illness.

A native of Vermont, Mrs. Newhall was born in Londonderry in 1921. She relocated to Washington in the early days of World War II to become a secretary for the U.S. Army. Her work was with a secret project housed at the Georgetown estate called Dumbarton Oaks, where her self-taught skill in spelling and using scientific terms was greatly valued. It was there that she heard about “that young Dr. Newhall,” who had just been brought into the project, and she made an effort to meet him. That same evening in 1944 she met Robert M. Newhall at the main gate to the estate, and they began a love affair that would last nearly 50 years, until his death in 1991.

After the war ended, Mrs. Newhall joined the staff of the *Army Times* Publishing Company, and was eventually named editor of *Family Times*, a publication written for the dependents of service members on active and reserve status. She particularly enjoyed doing a monthly column. Later, she joined the editorial staff of *U.S. Lady*, a newly established magazine for service wives and servicewomen.

Starting in the late 1950s — in the era when the National Press Club did not admit female members — Mrs. Newhall was a member of the American News Women’s Club. In the mid-1960s, while serving in a leadership position, she helped with the purchase of the club’s building on 22nd Street NW in the District of Columbia.

## **At the Helm of the FSJ**

In 1963, Mrs. Newhall joined the *Foreign Service Journal* as associate editor, later advancing to executive editor. In 1968, she was appointed editor, serving in that capacity until

her retirement in 1981. Upon retirement, Mrs. Newhall wrote “A Love Letter from the Editor” that appeared in the May 1981 issue of the *Journal* (see p. 58). In it she thanked all those with whom she had worked, recalled the highlights of her tenure and vowed to continue to “build a constituency” for the Foreign Service.

Mrs. Newhall’s professional legacy can be seen in the work of the many young journalists whom she mentored while editor of the *Journal*.

During her tenure at the *FSJ*, she was responsible for a number of innovations. For instance, in visiting the homes of Foreign Service families and in corresponding with them, she learned that many found in art a way of capturing memories and handling stress. At her request, members of the Foreign Service submitted their own drawings, paintings and photographs, which she used on the magazine’s cover and for illustrations within its pages. Over the years she and her husband bought some of the art to decorate their home, focusing in particular on paintings of Asian sites, a special passion of theirs.

Through a web of friendships, Mrs. Newhall was able to bring some unexpected writers to the magazine. She especially delighted in telling of a visit to her office by the poet Robert Pinsky. As they talked, Mrs. Newhall mentioned that she had some empty space in the current issue, and Mr. Pinsky immediately sat down and wrote a poem to fill it. When he became poet laureate in 1997, she made sure to remind him of his gracious contribution to the *Journal*. She was also glad to help friends, especially those attempting to break into journalism or start new publications.

## **Back in Londonderry**

Following their retirements, Mr. and Mrs. Newhall moved to Londonderry to renovate and settle in the late-18th century farmhouse that had been home to generations of



### A Love Letter from the Editor

"This is my love letter to the Foreign Service and I can't complain that it never wrote to me. I am sorry that I cannot write personally to all of those in the Service who helped me, guided me, extended the hand of friendship to me or offered the rare compliment that made this job worth doing.

"The almost 20 years I have spent with the association have been rich ones, with many changes. I have seen the association change from a professional association to a combination employee-management group and professional association. The young Turks took over during that period and, as one said, 'We have now become old Ottomans.' Some of those I knew as junior-officer members of the Governing Board and Editorial Board have become ambassadors and I have proudly attended their swearings-in.

"There have been changes in the *Journal*, too. Members of the Editorial Boards I have worked with over the years and I am proud of them. It has been a pleasure to feature the work of our talented Foreign Service artists on the cover and inside the magazine. Early on, we decided on a professional layout firm to do justice to the magazine. From time to time, the *Journal* publishes fiction and poetry under its mandate to act as a showcase for the talents of members of the Foreign Service community.

"It has been a challenge but it has also been very rewarding. The greatest reward has been getting to know the men and women of the Foreign Service, and I carry my appreciation of them into retirement. I shall do as my good friend Bob Rinden has done in Iowa and try to spread the word in my home country, Vermont, about the Foreign Service and its practitioners. Perhaps I can help to build a constituency for you..."

— Shirley Newhall, *Letters*, FSJ, May 1981.

Mrs. Newhall's family. Mrs. Newhall was an active volunteer at Londonderry's Flood Brook School and at the town library, while continuing to maintain an avid interest in reading, writing, gardening and caring devotedly for a succession of pet cats and Labrador retrievers.

As she had wished, Mrs. Newhall died in that old Vermont farmhouse; her daughter-in-law, Sally, and friend, Alice, were at her side.

Mrs. Newhall was married to the late Robert M. Newhall from 1944 until his death in 1991. She is survived by a son, the Rev. Jeffrey Newhall of Worcester, Mass., two grandchildren, Sarah Newhall Amorin and Jeremiah Newhall; and two siblings, Milton Raw of Winter Park, Fla., and Sheila Rivers of Pittsford, Vt. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Second Congregational Church of Londonderry, Vt. ■

— Rev. Dr. Jeffrey R. Newhall

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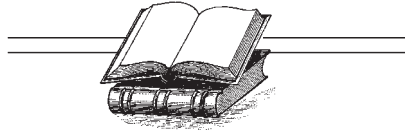


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# BOOKS

## All Foreign Policy Is Local

**Defense Relations Between The United States and Vietnam: The Process of Normalization, 1977-2003**

Lewis M. Stern, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2005, paperback, \$49.95, 291 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVID REUTHER

From time to time a book comes along that illustrates a truth familiar to the professional diplomat: domestic parameters within interacting countries often explain the goals and conduct of foreign policy. A classic in this genre, Lewis Stern's *Defense Relations Between the United States and Vietnam: The Process of Normalization, 1977-2003* should be required reading for every advanced class in international relations. Beyond a meticulous review of the policy process in both countries, Stern's analysis highlights the private and public actors who are part of the process, including American legislators who block initiatives and Vietnamese generals and bureaucrats who are disparaging, fearful and unimaginative.

Among the great strengths of this book are the author's unparalleled research in Vietnamese-language materials and his extraordinary access to Vietnamese officials. As the Southeast Asia team chief in the office of the Secretary of Defense during the period the book covers,

*This book reminds us that ignoring the internal politics of other countries is not conducive to sculpting successful foreign policy.*



Stern cultivated ties to Vietnamese bureaucrats visiting Washington and during his own trips to Hanoi, affording him an incredible window into the thinking of both bureaucracies.

After a preliminary chapter introducing the major players, Stern begins the story with the Clinton administration, which had to maneuver around domestic speed bumps on the road to normal diplomatic relations. Various laws, such as Jackson-Vanik (which requires unfettered emigration), had to be satisfied, giving domestic groups multiple levers with which to thwart policy initiatives.

The problem-solving tool the administration used to communicate to American constituencies that it was proceeding slowly and cautiously was a series of presidential delegations to Hanoi. Unfortunately, Vietnamese ignorance of the role and influence of U.S. domestic groups in foreign-policy formulation led to growing impatience and suspicion —

an attitude American actors would reciprocate from time to time.

Despite the obstacles, Washington opened a liaison office in Hanoi in February 1994, and the two nations established full diplomatic relations in July 1995. But it would take considerably longer for bilateral ties to include a military component. There were many reasons for this, but a key one was DOD's concern that a domestic constituency would see assigning a defense attaché to Hanoi as interfering with the work of the pre-existing military offices focused solely on the issue of resolving the cases of U.S. soldiers still missing in action after the Vietnam War. For their part, the Vietnamese were concerned the U.S. was trying to implicate them in an anti-Chinese alliance. But in the end, a consensus grew in Washington behind the belief that formal relations with Vietnam would assist the high priority of MIA accounting and embed it in obligations of the international community in a way that assist broader U.S. interests.

Dr. Stern repeatedly notes how domestic opposition on one side impacts the views and flexibility of the other. For example, Congress had long required DOD to report periodically on MIA cases about which it was judged possible that the Vietnamese could provide additional information. In the autumn of 1995 DOD reported, as it had before, that there was no evidence Hanoi was withholding information. This was not a result acceptable to congressional movers and shakers. That



November, an amendment to an appropriation bill froze State Department funds for an embassy in Hanoi unless the president certified the Vietnamese were fully cooperative in resolving MIA cases. That congressional initiative, in turn, empowered Hanoi hardliners at the Eighth National Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party to disparage the efforts of those arguing for normalization with the U.S.

This book puts its finger on an important point outside of its bilateral context. If, as Stern argues, foreign policy for the U.S. and other countries is formulated, channeled and made possible by the interaction of domestic groups, then the Foreign Service needs the resources and robust presence in all democratic countries to obtain a more complete view of the foreign interlocutor's domestic dynamics. Ignoring the internal politics of other countries is not conducive to sculpting a successful U.S. foreign policy.

*David Reuther, a retired FSO, is AFSA's Retiree Vice President. He frequently lectures and writes on China and East Asia.*

## Cultural Casualties

**Iraq Beyond the Headlines: History, Archaeology and War**  
*Benjamin R. Foster, Karen Polinger Foster and Patty Gerstenblith,*  
*World Scientific Publishing Company, 2005, \$38, paperback, 277 pages.*

REVIEWED BY ALETA WENGER

The fallout from having inadequate safeguards in protecting cul-

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***The nationwide  
 plunder of Iraq's  
 museums and ancient  
 sites should alarm all  
 those concerned about  
 protecting  
 cultural heritage.***

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tural heritage during war is the subject of *Iraq Beyond the Headlines: History, Archaeology and War*, the second installment in a "Series on the Iraq War and Its Consequences." Volume One, edited by Irwin Abrams and Wang Gungwu and published in 2003, is titled *Thoughts of Nobel Peace Laureates and Eminent Scholars*, a collection of essays by more than 30 Nobel Peace laureates and eminent scholars who offer opinions, analyses and insights on the war. Readers will find Volume 2 to be a concise, readable survey of Iraq's history, focusing on the discovery, management, preservation and destruction of the country's rich cultural heritage that explains how much of Western culture traces its genesis to this country and region. At the same time, the work is useful in navigating today's political reality in Iraq.

The authors — two Yale University professors of the ancient Near East, and a DePaul University legal expert on cultural heritage law — describe how Iraq went from having

one of the best-protected ancient heritages anywhere in the world to one of the worst. In April 2003, the world received numerous reports on the extensive looting of Baghdad's museums, libraries and other institutions in the aftermath of the U.S.-led war. The decimation of the world's finest collection of ancient Mesopotamian artifacts and a wealth of material from later historical periods was of an unprecedented scale.

One small ray of hope: The extent of the looting in Iraq's capital city may have been slightly less devastating than originally thought, both because some of the lost items and materials had been hidden by the museum staff before the first bombs fell, and because a few looted items have been recovered. But the losses are still incalculable. Chapter 15 offers a very useful illustrated guide to some of the major pieces that were stolen, damaged, or are still missing from the Baghdad Museum.

Although the world has understandably focused its attention on the political, economic and human impact of the war, the authors document the effects of three years of lawlessness in Iraq's cities and countryside on the country's cultural heritage. Many of the destroyed sites in the cities and increasingly throughout the countryside had never been scientifically excavated; their devastation and looting deprived us of essential information for understanding the development of mankind. As the authors observe, "This is far more than scavenging surreptitiously for pots in ancient mounds. Rather, thieves use heavy equipment, large armed teams of men, satellite telephones, containerized air freight and the Internet. Their highly lucrative trade is sustained and paid for by



## BOOKS



collectors and museums in the Middle East, Europe, the United States, Canada and Japan.”

The occurrence of this nationwide plunder should alarm all those concerned about protecting cultural heritage. It also raises a host of questions: Is current international law adequate to protect cultural property during and after military conflict? What is the extent of U.S. obligations in such situations? Has the U.S. complied with them?

The authors walk the reader through the confusing labyrinth of national and international legal regimes for the protection of archeological heritage, explaining how the State Department imple-

ments requests for import restrictions made under such conventions.

When the United States lifted sanctions on Iraq in May 2003, it continued to prohibit the import of Iraqi cultural materials, and in December 2004, the Emergency Protection for Iraqi Cultural Antiquities Act was signed into law after a great deal of lobbying from the American academic community.

The authors believe that, although these mechanisms have been developed to assist in deterring the looting of archeological sites, many weaknesses remain, in part because popular opinion still regards archeology as “glorified treasure

hunting, with no conception of its rigorous methodology or research programs.” Unfortunately, relatively few understand the consequences for human knowledge when artifacts are deprived of their context or when sites are destroyed. The authors conclude that archeology is like evolutionary biology — extinction is forever. Cultural heritage is not a renewable resource, and what is happening in Iraq affects us all. ■

*Aleta Wenger, a recently-retired FSO, served in Manama, Doha, Amman, Cairo and Washington, D.C. She is currently working in the Office of International Affairs at Yale University.*

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## IN MEMORY

**Philip Hall Coombs**, 90, the first assistant secretary of State for educational and cultural affairs, died on Feb. 15 in Chester, Conn.

Mr. Coombs was born in Holyoke, Mass., and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Amherst College in 1937. He did graduate work in economics at the University of Chicago, and became an instructor in economics at Williams College.

In February 1961, shortly after taking office, President John F. Kennedy named Mr. Coombs to the new position promoting education and American culture as tools of diplomacy. At the time, he was program director for education at the Ford Foundation and had been an educational adviser to the governments of India and Turkey.

With his White House appointment to run the newly created Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Mr. Coombs sought to bring a new dimension to foreign policy by putting the State Department and its embassies in closer touch with leading cultural and educational figures and organizations overseas. While holding that post, he moved to Paris to organize the International Institute for Educational Planning; as its first director, he advised member-states of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on steps to improve their educational systems.

"We praise education's virtues and count on it to help the new generation

solve great problems which the older generation has failed to solve," Mr. Coombs told an international meeting in Washington in 1961. "But when it comes to spending more money for education, our deeds often fail to match our words."

In mid-1962 Mr. Coombs resigned from the State Department. In a letter to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, he stated that bureaucratic obstacles and a dearth of funds had hampered the department's educational mission. Still, he said, he had succeeded in making "initial progress." The bureau he organized survives today.

Mr. Coombs stayed on as director of the international institute in Paris through 1968. From 1970 until his retirement in 1992 he was vice chairman, and later chairman, of the International Council of Economic Development, where he focused on improving education in rural regions and developing countries.

He was the author of a number of books, including *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy* (1964), *Education and Foreign Aid* (1965), *Attacking Rural Poverty: How Nonformal Education Can Help* (1974) and *The World Crisis in Education: The View From the Eighties* (1985).

Mr. Coombs is survived by his wife of 65 years, Helena Brooks Coombs of Chester, Conn.; a son, Peter B. Coombs of Essex, Conn.; a daughter, Helena H. Weeks of Salem, Conn.; three grandchildren; and two great-granddaughters.

**Jonathan W. Dublin**, 53, a Foreign Service officer, died of a heart attack in Al-Hilla, Iraq, on Feb. 18.

Mr. Dublin graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in computer systems. He served for 20 years in the U.S. Navy Submarine Service as a nuclear engineer before joining the State Department in 1999 as an information management specialist. His first posting was to Rabat.

In 2001, Mr. Dublin became a Foreign Service officer, serving as a consular officer in Kingston and as a narcotics affairs officer in Bogota. While in Bogota, he volunteered for TDY in Iraq, and was serving as a political officer in Al-Hilla at the time of his death.

Mr. Dublin is survived by his wife, Diana; a son, Christian; and daughters, Veronica, Anna and Bettina. Donations in Mr. Dublin's name may be made to the American Heart Association ([https://donate.americanheart.org/ecommerce/aha/aha\\_index.jsp](https://donate.americanheart.org/ecommerce/aha/aha_index.jsp)).



**David Elmo Foy**, 51, a Foreign Service officer, was killed by a suicide bomber outside the U.S. consulate in Karachi on March 2.

Mr. Foy joined the Foreign Service in 2003, and was posted to Bishkek. Last September, he took over as facilities manager at the consulate in Karachi, an unaccompanied post. Foy

## IN MEMORY



was killed along with his driver, Iftikhar Ahmed, when a suicide bomber, who had been stopped by consulate security, rammed his car into Foy's vehicle in a car park adjacent to the consulate. The blast propelled the car over a wall and into the grounds of a nearby Marriott Hotel.

Born in Fort Smith, Ark., Mr. Foy served for 23 years in the U.S. Navy and spent another two years as a civilian employee at Fort Bragg near Fayetteville, N.C., before joining the Foreign Service. While in the Navy, Mr. Foy was awarded the Navy Medal of Honor.

At a memorial service in Goldsboro, N.C., on March 7, more than 200 friends, colleagues and family members remembered Mr. Foy fondly. "He was a good, ethical, hard working, dedicated guy," recalled Chief Warrant Officer Eric Redd, who worked with Foy in Kyrgyzstan. "You could always count on him." Jerry Reaves, a former colleague at Fort Bragg, recalled how he and Mr. Foy argued about politics. "He was a Clinton fan, and I was a Bush fan," Reaves said. "He always made you laugh."

The Rev. Jim Whitfield described Mr. Foy as a hero, a patriot and a warrior who served his country and adored his daughters. Mr. Foy had talked with his wife the weekend before he was killed, Whitfield said, and had been with the family for Christmas, when he met his granddaughter for the first time. Whitfield then read from a list of memories prepared by Mr. Foy's daughters: it included memories of a man who answered problems with food and long conversations, who addressed his elders as madam and sir, and who sang when a room got too quiet.

"He spent his whole life serving our country. He always chose a path that took him down that way," David

Cushing, Mr. Foy's brother-in-law and good friend told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Obviously, it was a rough year in Pakistan. He wished it was a little less contentious. He was aware of the risks, but he enjoyed his work."

In his spare time, Mr. Foy enjoyed golf and landscape painting.

He is survived by his wife, Donna, of Goldsboro, N.C.; four grown daughters, Suzette Hartwell, Cherish Foy, Chandra Jackson and Tamar Foy; two grandchildren, Tyler James Elmo Jackson and Callie Hartwell; and three siblings.



**George Knight**, 74, a retired FSO, died of lung cancer on March 4 at his home in Reynolds Plantation, near Eatonton, Ga.

Mr. Knight was born in Pennsylvania. He worked as a comptroller from 1950 to 1952, and served in the U.S. Army from 1953 to 1954.

After a brief stint in the Veterans Administration, Mr. Knight joined the State Department in 1956. He was assigned to Bonn as a code clerk in 1957, and transferred to Moscow in 1958. He served as general services officer in Sydney from 1959 to 1962, and in Salisbury (now Lusaka) from 1962 to 1964. After two years at State, he was assigned to Kampala as administrative officer in 1966, and was transferred to Melbourne in 1970. He received his diplomatic commission in 1972.

After postings to Tegucigalpa and Wellington, Mr. Knight was assigned to Seoul in 1979 as counselor for administration — "the best admin officer I ever knew," recalls a colleague in Korea at that time. He was assigned as counselor for administration to Jakarta in 1982, and to Bangkok in 1985. From 1988 to 1992,

he was a personnel counselor at State. His last assignment before retiring in 1994 was as administrative counselor in Canberra.

Mr. Knight and his wife, Colleen, settled in Annandale, Va., for several years before moving to Georgia to be near their family. He traveled extensively and was active in church and community affairs.

Mr. Knight is survived by his wife, Colleen of Eatonton, Ga., a son, a daughter and three grandchildren.



**Edward W. Mulcahy**, 84, a retired FSO and former ambassador, died of complications from Alzheimer's disease on March 12 in Winchester, Va.

Ambassador Mulcahy graduated cum laude from Tufts University in 1943 with a degree in history, and thereafter joined the U.S. Marines. In June 1944 he saw his first action in Guam, where as a second lieutenant, he led a company of the 21st Marines of the 3rd Marine Division in repelling a series of Japanese banzai attacks. He was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for his actions in the liberation of Guam.

After recovering from his wounds, Amb. Mulcahy was promoted to first lieutenant, and in February 1945 landed on Iwo Jima on the first day of the Marine assault on that island. Pinned down on the beach with his men by heavy Japanese bombardment, he was hit directly on his left shin by a mortar round. Fortunately, the shell did not explode, but his shinbone was shattered. He awoke to see his medical corpsman pouring blood out of his boot. He received a second Purple Heart for his wounds on Iwo Jima. After the war, he was promoted to captain and placed in charge of the Marine detachment at the U.S. Navy



## IN MEMORY



brig on Governor's Island in New York City.

Amb. Mulcahy received a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1947. Upon graduation, he joined the Foreign Service, serving for 33 years. His first assignment was as principal officer in Mombasa. This was his first introduction to Africa, which was to play an important part in his career. In 1949, he was posted to Munich as a visa officer. In 1950, he was assigned as political officer to Addis Ababa, and then as principal officer in Asmara. There, in 1951, he met Kathleen Lyon, a Foreign Service secretary; they married in 1953 in Globe, Ariz. They had six children, five of whom survive them.

In 1952, Amb. Mulcahy returned to Washington, D.C., where he worked on a variety of assignments, including a stint on the Trusteeship Council for Cameroon at the United Nations in New York. In 1956 he was assigned to Athens as a political officer. In 1959, he was posted to Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), as deputy principal officer, and participated in the protection and evacuation of Americans and other foreigners from the Congo when civil war broke out there. In 1963, he returned to Washington, to the Bureau of Near East and African Affairs, with responsibility for Southern Africa. He was selected for the Senior Seminar in 1966.

Amb. Mulcahy served as DCM in Tunis from 1967 to 1970, and then in Lagos from 1970 until his appointment as ambassador to Chad in 1972. In 1974, he returned to Washington as deputy assistant secretary of State for African affairs. In 1976, he was named ambassador to Tunisia. After he returned to the U.S. in 1979, Amb. Mulcahy spent a year as diplomat-in-residence at Atlanta University, where

he drew up plans for a graduate program in international relations. An excellent linguist, he spoke German, French, Italian and Latin, and was conversant in Swahili and modern Greek.

Amb. Mulcahy retired from the Foreign Service in 1980, taking up the position of vice president at "Project Hope" headquarters in Millwood, Va. Project Hope provides medical care and education throughout the developing world. After retiring from Project Hope in 1982, he continued his interest in local and international affairs, serving on the board of the Tunisian-American Association in Washington, D.C., and lecturing on U.S. foreign policy at Lord Fairfax Community College in Middletown, Va. He was also a devout member of Sacred Heart parish in Winchester. He was actively involved in his college and Marine Corps reunions, as well as in the American Foreign Service Association and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He and his wife traveled extensively in retirement, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Since 2000, Amb. and Mrs. Mulcahy had been residents at Winchester-Canterbury in Winchester, Va. Mrs. Mulcahy died in 2005.

Amb. Mulcahy was laid to rest, with full military honors, at Arlington National Cemetery. He is survived by three brothers and two sisters; five children, Anne Dower of Glen Ellyn, Ill., John Mulcahy of Hong Kong, Eileen Mulcahy of Winchester, Va., Kevin Mulcahy of Charlotte, N.C., and Father Brian Mulcahy of Charlottesville, Va.; and nine grandchildren.



**Kenneth Rabin**, 81, a retired FSO with USAID, died Feb. 26 in Portland, Ore.

Born in Portland, Mr. Rabin was the son of Sonia Rothkowitz, a Russian immigrant, and Jacob Rabin, who had immigrated from England in 1912.

Mr. Rabin's attendance at Reed College was interrupted by service in the U.S. Army Air Force from April 1944 until June 1945. He flew 31 combat missions over Germany as a lead bombardier in the Second Division of the 8th Air Force, and was discharged as a first lieutenant in June 1945. He returned to Reed, graduating in September 1947, and received a master's degree from Columbia University in June 1948. He had further academic training at Columbia University and American University in Washington, D.C.

In 1955, Mr. Rabin joined the Foreign Service, serving in Canberra, Perth and Brussels, and at the exchange program office in Washington, D.C. In 1962 he joined USAID. He was posted to Manila and then, in 1965, to Conakry. Back in Washington, he served in the Vietnam Bureau and in the agency's Office of Programs.

In 1968 he was detailed as a fellow to the Harvard Center of International Affairs, a program of independent study with faculty status for 15 senior diplomats from 10 countries. Mr. Rabin also served from April through August 1969 as an adviser to Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and accompanied Gov. Rockefeller on four visits to Central and South America in support of the Alliance for Progress.

Mr. Rabin became USAID's director of East Asian regional development in 1969. His last overseas assignment was to Bangkok, where he served as director of the agency's Office of Regional Economic Development, counselor for regional economic development, and the U.S. representative to the United Nation's

## IN MEMORY



Economic and Social Council for East Asia and the Pacific. At various times he also served as chief or as a member of U.S. delegations to regional multinational meetings.

Mr. Rabin loved classical music, art and literature. He was a lifelong liberal.

Mr. Rabin's marriage to Margaret Spalding in 1946 ended in divorce. In 1976 he married Elaine Zweben. They lived in Maryland, Virginia and Oregon until her death in Portland in March 2003.

Mr. Rabin is survived by three daughters from his first marriage and his sons-in-law, Margaret Rabin and Ray Myers of Salem, Ore., Kathy and John Cramer of Portland, Ore., and Debby and Wally Haupt of Golden-dale, Wash.; the stepchildren of his

second marriage, Lisa Zweben of Lynchburg, Va., Marc Zweben of Washington, D.C., John Zweben of Portland, Ore., and Harry Zweben of Corvallis, Ore.; 12 grandchildren; and one great-granddaughter.



**Claude Gordon Anthony Ross**, 88, a retired FSO and former ambassador, died Jan. 18 at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C., of pneumonia complicated by an acute lymphoma. He was a resident of Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles, Calif.

Ambassador Ross was born in Chicago, Ill., and moved to southern California in his infancy. He graduated from Huntington Park (California)

High School in 1933. After two years with the *Los Angeles Daily News*, he enrolled at Los Angeles Junior College, where he received an associate of liberal arts degree with highest honors in 1937. He continued his education at the University of Southern California. There he was one of the first recipients of its Bachelor of Science degree in Foreign Service, graduating summa cum laude with membership in Phi Beta Kappa in 1939. He was active in student government and extracurricular activities throughout his educational career. In 1937, he was a delegate to the Fourth Japan-America Student Conference.

In 1940, Amb. Ross married the late Antigone Andrea Peterson (Lymberopoulos) of Los Angeles, making him the first non-Greek to marry into

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## IN MEMORY



the Greek-American community of Southern California. Learning Greek was the condition imposed by his father-in-law-to-be; fortunately, it was one that Amb. Ross, with his aptitude for languages, could readily fulfill. In addition to Greek, he spoke French, German and Spanish.

Amb. Ross entered the Foreign Service in 1940, serving successively in Mexico City, Quito, Athens, Noumea, Beirut, Cairo and Conakry, as well as in Washington, D.C. He attended the National War College in 1956-57 and served as deputy director of the Office of West African and Malagasy Affairs in 1962-1963. He was appointed ambassador to the Central African Republic in 1963, ambassador to Haiti in 1967 and ambassador to Tanzania in 1969. In 1972 he was named deputy assistant secretary of State for African affairs.

During his service, Amb. Ross earned a reputation for professional excellence and sound judgment. Family members and colleagues recall him as a genuine patriot, one who understood that great power should be accompanied by great tact in America's relations with the world. His ambassadorial appointments required him to deal with two of the most notorious dictators of his time — President (later Emperor) Bokassa of the Central African Republic and President "Papa Doc" Duvalier of Haiti.

After Amb. Ross' retirement in 1974, the Department of State continued to rely on him; he was recalled as a senior inspector to conduct a number of sensitive investigations into the operations of overseas posts. In this capacity, he carried out missions to Iran (in 1974, the last inspection before the hostage crisis), Colombia (1974), Brazil (1975), Nicaragua (1976), Chad (1979), France (1980), Mexico (1982), Bolivia (1983 and

1986) and Guatemala (1984).

Eschewing a second career in business or consulting, Amb. Ross devoted himself to promoting international understanding, the well-being of retired diplomats and the education of students aspiring to careers in international affairs. He was a member of the Executive Board of Sister Cities International, participated in the programs of the Washington Institute for Foreign Affairs and, from 1983 to 1988, served as chairman of the committee on Education of the American Foreign Service Association. He was a dedicated life member of Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired, serving two terms as its president from 1989 to 1991 and thereafter as a member and honorary member of its Board of Governors. He was also an energetic member of DACOR's Education Committee.

For his many contributions after retirement, Amb. Ross received the Foreign Service Cup in 1986. In 2006, DACOR and the DACOR Bacon House Foundation honored him posthumously with a special Award for Exceptional Contributions.

In retirement, Amb. Ross and his wife of 64 years, the late Antigone Andrea Ross, traveled extensively to five of the six continents; in particular to Greece and Italy to renew special ties of family and friendship, as well as to the countries where his son Christopher was assigned in his own diplomatic career.

Amb. Ross' wife died in 2004. Two sisters, Grace Jurewitz and June Drummond, also predeceased him. Survivors include one sister, Shirley Hogan of South Gate, Calif.; two sons, retired Ambassador Christopher W.S. Ross of Washington, D.C., and Geoffrey Faulkner Ross of Honolulu, Hawaii; a grandson, Anthony Gordon Ross; a former daughter-in-law, Carol Canning Ross of Washington, D.C.; a

granddaughter, Margaret Schneider Ross of Washington, D.C.; and numerous nephews, nieces and grand-nephews and grandnieces on the West Coast.

Memorial contributions may be made in Amb. Ross' name to the DACOR Bacon House Foundation, 1801 F Street NW, Washington DC 20006.



**Walter J. Sherwin**, 74, a retired FSO with USAID, died in Bethesda, Md., on Jan. 18 of brain cancer.

Born in Paderborn, Germany, Mr. Sherwin came to the United States in October 1939, barely escaping Nazi persecution. He grew up in Sheboygan, Wis., and was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, where he obtained a master's degree in political science. He was a Fulbright scholar in Germany and, during a trip to Paris, met his wife-to-be, Kitty, at the Paris Museum of Modern Art.

After working as a magazine writer for Scholastic Inc. in New York, Mr. Sherwin joined the Foreign Service in 1959. From 1965 to 1971, he served with USAID in Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Senegal. After spending the following seven years in Washington, in 1978, he went back overseas for five years, working in Niger and Guinea.

After his retirement in 1986, Mr. Sherwin was a consultant for several years working on USAID projects. He also volunteered for reading to the blind and dyslexic. At the time of his death, he was trying to launch a project to provide textbooks on tape in local languages for the blind in Africa.

Mr. Sherwin is survived by his wife of 49 years, Kitty Sherwin; his children, Jennifer Sherwin of Durham, N.C., and Mark Sherwin of Santa

## IN MEMORY



Barbara, Calif.; four grandchildren; and a sister, Sue Byrd of Anchorage, Alaska. The family suggests that memorial gifts be made to Oxfam.



**Eric Edward Svendsen**, 61, a retired FSO, died of sudden cardiac arrest at his home in Alexandria, Va., on Jan. 28.

Born in Grand Rapids, Mich., Mr. Svendsen spent his childhood in South Bend, Ind. He graduated from Carleton College in 1966 with a major in history, and completed an MBA at Columbia University in 1968. He and his wife, Nancy, then joined the Peace Corps and served in Iran, teaching at Jundi Shapur University from 1968 to 1970. Mr. Svendsen helped found a bank in Waterbury, Conn., in 1971, but soon joined the Foreign Service to pursue his interest in international affairs.

Mr. Svendsen's postings included Liberia, Bulgaria, Senegal, Yugoslavia, Ghana and Austria, in addition to Washington, D.C. He was a political officer who also served with the U.S. mission to the United Nations in later years, visiting Palestine and Jordan with the U.N. High Commission for Refugees. In 1982, he was elected to chair the State Department's Open Forum, an ongoing series of lectures and seminars encouraging discussion of a wide range of points of view on foreign policy. Mr. Svendsen retired in 1997, having served for 26 years.

In retirement, he worked part-time as a tax preparer. Other interests included service as a chief election officer for Fairfax County, genealogical research at the Library of Congress and extended travel within the U.S. and abroad, particularly in Scandinavia.

Mr. Svendsen is survived by his

wife, Nancy Carter Svendsen of Alexandria, Va.; his children, Andrew Svendsen of Royersford, Pa., and Christina Svendsen of Paris, France; his sister, Elinor Svendsen Stein of Cypress, Calif.; and his granddaughter, Rebecca Katherine Svendsen of Royersford, Pa.



**Guadalupe Yameogo**, 70, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died on Jan. 18 at the Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington, Va., following a long illness.

Mrs. Yameogo was born in Woodlake, Calif. The eldest of nine children of farm workers, she was a great help to her mother and an inspiration to her brothers and sisters, whom she encouraged to get as much education as possible and helped financially. She attended schools in Visalia, Calif., and graduated from the College of Sequoias in 1955. After graduation, she worked for the Tulare County School System.

In 1963, Mrs. Yameogo entered the Foreign Service. She served in secretarial positions of increasing responsibility in 10 different countries, many of them under difficult circumstances, as well as in several offices at the State Department. She advanced to the highest rank of the office management specialist field, serving as executive assistant to the American ambassadors to Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Honduras and Peru.

Affectionately known as "Lupe" by her family and a wide circle of friends both here and abroad, Mrs. Yameogo took a special interest in single people at the posts where she served. She was also active in women's organizations abroad; in Peru she founded an association of social secretaries.

Family and friends recall Mrs. Yameogo's infectious laugh — which

ranged from a soft chortle to a hearty chuckle to a tender lilt — her devotion to her family, and her invariably positive approach to life.

In 1992, Mrs. Yameogo was honored as the State Department Secretary of the Year because of her outstanding work in Sierra Leone in supporting U.S. diplomatic efforts during the early and violent stages of the war there. Mrs. Yameogo was especially known throughout the Foreign Service for being calm under pressure and sincerely interested in others. On the day of the coup d'état in Freetown, in the face of flying bullets and worrying about the safety of others, Mrs. Yameogo picked up the phone and calmly made calls to the residence of the chief of mission and to Washington from under her desk.

A gifted linguist, Mrs. Yameogo spoke four foreign languages: French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Mrs. Yameogo retired from the Foreign Service in 1998, after 35 years of government service. In 2000, she accompanied her husband, Joanny Yameogo, a GSO specialist, on assignments to Indonesia and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mrs. Yameogo is survived by her husband of 31 years, Joanny; her son, Timothy of Edinburg, Texas; her mother, Mrs. Mary G. Magana of Visalia, Calif.; two sisters, Esther Gotto of Reno, Nev., and Mary Lou Magana of Mount Vernon, Wash.; five brothers, Antonio Magana of Clovis, Calif., Leonard Magana of Berwickshire, Scotland, Jesse Magana of Lockhart, Texas, David Magana of Visalia, Calif., and Ramon Magana of Sanger, Calif.; and numerous nieces and nephews. ■

Send your "In Memory" submission to:  
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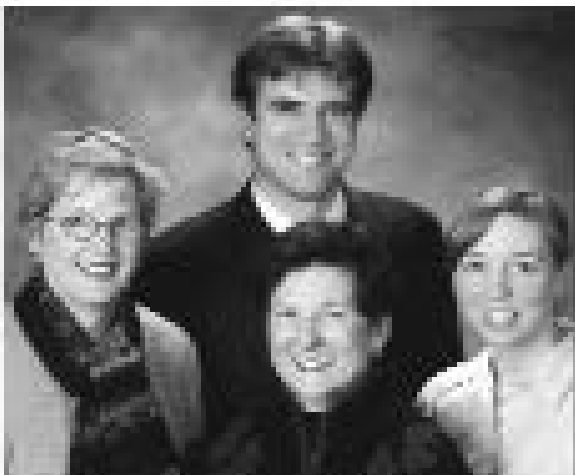


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# REFLECTIONS

## *Firecrackers*

BY REBEKKAH LAEUCHLI

Whenever I hear a firecracker, I still have a vague fear that it's a gunshot. That association goes back years to when we lived in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic, and I was 10 years old.

The first mutiny wasn't serious enough to warrant our leaving the country. The firecracker gunshots came in both the first and second mutinies. The morning of the second mutiny, Daddy was called to the embassy. We didn't see him again for six weeks.

During the first mutiny we were moved to the American embassy for a few days. We didn't have much to do at the embassy and were bored. The second mutiny came about a month after the first. It was suggested we might have to evacuate, an idea I recorded excitedly in my diary. This diary was a recent acquisition, as I was a big Anne Frank fan at the time. I kept the journal fairly faithfully, in a self-important tone. On the first outbreak of violence I wrote grandly, "Sarah and Naomi [my younger sisters] are scared." The best thing about the diary is its smell. When I sniff the paper I feel I am back in

---

*Rebekkah Laeuchli spent her early life traipsing around the globe on diplomatic travels with her family. Now 20, she lives in Budapest, where she studies the piano. Stamp courtesy of the Stamp Corner.*

Africa, I can hear the black night with machine-gun fire echoing through it, and I can sense again in my mouth the peculiar taste that air has when it's dangerous to be out of doors. I dream of that taste sometimes.

When the second mutiny broke out, we didn't go to the embassy; the embassy came to us. Our house was by the river and was surrounded by tall walls topped with barbed wire, and patrolled by several guards. It had been the Marines' residence before they left, once the country was deemed stable. This meant that our house was very secure, but it also meant there were no Marines. All the spouses and children from embassy families moved in. We had five bedrooms and each family was assigned a room. My brother, sister and I slept on the floor; Naomi, the youngest, shared the bed with Mama. At night I could hear Mama talking on the radio as reports came in.

I don't remember what day we left, but a French military truck came and picked us up. I do remember the night before; Daddy called and told us to pack. Mama said that after we left our house would probably be looted, and Sarah (who was almost 8) started to cry. I decided this was my cue to be a bright ray of sunshine and hazarded, "Maybe they won't loot our house."

Mama shook her head, "Daddy says to think of all this stuff as gone."

So we went into our separate rooms to pick out the things we want-

ed to take. Clothing was the least important. My favorite stuffed pig, my diary and the Bible that was Mama's when she was little were coming with me. I picked up my blue bunny to say goodbye to him, and to apologize to him and all the other stuffed animals because they couldn't come too. We slit open Sarah's enormous toy horse and took all his stuffing out to make him fit in a suitcase.

We left the next day. Riding through the city of Bangui was surreal. The streets were devoid of normal activity. Instead, French soldiers camped by the roads and in the ditches. Late that night we boarded a plane, and an hour later we landed in Cameroon. A bus with lights that glared white took us to the hotel. I wrote irately in my diary that our piano was back in Bangui along with all our music, and my fingers would get weak from not practicing.

The French eventually put down the rebellion, and Daddy came home at the beginning of July, a lot thinner than when we last saw him. Our house wasn't looted after all. Eventually our stuff was packed up and shipped to us. Houses all around ours were broken into and everything stolen, sometimes including the roof. I even got my blue bunny back.

A decade later, I hardly ever think about the mutiny, except when I hear firecrackers. Those still make me a little nervous. ■



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