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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

Time for FSOs to Stand Up for the Foreign Service

BY SUSAN R. JOHNSON

It is time for Foreign Service officers to explain who they are, what they do and what the personnel term “generalist” really means. In the context of a disciplined, national diplomatic service, it signifies a multifaceted, multifunctional officer, expert in the practice and art of diplomacy.



As with their military counterparts, FSOs are commissioned officers who have earned their status via a rigorous selection process, followed by highly competitive evaluations for promotion. No one thinks it makes sense to hire bird colonels from outside the ranks of the career military; the same principle should apply to our diplomatic service.

In previous columns, I have highlighted diplomacy as a forward-based, strategic asset for our national security and for the coordinated promotion of American interests and values overseas. For this purpose, an effective diplomatic service is indispensable to help U.S. policymakers exercise American leadership in an increasingly complex world. And can we better do that through a well-regulated apprenticeship system that recruits and grooms broad-based talent purposefully, or one that cherry-picks temporary expertise from outside the Foreign Service for one-off overseas assignments?

The answer should be obvious. The current Foreign Service personnel system has repeatedly demonstrated its

ability to produce a first-rate diplomatic service. It recruits generalists via a single competitive selection process open to all, and ensures that entrants are subject to service discipline and worldwide availability. Then, through assignments that ensure a mix of policy and management experience, as well as bilateral, regional and multilateral expertise, it develops and prepares a cadre of able professionals for executive responsibilities.

Although the Foreign Service Act of 1980 is more recent, the 1946 Foreign Service Act embodies a more purposeful vision of the system that should undergird U.S. diplomacy. Modeled on the Navy's personnel system, it restricted political patronage in favor of a non-partisan cadre of diplomatic service professionals.

Three decades ago, the Foreign Service was the central component of the State Department. Increasingly, however, this has become less true as the ranks of the Civil Service and the number of political appointments have expanded. In fact, today the Foreign Service's role is substantially diminished, especially in front offices and in the functional/global policy bureaus.

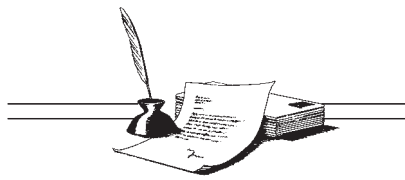
In the public eye and even within the State Department, the vague term “generalist” sells FSOs short and diminishes the brand. In personnel lingo the term means that, in contrast to hav-

ing a single, narrow, technical field of expertise — e.g., climate change, information technology, etc. — the generalist officer ought to possess a broad and deep educational background in U.S. history and government, political and economic theory and practice, as well as cross-cultural communication skills and management and leadership potential. Those qualifications must be complemented by personal attributes of integrity, courage and adaptability to constantly changing environments.

Moreover, to perform effectively, FSOs need in-depth knowledge of the diplomatic system and functions, including consular, which underlie international order and negotiating processes. Such qualifications are not acquired overnight; nor are they easily attained outside the setting in which they must eventually be used.

Diplomatic service is a demanding and often dangerous profession. Though today's Foreign Service aims to promote excellence and is based on meritocratic selection, it is not elitist but broadly representative of the United States as a whole, and open to all.

To ensure the desired caliber of professional diplomatic leadership, today's State Department leadership must make the case for professional education and training, improve assignment policies and formulate clearer criteria for career advancement. ■



LETTERS

Unleashing Our Black Belts

Read in conjunction with AFSA President Susan Johnson's recent columns about the institutional culture of the Foreign Service, the January Speaking Out column by George Jones, "The Next 50 Years," got me thinking. Can an organization like ours, often described as even more hierarchical than the military, adapt and change quickly? And if so, how?

Based on his column, Mr. Jones' answer to that question would seem to be "no." Rarely an early adopter of technology, the Foreign Service will always lag behind the private sector.

I am more optimistic, for I truly believe that our greatest asset is our people. Still, there is no denying that the current personnel structure of the Foreign Service hobbles us in addressing complex challenges.

I would posit that some of the newest FSOs are among the most experienced people anywhere in our ranks. But does the Foreign Service tap their talents fully?

The recent crop of new hires — bankers, professors, politicians, lawyers and entrepreneurs — bring with them a remarkable wealth of specialized skills. Yet they are treated essentially the same as 20-somethings who have just completed college and have no practical experience.

Yes, organizational culture is important, and yes, we can learn valuable lessons serving on the visa line or working as a general services officer for a tour. That is one reason simply importing a private-sector executive into a FS-2 position probably would not work. But immediately promoting an executive with 20 years of management experience to FS-2 upon tenuring might make sense.

Alternatively, State could eliminate mandatory minimum time in class so that all FSOs are promoted, regardless of age or tenure, based on their ability to move up and manage at the next level.

We have many new people with new ideas and knowledge who are the black belts of expertise that the Foreign Service needs. Yet they are treated as white belts: unknowing, unenlightened and clumsy. After just one or two tours, many become sure-footed and adept within the culture of the Foreign Service, but they are still constrained — not by a lack of ability, but by the organizational culture.

Our hierarchy needs to become more of a meritocracy. Time in class does not equal expertise. Longevity does not equal competence. Seniority should not confer entitlement. One of the greatest reasons for the downfall of the union movement over the last 50

years is the failure to recognize and adjust to that set of facts.

As an AFSA post representative, I am fully committed to protecting all employees' rights. But as a mid-career hire, I am desperately hoping not to be bored during the first several tours of my career.

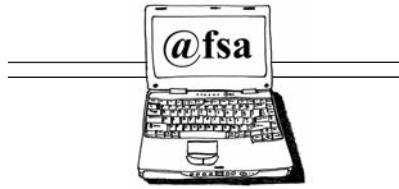
The State Department is a big bureaucracy, already limited in effectiveness by funding constraints, an unclear mission and a circumscribed role in world affairs relative to the Department of Defense. But there are so many areas of our internal culture and structure that we *can* control.

We should put in place a personnel system that hires the best, lets them rise as fast as they can and has zero tolerance for incompetence, all while advancing America's international interests.

That would be a noble goal for any governmental agency. But such a shift is absolutely critical for the Department of State as we head into budget cycle after budget cycle where we are told to do more with less.

Instead, how about we do more with what we have? Because what we have is pretty great, but sorely underutilized.

Bob Perls
AFSA Representative
Consulate General
Frankfurt ■



CYBERNOTES

The Power of Video

Last fall, the U.S. Africa Command (www.africom.mil) deployed about 100 military advisers to Kampala to assist local forces working to defeat Joseph Kony, a brutal Ugandan warlord who heads the Lord's Resistance Army. Since 1987, Kony and his forces have forcibly recruited between 60,000 and 100,000 child soldiers, killed or maimed thousands of people, and displaced around two million people throughout Central Africa. The International Criminal Court has sought his arrest for crimes against humanity, and the LRA is on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations.

The Obama administration authorized the deployment of the advisers pursuant to the 2010 Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act. The goal is to support the governments of Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, as well as the African Union and United Nations, in countering the threat the LRA poses to the entire region.

The strategy has four main objectives: increased protection of civilians; the apprehension or removal of Kony and senior LRA commanders from the battlefield; promotion of defections and support of the disarmament, de-

It seems to me that the United States doesn't have to beat on its chest. It doesn't need to strut. It can afford some humility, and it can afford to let others sort of step forward because everybody knows who's got all the assets at the end of the day.

And I believe Madeleine Albright was absolutely right: We are the indispensable nation. There is no international problem that can be addressed or solved without the engagement and the leadership of the United States. And everybody in the world knows that. It's just a fact of life. So I think sometimes we could conduct ourselves with a little more humility.

— Former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, in his March 15 remarks accepting the 2012 Elliott Richardson Prize for Excellence in Public Service from the National Academy of Public Administration (www.napawash.org).

mobilization and reintegration of remaining fighters; and provision of continued humanitarian relief to affected communities. The military component is part of a comprehensive effort involving U.S. embassies in the affected countries, U.S. Agency for International Development programs and contributions from nongovernmental organizations.

Despite this intensified international campaign to bring Kony to justice, the issue largely stayed off the world's radar screen until March. (The fact that the U.S. contingent is operating strictly in an advisory capacity, not as combat troops, is presumably the main reason their role has caused no

real controversy here.)

Then Invisible Children, Inc. (www.invisiblechildren.com), a nonprofit founded in 2005, released a 30-minute documentary, "Kony 2012" (www.kony2012.com). In it, director Jason Russell, one of Invisible Children's co-founders, talks to his young son, Gavin, about his work, and invites supporters to make Kony "famous" so that he can be brought to justice.

The video quickly went viral. As of late March, it had been viewed 85 million times on YouTube (www.youtube.com), and nearly 17 million times on Vimeo (vimeo.com), and has spread across social media networks with amazing speed.

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But a backlash soon developed. In a March 9 Associated Press article (www.ap.org), Rodney Muhumuza reports that some Ugandans accuse Invisible Children of, variously, exaggerating the current situation on the ground, oversimplifying a complicated history, being “colonialist” and self-promoting, and not spending enough directly on the people it intends to help.

Invisible Children has acknowledged that its video overlooked many nuances, but maintains it only intended the documentary to put the conflict “in an easily understandable format.” It also points out that money directly benefiting the cause accounted for more than 80 percent of its spending from 2007 to 2011.

For more detailed background on the Lord’s Resistance Army and efforts to assist its victims, we invite you to read two previous articles in the *Foreign Service Journal*: “It’s Time to Win the Battle for Uganda’s Children,” by State Department employee Michael Orona, in our July-August 2004 issue; and Associated Press reporter George Gedda’s description of “A Quest for Peace in Uganda,” which we published in February 2007.

Both issues are available in our online archives (www.afsa.org/fsj).

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor

Highlighting Human Rights

Three years ago, the Council on Foreign Relations (www.cfr.org) launched its Global Governance Guide, a media resource intended to highlight vital global issues for an online audience. Each section of the site uses visual and interactive features to delve into nonproliferation, finance, oceans governance, climate change, conflict prevention, public health and counterterrorism.

The CFR has now added a human rights component to the Guide, comprising an eight-minute video, a timeline of significant events, issue briefs, a matrix of pertinent institutions, an interactive map displaying countries that are signatories to human rights agreements, and a list of resources. The site focuses on four facets of the topic: legal protection, capacity building, response to atrocities, and women’s and children’s rights.

For each of these areas, the coverage acknowledges the real progress the international community has made since World War II, but calls for additional measures. For instance, the legal protection discussion centers on the many inconsistencies in international law and the need for more countries to ratify human rights treaties to bring their protections into effect.

While the Guide doesn’t single out the United States for failing to live up to its soaring rhetoric, it does call on Washington and its allies to treat human rights as a universal priority, rather than a peripheral concern.

—David J. Barton, Editorial Intern

Blood Money Talks

In the December 2010 edition of *Cybernotes*, we reported that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.org) had deferred acceptance of a \$3 million donation from Equatorial Guinea to establish the UNESCO-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences, named for the country’s president.

UNESCO’s executive board took that action in response to near-universal condemnation of the idea of cozying up to Africa’s second-longest-serving dictator. (Obiang’s 32-year



tenure is just one month shorter than that of Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos.) After strong international pressure, spearheaded by South African Nobel Peace laureate Desmond Tutu, the organization reiterated that decision last October.

Sadly, the third time proved to be the charm for Obiang. On March 8, Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com) reports, the UNESCO board voted to accept the donation, which will fund an annual award of \$300,000 to be shared by up to three laureates,

SITE OF THE MONTH:

<http://ambassadorsperspectives.wordpress.com>

As its name suggests, *Ambassadors Perspectives: Online Commentary on Current World Issues* presents short commentaries on major international and national security developments by non-career U.S. ambassadors who have served presidents of both parties. Co-chaired by Jim Rosapepe, ambassador to Romania from 1998 to 2001, and G. Philip Hughes, ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean from 1990 to 1993, the forum offers diverse perspectives.

Consider a pair of contrasting op-eds on handling Iran's nuclear ambitions. In "Iran: The Course Ahead," Thomas Graham Jr., former FSO and Special Representative for Arms Control, Nonproliferation and Disarmament from 1994 to 1997, counsels patience and a continued emphasis on diplomacy. But Bruce S. Gelb, head of the United States Information Agency from 1989 to 1991 and ambassador to Belgium from 1991 to 1993, warns in "What Is the Best Course of Action in Response to Iranian Pursuit of a Nuclear Program?" that the use of force may soon be unavoidable.

Other recent postings include "Sub-Saharan Africa Is Losing Ground," "Sudan: Erratic Diplomacy at Best" and "A Fresh Challenge for India," all by John Price, who was ambassador to Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros from 2002 to 2005, and "Assad's Survival Is Not Syria's Destiny," by Edward M. Gabriel, ambassador to Morocco from 1997 to 2001 (and Jean AbiNader, an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and a founding board member of the Arab American Institute).

The Council of American Ambassadors (www.americanambassadors.org), administrator of *Ambassadors Perspectives*, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization made up of more than 200 former and incumbent non-career United States ambassadors. The Council supports the role of the American ambassador and the country team in carrying out U.S. foreign policy at embassies around the world. In this vein, it offers advice and assistance to the U.S. Department of State, as appropriate, and endeavors to educate the public on foreign policy issues affecting the national interests.

CAA also organizes ambassadorial orientations, conferences, international affairs and public diplomacy fellowships, international missions and a roundtable luncheon series. In addition to *Ambassadors Perspectives*, the organization also produces the *Diplomatic Dispatch* newsletter and a foreign policy journal, *The Ambassadors REVIEW*, published twice a year.

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor



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with the goal of recognizing individuals or institutions conducting “scientific research in the life sciences leading to improving the quality of human life.” Opponents took little consolation from a concurrent decision to change the program’s name to the “International UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea Prize.”

The Committee to Protect Journalists (www.cpj.org), a consistent critic of the donation, quickly denounced the decision. “The purpose of this prize is to whitewash the image of one of Africa’s most repressive leaders, and no one is fooled by the name change,” CPJ Africa Advocacy Director Mohamed Keita said. He added, “The 33 states who voted in favor have chosen to promote the image of President Obiang rather than uphold basic standards of human rights. They should be ashamed.”

Lisa Misol of Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org) was equally scathing. “This vote is an insult to the people of Equatorial Guinea and damages the reputation of UNESCO,” she told AFP.

There is still some cause for hope, for a legal opinion requested by the UNESCO board suggests that a change in the source of financing may have invalidated the program. On that basis, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, who is opposed to the prize, plans to request reconsideration of the decision.

— *Steven Alan Honley, Editor*

Some Unexpectedly Tasty Spam

Writing in the March 12 *Wall Street Journal* (www.wsj.com), Laura Meckler reports on a serendipitous global e-mail chain. She begins her story, headlined “Changing the Subject: Spam Makes Friends Across Conti-

50 Years Ago...

Been wondering how much of the Agency for International Development has finally been settled into New State? Our reporter made a check and discovered that AID is currently housed in six locations – in addition to New State. There are no more rooms available for it at State, but AID’s widespread technical assistance goes on without interruption.



— From “Washington Letter,” by Gwen Barrows, *FSJ*, May 1962.

nents,” as follows:

“It had the makings of an e-mail disaster. An otherwise deletable piece of spam arrived, and one person after another hit ‘Reply All.’ Like a mutant virus, the message multiplied. Recipients from around the globe — Sydney, Dubai, Rio, London, Toronto — began replying with variations of ‘Take me off this list.’

“Then a strange thing happened. Camaraderie broke out amid the spam. There was a drink at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in London. A woman in Idaho became interested in a charity backed by a stranger in Toronto. Dozens of people traded contact information. And just like that, what started as a petty annoyance, a blight common to our interconnected lives, became something quite different.”

Meckler reports that the chain began on Feb. 29 with a message written mostly in Malayalam, a language spoken in parts of India, sent from a web portal, Gulfmalayaly.com. Due to a glitch, every recipient of that message then received an autoreply from Business Wire Inc., a company that distributes news releases, signing them up to its listserv. Because the full address list was not visible, recipients who sent replies demanding to be unsubscribed were unaware that those follow-up

messages also went to every recipient, compounding the problem.

Within a day of the original e-mail, hundreds of increasingly angry messages were flying through the ether. But then Pádraig Belton, a London writer, made a suggestion: “Personally, I feel that after this many e-mails from you lot, we should all knock off together to the pub.”

Robert Peacock, a business executive in London, followed up with a proposal of his own: “Rather than getting steamed up about all this, maybe it is worth considering setting up a LinkedIn group in which we can exchange crazy banter — or possibly even business opportunities if we can establish our common link.”

The next day, Andrew Wong, a travel manager at TripAdvisor in London, set up such a group and called it, “Unified by Spam — the Social Experiment.” By March 7, more than 75 people from all over the world had joined, and the group continues to expand. There is even talk of a social-networking site centered on the spam group, where people could find connections when they travel to other cities.

As Belton says, “Whoever sent that spam may have done us an actual sort of favor.”

— *Steven Alan Honley, Editor* ■

AN ARAB SPRING PRIMER



MOHAMMED ABED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST OVER THE PAST YEAR
HAVE SET IN MOTION A REALIGNMENT THAT COULD
PROVE TRULY TRANSFORMATIONAL.

By ALLEN KEISWETTER

hough the Arab Spring began only a little more than a year ago, it is already clear that we are seeing a realignment of the Middle East play out. Whoever wins the White House this November will take office on the movement's second anniversary; thus, now is an opportune time to take stock of its potentially transformative implications for the next administration.

This article begins by examining the movement's effects on regional issues and summarizing the various drivers of

events. It then assesses prospects for the core states of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and Bahrain, as well as implications for the region's wild cards: Syria and Iran.

Regional Issues

The Obama administration has astutely concluded that the Arab Spring is not just a series of discrete events over a few months, but a long process likely to span years or decades. It has also rightly insisted that each country involved has its own dynamic, so Washington cannot follow a cookie-cutter approach in response. That said, there is a need for a comprehensive look at the movement's policy implications for 2013 and beyond; here are some key judgments.

U.S. Power. The Arab Spring has shown the limits of American power in the Middle East. No longer does the United States have the prestige and resources to dominate Middle East affairs to the degree it has done ever since the British withdrew from east of Suez in 1971.

In fact, neither the U.S. nor Europe has the financial resources needed to shape prospects in these countries. Accordingly, significant investment will also have to come from elsewhere, particularly the Persian Gulf states and China — countries that do not share the Western interest in reinforcing democratic values.

Nonetheless, Washington has great strengths it can bring to bear. Bolstered by the size of its economy, its historically unmatched capability to project power anywhere around the world, its soft power assets and ability to set the agenda, the United States will remain the preponderant outside power in the Middle East.

The Rise of Others. While Washington can wield substantial influence and leadership in the region, its involve-

The Arab Spring has shown the limits of American power in the Middle East.

ment will increasingly become a collaborative task. Over the past year or so, Qatar has shown the role that a wealthy if small state can play; Turkey has emerged as a stronger player and a key American ally in Middle Eastern diplomacy; and most of the Gulf Cooperation Council states have stepped into more prominent regional leadership roles.

NATO's operations in Libya have demonstrated that leveraging unique U.S. military capabilities can, in effect, be a force multiplier. The Arab Spring's reinforcement of collaborative approaches politically, economically and militarily will continue to put a premium on aligning China and Russia either in support of, or at least not in opposition to, what has to be done.

Energy and the Persian Gulf States. The Saudis and other major oil producers have been able to compensate for the disruptions caused by Libyan unrest and play a cooperative role in the implementation of both trade and oil sanctions against Iran. Still, even those states face real limits on their ability to act. In the long term, world energy demand necessitates the development of both Iraqi and Iranian energy reserves — the second- and third-largest on the planet, respectively.

In terms of Persian Gulf security, the U.S. role remains paramount. Though differences with the Saudis and other Gulf states over the uprisings in Bahrain and Egypt, in particular, have caused tensions, unifying factors — such as the desire to maintain an orderly oil market and common interests vis-a-vis Iran, Yemen, Libya and Syria — are nevertheless likely to prevail.

Closer defense cooperation makes long-term sense among the Gulf Cooperation Council states. But the default position of a hub-and-spoke security strategy in the Persian Gulf — which the U.S. Central Command calls “bilateral multilateralism” — may be the best we can do over the next several years.

This approach gives the United States a crucial role in regional defense and has already facilitated notable progress toward coordinated air and naval defenses with regional powers. The next administration should build on this progress by allaying fears that defense budget cuts and U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan will impel Washington to isolate itself.

Middle East Peace Negotiations. The aftermath of the Arab Spring has worsened prospects for an Israeli-

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Palestinian accord, and they seem unlikely to recover soon. The Israelis are apprehensive that the relatively stable region of the past couple of decades has shifted against them. They also find themselves more isolated than ever, and less inclined to make the difficult choices that peace negotiations entail.

For their part, the Palestinians have drawn new energy from the Arab Spring, but it is unclear how that can facilitate progress toward a negotiated settlement with Israel. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has played to populist sentiment as a means of guarding against contagion at home, but in the process he has alienated himself from Israel and the United States through his drive at the United Nations for Palestinian statehood.

Hamas has become bifurcated because the previously Damascus-based element tied to Tehran seems to be mod-

The movement is not just a series of discrete events over a few months, but a long process likely to span years or decades.

erating and moving away from Iranian influence, while the Gazans are playing a separate game with Iran. The one bright spot is economic growth in the West Bank.

For all these reasons, the Arab Spring's legacy intensifies doubts about whether a two-state solution is still even possible. A strong U.S. role remains vital because no one else can pick up the pieces.

Political Islam. Before the Arab Spring, Washington only had to convince these countries' leaders to get what it wanted. Now, the need for the new governments to consider the popular will makes the diplomatic task of persuasion much more complicated.

Moreover, the democratic process is empowering Islamists, as shown by election returns throughout the region. As the new administration works to protect U.S. interests, it must exercise strategic patience while political order in

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Nevertheless, the current upheavals offer opportunities, exemplified by the situation in Yemen, for Islamic terrorists to gain ground in the midst of chaos. As new leaders cope with the demands of governing, mounting frustrations over unfulfilled promises could provide fertile ground for a restyled terrorism with an anti-American bent to take root. The new U.S. administration should consider whether developments justify a more watchful and less operational priority for counterterrorism.

Factors Driving Further Change

The paramount driver of the Arab Spring has been the mobilization of the masses, particularly young people who use social media and communications technology. At the same time, military and security forces and intervention by outside players also continue to be determining factors.

For years, the former regimes of the Arab Spring states thwarted the development of alternative leadership. But now that technology has empowered citizens to challenge repressive security forces, it no longer takes established leaders to mobilize the masses — just savvy techies who have organizational skills, along with the presence of live media coverage, such as Al-Jazeera's. In addition, the longevity of the leadership in all of the Arab Spring states has left no doubt as to who has been responsible for each country's plight. The result has been revolutions from the street, with new political leadership struggling to emerge amid the protest and fighting.

In all these countries, military and security forces have been key players. In the Egyptian and Tunisian cases, the military's largely neutral role deprived the old regimes of an essential tool of suppression and thus sealed the fate of

Technology has empowered citizens of these countries to challenge repressive security forces, when wielded by savvy techies with organizational skills.

Hosni Mubarak and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, respectively. In Yemen, as well, sharply divided military and security forces helped establish the conditions for a negotiated settlement and the departure of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. But in Syria, their backing forms the core of President Bashar al-Assad's base.

The effects of outside involvement in Libya, Bahrain and Yemen suggest alternative models. In

Libya, NATO and Arab forces committed to the protection of civilians took a broad view of their mission and provided the firepower and the technological and training assistance that enabled the Libyan-led resistance to succeed. A strongly worded United Nations Security Council resolution, backed by the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council, conferred political legitimacy on outside intervention, which paved the way for regime change.

In Bahrain, deployment of the GCC forces evinced the strong regional support, in particular from the Saudis, for the regime of King Hamad Al Khalifah, even though government troops numbered only a couple of thousand and were largely deployed to remote areas to protect infrastructure. At the same time, Bahraini leaders have heeded to some extent calls for reform by the U.S. and other countries to ameliorate grievances. Thus, at least in part because of outside intervention, the Bahraini approach blends reform with coercive strength.

In Yemen, the fragmentation of the military and security establishments, reflecting tribal loyalties and personal animosities, has left room for a decisive mediation by the GCC, strongly supported by the U.S. and other outside powers.

As the situations in these countries continue to unfold, the roles of the masses, the military and security establishments, as well as outside involvement, will continue to drive events. But they will be conjoined with another key factor: the success of political and economic reform.

Patterns of Political and Economic Reform

Despite similarities among the entrenched, repressive regimes and among the newly energized masses, the political and economic baselines of countries across the Arab world vary widely. What is obviously true is that the sweep-

ing reforms sparked by the Arab Spring will take years and perhaps decades to implement — and progress will be checkered if not stymied.

In the Arab Spring countries themselves, the easy part may well prove to be the overthrow of the old regimes. The real challenge is the requirement for skilled political leadership to guide reforms and buy the patience of the public while they take effect. Elections so far have enfranchised Islamists in large numbers, many of whom face the realities of governing for the first time.

Tunisia has the best chance of effecting democratic and liberalizing economic reforms. It has had free and fair elections in which moderate Islamists emerged as the largest bloc; its economic problems can be fixed with relatively small amounts of money with a prospective payoff not that far away; and its society has not been severely traumatized by Arab Spring events.

Prospects for Bahrain may also be positive once it sorts out its governance issues, for the “pearl of the Gulf” has a relatively educated, cosmopolitan population whose skills are already competitive in the world market. It has begun the process of political reform, but it is hard to envision any lasting peace that does not involve even more substantial changes to give the Shia majority greater political and economic rights. Yet fears of Iranian inroads, as well as Sunni self-interest, constrain steps in that regard.

Libya has the advantages of oil wealth and a small population. But it suffers from a lack of institutional structure on which to build, complex tribal and regional rivalries, and the challenge of being a “post-conflict” state where the revolution has been bloody and destructive.

Egypt has a large population (83 million), ethnic and minority divisions, and no great oil income on which to rely. The bulk of the resources required to revive its economy, totaling hundreds of billions of dollars, must come from the Persian Gulf states and other governments that are not motivated by promoting democracy. In addition, such fundamental questions as the structure of government, the role of the military and security forces, the rights of minorities, and the relationship of Islam to the state are all unresolved. Islamist parties have a strong majority in the newly elected parliament and are testing their political sinews. Prospects are murky.

The need for these new governments to consider the popular will is likely to complicate U.S. diplomacy.

Lacking both effective governance and significant resources, Yemen may be best described as a failed state but not a failed society, because of its pattern of weak central government but strong tribal authority going back centuries. The Gulf Cooperation Council-negotiated transition offers hope for change, but the new government faces a host of daunting challenges: a predominantly youthful population with few prospects; dwindling natural resources; an incipient secession movement in the south; the on-again, off-again Houthi rebellion in the north; al-Qaeda; and a growing refugee influx from the failed state of Somalia. For all these reasons, Yemen’s prospects are grim.

Beyond the Core

Beyond the core Arab Spring countries, the predominant pattern among the oil-rich GCC states is the use of largesse to facilitate incremental reforms without game-changing upsets. In Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah has decreed programs to provide housing, jobs and other basic needs totaling \$136 billion, and announced that women can participate in municipal elections and in the Majlas as-Shura (Consultative Council). While there may be a rapid change in the Saudi leadership in the next few years, the stability of the kingdom will not be affected. A similar pattern applies to Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, as well.

The United Nations has singled out Oman, where the Arab Spring found unexpected resonance, for praise as a model of economic development. Sultan Qaboos oversaw recent elections to the Omani Consultative Council, and has announced reforms underwritten in part by a GCC grant of \$10 billion.

In Algeria, another oil-rich state, memories of a robust Islamist uprising against the ruling autocracy in the 1990s have blunted the enthusiasm for regime change. The regime has put down protests and promised reform, but enough grievances remain that incremental reforms may not maintain the peace.

Morocco and Jordan’s monarchs have instituted some political reforms in response to calls for a more democratic, accountable political system. Both countries suffer from high unemployment, large youth populations and scarce resources (particularly Jordan). Widespread discontent will

likely continue to drive more protesters into the streets. And as in Egypt or Tunisia, Islamist parties will probably benefit from the more open political posture.

Wild Cards: Syria and Iran

In many ways, the Arab Spring actually began in Tehran three years ago. The protests following the corrupt elections of June 2009 pioneered the use of social networking and information technology to organize non-violent demonstrations.

Regime changes in Iran or Syria would be real game changers that would reshape the Middle East from the eastern Mediterranean to the Gulf. Political geography puts both countries at the core of American interests and regional dynamics. Syria is central to the security of Israel, prospects for terrorism, the stability of its neighbors (Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon), and the fate of politi-

In the Arab Spring countries themselves, the easy part may well prove to be the overthrow of the old regimes.

cal Islam. And Iran is pivotal for the world energy market, the security of the Persian Gulf and Israel, and the success of nonproliferation regimes, as well as Sunni-Shia and Arab-Persian rivalries.

The chances of near-term regime change appear much greater in Syria than in Iran, but in both cases any judgment would hinge on many unknown and still unknowable factors.

For instance, envisioning the nature of a post-Alawite government in Damascus is not easy. While many believe that Bashar al-Assad will not be in power when the Arab Spring celebrates its second anniversary, no one can foresee clearly how, or when, that desirable outcome will occur. In the meantime, there are real fears that the situation will descend into a regionalized conflict.

The primary U.S. issue with Iran is its nuclear program. In President Barack Obama's words, "loose talk of war" raises the prospect of yet another theater of military action for the United States. The potential of an Iranian breakthrough on acquiring nuclear weapons is sobering.

An Unfolding Process

The major gain to date from the Arab Spring is that more than a third of the 350 million Arabs living in the region today are freer than they were when the movement took off in January 2011. But on its second anniversary that number could be higher — or lower.

In the short term, states still in the process of democratizing can be among the most violent in the world as they work out their domestic political order and realign their relations with other states. Thus, continued regional turbulence is likely. But in the long term, a more democratic, prosperous and accountable Middle East offers the prospect of a region that enjoys better governance and respects human rights. That would indeed be a positive outcome for U.S. interests.

Whatever its result, the Arab Spring has set in motion a realignment of the Middle East that could prove truly transformational. As that process unfolds, American interests will not always align with each other or with those of these countries. So the next U.S. administration, whoever heads it, will have to, in the words of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, "walk and chew gum at the same time" — just like this one. ■



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THE ARAB MEDIA'S SHAKY AWAKENING

AFTER BREATHTAKING EXPANSION OF THEIR FREEDOMS, THE MEDIA NOW REFLECT THE UNSTEADY ADVANCE OF DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

BY ROBERT J. MCMAHON

An activist media, and citizens' savvy use of online platforms, played an important role in the protests that turned out dictators in Egypt and Tunisia and ignited upheaval across the Arab world. But in the second spring since those uprisings, the growth of media freedom has been uneven in those states.

Satellite television channels have continued to grow in an already crowded market, Internet use has spread rapidly, and citizen journalism has assumed a vital watchdog function. Yet early actions by transitional leaders in each country have given cause for concern.

While Egypt has yet to pass laws underpinning press freedoms, it has cracked down on hundreds of civil society groups, signaling an intention to stifle freedom of expression. In Tunisia, high-profile cases against a newspaper and broadcaster have generated concern about the new leadership's commitment to media freedom. And ruling forces in both countries have reasserted control over still-influential state media.

For the moment, a new media landscape offers Arabs

and outside audiences alike a fascinating glimpse into the ferment of societies ruled for decades by repressive regimes. Tunisia and Egypt, having conducted initial rounds of free elections, can serve as key testing grounds for Arab press freedom. Few, however, see the media gains as irreversible.

Transformative, Troubling Media

By the time of the Arab upheavals in early 2011, media outlets throughout the region had already been undergoing profound changes for more than a decade. Easing up on media controls as a sort of release valve, a number of repressive regimes permitted broadcasters and press reporters more leeway, including the freedom to air taboo subjects. In the case of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, some believe this decision may have sowed the seeds of their own destruction.

Activists' use of Twitter, YouTube and Facebook, and the extraordinary reach of pan-Arab channel Al-Jazeera, trained a spotlight on regime abuses and opened crucial portals to information and debate. "This opening of closed regimes to raw information and opinion, a faith in the power of public ideas, was itself one of the key ideas underpinning the Arab uprisings," Marc Lynch, an expert on the region and professor at The George Washington Uni-

Robert J. McMahon is editor of CFR.org, the Web site of the Council on Foreign Relations. Before that, he was director of central news for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and has written about media in transitional societies since 1995.

versity, wrote in the December 2011 edition of *Foreign Policy*.

As revolts gathered speed in early 2011, satellite TV and the multiplier effect of social media provided live coverage of the protests — and crackdowns — from small towns like Sidi Bouzid in Tunisia to Cairo's teeming Tahrir Square.

One year later, television remains the primary news source for most people in Egypt and Tunisia, according to public opinion surveys. By the summer of 2011 at least 530 Arab-language channels were transmitting, primarily from Arabsat, Nilesat and Noorsat. Dozens of them emerged since last year's revolts. Internet use, while limited by infrastructure, has also grown sharply.

Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country, offers a bazaar-like array of options in terms of TV programs, Internet sites and newspapers. They include talk shows debating topics ranging from religion to sex and regional politics, sophisticated newspapers like *Al-Masry* and *Al-Youm* that probe government policies, and the most vibrant blogosphere in the region.

"It's more intense now, more diverse now," says Ezzat Ibrahim, Washington correspondent of the daily *Al-Ahram*. "When you get people from the far-right Muslim Brotherhood or Salafi parties appearing on shows with secularists, it gets interesting."

Steven Cook, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square* (Oxford University Press, 2011), concurs, calling the media scene a "free for all." Substantive content is more readily available, he says, but so is sketchier fare. "I can't keep track of the number of television channels and newspapers and magazines," Cook says. "It's everywhere [in] a society that was supposedly not interested in politics."

Tunisia's media evolution is a bit different, characterized by a greater focus on French-language coverage targeted to elites. But it, too, has stirred up tensions, particularly following electoral wins by Islamist political parties.

Signs of Alarm

Both Egypt and Tunisia conducted general elections last year that were deemed mostly free and fair and resulted in Islamic parties winning majorities. In Tunisia the victorious Islamist party known as Ennahda (Renaissance) formed a coalition with two leftist parties. And in Egypt,

Competition among pan-Arab media broadcasters is growing intense.

the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood and the fundamentalist Salafis dominate both parliamentary chambers after electoral gains. Coverage of the process was deemed positive, but media monitors have pointed to troubling developments, particularly in Egypt.

One of the most ominous moments in recent Egyptian history was the Oct. 9, 2011, violence against Coptic Christians (10 percent of the population) peacefully demonstrating outside the Maspéro broadcast building in Cairo, during which government forces killed 22 Copts. Media monitoring groups said that state outlets falsely reported the protesters were armed and appeared to urge the public to support the military.

Tunisia generally gets good marks by watchdog groups for democratic advances since the ouster of President Ben Ali. In its most recent press freedom index, Reporters Without Borders cited "the emergence of real pluralism of opinion in the print media and, albeit possibly only for the time being, the end of massive and systematic Internet filtering." But the group also noted troubling instances of government efforts to suppress investigative reporting.

Two high-level court cases still unfolding have the potential to further chill the climate for local media. The owner of Nessma Television, Nebil Karoui, went on trial in January for blasphemy for broadcasting the movie "Persepolis" last October. Members of the Salafist movement angrily protested the animated film, which includes a depiction of God.

Separately, two journalists from the paper *Attounissia*, Hadi Hedri and Habib Guizani, were arrested in February and charged with distributing printed material that corrupts public morals — the photo of the topless girlfriend of a Tunisian soccer star. In this case, prosecutors sidestepped the country's new press and audiovisual laws, which protect journalists against detention and trial. Some local journalists fear new efforts to revise the laws.

The Role of International Broadcasters

Satellite television has for years been the primary source of news and information for publics in Egypt and Tunisia. The unrivaled leading source of international news remains Qatar-based Al-Jazeera. The station, started in 1996 and seeded with Western-trained journalists, has gained credibility through its coverage of U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and its willingness to interview Is-

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raelis in its coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

When the Arab revolts began to pick up steam in late 2010 and early 2011, Al-Jazeera did something else beyond traditional news reporting, wrote Philip Seib, director of public diplomacy at the University of Southern California. In a Sept. 27, 2011, "Snapshot" for foreignaffairs.com, Seib observed:

"Al-Jazeera made a point of aggregating social media content, repurposing YouTube video, reproducing Facebook material, and delivering Twitter messages to its TV viewers. Because many countries across the Arab world still have limited Internet access, but boast very high percentages of satellite TV viewers, Al-Jazeera bridged a vital communications gap."

The Arab Public Opinion Survey of six countries released in November 2011 (including Egypt but not Tunisia) found that Al-Jazeera is favored as a source of information by 43 percent of respondents, followed by Al-Arabiya (14 percent) and Saudi-based MBC (12 percent). Arabs tend to watch multiple international channels, says

Shibley Telhami, director of the poll. But, he adds, "Al-Jazeera is succeeding in large part because they are catering to Arab identity."

Meanwhile, competition among pan-Arab broadcasters is intense. In addition to its main local rival, Al-Arabiya, Al-Jazeera faces challenges on around-the-clock coverage from international giants like the BBC. U.S.-funded Alhurra is also an emerging choice in Egypt. A flash phone survey conducted amid the February 2011 revolt showed that 25 percent of respondents in Cairo and Alexandria watched Alhurra for coverage of the events.

"When broader surveys were conducted in June and July 2011 in Egypt, 21.9 percent of respondents across the country named Alhurra as one of the stations they used to follow the Egyptian Revolution," says Letitia King, director of public affairs for the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees Alhurra. The station is requesting \$2 million for three new shows focused on Egypt for Fiscal Year 2013.

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Western media companies are in the works, as well. A Saudi company, Rotana, and U.S.-based Bloomberg are jointly launching Alarab, while British-based Sky Broadcasting has plans to introduce a channel called Sky Arabia, in partnership with Abu Dhabi Media Investment.

Al-Jazeera, which changed its top executive last September, has begun shifting to more locally focused programming. For instance, it has started a separate channel targeting Egyptian viewers.

**Social Media and Politics:
A Rising Liberal Democratic Tide?**

While weekly use of Arab satellite TV is at nearly a saturation point in Egypt, according to surveys, use of online news sources also continues to grow rapidly. Surveys show that more than a quarter of Egyptians and more than a third of Tunisians have Internet access, with access and usage growing steadily since last year.

A November 2011 poll released by U.S.-based Zogby Research shows that about 9 in 10 respondents in Egypt

and Tunisia use social media sites as a source of news and information, far more than other regional countries surveyed. Most accessed these sites at home, but use of smart phones was increasing dramatically.

At the same time, however, Zogby's polling shows traditional sources of news such as television and newspapers remain dominant. Even among younger or university-educated Arabs, the heaviest users of social media, traditional media still rated highest in news reliability. For many Arabs, "the jury is still out on the trustworthiness and objectivity of Internet- and social media-derived news," the Zogby report said.

Voting patterns in the two countries also belie the impression, spread during the Arab Spring, that a rising liberal democratic populace stood ready to seize the political reins. Experts say the best-organized social forces in both states continue to be conservative Islamic groups. The victories in the late-2011 votes bear this out, though in the Egyptian case it remains unclear that the military clique will cede power easily.

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Still, it is the Muslim Brotherhood, not secular youth, that constitutes the main force for change in Egypt, writes Lucan Way of the University of Toronto in the October 2011 *Journal of Democracy*. He cited the group's press for a March referendum on early elections, which passed easily, despite opposition from new democratic groups. "The young people who filled Cairo's Tahrir Square may know how to use Facebook, but the Brotherhood has a branch in every neighborhood and town," observes Way.

What to Watch For

After a breathtaking expansion of their freedoms, the media in both Egypt and Tunisia are now tracking with the unsteady advance of democracy in both countries. It makes sense that countries still lacking administrative and judiciary structures able — or willing — to implement democratic laws, and subject to an extraordinary range of outside broadcast sources, would view the new media climate with wariness.

While these societies sort themselves out, governments that support a free press, international civil society and professional media groups should offer the following:

- An insistence on legal guidelines and safeguards for licensing media under international norms;
- A framework for indigenous journalists to create a journalistic code of ethics for the whole array of emerging online media, to build confidence and credibility; and
- Pressure to shine a light on abuses such as those committed in connection with Egypt's Maspero massacre.

This terrain will not be easy to navigate, to be sure. Egypt's crackdown on international nongovernmental organizations earlier this year reflects some of the sensitivity to perceived outside meddling during a highly fraught political transition.

Ultimately, of course, it is up to the citizens of the Arab states emerging from autocratic rule to decide whether their extraordinary media awakening will prove a temporary phenomenon — or a beacon for broader economic and political reforms. ■



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WOMEN AND THE ARAB SPRING

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ew people will soon forget the images of people taking to the streets of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, and now Syria, to overthrow autocratic regimes. These images belie long-held notions of the lack of popular democratic aspirations in the Arab world. So, too, did images of women, standing alongside men, undercut stereotypes of voiceless, invisible Arab women.

In Tahrir Square and Change Square, and on the streets of Tunisia and Libya, women and men marched together to demand change and a new order. These were the actions of people seeking a new political future.

Life under these repressive regimes had become so difficult that many believed only revolutionary change could remedy the situation. And for women, things were particularly difficult.

The Gender Gap

The World Economic Forum's annual Gender Gap Reports show that the quality of economic and political participation for Arab women declined in the years

Melanne Verveer has served as Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues since April 2009.

ONE OF THE CHIEF LESSONS OF THE PAST YEAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS THAT DEMOCRACY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS.

By MELANNE VERVEER

leading up to the Arab Spring. No Arab country ranked above the bottom seventh in either the 2010 or 2011 report. The United Nations Development Programme's own Arab Human Development Reports confirm that the exclusion of women from public life has been a prime factor undermining overall economic progress across the region.

According to the WEF, while some Arab countries have closed the educational attainment gap between men and women, the economic opportunity or participation and the political empowerment gaps grew steadily between 2006 and 2010. Even Tunisia, where women secured legal equality and the education gap has been closed for decades, ranked only 107 out of 134 countries in 2010. In the five years before the 2011 revolution, it had slipped 17 spots in the rankings.

Objective evidence shows these countries are still lagging behind global trends that increasingly recognize the value of empowering women. Although Tunisian women comprised the majority of college graduates under former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, they have faced significant barriers in attaining key decision-making positions in politics, the civil service and business. Only one woman was formally employed for every 2.6 men, and their average earnings were less than a

third of what their male counterparts made.

The situation was worse in Egypt and Syria, where the economic position of women slipped every year from 2006 to 2010. And ever since the inception of the WEF Gender Gap Report, Yemen has consistently ranked at the bottom. Most Yemeni women remain illiterate and have very limited opportunities, with many living in confined conditions.

Cautious Optimism

A year after the Arab Spring began, the picture for women is mixed. In Tunisia, the birthplace of the movement, all major political parties in the newly elected Constituent Assembly have pledged to uphold women's rights, including the Islam-based Ennahda. With an electoral system that requires parties to alternate between male and female candidates, 30 percent of assembly members are women. Four of the six committees drafting the new constitution are headed by women.

Yet even in this atmosphere of cautious optimism, the women of Tunisia have told us that the world must remain vigilant. Only three out of 41 transitional cabinet posts went to women, and none were in key departments. There have been several worrying instances of unofficial segregation by sex in universities, movie theatres and even polling places.

As Tunisians work to balance their secular government traditions with the democratic wishes of a conservative society, women elsewhere in the region are battling for core civil rights. In other countries in the region, many of the best-organized political forces are apathetic or even openly hostile to women's rights and participation.

No one knows whether conservative forces, especially in Egypt, will begin using their new powers to restrict women's participation across society. For example, after the protests ended, Egypt's transitional military council simply excluded women from the decision-making process.

Egyptian women witnessed the power of collective action in Tahrir Square, and so last year thousands of

“The women of the Arab Spring have come alive, and they will not go back to sleep.”

**— Tawakkol Karman,
Yemeni Nobel Laureate**

activists — from across the political, ideological and religious spectra — gathered to write the charter that distilled the core demands of Egyptian women: equal political, economic and legal citizenship. They hope this powerful document will rally others as they lobby to enshrine equal citizenship into Egypt's new constitution.

In Yemen, the exit of President Ali Abdullah Saleh was negotiated among men representing the political opposition and the country's Arab neighbors. Women and youth, who had been so essential to the popular movement, were excluded. With the election of the new president, the situation remains delicate; a security crisis could instigate further political, economic and social marginalization of women and youth.

Hopes for Libya's future are high, but the challenges are great; Moammar Qadhafi spent decades systematically destroying his country's core institutions. The rebellion was led by volunteers, who are working to rebuild the basic institutions of the state. So far, the Transitional National Council has given women only a very small role in the formal transition process.

Even so, women have seized their new freedoms to organize outside of government. They are effective civil society leaders, working with local councils and the national government, addressing the crucially important needs of a post-conflict society, including providing basic civics education to fellow citizens, and developing and lobbying for real solutions to the disarming, demobilization and reintegration of former rebels. In Syria, women are playing important roles in keeping the protest movement alive to counter the regime's wanton violence.

Women who long for progress in each of these countries are realistic about the challenges they confront. They understand that changing deeply held cultural and religious norms will take a generation, but this is an undertaking that they willingly accept. They seek our consistent, strong support of efforts to retain and expand their rights and participation.

Although women's empowerment is often viewed as a secondary priority in times of transition, it is precisely at these times that women can play a crucial role. Their involvement can ensure an enduring peace and a con-

stitution that protects the rights of all citizens equally, as well as creating the economic and social structures that underpin a future offering security and prosperity.

How Can the U.S. Help?

Real and lasting change will take time, so we must take advantage of every opportunity to help our allies stay on the path to democracy and inclusiveness. In particular, we must support national voices calling for women's inclusion and empowerment.

Such assistance need not be solely direct or financial; moral support in our public and private messaging is key. In addition, helping women build organizational capacity and greater connections to civil society, regionally and internationally, will be vital.

One of the chief lessons of the Arab Spring is that democracy is everyone's business — women and men, Muslim and Christian, young and old. Success comes

when everyone participates. The revolutions were not about pitting one group against another, but people coming together to bring about sustainable societal change for a better life.

This point was driven home recently when I met with Yemeni Nobel Laureate Tawakkol Karman. She described the struggle as directed not only against the Saleh regime but also against strong cultural and religious traditions used by some in the Arab world to keep women out of power. After declaring that "the women of the Arab Spring have come alive, and they will not go back to sleep," she added: "It is in the interests of dictators to keep women out of politics."

This is a critical juncture for American engagement and diplomacy. Emerging leaders, often for the first time in decades, are open to new ideas on political reform. It is an historic opportunity for us to advocate equal citizenship and opportunity for all. ■

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TUNISIA'S IDENTITY CRISIS



TUNISIANS ARE ATTEMPTING TO RECONCILE THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN WHAT HAD BEEN A STAUNCHLY SECULAR SOCIETY.

BY VICTORIA TAYLOR

Although Tunisia was the first Arab Spring country to overthrow its longtime dictator, its revolution was overshadowed by the uprising in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the conflict in Libya and the crackdown in Syria. By comparison, the Tunisian Revolution, while dramatic, has led to relative stability.

Former Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali left the country quickly and of his own accord on Jan. 14, 2011. The Oct. 23 constituent assembly elections proceeded smoothly and were heralded as a model for other transitional democracies. Despite an increasingly polarized debate between Islamist and secular elements, Tunisia's transition thus far has been smooth.

The Islamist Ennahda ("Renaissance") Party won an impressive 40 percent of the seats in the October voting, ushering in a profound and positive change for

those who had not felt free to practice their religion under the Ben Ali government. But many secular Tunisians continue to view Ennahda with suspicion, fearing that the party has a hidden Islamist agenda. The emergence of a small, but vocal, Salafist movement has further inflamed fears that increasing religiosity poses a threat to life as they know it.

Tunisians are questioning what it means to be Tunisian, even as they attempt to reconcile the role of religion in what had been a staunchly secular society. And as this debate continues, they are increasingly disappointed and frustrated with the lack of progress on key economic and social issues. The economy remains weak, with growing inflation and an unemployment rate that is higher than before the revolution. Foreign and domestic investment are both at a standstill, as investors wait for signs that the economy is improving.

To succeed, democracy will need to deliver tangible results, not just talk. The United States has an important role to play in assisting the Tunisian government to address these challenges.

A New, but Divided, Society

Those who spent time in Ben Ali's Tunisia will scarcely recognize the country of today. Known for its

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homogenous, secular, well-educated population, Tunisia was often called “a country that works.” Its government boasted that 80 percent of its population was solidly middle class, with a poverty rate of less than 4 percent. The population was notoriously apolitical and many were apathetic about the absence of democracy, arguing that stability was all that mattered. In addition, few Tunisians attended mosques or sported any of the outward expressions of religiosity.

The 2011 revolution revealed that this carefully cultivated image bore little resemblance to reality. Ennahda’s overwhelming victory in the Constituent Assembly elections last fall was a wake-up call to the country’s secular elite, who had long believed that they were the majority. Although analysts have pointed to superior organization and the multitude of center-left parties dividing up the vote to explain the Islamist victory, it seems clear that many Tunisians voted for Ennahda because they believe in its message and what it represents.

After years of religious repression, Tunisians are again veiling themselves or growing beards, and filling formerly empty mosques to capacity. Television stations have traveled into rural areas to demonstrate that the 4-percent poverty rate was nothing but a myth. Capturing the very real surprise of the Tunis-based elite, one prominent Tunisian reflects: “We thought we were all the same, but it turns out we are extremely divided: rich and poor, religious and secular, urban and rural.”

Secular Panic

Ennahda’s electoral dominance and the fractured state of the center-left opposition have only increased the panic felt by secular Tunisians. Statements by several Ennahda members about references to sharia law in the constitution have riled the center-left, despite moderate and reassuring speeches by Ennahda’s scholar-leader, Rached Ghannouchi, that sharia law is not a goal. Tunisia’s secular elite must not only come to terms with the party’s electoral victory, but recognize that most Tunisians would like society to reflect moderate Islamic values.

After years of religious repression, Tunisians are again veiling themselves or growing beards, and filling formerly empty mosques to capacity.

Meanwhile, the unruly and sometimes violent Salafists have prompted many Tunisians to question the direction of the country. While attending the Jan. 23 trial of a TV station owner in Tunis, two veteran journalists were assaulted by an angry Salafist mob. Similar instances of intimidation in the town of Sejnane led some resi-

dents to complain that the Salafists are trying to establish a caliphate there.

Several universities have faced Salafist protests over the niqab (worn by Muslim women to cover the face) that have led, in some cases, to clashes with the police and school closures. During one demonstration in Tunis, police had to use tear gas to disperse a knife- and baton-wielding mob.

The Salafists are a small and marginal element unlikely to shift the course of society, but these incidents have fueled the debate on religion in an unhelpful way. Ennahda has roundly condemned the use of violence, but the government and security forces have not yet demonstrated that they can rein in these groups.

Will Press Freedoms Endure?

Due to strict government control, as well as self-censorship, the press during the Ben Ali era was often little more than a mouthpiece for the government. The revolution has given Tunisian journalists unprecedented freedom, but there are signs that this newfound freedom may be captive to the debate over religion and secularism. For instance, Nebil Karoui, owner and director of Tunis-based Nessma Television, is being tried for blasphemy for an October broadcast of the French-Iranian animated film “Persepolis.” (The film, which had already been shown in Tunisian movie theaters, contains a scene that personifies God.) If convicted, Karoui could face five years in jail.

Nassridine Ben Saida, publisher of the *Attounisia* newspaper, was imprisoned for more than a week in February for publishing a photo from the German edition of *GQ* that showed Tunisian soccer player Sami Khedira covering the breasts of his nude model girlfriend with his hands. On March 8, Ben Saida was fined 1,000 dinars (roughly \$665) for “disrespecting public

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decency” — a light sentence compared to his previous jail time, but a signal of changing societal norms nonetheless.

Although Ennahda’s leadership has condemned the imprisonment of journalists, the party has argued that the two trials are out of their hands. Yet it is clear that these proceedings have the potential to set the boundaries for press freedom in Tunisia for years to come. A conviction in either case would have a chilling effect, leading to a return to self-censorship.

Ensuring Tunisia’s Success

The Ennahda-led coalition government faces a difficult and unenviable challenge: trying to build consensus in this increasingly polarized society, while promoting

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the economic and democratic development of the country. And it must do so without any prior experience governing a country. In addition, Ennahda has an urgent responsibility to resolve the conflicts between religious and secular elements in society, lest the country spend its time and energy on issues like the niqab instead of the economy.

Tunisia was never at the center of U.S. strategy in the Middle East, but today Washington has a clear strategic interest in its successful evolution into a democracy. For if its transition falters, what does that mean for the future of democracy in the Middle East?

Only Tunisians can resolve questions about their identity and their relationship to religion, of course. But the United States can help make sure that the demo-



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cratic agenda stays on track, by continuing to take strong positions on such critical issues as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and free and fair elections.

The continuance of Ben Ali-era laws and bureaucracy, coupled with the relative weakness of the opposition, means that the United States and other international actors also have an important role to play in standing up for universal democratic values. As journalists such as Karoui and Ben Saida go on trial or are imprisoned, it is important to publicly voice concerns and stress the important role that a free press plays in protecting democracy.

Maintaining continued, high-level contact with both the coalition government and the opposition parties is also vital, making clear that the United States is not playing favorites, but that the door to dialogue is open to any party that respects nonviolence and respects and promotes democratic values. We must continue to make explicit that we support democracy, not just stability.

Through organizations such as the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute and Freedom House, the United States can facilitate training for both the Tunisian election authority and Tunisian political parties. Ennahda's political dominance was won at the ballot box, reflecting its strong support throughout the country. However, a strong and viable opposition is also critical to the long-term stability of Tunisia's democracy. Encouragingly, the country's center-left parties are slowly forming coalitions, which will help them compete more effectively for political influence and assuage fears that secular views are at risk.

The United States should encourage Tunisia to set a date for parliamentary elections and begin preparations, such as voter registration. Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali has stated that the government expects elections to occur in 18 months. However, Ennahda's leaders have also indicated that voting could be postponed if the work of the Constituent Assembly is not completed within that time frame.

The Economy on Hold

While understandable, this lack of clarity about parliamentary elections fuels the suspicions of those Tunisians who believe Ennahda has ulterior motives.

*Setting a clear timeline
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and encourage investment.*

But more importantly, it increases the general sense of uncertainty in the country. Only half of eligible voters were registered for the October constituent assembly elections. Early preparations for the parliamentary elections would help engage a greater proportion of the population, increasing confidence

in the process.

While the October elections proceeded relatively smoothly, there were some irregularities. Reports that Ennahda provided money for weddings and offered sheep, and that the Progressive Democratic Party handed out sandwiches, may seem trivial, but they are still a hot topic. U.S. technical assistance to the Tunisian election authority and political parties could help avert similar incidents during the parliamentary elections, whenever they are held.

Promoting Tunisian economic growth remains critical to ensuring the success of democracy. In 2011, gross domestic product contracted by nearly 2 percent, and forecasts for 2012 remain pessimistic. Unemployment, already high prior to the revolution, has continued to grow and is currently estimated at 19 percent; but is estimated to be nearly 30 percent for university-educated youth.

For their part, foreign and Tunisian investors are also in "wait and see" mode. Setting a clear timeline for the transition will help provide predictability and encourage investment. The country has requested significant international funding to support economic development, and the Obama administration has already increased funding.

Although a Tunisian "Marshall Plan" is not realistic in these years of lean budgets, the United States can signal its strong commitment to Tunis by considering a free trade agreement. The congressional mood may not be ready for a U.S.-Tunisia FTA at the moment, but because the negotiations would be a multiyear process, congressional sentiment could change. In-depth trade discussions with Tunisia would also provide a forum for promoting serious economic reform and would facilitate a strengthened economic partnership between our two countries.

In short, America cannot resolve Tunisia's identity crisis. But it can, and should, help the country address its very real social and economic challenges to keep its democracy on the path to success. ■

MARGINAL NO LONGER: NEW OPENINGS IN THE MAGHREB

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THE ARAB SPRING HAS GIVEN NORTH AFRICA GREATER SALIENCY FOR U.S. POLICYMAKERS, INVITING MORE CONCENTRATED ATTENTION TO THAT REGION.

BY WILLIAM JORDAN

he dramatic overthrow of the Arab world's most repressive regime in Tunisia in January 2011 surprised everyone, not least the roughly two dozen federal employees in Washington who covered the tiny North African country. When those events appeared to inspire similar challenges across the Arab world, including neighboring Libya, the once-marginal Maghreb region became a major preoccupation for the Obama administration. Policymakers wondered whether Algeria and Morocco would follow suit and also require the evacuation of U.S. government personnel and American citizens.

(For the purposes of this article, I will restrict definition of the Maghreb, as the State Department does administratively, to include Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya — but not Mauritania, as the countries of the region generally do.)

William Jordan, a Foreign Service officer from 1981 to 2011, currently resides in Paris. His many overseas postings included Dhahran, Damascus, Amman and Paris, as well as Arabic-language studies in Tunis. From 2002 to 2007, he covered North African issues, first as an analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and later as deputy director and director of NEA's Maghreb office. His last assignment was as DCM in Algiers.

Fortunately, wholesale evacuation of our personnel was not required. Even as the over-reaction of the Moammar Qadhafi regime led to a brief but brutal civil war that triggered NATO intervention, opposition in Algeria failed to gel, the king of Morocco responded to protests with important symbolic reforms, and Tunisia's once-repressed civil society began the daunting task of rebuilding a state that President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his family had hollowed out through corruption. The locus of contestation then shifted eastward to Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria, where the true test of Arab reform is still playing out.

What is happening in the Near and Middle East is ultimately crucial to the region's long-term future and, thus, U.S. national interests. But the Arab Spring has also presented Washington with an opportunity to re-evaluate its interests in the Maghreb, increase the level and quality of its attention to that region, and reorganize itself to take into account its connection to the Sahel and West Africa.

Back in the Spotlight

Over the years, language, geography and historically closer ties with Europe (for which the Maghreb is a top national security priority) have reinforced Washington's tendency to relegate the region to secondary status. Early American involvement, linked to military action to

contain the Barbary Pirates at the turn of the 19th century, faded as Europeans colonized North Africa.

Independence and the Cold War brought the U.S. back to the region, leading to close relations with Morocco and Tunisia and frosty relations with Algeria and (after the 1969 coup that brought Qadhafi to power) Libya. Other than those in the hydrocarbon sector, American companies have generally found the Maghreb market inhospitable or inadequate.

In political terms, most Maghreb countries have remained stable but authoritarian. The one serious challenge to the established political order, in Algeria during the late 1980s and early 1990s, briefly shook Washington (and many European capitals). Algeria's return to a semblance of civil order, however, coincided with the rise of global jihadism that earlier conflict had heralded — a threat that came to dominate post-9/11 Washington's approach to the region. Improved counterterrorist cooperation was central to the rapprochement with Libya, as well as with Algeria. It also largely explained U.S. tolerance, however reluctant, of the generally poor human rights records in all four countries.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's visits to the region over the year since Ben Ali's fall, which in February finally included her first visit as Secretary to Algiers, have underscored the fact that the Maghreb is now enjoying more than benign neglect. Here is an overview of the situation and key issues in the four countries:

- **Tunisia.** The country that launched the Arab Spring has the greatest promise of the four to get the transition right, but the socioeconomic factors that triggered the uprising may actually become more intractable. In retrospect, toppling the Ben Ali regime was the easy part. (See "Tunisia's Identity Crisis" by Victoria Taylor, p. 27.)

- **Libya.** Unlike Tunisia, whose hollow governmental institutions survived enough to facilitate transition, Libya's revolution completely shattered what passed for a nation-state. Indeed, the country is now dealing with the consequences of Qadhafi's folly in creating a state that putatively conferred authority to the masses, but arrogated to himself the role of "guide of the revolution."

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Libya's reconstitution as a unitary state could be contested and protracted. So far, tribal leaders have not asserted themselves, so whatever power exists, including over the oilfields, is in the hands of revolutionary leaders with diverse agendas. The prevailing insecurity and the adamant refusal of armed militias to give up their weapons are both fueled by a widespread desire for revenge after 42 years of repression and

misrule.

This propensity is aggravated among Libyans from Benghazi and eastern Libya following years of neglect and bloody suppression by a regime centered in Tripoli. Recent calls from Benghazi for some sort of partition or regional autonomy suggest a tough battle ahead for those hoping to retain a unitary state.

The media and Western analysts have likely exaggerated the significance of the proclamation of sharia as the basis of law in Libya, since it was already more or less enshrined there, at least in respect to personal status. But there is legitimate cause for concern about the rights of women, as well as the presence in any regime of jihadists who not only opposed Qadhafi, but received training and inspiration from al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

In this context, the flow of weapons out of Libya into the surrounding Sahel is a very real threat to the country's neighbors, as well as to the United States and Europe. Most observers attribute the dramatic seizure by Taureg rebels of most of northern Mali in recent weeks to the weaponry those rebels brought home after fighting alongside Qadhafi loyalists.

Tripoli's concentration on re-establishing domestic order, moreover, means ending its international commitments, which will have profound, if currently little understood, ramifications for the African Union. It will also seriously affect several African states that have depended heavily on Libyan largesse and willingness to employ immigrant laborers.

- **Algeria.** Except for a few tense days in early January 2011, when a spike in food prices led to loosely coordinated riots across its north, the memory of the bloody 1990s kept Algeria from emulating what was happening in Tunisia, Egypt or Libya. Other factors likely include

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well-paid and well-equipped security forces, as well as the fecklessness of Algeria's divided opposition.

Algeria's remarkably free press serves as a partial safety valve for discontent, but restrictions on other media counteract that. The country's biggest political challenge, however, lies in the huge pool of disaffected and angry youth. Their lack of any connection to political institutions or parties makes them more likely to burn down a town hall than engage in legal politics to redress grievances.

Whereas such disaffection led youth to challenge the political order in the late 1980s and — after the military intervened in 1992 to avert an Islamist victory in national elections — take to the hills to join Islamist rebels, young Algerians are more likely now to take to small boats seeking illegal passage to Europe.

Algeria's aging leadership clings to power even though its legitimacy, rooted in the war of independence, diminishes as fewer citizens have any direct memory of

that struggle. Those leaders fear what has happened elsewhere in the region — especially Syria — for what it implies about regimes like theirs, which harken back to the heyday of pan-Arab nationalism. Still insecure more than 10 years after defeating the Islamist challenge, the Algerian regime understands that the international community today might not be as indulgent as it was 20 years ago were it to have to crack down harshly once more on what it considers an existential threat.

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika offered a series of limited but potentially significant reforms in April 2010. But, as most observers cynically expected, the final version of the measures bore little resemblance to the original proposals. Parliamentary elections are set for this month, but their significance could well be obscured if voters express their disdain by boycotting. Presidential elections in 2014 will say more about Algeria's trajectory.

In any case, the country's shadowy, closed and desperate leadership is unlikely to agree to the fundamental

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changes necessary to prepare the country for the eventual exhaustion of its oil and gas resources or address the needs of its burgeoning youth.

• **Morocco.** King Mohammed VI (hereafter M6) successfully traversed an immediate popular challenge to his authority via a deft constitutional reform that symbolically transferred more authority to parliament and dictated that the party with the most seats would be invited to form the government. The regime had initially dismissed the rise of the Feb. 20 Movement, but it eventually proved impossible to ignore. A disparate coalition of activists, principally students, organized demonstrations across Morocco to protest authoritarianism and the power of established interests and privilege among those belonging to or linked with the ruling elite (known as the *makhzen*).

Although M6 reacted adroitly to defuse the movement through personal intervention, the nature of the regime remains largely unchanged. As much as the king is revered as a unifying national figure, the *makhzen* is feared and regarded by some as a force beyond his full control.

Though he pushed hard for reform a decade ago, M6's softer approach today suggests his priority on maintaining stability and continuity to ensure his young son's eventual succession. The constitutional amendment and subsequent parliamentary elections, which led to the Nov. 29 appointment of Morocco's first Islamist prime minister, underscored the regime's preference for cooptation (which it alternates with persecution) of its opponents over real change.

Like other North African countries, Morocco's socioeconomic situation is dire — epitomized by staggering inequality, significant illiteracy and limited opportunity. The expensive commitment to develop the disputed Western Sahara continues to be a huge drain on the treasury that no citizen can question.

Rioting in northern Morocco in March was a reminder that constitutional reform alone cannot assuage decades of neglect and that the Western Sahara is not the only area under Moroccan control challenging Rabat's continued rule.

The Islamist Justice and Development Party that leads Morocco's current government — in coalition with the nationalist party that has dominated the country since independence — represents a break with the country's political past. It enjoys a strong reputation for honesty

given its previous opposition status. But the rival Islamist Justice and Charity movement, which rejects the legitimacy of the monarchy and reportedly commands wide support, remains unlicensed, leaving its supporters in effect disenfranchised.

Much like Algeria, the bottom line for Morocco is that the regime is managing its immediate challenges, but underlying, unaddressed socioeconomic ills cloud the country's long-term future.

What to Do?

The advent of the Arab Spring last year gave the Maghreb greater saliency for U.S. policymakers. Most immediately, the risk posed by regional terrorism, perpetrated by al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and its allies throughout the trans-Sahara region, along with the proliferation of weapons coming out of Libya, demands a reassessment of approaches. It also raises the question of how we can involve all regional stakeholders, including Europe, in countering this shared threat.

There is no turning back the political transitions now in play. For decades, regimes suppressed, stalled or manipulated the dynamics of generational change. This helped the Maghreb appear to be a relatively stable region, despite mounting demographic and economic pressures. The fighting in Libya and Syria (assuming the endgame leads to a new regime there) represents the real risk to regimes that refuse to hear or respond to calls for reform. Algeria's leaders, though they are the most resistant in the Maghreb, understand this, given their country's experience — even if their limited worldview prevents them from taking steps outside their comfort zone.

History offers little reason to believe that the U.S. government generally, or the Department of State in particular, will accord the Maghreb the attention it deserves over the long term. The death of the U.S.-North African Economic Partnership after the Clinton administration is an object lesson North Africans have not forgotten. Nor do the Obama administration's recent declarations about the need to shift attention to Asia and the prospect of tighter federal budgets bode well.

The good news is that the Maghreb does not need a Marshall Plan. But it does need sustained engagement and attention.

To facilitate this, it's necessary to acknowledge that existing bureaucratic structures at State and the White

House no longer work for the Maghreb. Transferring those countries from the Bureau of African Affairs to the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs made sense in the mid-1970s, when pan-Arabism was at its height and Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria all pursued Arabization to reinforce new national identities and lessen dependence on European languages imposed during the colonial era.

That structure makes little sense now, however, for those countries increasingly see themselves as separate from the Middle East, have never fully Arabized, and self-identify now more as Africans or part of a community of Mediterranean states.

The AF/NEA “seam” already complicates proper functioning of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. Except for Libya, no recent NEA assistant secretary has been able to devote much time to Maghreb issues or the development, with AF, of a coherent strategy for dealing with the many crosscutting issues affecting northwest Africa. The deputy assistant secretary covering North Africa has for years also been the DAS for the Arabian Peninsula, so it’s no surprise that the peninsula grabs most of that official’s attention, even when he or she brings considerable Maghreb experience to the job.

The Maghreb office in NEA attracts high-caliber and motivated individuals, but few of them have had much direct experience in the region, given the low priority it is accorded within the bureau. At the White House, the situation has been even worse; there the portfolio has largely been a hot potato thrown among overworked directors with no Maghreb experience who are more interested in higher-visibility Near and Middle East issues.

Time for a Fresh Approach

The solution is a new structure that would embrace the Maghreb’s hybrid nature. At State, it would involve creating a DAS position that straddles the NEA/AF divide and covers all of northwest Africa. Reporting to both AF and NEA assistant secretaries would facilitate policy development and improve coordination in its implementation. The new structure would also make

The AF/NEA “seam” already complicates proper functioning of the Trans-Sahara Counter- terrorism Partnership.

working with the Defense Department and the Africa Command, which already consider the Maghreb part of Africa, much easier.

Such a reorganization would require new thinking about budgeting and staffing, in Washington and overseas, and require seventh-floor backing to overcome institutional opposition.

But the long-term benefits would include the ability to react to and anticipate regional challenges more systematically, as well as the opportunity to develop a cadre of regional experts familiar with the key issues. For the sake of symmetry, the National Security Council should follow suit in creating a hybrid director position that would report to both the Near East/North Africa and Africa divisions.

From this starting point, the rest flows readily. Sus-

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tained, high-level engagement by U.S. government officials from all agencies and Congress, armed with coordinated talking points focused on reform and joint responses to regional challenges, would be essential. AFRICOM is ahead of the pack; civilian agencies need to step up, too.

Sec. Clinton's recent visit to three of the four Maghreb countries, as already noted, was welcome; but it should not have taken so long for her to visit Algeria. Assistant secretaries and DASes from AF as well as NEA need to follow up with frequent visits. Inviting Maghrebi officials to Washington counts for something, but the old line about how you really can't play if you don't show up applies in the Maghreb as much as anywhere else.

The region does not need overarching initiatives, but we should press the members of the Arab Maghreb Union, which includes Mauritania, to revive that moribund organization. Regional integration would create the larger market in which promoting local entrepreneurship with U.S. and other foreign partners makes sense. This would also complement and give new meaning to the North African Partnership for Economic Opportunity that Washington launched prior to the Arab Spring.

Instilling a sense of regional identity would not by itself address the demands of Maghrebi youth for political change in their specific countries. But a more promising regional economy has a better chance of creating new opportunities than the current framework that, like it or not, is dependent on limitations imposed at the national level. Campaigning for a more integrated Maghreb is also something we can easily do in conjunction with the European Union, which is still groping for a meaningful Mediterranean strategy after the implosion of its overly ambitious Union for the Mediterranean.

There is one situation, however, that the U.S. should leave alone: the long-running and intractable Western Sahara conflict. Thanks to ongoing United Nations mediation, nothing about this dispute currently demands immediate attention (apart, of course, from the suffering of tens of thousands of refugees living in the Algerian desert for more than 35 years). The issue will someday

The good news is that the Maghreb does not need a Marshall Plan.

But it does need sustained engagement and attention.

need to be resolved definitively. But while the people of the region are focused on achieving profound change and stability, this is not that time.

In Conclusion

The stakes underlying a new framework and approach for dealing with the Maghreb should be pretty clear 15 months after the Arab Spring erupted in Tunisia's agricultural heartland. Even before an unlicensed produce vendor set himself on fire with incredibly dramatic effect, the socioeconomic and demographic conditions were in place for major change. The excruciating denouement of the Syrian crisis, ongoing turmoil in Egypt, Yemen and Bahrain, and the confrontation with Iran, however, will inevitably dominate U.S. policy attention toward the NEA region during this effervescent time.

Yet 40 percent of the Arab world's population, mostly under the age of 30, is located in the Maghreb. This means that area will continue to be a major setting for the generational transition playing out across the region. The aggravating effect of the Libyan crisis on the already fragile security situation in the Sahel, meanwhile, underscores the increased linkages between the Maghreb and West Africa that defy bureaucratic boundaries.

Indeed, thanks to Libya, the Sahel is now entering a perfect storm. The revived Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali, the resultant military coup in that country and the proliferation of weapons pouring out of Libya have joined preexisting concerns about a flourishing (and originally Algerian) jihadist movement, indigenous criminal activity that may be increasingly linked to international drug trafficking, worsening trends in terms of refugees and trafficking persons, and growing food insecurity throughout the region. Further, West Africa's political, social and economic problems increasingly resemble those in North Africa.

Against this background, it is time for the U.S. to reset its policies and approaches to all of northwest Africa, starting with a long-overdue reorganization at State and the White House to ensure the region gets the sustained and comprehensive attention that will generate more effective policies to deal with its challenges and not merely its threats. ■

UNDERSTANDING ECONOMICS: A TOP DOZEN WONKISMS

ECONOMICS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A DISMAL SCIENCE,
AS THIS TONGUE-IN-CHEEK GUIDE DEMONSTRATES.

BY STEPHAN S. THURMAN

Lay readers often suspect those of us in the “economic priesthood” of deliberately shrouding the great mysteries of our profession through the use of code words — otherwise known as “wonkisms.” But while our use of such specialist shorthand does increase markedly during periods of high economic uncertainty like the present, most economists use such language precisely because they believe they are communicating more effectively with their audience.

Since that is usually *not* the case, however, this article attempts to decode some concepts and newly popular terms readers regularly encounter but seldom see defined.

1. A **black swan** has nothing to do with ballet. Rather, ever since Nassim Taleb published a book with that title in 2007, economists have called an event that when they cannot explain exactly how or why it occurred. Such developments are so rare that they go beyond any previous experience that might be used to describe them. Thus, a rapid resolution of a financial or currency crisis has been described as a black swan, although one wag dubbed such a fortuitous outcome a **golden swan** — even more rare. A **market failure**, by contrast, is used to explain why an economist’s firm and unyielding understanding of an event turns out to be wrong.

2. The **Rule of 72**, a quick approximation of simple compound interest, is all the mathematics economists need to

know. One of the best-kept secrets of our profession, the rule reveals how long it will take for an amount of money to double, given an average annual growth rate (divide 72 by the growth rate to get the number of years). Conversely, if you want the amount to double in a set number of years, the rule will tell you at what rate it must grow (divide 72 by number of years to get the required growth rate). To double an amount in 10 years, for example, requires an average annual growth rate of 7.2 percent. But like much in economics, this is only an approximation, and good only for small numbers.

3. **Financial inclusion** allows poor people in developing economies to access banking services, sometimes through non-traditional means, such as with a cell phone. Without physically visiting a bank building, they can use their phones to make payments or otherwise keep an account current. They are now “included,” as it were, in the global financial marketplace — though that has not been the safest of locales for several years now, thanks to global financial and debt crises.

4. **Technology infrastructure leapfrogging** (ribbit, ribbit) occurs when developing economies that previously could not afford to finance expensive infrastructure — brick-and-mortar branch banks or land-based telephone lines — are able to move beyond such requirements through innovative and relatively inexpensive new technologies, such as cell-phone banking.

5. A **Berlin Alexanderplatz event** is a long, drawn-out and complex occurrence with many different viewpoints, which for many aptly describes the “Sturm und Drang” of recent financial crises. I confess that I didn’t understand this reference when I first heard a commentator use it, but an online search informed me that the expression originates from a 1929 book of that title, followed by several movie adaptations over the years. For reference, the most famous cinematic

Stephan S. Thurman is an international economist in the State Department’s Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. The views expressed in this article are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. government.

adaptation is 15.7 hours long! Such a description is one that only a literature or cinema studies scholar would fully understand and, as such, is an appropriate analogy to the economic priesthood's use of seemingly impenetrable jargon to explain financial crises.

6. **Reprofiling**, a polite word for partial debt default, is also known as **soft restructuring**. It occurs when the holders of sovereign bonds take a **haircut**, which has absolutely nothing to do with the length or style of one's hair. Rather, it signifies a drop in nominal value of a bond held by an investor so severe that it is worth just a fraction of its original value.

7. If the bondholder involved in Item 6 is unfortunate enough to be nongovernmental, the haircut is known as **private-sector involvement**. This euphemism is intended to soften the sting of government-bond issuers socking it to private-bond investors by having them take the financial hit "voluntarily."

Bupkis, a highly technical term, describes much economic policymaking.

8. Most banks get around PSI because they are considered **Too Big To Fail**, meaning they have an effective lobbying presence at the legislative or regulatory body tasked with making them follow the rules. **Too Big to Bail** is a close cousin to TBTF, except that it usually applies only to a country. Both cousins take the attitude of "that PSI haircut looks much better on you than it would on me."

9. **Qualitative easing** (not to be confused with its distant cousin, **quantitative easing**) happens when a cen-

tral bank buys sovereign bonds in the secondary market because it is restricted from buying them in primary markets (or terrified of the press fallout if it did).

10. **Kicking that can down the road** is a technical policymaking expression for taking cowardly stopgap measures instead of pursuing a structural solution to the economic problems at hand. (Ever wonder what, exactly, is down that road? Lots of cans, surely.) The end product of such kicking is **bupkis**, a technical term in economics for a whole lotta nothing or "beans." It describes much economic policymaking everywhere.

11. **Financial repression** is a situation in which bond issuers deal with bond buyers in a nasty way by paying them bupkis (see above) in interest, sometimes by using depreciated or inflated currency. This is also known as **inflating your way out of trouble**.

12. A **perfect storm** is a term for any concatenation of events that allows commentators to blame everyone while blaming no one, thus effectively avoiding any semblance of accountability by governments, institutions or individuals.

This list of economic wonkisms is by no means exhaustive, of course, for specialists are constantly inventing new terms to reflect developments in the global economy. But for now, anyway, you can use these to demonstrate your savvy, whether at a conference or a cocktail party. Imagine the admiring glances you will garner when the topic of another financial crisis leading to global recession comes up, and you opine:

"By the Rule of 72, a perfect storm of global debt overhang will double in seven years, regardless of whether PSI forces significant haircuts on bondholders — with the exception of TBTF banks, of course, which will be spared any financial repression by TBTF countries who are kicking this can down the road with their qualitative easing." ■



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AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • May 2012

Representative Van Hollen: A Defender of the Foreign Service

BY CLINT LOHSE, AFSA LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

On March 8, Representative Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., spoke to an audience of more than 80 people gathered at AFSA headquarters. He discussed the federal budget, Congress's perception of government employees and the need for a robust international affairs budget and a strong, well-trained, professional Foreign Service.

As the child of an FSO, Rep. Van Hollen's advocacy on behalf of the Foreign Service comes naturally. He was born in Karachi and grew up in Turkey, Sri Lanka (where his father, Christopher Van Hollen, served as ambassador from 1972 to 1976) and India.

"Growing up in a Foreign Service family was a great and wonderful and unique experience," he recalls.

An Easy Caricature

AFSA President Susan Johnson opened the conversation by asking Van Hollen how Congress perceives government employees and the Foreign Service.

"Federal employees as a group have become the scapegoat for those who are looking for solutions to our budget problem. The rhetoric, in my view, has gotten totally out of control," he remarked.

Van Hollen cautioned against thinking of Congress as a monolith, however, and described how he and many of his colleagues were working to change misperceptions of the federal work force as a dysfunctional bureaucracy.

"That's an easy caricature, and it's dead wrong. I think we all know that federal employees, whether they're in the Foreign



DONNA AYERST

Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., explains the intricacies of the federal budget as AFSA President Susan Johnson takes notes at the association's headquarters on March 8.

Service or working at the National Institutes of Health, contribute in many ways and extraordinary ways to our country," he said.

The audience included active-duty and retired Foreign Service officers, several of whom were among Van Hollen's constituents. They raised concerns regarding the attacks on federal employee benefits.

"We've always said that federal employees are willing to do their fair share, to contribute to reducing the deficit, but it has to be part of a balanced package. We need shared responsibility and shared sac-

rice, and nobody should be singled out," the congressman said.

Van Hollen also noted his successful opposition to attempts by some members of Congress to increase contributions from current federal employees' paychecks to pay for extensions of the payroll tax cut and unemployment insurance benefits.

A National Security Budget?

Emphasizing the value of educating the public about the role the Foreign Service plays in promoting American interests overseas and supporting national security operations, Van Hollen encouraged members of the audience to "tell your sto-

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In Memory

On May 4, Foreign Affairs Day, Sharon S. Clark's name will be added to AFSA's Memorial Plaques. If you would like to celebrate Sharon's life, her family suggests making donations to Africare through its secure, online Web site at africare.safesecureweb.com/support-us/donate.php.

AAFSW Picnic

Mark your calendar for the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide annual picnic on Sunday, July 1, at the picnic shelter at Nottoway Park, Vienna, Va. The potluck event is for couples and singles, with and without kids. For more information, please see www.aafsw.org.

FSYF Kayaking Adventure

Attention teens: On Saturday, Aug. 25, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Foreign Service Youth Foundation invites you to join other recently returned to D.C.-area FS teens for a day of kayaking on the Potomac. This is a great opportunity to get to know kids your age. We will meet at Thompson Boat Center (on the river near the Kennedy Center) where two groups — middle school and high school — will kayak to Roosevelt Island and back. An experienced instructor will lead the excursion. Please bring your own lunch and drinks. For more details and to register, please e-mail fsyf@fsyf.org.

AFSA Welcomes a New Staff Member

As part of ongoing efforts to increase services to our members, we are pleased to announce a new addition to the AFSA staff. Matthew Sumrak has assumed a new position, Associate Coordinator for Retiree Benefits and Legislation. With Matt on board, AFSA has doubled the capacity of our retiree section.

Matt is originally from Naperville, Ill. He attended John Carroll University and is currently studying for a master's degree in public policy at George Mason University. He previously worked for the Mental Health Advocacy Project in San Jose, Calif. Matt can be reached at sumrak@afsa.org or (202) 944-5522.

The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide

AAFSW is a nonprofit organization that has been representing Foreign Service spouses, employees and retirees since 1960. The association is an independent advocate for its members, giving them a stronger voice when working on common concerns and a chance to enjoy shared interests.

AAFSW coordinates the annual Secretary of State's Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad, in addition to awarding a variety of scholarships and grants aimed at recognizing the achievements of Foreign Service employees and family members.

Each month, AAFSW offers members an event roster covering a wide range of topics. In March, it sponsored a panel discussion in the State Department's Dean Acheson Auditorium celebrating Women's History Month. In April, the association organized a visit to the U.S. Botanic Garden and a discussion on human trafficking in Vietnam.

AAFSW's Web site, www.aafsw.org, includes a popular classified section offering items for sale, D.C.-area housing, and products and services available from Foreign Service family members.

If you are an active or retired employee of a U.S. foreign affairs agency, or an adult family member of an employee, you are eligible for AAFSW membership. To join, go to www.aafsw.org/join-aafsw/apply-online.

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ATTENTION AFSA MEMBERS

Proposed Amendments to AFSA's Bylaws

The Governing Board has conducted a review of AFSA's bylaws and is proposing a number of bylaw amendments. The process of amending the association's bylaws requires notification to the AFSA membership, a 45-day period for submission of statements in opposition, a vote of the membership and two-thirds approval of those voting.

The full process is found in Article IX of the AFSA bylaws at www.afsa.org/afsa_bylaws. It is the responsibility of the AFSA Committee on Elections to conduct polling. This schedule has been set:

May 1: Proposed amendments announced to membership.

June 14: Deadline for statements in opposition to proposed changes.

Mid-July: Sending of ballots, together with any statements for or against the proposed amendments, by mail and e-mail.

Sept. 5: Governing Board endorses results of bylaw poll reported by the Committee on Elections.

Statements in opposition to any of the proposed amendments must be signed by no fewer than 10 AFSA members in good standing and must be received by close of business on June 14, 2012, by George Jones, Chair, AFSA Committee on Elections, 2101 E Street NW, Washington DC 20037; fax (202) 338-6820; or e-mail to election@afsa.org.

Explanation of Proposed Changes from the Governing Board

The Governing Board has identified two areas of the AFSA bylaws requiring amendment: 1) online voting and 2) eligibility criteria. There is also one technical amendment proposed to change the name of the Committee on Education to the Scholarship Committee. All three items were approved by the Governing Board at its April 4, 2012, meeting. The Governing Board recommends that

members support the amendments as proposed.

1. ONLINE VOTING

The current bylaws state that ballots will be mailed to the membership for purposes of elections. With the advent of the Internet and the fact that the majority of the membership is dispersed around the world, online voting is more efficient and cost-effective than traditional mail ballots. Moreover, enabling online voting should increase voter participation and decrease election length. The surveys conducted of our membership indicate that enabling the option for online voting is a key goal, and the Governing Board would like to have that capability in place for the 2013 election cycle.

This would require amending Article VII, Section 2, to enable electronic voting, specifically including mention of electronic distribution and the option of a third-party vendor. Suggested changes to language are in *italics*.

ARTICLE VII

Elections

Section 2. Procedures:

(e) The committee shall *e-mail instructions on how to vote online and/or mail* the official ballot bearing the names of all qualified candidates, slate identifications when applicable and voting instructions to each regular member no less than 45 days before the counting of the ballots.

(g) The committee shall ensure the secrecy of each member's vote. *The committee may hire a third-party vendor to facilitate the election and ensure the integrity of the process.*

2. BOARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Former Member — Tenure Requirement

The current bylaws allow any "former" member of the Foreign Service to run for

positions on the Governing Board. There is the possibility that a career candidate, or a limited non-career appointment, who had been in the Service for only one year, thus meeting the definition of a "former member," would be eligible to run for election. The Governing Board recommends defining a former member as a former "tenured" member.

This would require amending Article III to include language defining what constitutes a "former tenured member" of the Service. Former tenured members would be considered part of the "retiree constituency."

Term Limits

The Governing Board would like to ensure that the composition of the board maintains its fluidity and proposes to limit officers to no more than four full consecutive terms (i.e., eight consecutive years) in any one position on the Governing Board.

The main changes to the bylaws would have to occur in Article V. Proposed changes are in *italics*.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 2. Regular Members: Regular membership is limited to current or former members of the Foreign Service as defined by Sections 103 (paragraphs 1 to 5) and 202 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, or successor legislation. Individuals eligible for regular membership may be so admitted upon application and payment of dues, and shall be permitted to maintain their membership as long as they remain eligible and maintain current dues payments. Only regular members may vote, hold office or exercise other rights regarding the conduct of the affairs of the association. *Only former tenured members are eligible to hold office.*

Continued on page 44

Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA State VP.

Making the FS Truly Family-Friendly

An annual survey by the Partnership for Public Service ranks the State Department among the “best places to work” in the U.S. government. The same survey ranks State among the worst in terms of “family-friendly culture and benefits.” In part, that is a result of the questions asked in the survey. But comments received in response to AFSA’s own annual survey underscore the fact that many FS members feel State does not do enough for families.

To be fair, the bar for State and USAID (which also ranks near the bottom) is higher than it is for most agencies. Those with most or all of their employees stateside need only worry about child care, simple wellness programs, and such family-friendly initiatives as alternative work schedules or teleworking.

With most FS employees serving overseas, State must add to this list Eligible Family Member employment opportunities, schools, residential safety, transportation, basic medical services, emergency care, elder care, commissaries or consumables, recreational facilities and even pets. And this has significant resource implications for the department.

The nature of embassy work often makes it difficult for employees to arrange alternative work schedules or telework. And the dramatic increase in the number of unaccompanied posts adds the strains of separation and worry — both of which can have deep and profound effects on families and family members.

The Office of Employee Relations’ Work-Life Division, the Family Liaison Office, the Office of Medical Services, the Office of Overseas Building Operations, and other divisions of State take these matters seriously and are working hard and creatively to address many of the issues described in this article. But it will never be as easy, or as cheap, for State to be family-friendly as it is for the vast majority of government agencies.

Equally important is the philosophical question most agencies never have to ask: To what degree should a government agency spend taxpayer dollars on family members who are not employed by the government?

The short answer is that the Foreign Service requires its members to reside overseas, and to develop skills that mature with greater overseas experience. It would be impossible to recruit or retain enough people to do this kind of work without a guarantee that their families will be provided as safe an environment as possible along with the same benefits (for example, a free education through high school for their children) that any American citizen resident in the U.S. would take for granted.

AFSA’s member surveys are clear: for employees who share

a household with family members, family considerations are primary when bidding, for morale and deciding whether or not to stay in the Service.

Because our work in the Foreign Service requires us to spend the bulk of our careers abroad, support for families is even more important than it is for the military. Yet while Congress willingly funds facilities for military families, it is much less generous to the Foreign Service. Ironically, many areas of key interest to AFSA members are either relatively inexpensive to address, or involve costs that can be spread out.

State employees may currently use annual or sick leave, or leave without pay, for maternity purposes. While this may work for those with enough leave, it doesn’t work for newer employees. The military offers paid parental leave under the authority of the Secretary of Defense; State should do more to obtain a similar benefit.

Overseas safety is another concern. While some risks are inevitable, others are not. For instance, many members complain that posts are absurdly shortsighted when it comes to child-proofing residences. Investment in safety gates, covers for electrical outlets and reductions in the space between balcony railings can be spread out over multiple family residences, and should be part of the routine to make every house in a post’s housing pool ready for occupancy.

Work-life balance is important — not just for families, but for singles, as well. The department pays excellent lip service to making time for an outside life, but it continues to support a culture of 10-hour workdays and six-day workweeks for anyone who expects to advance. In some skill codes, overtime is required to receive full benefits. Singles also complain of being unfairly burdened with holiday duty on the assumption that, being single, they have no other life.

EFM employment opportunities will not improve until State adopts a centralized view of the function and abandons the archaic idea that it is make-work designed to keep “the little woman” happy. The department and chiefs of mission at posts should work with other agencies to develop fair employment strategies to increase opportunities for family members.

Foreign Service employees spend a lifetime supporting the interests of the U.S. government. In so doing, they leave behind their homes, extended family members, a spouse or partner’s career, their children’s playmates, and their friends to live in unfamiliar overseas environments. The bar may be higher for State than for other government agencies, but that is no excuse for failing to reach it. □





Much Ado About Nothing?

Reorganization, restructuring, regionalization, repositioning ... How about a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T, just a little bit! We have at least four major organizational changes going on at the same time at every level, affecting the International Trade Administration and Foreign Commercial Service, among other agencies. You have to ask yourself, “Why?”

The Commercial Service is blessed with being one of the most focused organizations in the U.S. government. We are about exports. We can measure what we accomplish. Exports grew by 17 percent in 2010 and by 15 percent last year — practically the only bright spot in the U.S. economy. We exceeded all of our export success goals. In 2010 we produced \$34.8 billion in export successes, assisted 18,000 clients and returned more than \$135 of exports for every \$1 appropriated — a pretty good return on investment. So what needs to be fixed?

As if there isn’t enough confusion already, last fall State launched its “Economic Statecraft” program, aimed at helping American companies increase exports. Admirable as it is, the duplication of goals has created angst and confusion among State and FCS economic and commercial officers in the field. What this new program will accomplish remains to be seen, but funds may have been better spent supporting existing Commercial Service programs.

To grasp what is going on, we need look no further than what the pundits call “the silly season.” During the Global

Business Conference in February, I asked an American Chamber of Commerce colleague how he thought all of the organizational changes were going. He responded, “We get it. We know this is an election year.” Meaning, decisions required to move any changes forward will not happen. Restructuring will take congressional approval. It will also take a budget decision, which is highly unlikely in this Congress.

So, not only has a lot of confusion been created, with scarce resources expended for these uncertain activities and programs, but it is unlikely that any reorganization, restructuring, regionalization or repositioning will occur this year.

I write this to give those of you in the field a feel for the state of play, but also as a plea to management to step back and take a breath — follow basic standard procedures and don’t take short cuts. While the current proposals are important, budget pressures are bound to intensify, and will not be resolved anytime soon.

Despite Washington’s own version of “March Madness,” let’s all do our best to persevere and continue the great work we do every day to help our country and our companies. □

Despite Washington’s own version of “March Madness,” let’s all do our best to persevere and continue the great work we do every day to help our country and our companies.

ARTICLE V

The Governing Board

Section 1. General: This association shall be governed by a Governing Board (herein called “the board”) consisting of regular members in good standing, elected by the regular membership biennially for two-year terms as officers or representatives in the manner provided in Section 4 below. *No member may serve more than four full consecutive terms (i.e., eight consecutive years) in any one position on the Governing Board.*

3. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Currently, the bylaws establish a Committee on Education under Article VI. In recent years, the practice has evolved to call that committee the “Scholarship Committee.” The current board approved this name change at its Nov. 2, 2011, meeting in addition to approving the name change(s) in the Scholarship Fund’s Bylaws and Scholarship Fund’s Articles of Organization.

The proposed amendment is simply a technical one requesting that the name be changed officially in the main AFSA bylaws. The attached exhibit shows the proposed change with deletions ~~crossed through~~ and additions in *italics*.

ARTICLE VI

Internal Organization

Section 1. The following committees and boards shall exist on a permanent basis:

~~Committee on Education~~ *Scholarship Committee*: The board shall appoint and determine the terms of the chair and members of the ~~Committee on Education~~ *Scholarship Committee* who, under the overall guidance of the board, shall develop policies and criteria for awards under the association’s scholarship programs. □

For AFSA Bylaws, go to www.afsa.org/afsa_bylaws

Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA RETIREE VP.

Serving AFSA's Current and Future Retirees

Last spring, when running as a candidate for one of the four retiree representative positions on the 2011–2013 AFSA Governing Board, I never imagined I would wind up writing this column as your retiree vice president. “Expect the unexpected” applies to retirees as well as active-duty employees. Fortunately for me and for AFSA, Bob Houdek, the outgoing retiree VP, remains a member of the board, so we will continue to benefit from his experience and sound advice.

Bob's final column, “An Adieu, With Reflections” (*AFSA News*, January), and “Laws Can Change; So Can Your Benefits” (*AFSA News*, April 2009) by his predecessor, Bill Farrand, are sober reflections on stories we see with increasing frequency in local and national media. Members of Congress and state legislatures are trying to use the salaries, pensions and benefits of public servants to resolve budgetary shortfalls. Facts about hard work, sacrifice and commitment to public service just seem to get in the way of a snap-py sound bite.

Is there an immediate threat to Foreign Service retiree pensions? No. Could there be a threat to current and future retirement benefits? Anything is possible as Congress and the administration struggle with the federal budget and competing visions of the role and size of government.

To defend our hard-won benefits, AFSA is working hard with friends of the Foreign Service on the Hill. But members of

Congress respond best to their constituents, especially when the constituents are well-informed and present compelling arguments that can stand against other, equally compelling interests. Retiree members, reaching out in person by phone, letter or e-mail, put a human face — and a human cost — on what busy members of Congress and their staff may sometimes perceive as an abstract policy chip to be negotiated away in the process of trying to move legislation.

Many of our retirees write articles and books, deliver talks and offer radio and television commentary. This, too, puts a human face on the Foreign Service and helps to raise our profile. On this front, I am happy to report that State management, responding to AFSA, has clarified its policy on pre-publication clearance of manuscripts by retirees: clearance is recommended but not required, unless the author believes that something in the manuscript may still be classified.

AFSA is committed to maintaining and deepening services to retiree members. The hiring of a second staff member was approved to respond to requests for assistance from retirees and to monitor congressional actions affecting current and future retired Foreign Service members.

I look forward to working with the professional staff to serve AFSA's members. □



Van Hollen • Continued from page 39

ries whenever possible and find ways to speak to your communities.”

He highlighted the importance that former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and current Defense Secretary Leon Panetta have placed on diplomacy and development initiatives, noting that diplomatic readiness needs to be recognized as part of our national security strategy. “We need to build a better appreciation of the work done by the Foreign Service and the fact that we have a multifaceted security strategy.”

Johnson asked the congressman about the possibility of linking diplomacy and defense in an overall national security budget, and what effect that could have on funding for foreign affairs agencies.

Although Rep. Van Hollen recognized



PHOTOS BY DONNA AYERST

(Left) Rep. Van Hollen takes a question from the audience during his visit to AFSA. (Right) Rep. Van Hollen engages with attendees following the discussion.

the difficulty of competing one-on-one with the defense budget, he pointed out that competing with budgets for education or infrastructure would also be difficult: “That’s not an easy place to be either, just in terms of the political dynamics of the budget.”

Although there are a number of dif-

ferent scenarios that could play out as Congress works on the budget for 2013, he is hopeful that a balanced, responsible budget can be agreed on. The alternative could prove to be “a mess that would have very bad results for federal agencies and their ability to do important work for the country.” □

AFSA Hosts Deputy Secretary Nides

BY ÁSGEIR SIGFÚSSON, AFSA MARKETING AND OUTREACH MANAGER

AFSA welcomed Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Thomas R. Nides to its headquarters for a discussion with members on March 15. This was his first official visit to AFSA and Nides made the most of the opportunity to address AFSA members, discussing issues ranging from his appreciation for the Foreign Service to the recently submitted Fiscal Year 2013 budget proposal for international affairs spending.

Deputy Secretary Nides began by expressing his admiration for the work performed each day by Foreign Service members around the world. He then shared the primary factor in his decision to work at the department: a persuasive phone call from Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Recalling his initial surprise at being offered the position, he asked the Secretary what he would be doing. To knowing laughter from the audience, he recounted her answer: well, he would be mostly working on Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Oh, and also the budget.

Budget Candor

The latter of those portfolios took up most of his presentation. Nides offered a candid view of the budget process, which he called “screwy.” The federal government is always spending last year’s money, while seeking approval for the current year’s budget and preparing the next request. Referencing his background in business, Nides reflected that this process would never go very far outside government.

Nides presented what he refers to as the “four truths” of the budget process:

- The lack of a natural constituency for diplomacy and development. Though sympathetic to members of Congress who have to defend foreign affairs spending to their home constituents, he lamented the misperception that foreign affairs spending amounts to 22 to 25 percent of the

federal budget, when it is actually less than 1 percent.

- Contrary to popular perception, there are a number of smart, focused supporters of foreign affairs spending in Congress, in both houses and on both sides of the aisle.

- Without the credibility and advocacy of Secretary Clinton, the foreign affairs agencies would have a much harder time on the Hill.

- State, USAID and other foreign affairs agencies have not done a good job when it comes to advocating for themselves and telling their story. Such outreach is crucial for continued resources and the creation of a constituency.

A Look at the Numbers

Nides continued his discussion of the budget by pointing to the numbers: the FY 2012 approved budget for the international affairs account contains about \$50 billion. The fighting it took to get to that amount prompted Nides to candidly call the current budget year “hellacious.”

He pointed out that the FY 2013 budget request is about 1 percent higher than

last year’s. However, given the realities of the economic situation — and the fact that this is a presidential election year — Nides believes that the overall federal budget will ultimately *not* be approved, so a continuing resolution will be required to keep spending at the current level.

Before wrapping up, Nides took questions from the audience on economic statecraft, advocacy and the perception that government employees, particularly in the State Department, lack sensitivity about the economic climate.

Pushing back hard on the latter issue, he praised the Foreign Service and Civil Service for their work. He singled out the “beyond heroic” staff at Embassy Baghdad, who no longer have the military for protection and are involved in the largest transition since the Marshall Plan.

Following the Deputy Secretary’s departure, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for State Programs, Operations and Budget Barbara Retzlaff fielded additional questions on subjects ranging from contract employees in Iraq to overseas contingency operations. □



On March 15, Ian Houston (left), AFSA’s executive director, and AFSA President Susan Johnson, welcome Deputy Secretary of State Thomas R. Nides to the association’s headquarters for a discussion with members.

ÁSGEIR SIGFÚSSON

Traveling with Our Pets

BY MAUREEN JOHNSTON

Shipping a beloved pet is one of the most daunting challenges Foreign Service employees face when transitioning to and from post. The process can be complicated, time-consuming and expensive. It involves a variety of tasks that can try the patience and good nature of even the most seasoned globetrotter. Yet year after year, despite frustrations and stiff challenges, they go through the drill because pets are an integral part of their families.

For more than 30 years, the Foreign Service Institute's Overseas Briefing Center has worked with thousands of FS pet owners, Department of State offices, overseas posts and outside experts to fit the pieces of the pet shipping puzzle together.

Getting Ready for Post

As you sort out your bid list, find out early what the pet entry requirements are. Depending on the animal and the country, the process can take anywhere from a month to six months. Once you receive your assignment, let post management know you will be bringing a pet. This is also a good time to reconfirm pet entry requirements with the post's general services office.

Shipping Your Pet

Your first stop should be the Overseas Briefing Center, where a variety of helpful documents are available. OBC's popular

"Shipping of Pets Checklist" provides pet owners with a brief overview of the myriad items they will need to consider: certifications, inoculations, pertinent U.S. Transportation Security Administration regulations, microchip requirements, basic methods of airline shipping, specific American-carrier pet shipping policies, professional pet shipper links, an explanation of possible partial reimbursements and more.

In addition, OBC's pet section on the department's OpenNet (fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc) offers crucial information, including a chart listing each country's pet restrictions or quarantines and other post-specific information.

Count on OBC

OBC updates and verifies its pet information by working with State's Office of Transportation and Allowances and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Annapolis, Md. It also maintains contacts with pet shipping agents and airlines to stay abreast of developments.

Pet Owners Class

Each year, the FSI Transition Center sponsors its popular Traveling with Pets seminar in mid-April. The class features five subject-matter experts who address the crucial aspects of pet shipping and pet health considerations. Videos of the seminar are available for loan at the OBC. For more information on the course, please visit www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc.

The Annual Pet Cable

The cable is drafted by the Office of Transportation and goes to all posts in early spring. It includes general pet-related information.

Game Changes

As of March, FS pet owners faced an additional hurdle. After United Airlines' merger with Continental Airlines, United

no longer accepts pets as accompanied baggage (pets small enough to meet United's in-cabin requirements are still accepted). United's new PetSafe® policy requires pet owners to ship their pets as cargo, a more expensive and complicated procedure.

To make the situation more difficult, the TSA now requires that all pets entering the U.S. as cargo be shipped by a professional pet agent. Reports from some posts already indicate that these fees add considerably to the cost.

Following concerns expressed by U.S. military pet owners, United agreed to provide military personnel embarking on a permanent change of station a waiver to the new rules. Pet owners — whose pet and kennel have a combined weight of 99.9 lbs or less — now have the option to check their animal as accompanied baggage to any destination for a set fee of \$250.

After sending a letter to United's top management, AFSA President Susan Johnson coordinated a 48-hour FS pet owners e-mail blitz that resulted in more than 3,000 messages to the airline requesting waiver parity with the military.

AFSA's campaign was ratcheted up a few notches when offices and organizations inside and outside the department joined the cause. These included the Under Secretary for Management, the Bureau of Administration, the Transition Center, the Foreign Affairs Friends of Animals Network and the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide.

In Conclusion

Despite the many challenges, we are confident that Foreign Service pet owners will continue to do all they can to keep their cherished companions with them wherever they go in the world. It is never an easy task, but using OBC's resources early on will help to answer your many questions. For more information, please e-mail FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov. □

Maureen Johnston is a resource specialist in the Overseas Briefing Center, a division of the Transition Center at FSI, and an expert on shipping pets, as well as logistics for an overseas move and returning to the Washington, D.C., area.

ADDITIONAL PET RESOURCES

Transition Center Internet:
www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc

Transition Center Intranet:
fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/obc

FS Pets Yahoo Group:

FSPets@yahoo.com

Foreign Affairs Friends of Animals
Network (FAFAN):

www.fafan.net

Office of Transportation:

almpsttm.a.state.gov/default.asp

AFSA Web site: www.afsa.org/pets

Dissent in the Time of Hysteria

BY DONNA AYERST, AFSA NEWS EDITOR

In 1954, Foreign Service officer John Paton Davies Jr. was fired by the Department of State for dissent.

Patricia “Tiki” Davies (one of John and Patricia Davies’ seven children) and Todd S. Purdum, national editor of *Vanity Fair*, came to AFSA headquarters on March 19 to share *China Hand, An Autobiography*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

Davies was born in China in 1908 to American Baptist missionaries, and graduated from Columbia University in 1931. Shortly thereafter, he took the FS exam and joined the Service in 1932. His first probationary duty was at the American consulate in Windsor, Ontario, earning “a princely stipend of \$2,500 a year,” Davies recounted.

The audience listened in rapt attention, often breaking into laughter, from *China Hand* as Purdum and Tiki took turns reading or relating moments in Davies’ life and career. They painted a vivid picture of a man who held strong beliefs, made “uncannily prescient judgments” and had a grand sense of humor.

His Foreign Service assignments took the family to India, Russia and China, among other posts. Davies’ career crossed paths with a host of famous and important



Todd Purdum, national editor of *Vanity Fair*, reads a passage from *China Hand* during AFSA’s Book Notes program on March 19.

players of the day. Similar to “Forrest Gump” or Woody Allen’s “Zelig,” he came to know (and they to know him) the likes of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Gandhi, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General George C. Marshall, Eric Sevareid, Wendell Willkie, Lord Mountbatten and even Noel Coward and Frank Capra.

On Nov. 3, 1954, the department ordered Davies to return to Washington, D.C., from Lima, where he was serving as deputy chief of mission. Two days later, Davies met with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles who, after brief pleasantries, informed him that the department’s Loyalty Security Board had concluded that Davies was “not a communist or otherwise disloyal, but was lacking in judgment, discretion and reliability.” He was then separated from the Service.

Why was he fired? Before the end of World War II, Davies had predicted Mao Zedong’s communists would prevail over

U.S.-backed Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist government. He counseled the U.S. government that “the communists were there to stay.” To some, this made Davies out to be anti-Chiang Kai-shek and, therefore, pro-communist.

By the 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy, R-Wis., had whipped up a frenzy of domestic hysteria based on his belief that the communists would infiltrate U.S. institutions and take over the country. Without any substantiation, thousands of Americans were accused of being pro-communist sympathizers. U.S. government employees, educators, entertainers and union leaders were particularly targeted. Many lost their jobs, their careers or their homes; some were blacklisted, others imprisoned.

After his meeting with Dulles, Davies returned to Lima. Tiki recalled that their parents spoke little about what had happened to JPD, but they knew that he had lost his job and his pension. “He told us they offered to let him resign, but he preferred to be fired. We didn’t have much money, but we didn’t live in poverty. At school, we felt as though we had become expats in our expat world.”

After spending a year trying out new careers, Davies ultimately started a furniture factory, producing his own award-winning designs from local hardwoods. The family remained in Peru for 12 years.

In his forward to the book, Purdum states, “It was the great tragedy of Davies’ life — and the searing cautionary crux of this book — that in the most parlous of those times, John Paton Davies’ country was deprived of his services.”

In 1969, Davies finally succeeded in getting his security clearance and pension restored. He was never reinstated in the Foreign Service, however.

At the end of their presentation, Tiki Davies stamped JPD’s seal on copies of *China Hand* for those who purchased the book. □



Patricia “Tiki” Davies (center) signs her father’s book, *China Hand*, for members of the audience. Davies played a pivotal role in getting the book published.

FSJ Editor Speaks at Texas Tech University

BY DONNA AYERST, AFSA NEWS EDITOR

Steven Alan Honley, editor-in-chief of the *Foreign Service Journal* since 2001, traveled to Lubbock on March 21 to deliver this year's William S. Morris III Lecture at Texas Tech University's School of Mass Communications. To mark the ninth anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom, which came just two days before his appearance, Honley addressed the topic, "Was the War in Iraq Worth Fighting?"

After a gracious introduction by retired Ambassador Tibor Nagy, TTU's vice provost of international affairs, Honley used his presentation to extol the courage, dedication and expertise of Foreign Service personnel in Iraq. He reminded the audience that analysts in State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, virtually alone in the U.S. government, had warned well before the war that Bush administration claims about Saddam Hussein's alleged ties to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction had little basis in reality.

He also cited State's 2002 "Future of Iraq Project," which drew on a wide range of expertise to predict most of the problems the United States would encounter after ousting Saddam.

Still, Honley emphasized, as soon as the regime fell, Foreign Service members immediately volunteered to serve alongside military per-

sonnel under dangerous, difficult conditions. Many suffered post-traumatic stress disorder or other serious injuries during their service there.

He concluded his remarks by observing that even though U.S. troops are now gone from Iraq, Embassy Baghdad is still the largest American diplomatic mission anywhere in the world — a distinction it is likely to retain for years as it works to support a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq that offers a voice of moderation and democracy in the Middle East.

Honley then answered numerous questions from an audience made up of faculty, staff and students from the university's College of Mass Communications and Department of International Affairs, local journalists and members of the Lubbock community, including two city council members and a judge.

Later that afternoon, Honley served on a panel moderated by Amb. Nagy on "The Arab Spring: One Year Later." That event was part of the Sigma Delta Pi Honor Society's Fourth Annual Forum on Peace and Security. As at the luncheon, Honley fielded several questions from TTU students and other audience members following his remarks. □

GLIFAA Celebrates 20th Anniversary

BY CLINT LOHSE, AFSA LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

On March 11, Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies celebrated its 20th anniversary by hosting a brunch. The event featured GLIFAA's founders, David Buss and David Larson, who established the organization over a similar brunch in March 1992. At that time, gay and lesbian Foreign Service officers could be subject to criminal investigations, as the potential for blackmail of homo-

sexuals was considered a security threat to the United States.

Buss and Larson shared with the crowd, many of whom were founding members, their own experiences of enduring investigations, but they also had much to report in the way of the many advances that have been made since then.

The event was an opportunity to celebrate the group's successes over the past two decades, but GLIFAA President T.J. Lunardi and Ken Kero-Mentz, GLIFAA's outreach director and a member of AFSA's Governing Board, noted that there is still important work to be done.

"We remember the incredible progress that we have made in these past two decades. We remember that there are still challenges, and that we are not yet truly equal," reflected Lunardi. "And as we continue the struggle, we remember the

most important lesson GLIFAA's history offers: a small, determined group of people willing to sacrifice can truly change the world."

AFSA has been a supporter of GLIFAA since its inception. The association provided legal support to AFSA members who were under State Department investigation as a result of their sexual orientation and helped the group connect with other advocates working to end discrimination against gays and lesbians. AFSA continues to advocate for equal benefits and equal opportunities in the workplace for gay and lesbian FS employees and fully supports GLIFAA's work to end discrimination.

"I deeply admire the courage of GLIFAA's founders as they stepped forward in those early days to challenge the department's discriminatory policies, insensitivity and unfair treatment," says Ian Houston, AFSA's executive director. "The fact is some of our gay and lesbian employees are among America's most talented and patriotic public servants. We are proud of our association with GLIFAA and privileged to represent and serve its members." □



(Left to right) GLIFAA members Bryan W. Dalton, president from 1998 to 2000; David Larson; David Buss, first president, 1992 to 1994; and Jene Thomas celebrate GLIFAA's 20th anniversary brunch on March 11. All four attended the group's founding brunch on March 8, 1992.

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

TRANSITION CENTER SCHEDULE OF COURSES May/June/July

| | | |
|---------------|-------|--|
| May 2 | RV105 | Mid-Career Retirement Planning Seminar |
| May 3 | MQ704 | Targeting the Job Market |
| May 5 | MQ116 | Protocol |
| May 9 | MQ118 | Special Needs Education |
| May 16 | MQ854 | Legal Considerations in FS |
| May 19 | MQ200 | Going Overseas: Singles/Couples w/o kids |
| May 19 | MQ210 | Going Overseas for Families |
| May 19 | MQ220 | Going Overseas: Logistics For Adults |
| May 19 | MQ230 | Going Overseas Logistics for Kids |
| May 23 | MQ852 | Personal Finances & Investments in FS |
| May 30 | MQ801 | Maintaining Long-Distance Relationships |
| May 31-June 1 | MQ104 | Regulations, Allowances & Finances |
| June 6 | MQ000 | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender |
| June 7 | MQ115 | Explaining America |
| June 9 | MQ116 | Protocol |
| June 13-14 | RV105 | Mid-Career Retirement Planning Seminar |

| | | |
|---------|-------|---------------------------------|
| June 16 | MQ802 | Communicating Across Cultures |
| June 18 | MQ250 | Young Diplomats Day |
| June 19 | MQ914 | Youth Security Overseas Seminar |
| June 25 | MQ250 | Young Diplomats Day |
| June 26 | MQ914 | Youth Security Overseas Seminar |

| | | |
|----------------|-------|--|
| July 9 | MQ250 | Young Diplomats Day |
| July 10 | MQ914 | Youth Security Overseas Seminar |
| July 2 | MQ703 | Post Options for Employment & Training |
| July 16 | MQ250 | Young Diplomats Day |
| July 17 | MQ914 | Youth Security Overseas Seminar |
| July 20 | MQ801 | Realities of Foreign Service Life |
| July 21 | MQ116 | Protocol |
| July 23 | MQ250 | Young Diplomats Day |
| July 24 | MQ914 | Youth Security Overseas Seminar |
| July 30-Aug. 2 | RV101 | Retirement Planning Seminar |

To register or for further information, please e-mail the FSJ Transition Center at FSITCTraining@state.gov.

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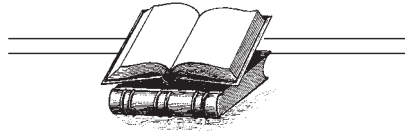
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BOOKS

War and Peace

Seeking Peace in El Salvador: The Struggle to Reconstruct a Nation at the End of the Cold War

Diana Villiers Negroponte,
Palgrave Macmillan, 2012,
\$90, hardcover, 258 pages.

REVIEWED BY TED WILKINSON

Though it passed almost without notice, Jan. 16 marked the 20th anniversary of the entrance into force of the three agreements that ended El Salvador's civil war, a conflict that lasted a decade and cost 75,000 lives.

How fast that bloody decade has faded into the distant past! During the administration of Ronald Reagan, Washington's firm support for the Salvadoran armed forces stemmed from concern that Central America might follow Cuba into the Soviet orbit, sending hordes of "feet people" refugees swarming across our borders.

But as truth commissions in El Salvador and Guatemala later made clear, the greatest threat to American values in the region didn't come from the left, but from the ruthless tactics of the armed forces in suppressing any perceived disloyalty.

As Diana Negroponte, spouse of retired Ambassador John Negroponte, observes in this book, there has been a

*Romero's courage
won him the
admiration of
his colleagues.*

dramatic "threat inversion" in El Salvador over the past 20 years. Whereas in the 1980s "the challenge to citizen safety came from a powerful state, now the challenge comes from non-state actors" — transnational crime organizations and maras (gangs).

Seeking Peace in El Salvador spotlights the period from the late 1980s through 1991, during which events aligned to move the country toward peace broke the stalemate in the civil war. Foremost among the external factors were Mikhail Gorbachev's announcement at the United Nations that the USSR would no longer support wars of national liberation, and the pragmatic attitudes of Secretary of State James A. Baker and Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Bernard W. Aronson.

Internally, both sides in the war had been weakened: the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN in Spanish), by the failure of its November 1989 "final offensive;" and the Salvadoran armed forces, by public and international horror at the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Brigade's murder of a

would-be mediator, the rector of the Jesuit University, along with five of his fellow professors and two witnesses.

These events provided a window for a formal United Nations mediation effort headed by two Peruvians: Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and Alvaro de Soto, his personal representative to resolve the dispute. Negotiations under de Soto's aegis began in early 1990, alternating among sites outside El Salvador.

The Salvadoran government eventually signed on to a broad range of changes: amendment of the constitution; creation of a U.N. truth commission and an internal ad hoc commission to vet the armed forces for human rights violators; formation of a parliamentary commission to draft enabling legislation; a ceasefire and demobilization of forces on both sides; an obligation to reform the security institutions of the state; and reintegration of the FMLN into civilian life.

After the ad hoc commission concluded that most of the top commanders in the armed forces were implicated in human rights violations, U.S. chargé d'affaires Peter Romero had the temerity to tell the assembled commanders that the peace agreements obliged them to retire. When this was reported back to Washington, as Negroponte relates, Romero's courage won him the admiration of his State Department colleagues. But

eventually, because of the enmity of Senator Jesse Helms, R-N.C., it also cost him confirmation as assistant secretary for Inter-American affairs.

From visits to El Salvador in recent years, Negroponte concludes that, despite spotty initial implementation and rising transnational crime in much of the region, the peace agreements have transformed the country. The culture and spirit of democracy may still be weak, she observes, but “the authoritarian tendencies of the past have not reappeared, and a remarkable lack of bitterness allows former enemies to engage in political dialogue.”

The once-feared Salvadoran army, now trimmed by two-thirds, is sought after for disaster assistance and law enforcement functions. And, remarkably, an FMLN presidential candidate, Mauricio Funes, won election in 2009 and still serves today.

Negroponte’s study of the peace process and its aftermath is exhaustively footnoted and may well become the authoritative English-language study on the subject. Initially prepared as her doctoral thesis at Georgetown University and then substantially expanded, her account draws on unique primary sources: interviews with virtually all of the principal participants in the negotiations, as well as a range of supporting actors. She also makes extensive use of State Department archives throughout.

To her other accomplishments as a lawyer, professor and mother of five adopted children, Diana Negroponte can now add this thoroughly researched yet readable history.

Ted Wilkinson, an FSO from 1961 to 1996, chaired the FSJ Editorial Board from 2005 to 2011.

Man of Mystery

The Ideal Man: The Tragedy of Jim Thompson and the American Way of War

Joshua Kurlantzick, John Wiley & Sons, 2011, \$25.95, hardcover, 264 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOSH GLAZEROFF

Many of us have stopped in Bangkok on one of our trips across Asia, even if we’ve never served there. Of all of those who have seen the place, how many have bought Jim Thompson ties? Hands up, now — looks like most of us.

So who was Thompson? In a nutshell, a famous spy turned tremendously successful businessman, who disappeared and left a legend behind (as well as a beautiful home filled with Thai treasures).

In this book, Joshua Kurlantzick takes a hard look at his background and what he became to extract deeper lessons about our country and its Asian adventures, including the cost of fighting a war that “must be won” but is lost from the start.

A socialite and dilettante from a wealthy Delaware family, Thompson tried a variety of pursuits before Bill Donovan, director of the Office of Strategic Services (precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency), recruited him during World War II. He quickly became a star operative, who enjoyed great success in North Africa and Europe before moving on to Thailand in 1945.

There he was an essential contact for Indochinese freedom fighters using Bangkok as an outpost. Whether from Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam, they all saw him as a link to

the rising American power in the region. And Thompson saw them as the region’s future, reasoning that the United States was bound to support those working for self-government against colonial rule. Why not get on the side of these popular fighters, even if they were communists?

Such views were neither prudent nor popular as the Cold War began to intensify, of course. Instead of heeding Thompson’s advice, Washington followed the French into Vietnam — and we all know how that story turned out.

As Kurlantzick observes, “Thompson had fought to rid the world of imperialism [but] actually midwived a new era of American imperialism.”

Disillusioned and marginalized, Thompson left government service in 1946 to build contacts with local weavers. From small beginnings, he turned Thai silk into a world-famous fashion accessory, launching an entire industry. A fixture on the Bangkok social scene, he came to know Thailand as well as any expatriate can.

But the country was rapidly changing, as an escalating American presence brought money and modernity to the country. Coups and countercoups left Thompson without friends in high places, and after so many years away from home, he grew tired and lonely. On a holiday trip to the hills in Malaysia, Thompson went for a walk after attending Easter services on March 26, 1967, then vanished.

Despite massive searches, no one ever found a trace of him — not even a telepath. Was he still a U.S. agent? Was the Thai government after him? Were business rivals eager to eliminate him? Nearly half a century later, in-depth research and CIA archives both still leave questions unanswered.

A dedicated government profes-

Thompson's career raises questions about the fate of those who see things a different way, and aren't afraid to speak up.

sional with on-the-ground experience that can't be beat argues against picking the wrong side in a conflict (and demonizing the future winners).

What if Washington had heeded that counsel? As Kurlantzick notes, Vietnam and America “have developed close ties, based partly on a shared fear of a rising China — exactly the kind of shared interests ... that Thompson and other early OSS operatives had in mind.”

And what does that episode say about our other “foreign entanglements”? Or the importance of weighing the advice of all those who see things a different way — and aren't afraid to speak up about it?

These are all matters well worth pondering, even if you never purchase a Jim Thompson tie. ■

Josh Glazeroff, an FSO since 1997, is consul general in New Delhi.

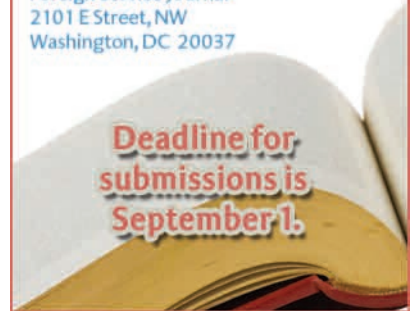
Calling All Foreign Service Authors!

The November 2012 issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* will include a list of recently published books written by Foreign Service-affiliated authors.

FS authors whose books have been published in 2011 or 2012, and have not been featured in the roundup, are invited to send a copy of the book, along with a press release or backgrounder on the book and author to:

Susan Maitra
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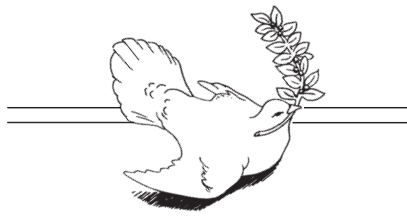
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IN MEMORY

Helga W. Bligh, 75, the wife of retired Senior Foreign Service officer John W. (Jack) Bligh Jr., died on March 25 in Manlius, N.Y.

Born Helga Margarete Wollesen in 1937 in Revensdorf, Germany, Mrs. Bligh was a graduate gymnastics teacher and taught in Bad Hermansborn before emigrating to the United States in early adulthood. She worked for a year as an au pair in Philadelphia before traveling to California, and then returned to live and work for another year in New York City.

After returning to Europe, she tutored children in Paris and Madrid before working as chief administrative assistant for a major trade association in Duesseldorf, where she met her future husband. The couple married in 1979.

Accompanying her husband on his Foreign Service assignments in Spain, Canada, Germany and Australia, Mrs. Bligh worked for U.S. embassies and consulates in Barcelona, Madrid, Ottawa and Bonn. She received the State Department's Meritorious Honor Award in 1990 for her success in obtaining visas for the travel of American diplomatic and military personnel to sensitive regions of the world, especially during the Persian Gulf War.

In 1994, Mrs. Bligh received recognition for distinguished service from

the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Special Investigations for her contributions to the pursuit of war criminals.

Following Mr. Bligh's retirement from the Foreign Service, the couple resided for three years in Germany, then moved to the U.S. for family reasons in 1999. Helga spoke French, Spanish and Russian, in addition to English and her native German, and she traveled widely throughout the United States and the world.

In addition to her husband, who resides in Manlius, Mrs. Bligh is survived by the children she loved as her own: Col. Edward W. (Christine) Bligh, USMC, of Stuttgart, Germany; Col. David J. (Mechelle) Bligh, USMC, of Chesapeake, Va.; and Juliana Bligh, of Saginaw, Mich.; and their children: William, Robert J., Chelsea, Sydnie, Zachary, Robert W. and Ryan.



Richard Wood Boehm, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on Nov. 8, 2011, in Bethesda, Md., of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Mr. Boehm was born on June 25, 1926, in Queens, N.Y., to Kathryn and Charles Boehm. He was valedictorian of the class of 1943 at Jamaica High School. He then served in the Third

Armored Tank division of the U.S. Army during World War II and was in Germany on V-E Day.

After the war, Mr. Boehm attended Adelphi College on the GI Bill and earned a bachelor's degree in English. There he met Patricia Ann Lynch of Rockville Center, N.Y., whom he married in 1949.

In 1955 Mr. Boehm started his career as a Foreign Service officer with an assignment at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. His first overseas tour was as vice consul in what was then the U.S. protectorate of Okinawa. He then served at the U.S. Mission in West Berlin during the Berlin Wall crisis.

In Luxembourg, Mr. Boehm was deputy chief of mission to Ambassador Patricia Roberts Harris, who was later Secretary of Housing and Urban Development during the Carter administration. Mr. Boehm went on to serve two tours in Ankara, as political counselor from 1971 to 1974 and, later, as DCM. He also served as political-military counselor in Bangkok and as DCM in Kathmandu.

Mr. Boehm served as ambassador to Cyprus from 1984 through 1987, and as ambassador to Oman during the Persian Gulf War. On retiring from the Foreign Service in 1992, Amb. Boehm received the State Depart-

IN MEMORY



ment's Wilbur Carr Award, the highest honor accorded retiring ambassadors.

In retirement, Ambassador Boehm was a voracious reader and loved to travel for interest and enjoyment. He had friends all over the world and enjoyed vacationing each summer with friends and family at the beach in Delaware or North Carolina. He was a skilled raconteur who could enthrall his listeners with anecdotes that ran the gamut from his boyhood in Queens to dining with presidents and kings in exotic lands.

Over the course of his distinguished career, Amb. Boehm served with flair and wisdom. Fluent in French and German, he had an insatiable thirst for knowledge and loved the arts and nature. He was highly regarded by his peers as a man of broad education and sharp wit who was always cool under pressure. As friends and family members recall, Amb. Boehm found his career exciting and deeply fulfilling on both a personal and professional level.

Survivors include his daughter, Karen Boehm, of Waterford, Conn.; his son, Stephen Boehm of Bethesda, Md.; and his granddaughter, Christina Boehm of Arlington, Va. His wife, Patricia, passed away in 1971. He was also predeceased by his sister Betty Shave of Amityville, N.Y.; another sister, Marion Wolf of Port Huron, Mich.; and a granddaughter, Veronica Boehm of Brooklyn, N.Y.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 12, at the DACOR Bacon House, 1801 F Street NW, Washington, D.C.



Mary Elisabeth von Briesen, 68, a retired Foreign Service officer, died of a stroke on Jan. 8 in Arlington, Va.

Ms. von Briesen was born in Milwaukee, Wis., where her family hosted many international visitors, and she and her siblings developed a keen interest in the world about them. She spent a high school semester as an American Field Service exchange student in Austria. While studying history at Wellesley College, an internship in the office of Senator William Proxmire, D-Wisc., established her love of Washington, D.C., her "second home."

Realizing a longtime ambition, Ms. von Briesen joined the Peace Corps, serving with one of the early groups and as one of the first female Peace Corps Volunteers posted in Nepal. She traversed the country, typically on foot and toting a backpack, promoting women's education and recruiting female students around the country to attend the Women's Training Institute in Kathmandu. There they studied home economics, health and hygiene.

Returning to the U.S., she completed graduate work at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and entered the Foreign Service in 1968.

Ms. von Briesen began her 28-year career with the State Department as an Afrikaans-speaking consular officer in Pretoria. Subsequent assignments took her to Taipei; Beijing; Taipei again; Stuttgart, where she directed the consular office; and Washington, D.C., where she headed the Office of Asylum Affairs.

She especially enjoyed two assignments with the Department of Defense: a year at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa., and a tour as diplomat-in-residence at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama.

After retirement from the Foreign Service in 1996, second careers with Borders Books and Washington Guide Services suited her passion for books,

her love of Washington, D.C., and her experience of teaching and sharing across cultures.

Because she was fluent in Mandarin Chinese and German, Ms. von Briesen was frequently called on to lead tourists from China, Taiwan and Germany to Washington's attractions, historic monuments and neighborhoods. Chinatown was a favored stop for lunch on such excursions.

An enthusiastic reader and raconteur, Ms. von Briesen was also a collector, specializing in folk art and handmade treasures. She loved camping, maple sugar, the Green Bay Packers and her dogs and cats.

Following her passing, a celebration of Mary von Briesen's life was held at DACOR Bacon House with family, devoted friends and diplomatic colleagues. A memorial service is planned for June 23 in Milwaukee, Wis.

Donations in her memory may be made to American Field Service International Scholarships, the World Wildlife Federation, the American Cancer Society or a service organization of one's choice.



Peter Malcolm Cody, 86, a retired USAID Foreign Service officer, died on March 2 at Sibley Hospital in Washington, D.C., from complications following a cardiac arrest.

Mr. Cody was born on July 30, 1925, in Paris. His parents were part of the American community there, known as "The Lost Generation." His father, Morrill Cody, was a journalist and novelist, who later worked for United States Information Services in the 1940s. His mother, nee Frances Ryan, was a novelist and actress.

Two years after Mr. Cody was

IN MEMORY



born, he and his mother moved from Paris, settling in Los Angeles, Calif. He attended Hollywood High School, graduating in 1941, and during that time worked as an office assistant for several of the major studios. Favorite jobs included parking Olivia de Havilland's car and walking Gene Tierney's dog.

Peter Cody served on active duty in the U.S. Naval Reserve from July 1944 to March 1946, including a year on the USS *Diphda*, and was promoted to lieutenant. After graduating from submarine school in New London, Conn., he served from 1951 to 1956 on five subs.

Mr. Cody received a B.A. in 1947 and an M.A. in 1948, both from Yale University, where he also worked to-

ward his Ph.D., and was an instructor in economics. After graduation, he worked for the Federal Reserve Board from 1950 to 1954, when he began his Foreign Service career with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Mr. Cody's first assignment was as a program officer in Mexico City, where he met his wife, Rosa Maria Cody, nee Alatorre. He was next posted to El Salvador (1957-1959), and then returned to Washington, D.C., to the State Department's Laos Affairs Office.

In 1961 Mr. Cody was assigned to Cambodia, where he was promoted to deputy mission director. In 1964, at the request of the Cambodian government, the entire program was terminated. Mr. Cody became acting director, negotiating and supervising the closing of the mission. In 1964 he returned to State as director of the Office of Vietnam Affairs, and then served as deputy director of the USAID Mission in Laos.

During his tour as mission director in Paraguay (1967-1971), Mr. Cody learned Guarani and often delivered speeches in the indigenous language. He next served as mission director in Ecuador (1971-1975), the Philippines (1976-1979) and Lebanon (1979-1980).

In 1981, at the end of his long career, Peter Cody received the Agency for International Development's Meritorious Service Award. He was known for traveling far and wide to learn firsthand about a country's conditions and to meet the population and staff members working in the field. He learned to speak the languages of every country to which he was posted, and thrived in the often-volatile environments in which he worked.

Following retirement, Mr. Cody

worked as a consultant for the Pan-American Development Foundation in Central America; the AFL-CIO in El Salvador, Egypt, and Guatemala; Price Waterhouse in Kenya; the United Nations in several Pacific islands; and USAID in the Sudan, Zaire, Haiti, Mauritania and Liberia.

Mr. Cody was a member of the Cosmos Club, Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired, the American Foreign Service Association, the Mountainside Villas Owners Association, and the Yale Clubs of New York and Washington, D.C.

A great outdoorsman and adventurer, Mr. Cody reached the summits of Cotopaxi, Huayna Pichu, Pichincha and Mount Kenya, and hiked in many other mountains in the Alps and Himalayas. He was proudest of his ascent of Cotopaxi, peaking at 19,347 feet.

He canoed down numerous rivers, including the Amazon, played tennis every day and skied until he was 83. He enjoyed scuba diving, kayaking, white water rafting, and water skiing (which he did a number of times in a piranha-infested river). Other hobbies were astronomy and shell collecting.

Although he traveled extensively for USAID, Mr. Cody also traveled widely on his own, and had visited every continent and all but a handful of countries. One of his favorite places, however, was in the Adirondacks, where his family had vacationed since his grandparents bought a home there in the early 1900s.

In his 80s, he interviewed Yale candidates and was also working on the dissertation to finish his Ph.D. and an autobiography.

Mr. Cody is survived by his wife of 55 years, Rosa Maria Cody, of Washington, D.C., who traveled and shared many of his adventures with him; two



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IN MEMORY



sons from his first marriage, Michael Cody of Valencia, Spain and Ryan Cody of Kirkland, Wash.; two daughters, Cornelia Cody of New York City and Cecilia Cody of Silver Spring, Md.; eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. A son, Peter Cody, died in 1976.



Elizabeth “Betty” Garrison, 80, wife of retired FSO Mark Garrison, died on Feb. 6 at home in Cranston, R.I., after living for many years with ovarian cancer.

Mrs. Garrison met Mark, her future husband of 62 years, in high school in Kokomo, Ind. When he entered the Foreign Service in 1955, she embraced

being an unpaid member of the Foreign Service team, a tradition at that time. It was in her nature to support and encourage those around her, beginning with families at post. But she also happily performed the many other tasks expected of that generation of Foreign Service spouses.

In Hong Kong, Mrs. Garrison taught English in a Chinese school; in Moscow, she was board chair of the International School; and in Prague, she provided shelter and succor to American correspondents during the Soviet invasion that ended the “Prague Spring” and to embassy families when a fire in the chancery displaced them.

Raising four children in the 1950s and 1960s and nurturing the family as

it matured and increased was Mrs. Garrison’s favorite career, however. She schooled her children at home in Sofia, where there was no alternative. During her husband’s assignments in Washington, D.C., she worked as administrator for a psychiatric halfway house and executive secretary of the Falls Church planning board.

After Mr. Garrison retired from the Foreign Service in 1981, the couple founded a foreign policy research center (now part of the Watson Institute for International Studies) at Brown University. In retirement, they created a blueberry farm — a favorite summertime destination for many Rhode Islanders — and Mrs. Garrison indulged her love of books and gardening.



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IN MEMORY



Mrs. Garrison is survived by two daughters, Libby Behrens (and her husband, Bret) of Courtenay, British Columbia, and Sarah Garrison (and her partner, Jane Bedell) of Bronx, N.Y.; two sons, Mark E. Garrison (and his wife, Marsha) of Ardmore, Pa., and Eric Garrison (and his wife, Becky) of Richmond, Va. The four families now include nine grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

Home and Hospice Care RI enabled Mrs. Garrison to spend her last weeks and days in her new home overlooking Narragansett Bay, with family around her. Contributions in her memory can go to that organization, at 1085 North Main Street, Providence RI 02904.

Mary Hamilton Lee Horsey, 96, widow of the late Outerbridge Horsey IV, an FSO and President Kennedy's ambassador to Czechoslovakia, died on Dec. 29.

A descendant of Thomas Sim Lee, an early governor of Maryland, Mrs. Horsey's father served with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in Cuba and held several diplomatic posts in Central America during the early 1900s.

Mrs. Horsey graduated from Manhattanville College in 1938 and also obtained a library science degree from Columbia University. During the war, she served as a librarian with the Office of Strategic Services. She married Outerbridge Horsey in 1946.

The couple served for many years

in Italy, as well as Japan and Czechoslovakia, before Ambassador Horsey retired from the Foreign Service in 1970. For some years they had an apartment in Rome, and traveled extensively. Amb. Horsey died in 1983.

After his death, Mrs. Horsey continued to travel, especially to visit her daughters, who are in or married to members of the Foreign Service. She included archeological digs in her activities and also did extensive volunteer work in Washington, D.C.

In 2000 she married William Wright, a former college beau who had served as an officer in World War II and was an engineer for Corning Glass. He died in 2007.

Mrs. Horsey is survived by her chil-

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IN MEMORY



dren Mary Lee Russell; Sarah Horsey-Barr, a retired Foreign Service officer; Anita Gannon; and her son, Outerbridge. She was buried in the family plot at Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Petersville, Md., a few miles from the farm on which she was raised.



Kevin Morgan, 49, a Foreign Service specialist with the Department of State and winner of AFSA's 2006 Tex Harris Award for Constructive Dissent, died on Dec. 3, 2011, after battling brain cancer.

The youngest of four children, Mr. Morgan was born at Fort Monroe, Va., on Jan. 16, 1962, and was raised in a military family in Hawaii and Northern Virginia. He established roots in Fairfax, graduating from Lake Braddock High School in 1980 and from George Mason University with a B.A. in accounting. As a young man, he enjoyed exploring the area, hunting and fishing with his father and backpacking with his brother.

Reserved by nature, Mr. Morgan nonetheless took an expansive approach to life. From back-country camping in the American West to sky-diving, he loved adventure. His love of travel led him to leave his early career as a certified public accountant with the National Science Foundation and join the Foreign Service in the 1990s.

After six years with USAID's Regional Inspector General's Office in Budapest, he transferred to the State Department and was posted to Zimbabwe, Yemen, Belarus and Poland.

In 2006, Ambassador William Harrop presented Mr. Morgan with the American Foreign Service Association's Tex Harris Award for "extraordi-

nary accomplishment involving initiative, integrity, intellectual courage and constructive dissent." Mr. Morgan had taken a brave stand to protect the rights of a local employee in Belarus.

Family, friends and colleagues universally remember Mr. Morgan as a genuinely good guy who will be sorely missed.

Mr. Morgan is survived by his wife, Tatiana, and their daughters, 8-year-old Valentina and the newborn Alexandra, whom he did not live to see; his parents, James and Mary Morgan of Annandale, Va.; two brothers, Sam Morgan of Shiloh, Ill., and James Morgan of Alexandria, Va.; a sister, Caroline Morgan of Annandale; and numerous nieces and nephews.



Susie J. Tucker, 71, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 31.

The Reverend Dr. Tucker was a member of the Foreign Service for 25 years. Her distinguished career included overseas assignments in Madrid, Manila, Riyadh, Dhahran, Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Kingston, Damascus, Athens, Taipei, Bangkok and Seoul.

After retiring from the Foreign Service, Dr. Tucker received her bachelor's degree in political science, her master's degree in divinity and her doctorate of ministry from Howard University in Washington, D.C. She enjoyed participating in religious workshops, Bible study, reading and writing.

Dr. Tucker is survived by her daughter, Nichole Walton (and son-in-law Timothy) of Stone Ridge, Va.; three grandchildren; five sisters and one brother; and many nieces and nephews. ■

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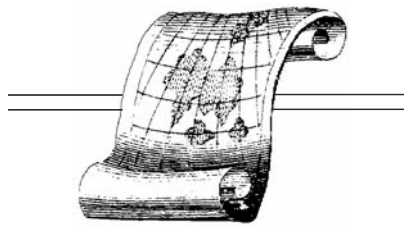


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REFLECTIONS

Skylab Descends

BY PETER WOLCOTT

It was a cool and damp Monday night in Melbourne when Skylab finally fell from orbit on July 12, 1979. I had just arrived there as the new branch public affairs officer, and local media representatives had gathered in the American Center to say farewell to my predecessor and meet me.

Though the evening began with a routine reception, it ended with an opportunity to witness, and report, an historic event.

NASA had launched Skylab in 1973 as an orbital space facility, similar to the current International Space Station. As late as 1978, NASA was still planning to send more astronauts there on the space shuttle. But that was not to be.

As an avid reader of the wireless file, I studied yards of paper with NASA's projections of Skylab's last orbits. Suddenly, I realized that its demise was likely to occur on Australian territory! So at the end of the reception, I invited the media to my office to witness Skylab's return to Earth.

I am not sure whether it was the offer of free drinks or the prospect of a scoop, but several print and broadcasting reporters accepted my invitation. Channel Seven even established a live link to its nearby television studios, taking advantage of my eighth-floor office's view.

Adding to the drama, Australia was in the midst of a massive telecommunications strike. The country was al-

Skylab was dipping low over the Indian Ocean and heading straight for Western Australia!



most cut off from the rest of the world because technicians refused to maintain the failing digital switching facilities. NASA had tracking stations in central Australia, but they lost contact with Houston. Embassy Canberra was cut off, as well.

Fortunately, the consulate depended on an ancient switching facility whose analog devices had been established to link Melbourne with Washington during World War II. And they still worked fine.

As the evening went on, the wireless file continued to produce dramatic descriptions of the satellite's steadily lowering orbit. It soon became evident that I was right: Skylab was dipping low over the Indian Ocean and heading straight for Western Australia!

The consulate was fortunate to have an Australian information officer, Ed Hind, who moonlighted as a late-night radio host. He had contacts all over the country and called his counterpart in Albany, an old whaling station that was now a resort and fishing town in southwest Western Australia. As re-

quested, the radio reporter stepped outside and watched the sky for a fiery, descending Skylab.

I got through to the USIA control center in Washington and told them that I had Ed on with Albany on a second phone on the other side of my office. They patched me through to the State Department, which, in turn, had NASA on the line.

At the same time, I had the Voice of America broadcasting live on my desk radio. The whole world was watching for Skylab when Ed shouted across the room: "Skylab is descending over Albany — the fiery entry is spectacular!" We relayed this to VOA, which quickly reported it to the world. They neglected to credit us, but we still took pride in our scoop.

When Skylab passed over Albany to descend into the Western Australian desert, Ed called the police station in Kalgoolie, a remote outback town, and persuaded a policeman to describe Skylab's final plunge onto Earth. Again, we were pleased to hear VOA pass on our report to the world.

As a bonus, local television stations broadcast the entire drama live. It was a truly exciting time for everyone gathered in my Consulate Melbourne office, and a privilege for me to have been part of this Space Age episode. ■

Peter Wolcott served as a FSO with the U.S. Information Agency for 22 years. He also represented USIA members on the AFSA Governing Board in the early 1970s.



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