

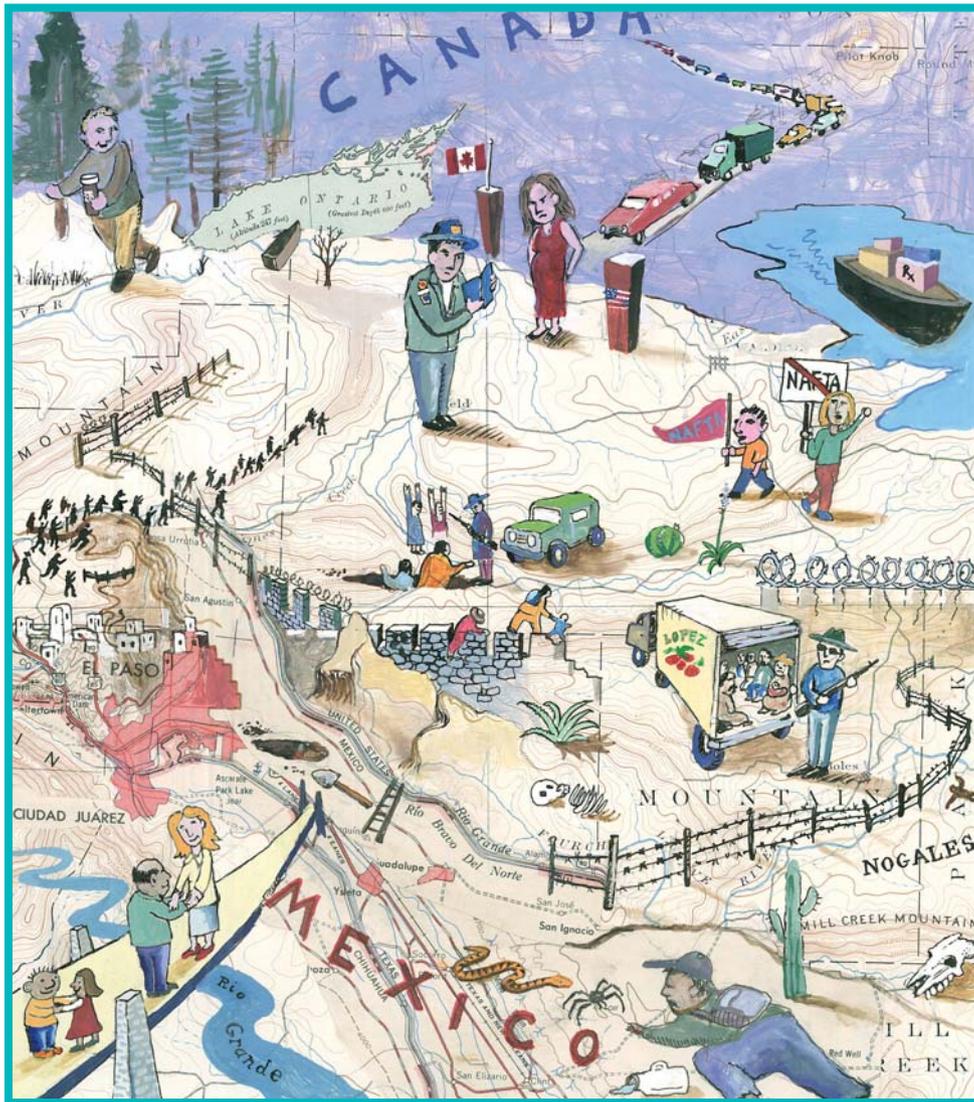
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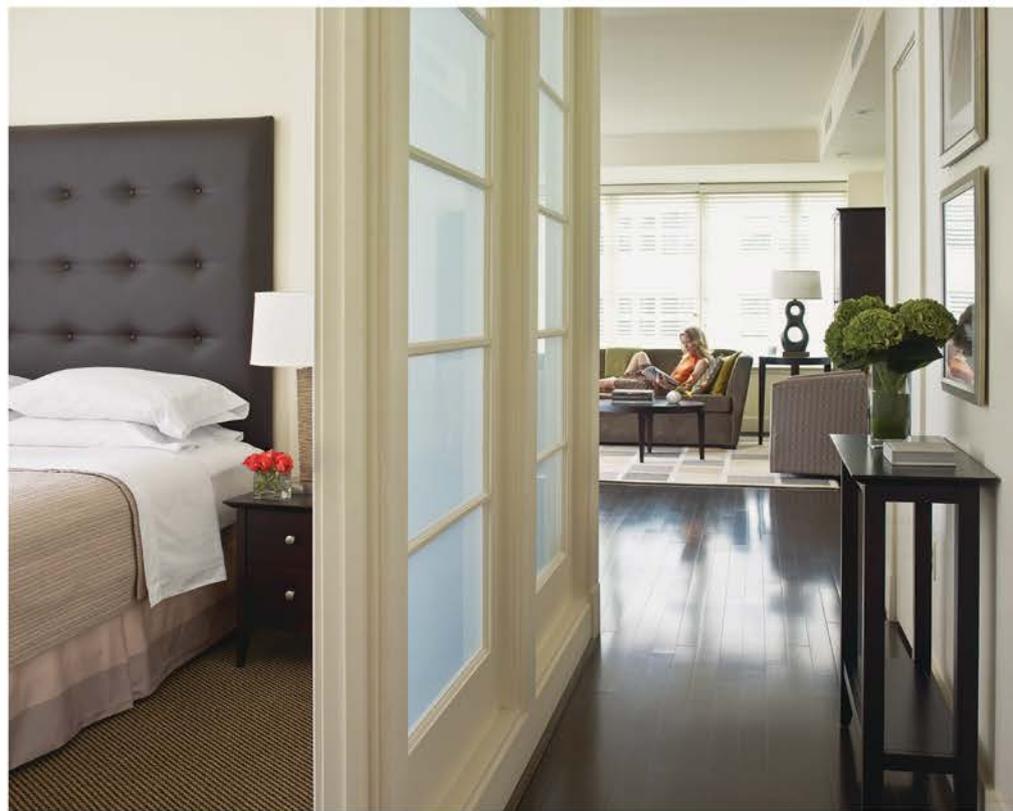
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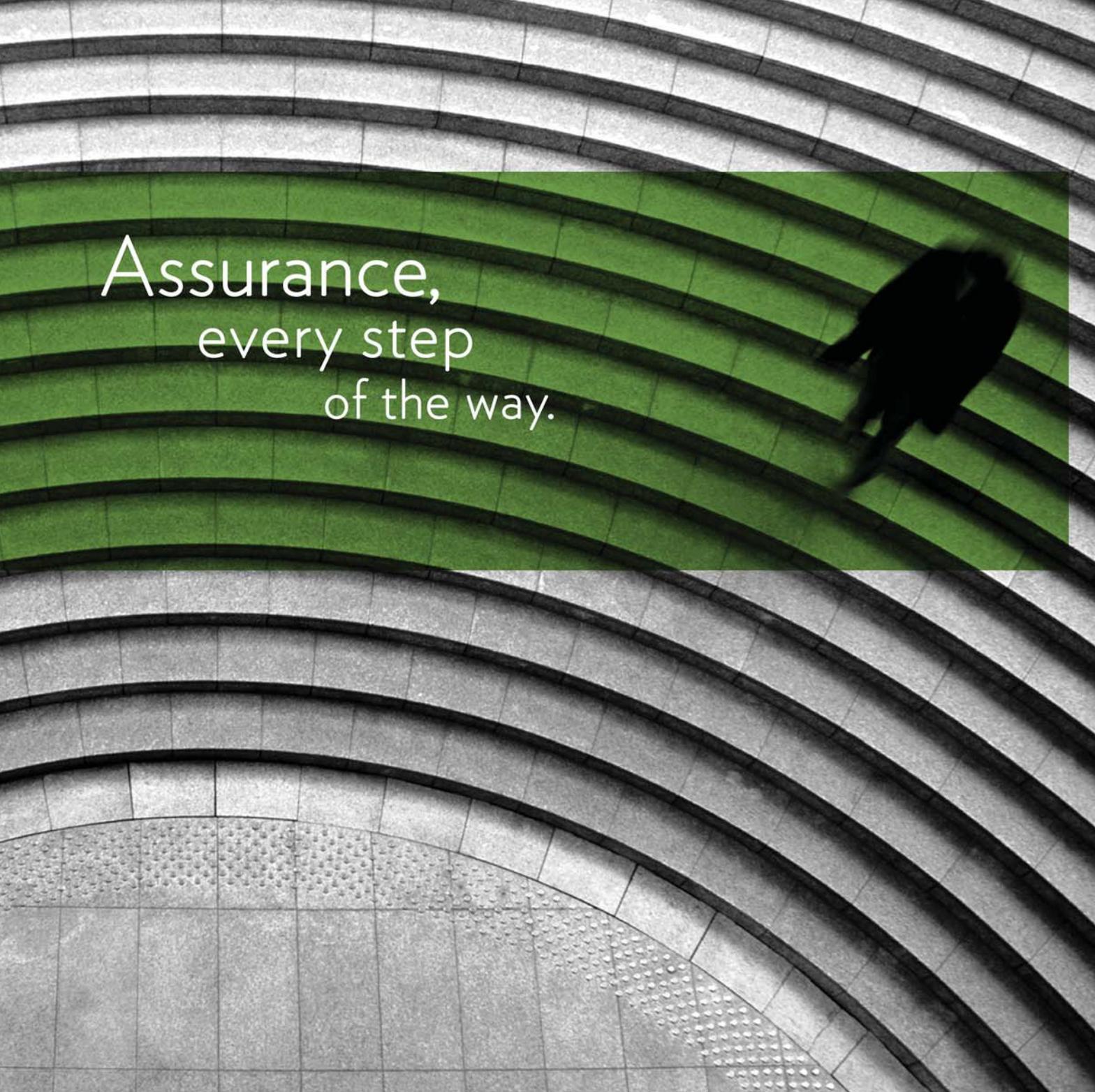
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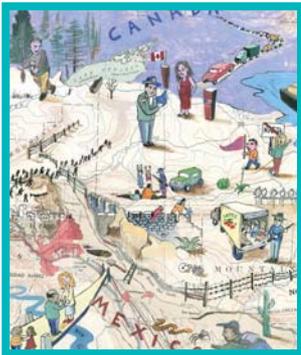
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Foreign Service Journal (ISSN 0146-3543), 2101 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 is published monthly with a combined July/August issue by the American Foreign Service Association, a private, non-profit organization. Material appearing herein represents the opinions of the writers and does not necessarily represent the views of the *Journal*, the Editorial Board or AFSA. Writer queries and submissions are invited, preferably by e-mail. *Journal* subscription: AFSA Members - \$13 included in annual dues; others - \$40. For foreign surface mail, add \$18 per year; foreign airmail, \$36 per year. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Foreign Service Journal*, 2101 E Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS). The *Journal* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photos or illustrations. Advertising inquiries are invited. The appearance of advertisements herein does not imply the endorsement of the services or goods offered. FAX: (202) 338-8244 or (202) 338-6820. E-MAIL: journal@afsa.org. WEB: www.afsa.org. TELEPHONE: (202) 338-4045. © American Foreign Service Association, 2007. Printed in the U.S.A. Send address changes to AFSA Membership, 2101 E Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990. Printed on 50-percent recycled paper, of which 10 percent is post-consumer waste.

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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

The Cinderella Service

BY JOHN K. NALAND

History never repeats itself exactly, but sometimes the story line is ominously familiar. Over the past decade, the State Department has come almost full circle. Between 1998 and early 2001, seven blue-ribbon panels detailed a hollowed-out State Department nearing a state of crisis due to underfunding and inadequate staffing. Armed with those reports, Secretary of State Colin Powell took charge and made extraordinary progress in convincing the White House and Congress to provide an infusion of resources to restore America's diplomatic readiness.



Unfortunately, the last three years have witnessed serious backsliding as new Foreign Service staffing demands in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere have far outpaced funds for personnel. Today, as in the late 1990s, there is a growing deficit between the State Department's mission and the resources available to carry out that mission. The same is true for the U.S. Agency for International Development, where hiring lags behind attrition and operating budgets are on a downward trend.

A task force report issued by the nonpartisan Foreign Affairs Council last June highlighted the fact that the State Department currently has over 200 unfilled Foreign Service positions. More importantly for the long-term success of U.S. diplomacy, the report

John K. Naland is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

found that State is 900 positions short of what it needs to create the "training float" needed to give Foreign Service members the knowledge, skills and abilities that are essential to foreign policy development and implementation. The report noted that budget requests in Fiscal Year 2006 and 2007 to narrow the staffing gap were not funded by Congress. While the State Department has requested 254 additional positions in its pending FY-08 budget submission, the prospects for full funding are in doubt.

AFSA is working hard to build and sustain a national consensus for strengthening the diplomatic element of national power.

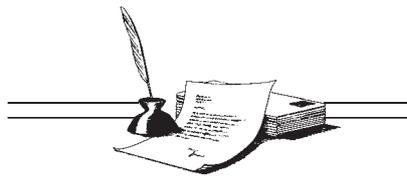
This poor outlook for funding for diplomacy stands in stark contrast to the situation at the Pentagon, which is proceeding to expand the armed forces' permanent rolls by 92,000 by 2011. Note that the 1,100 needed new Foreign Service positions amounts to just about 1 percent of the military expansion. That is barely a rounding error when compared to the additional resources being dedicated to the Department of Defense, which already has more musicians than the State Department has diplomats.

This imbalance between resources for the Pentagon and funding for diplomacy and foreign assistance is driving a growing militarization of policy, as highly trained and well-resourced members of the U.S. armed forces increasingly take on tasks once assigned to diplomats. That is not a criticism of America's can-do military, which is only stepping in to get the job done. However, if left unchecked, this trend could reduce America's options when responding to foreign challenges. As the saying goes, "If the only tool you have is a hammer, then every problem looks like a nail."

As was the case during the late 1990s, it falls to AFSA and like-minded organizations to make the case for expanded funding for the Foreign Service. Without begrudging the resources being given to our military "stepsisters," we must speak up for our Cinderella Service.

Toward that end, on p. 70 you will find an "AFSA Issue Brief" that makes the case for a robust training float. This would permit expanded Foreign Service education and training to meet the challenges of the 21st century facing U.S. diplomacy.

The goal of that essay, and of parallel efforts, is to build a consensus to prompt the executive branch and Congress to act decisively, as they did during the Powell years, to strengthen the diplomatic element of national power. You can expect to hear a lot more on this topic over the next few years, both within these pages and elsewhere. ■



LETTERS

PTSD and the FS

Well, Steve Kashkett was spot on again in his VP Voice column in the July/August *AFSA News*, "PTSD and the Foreign Service." Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a physical ramification of the personal and professional pressures Foreign Service employees experience daily, and not just in Iraq and Afghanistan.

How about the stress caused by terrorist attacks and car bombs in Syria and Saudi Arabia? And let us not forget the two embassies destroyed in Africa in 1998.

I was assigned to Embassy Tel Aviv from late 1999 through late 2002. During that period we experienced the intifada uprising by the Palestinian people and violent attacks from Hamas and Hezbollah against the government of Israel.

Suicide bombings were a weekly if not a daily occurrence for two years of my three-year assignment. Here are a few examples:

- I was walking home from dinner on the promenade 300 meters south of the embassy when a suicide bomber blew up a teen/young adult disco, killing 21.

- A suicide bomber targeted Mike's Hamburger Joint, immediately behind the embassy, killing well-known and well-liked employees and customers.

- Two blocks away from the embassy, on Ben Yehuda Street, a bus driver sat in his seat, apparently asleep. In reality, he was dead, killed when a suicide bomber blew up the bus, peeling its roof back like the

proverbial sardine can.

- At the Carmel Market, fruits and vegetables were splattered among the carnage after a suicide bomber blew it up, killing numerous people.

- The Park Hotel was destroyed during a passover seder when a suicide bomber struck, killing 27 people who were only celebrating their faith.

Throughout that period, those of us posted in Israel received no danger pay. No differential. No cost-of-living allowance. At the time, it was politically incorrect to say it was dangerous to live and work there. The attitude of the department and embassy seemed to be that because the suicide bombers' attacks were not directly aimed at Americans, there was no problem.

Instead we got restrictions from the regional security officer on: riding public transportation, grocery-shopping before or after Shabbat, grocery-shopping before or after any holiday, going to the mall, going to movie theaters and patronizing restaurants. We could not be out after 8 p.m., go to Israeli homes, hold a Marine Ball, or travel to Jerusalem (off-limits for almost seven months).

What else did I get out of these two years? Sleeplessness (my own); physical ramifications of stress (my own); anger (everyone in the embassy); depression (everyone in the embassy); irritability (everyone in the embassy); frustration (everyone in the embassy).

The only bright star in this morass of chaos was the strong shoulder and sympathetic ear of a British registered nurse (whose husband was with the

British Embassy). Jean Bowskill, wherever you are, "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Lee Ackermann

Information Programs

Officer

Embassy Damascus

Iraq Service Reward?

The State Department has a special obligation to Foreign Service members who have volunteered to serve at our most dangerous outposts in Iraq. Here is my reward for service in Iraq.

In October 2005, while serving as a provincial action officer in Basrah, I received a handshake on an onward assignment as a public diplomacy officer at USNATO Brussels. But, in January 2006, this and 27 other positions were eliminated as part of global repositioning.

I accepted the decision without question. After all, we needed everyone we could get to serve in Iraq. If sacrificing my onward assignment would help, I was not going to complain.

Still, finding another assignment outside of the regular bidding cycle was a challenge, especially for those of us in Iraq outside of Baghdad. The DC's commitment to ensure one of our top five choices for onward assignments came into effect in May 2006, so it did not apply to us. In any case, this commitment holds limited value when onward assignments can be eliminated at any stage of the process, including after paneling.

A list of new global repositioning



positions reached us in February 2006, and included two public diplomacy positions in Brussels identified as “on hold.” We were informed we could not bid on them. The two positions became the Media Hub Director (assigned to a Civil Service excursionist and contested by AFSA) and an FS-2 position at the hub that was filled in the summer of 2007.

One Brussels PD position was eliminated — the one for which I had a handshake — and one was created — the hub director. Yet my CDO told me there was no “one-for-one swap” between the two.

PD budgets and personnel are managed separately from the rest of State, and rank does not factor into overseas headcount costs. Would it have been possible to create the media hub position in Brussels without eliminating another PD position there?

The Civil Service employee previously held a position in the USNATO Information Office. Has any explanation been provided for why the hub needed to be in Belgium, a country with a Muslim population of about 400,000?

I recently learned that “my” USNATO position, eliminated in January 2006, was recreated and re-advertised only six months later. The USNATO deputy PAO position was eliminated instead.

This kind of smoke and mirrors brought benefits for a handful of personnel with good connections, leaving those of us serving in Iraq out in the cold.

For me, the true unfairness was that my sacrifice for the good of global repositioning was an illusion. My greatest reward from serving in Iraq has always been the service itself.

Rachel Schneller

FSO

Washington, D.C.

Nonproliferation Road Map

Most readers probably agree with Jim Goodby’s desire for a world eventually freed from the risks of nuclear terrorism if not annihilation, and he provides a valuable road map for at least part of the way there (*July-August Journal*). Christopher Ford argues effectively in the same issue that unilateral and multilateral efforts by the Bush administration have moved in the same direction, though he overlooks Goodby’s warning that short-term fixes of this sort can work against the long-term progress that most relevant NGOs also demand, as Mark Fitzpatrick notes in his article. It is obvious, however, as the two other articles on North Korea and Russia indicate, that regional politics are crucial in determining progress on this issue.

A key fly in the ointment of Goodby’s plea for a change in U.S. policy has to be Israel’s determination to keep a nuclear deterrent in a regional context where it can be outnumbered and conceivably overwhelmed by a potential combination of regional enemies. Israel’s security has become a bedrock of U.S. policy.

Objectively, Iran has no security interest in attacking Israel. The anti-Israel ravings of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are intended to overcome the historic Arab-Persian and Sunni-Shia divides and gain legitimacy and support from strong regional groups, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine. Thus, the maintenance of nonproliferation becomes one more hostage to the Arab-Israeli confrontation both in Palestine and more broadly. Only an eventual agreement, and years of proven security following it, are likely to persuade Israel to drop its ultimate deterrent.

The Libyan example might provide an opening for nonproliferation

in the Middle East. Like Libya, Iran is not directly involved in the territorial and other conflicts surrounding Israel. Several of Israel’s Arab (Sunni) neighbors have signed peace treaties with her, and none has actively contemplated obtaining nuclear arms as a reaction to Israel’s. This de facto equilibrium risks being upset if Iran continues to seek its own deterrent against threats it perceives as coming primarily from the U.S. A solution to the nonproliferation problem in that region, and more broadly, is therefore within U.S. reach, if Washington chooses to make it the priority it deserves to be.

It would be nice to see some indication that policymakers within the State Department, the NSC and elsewhere read (or at least are briefed on) such excellent *Foreign Service Journal* material more regularly. Perhaps the AFSA Governing Board can summarize and submit such pointed briefings to policymakers on a regular basis.

George B. Lambrakis

FSO, retired

London, England

Honoring Excellence

Recently, while exiting the Main State cafeteria (on the escalator side), I noticed two small wooden plaques with brass name plates. The plaques honor annual winners of “The Secretary of the Year Award” and the “Director General’s Award for Reporting.” Unfortunately, the nameplates ended with the honorees for 1999.

After checking with AFSA, I was informed that these plaques were the responsibility of the director general and that AFSA had brought their outdated nature to the DG’s attention, to no avail.

It would surely be appropriate for the incoming director general to commission new, updated plaques

LETTERS



and perhaps move them to a more prominent location — for example, in the Employee Services Center (formerly known as the Foreign Service Lounge). Giving appropriate recognition to deserving individuals sustains morale — particularly when the Service itself is under stress.

David Jones
FSO, retired
Arlington, Va.

Pomp and Circumstance

Our military colleagues aren't the only ones confused by diplomatic and consular ranks and titles. Fred Donner's amusing and informative article, "How Many Guns Does a Vice Consul Rate?" (July-August *Journal*) brought to mind a long-ago event that illustrated more general bafflement.

It was back in the days before jet travel, when we still had a consulate general in Yokohama. To get us there, the department booked the customary "minimum first-class" accommodations aboard the S.S. *President Cleveland*. About midway through the 13 days across the Pacific, an elderly lady invited my wife and me and a few others for a pleasant pre-dinner cocktail hour. We hadn't yet met, and our guess was that she was just picking us at random from the first-class passenger list.

Asked by our hostess how far we were going and why, I replied that I would be a new vice consul in Yokohama. "How wonderful!" she exclaimed. "And you're so young!" Maybe I looked puzzled, but in any case she elaborated, "Why, I have a

friend who's a vice admiral — but he's over 40." We smiled appreciatively. When we disembarked in Yokohama a few mornings later, there were — sad to say — no guns and no ruffles, let alone a flourish. ■

Bob German
FSO, retired
Austin, Texas

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FSJ Web Site Redesigned

In an ongoing effort to make the *Foreign Service Journal* more accessible to AFSA members and more widely available outside the Foreign Service, we recently redesigned our Web pages — www.fsjournal.org and www.afsa.org/fsj.

The new *FSJ* home page gives readers an overview of the magazine and allows them to go directly to what they need, whether it is an article on the FS in Iraq, the latest obituaries or information on how to submit a letter to the editor. The page offers links to articles on specific topics (e.g., Iraq, FS in Transition), particular departments (e.g., FS Know-How, In Memory, Tax Guide, Family Member Matters) and practical information (e.g., contact, subscription, advertising), as well as a prominent link to *AFSA News*.

On a related note, we have shifted our production schedule so that we can succeed more often in getting the magazine out before the first of the month.

Our longer-term goal is to make the *Journal* totally searchable, thereby bringing its unique content (posted online in its entirety since June 2005) into the mainstream of online discussion and research.

Take a look and let us know what you think!

— Susan Brady Maitra,
Senior Editor

Unless we correct the fundamental challenge of the violation of human rights of Latin American or Central American migrants crossing the border into Mexico, it's very hard for me to come up and wag a finger and say you guys should protect the rights of my citizens in this country.

— Ambassador of Mexico to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan,
The Washington Times,
July 20.

Latin America? We Don't Know and We Don't Care

During the last week of July, Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think-tank, collaborated with Zogby International to conduct an online poll of more than 7,500 adults nationwide on the topic of America's southern neighbors. The startling results suggest, in the words of Inter-American Dialogue President Peter Hakim, that "American adults are badly misinformed about the region."

"Most Americans believe Brazil and Mexico are the U.S.'s best friends in the region, but the great majority cannot identify the president of either country," Hakim adds. "And they mistakenly identify Washington's closest ally in the region, Colombia, as an adversary." Only 10 percent of online poll respondents said they were familiar with Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the second-term president of Brazil;

and just 20 percent were familiar with Felipe Calderon, the president of Mexico who was elected last summer by a narrow margin.

Even more surprising, more than half of the respondents said they believe that Chinese involvement in Latin America represents a serious threat to American interests — 48 percent among self-identified liberal respondents and 76 percent among conservatives. "The poll results on China suggest a huge gap between U.S. public perception and reality," says Hakim. "Any threat from China is among the lower-priority worries the U.S. faces in the region."

On the topic of trade, American views seem to be very confused. While 55 percent said they believe the American economy benefits from Latin American migrant workers and 48 percent said the U.S. should pursue more free-trade agreements with Latin American nations, 48 percent believe that the U.S. has been harmed more than Canada or Mexico by the North American Free Trade Agreement signed in 1993.

For more information, go to www.thedialogue.org/press/zogby.asp.

— Susan Brady Maitra

Trafficking In Persons: The 2007 Report

"Trafficking in persons is a modern-day form of slavery, a new type of global slave trade," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice writes in the *Seventh Annual Trafficking in Persons Report* (www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007). The State Department is mandated by the Traf-


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ficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to report yearly to Congress on the efforts of foreign governments to stop the trafficking of humans.

This year's survey, released June 13, covers 164 countries and adds seven nations to the list of worst offenders. Algeria, Bahrain, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman and Qatar were added to the Tier 3 blacklist, which already included Burma, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Uzbekistan and Venezuela. Tier 3 countries are defined as those that do not and are not making a significant effort to comply with the minimum standards according to U.S. law. They may be subject to sanctions from the U.S., the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

China and India were downgraded from the Tier 2 list to the Tier 2 "Watch List," meaning that their efforts to prevent human trafficking, prosecute criminals, and protect their victims are considered insufficient, but not enough so to warrant sanctions.

Not surprisingly, the Chinese government dismissed the findings as "groundless." Venezuela, too, rejected the report, saying the U.S. simply wanted to damage President Hugo Chavez's standing international-

ly. And the chief of police in Burma said, "The report is politically motivated, unfair and biased." The Malaysian press complained that even though the country recently passed a new human trafficking bill, it was nonetheless bumped down to Tier 3. Meanwhile, China and India have remained on the Tier 2 list for three and four years, respectively.

The decision to keep India on the Tier 2 list has been especially harshly criticized by U.S.-based advocacy groups, which say there may be as many as 65 million forced laborers in that country. Rep. Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J., who sponsored the law requiring the report, issued a statement speculating that India's ranking was probably given out of fear of alienating its government. A spokesman for the department's Trafficking in Persons Office stated that "multiple factors" go into deciding the rankings.

— Anna Wong Gleysteen,
Editorial Intern

What Goes Around Comes Around

The State Department's four-year battle with the Greater London Authority over \$3 million in unpaid congestion fees and fines American diplomats have accumulated there is now reverberating stateside. New

50 Years Ago...

The fact is that if the Department of State had available to it adequate funds to pay the necessary cost of running our embassies abroad, we could fill every ambassadorial post with an able man whether he happened to be a career Foreign Service officer or a non-career appointee. ... The question again is whether the United States, the richest country in the world, is willing to pay what it costs to get the best men available in these jobs.

— Sen. Mike Mansfield, D-Mont., from a speech on Aug. 26, 1957, excerpted in "Heard on the Hill," *FSJ* October 1957.





Site of the Month:
<http://del.icio.us>

Del.icio.us, which describes itself as a “social bookmarking” site, allows users to tag, save, manage and share Web pages from a centralized source. As a way to store bookmarks (favorites) on the Web instead of on your home computer, so that you can access them from anywhere, it is an obvious boon for peripatetic FS folks. It is also — and this is the “social” part — a way to share your bookmarks with others and sample their favorite finds, should you choose to do so.

After registering for a free account, users can begin saving bookmarks and set their accounts to either public (anyone can view the collection of links) or private. Instead of organizing the links in folders, as on a computer, users tag their links. There’s no limit on the number of tags that can be given to a link.

Users can also search for links on *del.icio.us*, either within their own collection or across the entire Web site. Because all of the links have been specifically added by a user (or users), it is a good way to discover smaller fun or useful Web sites that don’t appear on the first page of results from the larger search engines.

Del.icio.us is also a handy way to back up bookmarks in the event of a computer meltdown, as the accounts are Web-based and can be accessed from any terminal with an Internet connection.

For a user-friendly presentation of what the site is all about, see **<http://del.icio.us/about/>**. For the story of its creation as a hobby by Joshua Schachter in 2003 and its purchase by Yahoo in 2005, see **<http://del.icio.us/help/team>**. Yahoo has pledged to “provide the site with the resources, support and room it needs to continue growing the service and community.”

— Anna Wong Gleysteen,
Editorial Intern

York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s vow that diplomats would pay up like everyone else under the new congestion-pricing plan for the city he has worked out with the U.S. Department of Transportation has been undercut by the State Department.

According to the Aug. 19 *New York Post*, fine print in the deal giving \$354 million in federal transportation funds to support the city’s anti-traffic program grants the State Department authority to waive fees on “vehicles owned or operated by any foreign government or international organization.”

U.S. officials have been arguing in London courts that assessing such

fees as the congestion charges levied by London in 2003 against foreign governments violates the Geneva Convention’s prohibition on collecting taxes from foreign governments.

As of April, the U.S. topped the list of embassies refusing to pay the charge, with outstanding fines that totaled approximately \$3 million. Second was the Nigerian Embassy, owing about \$1.5 million, followed by the mission of Sudan and Japan.

Mayor Bloomberg’s anti-congestion plan must still win legislative approval, and opponents have seized on the State Department clause. “It is galling that an Iranian diplomat could pay nothing while a senior citizen

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from Bayside would be charged to go for cancer treatment at a Manhattan hospital,” Josh Bienstock, spokesman for the Committee to Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free, told the *Post* (www.nypost.com).

— Susan Brady Maitra

Terrorism Index: Losing the War

A recent survey of more than 100 of the top U.S. foreign policy experts — men and women who have staffed America’s national security apparatus over the past 50 years — found that 91 percent believe the world is becoming more dangerous for the U.S., up 10 percent from February. Fully 84 percent do not believe the U.S. is winning the war on terror, a 9-percent jump since February.

These findings are part of the third Terrorism Index produced by the Center for American Progress and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who teamed up to launch the semiannual survey in July 2006.

The stature and experience of the expert participants, and the fact that they range from liberal to conservative, give weight to the results. Eighty percent have served in the U.S. government — more than 50 percent in the executive branch, 32 percent in the military and 21 percent in the intelligence community.

Although the main government agencies with national security responsibilities were deemed to have improved their ability to do the job, nearly all of the government’s foreign policy efforts came in for heavy criticism, none more so than the Iraq War. Nearly all (92 percent) of the participating experts said the war in Iraq negatively affects U.S. national security, an increase of five percentage points from February. Significantly, negative perceptions of the war in Iraq are shared across the political

spectrum, with 84 percent of those who describe themselves as conservative taking a dim view of the war’s impact.

Published in the September-October issue of *Foreign Policy*, the complete Terrorism Index survey and results are also available online at (www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/08/terrorism_index.html).

— Susan Brady Maitra

Staffing Gaps and Language Shortfalls: No End in Sight

Though some progress has been made since implementation of the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative in 2002, significant staffing problems continue to compromise the State Department’s ability to function effectively. These are the findings of the latest Government Accountability Office study (GAO-07-1154T) of human capital issues at the department, released Aug. 1.

State’s staffing shortfall was the subject of a hearing that same day before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Work Force, and the District of Columbia. The need for a greater American presence within the U.N. agencies was also on the committee’s agenda.

In addition to convenor Sen. Daniel K. Akaka, D-Hawaii, and GAO representatives, the subcommittee heard testimony from AFSA President John Naland (see *AFSA News*, p. 65), Foreign Affairs Council President Thomas Boyatt, and Deborah Derrick, executive director of the United Nation’s Better World Campaign. State Department officials included acting Director General of the Foreign Service Heather Hodges and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Organizations James Warlick.

All testimony on the broad staffing issue was in agreement on the problem definition: although the \$200-million DRI effort brought some 1,100 new Foreign Service personnel online to make up for staff shortages caused by the budget-cutting of the 1990s and to establish a crisis-response capability and training float, these new officers have been absorbed by the demand for personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan that began to soar in 2003.

In his opening statement, Sen. Abaka cited Amb. Boyatt and the FAC report to underline the fact that in the first two years of Secretary of State Rice’s tenure, no new resources were secured to address this problem. As a result, State officials told the GAO, more than 1,000 new positions are needed now to support foreign-language training needs and respond to crises and changing priorities. Yet, according to Hodges’ testimony, the department’s FY 2008 budget request asks for only 254.

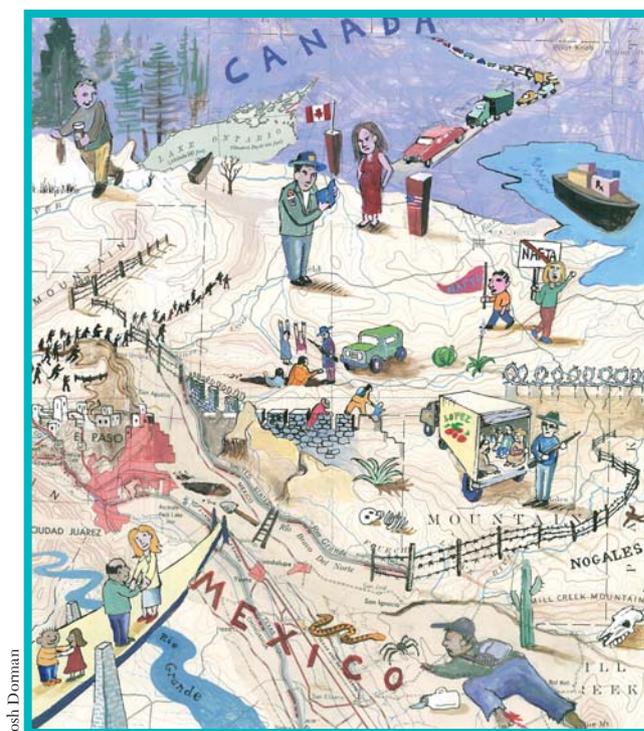
GAO Director of International Affairs and Trade Jess Ford noted that State had not yet fully implemented its earlier recommendation to consider an assignment system that allows for longer tours and consecutive assignments in certain countries to hone critical language skills.

The GAO report is the latest in a series of reports on State’s staffing problems that the agency began in 2002. It concludes that until the department has a sufficient level and mix of staffing and language resources to fill all of the gaps, its ability to carry out foreign policy objectives and critical mission functions will continue to be compromised.

The hearing agenda and all testimony, including the complete GAO report, are accessible online at <http://hsgac.senate.gov/index.cfm>. ■

— Susan Brady Maitra

BRIDGES, BARRIERS OR BOTH? THE U.S. BORDERS



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LIKE SIAMESE TRIPLETS, THE U.S., CANADA AND MEXICO HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT FATE HAS LINKED THEIR VITAL ORGANS.

BY LESLIE BASSETT

e often forget that the United States has many borders with the rest of the world, but only a handful of them are geographic. There are stock exchanges and reserve banks, borders for investment and finance. There are Internet service providers, media conglomerates and university networks, all borders for information exchanges. And there are multinational corporations, nongovernmental organizations and international entities that may be headquartered in one city or country but reach out across many.

While all these entities, and many others, facilitate the movement of goods and services from portal to portal, they are also restrictive, controlling the flows and monitoring passages. These virtual borders offer the model we seek for our geographic ones: membranes that screen the dangerous from the desired, and a governing paradigm whose job is to preserve the membrane.

Whether we think of trade, migration or security, we tend to think geographically, especially after Sept. 11, 2001. The United States shares a 7,500-mile land and air border with Canada and Mexico. The many ports of entry along those borders seem more vulnerable because the numbers of people and vehicles that flow through them daily are already unimaginable. But this flow is essential to all three countries' employment, production and commerce. According to the Migration Policy Institute, both Mexico and Canada send at least 85 percent of their exports to the United States. The U.S. sends more of its exports to Canada than anywhere else, and Mexico is in third place for U.S. exports. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, since the North American Free Trade Agreement between the three countries came into effect in 1994, two-way trade between Canada and Mexico has tripled.

On an average day, nearly one million people cross legally through U.S.-Mexico ports of entry in both directions. In 2005, five million trucks, 91 million cars and 730,000 railroad cars crossed that same border. While many people first think that the 11.2 million people living along the border must be the primary destination for all this activity, trade figures show the impact is broader. According to the Woodrow Wilson Center, 22 U.S. states count on Mexico as either the primary or secondary destination for their exports. The border grows wider as trade relationships and population flows deepen.

Nearly 200,000 Mexicans migrate to the United States legally every year, according to the Pew Hispanic Foundation. For obvious reasons, it is harder to pin down figures on "illegal" (i.e., unauthorized) border crossings by Mexicans, which vary seasonally and respond to changes in both countries' economies, as well as to U.S. border enforcement measures. And, of course, some Mexicans who enter with valid non-immigrant visas

overstay them. Taken together, the Pew Hispanic Foundation's figures for 2006 show that Mexican migration to the U.S. between 1995 and 2005 averaged around 400,000 people per year. According to Department of Homeland Security statistics, this is out of a total of 4.8 million visitors (in 2005) admitted with non-immigrant visas annually.

While Mexican migration was once concentrated in a few states, migrants are now settling in new ones (e.g., New York, Georgia, North Carolina) in increasing numbers. One sign of this is that Mexico now has 48 consulates in the U.S., the most recent one opening in Little Rock, Ark., earlier this year.

Our own figures suggest that one million Americans reside in Mexico, while 12 million more visit every year. We see colonies of Americans settling in warm areas where the cost of living is low and access to the U.S. is easy. We also have a floating "snowbird" population that travels south in the winter, then moves back north for the summer. U.S. cross-border bilateral trade totals about \$1 billion a day.

Shared Concerns

The challenge for all three nations has been to build across an immense physical expanse a membrane of technology, enforcement personnel and infrastructure that can expedite the flow of licit, mutually beneficial migration and trade while effectively impeding smuggling, trafficking in persons, narco-trafficking and terrorist threats.

Mexico, too, seeks such a membrane. Its government shares the goal of having licit goods and travelers move freely across the border while sharing U.S. concerns about drugs, contraband, third-country nationals and possible terrorists moving through its territory into the United States. Inevitably, Mexico must confront — and already faces — the risks if those illicit products and criminal elements, unable to penetrate the U.S., settle into Mexico and look for markets or targets there. Violence, drug use, money-laundering and related crimes are already growing challenges for Mexico. It is also vocal about the southward flow of arms and cash from the United States into its territory, enabling organized crime gangs to outgun local law enforcement and use the country as a base of operations.

As the other partner in this dynamic, Canada shares the same vision: trade, people and information flowing

Leslie Bassett is deputy chief of mission in Mexico City.

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seamlessly through a border that efficiently screens out the illegal, the unhealthy or the dangerous. The raw numbers are numbing: \$1.4 billion in two-way commercial traffic per day; 200 million crossings of the U.S.-Canadian border at 150 ports of entry (just 90 of which are staffed) every year. Those statistics translate into a reality where the CEO of Home Depot Canada says the company trades more with the city of Atlanta than the entire country trades with France. More trade moves across the Ambassador Bridge spanning Detroit and Windsor than U.S. commerce with all of Japan.

With upward of 80 percent of all exports heading to the U.S. and with an economy whose GDP is 20 percent dependent on trade, Canada's preoccupation with a functioning border is nonstop. It has to be; the cost to Canadian business of a border closure is estimated at \$100 million per hour. The United States shares that economic burden, of course, both because so much of the trade takes place within firms, and because many of the businesses are U.S.-owned.

Developing Zones of Confidence

Taking this concern into account, Washington has sought to frame its post-9/11 border security enhancements in terms of protecting the trade and prosperity that benefits all three nations. In a dual-bilateral fashion, the U.S. launched action plans with Canada and Mexico for secure, smart borders that increased the use of infrastructure, technology and personnel to monitor border crossings — especially overland borders.

With Canada, the United States agreed in December 2001 to "develop a zone of confidence against terrorist activity" by securing the flow of people and the flow of goods, improving border infrastructure and increasing information-sharing. Innovations included the provision of passenger data in advance, non-intrusive inspections of cargo and harmonized commercial processes at the border to move goods faster. A 22-point "U.S.-Mexico Border Partnership Action Plan" followed shortly thereafter, seeking to eliminate border bottlenecks while securing infrastructure and the flow of people. In addi-

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tion, all three countries continued their bilateral consultations on related issues, such as water, invasive species, air pollution and toxic rain.

The inevitable delay in putting new plans into action along the borders, coupled with increased media coverage of the migration phenomenon, allowed critics to argue that U.S. land borders were virtually unprotected. At the same time, increased NAFTA-induced trade among the three partners put pressure on land-border crossings to move products predictably, in order to get fresh produce to markets and meet “just in time” supply chains. Finally, existing security measures along the U.S.-Mexico border succeeded in pushing migration increasingly to isolated desert areas along the border, posing new humanitarian, environmental and enforcement challenges. They also succeeded in forcing criminal organizations to compete for access to border areas through which, by corruption, force or guile, they are able to smuggle drugs, people and other commodities. As a result, the few secure “plazas” routinely used by organized crime organizations have become more valuable, prompting cartel wars for control of the plazas and thereby access to the lucrative U.S. drug market.

To address such issues, in March 2005 the three nations’ leaders agreed to form the Security and Prosperity Partnership to catalog existing bilateral border

The challenge is to expedite the flow of licit, mutually beneficial migration and trade while keeping out criminal and terrorist threats.

control and security efforts, prioritize some trilateral trade opportunities and provide transparency to ongoing efforts.

The SPP provides a good overview of the potential threats to each country’s security that could affect either of the partners. For example, the maritime component allows consultation on sea-based threats, trafficking routes and information-sharing. The health component allows coordi-

nation on possible responses to avian flu or other pandemics, including border protocols to prevent the spread of disease across land, sea or air borders. And the North American Energy Security Initiative acknowledges that a “secure and sustainable” energy supply is essential for the three countries’ shared prosperity and strives to improve transparency of the market and regulatory compatibility.

In addition, recognizing that terrorist attacks, natural disasters and other emergencies can all have an impact across borders, the three governments are working to develop joint plans and protocols for incident response.

The ongoing U.S. congressional debate on illegal migration reflects tension between the growing demand for foreign labor and trade and the need to reassure Americans that their land borders are secure. While there is no evidence that terrorists have crossed into the U.S. from Mexico, the proliferation of tunnels under the border, violent incidents against Border Patrol agents, and the continuing flow of illegal migrants and goods across the border all signal reason for concern. At the same time, economies on both sides of the border rely on the ports of entry as arteries for survival. Cut them off and vital organs will suffer — and possibly die.

Like Siamese triplets, the U.S., Canada and Mexico have to acknowledge that fate has linked them. They may disagree about what direction to go in, but as trade ties deepen, population flows continue and interests coincide, they will inevitably have to communicate and, ideally, cooperate. The three nations are only as healthy as the borders that both bridge them and protect them. ■

North American Partnership Blog

Is there such a thing as a North Americanist, in the same way diplomats specialize in Asia, the Middle East or Africa? Colleagues at our two missions in Canada and Mexico are engaged in a unique collaborative weblog on the intranet to explore the overlaps and overlays of U.S. interests in those countries. Border-crossing issues, export-market trends and implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative are just a few of the topics treated on the blog. You can visit the North American Partnership Blog on the intranet at: <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap/>.

A VIEW FROM THE SOUTH

T FOR ALL THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES, THE BORDER REGION FORMS AN UNBREAKABLE BOND BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

BY MANUEL SUÁREZ-MIER

The Mexico-U.S. border is unique in many dimensions: its length, the volume of traffic that flows across it and the key fact that, ever since it was finalized midway through the 19th century, it has remained largely peaceful and free of troops. It is distinctive also as the frontier between the mightiest economic, military and political power on earth and a much less developed country with too many domestic problems to have realistic aspirations to world leadership. Finally, the border also represents the line separating two cultures that, for all their overlap, still diverge in their outlooks on cultural issues, in the food they consume, in their attitudes toward family, gender and wealth, and in their posture regarding authority and government.

Yet, for all the differences between Mexico and the United States, the border region forms an unbreakable bond between the two countries. The communities that lie along and frequently straddle it enjoy a unique sym-

Manuel Suárez-Mier has just joined Mexico's diplomatic service with the rank of minister, and will represent his country's attorney general in Washington, D.C. He was previously an adjunct professor of economics and finance in the School of International Service at American University.

biosis that impels them to work together to address common problems: legal and illicit trade, pollution and management of water resources, crossings of people who work on one side but live on the other side, and endless other exchanges that make them far more attached to each other than with other towns in their own countries.

High on the bilateral agenda is the fact that violence along the border has increased perceptibly over the past several years. Organized crime and bands of drug traffickers pose a growing danger in the south, and groups of vigilantes have taken the law into their hands in trying to stem the flow of immigrants to the north. These situations call on both countries to cooperate closely with each other to eliminate such threats.

Land Grab or Manifest Destiny?

When Mexico became independent from Spain in 1821, nearly four decades after the U.S. had gained its own sovereignty, its northern border extended through what is now Texas and included all the territories up to the northern frontiers of Colorado, Utah, Nevada and California. However, much of the land was sparsely inhabited and unexplored, and was variously claimed by Mexico, Great Britain, the U.S. and Russia.

Ironically, Mexico lost Texas in part because it followed a liberal immigration policy that enticed U.S. citi-

zens to settle in the northern parts of the state of Coahuila. Eventually, the majority of those English-speaking settlers took up arms and defeated General Antonio López de Santa Anna, Mexico's dictator, in 1836. After nearly a decade as an independent republic, Texas chose to become a state in 1845. That helped set off the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), when Mexico rejected Washington's "invitation" to sell its northwestern territories.

In April 1847, Gen. Winfield Scott's forces took Mexico City, essentially ending the war.

Back in Washington, the foes of the war, including the newly elected Rep. Abraham Lincoln, opposed it because they feared that acquiring more territories to the south would strengthen the hand of the slave-owning coalition of U.S. states. Even though slavery in all its forms had already been abolished in Mexico at the outset of its war of independence in 1810, the conquest of these territories would permit its restoration if the pro-slavery coalition was able to run the new territories, as appeared likely.

This conflict between pro- and anti-slavery political forces in Washington was ultimately the deciding factor in defining the new border between the two nations. President James K. Polk's envoy to Mexico City, Nicholas Trist, chief clerk of the State Department, drew an imaginary line that is very close to the present border, with a view to securing Senate ratification. Although Trist secured Mexican agreement to what would be known as the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, Polk callously fired him for not having demanded more Mexican territory in fulfillment of America's "manifest destiny."

A final twist in the story came several years later when the engineers in charge of planning the transcontinental railroad realized that the ideal pass through the southern range of the Rocky Mountains remained on Mexico's side of the new border. This led, in 1853, to the Gadsden Purchase, by which the United States acquired an additional swath of territory roughly the size of Pennsylvania, stretching from Las Cruces, N.M., to El Paso, Texas. This deal was presented to the Mexican government on very effective terms: "If you don't sell it, we'll take it."

Understandably, this period is recalled very differently in each country, which helps explain the radically diver-

The most important factor attracting Mexicans to the border region — and beyond — is the opportunities the U.S. economy offers them.

gent attitudes of Mexicans and Americans regarding their common border, as well as each other. The whole episode is seen in Mexico as a brazen act of conquest and land-grabbing by an abusive neighbor. The resentment planted in Mexico by this painful sequence of events is still present 160 years later. It explains, for instance, why foreigners still cannot own any land in Mexico within 100 kilometers (around 62 miles) of the border or less than 50 kilometers (31 miles) from its coasts.

And the story is kept alive in schoolrooms throughout the country, where students are taught about the infamy of their northern neighbors by a public education system keen on blaming the Americans, rightly or wrongly, for Mexico's shortcomings.

Conversely, while modern American history books generally acknowledge the unfairness of the way Mexico was treated, there is nothing approaching that sense of injustice. Nor is there a clear understanding in the U.S. of just how painful that history remains for Mexicans.

The Lure of the Border

The most important factor attracting Mexicans to the border region — and beyond — is the opportunities the U.S. economy offers them to earn far more than they could in their own country. For decades, the Mexican economy has not been creating the jobs required just to employ new entrants into the labor force (currently about 1.2 million a year). In fact, during each of the last five years only 400,000 jobs have been created annually in the regular economy — the one that pays at least the minimum wage, collects taxes and confers benefits, and fulfills the pertinent laws and regulations. An equal number of positions have moved into the "underground" economy, which includes street vendors and frequently entails illegal commerce. As for the rest, the most resourceful and bold workers try their luck in the United States.

But first they must reach the border and find the means to cross the line. It is estimated that 5 percent of the roughly seven million people living on the Mexican side of the border constitute a floating population that is there just until their chance comes to cross to the other side. According to research by the Center for Compar-

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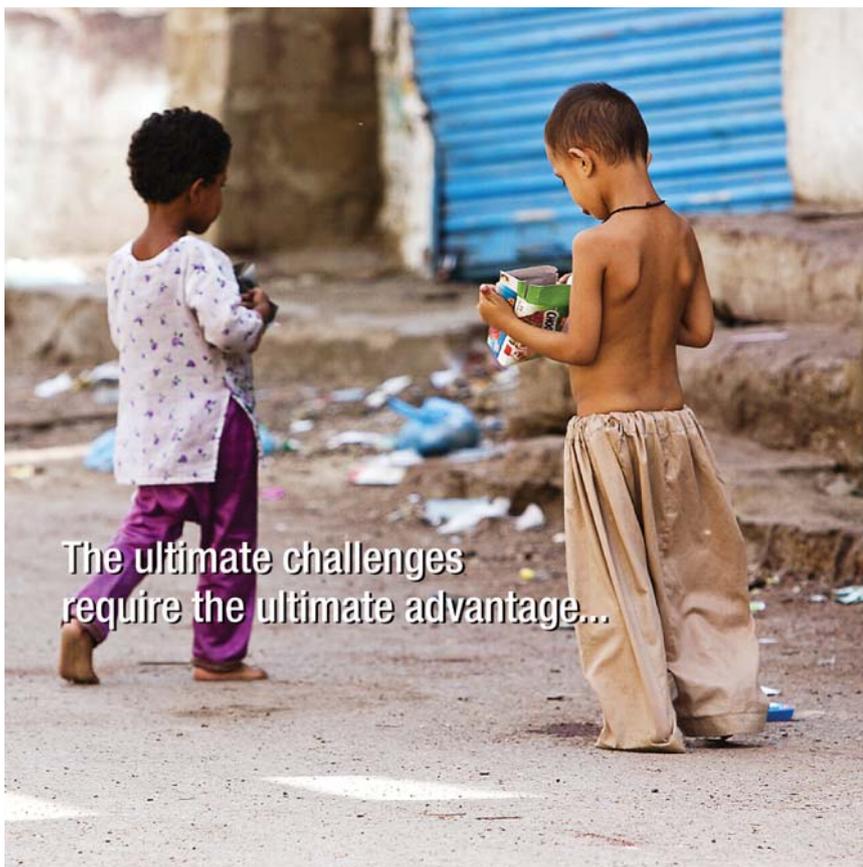
ative Immigration Studies at the University of California at San Diego, the fee paid to the “coyotes” who smuggle people across the border has risen steadily, from an average fee of \$900 in 1992 to around \$2,000 today — an increase of 122 percent in constant-value dollars. The rising cost of a crossing is clearly a function of the greater difficulty and risk involved, although the rate of increase in the last few years has not been as sharp as might have been expected from the implementation of the tougher measures adopted by the U.S. to prevent illegal immigration.

Less than one-third of all candidates to cross over are caught and returned to the border city from which they launched their attempt. Many of them never go back to their hometowns, instead joining the burgeoning and disparate population that has transformed the Mexican side of the frontier from a collection of sleepy, dusty desert towns into a vibrant and fast-growing industrial metropolis. However, a surprising 69 percent of those who try to enter the U.S. illegally succeed in doing so undetected in

their first attempt. And the chances of succeeding after being caught the first time exceed 90 percent, according to the CCIS.

As long as the basic conditions that propel Mexican workers away from their homeland — namely, lack of work and opportunities for a better life — persist, and the cost of crossing the border does not become prohibitive, they will continue to flee to the U.S. A key to understanding the extent and power of this draw is the fact that, on average, the productivity of Mexican workers is five times greater in the U.S. than in their native country. This is despite the fact that they are operating in an alien world where the language, the food, the culture and the customs are all very different, and they have left behind their basic support groups, including immediate families.

The other key ingredients needed to move to the U.S. are information and personal connections. It is amazing to witness how easily the informal communications of family and friends spread the news of opportunities in their adopted communities, while also providing the nec-



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essary support to the new arrivals as they find a job and a place to live. Three decades ago there were virtually no Mexicans in the New York City area. Then, a few poblanos (inhabitants of the state of Puebla, east of Mexico City) began arriving. Today, it is estimated that half a million Mexicans reside there. Two or three dozen of them — including my friend Leobardo López Pascual, who worked as a barman in the Twin Towers' Windows on the World restaurant — died on 9/11.

Three Scenarios

Back in 1986, when the United States passed the U.S. Immigration Reform and Control Act, I had a conversation with Charles Pilliod, then the American ambassador to Mexico. He asked me what I thought of the measure. I told him I thought it would raise marginally the cost of counterfeit papers that the immigrants would now be required to show to their employers, but wouldn't accomplish much else. Amb. Pilliod told me I was a cynic — to which I replied that I thought I was a realist. After all, the law did not change any of the basic incentives that induce my fellow Mexicans to cross the border.

My words turned out to be prophetic. True, in the four years that followed IRCA's enactment, the number of unauthorized immigrants living in the United States dropped from four million to 2.5 million, thanks to the new routes to legalization the bill provided. But the influx of new illegal immigrants into the U.S. continued to grow and has now reached 12-13 million, of whom some six to seven million are Mexicans.

Considering the collapse of President Bush's immigration bill in Congress, here are three possibilities for what happens next.

Win-Win: In the positive scenario, Washington and Mexico City cooperate to bring about the necessary conditions for faster growth south of the border. Among other things, these include substantial public investment in improvements to the country's physical and intellectual infrastructure, following the example of the Mediterranean countries within the European Union. Note that this option does not rely on large financial transfers from the U.S. to Mexico, as the E.U. provided to Greece, Portugal and Spain. That is fortunate because the purse-strings of foreign aid are held by the U.S. Congress, which frequently imposes political conditions that are unacceptable to the receiving country.

An alternative route to the same goal, also drawing on

the E.U. model, would be to form a North American monetary union, adopting the U.S. dollar as the single currency of Mexico, Canada and the U.S. The effect when Ireland and Spain joined the euro zone was profound: interest rates dropped to a third of their previous levels, spurring an unprecedented boom in investment, particularly in the construction industry. As a result, not only have these countries grown at the fastest rates in their history, but they have created more jobs than ever before. Spain created a million jobs a year for a decade, a sharp contrast to the previous 50 years, during which the labor force stagnated at around 12.5 million.

In such a booming environment, it would be easy to tap the international capital markets and the multilateral development banks for the resources to revamp Mexico's infrastructure without any aid from the U.S. If this were to happen, a large number of the Mexicans living abroad would hasten to return home, as the Irish and the Spanish did when their countries started growing at a record pace

Lose-Lose: Unfortunately, a far worse outcome is all too imaginable: Anti-immigrant zealots in the U.S. not only effectively close the border to the flows of immigrants but impose generalized and stiff penalties on their employers — then detain and expel millions of illegal residents. Such a mass repatriation back to an environment in which there is no new investment or faster growth would have unpredictable but almost assuredly negative consequences, starting with growing social unrest and political instability.

In such a case, the border would become a more violent and dangerous zone, necessitating increasingly tougher barriers to stem the return of desperate migrants who are unable to find the means to survive in their country. In fact, we are already seeing some of the dire consequences of tighter controls as immigrants are forced from old routes to deserts and other dangerous terrain.

Even leaving aside such humanitarian concerns, those Americans pushing for more punitive treatment of Mexican migrant workers should consider the question of what would happen to the U.S. economy if they stopped coming.

Many economic studies concur that illegal immigration has net positive effects on the U.S. economy, enabling it to respond to market forces rapidly and smoothly. Demand for labor increases when the U.S. economy is booming and unemployment is relatively low.

F O C U S

It is crucial not only for the well-known economic activities to which migrants tend to flock, like agriculture and construction, tourism and food preparation, housecleaning and child care, but also to other less familiar ones: e.g., the crab industry in Maryland, the mushroom plantations near Philadelphia, the wine industry on the West Coast and fruit harvesting all over the U.S. It is clear that the economic consequences of halting illegal immigration for these industries would be devastating, although little empirical work has been done to estimate precisely the potential costs.

Getting rid of all 13 million illegal immigrants residing in the U.S. would shrink the overall U.S. labor force by 5 percent, while the low-skilled labor force would drop by between 10 and 12 percent. Consider that in 2005, illegal immigrants accounted for 24 percent of the workers employed in farming, 17 percent in cleaning, 14 percent in construction and 12 percent in food preparation. Losing this work force, or even a substantial portion of it, would undoubtedly increase prices for the goods and ser-

vices provided by the industries that hire large numbers of them.

No Change: This currently appears to be the most likely outcome at the federal level. If so, local governments will implement measures that try to limit or reverse the flow of undocumented workers, as we have seen appear with increasing frequency in many parts of the U.S. Such policies, with unfortunate racist overtones, would have negative consequences for the integration and dynamics of the communities that undertake them.

The Contradictory Nature of the Border

Seen from the south, the U.S.-Mexico border is a metaphor for many powerful economic and political dynamics, as well as a host of historical grievances and resentments. Many Mexicans are drawn to the border out of necessity and lack of local economic opportunity, crossing only reluctantly because they have grown up with anti-American prejudices. Successive Mexican governments used powerful nationalist propaganda to blame the United



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States for their own country's poverty, shortcomings and incompetence. It was much easier to place the guilt across the border than to make the necessary changes at home.

Such attitudes started changing in the 1980s, when the disasters that resulted from the mismanagement of two populist Mexican governments could no longer be blamed on the gringos across the border, and profound structural policy changes were demanded. Those reforms led to the opening-up of the Mexican economy after decades of inward-looking, protectionist policies, carried out by a highly centralized state.

Eventually, the changes laid the groundwork for the negotiation of NAFTA, which, in turn, impelled the Mexican government to change the image that most citizens had of the United States, its people and policies. The approval rate within the Mexican population for the idea of

***This high level of support
among the Mexican
public for the economic
integration of North
America has held up.***

free trade with the U.S. when it was first proposed in the 1980s was only 30 percent. After a thorough campaign of information and education that took several years, the figures were reversed: 70 percent of Mexicans approved of NAFTA. This high level of support among the Mexican public for the economic integration of North America has held up, according to a recent survey conduct-

ed by Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas and Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales.

When neighboring countries work together for a constructive common goal, they can both succeed. The same is true on immigration, monetary union and the overriding goal of improving regional security for North America. In this context, the border should be viewed as a chain that links ever more closely two peoples who are destined by geography and history to live next to each other. ■

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CULTURAL QUIRKS & TASTY TREASURES: THE TWO LAREDOS

“G

THIS SELF-PROCLAIMED “GATEWAY TO MEXICO” IS THE BUSIEST LAND PORT OF ENTRY FOR COMMERCE IN THE WHOLE 1,952-MILE BORDER.

BY JENNIFER LUDDERS

ive me the Big Mac con queso, por favor,” says a teenager with pants hanging off his hips.

“La quieres con french fries?” responds the cashier.

“Claro que si, ma’am! And a coca grande, too.”

Welcome to the Texas-Mexico border. Not quite Mexico, not quite the United States, but rather a distinct parallel universe with language, food and traditions that are a fusion of the neighboring nations. Sitting in the central plaza with its pastel colonial facades and wafts of carne asada (grilled beef) from nearby vendors, one sometimes finds it easy to forget just which country you are in.

“Thank goodness for cheap tacos,” you think as you look at the Spanish sign on an adjacent kiosk, before realizing that the “\$2” listed is actually dollars, not pesos, and you’ve got your decimal point mixed up again. You’re no longer on the Mexican side. And when a green-and-white border patrol car cruises past to pull over a rusty Volkswagen van in search of illegal aliens and narcotics, your presence north of the Rio Grande is confirmed.

Jennifer Ludders recently completed her first tour in Nuevo Laredo. She is now in language training for her next assignment in Ho Chi Minh City.

Los Dos Laredos, as the sister cities of Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, are collectively known, take pride in superlatives. The self-proclaimed “Gateway to Mexico” is the busiest land port of entry for commerce in the whole 1,952-mile border. With 95 percent of the population claiming Mexican heritage, Laredo recently became the most ethnically homogeneous city in the United States, and it claims to be second only to Las Vegas as the fastest-growing city in the U.S. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why *Men’s Health* magazine recently named Laredo the “happiest” city in the U.S. (El Paso came in second.) Or perhaps the survey, based on a comparison of antidepressants prescribed per capita, simply did not take into account the possibility that U.S. residents were getting their prescription medications in the unregulated market that flourishes just south of the border.

Gorgeous George

Each year Laredo hosts the largest party in the United States honoring President George Washington — or Jorge Washington, as he is called here. The George Washington Birthday Celebration is Anglo-American colonial culture wrapped in a colorful Mexican poncho. It is representative of the bizarre cultural quirks that make the border region unique. The monthlong

festival traces its roots back to 1898, during the Spanish-American War, when a group of Texans sought to demonstrate Laredo's deep commitment to the United States. Rather than fading away, it has become larger and more diverse every year. In fact, the Washington Birthday Celebration Association, which organizes the event, is so busy that it maintains a year-round staff housed in a replica of Mount Vernon. Who would have guessed that the original George W. had such strong ties to Texas?

Among the many featured events are a Princess Pocahontas Pageant, a Comedy Jam for George, and a Jalapeño Festival, which includes a jalapeño-eating contest (the record is 152 in 15 minutes) and a jalapeño-spitting contest. For sophisticates, Laredo's Society of Martha Washington sponsors an elaborate re-enactment of a ball held at the Mount Vernon estate in 1790. The ball features 12 debutantes in extravagant handmade gowns that can take two years of labor each to create, costing up to \$30,000 dollars. Each dress weighs between 70 and 100 pounds — almost as heavy as the young ladies beneath them — and can inflict grisly bruises on their hips and shoulders. But participants consider all that a small price to pay for a coveted spot in the festival's most prestigious event.

As a symbol of the close relationship that the sister cities of Laredo and Nuevo Laredo have always shared, the international highlight of the GW celebration is the abrazo (hug) exchanged between children and officials of the neighboring countries. One of the bridges spanning the Rio Grande between the two cities is closed off to vehicle traffic while groups walk from their respective sides of the river and exchange pleasantries and speeches. Following tradition, the U.S. consulate's principal officer in Nuevo Laredo gives a warm abrazo to the Mexican consul in Laredo.

All this international love is not limited to that one particular day, however. One of the four bridges connecting the two cities is also a symbol of union for hundreds of couples each year. (Marriage is, after all, about meeting each other halfway.)

Typically, one spouse is a Mexican national who, usually because of a visa ineligibility, cannot be physically present in the United States to get married. Once the

***The sister cities of Laredo,
Texas and Nuevo Laredo,
Mexico take pride in
superlatives.***

logistics are arranged, the wedding party and the judge meet on the demarcation line where the U.S. and Mexico meet, while the couple joins hands across the international boundary. After a brief ceremony — *voilà* — the couple are officially esposo and esposa. But according to the laws of which

jurisdiction? Mexico? The United States? Texas? No, no and you betcha, partner! A justice of the peace from Laredo says the legitimacy of these marriages has never been challenged under the laws of the great state of Texas. Whatever the true validity of such unions, the practice continues in full swing and adds a touch of romance to otherwise routine bridge traffic.

Thank Heaven for ... Servicar!

Before hitting the bridge on a characteristically steamy day, someone might stop off at one of the three drive-thru Starbucks in Laredo and order an iced frap-puchino from the comfort of an air-conditioned vehicle. But to really spice things up, locals enjoy Nuevo Laredo's version of drive-through refreshment: chilled tequila shots. Not only can you drive, quite literally, into one of the many bar/mini-marts called "Servicars," but you can enjoy happy hour right at the wheel. Or if it's a whiskey or a Corona you prefer to drink while you drive, no hay problema: the Servicars cater to every open-container dream. Just pull into the store, roll down the window and order your margarita in a to-go cup. Make sure you buy an extra bag of chile and limon chips to fend off the munchies, though — and hope that your insurance covers any damage to Servicar walls that may be grazed while exiting.

In fact, most residents of Nuevo Laredo drive as if they've made far too many trips to their neighborhood Servicar. Vehicles resurrected from the junk yard compete with flashy Suburbans to overtake each other down one-way streets, undeterred by the numerous speed bumps that sprout up like concrete weeds. Those who are fortunate enough to have a visa may be in a hurry to cross the bridge and engage in the border's most beloved pastime: shopping!

Strip malls line Interstate 35, the spine of Laredo, like proud soldiers of American commercialism. The service economy of Laredo is highly dependent on the crowds of

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Mexican shoppers who flock daily to buy everything from diapers to Donna Karan. Because there is a strict limit on the value of goods that can be brought back into Mexico undeclared, it is commonplace to see families in the parking lot at Wal-Mart (the highest-grossing Wal-Mart per square foot in the U.S.) ripping off tags and stuffing items into empty suitcases. That way, if they have the bad luck to be randomly stopped by Mexican Customs, they can claim that the contents had gone with them from home in Mexico for their recent “vacation.”

No trip to the shopping mall in Laredo would be complete without a chair massage offered by one of the many Chinese masseurs and masseuses who, upon finishing their 10 minutes of magic, invariably ask in broken

*Laredo's George
Washington Birthday
Celebration is Anglo-
American colonial culture
wrapped in a colorful
Mexican poncho.*

turns stereotypical notions of both U.S. and Mexican culture on their head, while preserving the characteristic warmth and charm of the people. No serious fan of the quirky or unpredictable, or of amalgamation as an art form, should miss out on an opportunity to fully experience both sides of the southern border.

Si, muy good indeed. ■

Spanglish, “Muy good, lady?” Chinese buffets (pronounced “Boo-fátes”) around town are also wildly popular with Mexican day-trippers and locals alike. They offer a glut-tonous spread that positions jalapeño-kung pao chicken next to enchiladas, and suggests chipotle salsa as a garnish to the fried egg rolls.

Such is the distinct flavor of the U.S.-Mexican border: totally unexpected and extra-spicy. The region



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As you cross the street from the U.S. Consulate General in Tijuana, Mexico, located near the Agua Caliente dog track and casino, a billboard advertises bloody “cage fights” with Mexican wrestlers clad in colorful “lucha libre” (no holds-barred style) masks. Right next to it is a sign urging socialites to go to La Cantina for all-you-can-drink specials and live mariachi music.

Just a few miles down the road sits the Cultural Center, a monumental arts complex with a planetarium centerpiece, a gallery and a performance stage. Across from that is Tijuana’s commercial center, Plaza Rio (River Plaza), where weekend mall shoppers watch complimentary performances by up-and-coming Mexican musicians and actors. At night, many locals and visitors venture to Plaza Fiesta (Party Plaza) to go bar-hopping.

Farther down, nestled around the infamous Avenida Revolucion (Avenue of the Revolution), is a row of stores where pharmacists in their white coats offer discount drugs on the street that would only be available

THE SAN YSIDRO-TIJUANA PORT OF ENTRY IS THE MOST-CROSSED INTERNATIONAL BORDER IN THE WORLD.

BY MAY G. BAPTISTA

by prescription in the United States. Other vendors try to lure people into shops to purchase faux-leather goods or antique sombreros. And hawkers entice vacationers with promises to take their photo with zebra-painted donkeys.

Even without all those exotic attractions to generate tourism, Tijuana would still be a thriving metropolis. It is centrally situated where visitors heading south first enter Mexico and where many pass through on their way to the United States. The Department of Homeland Security reports that the San Ysidro-Tijuana port of entry is the most-crossed international border in the world: approximately 50,000-65,000 vehicles and 35,000 pedestrians cross it daily.

Tijuana’s population is estimated to be about two million, making it the largest city on the U.S.-Mexico border. It is also the sixth-largest metropolitan area in the country behind Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla and Toluca. Many migrants from all over Mexico and the world call Tijuana home, giving the city a diverse mix of people.

But Not Everything Goes ...

The region is famous for its bustling nightlife, luxurious spas and daylong shopping expeditions. “I come to Tijuana to relax and forget my troubles,” says one

May G. Baptista recently completed her first Foreign Service tour in Tijuana. She is now in German language training for her assignment as an operations officer in the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center.

FOCUS

American tourist. “The people are friendly and the fish tacos are the best in the world.” But the presumption that “anything goes” in Mexico has gotten countless tourists into trouble or even landed them behind bars. More than 20 percent of all Americans arrested outside the United States are incarcerated in Tijuana, making the consulate’s American Citizen Services Section one of the busiest in the world.

Unlucky tourists are arrested for a wide range of violations, from drunk and disorderly conduct to child pornography. On average, ACS handles at least one death (usually a victim of a violent crime, such as a gunshot wound or stabbing) and one welfare/whereabouts case each day.

Some visitors may simply find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. Drug-related violence, often involving the police, has plagued the city for decades; the number of execution-style assassinations reached a record high in 2006. Earlier this year, Mexican President Felipe Calderon sent approximately 3,300 soldiers and federal police officers to the border city in “Operation Tijuana,” part of an ongoing national effort to stem narco-violence.

On the campaign’s inaugural day, federal agents not only conducted a surprise inspection and inventory of municipal police weapons, but also set up random patrols and conducted helicopter overflights. The federal government ordered all municipal police to surrender their guns (2,135 firearms of various calibers) and patrol the streets weaponless. In protest, the police filled their empty gun holsters with slingshots and rocks until their weapons were returned to them after approximately one month of ballistics testing by the military. To date, the Mexican government has not publicly reported any arrest or indictments stemming from the aforementioned testing, and the region continues to be marred by drug and gang violence.

Tijuana is experiencing explosive growth, due both to tourism and to NAFTA-induced industrial development

of the maquiladora (manufacturing) sector. Over 900 maquiladoras, employing approximately 250,000 workers, have been set up in several areas along the border. The government of Mexico has successfully targeted the financial services, automotive and electronics sectors to increase investment, and has streamlined the process to attract even more investors. Maquiladoras account for approximately 35 percent of Mexico’s total imports and nearly 50 percent of total exports.



Tijuana PAO Charles S. Smith

Trucks crossing the Otay Mesa Port of Entry.

The residential housing explosion along the Pacific coast of Baja California is continuing to attract thousands of Americans to live in Mexico, even though non-Mexican citizens cannot constitutionally own property within 50 kilometers (about 31 miles) of the coast. American retirees, students and professionals are among those who are moving to Baja in search of affordable ocean-view, majestic residences. Donald Trump is even getting into the act: he recently announced the construction of the Trump Ocean Resort in Baja, a 525-suite luxury condominium.

Cross-Border Cooperation

Cooperation between U.S. and Mexican border com-

F O C U S

munities is alive and well, fostered by longstanding binational bodies, notably the Border Liaison Mechanism established in 1993. The BLM is chaired by U.S. and Mexican consuls in "sister city" pairs and has proven to be an effective means of dealing with a variety of local issues. These range from accidental violations of sovereignty by law enforcement officials and charges of mistreatment of foreign nationals to coordination of port security.

In that spirit, officials at all levels of government, civic leaders and university students on both sides of the border are working together for the betterment of the entire region. The San Diego Dialogue, the Center for U.S.-Mexico Studies and the Transborder Program are among the many binational

***Cooperation between
U.S. and Mexican border
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Mechanism established
in 1993.***

organizations, based on the U.S. side, working to narrow the economic and cultural divide between the two countries.

The Tijuana-San Diego region is like nowhere else in the world. It is a place where residents can go whale-watching in the morning, catch an afternoon major-league baseball game featuring the San Diego Padres, stay to see the Tijuana Potros playing a Mexican League baseball team in San Diego's Petco Park, and finally return to

Tijuana for tequila shots and margaritas while watching dog races or bullfights in the Playas de Tijuana (Tijuana Beaches) stadium. Almost anything you can imagine can be found here. For all these reasons, Tijuana is one of the best-kept secrets of the Foreign Service. ■

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CONSULATE NOGALES' DEADLY DESERT

AS SECURITY TIGHTENS IN URBAN CENTERS,
THE FLOW OF IMMIGRANTS AND CONTRABAND
IS BEING PUSHED TO MORE REMOTE AREAS.

BY JIM BREDECK

As a first-tour officer on a consular assignment, I imagined my view of Mexico would be formed primarily from a visa interview window. What else would there be to do in this small, dusty post? As it turns out, quite a bit. What I didn't fully realize until I got here was the extent to which Nogales is quite literally ground zero for illegal migration.

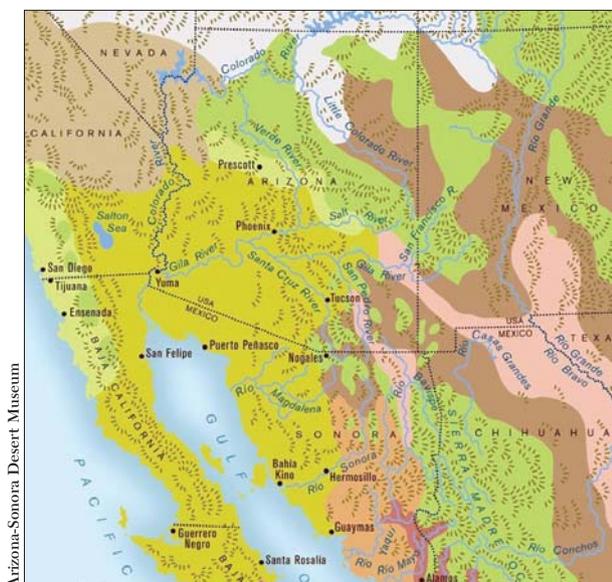
Shortly after my arrival, Principal Officer Cynthia Sharpe asked me to begin educating myself about the terrain and people of the desert corridor, so I could serve as a regional guide for interested private-sector and official visitors. Our consulate receives many requests from U.S. agencies for briefings on border security. In addition, we have worked closely with our public diplomacy colleagues in Embassy Mexico City to design tours of the region for journalists, editorial writers and academic opinionmakers, in an attempt to sensitize the Mexican public to the perils of illegal immigration via the Sonora-Arizona desert corridor.

With scorching temperatures during the day, freezing temperatures at night, scorpions and snakes, and cacti in a variety of shapes and sizes, the natural obstacles found in the Sonoran Desert of northwestern Mexico would

frighten off all but the most determined visitors. Illegal immigrants attempting to enter the United States are a very determined group, however. They have used the Arizona-Mexico border to enter the U.S. for decades, often with tragic results. Recently, an alarming rise in deaths of illegal immigrants has everyone wondering how much deadlier the desert may become.

As double and triple fencing is erected and the U.S. Border Patrol becomes a bigger presence in the urban

Jim Bredeck is a first-tour Foreign Service officer in Nogales.





Benjamin Onsley

A family waits outside a hotel in Altar for sunset, when the traffic to Sasabe picks up. Though the afternoon temperature is 70-80 degrees, they will need the heavy jackets for the frigid night walk ahead.



Benjamin Onsley

Cash is collected and vans are loaded outside a cheap guesthouse in Altar for the 100-kilometer trip to Sasabe.

areas of San Diego and El Paso, the flow of immigrants and contraband is pushed increasingly into the remote desert that lies between them. That trend has allowed several formerly isolated small towns to prosper.

Altar Call

Altar is a nondescript little town a few hours southwest of Nogales. Business there has boomed in recent years, with guest houses and market stalls catering to a new kind of tourist: undocumented immigrants heading north. The small square is filled with groups of intending immigrants waiting for word from scouts ahead to begin moving north. They lounge in the city square, make phone calls back home with instructions to wire money, and purchase dark backpacks or heavy clothing from the kiosks that line the square in preparation for their night walk through the desert. A sad, desperate air of fear and anticipation is everywhere. A Mexican Red Cross trailer is a feature in the square now, its personnel there to attend to the blisters and animal or spider bites sustained by those who have unsuccessfully attempted the crossing.

Along one side of the square is a line of battered vans whose seats have been removed and replaced with narrow benches that accommodate 20 or more passengers. These vehicles, marked "Altar-Sasabe," depart sporadically during the afternoon and then with increasing frequency as dark approaches. The vans depart and drive



Benjamin Onsley

In Sasabe, the gravity of what lies ahead begins to impress itself on prospective migrants, who are transferred to heavy-duty pickup trucks for the journey to the final drop-off points near the border.

north along a dirt toll road on privately-owned ranch land toward the last stop in Mexico: Sasabe.

The End of the Road

Sasabe is many things. It is a no-man's land with the look and feel of a frontier mining town before the law arrived. It is the immigration delta at the end of a river of desperate souls that begins in southern Mexico or even

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further south in Latin America. And it is where the paved highways from the south abruptly end, and contra-band traffic fans out along dozens of dirt trails and cow paths that meander north to the border.

Sasabe is — thankfully — unlike any other place in Mexico. First-time visitors murmur, “It’s like a scene from ‘Mad Max.’” As your vehicle approaches town, bouncing and sliding along the rutted dirt road from Altar, there is the undeniable feeling that you have definitely reached the end of the line — yet turning back is not an option. The entrance to town is lined with the carcasses of rusting automobiles and the remnants of the only industry (now defunct) the region has ever sustained: brickmaking. This is the middle of nowhere, and the last place you would expect growth and new construction. But growth has come here with a vengeance in the form of brothels and bars fueled by illegal immigration and drug trafficking. Satellite dishes are everywhere, yet there is no bank or gas station.

In Sasabe the vans empty, and passengers transfer to



Benjamin Ousley

Before crossing the fence that marks the U.S.-Mexico border, migrants drop trash and unnecessary articles to reduce the load for the dark and perilous passage.

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heavy-duty pickup trucks. These will carry them along roads too damaging for a normal van's suspension to their final drop-off points, where they will wait for sunset to dash across the border. Armed only with gallon jugs of water, and whatever other meager supplies they've managed to fit into their backpacks, the intending immigrants begin walking north, led by their group leader, who is colloquially known as their "coyote" or "pollero." The coyote will quickly abandon the group at the first sign of trouble and often collaborates with the bandits who plague the immigrants as they progress northward.

The formidable desert that lies ahead has been described to the migrants as an "easy walk of a few hours," but the reality soon becomes jarringly apparent. The truth is that it will require a minimum of three days' hard hiking through challenging terrain before any sort of paved road appears, offering the chance of a ride in a pickup truck to a safe house.

Walking at night to avoid detection, travelers greatly

increase their odds of slipping and falling into a canyon. During the day, low-growing scrub mesquite and creosote trees offer little shade. The plastic gallon jug of water each migrant carries is emptied and discarded during the first day, contributing to huge piles of garbage that mark their increasingly desperate passage. It is a race against time, against the Border Patrol and, increasingly, against groups of criminals lurking among the hills.

This recent trend is an indicator of how frustrated the human smuggling and narcotrafficking industries are becoming at enhanced U.S. border security initiatives. As the passage across the border has become more difficult, opportunistic criminals have taken to poaching loads of drugs as they are smuggled into Arizona, and the coyotes sometimes attack the clients of rival human traffickers, holding them hostage for ransom.

Each part of the Mexican border has a different reality. My tour here in Nogales has been a true adventure, as well as a crash course in the heartbreak and dangers of illegal immigration. ■



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EMBRACING CHANGE ON THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

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WHILE NAFTA PROMISED TO TEAR DOWN TRADE BARRIERS, MANY BUSINESS LEADERS BELIEVE THAT THE BORDER ITSELF HAS BECOME AN OBSTACLE.

BY ELIZABETH MARTIN

any Mexicans, Canadians and Americans welcomed the North American Free Trade Agreement as a way to stimulate the economies of all three countries and usher in a new era of growth and progress. In the nearly 14 years that have followed NAFTA's entry into force on Jan. 1, 1994, commerce has become even more global, and technology has revolutionized business in ways that were only beginning to materialize then. These changes, combined with the opportunities created by NAFTA, have made the economies of Mexico and the United States more dependent on each other than ever, to the benefit of U.S. companies and consumers.

U.S. exports to Mexico have increased enormously since the implementation of NAFTA, growing from \$41.6 billion in 1993 to \$134.2 billion in 2006, a 223-percent jump. At the same time, U.S. imports from Mexico have grown fourfold over the same period, going from \$39.9 billion to \$198.3 billion. Overall trade in goods and services across the U.S.-Mexico border now exceeds a billion dollars a day, with commercial trucks carrying 75 to 80 percent of the freight.

Yet while NAFTA promised to tear down trade barriers,

many business leaders in both countries now believe that the border between Mexico and the United States has itself become an obstacle, pointing to excessive commercial inspections and lack of infrastructure at the border. Following the Security and Prosperity Partnership ministerial meeting in March and President George W. Bush's visit with Mexican President Felipe Calderon in Merida, Mexico, the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to balancing security precautions with trade facilitation.

The Weight of Waiting

Particularly in the post-9/11 era, no one questions the importance of customs and security inspections for vehicles and cargo entering the United States. However, the increasingly long wait times such scrutiny requires, affecting not only cargo-laden trucks but also day-trippers crossing the border into the United States, are a concern of business leaders and government officials alike. Often it takes several hours just to reach the U.S. point of inspection at the port of entry. Equally troubling, some U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials say the delays may leave those vehicles more susceptible to security threats. Border communities have also expressed concern about the environmental costs of pollution spewing from engines kept idling in long lines.

Elizabeth Martin, an FSO since 2003, is an economic officer in Mexico City.

Long wait times for trucks seeking to enter the United States may seem like a minor inconvenience, similar to what a typical air traveler might encounter these days. Yet in an economy that has become increasingly dependent on “just-in-time” delivery of goods and services, extended delays mean increased costs for businesses, which translates into increased prices for consumers. For ports of entry like Nogales, where up to four billion pounds of fresh produce enter the U.S. each year, long waits at CBP checkpoints mean spoiled loads and lost revenue.

While border delays most directly affect southern border cities such as El Paso or Nogales, companies and consumers throughout the United States feel the effects. Three of the top six U.S. states in terms of volume of surface trade with Mexico are Michigan, Illinois and Ohio. Thus, reducing the amount of time trucks spend in those lines will result in fresher produce and cheaper products for all Americans.

Business leaders often stress the need for increased U.S. and Mexican infrastructure at land ports of entry into the United States — in terms of more inspection lanes and booths, and additional customs inspectors. CBP facilities were built decades ago, before NAFTA fostered the growth of binational trade, including Mexico-based maquiladoras (factories) and other industries such as car manufacturers, to produce goods for the American market, creating an enormous upsurge in the number of trucks using the POEs.

Not all border-crossing problems can be blamed on infrastructure, however. Some businesses have been slow to alter their routines to take advantage of extended hours at ports of entry or Department of Homeland Security programs, such as Fast and Secure Trade and the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, that give certified companies faster access to POE inspection facilities. In addition, the lack of road infrastructure to permit

dedicated FAST lanes on the Mexican side reduces the benefits of that program. Personnel shortages and lack of coordination between banks (for customs payments), government agencies and businesses along the border also compound the problem.

Complicating any attempt to improve the flow of people and goods across the border is the sheer number of stakeholders involved. Keeping a single American POE operational involves an alphabet soup of government officials, often including: the CBP and other DHS entities, the Centers for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Agriculture and the applicable state department of transportation, just to name a few. Nor does this include the many financial establishments, including customs brokers and banks, involved in moving commodities across the border

Creative Solutions

Individual POEs have used community support and innovative methods to address these issues. One example of a community group that has made a difference is the Greater Nogales-Santa Cruz County Port Authority in Nogales. This coalition encompasses city and county representatives, the local chamber of commerce and tourism council, as well as local CBP officials, the Arizona Department of Transportation, local Mexican government representatives and the U.S. consulate in Nogales, Sonora. These organizations recently worked together to lobby Congress and key agencies in Washington to win funding for the reconfiguration of a key Nogales POE.

The El Paso-Ciudad Juarez community has also benefited from the efforts of grassroots organizations working together with official, nongovernmental and private-sector stakeholders. The West Texas Advisory Group, formed in 2006 by the director of the El Paso CBP field office, has been an effective forum for addressing issues of mutual concern and planning binational strategies to mitigate problems in border communities. For instance, the group succeeded in brokering a compromise between the CBP and local businesses over the planned renovation of the busy Paso del Norte Bridge. By working together, the group ensured that the much-needed renovation would not harm El Paso businesses that depend on shoppers from across the border.

Where resources for optimum border-crossing streamlining are realistically limited, such local community efforts have helped to clear up the worst bottlenecks. ■

Snapshot of a Port of Entry

The four ports of entry in Nogales processed 16.6 million legal travelers during Fiscal Year 2006. To put this statistic in perspective, the John F. Kennedy and Los Angeles International Airports handle a combined 18 million travelers per year, without the additional worry of inspecting passenger and commercial vehicles. And the traffic Nogales sees pales in comparison to larger POEs such as Laredo and Otay Mesa.

ONTARIO & THE U.S.: CLOSE TIES, COMPLEX ISSUES

C

IF THE PROVINCE WERE A COUNTRY, IT WOULD RANK AS THE UNITED STATES' FOURTH-LARGEST TRADING PARTNER, AFTER CANADA, CHINA AND MEXICO.

By AARON HONN AND JOHN NAY

Canada and the United States are a bit like fraternal twins. Each has different identities and personalities, but they share a heritage and a history that make for a close, vital and distinctive relationship. That is especially true in the province of Ontario, home to Embassy Ottawa and Consulate General Toronto. Ontario showcases the full complexity and depth of these “family ties,” including the longest border with the United States of any Canadian province or Mexican state, the largest trading relationship and, arguably, the single most important border crossing in the world.

Uniquely, the U.S.-Ontario border is entirely a water boundary, so the relationship has developed by crossing over or under rivers and lakes or via air connections. Ontario has 14 bridges for automobile border crossings as well as an important car tunnel, plus two rail tunnels, a separate rail bridge and at least five regularly scheduled ferry crossings. Six of the car bridges and all but one of the other crossings lie in southern Ontario.

Those bridges, tunnels, rail links and airports provide the infrastructure for a truly massive trading relation-

ship, with over \$750 million in trade flowing between the United States and Ontario every day, representing over half of all U.S.-Canada trade. In fact, if the province were a country, it would rank as the United States' fourth-largest trading partner, after Canada, China and Mexico. Some 42 million vehicles, including 8.3 million trucks, crossed between the United States and Ontario in 2006.

By far the most economically important crossings are the bridges and tunnels into Detroit and Port Huron, Mich., and the four bridges near Buffalo, N.Y. Notably, more trade crosses the 78-year-old Ambassador Bridge linking Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Mich., than is exchanged between the U.S. and Germany, or than moves across any other border crossing in the world.

Unique Issues

Ontario has become the largest motor-vehicle assembler in North America, surpassing even Michigan. Free trade in autos and parts has been a reality since the signing of the Auto Pact in 1965, and so many parts go back and forth across the border that many cars have effectively crossed the border seven times before being sold. Because auto and parts manufacturers have gone to a “just-in-time” delivery system, any bridge closures or delays quickly disrupt manufacturing operations and

Aaron Honn, an FSO since 2006, serves in Toronto as a political-economic/consular officer. John Nay, an FSO since 1977, is consul general there.

cost millions of dollars. Other shippers find that the shortest route between New York and Michigan is through southern Ontario; they never stop in Canada at all except for customs inspections.

Toronto's Pearson International Airport and Ottawa's Macdonald-Cartier International Airport are two of eight airports in Canada (and less than a handful of others around the world) to host Department of Homeland Security/Customs and Border Protection officers, who pre-clear air travelers to the United States prior to boarding flights. Nearly nine million passengers flew through Pearson to or from the United States in 2006, making it America's fifth-busiest airport port of entry. Pearson also handles 40 percent of Canada's air cargo.

For almost a century the International Joint Commission, established in 1909 under the Boundary Waters Treaty, has served as a model for managing and resolving maritime border disputes. To protect the quality of our shared water resources and ensure equitable sharing of this vital resource, Washington and Ottawa have signed several bilateral agreements. These include a

***More trade crosses the
78-year-old Ambassador
Bridge linking Windsor,
Ontario, and Detroit, Mich.,
than any other border
point in the world.***

1950 treaty governing sharing of water from the Niagara River to generate power on both sides of the border, while ensuring sufficient water to maintain Niagara Falls; and the 1972 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which commits Canada and the U.S. to maintaining the integrity of that ecosystem and cleaning up polluted sites.

Canadians do not need visas to travel to the U.S., of course, but Toronto visa officers still have much to do. Toronto is perhaps the world's most diverse city; nearly 50 percent of Torontonians were born outside of Canada (compared, for example, to the 36 percent of New Yorkers who are foreign-born). Non-Canadian applicants from around the world — over 60,000 representing some 172 countries in 2006 — come to Consulate Toronto to apply for U.S. visas. This makes our non-immigrant visa work more varied and challenging in its own way than perhaps at any other post.

Toronto also is the only U.S. Foreign Service post with major league baseball and an NBA team, and both Toronto and Ottawa host storied NHL franchises. This means that consular and CBP officers in both cities sup-



Courtesy of Embassy Ottawa

The International Bridge links Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, to Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. It crosses over the Soo Locks, which connect Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes.

port movements of nationals from all over the world on these teams and the teams they play, as well as assisting foreign fans who want to see baseball, NFL, NHL or NBA games in Detroit or Buffalo.

Toronto and several other Ontario municipalities also send their trash across the border to Michigan landfills under contract with private companies, a longstanding thorn in the side of the state's residents. On a recent trip to the border, in a span of 10 minutes we counted 16 empty container trucks returning from Michigan. Restricting the flow of this kind of politically sensitive commerce may not be consistent with U.S. free-trade obligations under NAFTA and to the World Trade Organization, however. In addition, any attempt to impose controls might prompt reciprocal restrictions on the export of hazardous waste for destruction in Canada by Canadian specialty waste-management firms.

Finally, land claims and border-crossing rights by First Nations (the Canadian term for the country's many indigenous peoples) present unique challenges for tradi-

tional bilateral diplomacy — and perhaps nowhere more so than in Ontario. The territory of one First Nation, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, actually straddles the U.S.-Canada border, including portions of New York, Ontario and Quebec. Treaties dating back to the Revolutionary War—era grant these groups the right to cross freely between the United States and Canada. Canadian First Nations members generally use their official status cards as identification when crossing into the U.S., as many are reluctant to acknowledge Canadian government sovereignty by using a passport. Current status cards do not meet the new DHS requirements for secure documentation, however, so First Nations members hope a new secure status card can be issued and will be accepted.

These are but a few examples of why some academics are using the term “intermestic” to refer to the way these international issues become heated, politicized domestic issues. Ontario is certainly a case study for that type of bilateral relations. ■

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A VANCOUVER VIGNETTE

F

GEOGRAPHIC ANOMALIES LIKE POINT ROBERTS, WASH., UNDERSCORE THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY AND CREATIVE THINKING ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER.

BY LEWIS LUKENS

For two years now, I have been getting my mail twice a week through a post office box in Point Roberts, Wash. Its 4.8 square miles are completely cut off from the rest of the United States, accessible only through Canada. I finally visited this geographic anomaly recently with our locally hired, cleared American employee who normally makes the trip.

During the 1840s and 1850s, Washington and London negotiated over where to draw the border between what were then “Oregon Country” and the British “Columbia District.” The U.S. proposed drawing the line at the 49th parallel, but Britain wanted to maintain control over all of Vancouver Island, especially its main city, Victoria, which sits near the 48th parallel. Both sides finally agreed to draw the border at the 49th parallel all the way to the water, then drop down below Vancouver Island and head out to sea through the Juan de Fuca Straits. In the process, the southern tip of the Tsawwassen Peninsula was cut off from what became British Columbia, remaining part of the United States.

Point Roberts is 22 miles south of Vancouver, and on

Lewis Lukens, an FSO since 1989, is consul general in Vancouver. He has previously served in Baghdad, Dublin, Sydney, Abidjan and Guangzhou, as well as in the State Department and the White House.

a good day you can get there from our consulate in 40 minutes. It’s not big — roughly two miles north to south and three miles east to west. Almost 1,500 people live there, and many workers commute in each day from the “Lower 48.” So how does the place survive economically? In a word, Canada.

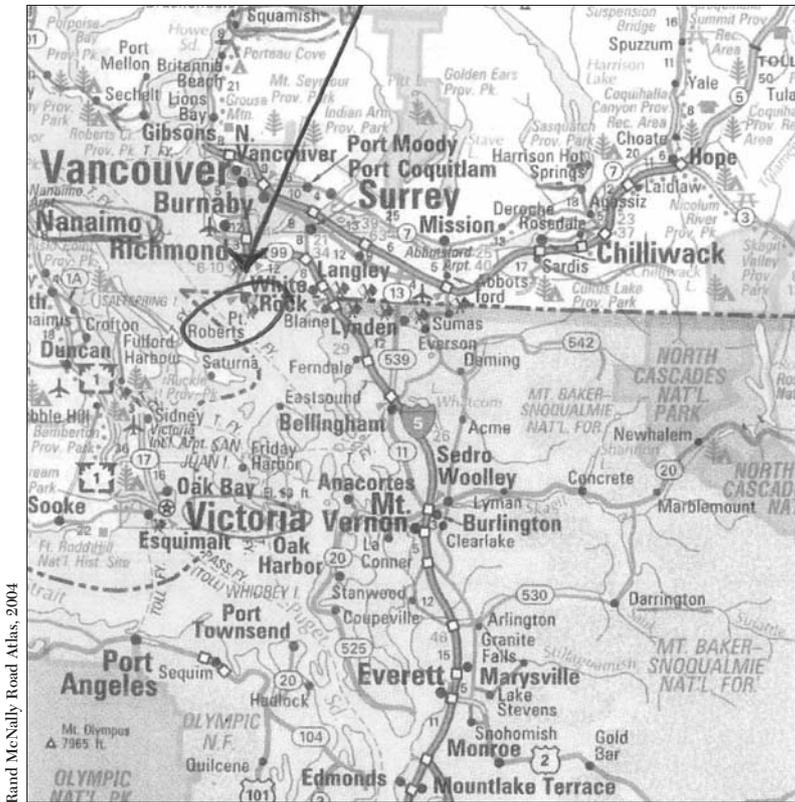
On the day I traveled down from Vancouver, roughly 30 cars waited in line to cross the border. They were all Canadian residents heading south to pick up mail, buy cheap(er) gasoline or pick up groceries.

A Booming Business

Point Roberts is home to a few motels and restaurants, one grocery store, one liquor store and several gas stations. It also boasts a U.S. post office and almost a dozen private mail outlets, all of which do a thriving business renting mailboxes and charging for package mailing and pickup. A steady stream of British Columbia residents flows into Point Roberts daily to take advantage of U.S. domestic mailing rates. (Except for the post office, every commercial enterprise in Point Roberts readily accepts payment in Canadian currency, some at par.)

The U.S. postmaster commutes daily from “the mainland,” making roughly a one-hour drive from Ferndale, Wash., across the U.S.-Canada border in Blaine, Wash., through several of Vancouver’s suburbs, and back across

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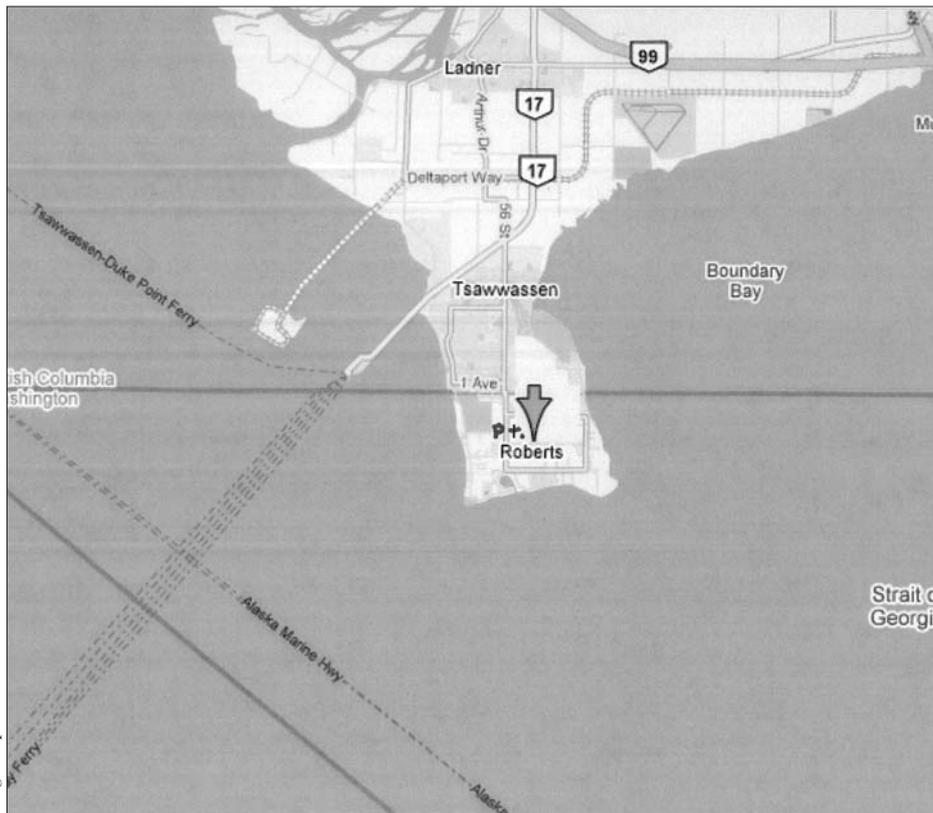


Rand McNally Road Atlas, 2004

the border into Point Roberts. The town has a small primary school serving kindergarten through 2nd grade, while older children ride the bus daily to Blaine, 30 miles away. Like the postmaster, they cross the international boundary four times daily.

Point Roberts is certainly the most visible, but not the only, anomaly along our border with Canada. With the introduction of a new passport requirement for everyone — American and Canadian — entering the U.S., Point Roberts has become a case study for all the points along the border that would be uniquely affected by the new law. Here, where high school children cross into Canada to get to their schools in the U.S., parents of teenage children grasp more quickly than most the impracticality of having their children safeguard a secure document like a passport in their backpacks.

There are similar cases in other parts of the United States' northern border. From



Google Map Data

New Brunswick's Campobello Island, Canadians have to drive through Maine to get to the mainland. The Akwesasne First Nations Reserve straddles the U.S.-Canada border (and, up to now, members of the Mohawk nation there have had their own entry lanes and travel documents). Another case is the Thousand Islands region, along the St. Lawrence Seaway, where boating is the principal means of transportation between the two countries.

All these anomalies underscore the need for flexibility and creative thinking on the part of Canadian and American officials on both sides of the border. ■

FOREIGN ASSIGNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

T

he high that February afternoon was minus-22 degrees Fahrenheit. We had not seen another car on the road for at least two hours. Over in the distance a small blue elevation across a snow-swept field was grandiosely known as the Turtle Mountains.

Brad Kirbyson, the consulate's political-economic specialist, and I were about halfway through our two-day visit to all 12 of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection posts located between Pembina and Antler along the North Dakota-Manitoba border, when we stopped on a stretch of gravel road to take in the view.

That North Dakota would seem like the end of the earth never occurred to me in my prior assignment, when I was walking the dusty streets of Timbuktu. Still, exoticism is in the eye of the beholder. And making sure one has a passport to be able to get the best chicken-and-fish dinner in five counties is pretty exotic.

Fortunately, this is not a tale of a sudden blizzard sweeping in and our having to spend a night awaiting

Mary Speer, an FSO since 1986, is consul and principal officer at the American Presence Post in Winnipeg. Brad Kirbyson is the post's political-economic specialist.

MAKING SURE ONE HAS A PASSPORT TO BE ABLE TO GET THE BEST CHICKEN-AND-FISH DINNER IN FIVE COUNTIES IS PRETTY EXOTIC.

BY MARY SPEER AND BRAD KIRBYSON

the Mounties to dig us out. We may have been out of cell-phone range, but our old Jeep got us to where we were going.

Together with our counterparts across Canada, we were visiting each of the border-crossing posts in our district. This trip was followed three weeks later by a second one to cover the seven border posts between Lancaster, Minn., and International Falls, Minn. Any fantasy I may have had of a Foreign Service tour at one of these border stations to catch up on my reading was quickly dispelled when I learned about the full workload of truck and passenger vehicles regularly passing through ports seemingly so distant from any major city. The volume of traffic may not be high at some facilities, but the value of the loads passing through even the smaller ones makes it worthwhile to keep them open.

Prior to 9/11, most of these posts had one person per shift, catering almost exclusively to local traffic. A majority of the facilities were identical brick buildings dating from the 1930s that have since been abandoned. (Local agents now commute from nearby towns.) Not worth the expense to move, the old buildings mainly provide shelter for local critters escaping from the cold. Nothing else was in sight except for the Canadian border station just up the road — or down it, depending on how you view the world.

Changing with the Times

Every section of the U.S.-Canada border seems to inspire an anecdote that, to someone's mind, is reason enough to keep crossing procedures as they always have been. Yet most people we encountered on both sides of this prairie section of the border acknowledge that a changed world situation requires updated procedures. At every port, officers were now documenting 100 percent of arrivals. As Brad noted, after a CBP official greeted a driver with "Did you get the price you wanted on that heifer, Andy?," he or she would then dutifully ask for Andy's ID and type the data into the computer. It never felt as if this were a show for our benefit.

Most officers expressed gratitude that a machine-readable passport obviated the need to tediously enter in all the required information. Finding a high degree of professionalism among officers at all the ports, we felt assured that appropriate judgments would be made within the discretionary authority of each officer to permit the necessary flow of traffic in anomalous situations. At one port, Sunday morning was the busiest time as members of a local church crossed back and forth, holding services some weeks on one side of the border and some weeks on the other.

While we were assured that a way would be worked out to deal with these anomalies over time, these situations do demonstrate that some consideration has to be given to local practices in areas where a line across a map is simply an arbitrary designation. For example, the closest hospital for Canadians living across the border from Roseau, Minn., is an hour away. Emergency cases can be taken to the U.S. hospital 10 minutes from the border. Because the port is closed from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m., ambulance drivers can obtain a key to the gate for night emergencies. The driver just opens the gate and proceeds to the hospital, reporting to the Border Patrol after the fact.

Working the Angles

Nothing could be more arbitrary in its boundaries

Prior to 9/11, most of these Canadian border-crossing posts had just one person per shift, catering almost exclusively to local traffic.

than a little section of Minnesota that sticks above the 49th parallel at Lake of the Woods. The Northwest Angle, as it is known, is the product of imperfect 18th-century geographic knowledge incorporated into various treaties, and the lack of any resolve to straighten out the line. This folded envelope of land has been held in trust by the Red Lake

Indian Reservation since 1945. Accessible only by boat or by land through Canada, it raises challenges for border security, but may not be the significant risk suggested by Anderson Cooper's investigative journalism piece several years ago on CNN.

In any case, CBP officials play down concerns, point-



Courtesy of Embassy Ottawa

The Peace Bridge connects Buffalo, N.Y., and Fort Erie, Canada.

ing to the area's isolation and the difficult journey from it to the United States mainland. Even if terrorists could get to the Angle, the only potential targets are a few fishing camps, and they would still need to access the mainland. There are also many places in the Boundary Waters region between Lake of the Woods and Lake Superior that would be easier to cross than the long and treacherous stretch from the Angle. And even those easier routes would require a knowledge of wilderness and winter survival potentially too bothersome to acquire for the likely result. After all, many a seasoned local has taken a wrong turn and found him-

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self or herself lost in a cove.

The International Peace Garden is another border anomaly. This 2,300-acre park straddles the U.S. and Canadian borders in the Turtle Mountain region and has been a symbol of peace and cooperation for the past 75 years. Established in 1932, it is a popular tourist destination and features a pre-eminent summer music camp. Visitors are not inspected at a port of entry in either country before entering the Peace Garden, and everyone is free to mingle freely while inside.

Fans of intrigue imagine people meeting face-to-face in the Peace Garden who, for some reason, are not permitted to cross the border to accomplish the same end. While CBP officials consider such possibilities and make contingency plans for them, it is highly unlikely that "bad guys" would go to such lengths to enter the park when long, unpopulated stretches of land would allow clandestine activities to take place in any number of locations.

However, it is possible that some Americans may not

be aware that they have left the country when they enter the Garden from the U.S. side, and so may not be carrying a passport or the necessary documentation needed to re-enter the United States.

Although no one seems to think this will present a major difficulty even when the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative goes into effect, Customs and Border Protection officers realize that they will have to establish a way to keep American citizens from being stuck in the Garden like Charlie on the MTA.

Working Together

What the northern border has working in its favor is the diligence of local residents, well aware of what is happening in their regions, and good support from Border Patrol officers, equipped with snowmobiles and the recent acquisition of reconnaissance aircraft.

Our section of the border, as would be the case further west, is located near reservations. The United States, unlike Canada, acknowledges the Jay Treaty and



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permits Indians to cross the border freely if they can prove that they are at least 50-percent Native American by blood. CPB officials are concerned that such determinations are being given just for the asking. One does not have to be aboriginal by tradition to receive a tribal card, which is also available to spouses and other categories of individual. Concerned that some people may take advantage of the Jay Treaty exemption to engage in illegal cross-border activities, CBP officials are interested in how Canadian First Nations peoples will be treated under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

When the WHTI rules come into effect, a passport or other specialized document will replace the previous birth certificate and photo identification needed for entry to the United States. Under the new system, it seems certain that U.S. Native Americans will be treated like any other American citizen, so they will be required to use a passport. What documentation will be required for native peoples resident within Canadian territory must still be determined.

Ten miles north of Roseau (population 2,000) and three miles south of South Junction, Manitoba (population 50) is the Roseau port of entry. This enormous building, with at least 40 workstations in one of two areas, was built as a pilot project with the expectation that U.S. and Canadian Customs could share the same building. Objections to the carrying of firearms or some other hurdle has kept the Canadians from occupying "their" half of the building, so for the time being, it stands virtually empty.

Still, this building, one of the last stops on our trip, symbolized for us the ongoing U.S.-Canadian conversation on how best to operate a secure border between our two countries. Its large glass windows, looking both north and south across the pine forest, conveyed an open and airy feeling. The intent expressed in the port's architecture mirrors that of those of us representing the United States on the northern side of the border: to work side-by-side with our Canadian counterparts. ■

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HOME TO GOVERNMENT PEOPLE ON THE MOVE
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CANADIANS: A BORDER PEOPLE

W

EIGHTY PERCENT OF CANADA'S POPULATION LIVES IN A BAND THAT IS ONLY ONE HUNDRED MILES WIDE, DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO THE U.S. BORDER.

BY CHARLES F. DORAN

hy has Canada made such a fuss over the U.S. decision to insist on passports at the border? In principle, the new requirement applies to all foreigners coming into the United States. But in practice, it applies equally to Americans going abroad, because they will need that passport to get back into the United States. There is no inequity here. So why are Canadians so perturbed?

This issue hinges, I believe, on a concept I first encountered more than 30 years ago. During a research seminar at Trinity College, University of Toronto, I heard a historian refer to Canadians as "a border people." Let me try to explicate this very Canadian sensibility.

A Band in Name Only

Start with the simple matter of geo-economics and demography. Although Canada looks on the map to be a very imposing territory, larger than nearly all other nation-states and with a length of coastline second to none, in human terms it is a very different kind of place. Eighty percent of Canada's population lives in a band that is only one hundred miles wide, directly

adjacent to the U.S. border, stretching over 3,000 miles.

Much of the country is cold and inhospitable, corresponding to Voltaire's dismissive quip about Canada as "quelques arpents de neige" (a few acres of snow). But within the zone straddling its southern border, Canada includes wine-growing locales that are much warmer than most of the northern, continental United States (e.g., Victoria and Niagara-on-the-Lake).

One must keep in mind, however, that the swath of Canada containing its major cities is discontinuous and truncated, interrupted by huge expanses of territory virtually empty of people but containing gigantic lakes, sprawling forests, broad prairies and intimidating mountain ranges. Even more than in the United States, the population of Canada is concentrated in its great cities: Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa-Gatineau, Calgary, Quebec City, Winnipeg and Halifax. These urban centers are isolated beads on a string, not homogeneous distributions of people and economic enterprise within a unified zone.

As in the United States, and despite the Canadian penchant for owning a "cottage on the lake," only about 1 percent of the Canadian population lives on farms. Manufacturing and services are spread out among the population centers, although Toronto has emerged with

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the richest share. The very large mines and stupendous reserves of petroleum in the oil sands are concentrated in the far west. Furthermore, the Canadian economy is drawn in two directions: not only east and west, but north and south toward the United States.

Two further characterizations of the Canadian polity shed light on the border mentality of its people. Since its founding by Cartier and other early French explorers, and notwithstanding the important participation of its native peoples, Canada is primarily the product of two founding groups: those who speak predominantly French and live in Quebec (and a few other places such as along the Ottawa River in Ontario and in Acadia), and those who live in the remainder of Canada and who mainly speak English. Of course, immigration has added millions of new Canadians who often do not speak either of the two official languages. Indeed, Canada prides itself on the idea that individual immigrants do not need to give up their former cultural identity when they become Canadian, thus distinguishing it from the presumed “melting pot” below its southern border. Canada is bilingual but also multicultural. These new Canadians add important talent and diversity to the population mix, not only in Quebec but in every other province, especially Ontario and British Columbia.

The Impact of Regionalism

In part because of the nature of Canada’s population distribution and its huge expanse, very identifiable regions have emerged that tend to further truncate contiguity within the narrow population band. Parts of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Quebec have more in common with Maine than with the rest of Canada. Regardless of state or provincial designation, for example, the Calgary Stampede is the best rodeo in the entire western circuit, bar none.

Similarly, the idiosyncrasies of the people living in Vancouver have more in common with those in Seattle and Portland than with “the people living on the other side of the mountains” in Canada, to invert a quotation from the late Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. And the Winnipeg Royal Ballet is as acclaimed in Minneapolis

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as it is in Toronto. Nevertheless, Canadians are Canadians and Americans are Americans.

Despite some protestations to the contrary regarding Ottawa from among those who value sovereignty (separatism, to most Americans) above all else, in social and cultural terms Canada is quite a decentralized place. And that decentralization aggravates an already present sense of vulnerability.

This sense of political and cultural vulnerability is not a concern about losing citizens to the United States. Immigration has always been a very open process on both sides of the border, with, it is true, more Canadians moving south than Americans moving north. The sense of vulnerability is much deeper and goes to the very heart of bilateral relations. This sense of vulnerability is about identity and culture, and whether Canada can be a real country, given both its geographic configuration as a people and its proximity and subordination to things American.

Conversely, this sense of vulnerability only accentuates the awareness for Canadians of being a “border people.” If Canadians were more contiguous within the primary population band, or if the awareness of regional and cultural differences were less prominent, they would be less conscious of their border status. Likewise, if the zone were wider or shorter, Canada would feel more like a “normal” country to its inhabitants. Instead, while Canadians are a very cosmopolitan people, often sending their children abroad to obtain at least some of their education and traveling a great deal, the citizens of Victoria normally have not visited Halifax, and vice versa.

But they *are* accustomed to crossing the U.S. border whenever a gallon of gas is cheaper on the other side, or to visit relatives or neighbors. They do so to catch a plane, or to transport the wheat harvest when the distance is shorter than not crossing the border. Americans living along the border do the very same thing. For a professor teaching at St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y., taking a plane out of Durval Airport in Montreal is a whole lot easier than taking that plane out of JFK in New York City. In the aggregate, these border crossings amount to millions of travelers a year, even though only a relatively small subset of residents on either side of the

border may be conducting repeated crossings.

The Cost of Doing Business

The Canadian economy needs access to American business and American visits as much as individual Canadians need, and want, to get to the U.S. side of the border. A border people is dependent for its prosperity, and for its psychological as well as its physical well-being, on its ability to cross the border freely, openly and without fear of closure, however temporary such a capricious interruption may be.

In an age of “just in time” commerce, the automobile industry, still one of the most important generators of high-end manufacturing jobs in Canada, cannot lose an hour if it is to compete with Asian efficiency (Japan) and low wages (China). The border must be invisible. For if it exists in more than a pro forma sense, then it imposes what is called “border risk” on the investor who, in crossing that line, must contend with slowdowns and red tape. No one understands better than a border people how obstacles will work to their economic disadvantage. Both local and foreign investors will tend to avoid investment in the neighboring country if the risk is too high.

Thus, efforts to make the border “smart,” by expediting those who are regular and familiar crossers, pre-inspecting cargoes on each side of the border, and using the latest in monitoring technology to detect terrorist materials or terrorists themselves, are the most plausible of actions, costs permitting. Stockwell Day, the Canadian minister of public safety, and Michael Chertoff, head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, hold more than the physical safety of their countrymen in their hands; they administer programs that affect jobs and determine incomes.

Asymmetries with the United States

The risks that a border people may fear if their ability to cross national boundaries is interrupted are exacerbated by the further reality of asymmetries. The United States has 10 times as many people as Canada, generates 10 times its gross domestic product and wields immeasurably greater military power. Moreover, the vast majority of Canada’s foreign trade is with a single country, the United States. Notwithstanding the territorial security that the U.S. defense presence provides, and the absence of any immediate external threat to Canada, such awesome one-sidedness might make any border

people wary. And it does.

This reality probably enhances Canada’s desire for autonomy and self-identity, though this sometimes takes the form of a nationalism that attempts to define itself in terms of whatever the United States is not.

When the British Empire collapsed, Canada lost its chief counterweight to the United States. On the one hand, Canada turned to its southern neighbor for protection and prosperity, and enjoyed a security umbrella at low cost to itself. On the other hand, it felt overshadowed and dependent on Washington. The unsuccessful effort under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in the 1970s to create an offset to perceived American dominance by a “Third Option” of trade diversification with Europe proved to be an embarrassing failure. The European Economic Community, as it was initially called, wanted too much in return for Canadian association.

Sharing its single primary border with the most powerful country in the world affords Canada most attractive commercial opportunities. Yet notwithstanding Canada’s penchant for contributing to international organizations, and absent meaningful territorial contact with any third country, this proximity also condemns it to perhaps the greatest sense of psychic subordination experienced by any nation-state on Earth.

The North-South Border Quandary

Now we return to the question I posed at the beginning of this essay: Why do Canadians object to the requirement that they produce passports to enter the United States?

From the American perspective, the border with Canada and the one with Mexico are juridical equals. Thus, in order to avoid invidious contrasts, they must be treated equally in political terms. But from the perspective of Canada, this is a false equation. The overwhelming difference between its border with the United States and the U.S.-Mexico boundary is the flow of people. According to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, at least 10 million Mexicans, and quite possibly more, have crossed the American border illegally in the last decade. The same level and rate of illegal immigration surely is not true of Canadians.

Admittedly, Canada tends to soft-pedal the fact that over the past century, millions of its citizens have become Americans, sometimes after supposedly temporary visits that drifted into permanent residence.

However, the process of entry and eventual citizenship for Canadians is quite regularized. Because the predominant U.S. issue involving Mexico is the status of its millions of illegal entrants to the United States, an issue that does not exist on the Canadian side, it is understandable that Canada does not want the United States to think of its southern and northern borders concerning this issue as though they were identical.

Moreover, in the age of terrorism, because identification of individuals posing a security threat to the United States is paramount, the immigration issue becomes even more sensitized. The problem here from the Canadian viewpoint is not that illegal Mexican immigrants possess criminal records. Most do not. They come to the United States for one reason, to work. And they work hard. Rather, the threat for the United States, as Canada sees it, is that in this mass of illegal immigration, a few terrorists could slip in as well.

Given this reality, the United States may adopt a single stringent approach to screening the flow of immigration across all its borders, even though the problem is far less severe to the north than in the south. And if it does, Canada will lose the benefits of cross-border mobility.

While admitting differences in the quality of law enforcement north and south of the United States, the American concern is with possible terrorist infiltration in all three countries. In Canada some suspicious groups have raised considerable money to fund their foreign operations, a fact that local law enforcement officers are, of course, well aware of. Yet the rejection by the Canadian public and by members of the country's elites of the very idea that Canada could be used for such purposes makes the American equation of the terrorist threat from the north and from the south far easier to defend.

Still, for a border people the U.S. insistence on the use of passports at the 49th parallel has a decidedly retro feel. It is as though American thinking about globalization and about North American economic integration has suddenly been reversed. Passports are cumbersome and out of keeping with the electronic age, particularly for a country that, in large part, invented information technology. And with the U.S. instituting new access controls, North America seems to be moving in the opposite direction from the European Union, where the Schengen Agreement has facilitated travel around the continent.

Caught Between NAFTA and 9/11

For most of the long interlude of Liberal Party rule since 1945, partially offset by the prairie populism of the Progressive-Conservative governments of John Diefenbaker and Joe Clark, Canada was dead set against "continentalism," as any form of North American integration was then called. The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which eventually led to the North American Free Trade Agreement, was therefore as close to a "revolution of alliances" as North America has ever come.

Surely the psychic impact of the death of anti-continentalism for the border people of Canada was as traumatic culturally and politically as the British Conquest (1760) was for Quebec, or the end of British colonial tutelage and the beginning of independence (1867) for Canada as a whole. Reversing many assumptions about the origins of economic growth, association with the United States, the viability of Canadian commercial enterprises and the capacity to compete internationally, the Mulroney government (1984-1993) charted a bold new course for Canada despite real risks.

At its urging, Canadians placed their faith in the strength of the American economy and in their perpetual and undiluted access to it, both in terms of trade and finance. Still a separate country politically and culturally, Canada irrevocably tied its economic future to a faith in the openness and prosperity of the United States. Then came the attacks of Sept. 11.

That the shock of 9/11 for the United States in security terms was gargantuan and lasting is undeniable. But it generated consternation to the north, as well, albeit for somewhat different reasons. Not only was Canada now concerned about its own territorial vulnerability to terrorist attack, but it began to doubt the heretofore comfortable assumption that its great neighbor to the south was impregnable. Far worse, for a border people, was the matter of what the United States would decide to do to bolster its own security.

Indeed, then-U.S. Ambassador to Canada Paul Celucci declared "Security trumps trade," as did other American officials, including Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y. However valid its underlying argument for stimulating action to shore up defenses against terrorism, what did this statement imply for a border people who had put their faith in the perpetual openness of the American border with respect to the movement of Canadian goods,

services and people, as envisioned in the North American Free Trade Agreement? Was Canada's economic future in jeopardy not only because of the possibility of terrorist actions, but also because of the American effort to deter such actions at the border? Abruptly, all of the confidence Ottawa had placed in the unbroken web of economic enterprise in North America appeared to be called into question.

From the American perspective, no such doubts were warranted. Washington continues to maintain that North America can have both security and trade simultaneously if we accelerate the application of technology to monitor and examine goods and personnel at the border without imposing undue restrictions on the movement of either. Furthermore, when the United States sought enhanced territorial security, Canada was regarded as inside the circle, not outside it. Greater territorial secu-

***Can the United States
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security without
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urity was thought of not as an obstacle to economic prosperity but as an essential parallel objective.

Placed in the larger historical context of dynamic change, and caught between the forces of NAFTA and the forces of 9/11, Canadians ask a strategic question: Are we in North America moving toward a greater

openness of borders, greater economic interdependence and greater efficiency through exchanges and economies of scale across those borders? Or are we moving in the opposite direction, toward greater inwardness, greater emphasis on internal security even at the cost of isolation, and tighter restrictions on mobility of all kinds? In short, can the United States really strengthen security without sacrificing openness?

These are the questions that a border people quietly but insistently raises, and thereby induces the rest of us to contemplate. ■

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

(required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1) Publication Title: Foreign Service Journal 2) Publication No. 01463543 3) Filing Date: October 1, 2007 4) Issue Frequency: monthly with July/August combined 5) Number of Issues Published Annually: 11 6) Annual subscription price: \$40.00 7) Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 8) Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters of General Business Officer of Publisher: 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 9) Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor and Senior Editor: Publisher: American Foreign Service Association, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990; Editor: Steven Alan Honley, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990; Senior Editor: Susan B. Maitra, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 10) Owner: American Foreign Service Association, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 11) Known Bondholders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: none 12) For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates: the purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: (1) has not changed during preceding 12 months 13) Publication's Name: Foreign Service Journal 14) Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: October 2007 15) Extent and Nature of Circulation: Average Number of Copies of Each Issue During Preceding 12 months: A. Total Number of Copies: 16,000 B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales: 0 (2) Mail Subscription: 15,300 C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 15,300 D. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary and Other Free): 175 E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail: 270 F. Total Free Distribution: 445 G. Total Distribution: 15,745 H. Copies Not Distributed (1) Office use, Leftovers, Spoiled: 255 (2) Returns from news Agents: 0 I. Total: 16,000 J. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 98% Actual Number of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date A. Total number of copies: 16,000 B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales: 0 (2) Mail subscription: 15,300 C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 15,300 D. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary and Other Free): 195 E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail: 250 F. Total Free Distribution: 545 G. Total Distribution: 15,845 H. copies Not Distributed: (1) Office Use, Leftover, Spoiled: 155 (2) Returns from news Agents: 0 Total: 16,000 Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 98%

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (signed) *Andrew Kidd*, Business Manager

BEST SERVED COLD

TEN YEARS AFTER THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA, AN AMERICAN REPORTER HAS A UNIQUE ENCOUNTER WITH THE ONGOING PROCESS OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE.

BY ROBERT GRIBBIN

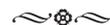
Under a bright blue sky the light breeze roiled the stalks of grass on the sun-dappled hill. The idyllic scene, however, was the setting for a long-running sequence of nasty, emotional, heart-wrenching dramas that played out every few days. Five solemn citizens — three men, two women — sat behind a table arranged under several massive eucalyptus trees. A crowd of several hundred spectators splayed out on school benches, their own chairs, or on the ground around them. Gacaca (community) court was in session.

A freelance stringer, I had come to Rwanda some 10 years after its terrible genocide to see for myself — and to get a good story — of how justice was being delivered. My interpreter, Emile, explained that these community courts

were designed to handle the less severe cases. “Less severe?” I asked. “Yes,” he replied. “Not so many murderers, but those who have confessed and those who supported or profited from genocide in other ways.”

Emile was from this region 50 miles southwest of the capital and had chosen this hillside to visit because he said the case against Evariste Nahimana was odd. He was both a killer and a savior. It promised to be an intense discussion.

I felt like a voyeur intruding upon this airing of local passions. What right did I, a foreigner, have to listen and to judge events that were unfathomable? Yet I stayed screwed to my seat as the dialogue began.



With a nod from the presiding elder, the defendant was ushered to a seat before the table. He was a haggard man, of indeterminate middle age and skinny, with a gaunt face and sunken eyes. I supposed that 10 years of prison would age a man. He was dressed conventionally in trousers and a fraying yellow shirt. Appropriately deferential to the court and the community, he sat patiently as instructed. The president read the committal document from the Ministry of Justice, as well as the brief confession Nahimana signed in prison. Next he turned to an old woman — not one of the court members — who, being bent at the waist from years of agricultural toil, slowly rose. She identified Nahimana and reviewed his lin-

This story won third place in the Journal's 2007 Foreign Service fiction contest. Other winning stories will appear in future issues of the FSJ.

Robert Gribbins spent many years in East and Central Africa, first as a Peace Corps Volunteer and then as a diplomat. Twice posted to Kigali, as deputy chief of mission (1979-1981) and ambassador (1995-1999), he is the author of a memoir titled In the Aftermath of Genocide: the U.S. Role in Rwanda.

eage on the hillside. Without doubt this court had jurisdiction.

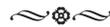
Emile gave me the gist of the confession. Nahimana had joined the killing bands late, only because he was coerced to do so by agents of the burgomaster. He was assigned to help hunt down Tutsis who had fled from their homesteads and hidden in the papyrus swamps. He admitted he participated in searches and was compelled by his companions to “chop” two boys — teenagers he did not know — found that first day. Thus blooded, Evariste was included in the evening feast of roasted goat meat — an animal seized and slaughtered by other marauders that day.

Thereafter, Nahimana confessed, he went to do the “work” required of him by his band. He witnessed several more killings, but did no more chopping himself. He added that he went with heavy heart and thrashed about in the swamps without truly

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searching for Tutsis. Once, however, he spotted two women, Agnes and Felicia, hiding, cringing in fear with only their mouths poked above the murky water. He motioned to them not to be afraid, then directed nearby hunters to move along.

The task before the Gacaca court was to hear testimony about Nahimana in order to prove or disprove his statement.



First, a survivor spoke, recounting the known facts that several hundred Tutsis from this hillside had been massacred. He recited their family names. Some died when the interahamwe (Hutu paramilitary thugs) attacked the mission church nearby, others in their homes, more at roadblocks mounted by the burgomaster’s militia; and still more were chopped or bludgeoned to death after being dragged from the swamps. While the leaders were well known, few lived to identify the killers.

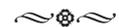
Outraged, the victim shook his finger at the assembly stating, “We demand justice. End impunity. Don’t let those who killed and their families conspire to silence.” He concluded that Evariste was a self-confessed killer, his allegation of mercy probably invented, and that he deserved his fate.

Then a woman, a neighbor of

Nahimana’s, stated her conviction that Evariste was fundamentally a good man from a known family. Sadly, like many in the commune, he had succumbed to the madness of the moment. She believed his reluctance to participate in events and his sparing of the Tutsi women.

A Gacaca judge inquired whether Agnes or Felicia survived. After some murmuring, someone responded that she had heard that Agnes did live, but that she was in Kigali and had never returned to her home hillside. The judge asked if anyone could substantiate the granting of mercy to the two women. No one responded.

A man who lived near the swamp acknowledged that he had seen Evariste among the band that prowled the edges of the swamp and probed its depths. He said he was told by others from the band that the defendant chopped the two boys. He added that their bodies probably still lay unrecovered, sunken into the dark, vegetation-choked water.



With little else to be said, the judges deliberated among themselves. After a half-hour or so, the president delivered their verdict. Nahimana’s act of mercy could not be substantiated; but his commission of murder was affirmed. He was to be returned to prison to serve another five years.

On the drive back to Kigali, Emile expressed satisfaction with the verdict. He confided that if not for my presence — that is, a white foreigner critically observing the proceedings — Nahimana would probably have gotten off easier. He added that Evariste’s act of mercy had really occurred. His cousin Agnes had confirmed it to him. “But,” I remonstrated, “you made no acknowledgement. You should have spoken out.”

“No,” Emile replied. “The two boys he killed were my brothers.” ■

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A FOREIGN SERVICE MURDER

THIS GRISLY INCIDENT, OFTEN EMBELLISHED IN THE RETELLING,
SET AN IMPORTANT LEGAL PRECEDENT.

BY LEN SHURTLEFF

On Aug. 30, 1971, Alfred Erdos, the chargé d'affaires in Santa Isabel, Equatorial Guinea, stabbed administrative officer Donald Leahy to death. At the time, I was principal officer in Douala, Cameroon, the nearest consulate to the scene of the crime, so I still recall the incident vividly.

Below, I outline the major facets of what transpired, based on my memory, documents obtained from the National Archives and consultations with others involved at the time.

It is not an uplifting account, for there is no moral or policy lesson to be drawn from it. But it is a legendary Foreign Service tale, often embellished in the retelling, and the case set an important legal precedent.

Equatorial Guinea had become independent from Spain in 1968, just three years before the murder. Two American officers and their wives were stationed at the embassy in Santa Isabel (now Malabo), a tiny city of about 25,000 inhabitants at the time, situated a few miles offshore from Douala on the volcanic island of Fernando Poo (now Bioko). Oil had yet to be discovered there, so the country was best known for its high-quality cocoa crop.

An estuary port and one of the rainiest spots on earth, Douala is Cameroon's commercial center, with a population of just under a million in 1971. It was the site of a three-per-

son U.S. consulate and, later, consulate general until 1993, when it was made a branch of Embassy Yaounde.

Both Santa Isabel and Douala were steamy tropical backwaters at the time, dependent on commercial communications and manual code systems for confidential reporting. Both had intermittent international radio phone service in those days before satellite communications became common.

On that fateful day, Lannon Walker, the deputy chief of mission in Yaounde, called me after lunch to report that Al Erdos, our chargé in Santa Isabel, had apparently gone off his rocker. Walker had been concerned for several weeks about the tone and substance of the cables coming out of Santa Isabel. But now Erdos was on the shortwave radio reporting a communist plot involving his administrative officer, whom he had tied up in the chancery vault. Walker instructed me to go immediately to the consulate, a 20-minute flight from Douala, and take charge.

A Grim Discovery

I had visited the capital only two weeks before, one of many trips I made there to keep current on events and personalities in Equatorial Guinea so that I might relieve the chargé when he vacationed. In fact, I had been following events there ever since independence, helped by the fact that I spoke Spanish. The political and economic situation had steadily deteriorated under the erratic, capricious and vicious rule of President Francisco Macias Nguema. Arbitrary arrest, imprisonment, torture and even murder on an increasingly large scale were all common. The local atmos-

Len Shurtleff retired in 1995 after a 32-year career as a Foreign Service officer in Africa, Latin America and Washington, D.C.

phere was paranoid and poisonous in the extreme.

Because there were no scheduled flights that afternoon, I arrived in Santa Isabel by charter aircraft just after 5 p.m. I instructed the pilot to depart if I had not returned before the airport closed at dusk. My single-entry visa having expired, I talked my way into the country by treating customs and immigration officers to rounds of beer.

It took time to find a taxi into town, so I didn't get to the chancery until dusk. When I rang the bell, Erdos responded that he wouldn't open the door to anyone but Louis Hoffacker, the American ambassador to Cameroon (who was also accredited to Equatorial Guinea). However, Hoffacker was on leave in the U.S.

Rebuffed, I walked the few blocks to the chargé's residence in search of his wife, Jean. I also telephoned Leahy's home and talked with his wife Rosita, who assumed Leahy was still at work. Locating Mrs. Erdos at the residence of the Cameroonian ambassador to Equatorial Guinea, I persuaded her to accompany me back to the U.S. chancery.

She entered the building, a converted family residence, carrying her infant son. Rather than confront Erdos again, I went to use the telephone at the neighborhood bar next door. By this time a crowd had begun gathering, and the Guinean police arrived.

As the Cameroonian ambassador had told me, Erdos had been phoning diplomatic colleagues to say that he was holed up in the chancery under threat from a communist plot involving his administrative officer. I managed to phone the dean of the diplomatic corps, the Nigerian ambassador, and to locate a doctor to stand by with me outside the chancery. It grew darker and the curious crowd gathering outside grew larger.

I also talked by phone with Erdos, who after about an hour, agreed to come out. Leaving the chancery, he

The State Department's attitude toward the case was ambiguous.

pulled me to one side and said, "I lost my cool. I killed Don Leahy." That was my last conversation with Erdos. I put him, his wife and infant son into the Nigerian ambassador's Mercedes and they sped away to the Nigerian Embassy residence. I entered the chancery and conducted a quick, frantic search of the ground floor. There I found papers strewn around and blood spattered on floors and walls, but no sign of Leahy.

I opened the vault and contacted Embassy Yaounde by shortwave radio. No sooner had I established contact with Walker, who was standing by, than I heard a scream from the foyer. I ran out of the vault to discover Mrs. Leahy kneeling over the body of her husband, sprawled lifeless in a pool of blood on the floor of an unused office just inside the front door that in my haste I had neglected to search. I called in the doctor, who pronounced Leahy dead. An autopsy revealed he had bled to death.

I was immediately thereafter confronted by the irate Guinean minister of the interior, who had entered upon hearing Mrs. Leahy's scream. With both the president and vice president absent from the island, he was apparently the senior official in the capital. He demanded to know what had happened. I showed him Leahy's body and asserted that I had arrived from Douala to take charge of American interests. He refused to accept my bona fides and ordered me to the chargé's residence under police escort. I spent a sleepless night there until

Walker arrived from Cameroon by charter aircraft the following morning. He was accompanied by Public Affairs Officer John Graves and State Department nurse Mary-Ann Dumkowski.

Cleaning up the Mess

There ensued four days of frenetic activity as we attempted to secure Leahy's body and other physical evidence, and to evacuate both the body and the Erdos family back to the United States. Complicating matters, the Guinean authorities adamantly refused to recognize either my or Walker's authority to act on behalf of the U.S. government. Demanding to deal only with Amb. Hoffacker, they claimed to have evidence of Erdos' complicity in a shadowy, inchoate plot to overthrow the Guinean government.

As we awaited the ambassador's return from leave, we attempted to keep the lid on a volatile situation. I immediately arranged for the body to be sealed in a zinc-lined box and secured in cold storage. Meanwhile, Mrs. Leahy was making hysterical accusations of U.S. government involvement in her husband's death, so we arranged to bring Mrs. Leahy's sister and brother-in-law from Tangier to calm her.

It certainly did not help that members of the large local Latin American community (Mrs. Leahy was a native of Ecuador) were spreading wild, unconfirmed rumors. Several of them asserted that Leahy and Erdos were homosexual lovers who'd had a falling out.

In the midst of the crisis, we held a hastily arranged memorial service for Leahy at the cathedral. Because the Equatorial Guinean government repeatedly refused our requests to interview Erdos at the Nigerian residence and to permit the FBI to investigate, we received assistance from the regional medical and regional security officers based in Lagos in our probe.

PAO Graves and I scoured the

Complicating the investigation, the Guinean authorities adamantly refused to recognize our authority to act on behalf of the U.S. government.

chancery for physical evidence, taking photos to be pouched back to Washington, D.C. Most importantly, we found the murder weapon, a pair of long, pointed scissors. The FBI later complimented us on our investigative skills.

Once Amb. Hoffacker arrived in Santa Isabel on Friday, Sept. 3, 1971, and talked with President Macias, we were able to evacuate the Erdos family, Mrs. Leahy and her husband's body to Douala for onward transportation back to Washington. Picking up Erdos at the Nigerian residence, Lannon Walker found him lucid and concerned about his fate, asking if he would be charged with murder and put on trial.

Erdos was accompanied to Washington by the regional security and medical officers from Lagos, while Walker accompanied Mrs. Leahy and the body from Douala to Washington on a USAF C-141 diverted from Ascension Island.

After a brief respite in Douala, I returned to Santa Isabel after Labor Day with my wife Christine to pack out Erdos' personal effects and generally clean up the mess at post. When the DCM returned, he told us that the Washington autopsy had revealed

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*The jury brought in a
verdict of voluntary
manslaughter, rejecting
both the insanity defense
and premeditation.*

semen in Leahy's trachea. In those days before DNA analysis, the source of the semen could not be determined, but its presence lent credence to speculation that homosexuality played a role in the affair. Walker also told me that a burn bag we had sent back to Washington with physical evidence contained an unsent encrypted cable reporting on the alleged communist plot. Some suspect that this cable — never introduced in evidence at trial — was an effort by Erdos to justify his actions.

Justice Is Done

Walker and I spent much of the next six months preparing for the Erdos murder trial, traveling trans-Atlantic from Cameroon to Washington nearly once a month. The proceedings took place during the first week of March 1972 at the Federal District Court for Northern Virginia at Alexandria, Judge Oren Lewis presiding. Erdos was charged with first-degree murder. He was defended by two young, but experienced, criminal trial lawyers from the premier Washington firm of Williams, Califano & Connolly: William McDaniels and Aubrey Daniel III. (Daniel had recently successfully prosecuted Lt. William Calley in the highly publicized My Lai massacre case.)

Despite Erdos' placid and lucid outward appearance, and his years of

experience in Third World posts, his counsel presented an insanity defense. They asserted that conditions in Equatorial Guinea, specifically the very real political terror there, had driven their client over the edge. Erdos testified in chilling detail to the crime, describing how he repeatedly stabbed Leahy with a long, sharp pair of scissors, one stroke of which nicked the jugular vein. Evidence of the semen in Leahy's trachea was entered into testimony, yet Erdos never admitted to any homosexual relationship. (In those days, homosexual officers, regarded as vulnerable to blackmail by hostile intelligence services, were subject to having their security clearances revoked.)

After deliberating over Friday lunch, the jury brought in a verdict of voluntary manslaughter, rejecting both the insanity defense and premeditation. Voluntary manslaughter is defined in federal law as "unlawful killing upon a sudden quarrel or heat of passion." Judge Lewis sentenced Erdos to the maximum 10-year term. His appeal was denied by the Fourth Circuit in Richmond.

At trial and on appeal, the defense asserted, inter alia, that the U.S. government did not have jurisdiction over acts committed overseas and that Erdos should have been arraigned in Boston where he first set foot back on American soil. Both the district and appellate courts found ample statute and case law to reject these assertions. Still, this was in some respects a "first impression" case, the first indictment ever brought for murder committed by an American official at a Foreign Service post. And the case firmly established the principle that federal courts have jurisdiction over acts committed at U.S. embassies and consulates.

His appeals exhausted, Erdos was incarcerated at the Federal Prison Farm in Amarillo, Texas. He was released on parole in late 1976 after serving about three years, and died of a

*Though his guilt was
clear, Erdos' motive
still is not.*

heart attack in California in 1983. His wife had divorced him following his trial. His obituary in *State* magazine made no mention of his manslaughter conviction.

The State Department's attitude toward the case was ambiguous. It offered full cooperation to Erdos' defense team, as well as to the prosecution. Nonetheless, Erdos was granted a full-disability retirement even before the trial, an act implicitly accepting and supporting the insanity defense rejected by the jury.

Though his guilt was clear, Erdos' motive still is not. It is hard to accept that a veteran FSO could be driven insane by a violent political atmosphere even at an isolated post like Santa Isabel. Erdos had visited Equatorial Guinea before he accepted the assignment and talked with me, Amb. Hoffacker and his predecessor. All of us gave him unvarnished accounts of the harsh conditions there.

Obviously, important aspects of this case seem destined to remain unresolved. Absent evidence of any coup plotting involving either officer, one cannot assert that local politics played a part. Since the jury did not accept the defense case for temporary insanity sparked by the unsettled domestic political situation, this justification is weak. It is, however, impossible to establish conclusively that Erdos and Leahy were homosexual lovers, despite strong physical and anecdotal evidence supporting "a lovers' quarrel" thesis. Readers are invited to draw their own conclusions. ■

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CONDEMNED TO ENDLESS STRUGGLE? THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

THE UNITED STATES CANNOT IMPOSE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
BUT WITHOUT ITS EFFORTS, A LASTING SOLUTION WILL REMAIN ELUSIVE.

BY RAFAEL REUVENY

In 1905, Naguib Azoury, a Maronite Ottoman bureaucrat turned Arab nationalist, proclaimed that “Two important phenomena, of the same nature but opposed ... are emerging at this moment in Asiatic Turkey. They are the awakening of the Arab nation and the latent effort of the Jews to reconstitute on a very large scale the ancient kingdom of Israel. ... [They] are *destined to fight* each other continually until one of them wins” [emphasis added].

By the 1920s, Jews and Palestinians had already laid competing claims to Palestine, and their interaction had turned violent. Israel’s June 1967 victory in the Six-Day War and occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip seemed to suggest a permanent end to the conflict, but that turned out to be an illusion. Since 1967, there have been numerous attempts to resolve the conflict diplomatically, but they have all failed. Even the 1993 Oslo accord and subsequent negotiations only temporarily halted the fighting.

So, a century after Azoury penned his grim prediction, has history vindicated him? Can we glean insights from the apparent inability of diplomacy since 1967 to resolve the conflict? If that failure reflects idiosyncratic factors, we would have to conclude that there is nothing to learn from history. However, if the failures reflect a specific problem, one can presumably address it and move forward to a solution of the underlying conflict.

To apply this logic requires examining the diplomatic attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 1967, and identifying the positions of the primary actors involved:

Rafael Reuveny is a professor of political economy in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind.

Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization/Palestinian Authority, and the international actor sponsoring almost all of these attempts, the United States. All these initiatives have focused on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (hereinafter referred to as “The Territories”), which Israel occupied in 1967.

The list is long: United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), the [Secretary of State William] Rogers Plan (1969), President Carter’s Geneva Plan (1978) and Camp David Summit (1978), the Saudi Plan (1981), the Reagan Plan (1982), the London Agreement (1987), the PLO Overture (1988), [Secretaries of State] George Shultz’s and James Baker’s plans (1988 and 1989, respectively), Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir’s plan (1989), the Oslo Process (1992-2001), and President Clinton’s Camp David Summit (July 2000) and Peace Plan (December 2000). There have also been numerous attempts since 2001, including the Mitchell Report, the Tenet and Zinni Plans, the Geneva Initiative, President Bush’s Roadmap for Peace, and the Saudi/Arab League Plan.

The patterns revealed by the reactions of our actors to these attempts are discussed next, following which we return to our key question: Why have all these diplomatic attempts failed to resolve the conflict?

The Israeli Balance Sheet

The Israeli policy approach to The Territories has depended upon the identity of the party leading the government — Labor or Likud — and upon whether the government was formed before or after the start of the Oslo Process (1992).

Before Oslo, the Likud governments sought to annex The Territories in their entirety. The Labor governments sought to annex some of the land and surrender the rest to Jordan in

return for peace. Because of these fundamentally divergent philosophies, the Labor-Likud coalition governments between 1984 and 1990 engaged in frequent disputes over the fate of The Territories.

During the Oslo years, the Likud government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu surrendered a small part of The Territories to the PA, while the Labor governments of Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Ehud Barak ceded larger sections.

All Israeli governments built settlements in The Territories during the pre-Oslo period, but pursued different strategies. The Labor governments focused on areas far from Palestinian population centers, while the Likud governments scattered settlements over the entirety of The Territories.

During the Oslo process, both the Labor and Likud governments brought more settlers to The Territories, more than doubling their number during this period. The Rabin government considered the possibility of discussing the future of The Territories and evacuating settlements before the final-status treaty, but decided against it. The Netanyahu government pledged to keep the settlements in place in any final-status setup. The Barak government appeared ready to evacuate many settlements as part of a comprehensive agreement, but bowing to settler demands and right-wing pressure it, too, expanded the Israeli presence in The Territories.

Since the collapse of the Oslo process, Israel has essentially rejected all the conflict-resolution plans that have required it to freeze settlement expansion or return to the 1967 line. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government rejected Pres. Clinton's proposal, which would have required Israel to remove settlements from almost all of The Territories. Sharon first sought to sign a long-term interim treaty with the Palestinians, but in 2003 began shifting to a plan, dubbed "disengagement," allowing Israel to craft the elements of a gradual pullout from The Territories to a line of its own choosing. Toward that end, the Sharon government evacuated the Gaza Strip in August 2005.

Sharon's successor, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, pledged in early 2006 to evacuate most of the West Bank, dubbing it "convergence," but the plan has all but disappeared. In the meantime, Israel has expanded settlements, and settlers built unauthorized outposts, reportedly assisted by branches of the government. These activities have been going on for years.

The Palestinian Balance Sheet

Unlike the fluctuating Israeli position, the Palestinian stance has evolved in a linear fashion. Until the 1970s, the PLO sought to drive the Jews from Palestine, but in the early 1970s, it began calling for a binational, Israeli-Palestinian state in all of Palestine. Later in that decade, the PLO seemed ready to recognize Israel, in return for recognition of the

Palestinians' right to a state. In 1977, the PLO essentially accepted President Carter's Geneva Plan and United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, amended to mention Palestinian statehood.

By the 1980s, facing growing indication that the U.S. and many in Israel, particularly within Labor, were seeking to solve the conflict by linking a Palestinian entity in The Territories to Jordan, the PLO leaned toward forming a confederation with Amman. However, Likud and its partners rejected that approach, the so-called Jordanian Option, torpedoing the Reagan Plan and its derivatives, the Hussein-Arafat Accord and the London Agreement, negotiated by Israeli Foreign Minister Peres and Jordan's King Hussein.

By the late 1980s, the PLO came to accept putting an end to the conflict based on an Israeli return to the 1967 line and the formation of a Palestinian state in The Territories beside Israel — either in a confederation with Jordan, as mentioned above, or as a standalone entity, as called for by the Saudi Plan of 1981. Affirming this change of stance in 1988 the PLO recognized Israel and declared its intention to resolve the conflict in a peaceful manner. Since then, the Palestinians have essentially accepted all the plans put forward to resolve the conflict, except Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's Plan (1989), which did not recognize the PLO and insisted on continued Israeli control of The Territories.

In 1989, the PLO accepted the Baker Plan, and in 1991 it sent representatives to the Madrid conference. The Palestinians then embarked on the Oslo process with Israel. Within this framework, the PLO/PA signed five major interim treaties with Israel — the Oslo I and Oslo II Accords, the Hebron Protocol, and the Wye River and Sharm El Sheikh Memorandums — assuming this would lead to evacuation of the settlements and formation of a Palestinian state in all of The Territories. However, Israel refused even to discuss these issues before the final-status talks and, instead, expanded the settlements. Soon Palestinian self-rule in the areas surrendered by Israel essentially turned into governance subject to Israeli consent.

By the 1990s, Palestinian dissatisfaction mounted and conflict intensified, sparking frequent Israeli collective punishments, which only inflamed the situation. Still, the PA continued to accept the Oslo outline, despite growing indications that Israel did not intend to fully relinquish The Territories.

With the failure of the Camp David Summit in July 2000, tensions mounted in The Territories and eventually exploded on Sept. 28, 2000, leading to a Palestinian revolt against Israel. Nevertheless, the PA continued talks with Israel, and progress was made by early 2001; but most Israelis rejected this process, electing Ariel Sharon as prime minister.

The PA has accepted the attempts to stop the fighting based on a bilateral, Israeli-Palestinian effort, including the

Jordanian-Egyptian Plan, the Mitchell Report, the Tenet and Zinni Plans, the Saudi-Arab League Peace Plan, the U.S. Roadmap, and the 2003 Geneva Initiative. But it has rejected the fence Israel has been building around the West Bank, and the Israeli disengagement and convergence initiatives, all of which essentially seek to set the Israeli-Palestinian border unilaterally.

The U.S. Balance Sheet

In general, Washington has adopted Israel's position on all the conflict-resolution plans since 1967. When the two allies do disagree on some details, Washington does not force Israel to change its position — particularly not on the substantive matters driving the conflict: territorial control, settlements and the division of Jerusalem.

The U.S. essentially accepts Israel's view of Resolution 242, which Israel argues calls for withdrawal from some of The Territories it occupied in 1967, but not from all of them. When Israel continued its refusal to negotiate with the Palestinians even after the PLO's unilateral recognition of the Jewish state in 1988, the U.S. did not encourage further discussion, and its dialogue with the PLO diminished. Instead, the George H.W. Bush administration supported Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's 1989 plan, effectively a declaration of intent to annex The Territories. And at the 1993 Madrid talks, the U.S. presented a draft of a declaration of principles that, in effect, called for Palestinian personal autonomy for the transition period, not the territorial autonomy that the Palestinians had demanded from the beginning.

When Israel refused to discuss the issues of statehood, borders, Jerusalem, settlements and refugees before the final-status talks of the Oslo process, the U.S. followed suit again, ignoring the spread of Israeli settlements and the expansion of Greater Jerusalem's boundaries. Whereas for

Pres. Carter the settlements were illegal, and for Pres. Reagan and George H.W. Bush they were obstacles to peace, for Pres. Clinton they were merely complicating factors. Beginning in 1967, the U.S. stance was that The Territories were occupied. In the 1990s the U.S. "adjusted" its stance to viewing The Territories as disputed land, control of which would have to be negotiated.

President George W. Bush essentially ignored the Jordanian-Egyptian plan (2001), the Saudi-Arab League Peace Plan (2002) and the Geneva Plan (2003), all of which Israel rejected. The U.S. also adopted the Israeli interpretation of the Mitchell Report, according to which the violence must first stop completely before any move forward can be made. The U.S.-authored Tenet and Zinni Plans and the Middle East Quartet's Roadmap took a similar approach, as Israel insisted. Meanwhile, Israel has steadily expanded the settlements, a policy the Mitchell Report characterized as extremely destructive to stopping the violence and resolving the conflict. Yet the U.S. essentially stood by and did nothing.

Let me be clear: I do not believe the U.S. is a rubber stamp for Israel, but rather that it consistently adopts Israel's positions. Some American presidents have taken a more neutral stance than others, and some disagreed with Israel. However, the ultimate outcome has thus far been an acceptance of the Israeli position. In effect, the U.S. has adopted Israel's vision of a final status in which it retains control of many settlements and does not return to the June 5, 1967, line.

"In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing population centers," Pres. Bush wrote to Prime Minister Sharon on April 14, 2004, "it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final-status negotiations will be a full and complete return to

the armistice lines of 1949." The border must "reflect these realities."

Taking into consideration the three balance sheets, it is apparent that ever since the Six-Day War, Israel has rejected all attempts at conflict resolution that would require it to return to the 1967 line. The Palestinians initially rejected Israel's right to exist but shifted their position to accept it, and have agreed to end the conflict if the 1967 lines are restored. The U.S. has supported the Israeli position in each of the attempts to resolve the conflict, in effect perpetuating continued dissension between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Perpetuating the Conflict

What drives the U.S. position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? The answer is complicated, involving forces such as the political power of the pro-Israel Christian fundamentalist and Jewish lobbies; the prevailing view among many U.S. policymakers that Israel is a strategic asset to the U.S.; and the perception of a common ideology according to which both countries are melting-pot democracies. But a more crucial question is: *How* has the U.S. perpetuated the conflict?

Since the 1960s, Israel has become dependent on the U.S. economically, diplomatically and militarily. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, from 1962 to 2005 Israel received about \$150 billion in economic and military assistance (in constant 2005 dollars) from the U.S. Earlier this year, Washington increased the assistance to Israel by \$700 million per year, promising to provide a total of \$30 billion during the next 10 years. These figures put Israel at the top of the list of countries receiving aid from the United States. Without this support, its economy would have suffered greatly.

Furthermore, all this aid has been effectively fungible, allowing Israel to funnel more money into strengthening

its grip on The Territories. Regardless of any U.S. insistence that Israel would not spend its aid on expanding settlements, Washington has essentially financed the Israeli settlement project in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Had the American funds not been available, Israel would have had to cut its expenses in other areas in order to finance the massive settlement building task, causing it great difficulty and quite possibly weakening Israeli popular support for the project. Further demonstrating this point, an American-Israeli memorandum of understanding signed in 2007 reportedly allows Israel to use our assistance as it sees fit, unrelated, for example, to progress in the Israeli-Palestinian arena.

Equally critical, the U.S. has shielded Israel from international pressures at the United Nations and elsewhere, essentially forcing its many allies to look the other way when confronted with Israeli abuses. Since the 1960s, the U.S. has become the country's most important source of weapons, and what arms it does not supply come from Europe. Should Washington ever decide to curtail that supply, its allies will most likely follow its cue. And without that stock of weaponry, many units of the Israeli defense forces, including the celebrated Israeli Air Force, would quickly come to a halt.

It is hard to envision Israel defying the U.S. for any extended period, particularly if Washington backs its words with concrete actions (as Pres. George H.W. Bush did in 1991 by temporarily cutting off aid to protest settlement expansion). But so long as America does not go beyond rhetoric, and continues to provide financial and military aid to Israel, it is essentially supporting Israeli control of The Territories.

We must stress that the point is not that the U.S. cannot compel Israel to take a certain position should it decide to do so. On the contrary, when a U.S.

president decides to impress upon Israel to take specific action, it complies. For example, Pres. Nixon persuaded Israel to accept Resolution 242 — albeit under an Israeli interpretation that requires it to withdraw from some, but not all, of The Territories — and averted the destruction of the Third Egyptian Army in the 1973 war. Later, Nixon and Ford encouraged Israel to withdraw from parts of the Sinai and Syria, and Pres. Carter prevailed upon Israel to withdraw completely from the Sinai region and remove all the settlements there, as well as to accept the idea that the Palestinians are a national group with legitimate political rights.

Pres. Reagan convinced Israel to let the PLO forces retreat from Beirut, and his successor prompted Israel to attend the Madrid Conference. Pres. Clinton compelled Prime Minister Netanyahu, who rejected the Oslo Process, to sign the Hebron Protocol and Wye Memorandum, and persuaded Prime Minister Barak to enhance his offer at Camp David and at the Egyptian resort of Taba. In fact, any other outcome in those cases would have been utterly strange. A country that receives virtually all of its military equipment and approximately \$3 billion a year from another country, which also shields it from international criticisms and sanctions, is not really free to make independent decisions.

A Fateful Choice

In a major speech he gave in November 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared: "History, fate and success have combined to compel American leadership in the Middle East and around the globe. ... We welcome the opportunity to use our power and influence to make the world a better place for all of God's children."

With the possible reconvening of a regional peace conference in late 2007

at the initiative of the current president, it is important to bear in mind the fact that, ultimately, Washington can lead internationally only to the extent that others are willing to follow — unless it resorts to coercion. After all, a broker who consistently sides with one party in a dispute will in all probability fail to convince the opposing party to go along.

Thus, despite the repeated attempts of the U.S., beginning in September 2000, to convince the Palestinians to halt their second revolt against Israeli control, it has never really ended. Instead, in 2006 the Palestinians put in power Hamas, the very party that has all along rejected U.S. brokering. Now that Hamas has taken full control over the Gaza Strip, the already complex situation is nearly intractable.

In the end, one cannot help but wonder whether the situation would have evolved differently had Pres. Clinton suggested his plan in July 2000, instead of December of that year. As written, his proposal called on Israel to withdraw from 94 to 96 percent of The Territories, and to exchange parcels of land with the Palestinians for the proposed land to be annexed to Israel. Unfortunately, both Pres. Clinton and Prime Minister Barak were already on their way out of the political arena, and their successors rejected that approach.

Of course, we will never know the exact answer to this question. But in any case, as long as the U.S. continues to refrain from exerting real pressure on Israel to return to the 1967 line and evacuate the settlements, Azoury's century-old prediction will continue to be correct. That is to say, Israelis and Palestinians are fated to fight until one group is the victor.

The converse is also possible, however: the Israeli-Palestinian violent debacle could be brought to a halt. Ultimately, the choice is in the hands of the United States. ■

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AFSA NEWS

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SAFEGUARDING YOUR RIGHTS

AFSA's Protest Leads to New Hearing

BY SHARON PAPP, GENERAL COUNSEL

Last year, the AFSA Governing Board unanimously agreed to pay the legal fees of private counsel to seek reversal of the Foreign Service Grievance Board's erroneous dismissal of the separation-for-cause case of a Foreign Service member. The FSGB dismissed the case after the acting director general advised the board that she had withdrawn the proposed separation for cause, because the employee had allegedly voluntarily resigned from the Foreign Service. The issues at stake in this case — an employee's right to challenge procedural violations committed during the

revocation of his security clearance and to have the FSGB decide whether his separation from the Foreign Service is warranted — are of the utmost importance to AFSA and its members.

Given the State Department's abuse of procedures, the FSGB's erroneous dismissal and the dangerous precedent it could set, AFSA has been closely involved in this particular case. On July 25, the Grievance Board granted the grievant's motion for reconsideration, in part, stating it would retain jurisdiction over the "voluntariness"

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ESSAY CONTEST INTRODUCES STUDENTS TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE

Secretary Rice Meets AFSA Essay Contest Winner

BY TOM SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

On July 11, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice presented the first-place award for AFSA's 2007 National High School Essay Contest to Sumit Malik of Great Falls, Va. Malik is a rising junior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. His winning essay was titled "The Role of the Foreign Service in the Reconstruction of Iraq." (You can read the essay at www.afsa.org/essaycontest/winningessay07.cfm.)

The first-place winner received \$2,500, and his school received \$500. The second-place award of \$1,250 went to Jeff



Essay Contest winner Sumit Malik with Secretary Rice.

Derbyshire, a rising senior at St. John's School in Houston, Texas. His essay topic

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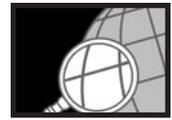
AFSA SITS DOWN WITH SEC. RICE

Relations Renewed Between AFSA and the Secretary

AFSA officers met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on July 26, just two weeks into the new Governing Board's term. AFSA asked the Secretary to contact key members of Congress to urge them to eliminate the overseas pay disparity and to fully fund the State Department's Fiscal Year 2008 budget request for additional personnel and operating costs. Other issues discussed at the meeting included Iraq staffing and security, family-friendly initiatives, the proposed diplomacy museum and support for greater diversity in Foreign Service hiring.

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AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



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Please consider supporting AFSA with your 2007 Combined Federal Campaign donation. The AFSA Scholarship Fund has a new number for 2007: CFC-11759, as does the Fund for American Diplomacy: CFC-10646. Your contributions help fund college scholarships for FS children and provide public education programs on the importance of a strong Foreign Service.



Journal Board: Comings and Goings

AFSA would like to thank the following outgoing *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Board members for their dedicated service: Kent Brokenshire, Tony Chan, William Jordan, Kay Webb Mayfield, John Naland, Joyce Namde and Christopher Teal.

There were 36 applications for the six new vacancies on the Editorial Board.

The AFSA Governing Board has appointed the following individuals to two-year terms: Joe Bruns, Julie Connor, Jim DeHart, Jeff Giauque, George Jones and Yvette Malcioln. In addition, the Governing Board reappointed current Editorial Board Chairman Ted Wilkinson and returning members Stephen Buck, Josh Glazeroff and Laurie Kassman to new two-year terms.

Thanks to all of these members who volunteer their time to make AFSA's *Foreign Service Journal* the magazine for foreign affairs professionals.

AFSA Launches FS Women's Web Discussion Forum

AFSA is now hosting an online forum exclusively for Foreign Service women. It is a place to chat, share stories, reach out and air concerns. The forum provides an opportunity to connect anytime, anywhere.

Join discussion leader FSO Della Cavey to discuss the unique challenges and opportunities facing the women of the Foreign Service today. Go to www.afsa.org/discussionforum.cfm/ to get in on the conversation. Tell your friends.

East Africa Bombings Anniversary

On the ninth anniversary of the Aug. 7, 1998, terrorist bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, the State Department held an emotionally moving ceremony at the Arlington Cemetery memorial to the victims of those bombings. The event was attended by survivors, senior State Department and USAID officials, African Affairs and Diplomatic Security Bureau veterans, representatives of the Kenyan and Tanzanian embassies and others. AFSA President John Naland attended and laid flowers beside the memorial stone.

BOOKFAIR Opens Oct. 12

The 47th annual BOOKFAIR of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide opens Friday, Oct. 12, at 2 p.m. for employees, spouses and escorted guests. BOOKFAIR takes place in the exhibit hall of the Truman Building, and continues Oct. 15-19, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for this same group. During two weekends, Oct. 13-14 and Oct. 20-21, the sale is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For questions, go to www.aafsw.org, e-mail aafsw.bookroom@erols.org or call (202) 223-5796.

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Support for Separated Families

As the Foreign Service becomes more like the military, with a significant percentage of our members doing unaccompanied tours of duty in war zones and other danger-pay posts, it is a lot harder to ignore the stark contrast between the way the State Department treats the families left behind and the support structure institutionalized by the U.S. military.

On the military side, there are numerous government-funded programs to advocate for families separated by deployments, to subsidize housing and loans, to assist with parenting and child care, to facilitate spousal employment, to cover spouses' tuition for higher education and to teach personal financial management. There are endless clubs, support groups, commissaries, mental-health professionals, social activities and organizations standing ready to help military families. The military takes seriously the job of caring for families left behind and devotes both staff and extensive budgetary resources to it.

On the State Department side, nothing like the above exists to support the families of civilian U.S. government employees serving in those same war zones. The small staff of the Family Liaison Office has done its heroic best — with almost no resources — to try to develop some low-cost outreach activities for families separated by unaccompanied assignments. These include orientation sessions held every other month, “no-host” monthly lunches, an information fair held last November, a live Internet/phone seminar on managing stress last February, a pre-departure seminar, the creation of a coordinator position for unaccompanied tours and a Web portal.

But it is disheartening to discover that M/FLO receives no department funds whatsoever to support even these limited information-sharing activities. Everything M/FLO has tried to do in support of separated families has been financed through private contributions from the Una Chapman Cox Foundation.

Of course, we all understand that it is easier for the military, which is more than 200 times larger than the Foreign Service, to furnish tangible, concrete support for families through its network of subsidized commissaries, schools and residential bases, infrastructure that State does not have. We all understand that the Pentagon's vast budget can afford far greater resources for actual assistance to families. But seriously ... *no* new State Department money allocated to M/FLO in recent years for the hundreds of separated Foreign Service families?

There is one relatively straightforward way for the department to address this glaring problem: by substantially increasing or even doubling the Separate Maintenance Allowance. The SMA is the only material support that FS families get when the employee goes off to Iraq or Afghanistan. We at AFSA believe — and have heard constantly from members serving at unaccompanied posts —

that the SMA is insultingly inadequate. At the current rate, an employee serving in a war zone can get about \$850 per month to maintain a spouse at a separate location, or just over \$1,200 per month to maintain a spouse and a couple of kids. These amounts are little more than a token contribution to the actual expenses that an unaccompanied employee incurs in maintaining his/her family back home.

For example, in the area of lodging expenses in the Washington metropolitan area, the current SMA realistically covers barely half of the average rental costs for unfurnished dwellings alone. This is to say nothing of all the other expenses of food, utilities, transportation, clothing, activities, long-distance phone calls to the missing spouse/parent, etc.

The State Department will say that the SMA exists only to help “defray” the costs of maintaining families thousands of miles away, but the current SMA rates are insufficient to make a meaningful difference. Although Foreign Service members do get a hardship differential and danger pay during these most difficult assignments, they are forced to spend these extra monies — and often to go out-of-pocket — to maintain their families elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the department benefits financially from sending employees alone on unaccompanied postings. Lower housing costs at post, lower utility costs, lower transportation costs, no family overseas health care costs, and complete elimination of schooling costs all combine to provide substantial savings to the department. These savings, we believe, far exceed the amount that the department pays out in SMA.

Moreover, at a time when we are struggling to fill more than 800 unaccompanied positions overseas every year, dramatically increasing the Separate Maintenance Allowance to bring it more in line with reality would provide a powerful incentive to employees to volunteer for such postings.

AFSA has repeatedly raised with the department our urgent proposal to increase SMA, starting with a formal letter in November 2005. We have mentioned it to the Secretary of State at every meeting since then, and we highlighted it in AFSA's “wish list” for the new director general in summer 2006. Nearly two years have passed, but the SMA remains at the same paltry level.

Until the department demonstrates a willingness to devote actual resources to the support of the growing number of Foreign Service families separated by war-zone and other unaccompanied postings, the words of senior officials about family-friendliness will ring hollow. □



Taking a Fresh Look

The last time I wrote to you from this corner, our nation had just gone to war with Iraq. It was March 2003. By the time my piece appeared in the *May Journal*, we were fully engaged in a massive military campaign in Iraq.

We assumed that the Pentagon would be urgently taking precautions to protect the lives of our fighting men and women. I argued that parallel measures to preserve the safety and security of our diplomats stationed in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world — dangerous regions in the best of times — should also be taken.

What I fretted about in that column has, of course, come to pass. The Foreign Service is squarely in the thick of it, both in Iraq and Afghanistan. Major front-burner issues are how to staff Embassy Baghdad, the largest embassy in the world, with

[The last time I wrote you from this corner, our nation had just gone to war with Iraq.](#)

some 300 FS positions, and how to find FSOs of suitable rank and experience to head up the score of Provincial Reconstruction Teams tasked to bring economic initiatives and good government practices to the Iraqi hinterland.

What, you may ask, do these issues have to do with AFSA's retiree agenda? A good bit, I'd say, because the Foreign Service's claim to its rightful place in the foreign policy arena depends on how well it fulfills its mission — and this, in turn, depends on receiving the funding and resources needed to do so. Active-duty Service members need our support, as they, unlike retirees, have only limited means of pressing their concerns directly within the system.

Returning to the AFSA Governing Board after a hiatus of four years, I find several retiree issues are still on the agenda from that earlier time, including the need for a department commitment to seek wider authority to hire When Actually Employed retirees not subject to a salary cap and the creation of a standardized and centralized WAE program designed to address the department's critical staffing shortfall.

The new team is taking a fresh look at these questions. We mean to show steady progress on them all, despite the less-than-forgiving environment in which we operate. Chief among them

is a resource-constrained Department of State whose priorities are heavily, if not totally, skewed toward the Iraq War. Given the looming cost of that conflict and the larger campaign against Islamic fundamentalists — which the Iraq Study Group estimated could cost as much as \$2 trillion (yes, trillion) — it is crucially important that AFSA keep retiree bread-and-butter issues at the fore. When the nation's fiscal health is under extreme pressure, ways to cut back public employee benefits are sure to come under intense review. We need to lay the foundation now for the battle, if and when it comes, to preserve our hard-won benefits.

In this connection, let me reiterate a pitch I made back in the February 2002 *FSJ* regarding retiree membership statistics. Out of a retired annuitant base totaling 15,720 people, only 3,778 are members of AFSA — an anemic 24-percent retiree membership rate. Compare this to the Military Officers' Association of America, with a retiree membership rate of nearly 60 percent of its pool of potential members. With 372,000 members, MOAA is admittedly an elephant compared to our mouse; but such a robust membership base earns it enviable clout on Capitol Hill.

Within AFSA, the comparable rate for State active-duty members is 75 percent. The AFSA Governing Board and I warmly commend Member Services Director Janet Hedrick for her tireless efforts to increase AFSA membership among almost 12,000 FS annuitants who remain outside AFSA, the lone voice of the Foreign Service on Capitol Hill.

An increase of just 200 retired members would enable AFSA to expand the hours of its retiree services unit, where Bonnie Brown labors three days a week handling every conceivable inquiry relating to annuity computation, health insurance, death benefits and a myriad of topics too arcane to list. We need seriously to consider expanding Ms. Brown's unit and adding a part-time understudy to her one-person staff.

Finally, my four retiree colleagues — Herman (Hank) Cohen, Harry Geisel, Howard Jeter and David Passage — will share this column space on a more or less rotating basis so that we can tap into a wider range of opinion and expertise. We are eager to hear your concerns and comments as our term unfolds. You may contact us through Bonnie Brown at tel: (800) 704-2372, ext. 509; or e-mail: brown@afsa.org. ■



LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS UPDATE

AFSA Testifies on the Hill

On Aug. 1, AFSA President John Naland testified alongside Foreign Affairs Council President (and former AFSA president) Ambassador Thomas D. Boyatt before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight and Government Management, chaired by Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii. The hearing, "Building a Stronger American Diplomatic Presence to Meet the Challenges of a Post-9/11 World," gave AFSA a chance to present its position on the need for increased resources and personnel for diplomacy. In his testimony, Naland noted that "the last three years have witnessed serious backsliding as new Foreign Service staffing demands in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere have far outpaced appropriations for personnel."

The AFSA testimony concluded: "[The] underinvestment in Foreign Service funding, staffing and training is undermining U.S. diplomacy. ... AFSA respectfully asks this Congress to fully fund Secretary Rice's FY 2008 budget request, to implement Overseas Comparability Pay and to move forward in FY 2009 with creating the robust training float that will provide our Foreign Service with the knowledge, skills and abilities that are essential to successful foreign policy development and implementation."

On the issue of overseas pay disparity for members of the Foreign Service, Naland stated that "ending this disparity would help validate the significant efforts and sacrifices made by the men and women of the Foreign Service and their families who serve our country abroad." This continues to be a high-priority issue that AFSA will be actively pursuing during the fall session of the 110th Congress.



AFSA President John Naland (left) and Foreign Affairs Council President Thomas Boyatt being sworn in at the Aug. 1 Senate hearing.

Representatives from the State Department, Government Accountability Office, United Nations and other organizations also testified at the hearing.

New Legislation Introduced on Overseas Pay Disparity

In a major step forward, legislation was introduced in the House on July 27 to correct the overseas pay disparity. There are two versions: one simply implementing Overseas Comparability Pay and the other closing the same pay gap in conjunction with implementing a pay-for-performance system. (Go to www.afsa.org/congress/overseas_comp_pay.cfm for background on the issue.)

The Bush administration supports the pay-for-performance concept, but many Democratic members of Congress are wary of that model based on the experience of attempting to implement such a system for civilian employees at the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security. The AFSA Governing Board,

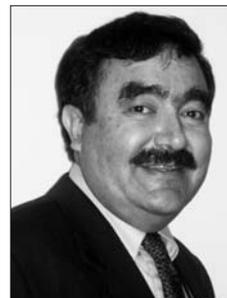
meeting on Aug. 1, reaffirmed AFSA's position that either version is acceptable. The priority is to close the pay gap between FS employees serving in Washington and overseas, and to remedy the inequity of Senior Foreign Service members getting Washington comparability pay when no one else does.

The new House legislation is co-sponsored by Reps. Tom Davis, R-Va.; Donald Payne, D-N.J.; David Scott, D-Ga.; Chris Smith, R-N.J.; Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.; and Frank R. Wolf, R-Va. AFSA greatly appreciates their support.

The two bills were referred to the House Foreign Affairs and the Oversight and Government Reform Committees. In early August, AFSA President John Naland and Legislative Director Ian Houston met with Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., and Rep. Sam Farr, D-Calif., seeking their support. (Sen. Whitehouse grew up in the Foreign Service and his father, Charles, served as AFSA president from 1981 to 1982.)

Pursuing another angle on the issue, Naland and Houston met July 31 with State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs Assistant Secretary Jeffrey T. Bergner and Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph MacManus to discuss efforts to eliminate the overseas pay disparity and fully fund the department's Fiscal Year 2008 budget request for personnel and operating costs. The H Bureau officials detailed State's concerted efforts to achieve those legislative goals, which have already included personal contact with key members of Congress by Sec. Rice, outgoing Under Secretary for Management Henrietta H. Fore and other senior department managers. The H officials said they were confident that such high-level involvement would continue as needed. AFSA expressed appreciation for this advocacy of measures critical to the success of U.S. diplomacy in the coming years. □

Penny Wise and Pound Foolish



In previous articles, I have referred to the “Operating Expenses” crisis at USAID, citing my concern that this situation is bad for our agency and nation. Below is a more precise, factual and, I hope, convincing summary to make my case. This information is a result of our close collaboration with InterAction, a nongovernmental umbrella group representing more than 165 organizations, in response to an official request from Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In terms of real dollars, operating expenses have actually decreased over the last 25 years, a decrease that is even more significant when viewed as a percentage of USAID’s total budget authority. This decrease has limited the agency’s ability to fill critical positions with experienced and qualified direct-hire staff and impaired the planning and implementation of its programs.

The charts below show USAID OE levels over the last 25 years, USAID’s total budget authority for that period, and OE as a percentage of USAID’s budget authority. The first chart shows both USAID’s operating expenses and total budget authority as adjusted for inflation. The second depicts the downward trend in OE funding relative to total budget authority from 1982 to 2007.

Over the last 15 years, larger and larger portions of this account have been consumed by costs such as computer tech-

nology, rent and security needs that were not as substantial in the 1980s when OE was generally funded at its highest levels. These increasing costs, when combined with decreasing appropriations for OE, have forced the agency to operate with an ever-smaller work force, which, in turn, compromises program effectiveness.

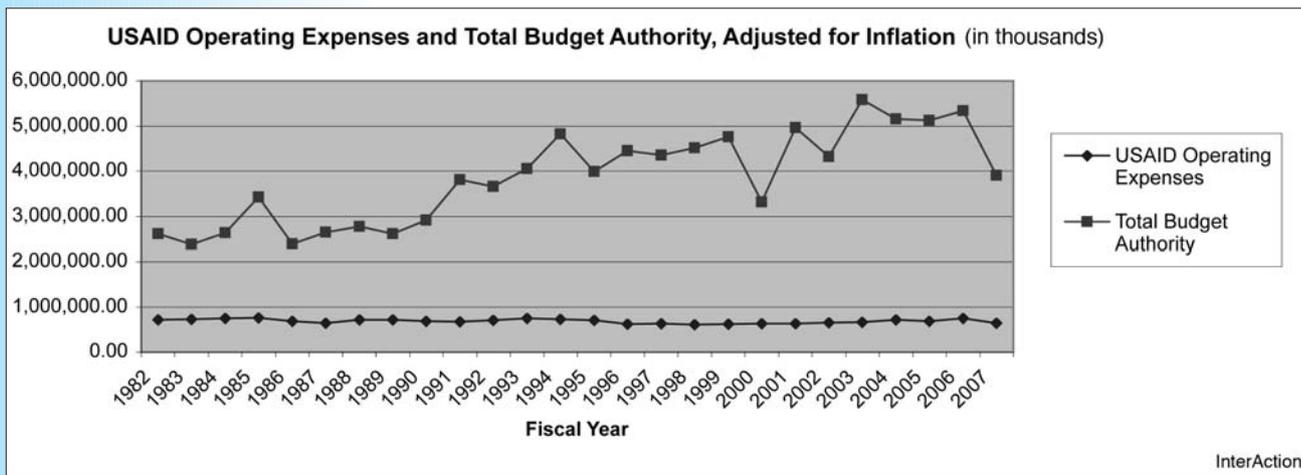
Operating expense constraints have also resulted in the hypercentralization of USAID planning and program design.

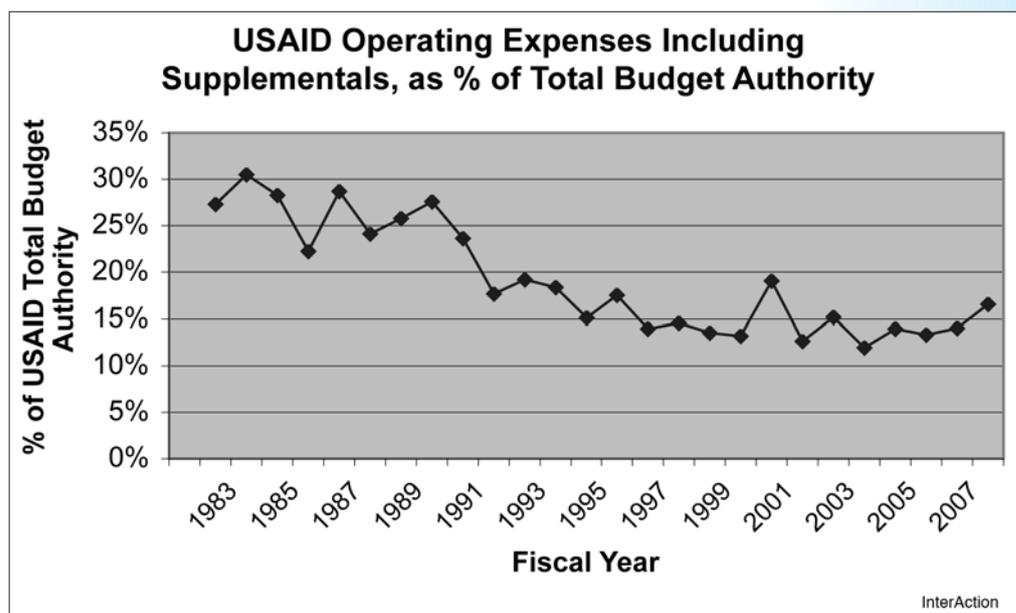
In the months since Secretary Rice’s announcement of her transformational diplomacy initiative in January 2006, that hypercentralization has even manifested itself in the suggestion that missions should close in certain “non-strategic” countries around the globe. In an April 12 memo to all USAID field staff, then-Director of Foreign Assistance Randall Tobias

said, “[USAID] will need to shift resources away from some functions, including those nations where USAID’s full-scale mission platforms are not critical to delivering U.S. assistance effectively. Specifically, I will propose the deployment of USAID ‘development attachés’ to assist U.S. chiefs of mission and country teams in such nations.”

It would seem that, during a time when the White House has acknowledged the importance of development relative to defense and diplomacy, the administration should be looking

Operating expense constraints have resulted in the hypercentralization of USAID planning and program design.





for ways to *expand* USAID's presence in the developing world. Instead, the administration's total OE request for FY 2008 was 15 percent lower than the FY 2006 actual budget for OE. Budgetary and management decisions such as these that lead to the overcentralization of USAID's strategic planning and program management processes will compromise aid effectiveness by moving strategic decision points from the field to headquarters.

The staffing situation is also critical, as the number of USAID direct hires has decreased substantially over the last 15 years, causing a troubling loss of technical expertise at the agency. In the 1990s, for instance, 37 percent of the agency's work force left without being replaced, or were laid off in the 1995 reduction-in-force.

The number of FSOs working overseas dropped by 29 percent between 1992 and 2005, from 1,173 to 833. The current attrition rate is outpacing new hires by more than 2-to-1. In 2006, 65 FSOs retired while only 29 were hired, and about half of all FSOs have been recruited in the last six or seven years. Even when new officers are hired, it takes two years to fully train them for entry-level jobs. The result is that the work force increasingly lacks institutional memory and technical knowledge. Because of the ever-shrinking size of USAID's staff, the agency has been forced to manage an increasingly large portfolio with fewer and fewer personnel. For instance, while the average federal contracting officer manages around \$10 mil-

lion in contracts per year, a USAID contracting officer oversees an average of \$57 million in contracts. As overseas missions get smaller, the system's management and oversight capabilities will become overstressed.

The operating expense constraints at USAID have also led to a proliferation of personnel systems at the agency. Up to 13 different personnel systems have operated between 2001 and 2005, many of them designed to circumvent OE and human resources restrictions. The agency tried to address this several years ago by consolidating many positions into the existing Foreign Service Limited hiring mechanism, using program funding. The FSL mechanism is normally a way to staff positions overseas with Civil Service officers on an exceptional basis when qualified Foreign Service officers are not available. However, this only exacerbated and distorted the FS career system, causing more problems and concerns for regular FS employees.

On a positive note, both houses of Congress are supporting our call to increase OE. It is our hope that by the time this column is published, the administration will have concurred. It is the only logical and sensible solution left to correct years of neglect. We hope that the administration will finally provide adequate funding for USAID to carry out the nation's foreign assistance programs, which, after all, are our most cost-effective and best first line of defense. □

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over the last 15 years.

Relations Renewed • Continued from page 61

The meeting was held at the invitation of Sec. Rice. Participants were AFSA President John Naland, State Vice President Steve Kashkett, AFSA attorney Neera Parikh, acting Director General Heather Hodges, Chief of Staff Brian Gunderson, and State's Chief Labor Management Negotiator Steve Polson.

Naland remarked that his election campaign had focused on AFSA's interest in maintaining a positive dialogue with the Secretary and other key interlocutors. Sec. Rice said that her top priority was "our people and what happens to them" and expressed great respect for the Foreign Service.

Naland raised the urgent need to address the pay disparity issue and obtain more resources for diplomacy, asking the Secretary to contact key members of Congress, at the appropriate point, to urge them to pass legislation that would eliminate the overseas pay disparity and to fully fund the State Department's FY 2008 budget request. Sec. Rice expressed strong support for those legislative goals, adding that she had personally played a key role in securing White House support for correcting the overseas pay disparity.

Turning to Iraq, VP Kashkett affirmed that AFSA remains committed to working with the department to find creative incen-

tives to encourage voluntary bidders — rather than resort to directed assignments — for the many positions in Iraq, as the association has done for the past two years. He noted that AFSA has agreed to numerous State Department initiatives and assignment rule changes to encourage bidding on these extreme hardship posts. Kashkett reiterated AFSA's desire for an increase in the Separate Maintenance Allowance.

AFSA seeks to avoid directed assignments to a war zone, believing that would be detrimental to the individual, the post and the Foreign Service. The Secretary said that she, too, hoped to continue to rely on volunteers, but that staffing Iraq was a top priority and she was prepared, if needed, to direct Foreign Service members to serve there. One persistent concern raised by AFSA members that Kashkett put forward at the meeting is the safety of residential trailers at Embassy Baghdad. The Secretary said that she did not believe that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security would allow an insecure condition to go unaddressed.

Asked her view of the future of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq, the Secretary said that the PRTs have been a success. She said that while an original plan may have envisioned a scaling back of the teams, this would likely wait until Iraq has been stabilized to the point that traditional consulates and other diplo-

matic-presence posts can take over local coordination.

Naland raised the plan to create a Museum of American Diplomacy in the Marshall Wing of the Truman Building. He noted the potential for this project to educate the American people on the vital role of diplomacy. Sec. Rice agreed on the need to tell the story of diplomacy, but expressed concern about securing private funding for the \$30-million-plus startup cost, which, she said, should not be funded with State Department money. She encouraged Naland to seek solutions and get back to her with ideas. On July 30, Naland toured the space reserved for the museum and plans to pursue options for supporting the project.

Sec. Rice closed the meeting by urging AFSA to do whatever it could to support greater diversity in Foreign Service hiring. AFSA, in fact, has a solid track record in this area, including sponsorship of a minority internship at State, the nationwide High School Essay Contest and the wide distribution of AFSA's book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*.

Subsequent to the meeting, AFSA scheduled meetings with the Bureaus of Legislative Affairs and Diplomatic Security for follow-up. AFSA looks forward to continued discussions with the Secretary. □

Essay • Continued from page 61

was "The Birth of Democracy: The Role of the Foreign Service in Establishing a Democracy in Sudan."

The third-place prize of \$750 went to Michelle Fang, a rising senior at Milton Academy in Milton, Mass., who is from British Columbia. Her essay topic was "Reforming Liberia, Stabilizing West Africa: The Work of the Foreign Service to Create Good Governance in Liberia."

Twenty-three finalists received honorable mention certificates for their excellent essays.

An AFSA advisory panel of judges selected the winners. This year the top three winners' essays were separated by only one point, making this the closest competition

in the history of the contest.

The goal of AFSA's essay contest, now in its eighth year, is to encourage interest in possible Foreign Service careers among top-quality high school students nationwide. AFSA promotes the contest widely through direct mailings to social science teachers, as well as through listings on various Web sites popular with students. Teachers become AFSA's key promoters and mentors of the contest in schools. Sumit Malik's English teacher and mentor, Michael Miller, was also received by Sec. Rice during her meeting with Malik and his parents.

For the 2007 essay contest, AFSA received more than 100 submissions from high school students nationwide covering

a wide variety of topics. Students were asked to analyze and explain how Foreign Service members promote U.S. national interests by participating in the resolution of today's major international problems.

The contest is open to all students in grades nine through 12 attending a public, private, parochial or home school; or participating in a high school correspondence program in any of the states, Washington, D.C., or U.S. territories; or U.S. citizen students attending schools overseas. Students whose parents are members of the U.S. Foreign Service or have served on the Advisory Committee are not eligible.

AFSA consultant Perri Green deserves much credit for ably administering the contest since its inception. □

New Hearing • Continued from page 61

of the employee's resignation. It suspended the remaining issues that were raised in the motion for reconsideration pending the outcome of a hearing on the voluntariness of the resignation.

Facts of the Case

In late 2003, the director general proposed the separation for cause of an FSO after his top-secret security clearance was revoked based on his inappropriate use of government equipment in 2000. [Note: In 2002, the department attempted to discipline the employee for the same incident, but the Grievance Board found that the maximum reasonable penalty was an admonishment, a cautionary letter that is not put in the employee's official file and is destroyed after one year.]

Under the Foreign Service Act, employees (other than those who have been convicted of a crime) are entitled to a hearing on separation for cause before the FSGB, unless they waive that right. They are placed in a leave-without-pay status pending the outcome of the hearing.

The FSO in this case did not waive his right to a hearing, so the parties engaged in protracted discovery and litigation for 19 months.

The employee alleged that the Diplomatic Security Bureau and the Security Appeal Panel committed grave procedural errors during the revocation of his security clearance. For example, DS employees had ex parte communications with the panel after the employee and his counsel were excused from the meeting. In addition, the SAP and the director of DS, in revoking the employee's clearance, relied on witness statements that the employee was not permitted to view. These procedural errors denied the employee the right to notice of, and an opportunity to respond to, the reasons for the clearance revocation.

The employee also alleged that his firing would not be in the best interest of the Foreign Service, because he was continuing to make a meaningful contribution to the State Department despite the revocation of his security clearance. He noted that he had been recommended for promotion

to FS-2 in 2000 as well as 2004, despite his lack of a clearance. However, the promotion was held up due to the discipline case discussed above and the subsequent separation-for-cause proceeding.

The employee also cited compelling personal factors that militated against his firing. These included the fact that, at the time, he had only three years to go before becoming eligible for voluntary retirement, so his family's pre-existing medical conditions made it essential that he maintain his government health insurance.

A Legal Catch-22

As the sole breadwinner for his family, the employee needed to find other employment while fighting his separation for cause before the Grievance Board. He took low-paying, part-time jobs in the private sector until, after 19 months of mandatory leave-without-pay status, he was able to secure a position at another federal agency. When that agency requested that the State Department send over his official personnel file, State refused, stating that it could not release the file until the employee resigned.

Fearing that he was placing his new job in jeopardy, and under severe financial duress, the employee tendered his resignation in 2006, but stated in his resignation letter that he intended to pursue his appeal rights before the Grievance Board. Upon receipt of his resignation letter, the acting director general, without prior notice to the employee or his counsel, withdrew the proposed separation for cause, claimed the board no longer had jurisdiction over the case and sought to terminate all of the employee's appeal rights.

Unfortunately, the Grievance Board dismissed the employee's case, acting on the mistaken belief that the State Department's withdrawal of the proposed separation deprived it of jurisdiction over all of the issues that the parties had been litigating for the past 19 months. The department argued, and the board agreed, that prior to going off the rolls of the department, the employee was required to file a separate grievance with the department alleging all

AFSA Creates Legal Defense Fund and Seeks Contributions

Over the years, the AFSA Governing Board has contributed money toward the legal fees of Foreign Service members with cases that are of institutional importance to AFSA and its members. For example, AFSA contributed \$5,000 to assist a Foreign Service officer as he sought to have the U.S. government protect him from a private lawsuit by a Russian national who was injured in a car accident in Vladivostok, where the FSO was serving as consul general. (For details, see "The CG Is On Duty 24/7: Court Agrees," October 2006, *AFSA News*.) AFSA also contributed to the legal costs of two USAID employees who were forced to go to court to enforce favorable Grievance Board decisions. To date, these contributions to assist members facing high legal fees have come from the limited resources of AFSA's Labor Management Office.

Many federal unions have legal defense funds in place so that they can finance private counsel to pursue cases of significance to the union and its membership. While AFSA's four full-time attorneys work tirelessly to help our members (without charging them), some cases, especially those requiring a hearing, require the time and expertise of private counsel. With this in mind, AFSA announces the creation of its own legal defense fund.

Individuals — especially those who have benefited from free legal representation by AFSA — are encouraged to make a contribution to the fund. Please make out your check to "AFSA Legal Defense Fund" and mail it to AFSA (Attn: Legal Fund), 2101 E Street NW, Washington DC 20037. Please note that contributions are not tax deductible, but we hope that will not discourage you from contributing to this important fund.

Continued on page 74

AFSA Issue Brief

With this inaugural edition, we begin a new series of articles that will outline AFSA positions on critical issues. These "Issue Briefs" will run in AFSA News several times a year and will help keep the membership informed about current AFSA priorities.

Training America's Diplomats: Better than Ever, but Is It Enough?

HOW UNDERINVESTMENT IN FOREIGN SERVICE TRAINING IS HURTING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

BY JOHN K. NALAND, AFSA PRESIDENT

Never have Foreign Service members received as much training as they do today. Enrollment at the Foreign Service Institute—including classroom and distance learning—is up 62 percent since 2001. FSI course offerings have increased to over 500 per year. Mandatory leadership and management training has been fully phased in. FSI, a facility that seemed half-empty when it opened in 1993, is now so overcrowded that some foreign-language classes have been split into morning and afternoon shifts.

Thus, America's diplomats are receiving more training than ever before. But is it enough training of the right type in view of the needs of 21st-century U.S. diplomacy? And, given our nation's far greater investment in education and training for the uniformed military, is the relative underinvestment in Foreign Service education and training contributing to an erosion of the Department of State's role as the lead foreign affairs agency?

How the Other Half Trains

While some Foreign Service members may question being compared to the uniformed military, the fact is that the Foreign Service personnel system was purposefully modeled on that of the U.S. military. For example, the Foreign Service's "up-or-out" promotion system, implemented in 1946, was based on the U.S. Navy's personnel system. Because both the Foreign Service and the military work under difficult and often hazardous conditions throughout their careers, members of both are allowed to retire with a pen-



sion after 20 years of service.

As is the case in the military, Foreign Service assignments are heavily influenced by the needs of the Service. For that reason, Congress included only the Foreign Service and the uniformed military in a 2003 law providing a longer period to meet the occupancy requirements to qualify for exemption from the taxation of capital gains on the sale of a primary residence.

Unfortunately, the similarities between the two personnel systems do not carry over into the area of professional educa-

tion and training. Take, for example, the U.S. Army, which I know firsthand, having spent three years as an armored cavalry lieutenant 25 years ago and graduating from the U.S. Army War College via a State Department training detail in 2006. The chart below depicts the U.S. Army officer education system.

As the chart shows, Army officers undergo extensive training even before they are commissioned. Upon entering active duty, they attend an Officer Basic Course lasting three to five months depending on career track (e.g., armor, infantry, etc.). At about year five of service, Army officers undergo six months of training at a Captain's Career Course, followed by the Combined Arms and Service Staff School. Between years four to 17 of service, some officers attend advanced civilian schooling to pursue a master's or Ph.D. degree. At about year 12 of service, they are assigned to year-long Intermediate-Level Education (formerly called the Command and General Staff Course). At about year 17

U.S. Army Officer Education System (major courses)

Pre-Commission	Company Grade (Yrs. 1 to 11)	Field Grade (Yrs. 12 to 29)	General Officer (Yrs. 30 +)
West Point, 4 yrs. or ROTC, 2-4 yrs. or Officer Candidate School, 14 wks.	Officer Basic Course, 12-20 wks. and Captain's Career Course, 6 mos.	Intermediate-Level Education, 12 mos. and Pre-Command Course, 2-11 wks. and Army War College, 9 mos.	Capstone 7 wks.

of service, the highest-rated 35 to 40 percent are assigned to the nine-month Army War College course (most via resident instruction, while some take the equivalent distance-education course).

While those courses include training on technical and tactical topics, they also educate officers on non-military-specific topics such as management, human resources, planning, organizational behavior, critical thinking and interagency coordination. All officers wishing to be promoted must complete these courses.

Given the Army's career-long commitment to classroom training and professional education, the only real point of similarity between Foreign Service and Army officer training is at swearing-in. New Army officers receive 12 to 20 weeks of orientation and functional training while new Foreign Service members typically receive 13 to 17 weeks (typically, the "A-100" course plus consular training). There the similarities between the Foreign Service and Army approach toward education and training end.

It is true that most Foreign Service members receive from 6 months to 3 years of assignment-specific foreign-language training during their careers — something that few Army officers receive. However, most Army officers spend a similar amount of time in on-the-job operational training, such as weapons practice and field maneuvers.

Trying to Close the Gap

No one has spoken more eloquently about the need for expanded training for Foreign Service members than did former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. As a retired Army officer himself, Sec. Powell explained that "in my 35 years, almost 36 years of service, I was in school for close to six years — an enormous investment on the part of the Army in getting me ready for whatever came." He contrasted his military schooling to that of a typical Senior Foreign Service member, who might have received only a few months of non-language training during a 30-year career. During his tenure at State, Sec. Powell

launched several initiatives to begin to reduce that disparity.

For example, with AFSA's strong support, he established the requirement to complete leadership and management training to be eligible for promotion. That marked a culture change for Foreign Service members, who often avoided any training (except for foreign-language instruction) due to the perception that it would slow their promotions by taking them away from their day-to-day duties. The resulting four new FSI leadership courses are highly regarded. However, added together, they total just three weeks of instruction prior to promotion to the Senior Foreign Service — compared to 30 months of midcareer schooling that the average Army officer receives.

He also sought funding to create a "training float" — such as the U.S. military services have — equivalent to 10 to 15 percent of the staffing level required to fill existing overseas and domestic jobs. Only with such "bench strength" could the Department of State significantly expand long-term language and functional training without leaving hundreds of regular positions vacant worldwide. Unfortunately, while Sec. Powell did secure some funding for additional training positions, the creation of a large training float was abandoned once all available positions were shifted to Iraq.

The net result is that, despite important initiatives in the last decade that afforded America's diplomats more training than ever before, most Foreign Service members still receive far less professional training than does the average U.S. Army officer.

Militarizing U.S. Foreign Policy

What is the impact on U.S. foreign policy of this relative underinvestment in Foreign Service training? This question is difficult to answer because several other factors are simultaneously at work, including shortfalls in Foreign Service staffing levels and underinvestment in foreign affairs agency program budgets.

Looking at the net impact of all of the

shortchanging of diplomacy, the December 2006 report "Embassies as Command Posts in the Anti-Terror Campaign," issued by the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee under then-Chairman Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind., found that "The current 12:1 ratio of military spending to spending on the diplomatic and civilian foreign aid agencies risks the further encroachment of the military, by default, into areas where civilian leadership is more appropriate."

The report quoted one U.S. ambassador who noted that "the military has significantly more money and personnel and is so energetic in pursuing its newly created programs and in thinking up new ones, that maintaining a management hand on military activities is increasingly difficult." The report went on to warn that "U.S. defense agencies are increasingly being granted authority and funding to fill perceived gaps [in diplomacy, international information programming, and foreign assistance]. Such bleeding of civilian responsibilities overseas from civilian to military agencies risks weakening the Secretary of State's primacy in setting the agenda for U.S. relations with foreign countries."

As the Senate report indicates, the result of skimping on diplomatic readiness while building up military muscle is that the highly-trained and well-resourced members of the U.S. armed forces are increasingly taking on tasks once rightfully assigned to diplomats. That is not a criticism of America's can-do military, which is only stepping into a partial vacuum to get the job done. However, if left unchecked, this trend could erode the Department of State's role as the lead foreign affairs agency and reduce our nation's options when responding to foreign challenges. As the old saying goes, "If the only tool you have is a hammer, then every problem looks like a nail."

Even former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich, a past critic of the State Department and current member of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, now argues that too many tasks have devolved to the military and that a sig-

nificant increase in the State Department budget is needed in order to reverse that trend. This past April, Gingrich had this to say:

“You have to have about a 50-percent bigger budget for the State Department. ... The State Department is too small to have the training program and the secondment of personnel needed to grow a genuine professional institution. It is impossible for the current Foreign Service to get the level of education it needs. They recruit really smart people [but] they grossly underinvest in training them. It’s a very significant problem ... The reason I became a convert to the fundamental transformation of the State Department is you want to move things away from defense that it’s currently doing. ... You do not want [the] uniformed military having to do all sorts of things that you want to, frankly, give to other agencies if you could count on them doing it.”

Value Added

What, then, are the knowledge, skills and abilities that our 21st-century Foreign Service currently does not have to a sufficient degree, but could obtain with expanded education and training? To answer that question, it is necessary to first identify what diplomats uniquely should be able to bring to the table.

The Foreign Service exists to provide the president with a worldwide-available corps of professionals with unique abilities that are essential to successful foreign policy development and implementation. Those abilities include: keen knowledge of the history, politics, economics, cultures and languages of other countries; skill at employing that body of knowledge to keep Washington informed of the realities on the ground in the host country; the ability to influence foreign governments and publics; skill at managing programs and projects assigned to foreign affairs agencies; mastery of the interagency process at home; and the ability to coordinate and integrate the efforts of other country-team members in the host country.

To live up to that definition, Foreign

To emulate the Army’s proven model, the State Department could implement at least one long-term professional training course to be taken by all Foreign Service members.

Service members must possess a range of knowledge, skills and abilities. Those include: foreign-language fluency, advanced area knowledge (including history, culture, politics and economics), leadership and management skills, negotiating skills, public diplomacy skills, project management skills and job-specific functional expertise. Unfortunately, the Foreign Service exhibits shortcomings in each of these areas. For example:

- An August 2006 Government Accountability Office report found that 29 percent of overseas language-designated positions were not filled with language proficient staff. The report said that this situation “can adversely impact State’s ability to communicate with foreign audiences and execute critical tasks.”

- Most Foreign Service members — including ambassadors, deputy chiefs of mission and principal officers — who do not go to their new assignment via language training do not receive up-to-date area studies training.

- While one might expect that every U.S. diplomat would receive training in how to negotiate, only about 50 Foreign Service members take FSI’s introductory negotiating course each year. Given that rate of instruction, less than 15 percent of current U.S. diplomats have received even basic instruction in negotiating techniques.

- Despite the current “transformational diplomacy” focus on shaping outcomes and running programs, few Foreign Service members receive training in program management.

Squaring the Circle

Two major obstacles stand in the way of providing Foreign Service members with the knowledge, skills and abilities that are essential to successful foreign policy development and implementation: lack of time and understaffing/under-resourcing.

The first obstacle is time. Currently, the typical FSI course runs for one to five days. Few non-language courses last longer than three weeks. The reason for such short courses is that, after new-hire training, the only opportunities that most Foreign Service members have for non-foreign language classroom training are during a brief window of availability every few years while between assignments or while leaving their in-boxes untended during infrequent domestic tours. Even over a 30-year-long career, taking a few short courses every couple of years adds up to less than 10 months of non-language training during an entire career — one-third of what the typical U.S. Army officer receives.

As previously mentioned, the Army avoids such time constraints by permanently reassigning officers to long-term training three times during their first 20 years of service for six to 12 months each time. By making training a permanent-change-of-station assignment, the Army takes officers fully offline for the academic year that is needed to master the course material.

To emulate the Army’s proven model, the State Department could implement at least one long-term professional training course to be taken by all Foreign Service members. One suggestion is to create a nine-month “career course” to be taken by newly tenured employees. That course could offer a common core curriculum comprised of existing FSI courses (for example, negotiations, public diplomacy basics, global issues, Washington tradecraft, congressional relations and various information-technology, leadership and management courses) along with newly created segments (for example, national security strategy, instruments of national power, diplomatic history and first-responder training). Participants could

then separate into subgroups for advanced functional and area studies training, depending on their specific cone/specialty and anticipated primary regional focus. The course could also have a community-service component permitting students to do volunteer work, such as mentoring in local public schools.

In addition to creating a course for all employees at about year four or five of service, State should continue to expand language training — especially for hard languages in strategic regions, such as Arabic and Chinese. For example, to ensure uninterrupted language capabilities at one-year Arabic posts such as those in Iraq and Saudi Arabia, three officers are required: one at post, one in the first year of language training, and one in the second year of training.

State could also expand non-FSI long-term training opportunities for employees between about years 12 to 17 of service. Examples include the various U.S. military war colleges, university training and developmental details at nongovernmental organizations and within private industry. Currently, fewer than 75 Foreign Service members (mostly at the FS-2 and FS-1 grade levels) are given such opportunities each year — representing less than 3 percent of all mid-level employees.

However, before additional long-term training opportunities could be created, another obstacle would need to be overcome: understaffing. The State Department is simply not staffed to permit additional long-term professional training. The dilemma is summed up on the Web site of the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas:

"We do not have interagency students in every classroom [because] ... U.S. governmental agencies do not have the same robust training and education personnel accounts that the military services have to support a continuous professional military education that includes institutional education and training throughout an officer's career ... U.S. governmental agencies would be hamstrung to let their 'front line' subordinates attend a yearlong curriculum

at CGSC. Unfortunately, these agencies tend to be 'one deep' in their manning."

Overcoming this "one deep" problem can only be achieved by creating a larger education and training float. For example, to permit all newly-tenured Foreign Service generalists and specialists to attend a nine-month "career course," approximately 600 student positions and 25 instructor positions would be required. Another 75 positions would be required in order to double the number of mid-level employees in long-term training and developmental assignments. Another 200 slots could be dedicated to expanded long-term language training. Creating those 900 new positions would represent a huge step toward implementing the robust training float that Sec. Powell and others identified as necessary.

Spare a DIME?

Obviously, creating a large training float would cost a lot of money. But without a fully staffed and well-trained Foreign Service, the future will likely see, as the recent Senate report warned, "further encroachment of the military, by default, into areas where civilian leadership is more appropriate." That is something that no one, including the overstretched U.S. military, should want.

In fact, U.S. military doctrine teaches that there are four elements of national power — diplomacy, intelligence, military and economics — with military force almost always being the last, not first, tool that should be employed to achieve national security goals. Thus, the military recognizes the value of a diplomatic corps that is sufficiently staffed and trained to enable it to, whenever possible, achieve national goals without necessitating military-led "kinetic" intervention.

All of this argues for a rebalancing in the current 12:1 ratio of military spending to spending on diplomacy and foreign assistance. Instead, as things stand now, that imbalance is set to worsen. Consider the suggestion that 900 Foreign Service training positions be created. The U.S. Marine Corps alone — the smallest of the

uniformed services — is slated to expand its active-duty ranks by 30 times as many (27,000) by 2011. The U.S. Army is slated to add 65,000 more soldiers to its permanent rolls. Thus, 900 new Foreign Service positions would amount to less than 1 percent of the planned military expansion — barely a rounding error when compared to additional resources being dedicated to the Department of Defense which, for example, already has more musicians than the State Department has diplomats.

But even if the administration and Congress were to fund a larger training float and a nine-month "career course," there would still be a need for additional training at regular intervals throughout the employee's career. One suggestion is to require supervisors at the beginning of each rated period to set a minimum number of days of training expected of each employee to strengthen currently needed skills or for general career development. This, of course, would be easier for D.C.-based employees to do than for overseas employees, but FSI could help by continuing to expand its online course offerings and its courses given at regional centers. The goal would be to make both managers and employees see education and training as an ongoing professional requirement that is a key to work force effectiveness.

In conclusion, while America's diplomats are receiving more training than ever before, it is not nearly enough in view of the needs of 21st-century U.S. diplomacy. This underinvestment in Foreign Service education and training is contributing to an erosion of the Department of State's role as the lead foreign affairs agency. To reverse this trend, State needs the resources to provide Foreign Service members the education and training necessary to equip them with the knowledge, skills and abilities that are essential to successful foreign policy development and implementation in the coming decades. □

John K. Naland, a 21-year veteran of the Foreign Service, is AFSA president.

New Hearing • Continued from page 69

of the things the parties had been litigating over for the past 18 months before the FSGB. It further asserted that the employee was a “former member” of the Foreign Service and claimed it was too late for him to file a separate grievance over these matters.

AFSA Supports FS Grievant

The AFSA Governing Board believes the State Department abused its discretion in withdrawing the proposed separation without the employee’s knowledge or agreement, especially since the employee’s resignation letter made clear that he wished to continue with his grievance. In addition, the FSGB’s decision was severely flawed and contrary to federal case law and its own precedents. AFSA maintains that Foreign Service employees should be afforded the right to challenge procedural violations committed during the revocation of their security clearance, as well as their separation for cause, before an impartial tribunal, such as the Foreign Service Grievance Board.

Because the department’s procedural maneuverings denied the employee these fundamental rights, the AFSA Governing Board unanimously agreed to seek reversal of the Grievance Board’s decision and pay the fees of private counsel.

AFSA maintains that Foreign Service employees should be afforded the right to challenge procedural violations committed during the revocation of their security clearance.

In February 2007, attorney Beth Slavet, a former chair of the Merit Systems Protection Board, filed a motion for reconsideration with the Grievance Board seeking reversal of its dismissal of the case. As

stated above, in July, the FSGB granted the motion for reconsideration, in part, and ordered a hearing on the issue of whether the employee’s resignation was voluntary or was, in effect, a forced resignation or “constructive discharge.”

That hearing will likely occur this fall. Should the employee prevail on this issue, it is unclear whether the department will be permitted to reinstate the proposal for separation for cause. In any event, this employee probably has a long legal battle ahead of him as he seeks justice before the FSGB. As this will be an expensive proposition, AFSA is seeking contributions from its members for this worthy cause. See sidebar (p. 69). □

AFSA Meets with Diplomatic Security PDAS

AFSA President John Naland, State Vice President Steve Kashkett and senior AFSA staff members met with Diplomatic Security Bureau Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Greg Starr on Aug. 3. They covered such topics as security for Foreign Service members in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the security conditions in the Baghdad International Zone and the upcoming move to the new embassy compound.

DS gave an upbeat progress report on two longstanding issues: the out-of-date contact reporting requirements and the security clearance suspension process. DS expects to have the final draft of a complete revision of the regulations concerning foreign contact reporting ready in the near future. AFSA looks forward to having an opportunity to review and comment on that final draft before it is incorporated into the Foreign Affairs Manual. AFSA’s relationship with DS encompasses a wide range of vital issues, and AFSA appreciates the open lines of communication with the current DS leadership. □

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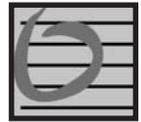
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BOOKS

A Brace of Canadians

The Unfinished Canadian: The People We Are

Andrew Cohen, McClelland & Stewart Ltd, Toronto, 2007, \$22.95, hardcover, 270 pages.

Canadians: A Portrait of a Country and Its People

Roy MacGregor, Viking, 2007, \$35.00, hardcover, 344 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVID T. JONES

Perhaps mindful of the quip that the classic definition of a boring headline is “Worthy Canadian Initiative,” many Americans are willing to do anything for Canada except learn about it. Fortunately, *The Unfinished Canadian: The People We Are* and *Canadians: A Portrait of a Country and Its People* are both distinctly readable volumes, possibly reflecting the fact that the authors are journalists rather than academics, with the reporter’s eye for detail. Both are primarily designed as vehicles for Canadians to talk about themselves, but they offer us an opportunity to “listen in” to what is driving (and bothering) our close allies and economic partners.

Roy MacGregor’s *Canadians* is the more optimistic of the pair. He follows a path blazed by an iconic Canadian political observer, Bruce Hutchinson, in his *The Unknown Country* (1942). MacGregor takes the reader across the country province by province, as he rides former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s fun-

eral train into history, recounts the funeral ceremonies of Maurice “Rocket” Richard as the backdrop for the Canada-hockey nexus, extols forgotten heroes such as World War I combat ace Will Barker, and travels through the empty north to meet native “First Nation” Canadians.

On a lighter note, he recites a list of Canadian inventions ranging from caulking guns to the Wonderbra, including the creation of highway center lines. Perhaps that last development was necessary to provide an answer to the question, “Why does a Canadian cross the road?” Answer: “To get to the middle.” But, essentially, MacGregor views Canada as a “bumblebee”: no observer can understand how it flies, but it does — and will continue to do so.

Cohen is less sanguine and more barbed, with no signs of mellowing since his previous book, *While Canada Slept: How We Lost Our Place in the World* (2004), created a major fuss among his countrymen. Rather than employing the classic travelogue to show us his country, he constructs a variety of prototypes that collectively make up his *Unfinished Canadian*. These include the “Hybrid Canadian,” a mixture of input from England, France and the United States and the “Observed Canadian,” via whom Cohen sorts through musings by a variety of outsiders who have written about Canada.

In his discussion of the “Unconscious Canadian,” he cites a popular TV program that surveyed viewers to identify the nation’s greatest citizen to demonstrate Canadians’ woeful igno-

rance of their history.

The chapter on the “American Canadian,” exploring ritualized anti-Americanism, will probably be of most interest to U.S. readers. The author suggests that politicians’ disrespect for their southern neighbors constitutes “pandering to the lesser instincts of an insecure people.” Ultimately, Canadians remain happy to accept the U.S. security “subsidy” that permits them to spend expansively on social programs while scolding Washington for fiscal irresponsibility.

Yet instead of his compatriots’ diverging from Americans (as argued by one recent sociopolitical text, Michael Adams’ *Fire and Ice*), Cohen believes there is actually increasing *convergence* in economic attitudes, political practices and lifestyles, though Canada is moving more rapidly toward the U.S. than vice versa.

Cohen has already generated considerable media angst back home with his caricature of the “Capital Canadian.” In that chapter, he trashes Ottawa as a national capital that makes the least of its opportunities, filled with uneventful architecture, poor urban planning and cuisine that is “unflavored and unfavored.” But to be fair, John F. Kennedy memorably pilloried Washington, D.C., as a city “with Southern efficiency and Northern charm.” So one might reasonably conclude that there is hope for Canada’s capital, as well.

Neither volume examines the Quebec/national unity conundrum. Such timidity is regrettable but hardly surprising, for it is the rare English-speaker who can deal with Franco-



phone Canada in other than platitudes. For sophisticated analysis of the evolving relationship between that province and the rest of the country, try Chantal Heber's *French Kiss* (Alfred Knopf, Canada, 2007).

That said, Americans seeking a better understanding of their northern neighbors — and how they see themselves — will find a good deal of wisdom in these books.

David T. Jones, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, is a frequent contributor to the Journal. Among many other postings, he served in Ottawa from 1992 to 1996. He is co-author with David Kilgour of the new book, Uneasy Neighbors: Canada, The USA and the Dynamics of State, Industry and Culture.

The Way Forward

Iraq: Preventing a New Generation of Conflict

Edited by Markus E. Bouillon, David M. Malone, and Ben Rowsell; Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007, \$25.00, paperback, 349 pages.

REVIEWED BY KEITH W. MINES

There is no shortage of books on what went wrong in Iraq. They bear evocative titles like *Fiasco*, *The End of Iraq*, *Squandered Victory* and *Losing Iraq* and lay out essentially the same story: too few troops, spotty planning and needlessly aggressive de-Ba'athification led to the growth of a Sunni insurgency, which morphed into full-blown civil war as the disenfranchised Sunnis came to associate Iraq's new Shi'ite and Kurdish rulers with the occupiers. What they don't tell us, with a few exceptions, is what to do now. So it is refreshing to

have this short volume, focused primarily on the future and on what it will take to stabilize Iraq and "prevent a new generation of conflict."

Iraq: Preventing a New Generation of Conflict stems from a conference co-sponsored by the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Peace Academy in May 2006. One of the editors is a senior policymaker and accomplished author; another served as Canada's first representative in post-Hussein Iraq; and the third is head of the Middle East Division at the International Peace Academy. In addition to extremely strong analytical skills and long experience with peacemaking and nationbuilding, the three share a studied neutrality.

The book's 17 contributors are equally impressive, having been carefully selected for their longstanding, deep understanding of Iraq. Many of them provide much-needed perspective by citing the 20-plus years of conflict that preceded the current round.

Part One, "Iraq in Turmoil," covers the social, political, economic and confessional state of Iraq "three wars later." It is in Part Two, "Toward a Stable Peace," however, that the book really takes off, particularly in the four chapters on the country's political structure and options.

As laid out in the introduction, the book's premise is that "it is primarily relations between Iraqis that perpetuate the violence in that country, and any solution must start with them." To this end, Nicholas Haysom writes of what it would take to forge an inclusive and enduring social contract. Forum of Federations analyst David Cameron makes perhaps the most important contribution in the book when he argues that the federation that Iraqis forged with international assistance in 2004-2005 is essentially unworkable but fixable. He offers

detailed ideas on how to do so, and get Iraq to a balanced and functional federation.

Similarly, John McGarry looks at what it would take to fix Iraq's federal structure, arguing for the creation of "liberal consociational institutions," which would "focus on democratic preference rather than on predetermined ethnic or communal categories." Finally, Brenden O'Leary wrestles with the thorny question of federalizing natural resources.

The book also offers a strong introductory section and a solid conclusion by the editors. What it does not include, regrettably, is any commentary by citizens of that beleaguered nation. Despite the organizers' best efforts, travel challenges and the dearth of Iraqi analysts who combine analytical skills and neutrality meant that only a handful of them were able to attend the conference — and none contributed anything in writing. Also missing from the book is a submission by the veteran United Nations envoy and adviser Lakhdar Brahimi, who gave an exceptional speech at the conference but did not pen an essay.

Nonetheless, if U.S. policymakers could read just one book on Iraq, this should probably be it. It is penetrating, neutral, asks all the right questions and lays out far more new ideas than anything else currently available. Its intention to "build a grand political settlement" may seem like a stretch. But if we are ever to get beyond the current spate of ill-informed, politicized and shallow analyses of the way forward, this is the place to begin. ■

Keith Mines, now a political officer in Ottawa, served in Ramadi in 2003 and 2004. He has also served in Tel Aviv, San Salvador, Port-au-Prince, Budapest and Washington, D.C., and done TDY tours in Mogadishu, Kabul and Darfur.

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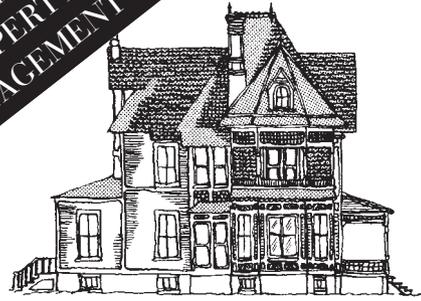
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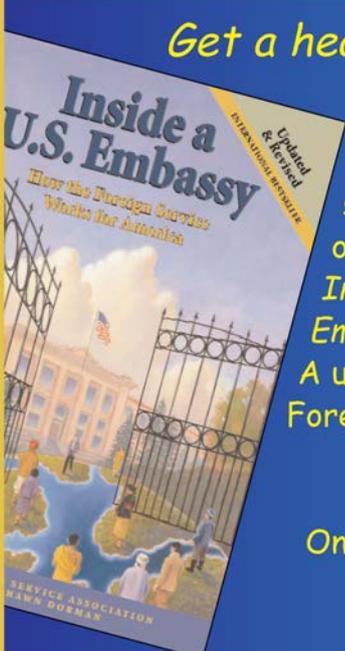
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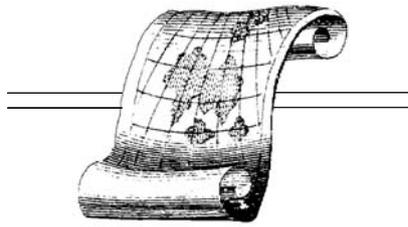
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REFLECTIONS

Slava in Mexico

BY STANLEY A. ZUCKERMAN

The late Mstislav Rostropovich performed all over the world during his illustrious career, but his 1979 visit to Mexico as conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra was certainly among his most memorable.

First, an ongoing strike by the orchestra threatened to derail the concert. The U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Patrick J. Lucey, took it upon himself to try to save the performance, coming as it did at a time when relations between Mexico and the U.S. were strained.

Lucey called the head of the orchestra's union and asked if its members would play if he could arrange a contract directly between it and the Bellas Artes (Institute of Fine Arts), taking the National Symphony Orchestra Association management out of the picture. The union agreed, and Lucey contacted Bellas Artes officials; they, too, concurred.

One major obstacle remained. The orchestra needed a conductor, and they wanted their own, their beloved Slava. Lucey asked me, as his public affairs counselor, to find Rostropovich. After many phone calls I tracked him down in the VIP lounge at Kennedy Airport.

"Oh yes," the maestro said. "Zuckerman! You are wonderful violinist and I want to meet you."

Stanley A. Zuckerman, a retired FSO, was counselor for public affairs at Embassy Mexico City from 1973 to 1978.

It took several minutes to convince him that I wasn't Pinchas Zuckerman, the fiddler, but Stanley Zuckerman, the harassed diplomat. Then I explained the situation. Unfortunately, presuming the orchestra's negotiations were hopelessly deadlocked, Rostropovich had made commitments in Paris and, in any case, would find it difficult to conduct the orchestra under such an unusual arrangement.

Months later, however, with a truce achieved between the orchestra association and its musicians, the concert was rescheduled. It would take place at the Bellas Artes after an initial performance at the Cervantino Festival, an annual celebration of the arts that was held in the colonial mining town of Guanajuato in central Mexico.

The Guanajuato concert garnered long applause and many bows. But the NSO's standard encore, a rousing performance of Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever," elicited a far less positive response. Reviews by the nationalistic Mexico City media complained that it was a message of gringo imperialism that did not belong in a cultural presentation of international stature.

Upon reaching Mexico City, Slava held a press conference. Sousa, he said, was to the march what Strauss was to the waltz: each produced the best of the genre. The music should be accepted as such, not interpreted as if it had political meaning.

That night, Amb. Lucey held a small dinner in Rostropovich's honor. We talked about the press reaction to the Sousa march, and I asked the con-

ductor if he intended to perform the piece as an encore at Bellas Artes.

He wouldn't, he said, because the concert would end with the Tchaikovsky Sixth Symphony, the "Pathétique," which closes with an ethereal, almost religious theme and could not be followed by any encore, particularly one of so different a mood.

"But perhaps," I said, then immediately regretted it, "the Mexican press will conclude that they've intimidated you."

"Oh," Rostropovich said, as his eyes narrowed.

As it happened, the standing-room-only audience brought the maestro back to the stage repeatedly at the end of the "Pathétique." Finally, Rostropovich relented and conducted the humorous march from Prokofiev's "The Love for Three Oranges."

The reception was thunderous. Slava was brought back to the stage for repeated bows, finally yielding again to the demands of the audience. He tapped his baton upon the music stand, and out came "Stars and Stripes Forever."

Pandemonium broke loose. Half the audience, which included many Americans and other foreigners, clapped to the rhythm of the march. The other half shouted "Viva Mexico," shaking their fists in the air.

Still, no injuries were reported. Slava was triumphant. The ambassador took it all in stride. The Mexican press again had a field day, but the relationship between our two countries somehow survived. ■

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