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THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS



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# PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

## *Square Pegs, Round Holes*

By J. ANTHONY HOLMES

A year ago the Foreign Service was abuzz about then-Director General W. Robert Pearson's signature initiative, the State Department's highly-touted new Career Development Programs. The CDPs were, *inter alia*, the department's solution to the challenges of staffing unaccompanied and severe hardship posts, creating "a Foreign Service for the 21st century." There was strong support throughout the Service for the CDPs. They were viewed as bringing the system into sync with reality, improving the assignments system's fairness, and finally putting some teeth into the long-ridiculed "fair share" rules for service at hardship posts. In a town hall meeting, DG Pearson agreed that the CDPs obviated the need for fair-share rules in the future.

It is now clear, however, that the department views the CDPs as a medium- to long-term solution that is not relevant to its acute short-term staffing needs. Because unaccompanied tours are for only 12 months and, at almost 800, they now represent over a quarter of all positions opening next year, the pressure to staff them is relentless as the same jobs reappear every cycle. Secretary Rice has started saying the Foreign Service is becoming "more expeditionary." It is hardly surprising that she wants to bring the assignments system into conformance with her transformational diplomacy concept.

---

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



As I write in early August, AFSA is in the process of negotiating elements of a major State Department initiative to re-engineer the assignments process. The first shoe to drop was a ban, with a few limited exceptions, on tour-of-duty extensions at posts below the 15-percent hardship differential level.

Other department proposals include: turning the cycle's timing inside out so that the toughest positions to staff are addressed first; minimizing and delaying "handshake" commitments between bureaus and individuals; tightening up the still-on-the-books fair-share program by eliminating low-differential posts and ending further consultations before paneling; CDOs becoming much more aggressive in arm-twisting and jawboning; and, in what is easily the most sensitive proposal, changing the 6/8 year limits on Washington service to 5/6 years.

AFSA and State share a strong desire to maintain the present system of staffing all positions for tenured personnel on a voluntary basis. We recognize the Secretary's authority to move to directed assignments if she chooses. In an era when the department places great emphasis on sound management practices, though, the advantages of having personnel where they want to be are obvious in productivity and morale terms.

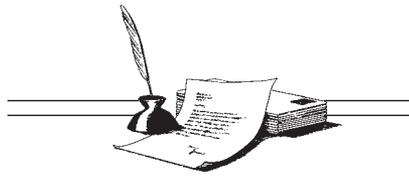
We in AFSA have decided to work closely and constructively with the department to support its assignment objectives while preserving a system that lives up to State's publicly articu-

lated priorities of being employee- and family-friendly.

We all agree that getting the best qualified personnel to the highest priority positions is a worthy objective. The reality, though, is that neither State nor any other part of the USG have anywhere near the number of qualified people they need for Iraq or other war-zone service. The recently released GAO report on foreign-language shortfalls reveals this starkly. We simply do not have enough Arabic speakers with Middle East experience for the 300 positions at Embassy Baghdad and the PRTs every summer, much less the rest of the region with similar needs.

The FS assignment system needs to remain a fair, effective mechanism for staffing all posts around the world, not just Iraq. It would be dangerous and wrong to allow short-term exigencies to undermine the department's long-term ability to meet its broader mission, regardless of the wildly inappropriate allegations by some in certain other USG departments that the state of Iraq today is somehow due to State's "failing to step up."

The department is in a huge rush to make these changes, which amount to an "Iraq tax" on all personnel akin to what the bureaus have paid in budgetary terms over the past few years. We need to make sure that we all understand their implications and that unintended consequences are minimized. AFSA urges the department to allow the CDPs and all the special Iraq service incentives approved over the past year to have their desired effect. ■



# LETTERS

## Donor Difficulties

Many of the fine articles in the June focus section, “Realigning Foreign Assistance: The Future of USAID,” made apparent the complex difficulties donors encounter in fostering economic development and emphasized that long-term efforts may be required to overcome them. Barely alluded to in these discussions were the intangible and seemingly intractable societal attitudes impeding the development process in many, if not most, developing countries. A partial list would include: denying equality of opportunity to all citizens, resisting wealth redistribution, undervaluing a work ethic, tolerating official corruption/nepotism/tribalism, preferring authoritarian (“strongman”) governments, etc.

One of your authors cited the success of several Asian countries, from Japan to India, in achieving significant levels of economic development. Notably missing from that list was the only Asian country to have “benefited” from a half-century of American colonial administration: the Philippines. Was American tutelage there during the first half of the 20th century insufficient to erase the attitudes and values acquired during centuries of Spanish domination? Why does that country continue to lag behind its regional neighbors despite substantial assistance? Despite the adoption of an American-style constitution and other forms of government, the Philippines seems constantly plagued by a restive military, political violence, an oligopoly-dominated economy, per-

vasive corruption and grinding poverty (not to mention serious problems with a Muslim minority). No matter how many donor resources are made available to address a country’s problems, can sustainable economic development occur in such a place absent a change in key societal attitudes?

The foregoing notwithstanding, let us optimistically assume that some gradual progress is possible. Do our own domestic attitudes toward foreign aid really support the idea of external donor assistance beyond the provision of short-term humanitarian aid and emergency relief? In this context, it is interesting to note that schoolchildren from Scandinavia to Japan receive instruction in developmental issues, the role of foreign assistance in their government’s budget and the work of such specialized United Nations agencies as UNICEF and UNDP.

Here at home, in contrast, Congress has banned USAID from using its resources to educate the public regarding America’s foreign assistance efforts. Nor is there much interest in this topic among any but a miniscule group of specialized educators at any level. Is it any wonder, then, that foreign aid as a federal budget line item, and the United Nations as an international organization, have become whipping boys for politicians seeking federal elective office? Under these circumstances, one wonders whether USAID can ever be reconstituted so as to once again take a leading role in international development forums. If indeed the agency is to have a future,

are we not obliged to recognize and rectify our own dysfunctional societal attitudes towards foreign aid?

*Fred Kalhammer*  
USAID FSO, retired  
Stateline, Nev.

## USAID Reform

The June articles by Tom Dichter and James Fox on USAID reform are the most insightful and provocative I’ve read in a long time. They are particularly relevant to me in my current, post-USAID job with Bread for the World, where I’m working on foreign-assistance policy issues. Kudos to the authors, and to the *Journal* for seeking out and publishing them!

*Charles Uphaus*  
USAID FSO, retired  
Fairfax, Va.

## Lessons Not Learned

Thanks for your June articles that commented on both USIA and USAID. I served in USIA from 1962 to 1965 and in USAID from 1966 to 1980. I then went out on short-term assignments until about 1990. When I left USIA, I was debriefed by almost every office in the agency. But when I left USAID, I was not even asked to come back to Washington, despite the fact I had served so much longer there.

I did not leave quietly; I wrote long memos to give my views on how foreign aid should be improved, but they never evoked a response. My departure from USIA made a lot more sense to me than my departure from USAID. We had a lot to learn in both

## LETTERS



institutions — and we certainly still do.

When I was in USIA, Edward R. Murrow was our leader, and I think our public diplomacy was at its zenith. He insisted that if PD were to work, it had to be believable — and to be believable, it had to be the truth. Telling America's story to the world was not hard, because we had such a good story to tell. We were not to “shade the truth.”

The main thing I learned from my experience in both agencies was that we have to go for the long haul. Too often we give too much attention to quick fixes. We should be just as concerned about how things are going to be in 10 years as in the next 10 months. This is often not the case.

In USAID, our project evaluations always had a section at the end for “lessons learned.” I thought this was the most important part of the evaluation and I gave it serious thought, but I found that other missions and projects seldom learned from our experience. I complained and asked that the section be named “Lessons to Be Learned” and that other missions and projects really benefit from our experience. I noted that other missions went right on making the same mistakes that we had corrected.

We must make sure that we are making a better country and world for our children and grandchildren — that is what public diplomacy and foreign aid must be doing.

*Charles B. (Chuck) Green*  
*FSO, retired*  
*Malibu, Calif.*

### Job-Specific Training for IMS

Carl Stefan is right on with many of the points in his May Speaking Out regarding the information management specialist training program,

“What Are We Training IMSers to Do?”

I'm just finishing up my first Foreign Service assignment and the new-hire training process is still fresh in my mind. I agree that there is an undue emphasis on training for technical certifications, and the certification mill my new hire class ran through didn't do nearly enough to get us ready for the actual work at post. Three months of generic A+, Windows and Exchange certification classes, and only six weeks of State-specific training? Reversing those numbers would go a long way in better preparing new hires for the field.

Although there wasn't enough of it, the State-specific training (most of it at the Warrenton Training Center) was extremely helpful. The highlight was the two-week Simulated Operations Course that put us through the paces of preparing pouches, troubleshooting the phone system and administering the servers. It gave us a chance to pull together everything we had learned and was the first time I got a realistic picture of what being an IMS entailed. We need more of these kinds of classes, and fewer generic ones. Being taught by IMSers who had served in the field was invaluable; they could clearly articulate how to apply the things we learned to work in the field in a way that contract Windows-certification instructors couldn't.

While there are plenty of capable people out there with certifications, having a certification certainly doesn't automatically make someone capable. Metrics and accountability are important, but pursuing the goal of having all new hires certified in this or that is a metric that doesn't correlate with the ability to perform the job.

*Gene Tien*  
*IMS*  
*Embassy Khartoum*

### IMS Work & Personal Responsibility

Carl E. Stefan's May Speaking Out appears dated because many changes have occurred at FSI's School of Applied Information Technology. To FSI's credit, it asked our IMS class for feedback on how to improve future FSI/SAIT classes. Our group, the 82nd IMS class, was a strong proponent of eliminating the Microsoft certification requirement and replacing it with classes that are more relevant to the State Department's IMS shop. FSI/SAIT recently eliminated the requirement to certify in Microsoft Server 2003 and replaced it with State-relevant courses. When I was going through FSI/SAIT in 2005, we had a 10-day “Practical Examination,” where we applied what we learned in a setting that resembles an embassy or a consulate Information Program Center.

In Jeddah, where I now work, one of the casualties of the Dec. 6, 2004, al-Qaida attack was the FSN telephone technician. With that position vacant, the everyday maintenance of the consulate phone system became part of my job as the new IMS.

Without going into details, the way the consulate buildings are laid out, the age of the telephone wiring and the hot temperature outside made maintenance of the telephone systems very demanding. But the technical training I received at FSI provided me with enough knowledge to effectively handle the day-to-day upkeep. When I didn't know something, I would consult with my supervisor, Riyadh or the regional information management center, and they were all helpful.

Eventually, we were able to hire a new FSN telephone technician, and I've trained him using much of the knowledge I acquired at FSI/SAIT.

The radio system also needed

## LETTERS



maintenance and organization. The knowledge and documentation I brought from FSI/SAIT helped me perform radio tasks effectively. I don't think it is fair to blame only the training if an IMSer is not functioning effectively in his or her position. Isn't it also a part of the job of the senior IMS or information program officer to provide on-the-job training for a new hire? I'm fortunate to have an information programming officer who taught me many things needed to be an effective IMSer. Without my IPO's guidance, all the training in FSI/SAIT wouldn't have been as effective.

First-time IMSers need to learn where to get help. Sometimes assistance can be found through the "InfoCenter" rather than from colleagues in the IMS world. There are

issues that we can't resolve within the embassy, so we need assistance from the InfoCenter.

We new IMSers should be asking ourselves these questions: Are managers at post providing good on-the-job training and are they providing a clear picture of expectations? Where is the best place to go for assistance? And (especially because of the mention of leaving the Service after one or two tours), why did we join the Foreign Service? For most of us, it was to serve our country.

*Hector Matienzo*  
IMS  
Consulate Jeddah

### Credit for 1970s Editor Newhall

It is with great sadness that I read of the death of Shirley Newhall, editor

of the *Foreign Service Journal* for almost 20 years. While her son did a wonderful job describing his mother's tenure at the helm of the *Journal* (Appreciation, May), I think that there is a rather vital part of her story which needs to be told.

I knew Shirley from early on in her tenure at the *Journal*. She was content to work diligently and quietly behind the scenes and laid the foundation for making the magazine what it is today. During the 1970s, when I had a rotation tour back in Washington, she persuaded me to run for the AFSA Governing Board (earlier, I had been an appointed member). With no overseas assignment in sight, I found it hard to refuse her nudging.

During that election there was a three-way race for president. The group that won the presidency was headed by someone who had been selected out of the Foreign Service, was exceedingly conservative in his views on all manner of issues, and demanded that the Governing Board be in lockstep with him. Moreover, he wanted to use AFSA and the *Journal* as a vehicle to express his right-wing views and rehash his selection-out case.

Neither the Governing Board nor the Editorial Board would approve such tactics. Various lawsuits followed, some initiated against Shirley Newhall and the *Journal*. We all held fast to our positions. Ultimately, thanks to Shirley's help, the whole group was removed. Together with AFSA's capable general counsel and several Governing Board members, Shirley orchestrated the scenario leading to the recall of the AFSA president. She insisted that the entire distasteful procedure had to be procedurally and legally correct. Furthermore, without her, the unbiased story of this episode in the life of AFSA would never have been told. Thanks to her, the *Journal* not only

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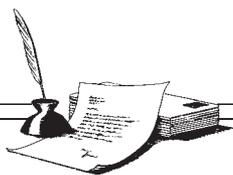
maintained its independence but refused to be a vehicle for biased and inaccurate reporting.

Those working at AFSA today might do well to remember those like Shirley Newhall who, at great personal and professional sacrifice, have made AFSA and the *Foreign Service Journal* something of which we can all be proud. Tom Boyatt and Tex Harris are two who can remember those hectic days of acrimonious Editorial Board and Governing Board meetings. This, too, is a legacy of AFSA and the *Foreign Service Journal*.

Roy A. Harrell Jr.  
FSO, retired  
Ozona, Texas ■

### CORRECTION

The URL for *Craigslist*, the July-August "Site of the Month" (Cybernotes), is incorrect. Though it was incorporated as a for-profit entity in 1999, *Craigslist* retains the .org domain as a symbol of its service mission and noncorporate culture. The correct URL is [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org). We regret the error.



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# CYBERNOTES

## **NPR Spotlights the “Real” Foreign Service**

On July 25 and 26, National Public Radio’s “Morning Edition” ran a two-part series on the real Foreign Service, produced by Megan Meline, an NPR producer and Foreign Service spouse. The series offered an inside look at today’s Service, and was an excellent vehicle for educating the American public about this still-misunderstood profession.

Part I, “Dangerous Postings: Life in the Foreign Service,” looked at the reality of FS work in the post-9/11 world, including the dangers, evacuations and other challenges that are rarely publicized. Part II, “Foreign Service Life Disruptive for Foreign Service Families,” looked more specifically at the heightened difficulties for FS families, who are increasingly separated by unaccompanied postings.

“Read [about] a day in the life of diplomats in Kabul and Bangkok at [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org),” host Renee Montagne commented at the end of Part I, referring to excerpts from AFSA’s book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*. The transcript of Part I is posted on the NPR Web site, accompanied by two excerpts from *Inside a U.S. Embassy* as well as a “Purchase Featured Book” link. The story spent two days as one of the top three most-e-mailed stories on NPR.

AFSA was in regular contact with the producer of the series, and assisted with providing resources, contacting FSOs overseas and clearing legal hurdles. In addition to excerpts from *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, NPR included a link to the FSJ’s 2004 Special Report,

“New Hires and the Foreign Service,” by Associate Editor Shawn Dorman, in its online version of the story ([www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5343016](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5343016)).

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

## **Mexico: ‘Close Elections Are No Big Deal’**

It was the closest Mexican election in history. In the July 2 presidential contest — in which an estimated 41 million Mexican citizens voted — Mexico’s Federal Election Institute declared that Felipe Calderon of the National Action Party, beat Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador of the Democratic Revolutionary Party, by a mere 0.58 percent.

“Close elections are no big deal,” says Jorge G. Castañeda, Mexican foreign minister from 2000 to 2003. This election was significant, he says, because it was not only close, but “real.” According to Castañeda, only four presidential votes in Mexico’s history would qualify as free and fair by international standards, including President Vicente Fox’s 2000 win, which broke the 71-year rule of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/14/AR2006071401436.html>).

Indeed, the European Union declared the election legitimate and the world praised Mexico’s electoral institutions for their efficiency and sophistication. Yet, in a move reminiscent of the U.S. presidential election in 2000, Obrador and supporters claimed fraud and are demanding a full recount. As

Harvard University scholar Maria Cristina Caballero says, Americans learned in 2000 that even in a mature democracy, “there are all sorts of things that can happen to an individual’s vote. There can be efforts to keep certain kinds of people from voting, there can be honest mistakes, there can certainly be the possibility of fraud. My suspicion is that there is a little bit of all of that in Mexico” (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13833342/site/newsweek/>).

Many analysts argue that Mexico can only stabilize its democracy if its different political parties stop bickering and start cooperating. Julia Sweig, director for Latin America Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, says that if the PAN, PRD and PRI do not cooperate with each other, the “shallow mandate of this election and its legacy of political polarization and distrust will weaken the next president’s capacity to build a coalition in the legislature and to carry out the numerous reforms left incomplete by the Fox government” (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/19/AR2006071901593.html>).

The election is important to the U.S. — but not primarily for who wins. Pamela Starr, an analyst with the Eurasia group and professor of Latin American studies at Georgetown University, points out that Mexico and the U.S. simply have to work together if they want to achieve national economic and political goals, no matter who is the president (<http://www.cfr.org/publication/11030/challen>



# CYBERNOTES

## **ges\_for\_a\_postelection\_mexico.html?breadcrumb=**

Even apart from the sensitive immigration issue, U.S.-Mexican relations are vitally important. As Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Elizabeth A. Whitaker emphasized in testimony before the House Committee on International Relations in April, the U.S. must stay intensively engaged with Mexico on issues of trade; law enforcement, including border security; and democracy throughout the hemisphere (<http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2006/q2/65334.htm>).

Mexico will not inaugurate its new president until December. In the meantime, Sweig advises, “no one in Washington should have any illusion that a bilateral agenda with the new president will be any easier to carry out than it was with Fox, who came in with a much stronger mandate.”

For updated news sources on Mexican politics, visit *Mexico Online* at <http://www.mexonline.com/headline.htm>. For profiles of the Mexican presidential candidates, visit the BBC at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5114388.stm>.

— Eirene Busa, Editorial Intern

## **The Supreme Court on Guantanamo: Victory for Justice or Toothless Ruling?**

The June 29 Supreme Court ruling that President Bush overstepped his authority, in violation of U.S. laws as well as the Geneva Convention, in ordering military tribunals for Guantanamo Bay detainees was a sharp

blow to the administration’s assertion of executive power.

Surveying Italian, British, French and German newspapers for reactions, Jefferson Morley of the *Washington Post* observed: “The consensus was that the court’s ruling was a victory for American law, international law, and the image of the United States” ([http://blog.washingtonpost.com/worldopinionroundup/2006/07/guantanamo\\_reaction\\_seen\\_as\\_us.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/worldopinionroundup/2006/07/guantanamo_reaction_seen_as_us.html)).

Morley cites coverage in the Italian right-wing newspaper, *Il Giornale*, which read: “Ask yourself if in any

country outside the liberal democratic West it could have happened that the highest constitutional court ruled against the decisions of the extremely powerful head of the executive branch at the request of a terrorist prisoner who has sworn to destroy the nation.” Coverage in the Arab and Islamic media, though less strong, was also positive, Morley found.

In Europe, the ruling “fueled hopes that the detention center’s days are over,” writes Craig Whitlock of the *Washington Post* (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/art>

## **Site of the Month: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**

Is there a risk for malaria in Kuwait? Which mosquito repellent works the best? How do I know if I need yellow fever vaccinations? As the most experienced travelers know, anxiety over health care concerns never goes away.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a Web site for travelers’ health at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>. Basing its information on scientific studies, disease surveillance and best practices, the site assists travelers and their health-care providers in deciding what vaccines, medications and other measures are necessary to prevent illness and injury during international travel.

Simply type in your destination country, click enter, and you will be provided with the latest travel notices, the necessary vaccines you should take, a list of diseases in the region you should be aware of, advice on what you should bring with you, what you should do while you’re there, and what you should do when you get home.

You can also search for information according to specific topics: Vaccinations, Diseases, Insect and Arthropod Protection, Safe Food and Water, Travel Medicine Clinics, and more.

The site also provides information for specific groups and settings, including special-needs travelers and disaster-relief workers, and offers links to other online resources.

The CDC is one of the 13 major operating components of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

— Eirene Busa, Editorial Intern

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[icle/2006/06/29/AR2006062902248\\_pf.html](http://www.fsjournal.org/2006/06/29/AR2006062902248_pf.html)).

Elsewhere in Europe, leaders are more skeptical of the ruling's positive implications, however. Paisley Dodds of the Associated Press notes that the decision is seen as either a "vindication for Europeans who have condemned the U.S. prison camp" or a "toothless ruling that will ultimately make no difference in a climate where they believe Washington is determined to have its way" (<http://www.thestate.com/mld/thestate/news/world/14936584.htm>).

For more information on the decision, see the Council on Foreign Relations backgrounder at [http://www.cfr.org/publication/11025/impact\\_of\\_hamdan\\_v\\_rumsfeld.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/11025/impact_of_hamdan_v_rumsfeld.html). *Wikipedia* provides additional references, including links to official documents relating to the case, at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamdan\\_v.\\_Rumsfeld](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamdan_v._Rumsfeld).

— *Eirene Busa, Editorial Intern*

**Darfur: What Next?**

As the Sept. 30 end-date for the mandate of the African Union peacekeeping mission in Sudan draws near, attention is once again focusing on the crisis in Darfur. Continuing violence there has resulted in over 200,000 dead civilians and more than two million refugees since February 2003 — and, tragically, shows no signs of letting up.

In brokering the Darfur Peace Agreement, signed May 5 between the Sudanese government and one faction of the largest rebel movement, the U.S. and African Union aimed at disarming the government-sponsored militias. But the agreement has been largely ignored by both the government and the rebels (<http://www.cbc.ca/cp/world/060523/w052378.html>).

The A.U., the U.N. Security Council and the Arab League have all

Look at where we are in the Middle East with no process. Crisis diplomacy is no substitute for sustained, day-to-day engagement. The pursuit of tactical military victories at the expense of the core strategic objective of Arab-Israeli peace is a hollow victory.

— *Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., in an address at the Brookings Institution, July 28, <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20060728.pdf>.*

been pushing to deploy U.N. troops to help the A.U. peacekeeping mission and, in effect, take over from it. Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, however, has rejected the proposal outright (<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/FB917C3B-D9BF-4D96-B29B-DCE020F673D0.htm>).

But pressure for a U.N. peacekeeping deployment increases. At a donors conference in Brussels in mid-July, the U.S., European Union and others urged Khartoum to give its consent (<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/07/14/darfur13743.htm>). Humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF are pushing for the deployment of U.N. troops because the A.U. mission is underfunded and unable to protect civilians. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 27, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton echoed this view (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060727163315WCyeroC0.4781763>).

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer empha-



sized the Bush administration's determination to "play a leadership role internationally in the effort to resolve the situation in Darfur" in mid-May testimony to the House International Relations committee (<http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2006/66498.htm>). In a July 25 press release carried in the *Sudan Tribune*, the U.S.-based Africa Action NGO spelled out how Washington can use its leverage ([www.africaaction.org](http://www.africaaction.org)).

But whether the U.S. and the international community will continue to bow to national sovereignty and allow Khartoum to implement the peace agreement on its own, or will act based on a "responsibility to protect" — as an International Crisis Group document puts it (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4269&l=1>) — remains to be seen.

— Eirene Busa, *Editorial Intern*

## Rumbling in the Balkans ... Again

The Union of Serbia and Montenegro dissolved on May 21 when, after three shaky years, 55.5 percent of Montenegrins voted in favor of independence during a referendum. The European Union-brokered federation was the final step in the tumultuous breakup of Yugoslavia that began in the 1990s. Whether Montenegro's secession sets the stage for stability

and rejuvenation in the Balkans, or triggers further unraveling in the region, is the question.

A May 30 briefing from the International Crisis Group opined that Montenegrin independence should "on balance" improve stability in the western Balkans, with the caveat that reactions from Belgrade, the Montenegrin opposition and within Bosnia could tip the scales in the other direction (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4144&l=1>). In a July 25 op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, retired Ambassador Morton Abramowitz and Joe Black, both of the ICG, called on American and European officials to demonstrate strong leadership in the Balkans during this uncertain period (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4281&l=1>).

Some analysts, such as Gordon N. Bardos of the *Washington Post*, worry that Montenegro's move to independence may pose a threat to the Dayton Accords, which have kept the peace in Bosnia since 1995, especially in light of the upcoming decision on Kosovo's status (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/23/AR2006062301505.html>). According to a commentary at *EU Observer.com*, however, "fears of a domino effect are unwarranted. The political sophistication and patience

exhibited by the government in Podgorica emphasized that the goal of self-determination can be achieved peacefully" (<http://euobserver.com/7/21703>).

The new nation is more determined than ever to become a member of NATO and the E.U., but according to European Commissioner for Enlargement Ollie Rehn, "There is no shortcut to Europe." The E.U. will help Montenegro navigate the membership process, but makes no promises of membership.

Economists look forward to a positive effect. Janusz Bugajski, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, is optimistic that Montenegro's independent status will enable both its country and Europe to focus less on security threats and more on economic investment and institutional integration ([http://www.csis.org/component/option,com\\_csis\\_prog/task,view/id,652/](http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_prog/task,view/id,652/)).

Others, such as Marian Tupy of the Cato Institute, consult that Montenegro can only promote economic stability if its government makes wise decisions ([http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=6404](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6404)).

For updated news sources on Montenegro, consult *BBC News Online* <http://www.bbc.com>. For Europe's involvement in Montenegro, read the European Commission's "Serbia and Montenegro 2005 Progress Report" at [http://www.delscg.cec.eu.int/en/eu\\_and\\_fry/key\\_documents/documents/2005%20sec\\_1428\\_final\\_en\\_progress\\_report\\_cg.pdf](http://www.delscg.cec.eu.int/en/eu_and_fry/key_documents/documents/2005%20sec_1428_final_en_progress_report_cg.pdf). For details on U.S. policy in the Balkans, click onto [http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/europe\\_eurasia/balkans.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/europe_eurasia/balkans.html) or read the Congressional Research Service report, "The Future of the Balkans and U.S. Policy Concerns," last updated in January 2006, at <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/12organization/62663.pdf>. ■

— Eirene Busa, *Editorial Intern*

## 50 Years Ago...

The idea of a universal international organization able to resolve political problems and to enforce their resolution has played a great role in this period and is of continuing importance. The U.S. took the initiative in creating the League of Nations, and despite our refusal to participate, the fundamental idea of the League retained an appeal in this country so that the U.S. played a prominent role again in the establishment of the United Nations.

— Howard Trivers, "Morality and Foreign Affairs," reprinted from the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, FSJ, September 1956.





# IN RESPONSE

## *What We Train IMSers to Do*

BY DAVID P. JESSER

The May 2006 issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* featured a Speaking Out article titled “What are We Training IMSers to Do?” by Carl Stefan, a mid-level IRM employee. This article was highly critical of FSI’s School of Applied Information Technology, our staff and our training programs.

Some of Mr. Stefan’s points may have been relevant, at least in part, back in 2004 when he was at the Warrenton Training Center. However, information technology changes rapidly, and two years is a long time in IT terms. Over that period, as documented in numerous telegrams, department notices and other media, SAIT (like its sister schools at FSI) has continuously reviewed and updated its curriculum, both for accuracy and relevance.

For instance, Mr. Stefan’s article calls into question the conduct of our new-hire colleagues and adds an assumption that they arrive at post with the idea that they are, first and foremost, systems administrators. Today, I am confident that our new colleagues leave SAIT with the understanding that they will be expected to perform the full range of IMS duties.

Mr. Stefan is also critical of the industry-standard certification process, implying that the primary focus of SAIT instructors is to help the students pass the exams. Industry-standard certifications set a reference point by defining a base set of skills and are used in many professions. Doctors, nurses, teachers, auto mec-

*We have completely overhauled the new-hire IMS curriculum to prepare specialists to perform the full range of duties.*

hanics and accountants must all stay abreast of developments in their fields and periodically obtain certifications of their competence. This is of particular importance in the IT field, where rapid changes in software and hardware are a constant reality. Certifications are also used as prerequisites for our courses, with the goal of keeping our IT work force up-to-date with the latest technological changes. Continual refresher training is a must, as certification alone is not sufficient to guarantee high performance. Experience and practice are also required.

The new-hire IMS curriculum has been completely overhauled since 2004. The Basic Communications course, in particular, has been upgraded through collaboration with the Diplomatic Mail and Pouch Division, the Cryptographic Services Branch, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and other process owners to continually update our training and ensure its relevance to the field.

Mr. Stefan should be pleased to hear that the cornerstone of the new-

hire curriculum is the two-week Simulated Operations course that takes place in two mock-up embassies, which the Warrenton Training Center has been using since 2004. This training includes extensive State-specific systems troubleshooting and exercises for OpenNet, CableXpress Administration, COMSEC, pouch, radios and telephone systems, capped off by a day-and-a-half-long advanced First Responder course taught by certified trainers/Emergency Medical Technicians at the Fire and Rescue Station.

Beginning in February 2005, every student attending SAIT training has been informed, on the first day of class, that supplemental test materials such as “Test King,” “Actual Exams,” etc., are not allowed on the premises. This prohibition is reflected in SAIT policy and strictly enforced. While we do sanction one approved commercial and licensed package as a supplemental study aid, the emphasis is on following the prescribed curriculum, not just passing an exam.

Since October 2005, A+ and Network+ certifications have been established as prerequisites for all FSI/SAIT systems courses (see 05 State 188485, sent Oct. 12, 2005). In addition, SAIT recently coordinated with the Bureau of Human Resources to include A+ and Network+ certifications among the prerequisites for hiring new IRM personnel.

SAIT leadership and staff are open-minded and encourage comments and suggestions from students,

## IN RESPONSE



management and other stakeholders. For example, in April 2006, our new hires piloted YW279 — Department of State Applied Systems — a three-week State-specific course that is now a permanent part of the new-hire training regime. The course does not adhere strictly to the Microsoft Official Curriculum, and whether a student passes or fails is determined by a comprehensive practical in-house exam. SAIT continues to pursue providing more State-specific training, rather than teaching strictly industry standard curriculum.

Finally, the Stefan article suggests that SAIT should teach new hires to build various servers from scratch. While this is not a core competency of IM specialists in the field, SAIT does offer an extensive IT Disaster Recovery course that addresses the most common contingency issues at post. Although our current curriculum does not provide instruction for the complete rebuilding of all systems, IRM personnel are given excellent reference tools.

Information management in the Foreign Service is a unique job that requires our personnel to be talented in a broad spectrum of related disciplines. As all SAIT training makes clear, providing IT support at our missions worldwide is a critical and even exciting role; it is not necessarily a glamorous one.

In closing, SAIT's goal is simple: to establish a highly trained technical work force that effectively uses information technology in meeting the strategic objectives of the Department of State. ■

*David Jesser, the operations branch chief at the Warrenton Training Center, joined State in 1988. Over the course of his Foreign Service career, he has served in the information management field in Hong Kong, Cairo, The Hague, Muscat and Pretoria.*

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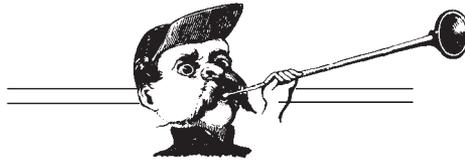
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# SPEAKING OUT

## *Time to End the U.N.'s Culture of Corruption*

By THOMAS D. BOYATT

In the second half of 2005, the United Nations teetered on the edge of implosion. This crisis was not brought about by great-power rivalries, U.S. unilateralism or north/south divisions. The cause, rather, was the unadulterated corruption — old-fashioned bribery and extortion — on display in the secretariat, the General Assembly and some of the specialized agencies. It even reached into the Security Council. Secretary-General Kofi Annan escaped indictment and trial only because the Volcker Commission that investigated the “Oil For Food” scandal — the diversion of funds generated by U.N.-monitored sales of Iraqi oil that were intended to provide food and humanitarian aid to Iraqi civilians — did not possess the power to subpoena, indict and try. Had Annan been required to meet the Martha Stewart–Scooter Libby standard of justice — i.e., liability to a jail term for “lying to investigators” — the outcome might well have been different.

This discouraging state of affairs was remarkable both because of the breadth of the rot and the persistence of American elites in denying or ignoring the reality. Over the past two years, numerous verified reports have been published of widespread abuses by U.N. personnel involving sexual and financial extortion. There have been two consistent themes in these scandals: the use of U.N. office and status for self-gratification (anyone who has ever served in the Third World will recognize this phenomenon) and the apparent total lack of

*There have been numerous verified reports of widespread abuses by U.N. personnel involving sexual and financial extortion.*

accountability within the U.N. system. (For a book-length analysis of the U.N.'s culture of corruption, see Pedro San Juan's *The U.N. Gang*. Although written before the Oil for Food scandal broke, it is most illustrative.)

Space is limited and the examples of wrongdoing are numerous, so I will not deal with sexual malfeasance here — beyond noting a rare example of gender equity at the U.N. in actions taken against a senior Dutch politician (male) and a senior Uruguayan staffer (female) both for sexual harassment. The former, a special representative of the secretary-general, was forced to resign, and the latter, his special representative to the Iraqi parliamentary elections, was suspended pending investigation. Instead, I will confine myself to describing some of the most egregious examples of corruption in the Oil for Food program and the U.N. procurement office; analyzing the denial of such problems by U.S. elites; and discussing the possibilities for reform.

### **The Oil for Food Program**

Benon Sevan, the Cypriot national and U.N. official heading the Oil for Food program, accepted hundreds of thousands in bribes from the Saddam Hussein regime during his incumbency, according to the Volcker Commission Report. The bribes were in the form of allotments to purchase Iraqi oil at below-market prices, which were then resold at a profit to the holder. The report found that Sevan steered oil allocations to AMEP, an oil trading company run by one Fakhry Abdelnour, who just happens to be a cousin of former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who presided over the creation of the Oil for Food program in 1995. Also on AMEP's board is Efraim Nadler, Boutros-Ghali's brother-in-law.

When Volcker's investigators found an unexplained \$150,000 in a bank account belonging to Sevan, he claimed it was a gift from his maiden aunt in Cyprus who had retired as a photographer for the government. Sevan's claim regarding his aunt could not be verified because she was found dead at the bottom of an elevator shaft soon thereafter (I am not making this up). Cypriot authorities ruled the death accidental.

Other examples of dubious behavior involving the Oil for Food program include (but, as the lawyers say, are not limited to) the following:

- The U.N.'s internal auditors sought to audit the program. Naturally, Sevan opposed this idea, and U.N. Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette decided against any audit.



- When Annan announced formation of the Volcker Commission, he enjoined U.N. employees to safeguard all files. Nevertheless, Annan's chief of staff promptly shredded significant portions of the records in the secretary-general's office and then retired to his native Pakistan.

- The Swiss company Cotecna won a large management role in the Oil for Food program by low-bidding, then immediately requested and received a significant contract price increase. This is the oldest trick in the bid-rigging game. Kofi Annan's son worked for Cotecna and was paid about \$500,000 in disguised deposits after he left the company. The secretary-general either lied to investigators or misspoke, depending on your point of view, about the dates of his son's employment, the amounts his son received and about meeting personally with Cotecna representatives.

- In late 2005 France's former ambassador to the United Nations, Jean-Bernard Merimee, admitted he had taken payments of \$156,000 from the Iraqi government in 2002 in return for support for Iraqi interests. At the time, Merimee was a special adviser to (you guessed it) Kofi Annan.

- Under Secretary Maurice Strong, also a Canadian, resigned when it emerged that he had given a U.N. job to his stepdaughter. Even before resigning, Strong had been suspended from his duties as Annan's personal adviser on North Korea, pending the outcome of an investigation by U.S. federal prosecutors into his alleged financial ties with Tongsun Park (remember him from Koreagate<sup>2</sup>). Park was convicted in July of acting as an "unregistered agent" of Saddam's Iraq regime to influence the Oil for Food program, and faces up to a dozen years in prison for his role in the decade-long conspiracy. (Sentencing is set for Oct. 26.)

### Getting Rich in the Procurement Office

Another locus of U.N. corruption is its procurement office, which has been under fire for years for rigging bids and taking bribes. In 1993 seven procurement officers were suspended for rigging bids to the benefit of a favored airlifter, Canadian Skylink Aviation. Despite overwhelming evidence, a "U.N. administrative body" exonerated them and all seven returned to work.

Two of the seven procurement officers investigated and exonerated in 1993 were later involved in another major scandal in the context of Oil for Food. Alexander Yakovlev of Russia was indicted in late 2005 for taking \$1 million in bribes and pled guilty. His colleague, Alan Robertson of Zambia, was accused by the Volcker Commission of rigging bids in favor of a Dutch company hired to monitor Iraqi oil exports. These two officials were "exonerated" by the U.N. system and returned, as we now know, to corrupt business as usual.

The "administrative body" that found Yakovlev and Robertson innocent in 1993 was actually a group from the U.N. employees' association, which performs the appeal function in such cases. In reviewing disciplinary cases this administrative body has almost never found anybody guilty of anything. The lunatics are running the asylum, and that explains in large part the lack of accountability in the U.N. system.

Indeed, to my knowledge, no one involved in either the Oil for Food program or procurement office malfeasance has ever been punished by the U.N. Some officials have resigned or retired to avoid problems, and others have been suspended, but all apparently still receive their annuities or salaries. (The one U.N. official who was fired in connection with the Oil for Food scandal in 2005, another

Greek Cypriot named George Stephanides, has been reinstated.)

Over Labor Day weekend in 2005 Vladimir Kuznetsov, a Russian Foreign Ministry official who has for many years chaired the very critical General Assembly Budget Committee, was also indicted for corruption. It is not clear where this particular alleged malefactor fits into the situation, but it seems likely that his compatriot Yakovlev turned him in while copping a plea in his own case. No further public announcements in his case have been forthcoming.

### Elite Denial

Does anyone see a pattern in all of the above? Apparently not in Blue America (uptown liberals, academia, the mainstream media and the government bureaucracies). Let us stipulate that Tina Brown was correct when she stated in a *Washington Post* article last fall that New York's upper East Side "salonistas" will "cling to Kofi" as long as possible. As to the universities, the silence is deafening: no outraged letters to the editor, no broadsides from "Nobel Laureates Against U.N. Corruption," no student protests. Likewise, the media remain as quiet as possible under the circumstances. Even the biggest U.N. corruption stories ran below the fold (if they appeared on the front page at all), and were soon buried on page 14. Now they're ignored altogether, even though much continues to happen.

With respect to most of my retired Foreign Service colleagues in the international branch of the blue bureaucracies, the responses to U.N. corruption have been risible. First, it was asserted that it didn't happen and, if it did, it was an isolated event and — by the way — everyone is innocent until proven guilty. When this line of defense/apology was overtaken by events, efforts at deflection focused on shifting the blame. The "irregular-



ities” in the Oil for Food program happened because the Security Council permitted Saddam to smuggle oil out of Iraq. This non sequitur was followed by the “blame America” ploy, consisting of condemnation of U.S. firms for buying tainted oil, coupled with dark mutterings about Enron and U.S. corporate corruption. However, this approach has been hard to maintain as more and more U.S. businessmen go to jail, while corrupt European politicians and U.N. staffers remain free.

Now that the existence of a U.N. pattern of corruption has been established beyond reasonable doubt, and serious efforts at reform — particularly the Gingrich-Mitchell Commission Report discussed below — have begun, the elite counterfire has concentrated on those advocating and pursuing much-needed reform. The most important and extensive set of reform proposals is found in the 2005 report of the bipartisan commission authorized and funded by Congress and chaired by former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., and former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, D-Maine.

This report makes very specific proposals on a variety of subjects (Human Rights Commission, peacekeeping, etc.). Gingrich-Mitchell goes right to the heart of the U.N. corruption reality by highlighting the fact that in the current U.N. structure there is no accountability. None. Anything goes, as the history of the Oil for Food program and the U.N. procurement office proves.

To deal with this, the Gingrich-Mitchell Commission proposes setting up an Independent Oversight Board with broad powers to investigate and punish corruption. The U.S. government supports these proposals strongly. But the Chinese, Russians and Group of 77 countries (from the Third World) oppose these reforms with

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***The Oil for Food  
program has spawned  
some of the most  
egregious examples of  
U.N. corruption.***

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equal vigor, precisely because they are so specific and would be so effective.

Under the circumstances it is disappointing to see retired colleagues attacking the reform proposals as “hortatory, diffuse and laden with generalizations.” That’s simply not true. There is nothing diffuse, general and hortatory about the investigations, indictments and convictions, or the proposal for an independent oversight board. Even more sadly, the reformers have been attacked with claims that “some of them are people who just don’t like multilateralism.” Perhaps that is true for a few. But the vast majority of reformers are people who just don’t like corruption, and the distortion of diplomatic processes corruption brings.

Does anyone believe that Saddam Hussein’s ill-gotten gains were not pouring into the French and Russian political systems via U.N. programs and affecting those countries’ positions on Iraq? The characterizations of reformers’ motives are as out of place as would be characterizations of their critics as apologists for corruption.

**Is Reform Possible?**

At best, reform will be very difficult. The reason is that for 50 years the major powers have concentrated on the political aspects of the United Nations, while staffers appointed by

developing countries (including KGB-types salted away throughout the organization) have quietly taken over the secretariat, the General Assembly and the Budget Committee. The latter meets as a “committee of the whole” wherein all members of the General Assembly approve budgets by consensus. This, in turn, gives every mini-state the chance to extort a job here, a project there — and to thwart any and all reform proposals, which must be approved by the Budget Committee. It should be pointed out that the U.N. Oversight Office, which is responsible for monitoring and investigating all parts of the U.N., including the General Assembly, depends on this committee for funding.

The reality is that by controlling the U.N. budget, the G-77 has effectively taken over finances and staffing and brought Third World-like corruption and chaos to these functions. Yet even though the dice are loaded against any change in the status quo, progress is possible. In fact, the current context is favorable. For starters, the entire sordid mess is now in public (and congressional) view, and likely to remain there as events continue to unfold. Secretary-General Annan has waived diplomatic immunity for all U.N. personnel facing serious charges. According to GAO reports, in January Annan placed eight top procurement officials on special leave, pending investigations by the U.N. and the U.S. (Federal Court of the Southern District of New York). One of these officials, Sanjaya Bahel of India, a former head of the U.N.’s Commercial Activities Services and Post Office, is alleged to have improperly steered U.N. peacekeeping contracts to several Indian companies. Reportedly hundreds of corruption investigations — mainly in peacekeeping operations and particularly in Africa — are under way.

Second, Washington is maintaining pressure for administrative reform.

## SPEAKING OUT



This year, Annan submitted a U.S.-supported reform plan (a watered-down version of Gingrich-Mitchell, but still a reform plan) to the Budget Committee and the General Assembly. However, the G-77 plus China forced a vote in April on a resolution to table Annan's reform proposals for several months, betting that the secretary-general would not be able to push through reforms during his last year. Reform lost 108 to 50. The good news is that Washington is now in a stronger position to reduce or even eliminate U.N. funding on a selective basis. The greater the U.S. pressure, the more likely administrative reform becomes.

Third, the appointments of Chris Burnham, a former chief financial officer of the State Department, as U.N. under secretary for management, and Mark Malloch Brown, a U.K. citizen who has lived in the U.S. for years, as deputy secretary-general, have strengthened the chances for anti-corruption reform significantly. Burnham is the real thing, a financial official of unquestioned integrity and capability who also has extensive private-sector experience. The current large-scale, anti-corruption campaign began with his arrival on the job late last year. I met Malloch Brown in a commercial activity with which we were both associated several years ago, and know him to be an honest and effective executive. I sincerely hope that he can help change U.N. culture.

### Recommendations for Action

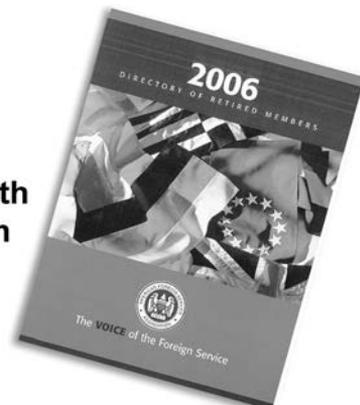
To take advantage of the current favorable prospects for reform, I recommend the following steps be taken by U.S. governments, current and future:

- Candidates to replace Secretary-General Annan, who steps down at the end of this year, are already politicking. None can be confirmed without U.S. backing. Washington should

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therefore make its support of the next U.N. head contingent on a pledge to continue to waive the diplomatic immunity of any employee accused of corruption and an agreement to strongly pursue administrative reforms designed to clean up the current mess and sustain honest, effective operations thereafter. Otherwise, in a few months or years it will be business as usual — anything goes.

- The position of under secretary-general for management has traditionally been reserved for a U.S. official. Washington should ensure that remains the case.

- Washington needs to remain firm over time in its commitment to financial reform of the United Nations. This will require the appointment of U.S. ambassadors who will pay attention to the issue and be strong in its

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***The U.N. procurement office has been under fire for years for rigging bids and taking bribes.***

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pursuit. The days of single-issue concentration on political matters should be over. Ambassador John Bolton is setting a positive and useful standard in this regard.

- The U.S. government should make it very clear that it will not support any moves to give the G-77 a large

er role in the Security Council until and unless the group agrees to significant reforms in the U.N.'s Budget Committee. Some form of proportional representation favoring those who pay the bills would be a good place to start. Financial and administrative processes must also be rationalized.

- Finally, neither the president nor Congress should flinch from withholding funds on a targeted basis as leverage to correct U.N. abuses. For several years in the 1970s and 1980s, UNESCO campaigned to limit press freedom worldwide. The U.S. refused to fund that agency, and eventually its campaign for press control ended.

Let me close by stressing that the United Nations does useful work in many areas. And yes, if the U.N. did not exist, the international community

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## SPEAKING OUT



would have to invent it (presumably we would do a better structuring job the second time around). From a personal perspective, my professional involvement with the U.N. Force on Cyprus in the 1960s and 1970s was very positive. The UNFICYP was militarily and politically effective, at least in its early decades. However, that was 30 years ago. The intervening decades have witnessed serious deterioration in the U.N.'s capacity for effective and corruption-free activity on the world stage. Something must be done.

Reforming the U.N. to end corruption should not be an issue agitating the red-blue divide in U.S. domestic politics. Surely we can agree on a bipartisan basis that this is a priority. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker was right when he stated

***Neither the president  
nor Congress should  
flinch from withholding  
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U.N. abuses.***

at his last press conference as chairman of the Volcker Commission that the U.N. itself had the largest stake of all in ending the abuses. As he

pointed out, continued corruption will eventually erode U.S. public support for the organization — without which it cannot survive. ■

*Thomas Boyatt, an FSO from 1959 until 1985, served as ambassador to Colombia and Upper Volta (now Burkino Faso) and chargé d'affaires in Chile, among many other postings. Currently the treasurer of AFSA's political action committee, AFSA-PAC, he has in the past been AFSA's president, vice president and treasurer, as well as serving as a retiree representative. After retirement Amb. Boyatt was vice president of a large company, president of a small company, and a trustee of Princeton University. He is currently president of the Foreign Affairs Council and continues to lecture, teach and consult.*

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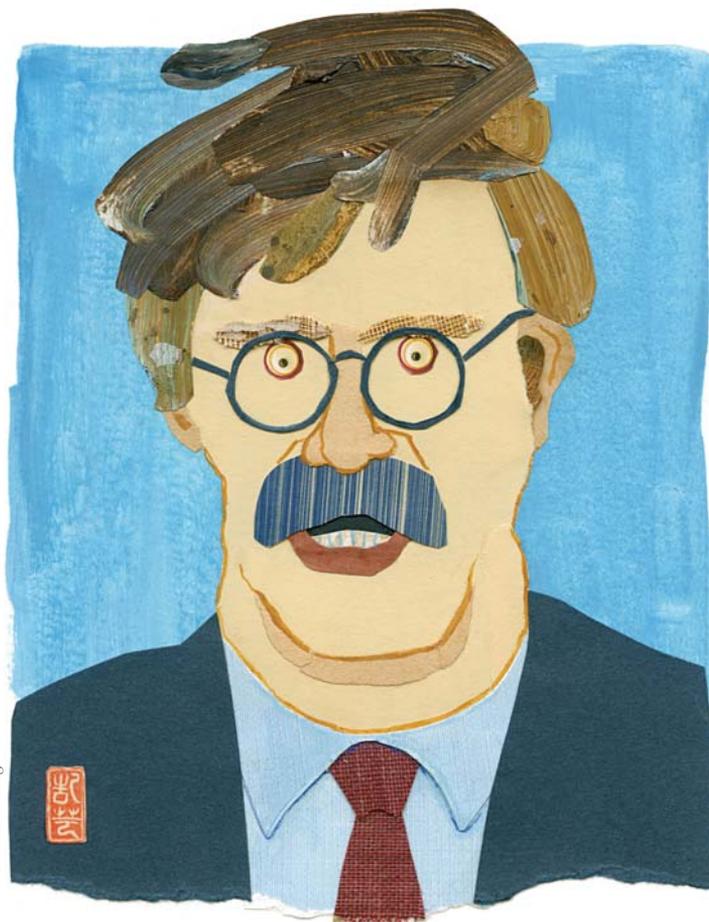
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# JOHN BOLTON: OUR UN-DIPLOMAT



Poul Hans Lange

**I**N AFTER HIS FIRST YEAR AT THE UNITED NATIONS, IT SEEMS THAT JOHN BOLTON IS NOT SO MUCH AN INEFFECTIVE DIPLOMAT AS AN UNWILLING ONE.

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*By JAMES TRAUB*

In choosing officials to serve as our ambassador to the United Nations, presidents over the last 30 years or so have alternated between professional diplomats, like Thomas Pickering (Bush I) or Richard Holbrooke (Clinton), and activists or dogmatists, including Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Nixon), Andrew Young (Carter) and Jeane Kirkpatrick (Reagan). Presidents send doctrinaire figures to the U.N. not only to work with the organization but to say something to it — either “we’re with you,” in Young’s case; or “we’re not with you,” as was true of Moynihan

and Kirkpatrick. These ambassadors served at times when the U.N. itself had become an ideological cockpit: Moynihan faced down the obsessive hostility to Israel that led to the notorious “Zionism equals racism” resolution, while Kirkpatrick lambasted the contempt for capitalism and Western freedoms that was pervasive there during the 1980s.

By the time George W. Bush became president in 2001, the West had largely won the ideological battle in the U.N., as it had in the world. Most states professed faith in capitalism and democracy, even if they didn’t practice them. Bush shared none of his father’s zest for international affairs, but he was essentially indifferent, rather than hostile, to the U.N. He did not bother to appoint an ambassador at all until the shock of 9/11, but then he immediately forwarded the name of John Negroponte, a highly regarded career diplomat. When Negroponte left in 2004 to become our first ambassador to post-Saddam Iraq (he now serves as director of central intelligence), another well-regarded figure, former Senator John Danforth, R-Mo., followed him, serving until January 2005.

Then, in a decision that would have seemed unaccountable in any previous administration, Bush nominated as Danforth’s successor a fierce dogmatist, John Bolton.

No one could doubt that Bolton’s nomination meant “we’re not with you.” But on what?

After all, the U.N. had certainly not moved “left” in any discernible sense. The secretary-general, Kofi Annan, was sympathetic to U.S. interests; in fact, his calls for institutional reform largely accounted for the Clinton administration’s support in 1996 after it blocked the reappointment of his predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a regular and unbuttoned critic of America’s role at the U.N. In addition, the institution had rallied behind the United States in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

So it wasn’t the U.N. that moved, but Washington. The Bush administration was inclined to view international agreements and international organizations — at least those it couldn’t dominate — as encumbrances. Soon after taking office, the White House not only repudiated the International Criminal Court but demanded that signatories who were U.S. aid recipients sign bilateral agreements exempting American citizens from its terms. In September 2002, the administration released a new National Security Strategy which stated forthrightly that in the face of a terrorist threat, the U.S. “will not hes-

itate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively.”

The Bush administration, in short, seemed uncomfortable with the very premise, first made explicit by President Truman, that the U.S. would ultimately enhance its authority, and its security, by accepting the strictures that come with membership in a global body. When the administration decided in 2002 to confront Saddam Hussein, Vice President Dick Cheney urged President Bush to bypass the U.N. rather than permit the organization to trammel the U.S. in process and debate. Cheney lost that argument, but ultimately was vindicated, at least in the inner councils of the White House, when the Security Council refused to vote for a resolution authorizing hostilities. The burst of euphoria that followed the coalition’s swift military victory, no matter how transitory, bolstered the hawks’ view that the council’s fabled “legitimacy” was an over-rated good.

### **Just Say No**

There was no more ardent exponent of the rejectionist view than John Bolton. In articles and speeches throughout the 1990s, he had argued that the U.N., and international law generally, were tools that had turned on their master. He described treaties as “political obligations” rather than legal ones, in no way binding on their signatories. In 1999, when the U.S. fell so far behind in its dues payments to the U.N. that it was in danger of losing its vote, he said, “Many Republicans in Congress, and perhaps a majority, not only do not care about losing the General Assembly vote but actually see it as a ‘make-my-day’ outcome.” Ideally, he said, “nothing should be paid to the U.N. system.” In a 1998 interview (with me), he sneered that the Clinton administration acted “as if it sees the U.N. as having a life or existence outside of what the U.S. wants it to do.”

During the Bush administration’s first term, Bolton served as under secretary of State for arms control, where he won respect for his grasp of highly technical issues and his exacting, not to say remorseless, negotiating style. He specialized in extricating Washington from obligations it had no wish to honor, withdrawing from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and terminating negotiations on the Bioweapons Protocol, a small arms pact and the International Criminal Court. When Bolton signed the document formally repudiating the Clinton administration’s acceptance of the court, he called it “the happiest

moment in my government service.”

Officials inside the U.N., who viewed Bolton as the diplomatic equivalent of Genghis Khan, were horror-struck when President Bush announced Bolton's nomination in March 2005. Had the president decided to sack the place? A more likely explanation was palace politics: Bolton apparently had hoped to become deputy secretary of State, but new Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who was putting together a team of relatively doctrine-free professionals, had refused. The U.N. job was said to be the consolation prize upon which Bolton's patron, Vice President Cheney, had insisted.

Yet Bolton almost didn't get this job, either: In the course of hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, former aides and colleagues of Bolton accused him of browbeating underlings and, more seriously, of threatening intelligence officials who disputed his (groundless, as it turned out) claims about weapons programs in Cuba and Syria. It became clear that Bolton had lost all the Democrats and one or possibly two Republicans on the committee, forcing Bush to give his candidate a “recess appointment” rather than risk a vote. Bolton's term began Aug. 1, 2005; he will serve until the

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*James Traub is a contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine, where he has worked since 1998. From 1994 to 1997, he was a staff writer for The New Yorker. He has also written for The New York Review of Books, Foreign Affairs, The Atlantic Monthly and The New Republic. His articles about the United Nations and international affairs have been widely reprinted and anthologized. In recent years, he has reported from the Congo, Iran, Iraq, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Vietnam, India, Kosovo and Haiti.*

The Best Intentions, his forthcoming book about Kofi Annan and the United Nations, will be published in November. His previous books include The Devil's Playground: A Century of Pleasure and Profit in Times Square, which was published in 2004, and City On A Hill, a book on open admissions at City College that appeared in 1994 and won the Sidney Hillman Award for nonfiction.

***Most of Bolton's U.N. tenure has been quiet — at least until this past summer, when he almost torpedoed efforts to reform the institution.***

end of 2006, when the 109th Congress adjourns, unless he is confirmed to the position.

Bolton's chief Republican opponent, Senator George Voinovich of Ohio, recently announced his support, significantly easing the way for Senate confirmation. However, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has postponed a vote on his nomination until September, and a Democratic filibuster is still possible.

### **His Way or the Highway**

Until this past summer, John Bolton's yearlong tenure as U.N. ambassador has been in many respects a quiet one, largely marked by the Security Council's ongoing, and painfully inadequate, attempt to grapple with the grave humanitarian and political crisis in Darfur. But in recent months the council has been all but overwhelmed by the need to deal simultaneously with the nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea and with the spreading conflict pitting Israel against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. In all these matters, Bolton has shown himself to be an exceptionally well-informed and hard-working emissary, which is scarcely surprising. But he has also generally proved to be circumspect and pragmatic, which might not have been predicted. If he has won few unexpected allies on the council, neither has he made unnecessary enemies. He has sparred with reporters without regularly making a meal of them, proving to be a far more accessible figure than his reputation had led them to expect.

But Bolton has left his mark, not on the ordinary high politics of the Security Council, but on the extraordinary campaign of reform that Kofi Annan initiated after the demoralizing failure to reach a consensus on Iraq. That process was already far advanced by the time Bolton reached Turtle Bay: Annan had published his reform blueprint, “In Larger Freedom,” to almost universal praise in the West, and his aides had worked with Jean Ping, president of the General Assembly, to produce a document that would also satisfy the concerns of the Group of 77, as the U.N.'s Third World bloc is known. The Ping document was a plum pudding into which the entire developing world's agenda on economic and social issues had been crammed, but U.N. officials and Western

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diplomats hoped that the more noxious elements could be extracted in the course of negotiations.

And then Bolton arrived.

Though it's impossible to know what would have happened had Pres. Bush appointed a more anodyne figure, there's no question that Bolton altered the reform debate drastically, and in a very Boltonesque direction. On his very first day in New York, Aug. 3, 2005, he delivered to General Assembly President Ping the stunning news that the entire existing 35-page document would have to be scrapped. What was more, the small group of diplomats who had been collecting views and writing drafts would have to step aside, so that all 191 ambassadors could draw up a document among themselves. When a panicked U.N. official told the American ambassador that he was courting disaster — the deadline was now five weeks away — Bolton calmly answered that he would be satisfied with the sort of brief summary of common points typically issued after a G-8 conference.

A number of Western diplomats, having begun to

worry that they were making important concessions on the issues the developing world cared about without bringing the G-77 around on the core peace and security issues that the U.S. was pushing, were relieved to see Bolton interrupt what had come to feel like an unstoppable process. At the same time, virtually all participants felt that conducting a debate among 191 deeply self-interested parties was a recipe for gridlock. And Washington itself seemed not to want stalemate: Earlier in the summer, administration officials had told their counterparts in the U.N. secretariat that while they had some important reservations about the emerging document, they strongly supported Annan's uncompromising language on terrorism; his proposal to replace the toothless Human Rights Commission with a much tougher body; his package of management reforms, and a new Peacebuilding Commission. But Bolton gave a distinctly different impression: improving the U.N.'s capabilities mattered less than blocking language Washington deemed unacceptable. Indeed, the only advocates for



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Bolton's proposed approach besides the U.S. were spoilers such as Cuba, Venezuela and Egypt, who preferred failure to letting the West have its way. This marriage of convenience would endure over the ensuing weeks.

At the end of August 2005, Bolton issued a series of "Dear Colleague" letters, each accompanied by an extensively rewritten version of a section of the draft document. The "amendments" on disarmament and nonproliferation, for example, proposed to eliminate more than half of the existing language, and to erase all references to disarmament, the regulation of small arms and treaties the U.S. opposed. His draft text on development issues struck out every reference to the so-called Millennium Development Goals, which until that moment the Bush administration had never found exceptionable, as well as to commitments on aid and debt reduction that Washington, and in some cases only Washington, opposed. With two weeks left before the world's heads of state arrived for the much-touted 60th-anniversary session of the General Assembly, Washington was suggesting a deal which, even viewed as a maximalist negotiating position, looked like a calculated insult.

The debate, not surprisingly, became increasingly poisonous. Moderate G-77 states were unwilling to stand up to the spoilers, who had been empowered by Washington's intransigence. Diplomats met in a group of 30, and then 15, but made little headway. Core issues like nonproliferation or guidelines for the use of force had long since been discarded for lack of common ground; on others, the group could agree only on broad principles. Bolton seemed to view compromise as surrender. "He would not give anything away to get his priorities — even rhetoric," recalls a U.N. official deeply involved with the process. Bolton struck this official as oddly nonchalant about the prospect of losing core elements of the U.S. agenda. The ambassador's attitude, he says, seemed to amount to, "It's either my outcome and we walk out of here alive, or leave the place a smoldering ruin."

It was only owing to the kind of adroit, difference-splitting diplomacy to which Bolton seemed allergic that

***The Bush administration seems uncomfortable with the premise that the U.S. enhances its authority, and its security, by accepting the strictures that come with membership in a global body.***

the reform package was rescued from the American emissary's all-or-nothing position. The day before the heads of state were to arrive, Amman presented Bolton with a compromise document which his staff had been secretly preparing all along. Bolton was outraged at this subterfuge. Secretary of State Rice has said (in an interview with me) that she had expected such an outcome, and was fully aware of the consequences of Bolton's brinkmanship, but some of her subor-

ordinates were sending very different messages to U.N. secretariat officials. In retrospect, Bolton looks like a madcap pilot who kept his hand firm on the tiller even as the roar of the waterfall ahead grew louder and louder. Perhaps he wanted to plunge off the precipice.

The drive for reform has not been an out-and-out failure, but it has fallen drastically short of the no-doubt hyperbolic hopes of the secretary-general and his staff, and of the Bush administration's more measured expectations. John Bolton is scarcely the only party responsible for this anticlimax, to be sure. The absurd lengths to which the G-77 has gone to obstruct management reform leave the clear impression that many countries prefer a hamstrung, ineffective secretariat. Arab nations blocked a straightforward definition of terrorism. The opposition of China and dozens of other countries killed all hopes of expanding the permanent membership of the Security Council to include Japan, Germany, India and Brazil. China and Russia, with allies like Pakistan, drew the teeth from the proposed Human Rights Council, ensuring that authoritarian states like Cuba and Saudi Arabia (and China) will be able to serve on the organization and use their position to block resolutions criticizing their behavior. The Bush administration, which had talked about the Human Rights Council as its highest priority on U.N. reform, ultimately voted against it and refused to stand for election to the new body earlier this year.

### **A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy**

Bolton's unique contribution has been to make failure a self-fulfilling prophecy. Apparently convinced from the outset that the U.N. was an inhospitable place for the

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U.S., he ensured that it would be so. In fact, the U.S. has an extraordinarily strong hand to play as the U.N.'s largest funder, and as the world's ultimate guarantor of security. A seasoned diplomat can win wholly undeserved victories there, as Richard Holbrooke proved in 1999 when he persuaded the institution to lower the U.S.'s annual dues payments even after Washington had withheld payments for years, and to accept the suffocating "reforms" upon which conservatives in Congress insisted. The U.S. can get away with bullying the members — within limits. By surpassing those limits, Bolton managed to play a strong hand as if it were a weak one.

Should one conclude that the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations was simply maladroit? Did Bolton, that is, mistakenly calculate that threatening to leave the U.N. a smoking ruin would sufficiently terrify the members

### *Bolton has managed to alienate some of Washington's best friends at the U.N.*

that they would submit to Washington's demands? (It's an approach that seems to be working fairly well for the North Koreans, after all.) According to an American official deeply involved with the negotiations, "I think we on the U.S. side, and the radicals on their side, thought huge portions would fall out because of disagreement, and we would salvage the heart of it." In fact, they would have salvaged nothing had secretariat officials not intervened. It is also possible that Bolton didn't count on the backlash he would produce by arriving at the eleventh hour and casually toppling the house of cards that others had been patiently — if perhaps deludedly — building for months. You would think, however, that someone of his intelligence and experience would be able to foresee such consequences.

Or perhaps Bolton is not so much an ineffective diplo-

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mat as an unwilling one. After all, he represents an administration that puts extraordinary store in the telling of what it deems to be blunt truths — “Old Europe” vs. “New Europe,” “Either you’re with us, or you’re with the terrorists.” This Manichean approach reorganizes the great amorphous mass of reality into two categories — desirable and undesirable — and lets the world see who stands where.

This is not a formula of which, say, Bismarck or Talleyrand would have approved, of course. The goal of diplomacy is not the revealing of truth but the blurring of differences in order to advance national interests even in adverse settings. But the Bush administration, at some deep ideological-temperamental level, is opposed to diplomacy — or at least very important elements of it are. True, during her confirmation hearing Condoleezza Rice announced, “This is the time for diplomacy,” and she has sought to stitch up the tattered fabric of alliances. But the U.N. may have been one piece of the fabric she felt she had to yield to the absolutists.

John Bolton stands out even among the Bush administration’s Roundheads. In the run-up to arms-control talks with North Korea, Bolton, then our chief negotiator, described the country’s president as a “tyrannical dictator” who managed an “evil regime.” The North Koreans returned the favor by describing Bolton as “human scum,” forcing the State Department to remove him from the talks. Bolton had never minced words about the U.N. in years past, and once he arrived he kept up the hail of invective. In the fall of 2005, as the reform debate resumed, the trigger-happy diplomat described the U.N. as “a target-rich environment,” and warned that if the place didn’t shape up, “we’ll turn to some other mechanism to solve international problems.” At a time when the advocates of reform needed to mollify Third World countries who resented what they viewed as American and Western domination of the U.N., Bolton appeared to be trying to get their goat — which, of course, he succeeded in doing. By the spring of 2006, even moderate figures like Dumisani Kumalo, South Africa’s ambassador to the United

***It was only thanks to the kind of adroit, difference-splitting diplomacy to which Bolton seemed allergic that the reform package was rescued from his all-or-nothing position.***

Nations, were denouncing management reform as a plot to marginalize the G-77.

Indeed, Bolton has managed to alienate some of Washington’s best friends at the U.N. Throughout 2005, Mark Malloch Brown, Annan’s chief of staff and closest adviser, earned the enmity of many diplomats and U.N. staffers by defending the American position on a wide range of issues, and accepting much of the harsh criticism provoked by the “Oil for Food” scandal. But

this past June, Malloch Brown, now the U.N. deputy secretary-general, finally blew his stack, delivering a speech accusing Washington of sabotaging the U.N. by practicing a “stealth diplomacy” in which it regularly made use of the institution’s political, peacekeeping and humanitarian capacities while allowing it to be characterized publicly as a den of corruption and fecklessness. (See p. 56 for the text of that address.)

Bolton responded in characteristic fashion, declaring that Malloch Brown had insulted the American people, and threatening to abet the efforts of congressional Republicans to cut U.N. funding. And so U.S.-U.N. relations took another turn in their long downward spiral.

It is worth recalling that in the months after Kofi Annan published “In Larger Freedom,” various Bush administration figures had told U.N. officials that they were pleased (if surprised) by the document. They indicated that they were prepared to push hard for a forceful human rights body, an unambiguous condemnation of terrorism, and the kind of deep management reform that would turn the U.N. into a more or less modern organization. Instead, it seems unlikely that any of those vital reforms will occur in the near future. Perhaps Talleyrand himself would have done no better, but most of the central players in the drama believe the U.S. could have achieved a good deal more than it did.

We cannot, of course, fathom John Bolton’s motives, but apparently he is keeping score by an entirely different metric. History, though, is likely to judge him as a bad diplomat at a time when diplomacy really mattered. ■

# U.N. REFORM: THINK BIG



Poul Hans Lange

**U** A BOTTOM-UP OVERHAUL MAY BE THE MOST PROMISING APPROACH TO TAKE.

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BY RONALD I. SPIERS

nited Nations reform has been at the top of the international agenda for the past year, yet nothing very fundamental has been achieved to date. Rationalization of the secretariat, despite progress due to the efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, still has a long way to go. Apparently resistance among smaller member-states to the introduction of merit systems has impeded further progress. Although I suspect charges about the prevalence of corruption in the staff are politically exaggerated, it has certainly existed and, until merit systems governing recruit-

ment, evaluation and promotion are introduced, it will be hard to ferret out.

There has been marginal improvement in the Human Rights Commission, though the U.S. decided not to stand for election to that body — perhaps realizing it might well suffer an embarrassing defeat if it did. The concept of a Peacebuilding Commission, intended to keep an eye out for failed and failing states and coordinate international action to help or pre-empt failure, is a constructive one and may still produce something useful, but there is no telling when it will bear fruit.

The key obstacle to meaningful reform is the fact that different categories of members have different assortments of dissatisfactions with the institution. American unilateralists distrust the whole idea of a “world government” (which the U.N. certainly is not) and are suspicious of any strengthening or power-sharing. Washington chafes at the economic burden of paying 22 percent of the institution’s total budget. It resents underwriting programs with no sunset provisions in which the U.S. has little interest or actually opposes, particularly when they are advanced by countries that don’t have to carry the costs.

Other major contributors like Germany and Japan are unhappy that countries paying much smaller shares of the costs (e.g., Russia and China) continue to enjoy a preferred position. Major geographic powers like Brazil and India feel the institution should be modernized to recognize the political weight their large populations should be accorded in the world body. Smaller countries complain about the concentration of authority in a small group of developed countries that don’t have their interests at heart. They feel that the General Assembly in which they are all represented, has been totally marginalized by the

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*Following his retirement from the Foreign Service, Ambassador Ronald Spiers was undersecretary-general for political affairs of the United Nations from 1989 to 1992. He began his 34-year FS career by serving on the staff of U.S. delegations to the General Assembly from 1955 to 1959. He now writes and lectures on foreign affairs and is a fellow of the American Academy of Diplomacy.*

***The key obstacle is the fact that different categories of members have different complaints about the institution.***

Security Council.

In many instances, appeasing one group would sharpen the dissatisfaction among another. There has been no reform solution proposed that would take care of everyone’s problems. Only the classic “good citizens,” like the Scandinavians and Canadians, seem to stand outside the “unhappiness” corner.

### **Aim High**

Perhaps the problem is that our sights have been set too low, and that we need to aim for a more radical restructuring. Realists may argue that if small steps can’t be made, large ones are even more out of the question. I am not so sure. It is worth thinking about a bottom-up overhaul of an organization that is frozen in the realities of the 1940s.

I believe the following ideas, though far-reaching, are worth considering.

The General Assembly might be rescued from its sleepy irrelevance by two fundamental changes. The first would be a move to population-based, weighted voting. It is ridiculous that the vote of Palau (population 20,000) has the same weight as that of China or India (each over a billion). Under weighted voting, each of the 192 members (Montenegro recently became the 192nd) might have one vote (or a fraction thereof) for each million of its population. Admittedly, this approach would give China (hardly democratically representative) a weightier vote than the U.S. in the General Assembly, but it would engender a greater sense of equity within the body that might be conducive to achieving some of our goals.

The second reform would be to reconstitute the assembly’s committee system along parliamentary lines, so that each of the present Committees of the Whole would consist of just 30 to 40 members elected by each General Assembly session from among the members who presented themselves as candidates to assume membership at the following session. This would make the committees smaller, more substantive and efficient, and give the plenary sessions more of a role in resolving differences. As a bonus, General Assembly recommendations would be more likely to reflect global realities.

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Critics will be loath to see the General Assembly strengthened, noting that the U.S. is frequently heavily outvoted there and has no veto. However, they should remember that most GA resolutions are only recommendations, or expressions of opinion. In addition, war and peace decisions are reserved to the Security Council. But as a means of reassuring skeptics, the areas of "decision," such as on the budget, should require 3/4 votes in the assembly rather than simple majorities.

### **An Expanded Security Council**

If the U.N. Charter were to be redrafted from scratch, I would argue strongly for an expanded Security Council (20 countries instead of the current 15) drawn from three categories of membership. One

***Adopting population-based, weighted voting could help rescue the General Assembly from its sleepy irrelevance.***

category would consist of the five countries with the largest budget assessments, which currently includes the U.S., Japan, Germany, the U.K. and France. A second group could encompass the five most populous members not already included in the first; today that would be China, India, Indonesia, Brazil and Pakistan, in that order. A third category of, say, 10 members could be elected by the General Assembly by majority vote in order of number of votes received.

Such a charter would serve geographic diversity by placing selection of Security Council members in the hands of the General Assembly. It would also free the institution from the traditional "Buggins' turn" system, under which regional groups currently get to decide candidates for top positions on a rotational basis with

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little regard to merit or qualifications.

Unfortunately, this logical formula would leave Russia out in the cold to compete under the third category and is thus a non-starter. So as a compromise, I believe the U.S. should wholeheartedly support British Prime Minister Tony Blair's proposal to add Germany, Japan and India as permanent members without otherwise expanding the Security Council's total membership.

In addition, I believe both world and U.S. interests would be served by abolishing the veto that the present five permanent members enjoy. If that is too bitter a pill for them to swallow, perhaps the veto could be strictly limited to action under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter. Otherwise, substantive decisions could be taken by two-thirds or three-quarter majorities and by simple majority on procedural matters. However, I am quite convinced that the veto is not as important or precious as most people think.

The Trusteeship Council is presently out of business, because no trusteeship territories remain to be overseen. But it could be usefully reconstituted as a Trusteeship Committee for the Environment, commissioning studies and producing policy recommendations relating to such "global commons" issues as pollution, fisheries, climate, the "high seas," global epidemics and biodiversity.

These changes might aid in easing more fundamental secretariat reform that has so far been opposed by smaller member-states who fear that the large developed countries are trying to wrest away what little influence they have. As a result, the secretariat remains top-heavy, overstaffed, reluctant to apply merit principles to promotion and recruitment, and too subject to outside political pressure.

The deputy secretary-general should be the chief management officer of the U.N. and be selected on the basis of demonstrated management experience. Subject to membership control of the budget process, he or she and the secretary-general himself should have a freer hand to organize the secretariat without membership micromanagement.

***Abolishing, or at least curtailing, the veto of the Security Council's five permanent members would serve not only world interests but our own.***

### **Patience Is a Virtue**

At first blush I know these proposals sound impossibly revolutionary, running as they do against the cherished fiction of "sovereign equality." Clearly the obstacles are daunting and resistance would be widespread, including within the U.S. But discussion and further thought may permit a more realistic appreciation of how reform would improve the operation

and effectiveness of an organization which, if it did not exist, would truly have to be invented. The only alternative may be to watch a further withering away of an increasingly outdated institution.

I think back to when I was a new member of the staff of the Atomic Energy Commission in the early 1950s and wrote a proposal for an international organization to monitor nuclear programs to ensure that they were not diverted into weaponry. Most of my colleagues at the AEC ridiculed the idea as naively visionary, if not actually contrary to U.S. interests. But one of the commissioners (Harry Smythe, a former Princeton physics professor and author of the famous "Smythe Report") thought the idea was worth pursuing.

He took it to some of his colleagues in the Eisenhower White House and the idea, to my surprise, surfaced as a proposal in President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech at the U.N. in December 1953.

Shortly afterward I received a panicky call from a special assistant to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, telling me that the State Department had been handed responsibility for follow-up to the president's speech. State had no experts on nuclear matters in those days and was at a loss about how to proceed. So my first assignment when I joined the department in January 1955 was to fill out the practical details of the idea, prepare a draft statute and serve as a principal member of the team that negotiated it into existence in 1956.

Last year the International Atomic Energy Agency won the Nobel Peace Prize. It may take half a century, but sometimes it *does* pay to think "outside the box"! ■

# REINVENTING THE UNITED NATIONS



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THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS WAS THE FIRST GENERATION OF GLOBAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE U.N. WAS THE SECOND. IT IS TIME TO DESIGN A THIRD-GENERATION ENTITY.

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BY TAD DALEY AND DAVID LIONEL

rive from San Francisco across the Golden Gate Bridge and turn left, and you will arrive before long at John Muir Woods, home to the oldest living things on Planet Earth. Walk along the path back into the forest for a few miles, and you will come across a heavy metal and stone plaque set squarely into the earth. It is dated April 29, 1945 — 10 days before the surrender of Nazi Germany, more than three months before the atomic devastation of Japan, less than three weeks after the death of arguably the greatest statesman of the age. The plaque says this:

“Here in this grove of enduring redwoods, preserved for posterity, members of the United Nations Conference on International Organizations met on April 29, 1945, to honor the memory of Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Thirty-Second President of the United States, Chief Architect of the United Nations, and Apostle of Lasting Peace for All Mankind.”

The work of that architect has stood the test of time. But the challenge that apostle chose to take on is at least as acute today as it was six decades ago. And a whole host of new challenges have emerged, ones simply not on the radar screen of the framers who met in San Francisco during that fertile spring.

Today the world faces non-state terror networks, failed states, intractable poverty, AIDS and other pandemics, the challenge of governing transnational corporations, climate change and other forms of chronic environmental degradation. Despite promises of “never again,” we see genocides repeated in Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur — places remote from great-power interests and therefore unlikely to motivate international interventions. We witness one state trying to stem the tide of nuclear proliferation while insisting on retaining and indeed improving its own vast nuclear arsenal — seemingly oblivious to both the contradiction in that position and the futility of such an enterprise.

The structure of the U.N., too, has become embarrassingly anachronistic: Britain and France are only medium-rank world powers by any reckoning, yet both hold Security Council vetoes. In contrast, Germany, Japan, India, Brazil, and many other nations possessing significant geopolitical weight have virtually no voice.

Since the U.N.’s inception, those who feel like they

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*Tad Daley, who led an initiative called the “Campaign for a New U.N. Charter” during the U.N.’s 50th-anniversary year in 1995, is now Peace and Disarmament Fellow in the Los Angeles office of Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Nobel laureate anti-nuclear organization. David Lionel, president of the Earth Television Public Education Foundation, is a veteran producer of video documentaries portraying the historic U.N. civil society forums of the past 15 years, including those in Rio in 1992, Istanbul in 1996, and the Millennium Forum in New York in 2000. He is developing a weekly digest of the vast quantity of U.N.-produced TV programming that is presently unseen in the United States.*

weren’t invited to the party have pleaded to make the United Nations more legitimate, more accountable and more representative of the peoples of the world. Several initiatives marked the organization’s 50th anniversary in 1995, including the Commission on Global Governance, the Independent Working Group on the U.N. in Its Second Half-Century, the “Preferred Futures for the U.N.” symposium, and the South Center’s report, “For a Strong and Democratic United Nations.” Many of these plans were backed by Nobel laureates, former heads of state, and distinguished scholars and practitioners with vast experience in the global governance arena. Yet they all went nowhere.

Nearly a decade later, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change issued a report in December 2004, offering several recommendations to revitalize the U.N. system. A follow-up document, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, further explored those ideas in March 2005.

At a summit just before the opening of the U.N.’s 60th General Assembly session in September 2005, world leaders intended to inaugurate a package of reforms that, it was hoped, might equip the world organization with at least some promising new tools to cope with challenges likely to arise over the next six decades or so. For six months before that meeting, Annan’s panel focused on identifying politically attainable results that governments might actually adopt. These were compiled in an imaginative 38-page “Outcome Document” that contained many genuine advances.

Enter, stage right, John Bolton, the new U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Despite Republican control of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bolton was so unpopular that President George W. Bush ended up sending him to New York in August 2005 under a recess appointment through the end of 2006. His first act was to reject 35 of the agreement’s 38 hard-won pages. A frantic three weeks of negotiations restored barely 10 watered-down pages, which was all that was left for signing at the summit. Some excellent proposals survived, including a Human Rights Council, a Peacebuilding Commission, and a Democracy Fund. But it was hardly the profound revitalization of the United Nations system it might have been. And thanks to perfunctory media coverage, most Americans barely knew the summit took place —

## F O C U S

let alone the dimensions of the missed opportunity.

If the League of Nations was the first generation of global multilateral organizations and the United Nations the second, it is high time to begin considering the architecture of a third-generation entity. What kind of United Nations system would we create if we were designing it from scratch today? Here are some of the issues that, for the most part, have been conspicuous mostly by their absence from the global governance policy debate.

### **The Security Council**

In the past decade or so, several important initiatives have advanced not so much by changing the Security Council, but by going around it. The Rome International Criminal Court Treaty and Ottawa Landmine Treaty, for example, were both initially kept off the U.N. agenda by the United States. In response, smart coalitions of middle-power governments and civil-society organizations generated enough political momentum to actually bring into being two brand-new multilateral treaties, despite

Washington's intransigent opposition. The ICC and the landmine ban are clearly here to stay. And we have likely not seen the last of this new technique for changing the international political status quo.

Still, those near-term successes hardly obviate the need for longer-term structural transformations. Perhaps the most important of these is the veto. Few things could be more profoundly undemocratic than a rule that allows a single state to stand opposed to the rest of the world, and command the rest of the world into impotence and inaction.

Even when a veto is not actually cast, veto calculations dominate virtually every decision the Security Council makes. Why? Because it is always necessary to get all five permanent members on board. Has there been any exercise in the past decade more inequitable (or cynical) than the one in December 1996, when the vote to reappoint U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to a second term tallied up at 14-1 ... but the "one" won? If we believe, as Churchill insisted, that "democracy is the

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worst form of government — except for all those others,” then we ought to aspire to democracy at every level of human governance.

Many schemes have been put forth over the decades for modifying the veto. Perhaps it could be limited to only the most vital matters the Security Council considers — rather than extending to everything on its docket. Perhaps for other matters it could be transformed into a supermajority requirement — say, three of the five permanent members and nine of 15 total members. In American elections, after all, 60 percent is usually considered a landslide.

It's often declared as self-evident that the U.S. “would never give up the veto” — that is, give up our ability to prevent the rest of the world from doing something we don't want it to do. But the veto's existence also allows other countries to keep us from doing something, too. Consider an initiative Washington wants very much to pursue, which garners the support of 10 or 11 or even 14 Security Council members. If it is Russia, China, Britain or France that stands opposed, the U.S. is forced to choose between dropping the initiative or pursuing it without council authorization and in defiance of international law. This, of course, is why curtailing Iran's nuclear program has been so difficult, because the five have consistently had very different ideas about how to proceed. This is what happened in early 2003, when the U.S. abruptly dropped its efforts to secure a resolution authorizing a U.S. invasion of Iraq, and launched such an invasion anyway — illegally, in the view of most international lawyers.

Inextricably intertwined with the question of the veto is the question of the composition of the Security Council. Few things could be more profoundly anachronistic than a body owned and operated by the five victors of a war that ended in the first half of the last century. Many schemes for democratizing the council have been put forth over the decades. There is little point in rehashing the respective merits of various plans here, beyond noting that virtually all of them focus on bringing a small number of new great powers to the table, to provide a voice to presently unrepresented regions. Perhaps one day we will see the emergence of enough political will to actually bring one of these schemes into existence.

If humanity wants to avoid some of the cataclysmic scenarios that are all too easy to conjure today, we must try to envision much more dramatic changes in our glob-

al public policymaking processes — changes that will bring a much larger transformation in representation, legitimacy, accountability and universality.

### **A Broader Democratization**

Some have described the often-ineffectual U.N. General Assembly as embodying the principle of “one nation, one vote and no power.” Surely the time has long since come to give serious consideration to a weighted voting system in the General Assembly — similar to those already used in the International Labor Organization, the European Union and the international financial institutions.

One longstanding idea is the “binding triad” proposal, promoted for years by the late Richard Hudson of the Center for War/Peace Studies, under which vote tallies would calculate not only the number of states voting for some measure, but also the number of people represented by those states and the number of dollars contributed by those states. Consider how much legitimacy would be conferred on initiatives that had secured support from a majority of states, a majority of people, and a majority of those paying the bills.

In Hudson's vision, such a system of three simultaneous majorities would have enough credibility to grant to the General Assembly the same kind of power to enact binding international law over other matters that the Security Council now possesses over war and peace matters: the ability to legislate.

Professor Joseph Schwartzberg of the University of Minnesota has done elaborate mathematical analyses of how both the binding triad and other weighted voting schemes might actually operate in practice. Nongovernmental advocacy organizations ought to start counting and promoting those tabulations now — to illuminate the simple proposition that the mechanism for representation decided upon in San Francisco in 1945 is not the only possible kind.

Another advantage of this approach is that it would provide a tangible incentive for nations to fulfill their funding obligations to the U.N. promptly and consistently. The more you pay, the greater your clout. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, under the suzerainty of Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., a few years back, might not have been so quick to withhold our dues to the U.N. had our voting power there been directly diminished as a consequence.

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Incidentally, a variety of other alternative financing schemes has been advanced over the years. The most well-known of these is the "Tobin Tax," which would fund U.N. activities and other worthy international undertakings through a trivial levy on international currency transactions. Other proposals include similar levies on national defense expenditures, international arms sales or national carbon emissions. Among the most innovative of these is the "International Finance Facility," a central repository for aid and disaster funds contributed in advance — rather than in panic mode after the fact.

Many ideas have also been advanced to provide a voice at the U.N. for more than just the appointed representatives of national governments. One is to establish a "U.N. Parliamentary Assembly," where elected representatives from various national legislatures would convene

### *A call for an Article 109 charter review conference could become a powerful mobilizing force in civil society.*

together in an international forum. Even if only advisory, such an assembly could give citizens a more direct voice on the world stage. Such an assembly could lead to the emergence of true transnational political parties — a historic step forward for democratic political participation.

Even better might be to create a directly elected "U.N. People's Assembly." Here in Los Angeles, we get to pick our representatives for the city council, the state assembly and state senate in Sacramento, and the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate in Washington, D.C. Not, however, beyond that. Why not? After all, a directly-elected transnational legislature already exists: the European Parliament. A woman in Aberdeen, for example, elects someone to represent her there, in Edinburgh, in London and in Strasbourg. Why can't all citizens of the

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world do something like this no matter where they live? Even if only advisory, such a world assembly could give people who feel impotent and powerless somewhere to go to express themselves on the great challenges facing the human race. It might even move some to choose this as the vehicle for conveying their grievances — rather than suicide bombings or crashing airplanes into skyscrapers.

### **Getting the Ball Rolling**

One strategy to actualize many of these potential strengths was envisioned by the San Francisco framers themselves in Article 108, which details the process for making particular revisions to the U.N. charter, and Article 109, for summoning “a general conference ... for the purpose of reviewing the present Charter.” Moreover, convening such a conference is not subject to the great-power veto. Such a meeting can be called by a vote of two-thirds of the General Assembly and any nine of the 15 Security Council members. (Incidentally, the language of Article 109, Section 3, indicates that the framers expected the member states to summon such a “general conference” after only 10 years — in 1955.)

A call for an Article 109 charter review conference could become a powerful mobilizing force in civil society. It would provide something tangible and specific to urge upon our governments, while leaving open what might ultimately emerge from the process. It could assemble a broad coalition of supporters who might hold a number of different visions for a world order, but who could all agree on pursuing the process laid out in the charter itself to define the most appropriate vision for the challenges of the 21st century.

In 1945, Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, feared that the simultaneous dawn of both a timid U.N. charter and a new atomic age meant that “mankind has made up its mind for self destruction.” So he assembled some of the greatest intellectuals of the day, and grandly designated them “The Committee to Frame a World Constitution.” Are there any philanthropists out there who might consider launching a “Committee to Frame a New U.N. Charter” today? It is hard to imagine anything that might better serve as an engine of our global political imagination.

Singapore’s U.N. ambassador, Kishore Mahbubani, says the organization is “based on the strange principle that nation-states pursuing national interests will some-

how take care of our global commons.” John Kenneth Galbraith, who died earlier this year, said not long ago: “The greatest political conflict of our time [is] that of national interest as opposed to transnational concern and responsibility.” And the late George F. Kennan, arguably America’s pre-eminent 20th-century foreign policy sage, floated the idea of a global “House of Councilors,” whose members would explicitly not represent nations or regions, but instead strive to identify the perspective of the whole, the transnational vital interest, the global public good.

Perhaps we can peer even further into the future. Many thinkers have maintained that it is within the power of the human imagination to envision abolishing war itself. Many have suggested that organizing the world into separate sovereign states, each pouring enormous quantities of treasure, talent and often blood into the ability to make war on other states, is perhaps not the end of history. Many have imagined that someday there may be a next step in the social evolution of the human species.

Nearly 700 years ago, in his *De Monarchia*, Dante insisted, “to achieve a state of universal peace and well-being, a single world government is necessary.” That remarkable proposition was elaborated in Immanuel Kant’s *Perpetual Peace*, Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *A Lasting Peace Through the Federation of Europe*, H.G. Wells’ *A Modern Utopia*, Emery Reves’s *The Anatomy of Peace*, Vernon Nash’s *The World Must Be Governed*, Wendell Willkie’s *One World*, Bertrand Russell’s *Toward World Government*, G.A. Borgese’s *Foundations of the World Republic*, Mortimer Adler’s *How to Think About War and Peace*, and Grenville Clark and Louis Sohn’s *World Peace Through World Law*. And that same proposition was forcibly defended — especially around the middle of the last century — by figures like Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill, Sigmund Freud, Arnold Toynbee, E.B. White, Norman Cousins, Oscar Hammerstein, Carl Van Doren, U.S. Supreme Court Justices Owen Roberts and William Douglas, and future U.S. Senators Alan Cranston, Harris Wofford, Paul Simon and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Many of them felt their hearts as well as their heads moved by the words that had been uttered a century earlier by Alfred Lord Tennyson, who dreamed of the hour when we might “hear the war drum throb no longer, see the battle flags all furled, in the parliament of man, the federation of the world.”

## F O C U S

The San Francisco Charter itself, in its very first sentence, states that its principal purpose is “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” Perhaps we might permit ourselves the intellectual freedom to believe that we might one day live up to that noble calling.

### **The Pragmatism of Idealism**

Few of these global governance reform proposals, admittedly, are likely to be politically realistic in the near term. The veto, for example, might be the single most intractable feature of global governance, because — as *The Economist* magazine put it so pithily several years ago — “the vetoers can veto a veto of the veto.”

But how will we ever get rid of the veto if no one even says that we ought to do so? How can we ever change the political realities of the near term if we don’t even discuss what might be desirable in the long term? If politics, as every undergraduate knows, is the art of the possible, then this kind of conversation can serve as

a catalyst for expanding the parameters of political possibility.

We began this article with a visit to Muir Woods. Now get back on the Golden Gate Bridge, cross back into San Francisco, turn left at the Bay Bridge to Oakland, then continue east until you reach the National Mall in Washington, D.C. At the Jefferson Memorial you will find these words: “I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.”

The time has come for us to weave a new coat for a third-generation world organization. We must seize the opportunity to invent a garment of our own, one designed not for our ancestors, but for weathering the storms, exploring the vistas, and reaching for the promise of the uncharted 21st century. ■

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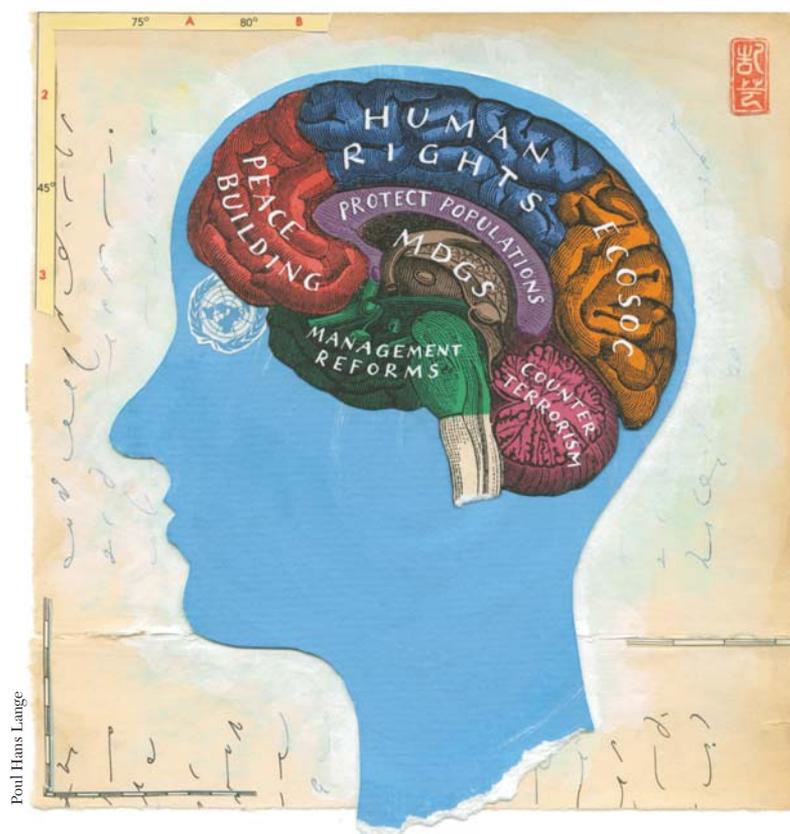
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# SELECTING THE NEXT SECRETARY-GENERAL



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U.N. REFORM HAS BEEN THE HALLMARK OF KOFI ANNAN'S DECADE-LONG TENURE. FINDING A LEADER TO CONTINUE THAT EFFORT IS CRITICAL.

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*By SUZANNE DIMAGGIO*

here has been a great deal of talk over the years about reforming, renewing and revitalizing the United Nations. During the past year, real progress has been made in some important areas, including the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and a new Human Rights Council, but considerable challenges still remain.

In many ways, the effort to modernize the institution can be viewed as the hallmark of Kofi Annan's decade-long

tenure as secretary-general. So as Annan prepares to step down on Dec. 31, 2006, selecting his successor is perhaps the central question facing the member-states this year. That process should reflect not only the desire to find the most qualified man or woman for the job but to ensure that the new secretary-general has the mandate and capability to pursue institutional reform.

This article draws upon a project recently carried out by the United Nations Association of the United States of America that aimed to: (a) clarify the appropriate roles of the secretary-general and identify the qualities we should look for in the next secretary-general; (b) shed light on how to best improve the selection process; and (c) think through what should be the priority agenda for the next secretary-general. Toward this end, over a period of several months during the first half of 2006, UNA-USA organized a series of meetings and consultations on choosing the next person to fill the U.N.'s top post. Participants included member-state representatives to the body from every region of the world, former and current U.N. officials, representatives from nongovernmental organizations and the private sector, scholars and other experts.

The following outlines some of the major issues that emerged during the discussions, highlighting the areas of agreement and disagreement, and concludes with a series of recommendations. (You can read the project's full report at [www.unausa.org/nextsg](http://www.unausa.org/nextsg)).

### **The Current Process**

Since the United Nations was founded in 1945, the office of the secretary-general has evolved to encompass both administrative and diplomatic portfolios, at once managing a large bureaucracy and forging consensus among often-polarized member states. Yet despite the reach and importance of the position, the process for choosing the secretary-general is murky at best. The U.N. Charter provides minimal guidance, stating simply that "the Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council." The charter also states that the secretary-general should serve as the chief administrative officer of the organization, but no specific qualifications are identified; nor is there any mention of the term length or criteria for selection.

The General Assembly is on record as opting out of the process by requesting that the Security Council rec-

ommend no more than one candidate. Resolution 11(1), which was passed in 1946, states that "it would be desirable for the Security Council to proffer only one candidate for the consideration of the General Assembly." Resolution 51/241, passed in 1997, sought to establish a set of principles that might be applied to the selection of the secretary-general, calling upon the assembly to make "full use of the power of appointment enshrined in the charter" and identifying a role for the assembly president in facilitating interaction with the Security Council.

In practice, this has given the five permanent members of the Security Council — China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States — veto power over the selection process within the council since the U.N.'s founding. The assembly has had the theoretical power to override the council's selection by declining to give the recommended candidate the necessary majority vote, but has never done so.

In the absence of official guidelines, some precedents have emerged over the years. Each secretary-general's tenure lasts one or two terms of five years. The selection has followed a geographical rotation of sorts, and it is generally accepted that the secretary-general should not originate from one of the council's P-5.

Previous U.N. secretaries-general were: Trygve Lie of Norway (1946-1952); Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden (1953-1961); U Thant of Burma/Myanmar (1961-1971); Kurt Waldheim of Austria (1972-1981); Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru (1982-1991); and Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt (1992-1996).

### **The Selection Process**

Given the array of tasks for which the secretary-general is responsible, it is difficult to codify the specific qualifications needed to do the job well. Obviously, the list would include outstanding diplomatic skills and strong leadership capabilities. But it is notable that some participants in USA-UNA's project felt leadership should reflect an ability to ensure that the organization is managed well, but not necessarily to serve as the organization's "manager." Instead, proponents of this view asserted, candidates should exhibit a willingness to delegate responsibilities to a deputy on a daily basis while maintaining overall accountability for the health of the organization. Others disagreed, emphasizing that at this moment in the organization's history — with the mismanagement of the Oil for Food program and wide-

spread cases of sexual abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers still fresh in people's minds — the U.N. needs a strong administrator at its helm above all else.

There was general agreement that the next secretary-general must be a “uniting figure” who can develop solutions to challenges in the diplomatic, economic and humanitarian fields. In particular, many respondents cited the need to bridge the gap between North and South and to repair the deep divisions that have emerged recently. But while there was consensus that the next secretary-general must be able to work with all member-states and to stand up to the five permanent Security Council members when necessary, some P-5 members cautioned that he or she should not be *too* strong a personality. Some participants drew attention to the mounting pressure that the next secretary-general will likely face from powerful members-states whose recent attempts to gain permanent seats on the council have failed.

The process for selecting the secretary-general has mainly consisted of secret ballots and closed meetings, with information distributed through leaks rather than formal reporting. Most participants in our discussions therefore agreed that a transparent, democratic process would go a long way toward producing the most qualified and credible candidate.

Some participants advocated the establishment of a search committee with diverse regional representation, possibly comprised of former heads of state that have emerged positively in an international light. This idea, however, was met with some reluctance, primarily by those who pointed out that the U.N. is not a corporation and should not be managed as such. One participant likened the establishment of a search committee for the next secretary-general to placing an advertisement in *The Economist*.

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***Re-examining  
the selection process  
should be viewed  
as a component of the  
larger, ongoing U.N.  
reform effort.***

As noted above, the U.N. charter does not contain any specific reference to regional rotation in the process for selecting the secretary-general. However, General Assembly Resolution 51/241 states that “due regard” should be given to regional rotation. During our discussions, some argued that the practice has been more or less adhered to for the past 60 years and, as such, it should continue to be observed.

Those who strongly favored regional rotation viewed it as a way to ensure an element of equity in the process, allowing the developing world to be represented. They believe Annan should now hand off the baton to an Asian. Others felt that while regional rotation is important and desirable, we should move on to others if Asia cannot produce the best candidate. A third group of participants (the smallest of the three) took the position that the most qualified person for the job should be sought regardless of regional origin.

The Asians and Africans, who together represent the majority of the 192 member states of the U.N., seem to agree that it is now Asia's turn to take the helm at the U.N. But the five permanent, veto-wielding members of the Security Council appear to be divided on where the next secretary-general should come from. With a lack of consensus among the P-5 on this issue, it remains to be seen if the element of regional rotation will be adhered to in the upcoming process. Notwithstanding this uncertainty, a number of participants observed that, pragmatically speaking, it would be difficult to envision any other outcome at this point.

Not surprisingly, many participants in our discussions called for the General Assembly to have a larger role in identifying specific candidates that reflect the priorities of the membership and submitting them to the Security Council. In fact, some asserted that the process of choosing the secretary-general should originate in the General Assembly, which would enhance the nominee's legitimacy. It is not clear whether adopting such a procedure would necessitate a change to the U.N. Charter, but an expanded General Assembly role would likely become a great source of tension with the Security Council that would not be easy to resolve.

## F O C U S

### **Agenda and Priorities**

It is self-evident that the demands currently being placed upon the U.N. are markedly different from those of just a decade ago, let alone those at the organization's founding six decades ago. As some participants in our discussions emphasized, the U.N. has in many ways become a peacekeeping and peacebuilding organization — a development its founders could not have foreseen. With 80,000 peacekeepers stationed in trouble spots around the globe, the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations is now the largest deployed military in the world, aside from the U.S. armed services. In addition, more than half of the U.N.'s 30,000 civilian staff are currently serving in the field, engaged in peacekeeping, humanitarian relief efforts, electoral assistance

***Given the array of tasks for which the secretary-general is responsible, it is difficult to codify the specific qualifications needed to do the job well.***

and human rights monitoring.

Some participants also noted that the U.N. is being called upon more and more to respond to complex humanitarian emergencies. Currently, more than 19 million refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons receive food, shelter and medical assistance from U.N. bodies. At the same time, the U.N. system is leading the largest international effort against diseases such as

HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio.

When thinking about choosing the next secretary-general, participants underscored that any candidate being seriously considered for the job must have the capacity to carry out the aforementioned responsibilities and, at the same time, lead and follow through on the ambitious agenda for reform that was put forward at the 2005

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Artist and Foreign Service youngster Caroline Huskey, daughter of Joanne and James Huskey, currently resides in Taiwan. In 1998, when the embassy in Nairobi was bombed, she narrowly escaped on hands and knees. Caroline, who has also lived in India, remains thankful that her father's career has allowed her to see so much of the world.

World Summit and is already in progress. This reform agenda includes:

- Solidifying the organization of the new Peacebuilding Commission to strengthen the secretary-general's capacity for mediation and to serve as the organizing mechanism to coordinate preventive and post-conflict activities;
- Following through on a comprehensive convention against terrorism that universally condemns it in all forms and also significantly strengthens the U.N.'s counterterrorism capacity;
- Strengthening the newly-established Human Rights Council to reinvigorate the U.N.'s commitment to promoting human rights, a function largely discredited in recent years under its predecessor, the much-criticized Human Rights Commission;
- Moving forward on member-states' recognition that there is an obligation to protect suffering populations under certain conditions, particularly genocide, if the government in question is unable to do so or is itself inflicting the suffering;
- Continuing the implementation of a wide range of management reforms in the secretariat and beyond, including increasing the U.N.'s oversight capacity, updating all mandates older than five years and overhauling policies on budget, finance and human resources;
- Maintaining the momentum toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals — a set of eight clearly-defined, time-bound and measurable development targets that provide a common development strategy for the international community on issues ranging from universal primary education and a reduction in child mortality to environmental sustainability and the promotion of gender equality — by 2015; and
- Revitalizing the Economic and Social Council to follow up on relevant outcomes of major U.N. conferences and develop a mechanism for monitoring member-states' progress toward fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals.

Throughout our discussions, participants noted that the deputy secretary-general position has not been utilized to its full advantage. (It is worth noting that there is no mention of a deputy anywhere in the U.N. Charter; in fact, the position was not created until 1996, a half-cen-

***In selecting the next  
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ture into the organization's history.) Some participants advocated empowering the deputy with a real line of authority on management and operations, to enable the secretary-general to focus on the ever-growing political and policy dimensions of the U.N.'s work. Proponents of this view noted that, given the realities of the job, defining the secretary-general as chief

political officer and the deputy as a chief operating officer makes great sense. Still, some disagreed, maintaining that when assessing the qualities of candidates for the post of secretary-general, the emphasis should be on management skills, not political skills.

**Recommended Improvements**

The discussion above provides a snapshot of the debate surrounding the search for the next secretary-general. The recommendations that emerged from the UNA-USA consultations would not require any changes to the U.N. charter and could be implemented during the current selection process. They are as follows:

- In selecting the next secretary-general, the overriding goal should be to appoint the most qualified man or woman for the job. In other words, qualifications should hold primacy over all other considerations.
- The secretary-general should first and foremost be a highly capable diplomat with outstanding leadership and negotiating skills. His or her moral authority should be beyond reproach because, ultimately, the secretary-general's power flows from the respect commanded by the individual holding the office.
- The secretary-general should be held accountable for the overall management of the organization, but he or she should be able to entrust day-to-day management responsibilities to the deputy and other senior staff.
- In the U.N.'s 60-year history, the organization's top post has never been held by a woman. In light of this, gender equality should be viewed as an important criterion in the selection process, and an effort should be made to identify qualified female candidates.
- A candidate should not be accepted simply because it is his or her region's "turn" to hold the position. The unwritten principle of regional rotation has helped to somewhat mitigate the arbitrariness of the selection

## F O C U S

process in the past, but this is not a compelling enough reason to stick with it.

- The time has come to expand the role of the U.N. General Assembly in the selection process. The assembly should play a role early on and assist in identifying candidates. The president of the assembly should be engaged in seeking candidates and making those candidates available to the Security Council as envisioned in Resolution 51/241. Ideally, the selection process should start from both ends of the organization and meet in the middle — in other words, both the Security Council and the General Assembly should provide names of candidates for the other organ to consider informally. A deeper sense of process, including more extensive consultations, would increase transparency in a significant way.

- General Assembly Resolution 11(1), which calls upon the Security Council to recommend one nominee for appointment as secretary-general, should be amended so that two or more well-qualified candidates are submitted to the assembly for consideration.

- In an effort to open up the process, the Security Council, working through its president, should appoint a nominating committee composed of highly regarded individuals with integrity and stature and task them with the responsibility of seeking out qualified candidates.

- Candidates seeking the U.N.'s top job should communicate how they propose to address the most pressing issues facing the organization and the international community at large, including development and the eradication of poverty, terrorism and weapons proliferation. They also should elaborate on how they would deal with the expanding demands on the U.N. system in the areas of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, as well as its growing role as a central coordinator for global action on issues relating to the environment and health.

- All candidates to succeed Kofi Annan should commit themselves in advance to the full implementation of the reforms he has overseen aimed at modernizing the organization. Those reforms that remain outside the secretary-general's authority should be implemented by the

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member-states before the end of this year in order to give his successor a solid basis from which to begin.

### The Time Is Now

A re-examination of the process of selecting the secretary-general should be viewed as a component of the larger, ongoing U.N. reform effort. A strong, capable leader is needed to ensure the implementation of reforms and to guide the transformation of the U.N. into a more efficient and effective body. The choice of a new secretary-general will have a lasting impact on the organization and, indeed, the world.

The negotiations leading up to the World Summit of September 2005, as well as more recent debates, reveal how far apart member-states are on many fronts, includ-

*The demands currently being placed upon the U.N. are markedly different from those of just a decade ago, let alone those at the organization's founding.*

ing how to approach development, terrorism, disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation and the management of the U.N. itself. Making improvements in the process for selecting the body's next leader in the current climate of strained relations and mistrust will undoubtedly be difficult. But there is too much at stake to do otherwise.

In some ways, the process of reform is an issue of the triumph of imagination over reality. Imagination is required to overcome entrenched realities that always seem to steer the conversation toward the next secretary-general rather than focusing on effecting real changes at the present time. The urgency of the issues at hand call for changes in thinking in time for the election in 2006, rather than waiting until 2011 or beyond. ■

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by Robert Kaplan last year. Currently, however, only an estimated 3 to 6 percent of PKO mission budgets is actually spent in the local economies of the countries in which they operate.

How does one contribute systematically to the stable growth of local entrepreneurial activity in the most challenging environments in the world? I had an opportunity to consider this question during the summer and early fall of 2005, when I traveled to U.N. peacekeeping operations in six different countries to help gather information for the Peace Dividend Trust's "Economic Impact of Peacekeeping" project. The project aims to increase the positive impact on local economies of the large sums spent by the U.N. operations. I held discussions with U.N. mission officials, economists, local businessmen, diplomats and government officials in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Sudan. While one week with each PKO was hardly sufficient to achieve in-depth knowledge of these operations, and each country has its distinct character, the clear outlines of some cross-cutting themes nevertheless emerged.

### **Local Business Is Passionate**

Because they may have the most direct stake in the U.N.'s economic impact, local contractors and indigenous business leaders were most passionate on these issues and often provided the most valuable insights. Among them, returning entrepreneurs play a particularly critical role.

In the Congo, at what was expected to be a routine meeting with the national Chamber of Commerce president, we were ushered into a large hall where 15 or so of Kinshasa's leading businessmen eagerly awaited this rare opportunity to air grievances regarding their inability to obtain U.N. contracts. This ethnically diverse group — including Indians, Lebanese and indigenous Congolese — had awaited the arrival of the mission with great anticipation. But, as they put it, they had had their hopes dashed by what they saw as a less-than-transparent con-

tracting process biased in favor of external bidders. Most irate was the director of a Congolese transportation consortium, who had expected the U.N. to make extensive use of local aviation resources but failed to win any contracts. A textile manufacturer wondered why the peacekeepers could not at least buy their uniforms locally. The Chamber of Commerce leaders said they had been consulted by mission personnel initially, but were subsequently ignored.

There are, of course, two sides to these issues: U.N. mission officials and international contractors cite the abysmal safety record of Congolese aviation, the established practice of troop-contributing countries providing for their own soldiers, and concerns that the local business establishment was rife with cronyism and could not be counted upon to give unbiased advice. One Congolese businessman privately acknowledged to me that most local enterprises would have difficulty competing with international firms in terms of the quality and quantities required for U.N. contracts. What seemed clear, however, was that there was much room for improvement in communications between the mission and the local business community.

Generally, success stories were the exception rather than the rule. In Monrovia, amid the mud, dust, smoke and chaotic traffic of an industrial area on the edge of the city's sprawl, the bare-bones office of a furniture-building enterprise seemed an unlikely setting for the recently returned, articulate Liberian manager with an MBA from the U.S. He noted that, while it involved some cumbersome procedures and delays in obtaining payments, the contract with the United Nations Mission in Liberia had given a significant boost to his firm, which was struggling for a foothold in what must be one of the toughest business environments anywhere. This firm was a beneficiary of the efforts of an exceptionally dedicated and enthusiastic UNMIL chief procurement officer, who made it a point to find indigenous contractors whenever possible. Though office furniture would seem to be a natural target for local procurement, the usual approach of U.N. peacekeeping operations is to bring in most furniture from outside via international "systems" contracts with big suppliers capable of meeting the large demand at mission startups.

The United Nations Operation in Burundi enabled Louis Ntibuberwa to greatly expand his security business after winning a contract for the bulk of the mission's guard

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force. Returning to Bujumbura after 10 years in Montreal, he was passionate in arguing that the biggest problem in countries like Burundi was the mistreatment and lack of respect for workers, and urged that the U.N. attempt to address this within the realm of its engagement with the local work force. Ntibuberwa's own efforts had demonstrated results — some 30 percent of the local security personnel at the mission were female, an extraordinary development in the African context. In countries such as Burundi, the U.N. presence and the onset of a degree of normality resulted in some indigenous businessmen returning from abroad to play an important role. The degree to which these returning entrepreneurs can survive and flourish is a critical indicator of whether the peacekeeping missions ultimately meet their objectives.

*They had had their hopes dashed by what they saw as a less-than-transparent U.N. contracting process biased toward external bidders.*

Haiti was the only mission environment we examined where security threats seemed to hamper activities in all spheres, including business. When I called at the office of one of the mission's leading local contractors, it turned out that, like many others, he was waiting out the latest round of troubles in Florida, so we had to talk by phone. He nevertheless provided some of the most insightful comments I'd heard anywhere on the economic effect of the U.N. presence. One of the biggest benefits of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, this businessman observed, was giving local enterprises an "alternative to having to deal only with the government power," which has a pernicious influence on local business. Engagement with the U.N. had also exposed the business community to higher international standards and pushed peo-

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ple to learn more English. Just as important, in his view, was the process of building U.N. bases outside of the capital, which had enabled his firm to expand and hire people in the economically depressed regions.

This is a critical point. Whether the UNPKOs contribute to much-needed decentralization (as opposed to simply furthering the tendency to concentrate economic benefits and political power in the center) can have important consequences for economic development, as well as the settlement of political conflict. Cote d'Ivoire is a good example. Given the relatively large size of the economy compared to most other PKO countries, U.N. mission spending, mostly in the capital, had little effect on the country's overall economy. But it did exert a more potent influence in neglected regions outside the capital, where threats to the country's prospects for reunifying were most serious. And, as at other missions, the relatively small (\$1 million per mission) budget for PKO-managed Quick Impact Projects achieved disproportionate results. The QIP programs give missions the ability to target projects to areas most key to overall mission objectives, and they were referred to in positive terms everywhere I visited.

### **PKF Catering and Local Agriculture**

One of the largest economic activities at every mission is the catering contract for the PKF troops. Given the scale of these operations and the stringent U.N. quality-control requirements, it did not seem feasible in most of these countries for any local enterprise to handle such a contract. It was encouraging, however, to find that, for the most part, experienced on-the-ground managers for the major catering contractors had a strong interest in increasing local procurement and local hiring. In most cases there were obvious financial and practical benefits.

In Burundi, the PKF catering operation was the largest economic enterprise in the country. Faced with the requirement of trucking imported supplies at least 1,600 kilometers overland from East African ports, its innovative manager worked with local farmers to the maximum extent possible to procure eggs, fruits and vegetables. Finding inadequate supplies of bread and baked goods locally, this manager established his own bakery, creating a number of additional local jobs and producing what were probably the only authentic bagels in Central Africa.

In the DRC, the international manager of the catering

operations located an NGO project in the eastern part of the country that was training some 500 blind people to do gardening. Arrangements were made, in cooperation with international agricultural specialists in the area who were in a position to maintain quality control, for these blind gardeners to sell their excess production to the catering firm. This was an inspiring example of what could be done to improve the U.N.'s economic impact, but it was carried out solely on the local manager's personal initiative. With active encouragement from above and systematic efforts to coordinate NGO projects and UNPKO needs, there is little doubt that much more could be achieved.

### **Mission Officials: Divergent Approaches**

Working in any aspect of a peacekeeping operation is a tough job. These are, after all, some of the most difficult logistical environments found anywhere. Senior mission managers face additional challenges that include unclear mandate lengths, inadequate lead times for the startup of missions, contradictory directives and meddling from member states (who sometimes press for lower expenditure and more efficiency, while simultaneously seeking to ensure that their own companies benefit). In addition, the U.N. bureaucracy has evolved volumes of sometimes confusing and often overly rigid regulations. It was not surprising, therefore, that some PKO senior managers, who had developed their own time-tested ways of navigating through such obstacles, did not react with enthusiasm to suggestions that they change their approach.

While most special representatives of the secretary-general and their deputies favored maximizing the involvement of local contractors and personnel, their views did not always take hold. At one mission, after hearing the special representative state that the policy was to purchase everything possible on the local economy, I met with the chief of procurement. He began by noting that he had been forced to buy a few small items locally to meet urgent needs, but he wanted to provide assurances that otherwise he got everything possible from outside sources. This officer was not unique in reflecting what he saw as strong encouragement from New York to procure as much as possible within the confines of the big systems contracts.

Complex procurement rules provide convenient pretexts for officials who find it easier to deal with the more

familiar international contractors, but it also appeared that these rules could be worked around when there was an overriding need to procure locally. U.N. policy is to pay for goods and services only after delivery, and this disqualifies many small local firms lacking the necessary startup capital. It was striking that this policy was widely cited by officials in most missions as a major obstacle to local procurement. Yet in the new Sudan mission, where there had been strong incentives to find local contractors to work in areas where internationals were reluctant to go, waivers to this policy were routinely obtained so that Sudanese contractors could be provided with the necessary funds up-front.

In some missions it was clear that procurement officers had relatively little contact and familiarity with their

***Complex procurement rules provide convenient pretexts for officials who find it easier to deal with the more familiar international contractors.***

local and even international contractors. On occasion, I even encountered problems obtaining current contact information for these firms. A number of officials, some citing ongoing investigations of U.N. procurement irregularities, explained the need to maintain distance from contractors to avoid the appearance of favoritism or collusion. Again, however, the more dedicated, energetic mission personnel seemed to be able to work

around these concerns and find ways to engage the contractors effectively.

#### **Political Factors**

In assessing the prospects for enhancing UNPKO impact on local economies, one cannot ignore the overall state of governance in these countries. Clearly, the more

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involvement there is by high government officials in business, the more corruption and cronyism proliferate, and the more pitfalls there are for U.N. officials. One of the objectives of the “Economic Impact of Peacekeeping” project is to measure the impact of PKO spending on host-government revenue and to explore the potential for making this influence more positive. It was primarily in this connection that I sought meetings with government officials, but I cannot say the results were encouraging.

The mere logistics of setting up meetings in most of these government offices was daunting. When I did succeed in talking to host-country officials, there were usually a lot of complaints that the U.N. should be providing more funds and projects but, in contrast to the private-sector meetings, little in the way of constructive suggestions.

Finding officials who could speak authoritatively about tax issues was especially challenging. One of the more forthcoming officials in the Congo acknowledged that the country’s tax collection system was largely dysfunctional. There, as in other countries where the rule of law is weak, tax officials appeared to focus on harassing high-profile foreign enterprises with unreasonable demands for special payments, helping to chill foreign investment. The manager of a foreign-owned hotel doing significant business with the U.N. mission showed us a thick notebook recording his frequent dealings with host-country tax officials who showed up monthly to demand exorbitant payments.

Given this reality, the issue of whether U.N. missions contribute to government revenues seems secondary to the need for international assistance to fix the broken host-country revenue collection and spending mechanisms.

A common criticism of PKOs (and of diplomatic, international agency and NGO operations in these countries) is that they tend to outbid the local governments and recruit all the most able, educated local personnel, undermining attempts to improve governance. Typical was the complaint from a businessman in Burundi that the U.N. mission was “paying drivers the salaries of Cabinet ministers and casual laborers the wages of experienced civil servants.” While these inflated wage levels did seem to affect local businesses, depriving them of talent or forcing them to raise their own pay scales to compete, most knowledgeable observers did not see much effect on governments, noting that these governments

were so dysfunctional that they were unable to effectively utilize skilled civil servants in any case.

Some contacts complained that the economic impact of such missions (and again, this extended to all international entities) was merely to further enrich local elites or, even worse, to further the business interests of those associated with forces actually seeking to undermine the U.N.’s objectives. Seasoned observers agreed that, particularly in regard to real estate, the need to deal with possibly corrupt local elites, many of whom immediately sent the resulting income to overseas bank accounts, was an unavoidable fact of life in these settings. Many contacts also pointed out that in highly polarized post-conflict states, some with serious ethnic divisions, PKO hiring and procurement decisions unavoidably had the potential for political fallout.

This would seem to argue for some input from the political section into the procurement process, but in most missions this was not happening. “The last thing we want to do is involve political affairs in these (administrative) issues,” said a very senior official at one mission. As a former mission political affairs director myself, I can sympathize with the desire of already overburdened officers to avoid still another meeting or clearance process. But it would seem that if the PKOs are to improve their economic impact, there has to be an increased awareness of who is who among the beneficiaries in these societies, and how such local expenditures can serve or detract from the missions’ overall objectives.

### **Local Personnel: A Critical but Controversial Component**

A significant component of PKO local economic impact is the hiring of local personnel. It was in this realm that I found the most divergence in practice and viewpoints among the various missions. Some personnel managers were actively encouraging recruitment of significant numbers of national professional officers (local personnel meeting international standards who are much more highly paid than other local personnel), while others were quite negative toward the idea. In some missions local personnel were found in all sections; at others they were not permitted in the more sensitive offices. Having worked in East Timor where there was a dearth of local human resources, I found it striking that all these other missions had access to a very ample, qualified (often overqualified) pool of local talent, with dozens of

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suitable applicants for most openings.

Nevertheless, among personnel officers and some senior managers I found strong resistance to the idea of converting more international positions into local posts, even though local employees come at a small fraction of the cost of internationals. This was curious, given the uneven quality of the U.N.'s international staff. As any PKO veteran knows, one can find at these missions some of the most highly dedicated, talented and experience-hardened people anywhere. But, on the other hand, as one top official confided, "We have a way of recycling from mission to mission some people who could never obtain jobs elsewhere." It is widely acknowledged that the U.N. personnel system urgently needs reform, and it would seem that making better use of local talent should be an important element of this.

*It would seem that making better use of local talent should be an important element of U.N. personnel system reform.*

Common to all the missions were complaints from local business, expat contractors and U.N. officials themselves about the organization's handling of casual labor. Hundreds of casual laborers were needed for construction projects, and almost every mission had encountered an unforeseen requirement to hire local translators for the peacekeeping forces. Because these positions were not included in the original mission staffing patterns, they were being maintained as part-time, casual jobs, with no benefits. Some missions were trying to outsource these positions, with the unintended consequence of significant pay cuts for workers. Often, however, there was informal pressure from the U.N. on local contractors to pay their workers more. Some missions attempted to compensate these workers for the lack of benefits and full-time, tenured employment by paying

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them daily wages that were exorbitant by local standards. This, in turn, angered local businessmen, who came under pressure from their own workers as a result.

Although the issue is not directly related to the UNPKOs' economic impact, because it was raised by so many of my interlocutors it is impossible to avoid mention of the ubiquitous, imposing white land cruisers that are the most recognizable trademark of every PKO. A chief administrative officer at one mission acknowledged that his biggest headache was dealing with vehicle accidents involving mission personnel and local residents demanding compensation. At most missions, these expensive, heavy vehicles appeared to seldom engage their four-wheel drives, rarely venturing outside the commuting corridors from residence to office, the airport or international supermarkets and restaurants.

Security is often cited as a justification. But there is no doubt that attempts to change the mindset of U.N. personnel on this issue would encounter fierce resistance. As any staffer knows, having one's own car full-

time is not only a great convenience, but also perceived as a measure of one's status and value to the organization.

### Some Obvious Steps to Take

The scope of the EIP project goes well beyond the framework of the discussions I had; it involves systematic analysis of a wide array of economic data, which will lead to numerous thoughtful recommendations. I would nonetheless like to identify a few of the more obvious conclusions that emerged from my investigation:

- More coordination among the U.N.'s various elements in these countries, as well as between the U.N., NGOs and major donors, on the economic impact of their activities is a priority. "Coordination" has become an overused mantra at these missions, and formal structures are constantly being set up to encourage it. In my discussions, however, it seemed that, for the most part, PKO managers and development agency officials still see themselves as operating in very different worlds.

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At a minimum, it would seem that a full-time point of contact in the mission for these economic impact issues, a position with some real clout, is essential for real coordination.

- PKO construction projects should produce sustainable long-term facilities (e.g., concrete fuel and water tanks rather than bladders, more permanent office facilities rather than Quonset huts) to the maximum extent possible; but at the same time, the inheritors of these assets should not be left with overly sophisticated systems difficult to maintain. It was encouraging to find that this approach was taking hold among some PKO managers.

- An improved local economic impact also requires an increased tolerance of risk, acknowledging that in some cases local contractors or locally-hired personnel will fail to deliver as promised. It is only natural that U.N. procurement and personnel officers, as most bureaucrats anywhere, tend to be cautious and stick to time-honored approaches. That is why there must be

strong, clear signals from above to encourage and reward more engagement with the local economies.

- While increasing efficiencies to some degree, “bigness” — i.e., globalized “systems” contracts and tendencies toward more centralized procurement management from headquarters — has not necessarily created the most favorable environment for increasing engagement with the smaller local contractors. A procurement chief in the Congo offered a simple but possibly effective solution: why not break up some of these huge contracts into smaller pieces, so local firms would have a shot at them?

- Finally, it was apparent that exit strategies are vital. Though outside the scope of my research, one of the most common concerns encountered in all quarters was the question of what will become of any positive economic impacts — especially from the local employment perspective — once PKO missions radically downsize or depart altogether. From the standpoint of their own security, if nothing else, the U.N. presence has become a critical factor for business owners in these countries. ■

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# A SINCERE CRITIQUE OF AMERICA'S U.N. POLICY

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THE DECADES-LONG TENDENCY BY ADMINISTRATIONS OF BOTH PARTIES TO ENGAGE ONLY FITFULLY WITH THE U.N. IS HAVING SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES.

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BY MARK MALLOCH BROWN

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today on power and global leadership. I often get asked to talk about leadership, but rarely about power. I wonder why.

With that thought as my starting point, I am going to give what might be regarded as a rather un-U.N. speech. Some of the themes — that the United Nations is misunderstood and does much more than its critics allow — are probably not surprising. But my underlying message, which is a warning about the serious consequences of a decades-long tendency by U.S. administrations of both parties to engage only fitfully with the U.N., is not one a sitting United Nations official would normally make to an audience like this.

But I feel it is a message that urgently needs to be aired. And as someone who has spent most of his adult life in this country, only a part of it at the U.N., I hope you will take it in the spirit in which it is meant: as a sincere and constructive critique of U.S. policy toward the U.N. by a friend and admirer. Because the fact is that the pre-

vailing practice of seeking to use the U.N. almost by stealth as a diplomatic tool, while failing to stand up for it against its domestic critics, is simply not sustainable. You will lose the U.N., one way or another.

## Founders' Vision

Multilateral compromise has always been difficult to justify in the American political debate: [it has] too many speeches, too many constraints, too few results. Yet it was not meant to be so.

The all-moral-idealism-no-power institution was the League of Nations. The U.N. was explicitly designed — through U.S. leadership and the ultimate coalition of the willing, its World War II allies — as a very different creature, an antidote to the League's failure. At the U.N.'s core was to be an enforceable concept of collective security protected by the victors of that war, combined with much more practical efforts to promote global values such as human rights and democracy.

Underpinning this new approach was a judgment that no president since [Harry] Truman has felt able to repeat: that for the world's one superpower — arguably more super in 1946 than 2006 — managing global security and development issues through the network of a United Nations was worth the effort. Yes, it meant the give-and-take of multilateral bargaining, but any dilution of American positions was more than made up for by the added clout of action that enjoyed global support.

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*United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch Brown delivered this address on June 6 in New York City to the annual conference of The Security and Peace Initiative, "Power and Super-Power: Global Leadership in the Twenty-First Century." The conference was jointly sponsored by The Century Foundation and the Center for American Progress.*

## F O C U S

Today, we are coming to the end of the 10-year term of arguably the U.N.'s best-ever secretary-general, Kofi Annan. But some of his very successes — promoting human rights and a responsibility to protect people from abuse by their own governments; creating a new status for civil society and business at the United Nations — are either not recognized or have come under steady attack from anti-U.N. groups.

To take just one example, 10 years ago U.N. peacekeeping seemed almost moribund in the aftermath of tragic mistakes in Rwanda, Somalia and Yugoslavia. Today, the organization fields 18 peacekeeping operations around the world, from the Congo to Haiti, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Southern Lebanon and Liberia, with an annual cost that is at a bargain-bin price compared to other U.S.-led operations. And the U.S. pays roughly one quarter of those United Nations peacekeeping costs — just over \$1 billion this year.

That figure should be seen in the context of estimates by both the Government Accountability Office and RAND Corporation that U.N. peacekeeping, while lacking heavy armament enforcement capacity, helps to maintain peace — when there is a peace to keep — more effectively for a lot less than comparable U.S. operations. Multilateral peacekeeping is effective cost-sharing on a much lower-cost business model, and it works.

That is as it should be and is true for many other areas in which the U.N. system works, from humanitarian relief to health and education. Yet for many policymakers and opinion leaders in Washington, let alone the general public, the roles I have described are hardly believed or, where they are, remain discreetly underplayed. To acknowledge an America reliant on international institutions is not perceived to be good politics at home.

However, inevitably, a moment of truth is coming. Because even as the world's challenges are growing, the U.N.'s ability to respond is being weakened without U.S. leadership.

### **Take the Issue of Human Rights**

When Eleanor Roosevelt took the podium at the United Nations to argue passionately for the elaboration of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the world responded. Today, when the human rights machinery was renewed with the formation of a Human Rights Council to replace the discredited Commission on

Human Rights, and the U.S. chose to stay on the sidelines, the loss was everybody's.

I hope and believe the new council will prove itself to be a stronger and more effective body than its predecessor. But there is no question that the American decision to call for a vote in order to oppose it in the General Assembly, and then to not run for a seat after it was approved by 170 votes to 4, makes the challenge more difficult.

More broadly, Americans complain about the U.N.'s bureaucracy, weak decisionmaking, the lack of accountable modern management structures and the political divisions of the General Assembly here in New York. And my response is, "guilty on all counts."

But why? In significant part because the U.S. has not stuck with its project — its professed wish to have a strong, effective United Nations — in a systematic way. Former Secretary of State [Madeleine] Albright and others here today have played extraordinary leadership roles in U.S.-U.N. relations, for which I salute them. But in the eyes of the rest of the world, U.S. commitment tends to ebb much more than it flows. And in recent years, the enormously divisive issue of Iraq and the big stick of financial withholding have come to define an unhappy marriage.

As someone who deals with Washington almost daily, I know this is unfair to the very real effort all three Secretaries of State I have worked with — Secretary Albright, Secretary Powell and Secretary Rice — put into U.N. issues. And today, in a very wide number of areas, from Lebanon and Afghanistan to Syria, Iran and the Palestinian issue, the U.S. is constructively engaged with the U.N. But that is not well known or understood, in part because much of the public discourse that reaches the American heartland has been largely abandoned to its loudest detractors, such as Rush Limbaugh and Fox News. That is what I mean by "stealth" diplomacy: the U.N.'s role is, in effect, a secret in Middle America even as it is highlighted in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

Exacerbating matters is the widely held perception, even among many U.S. allies, that America tends to hold on to maximalist positions when it could be finding middle ground. We can see this even on apparently non-controversial issues such as renovating the dilapidated U.N. headquarters in New York. While an architectural landmark, the building falls dangerously

short of city codes, lacks sprinklers, is filled with asbestos and is, in most respects, the most hazardous workplace in town. But the only government not fully supporting the [renovation] project is the U.S. Too much unchecked U.N.-bashing and stereotyping over too many years — manifest in a fear by politicians to be seen to be supporting better premises for overpaid, corrupt U.N. bureaucrats — makes even refurbishing a building a political hot potato.

### **Making Reform Work**

One consequence is that, like the building itself, the vital renewal of the organization, the updating of its mission, its governance and its management tools, is addressed only intermittently. And when Washington does champion the right issues like management reform, as it is currently doing, it provokes more suspicion than support.

Last December, for example, largely at American insistence, instead of a normal two-year budget, member states approved only six months' worth of expenditure — a period which ended on June 30. Developing and developed countries, the latter with the U.S. at the fore, are now at loggerheads over whether sufficient reform has taken place to lift that cap, or indeed whether there should be any links between reform and the budget. Without agreement, we could face a fiscal crisis very soon.

There has been a significant amount of reform over the last 18 months, from the creation of a new Ethics Office and whistleblower policy, to the establishment of a new Peacebuilding Commission and Human Rights Council. But [that is] not enough.

The unfinished management reform agenda, which the U.S. sensibly supports, is in many ways a statement of the obvious. It argues that systems and processes designed 60 years ago for an organization largely devoted to running conferences and writing reports simply don't work for today's operational U.N., which conducts multi-billion-dollar peacekeeping missions, humanitarian relief operations and other complex operations all over the world. The report sets out concrete proposals for how this can be fixed while also seeking to address the broader management, oversight and accountability weaknesses highlighted by the "oil-for-food" program.

One day soon, we must address the massive gap between the scale of world issues and the limits of the institutions we have built to address them. However, today even relatively modest proposals that in any other

organization would be seen as uncontroversial, such as providing more authority and flexibility for the secretary-general to shift posts and resources to organizational priorities without having to get direct approval from member states, have been fiercely resisted by the G-77 (the main group of developing countries) on the grounds that this weakens accountability. Hence the current deadlock.

What lies behind this?

It is not because most developing countries don't want reform. To be sure, a few spoilers do seem to be opposed to reform for its own sake, and there is no question that some countries are seeking to manipulate the process for their own ends with very damaging consequences. But in practice, the vast majority are fully supportive of the principle of a better-run, more effective U.N.; indeed, they know they would be the primary beneficiaries, through more peace and more development.

So why has it not so far been possible to isolate the radicals and build a strong alliance of reform-minded nations to push through this agenda?

I would argue that the answer lies in questions about motives and power. Very unfortunately, there is currently a perception among many otherwise quite moderate countries that anything the U.S. supports must have a secret agenda aimed at either subordinating multilateral processes to Washington's ends or weakening the institutions, and therefore, put crudely, should be opposed without any real discussion of whether it makes sense or not.

As for power, in two different ways that revolves around perceptions of the role and representativeness of the Security Council. First, there has been a real, understandable hostility by the wider membership to the perception that the Security Council, in particular the five permanent members, is seeking a role in areas not formally within its remit, such as management issues or human rights.

Second, there has been an equally understandable conviction that those five veto-wielding permanent members, who happen to be the victors in a war fought 60 years ago, cannot be seen as representative of today's world — even when looking through the lens of financial contributions. Indeed, the so-called G-4 of Security Council aspirants — Japan, India, Brazil and Germany — contribute twice as much as the P-4, the four permanent members excluding the U.S.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair acknowledged exactly this point on his trip to Washington [in May], and it is

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something that does need to be addressed. More broadly, the very reasonable concern of the full U.N. membership — the fundamental multilateral principle that each member-state's vote counts equally in the wider work of the U.N. — needs to be acknowledged and accommodated within a broader framework of reform. If the multilateral system is to work effectively, all states need to feel they have a real stake.

### **New Global Challenges**

But a stake in what system?

The U.S. — like every nation, strong and weak alike — is today beset by problems that defy national, inside-the-border solutions: climate change, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, migration, the management of the global economy, the internationalization of drugs and crime, the spread

### **Using the U.N.**

***almost by stealth as a diplomatic tool, while failing to stand up for it against its domestic critics, is simply not sustainable.***

of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and avian flu. Today's national security challenges basically thumb their noses at old notions of national sovereignty. Security has gone global, and no country can afford to neglect the global institutions needed to manage it.

Kofi Annan has proposed a restructuring of the United Nations to respond to these new challenges with three legs: development, security and human rights supported, like any good chair, by a fourth leg, reformed management. That is the U.N. we

want to place our bet on. But for it to work, we need the U.S. to support this agenda — and support it not just in a whisper but in a coast-to-coast shout that pushes back the critics domestically and wins over the skeptics internationally. America's leaders must again say the U.N. matters.

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When you talk about better national education scores, you don't start with "I support the Department of Education." Similarly for the United Nations, it starts with politicians who will assert the U.S. is going to engage with the world to tackle climate change, poverty, immigration and terrorism. Stand up for that agenda consistently and allow the U.N. to ride on its coat-tails as a vital means of getting it done. It also means a sustained inside-the-tent diplomacy at the U.N. No more "take it or leave it," red-line demands thrown in without debate and engagement.

Let me close with a few words on Darfur to make my point. A few weeks ago, my kids were on the Mall in Washington, demanding President Bush do more to end the genocide in Darfur (and Pres. Bush wants to do more). I'd bet some of your kids were there, as well. Perhaps you were, too. And yet what can the U.S. do alone in the heart of Africa, in a region the size of France? A place where the government in Khartoum is convinced Washington wants to extend the hegemo-

ny it is thought to have asserted in Iraq and Afghanistan?

In essence, the U.S. is stymied before it even "passes Go." It needs the U.N. as a multilateral means to address Sudan's concerns. It needs the U.N. to secure a wide multicultural array of troop and humanitarian partners. It needs the U.N. to provide the international legitimacy that Iraq has again proved is an indispensable component to success on the ground. Yet, the U.N. needs its first parent, the U.S., every bit as much if it is to deploy [forces] credibly in one of the world's nastiest neighbourhoods.

Back in Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's day, building a strong, effective United Nations that could play this kind of role was a bipartisan enterprise, with the likes of Arthur Vandenberg and John Foster Dulles joining Democrats to support the new body. Who are their successors in American politics? Who will campaign in 2008 for a new multilateral national security? ■

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# MANDARIN MATZAH

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AN FSO PUTS A JEWISH CEREMONY TOGETHER IN GUANGZHOU WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM  
ATHEIST, BUDDHIST, CHRISTIAN AND MORMON FRIENDS.

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BY JASON SEYMOUR

**T**radition! More than just a song from a Broadway musical, the word is the life-giving water of every culture and, indeed, every individual. Almost everyone who joins the Foreign Service does so because he or she is captivated by different cultures and the variety of time-honored celebrations and rituals around the globe.

Like all religions, Judaism observes many holidays with particular customs. However, because Jews are a minority in the United States, non-Jews are often unfamiliar with the religion's tenets and practices. Growing up in a small town with very few Jews, I had almost no friends who shared my background, so I began my own tradition. I started introducing people to my favorite holiday, Passover (Pesach), by inviting friends and colleagues to come to my home for the complex and lengthy celebration called the Seder.

This rite remembers much of the book of Exodus through metaphor. Participants eat certain foods, drink certain liquids and follow a large variety of rules. For example, guests are supposed to relax, so pillows, comfortable chairs and even lying down are acceptable. A dish called charoset combines various sweet and bitter tastes and resembles the mortar used in creating ancient Egyptian buildings. Red drinks, such as wine or cranapple juice, symbolize the blood shed during the violent events. If you have ever seen "The Ten Commandments" or "Prince of Egypt," you know some

of the details of the story; but unless you have participated in a Seder, you cannot fully grasp all that the experience can offer.

## Each Ceremony Is Unique

No two ceremonies are alike, even when the same host organizes the event. During my training at the Foreign Service Institute, I invited many of my A-100 colleagues and had different religious and non-religious backgrounds represented. When I was living in a tiny apartment in Spain, I conducted a ceremony in Spanish and Hebrew for a room full of Catholics. The joyous evening was so loud that the neighbors complained for days.

For this year's big event, I was living in a large diplomatic housing facility in Guangzhou, with thick walls, so I was no longer worried about noise complaints. On the other hand, I *was* concerned about creating a memorable event for a large variety of Chinese friends, acquaintances and colleagues. I even expanded the focus of the event by asking professional journalists to attend. What better way to teach about the hospitality of Americans and the variety of American lifestyles than by inviting people to my home for food, drink and cultural education?

The first difficulty I encountered was the size of my home, which certainly could not comfortably accommodate 20-plus people. No problem! A Mormon colleague offered



*The author, with a young American guest at his side, leads the ceremony. Chinese guests are in the background.*



*Charoset, shown here, is the traditional meal for the Seder ceremony. It is made of apples or other fruit, nuts, spices and wine.*

his much larger apartment.

The second obstacle: despite having consistently attended public affairs events, my post has not needed me to personally sponsor one. I therefore did not have enough table settings for more than eight guests. I considered shopping, but a Protestant

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*Jason Seymour is a first-tour FSO serving a two-year consular tour in Guangzhou, China.*

colleague offered his utensils, plates, pots, etc.

I hired two cooks who happened to be atheists, and began the complex ordeal of designing a format that would be fun, informative and stimulating for a guest list that included mostly agnostic Buddhists who had never heard of the Ten Commandments and a sea split in two, let alone food like vivacious charoset and bland matzah. I had to supervise my cooks,

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***The guest list included  
mostly agnostic  
Buddhists who had never  
heard of the Ten  
Commandments,  
let alone charoset and  
bland matzah.***

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who kept offering caring but unwelcome advice and suggestions to improvise or make things more complex. “No, I really *do* just want a small bowl with salt and water and, yes, the other bowl should have nothing but parsley.”

I considered conducting the ceremony in my primitive Mandarin. A friend offered useful translations, such as how to convey the term chutzpah; but in the end, I went with English. While I still kick myself for not finding the time to translate everything, I did not want the ceremony to be so simple that the detailed essence of the moment was lost, and I knew my Mandarin was still too unsophisticated to accomplish such a goal. Maybe during my next China tour ...

The third problem was shopping. Matzah and horseradish are not easily found at the local Guangzhou market — but colleagues traveling to Hong Kong found those items for me. Piece by piece, everything fell into place.

At previous ceremonies in my home, I had opened the door for each guest. This time, I would have to take the elevator to find my guests, deliver them to security guards and hope they had all remembered their identification. After the late arrival of a few

people (lateness seems to bridge every culture and location) and some last-minute changes to the guest list, the grand moment was at hand.

### **Sharing the Ancient Jewish Story**

The ceremony includes many long passages and storytelling. Because of the variety of English abilities among the guests, I know much of the story was lost due to linguistic and cultural boundaries. Of course, that is true even for an English-speaking American audience attending the ceremony for the first time. The ceremony is simply not one that can be fully appreciated during the first attempt. But that doesn't matter. No one has to understand everything in a new experience to have a good time.

I began with a verse from Isaiah and the following paragraph: *We are born. We quickly learn to smile and cry as lessons come our way. Life pours out blood. Violence stains. Wisdom refreshes. Loss weakens. Love rejuvenates. Blessings abound.*

The script I wrote could have been shorter and simpler, but I never seem to think of a phrase that I would not rather say with three or four sentences. That's my PD challenge.

Guests shared the reading of the ancient Jewish story, which follows Moses' life from his childhood spent as Egyptian royalty; his midlife as a shepherd, which occurs after he flees to the wilderness because he murdered a cruel slave master; his first encounter with God; and his return to Egypt to save the Israelites from slavery. The tales include a variety of miracles, including a burning bush; 10 harsh plagues such as an epidemic of boils, an infestation of frogs and the killing of the Egyptians' first-born; and the most famous moment, the parting of the Red Sea, which provides the opportunity for the Israelites to make a final escape.

The many plot points inspire the

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## ***The ritual has sixteen steps, each with a special significance that guests could analyze and discuss.***

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guests to debate important ethical issues by analyzing the choices of both God and Moses. These elements of the lengthy biblical passages have also become part (in different ways) of the Christian and Muslim traditions. The script that I gave to each guest included photos from my trips in India, Brazil and China, showing that the subtext of the story is applicable to many cultures and time periods, and that the holiday's themes of slavery and freedom are universal.

The ritual has 16 steps, each with a special significance that guests can analyze and discuss. One of my favorites is the dipping of a green vegetable, such as parsley or cucumbers, into a bowl of salty water. Symbolically, life and spring are immersed in the tears shed during this painful time, reminding everyone that life is a constant blend. No moment is ever completely satisfying or completely devastating.

Another popular phase of the ceremony is the hand washing. Traditionally, this part emphasizes the unity of the whole group. Strangers hand a towel to another person or pour water over another person's hands. Once a person's hands are washed, he or she remains silent until everyone has had a chance to wash, so that everyone can start the meal together.

We read the story, said the prayers,

and ate plenty of traditional food — except for gefilte fish, alas — and added some excellent Chinese dishes. We lit candles without setting off the sprinklers. I even loudly and enthusiastically sang in my horrendous singing voice. At least I didn't have to sing in Chinese.

All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed the exhausting but fantastic night, and I am sure I will have another Seder next year. As at every party, gathering or representational event, I noticed plenty of kinks and little mistakes, but I also saw plenty of smiles and curious but appreciative eyebrows.

### **A Simple Moment to Remember**

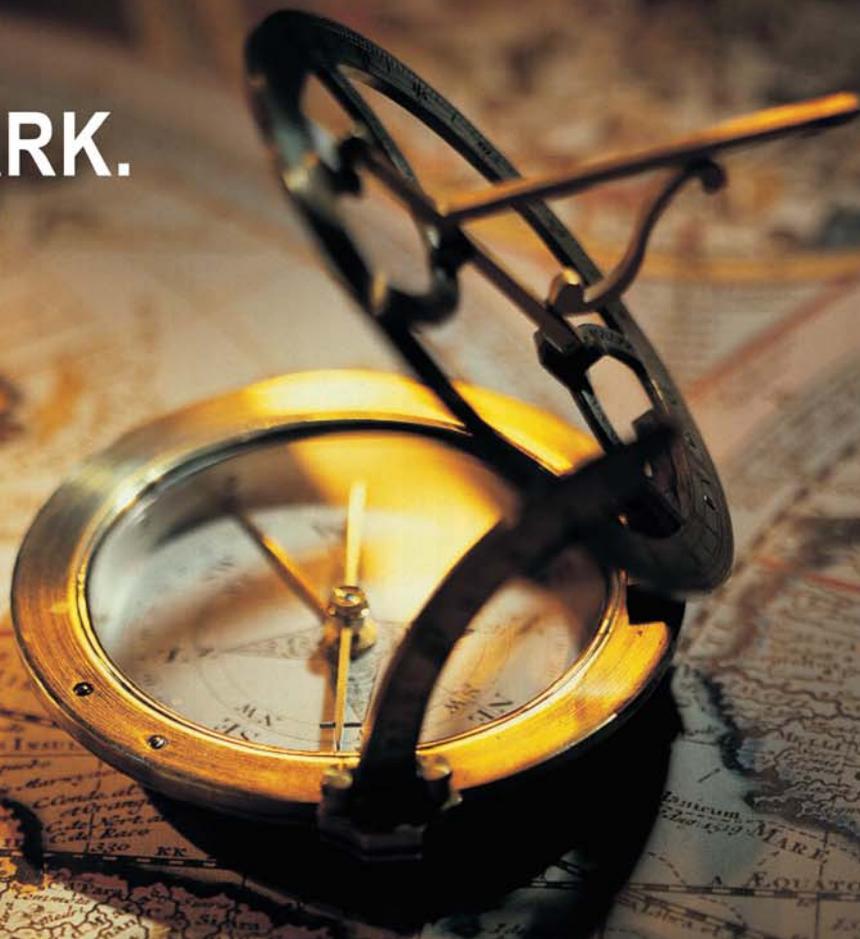
Diplomats serve many functions when abroad. Sometimes they accomplish challenging goals with complex programs during a period of weeks, months or years. Sometimes, they have just a single moment to make an impression, and they aren't always sure what they achieved. They just hope they have planted small seeds that will continue to grow.

I know that for many of my Chinese friends, I am the only American they have ever known and certainly the only Jew. What will they remember? I do not know. I can only hope that my guests (and especially my foreign friends) will occasionally reminisce about that American Jew who opened his home and his life to them one April day in 2006.

Next year I'll be back in Washington. I will have another chance to perform the ceremony even better. I probably will not have a large room filled with foreign minds, inquisitive giggles and covered mouths; but I can look forward to one thing that will not change. I will still have the opportunity to share my special life story as an American, something this job gives every diplomat the privilege of doing throughout the world.

L'chaim! To life! ■

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# AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • September 2006

## 2006 AFSA AWARD CEREMONY

### AFSA Honors Dissent and Performance

BY SHAWN DORMAN

**O**n June 22, AFSA welcomed several hundred people to the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room to honor this year's award winners. The prestigious and unique AFSA Dissent Awards, the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award, the Outstanding Performance Awards and two Special Achievement Awards were presented at the ceremony.

AFSA President J. Anthony Holmes officiated. In his opening remarks, Holmes said that "Speaking out against conventional wisdom and offering an alternative and per-

haps controversial view on policy or operational issues can be risky. It can jeopardize one's career. However, AFSA firmly believes that it is vital to honor the constructive and creative dissenters who are willing to work within the system to bring about change."

Ambassador Holmes shared a quote from Ambassador Morton Abramowitz, the honoree for the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award: "Abramowitz stated in an article in *National Interest* magazine last year titled 'In Defense of Striped Pants' (written with another of our distin-

Continued on page 73

## AFSA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

### Ceremony Awards Talented and Passionate Youth

BY EIRENE BUSA, EDITORIAL INTERN

**O**n July 19, State AFSA VP Steve Kashkett presented the 2006 AFSA National High School Essay Contest awards during the annual Youth Awards Ceremony held in the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room. Director General of the Foreign Service George M. Staples delivered the keynote address, and Family Liaison Office Director Ann DeLong officiated. The annual ceremony is a joint endeavor of ASFA, the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, the Family Liaison Office, the Foreign Service Institute and the Office of Overseas Schools. "The individuals behind the scenes at FLO and the volunteers at FSYP ultimately make each year's ceremony successful," commented FSYP President Blanca Ruebensaal.



Essay winners Eva Lam (right) and Karina Legradi with AFSA State Vice President Steve Kashkett.

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## FOREIGN SERVICE CHALLENGES AHEAD

### AFSA Meets with Secretary Rice

**S**ecretary of State Condoleezza Rice discussed the challenges of staffing Iraq PRTs, overseas comparability pay and pay for performance, improving the senior performance pay system, transformational diplomacy and the future of the Foreign Service during a July meeting in her office with AFSA President J. Anthony Holmes, State VP Steve Kashkett and General Counsel Sharon Papp.

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See Wish List on page 70

# AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



## News from the AFSA Boards

Two AFSA vice presidents stepped down from their Governing Board positions in July. Laura Scandurra resigned from the FAS VP position effective after the July board meeting. She is heading off for a tour as agricultural attaché in New Zealand. The FAS VP slot is currently vacant, and AFSA encourages interested FAS employees to contact the association about the position.

USAID VP Bill Carter left AFSA in July for the retirement seminar. At the July Governing Board meeting, USAID AFSA Representative Francisco Zamora was appointed to serve as the USAID AFSA vice president for the remainder of the current board's term. During the Aug. 2 meeting, the Governing Board approved the appointment of Michael Henning as the new USAID rep, replacing Zamora.

In addition, on June 7 the AFSA Governing Board approved Diplomatic Security Special Agent Randy A. Steen to replace outgoing DS agent and State representative Brian Cook. Cook resigned because his duties on the Secretary of State's protective detail require a heavy travel schedule, thus keeping him from attending many board meetings.

On June 30, State Governing Board representative James Roseli left the board due to his transfer to Embassy Baghdad. State representative Makila James also resigned, in connection with her assignment to Juba, Sudan. At the Aug. 2 meeting, the Governing Board approved Daphne Titus as a new State representative. International Broadcasting Bureau Representative Sheldon Daitch resigned from the board effective June 30, due to his new assignment to Morocco. That position is currently vacant.

In July, the Governing Board approved the selection of Crystal Meriwether to fill a new vacancy on the *Foreign*

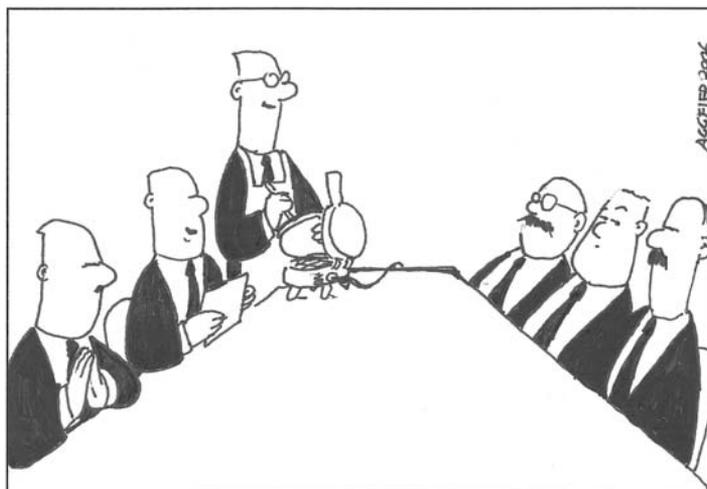
*Service Journal* Editorial Board left by departing board member Lillian G. deValcourt-Ayala, who is heading out to an assignment in Rome. Meriwether is a State Department FSO currently serving as an education officer with the Middle East Partnership Initiative.

From everyone at AFSA, sincere thanks to the departing Governing and Editorial Board members for their distinguished service, and welcome to the new board members.

Briefs • Continued on page 69

## Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER



“Failure to reach a diplomatic solution to this standoff could lead to economic sanctions or punitive military action, while a successful agreement means enjoying some of Bixby’s world-class blueberry waffles!”

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Baldyga, Roger Dankert, Larry Lesser and

Gilbert Sheinbaum

## A Tale of Two Cultures

One afternoon not long ago, I watched an old argument unfold between two close friends and valued State colleagues of mine, one who happens to be in the Foreign Service and another who happens to be in the Civil Service. My Foreign Service buddy was bemoaning the conversion of FS positions to Civil Service jobs and the DG's stated intention to expand overseas opportunities for the department's Civil Service employees. My Civil Service buddy retorted that we FSOs are just pampered, spoiled brats who do nothing but protect our territorial privileges.

The Department of State has always benefited — and suffered — from the uneasy coexistence of the professional Foreign Service and the professional Civil Service, working side-by-side throughout the halls and offices of Foggy Bottom. We have two different career tracks, two different sets of rules and two different workplace cultures, yet we collaborate daily on the tasks that are necessary to advance U.S. interests in the world and to make American diplomacy work.

Our Civil Service colleagues play a vital role at State, providing expertise and continuity on a multitude of issues. There are clearly advantages to having people concentrating on the same job over a period of time, acquiring vast background knowledge and institutional memory in a particular field. In bureaus such as NP, OES, IRM and PRM, Civil Service specialists furnish specialized proficiency on a wide range of technical subjects that Foreign Service employees might have trouble mastering because they switch jobs every couple of years. So we can certainly understand the desire of Civil Service careerists to have opportunities for growth, increased salary potential and mobility.

Nonetheless, the Foreign Service must remain the backbone of American diplomacy. Nothing can replace the insight and nuanced understanding that comes from a lifetime of living and working in foreign countries, speaking foreign languages, representing the United States to foreign audiences and dealing directly with foreign governments. It is not a mistake that most desk officer-, country director- and deputy assistant secretary-level positions at State are reserved for Foreign Service members. We need to keep the Foreign Service at the forefront of the decisionmaking process underpinning U.S. foreign policy. We have all seen the disastrous consequences that can result from ignoring the advice of America's veteran career diplomats.

Here at the department in Washington, there should be plenty of room for both career services. Foreign Service employees need good jobs to come back to after spending two, three, four or more assignments overseas. The department should ensure

that Civil Service employees have a fair chance at promotion to higher grades and mobility among challenging domestic jobs at State. But we can certainly find a mutually beneficial balance between Foreign Service and Civil Service positions, as long as both sides are willing to be flexible and creative.

Overseas mobility, however, is another matter entirely. The people of the Foreign Service rightly bristle when they hear Civil Service colleagues complain that they, too, want a shot at serving in Paris or London or Tokyo. Foreign Service members have fewer and fewer of these choice assignments these days when a growing majority of FS overseas positions are at hardship, danger-pay and unaccompanied posts.

Most people in the Foreign Service today are more likely to spend the better part of their careers in places like Niamey, Islamabad and Ashgabat, dragging their families from one tough spot to another and sometimes being forced to spend a year or more away from their families. They put up with the unhealthy conditions, the political violence, the

threats of terrorism, the constant uprooting and the separation from loved ones. Foreign Service members face the annual risk of being selected out of the Service because of the mandatory 5-percent low-ranking and the six-year window for senior promotion. The bottom line is: FS members pay dearly for a shot at a cushy First-World posting.

There is already a well-established vehicle for giving Civil Service employees an overseas excursion tour: the hard-to-fill exercise. Under this program, hundreds of Civil Service employees have served all over the world in vitally important jobs, often helping to plug gaps in the Foreign Service staffing. There can be no doubt that they have contributed critically to the Iraq mission, supplementing the hundreds of FS members who have volunteered to serve there over the past three years.

When it comes to the overseas jobs that are not hard to fill — i.e., those increasingly rare and sought-after opportunities to serve in places like London, Paris, or Tokyo — there can be only one legitimate, equitable path. That path involves taking the Foreign Service exam, going through months of training, serving an apprenticeship in a couple of “directed” entry-level positions, preparing the family for a lifetime of dengue fever and giardia and damaged household effects and limited school options, getting a few difficult postings under one's belt . . . and then competing for the few non-hardship assignments along with the rest of us. □



We need to keep the  
Foreign Service in the  
forefront of the decision-  
making process underpinning  
U.S. foreign policy.

V.P. VOICE: RETIREE ■ BY DAVID REUTHER

## Foreign Service Domestic Field Reps

Retirees are the domestic field reps for the Foreign Service and for AFSA. You are out there in cities and towns across America, and the Foreign Service needs you to lend your voice in support of the Service, for your own retiree benefits and for sensible policies for active-duty members.

Far too few lawmakers have the Foreign Service on their radar or see it as having any connection to their own constituents. In fact, there remain those who are convinced that the Service is still comprised of the sons and daughters of the rich East Coast elite. With your help, we can change this. We live in all 50 states (and the District, of course). AFSA calls on you to reach out to legislators in your home state. Visit the local offices of your representatives and senators in your hometown. Let them know you're there, and that you, and your family and friends, vote.

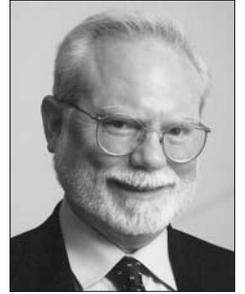
Once a year, the day before Foreign Affairs Day at the State Department, AFSA hosts "Day on the Hill," escorting Foreign Service retirees to Capitol Hill to meet with their members of Congress. This event helps put a human face on the Foreign Service, but it is only one piece of what has to be a larger effort, an ongoing, year-round, long-term campaign.

Congress can be your ballgame. You are the human face of the Foreign Service. You are the generations that staffed Vietnam, saw the emergence of independent nations in Africa, South Asia and the Far East and experienced the winds of emergent nationalism, regardless of which embassy section you called home.

Just as our diplomatic missions nurtured relationships with foreign officials during your active-duty years, durable relationships with members of Congress need careful nurturing. If AFSA members establish relationships with legislators locally, around the country, we could see an overall growth in awareness of the Foreign Service and the issues of importance to both retirees and active-duty members. Then when key issues come up, you will be well-positioned to let your legislators know what's best for the Foreign Service.

During our retirement years, what happens on Capitol Hill can take on even more meaning than during our active-duty years. So we have to remain engaged, not just for the good of the Foreign Service, but for our own personal benefit, as well. AFSA already works with other large retiree organizations, such as the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, in seeking to change the laws regarding the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provisions (which affect your Social Security benefits).

It's not just for the good of the Foreign Service, it's for your own benefit as well.



At the same time, AFSA is also a boutique Foreign Service-oriented organization. It was AFSA that, working with the military groups, persuaded Congress to liberalize the treatment of the capital

gains tax calculated on the sale of a principal residence. Remember, it was those approaching retirement who first alerted us to the need for change, because they were the ones who realized that the one-time tax exclusion on rolled-over capital gains had been

inadvertently eliminated in the 1997 tax law changes. It took five years to get the tax code changes through Congress, so AFSA made sure the provision was retroactive to 1997 instead of just the three years usually provided for the filing of amended taxes. It was also through AFSA's efforts that the "virtual locality pay" concept was legislatively authorized in the computation of retirement

from an overseas post, and that diplomatic security personnel are now covered under the Law Enforcement Officer Retirement System.

Your help is needed, not only for the retirement issues that affect you directly, but also because of what you can do to help the Foreign Service overall. Your member of Congress not only needs to hear your opinions on the legislation of the day, but also your delight in being chosen to represent the American people overseas. Telling your short story to a congressional office will give the Foreign Service the face it needs when legislation is pending. We need your help in educating Americans about the real-life Foreign Service, about the employees willingly serving in difficult and dangerous places. Too often, the media and entertainment industries depict the Foreign Service negatively and inaccurately, promoting a popular image that is far from reality. So we need to educate our fellow citizens and our members of Congress on today's Foreign Service reality. There is a lot of work to be done both in Washington, and in "the field" around the U.S., and there is an important role for you if you are willing to pick up the gauntlet.

Ask us for resources, or volunteer for a local speaking engagement. AFSA Communications Director Tom Switzer can arrange local outreach events for you, and we can provide you with background papers to help in discussing our issues (Phone: (800) 338-4045, ext. 501, or e-mail: switzer@afsa.org). AFSA can help you establish local Foreign Service retiree associations. Together with AFSA, you can help give the Service a voice that will be heard around the country and on Capitol Hill. □

**Secretary Rice • Continued from page 65**

Holmes opened the meeting by highlighting the compromises that AFSA and the department had reached on incentives for Iraq volunteers, noting that AFSA's support for special benefits is combined with our strong desire to minimize unfairness to the rest of the Foreign Service and to protect the integrity of our performance-based promotion system and meritocracy. Secretary Rice expressed her view that merit also encompasses willingness to take difficult assignments, and that there should be ways to reward those people without compromising basic principles enshrined in the Foreign Service Act.

State VP Kashkett commented that AFSA's recent electronic poll on Iraq PRT incentives, which 2,500 members worldwide completed, revealed a strong sense of duty and a widespread desire to maintain the volunteer nature of war-zone assignments, as well as a concern that proper recognition be given to FS employees doing superb work all over the world, as well as in Iraq. The Secretary affirmed her hope to keep staffing Iraq with volunteers, but cautioned that the staffing imperatives of unaccompanied posts could be a long-term problem.

AFSA officers briefed the Secretary on ongoing efforts to work out compromise language for the Foreign Service modernization legislation that would provide overseas comparability pay to all FS employees abroad while converting automatic within-grade step increases to performance-based salary adjustments. Holmes explained that AFSA wants to ensure that such adjustments will truly be based on quality of performance and that money will be available to pay for them. He suggested that the Secretary's personal intervention might be necessary to break a potential executive branch deadlock and ensure that the final draft bill reaches Congress in time to be passed this year.

Moving to transformational diplomacy, the Secretary described her vision of the Foreign Service as becoming more "expeditionary" and requiring employees to deploy more frequently to areas of crisis and conflict, sometimes on short notice. This, she said, will require sacrifice and a broad

acceptance that the FS career may involve a greater proportion of difficult, dangerous and unaccompanied postings in the future. We must start recruiting differently, she said, and new entrants into the Foreign Service will need to have different expectations. Holmes noted, and the Secretary agreed, that the new Career Development Programs were designed to do just this, but he recognized that the CDPs are a medium to long-term solution to staffing hardship posts and the Secretary was focused more on the short-term problems related to filling jobs in Iraq, particularly those on provincial reconstruction teams.

The Secretary agreed with AFSA that the department must provide a better support structure for families, as the military does. This applies to family members at post and those separated from employees serving at unaccompanied posts. AFSA officers observed that the reality for family members falls far short of the department's stated commitments in areas such as employment and financial benefits, pointing out that the department has not given serious consideration to AFSA's proposals for creating a family-member employment "equalization fund" and increasing the inadequate Separate Maintenance Allowance. Holmes observed that unmarried partners (Members of Household) still face even greater difficulties, and that the department continues to use the Defense of Marriage Act

to justify inaction in changing the regulations. He asked the Secretary to have the department's legal adviser review this policy and the relevance of the DMA to it; she said she would look into this issue.

The recent successful negotiations to improve the fairness of the SFS pay-for-performance system, Holmes pointed out, serve as an example of how a sustained AFSA-State Department engagement could lead to win/win outcomes in many areas. He reiterated AFSA's desire to work with the department across the board, stressed the contributions the association can make even in areas outside of its bargaining rights, and stressed the need to be included much earlier in the process.

Holmes also reported on several minority outreach programs that AFSA is ramping up in response to the Secretary's request that we assist her efforts to make the Foreign Service more diverse. These programs include the AFSA Minority Intern Program, the AFSA National High School Essay Contest, and outreach connected with AFSA's *Inside a U.S. Embassy* book.

The Secretary concluded the meeting by expressing satisfaction with the results of the AFSA-department partnership so far and stating that she looks forward to a continuing engagement on the many tough issues that will undoubtedly arise in the future. □

## AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

### AAFSW Seeking Volunteer Award Nominations

The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide are seeking nominations for the AAFSW/Secretary of State's Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Activities. These awards honor members of the Foreign Service community who have made exceptional contributions in one of the following categories: service to the U.S. government community at post, outstanding activities directed toward the host country and/or exceptional service during emergencies at post.

Nominations for the SOSA awards must be received by Oct. 6, and should be sent by mail to AAFSW, 5555 Columbia Pike, Suite 208, Arlington VA 22305-3117; e-mail to [office@aafsw.org](mailto:office@aafsw.org) or fax to (703) 820-5421. For further information,

call AAFSW at (703) 820-5420.

Beginning this year, nominations for a new award — the Eleanor Dodson Tragen Foreign Service Spouse Award — are being sought by Diplomats and Consular Officers, Retired. This award will recognize a family member who has effectively advocated for family member rights and benefits. The award is named after Ele Tragen, a long-time AAFSW member and advocate, and funded by income from a gift to DACOR from her husband, retired FSO Irving Tragen. Nominations must be received at DACOR by Oct. 6. Send them to: DACOR Bacon House Foundation, 1801 F St. NW, Washington DC 20006.

**Briefs • Continued on page 72**

## AFSA AND THE DG

## AFSA Presents “Wish List”

On June 7, during his first week on the job as the new director general of the Foreign Service and director of the Bureau of Human Resources, Ambassador George M. Staples joined the AFSA Governing Board for a lunch meeting at AFSA headquarters. Amb. Staples was accompanied by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Heather Hodges, Policy Coordination Staff Director Karen Krueger and Chief Labor Management Negotiator Steve Polson.

The DG described priority issues to the Governing Board and

said he hoped for relations with AFSA that would be as collegial and collaborative as possible. Topics covered included recruitment for the Foreign Service, training, service discipline and Foreign Service family issues. AFSA President Tony Holmes spoke about the core importance of maintaining integrity in the performance-based promotion system.

In connection with the desire to have an open and productive relationship with the DG, AFSA offered to present a “wish list” of priorities that the association would like to see addressed by the State Department. Amb. Staples said he would welcome such a list.

Following is a copy of the AFSA Wish List document that was sent to the DG on June 27.

June 27, 2006

Ambassador George M. Staples  
Director General of the Foreign Service  
U.S. Department of State

Dear Ambassador Staples:

AFSA remains committed to working with you and your team to transform the Foreign Service to meet the needs of the 21st century, to devise creative “outside-the-box” solutions to problems, and to develop sensible changes in personnel policies, procedures, and regulations that would benefit our colleagues worldwide. We share with you the objective of making the Foreign Service a career that attracts and retains the very best people to represent our country overseas. Doing so requires us to address the fairness and equity concerns of our members, to attend to the needs of families, and to implement effective incentives for hardship service in an increasingly difficult and dangerous world.

We need a Foreign Service that bends over backward to take care of its employees. Too often, our members feel as if an unsympathetic bureaucracy is looking to chip away at their overseas allowances, is ready to strip them of their security clearances on the slightest pretext, and is generally unforgiving and regulation-bound when unique situations arise.

You asked that AFSA provide you with the priority “wish list” of the most important or most pressing action items which our members have raised with us. The list that follows is distilled from the hundreds of comments that we receive from members around the world every week, as well as from the extensive responses to our surveys.

**Open Assignment rules:** The Department needs to follow its own rules in making assignment decisions. Members are deeply frustrated by a system in which bureaus routinely reserve choice jobs for insider candidates, excluding those who may be quali-

fied but are not personally “known” to the bureau. Some prime examples of unfair practices that you can put a stop to are:

- ✓ Giving “half-handshakes” to below-grade bidders
- ✓ Assigning Civil Service candidates when good FS candidates are available
- ✓ Using directed assignments to overcome Fair Share requirements
- ✓ Asserting “unique personal qualifications” to give jobs to special candidates

**Iraq PRTs:** Our members continue to express deep reservations about service in the red-zone PRTs, partly because of the dangerous conditions — which many believe exceed what unarmed FSOs should be expected to endure — and partly because of concerns about the inability to do the job they would be sent to do. Because we know that greater openness and more information are in everyone’s interest, we urge you to persuade NEA, S/I and DS to work forthrightly with HR and AFSA to:

- ✓ Give the membership an honest accounting of conditions at PRTs
- ✓ Address security concerns
- ✓ Develop further incentives to encourage volunteers and prevent directed assignments

**Overseas employment of spouses/partners:** Despite the Department’s stated commitment to meaningful, well-compensated employment of family members overseas, the reality is that many spouses and partners feel blocked by bureaucratic rigidity and by posts’ relative budgetary priorities. Some measures you can take are:

- ✓ Urging M to create the EFM employment “equalization fund” proposed by AFSA and FLO
- ✓ Changing the FAM to require posts to pay the Highest Previous Rate to experienced EFMs
- ✓ Ordering an expedited process to hire spouses/partners to fill vacant FS positions at post

**Promotions:** Reinforcing the integrity, fairness, and number of opportunities in our performance-based promotion system is a top priority for our membership. Employees feel that their promotions are too dependent on their supervisor's EER-writing abilities, and many (particularly DRI entrants) are apprehensive about the overall shrinkage in promotion numbers, which seems to be leaving more people at the same grade longer — six to eight years or more — before getting promoted. It is important that you:

- ✓ Fight for more resources to expand the promotion numbers
- ✓ Seek ways to significantly reduce the unrealistically high mandatory 5-percent low-ranking

**Unaccompanied tours of duty:** At a time when the Department needs to motivate our colleagues to volunteer for the nearly 700 unaccompanied positions every summer — more than 20 percent of overseas assignments — AFSA believes we must do more to accommodate family concerns. Our members serving in war zones are keenly aware of the disparities between DOD's treatment of military families and our own. Some important actions you can take include:

- ✓ Increasing the woefully inadequate Separate Maintenance Allowance
- ✓ Facilitating use of home leave during or after 12-month unaccompanied tours
- ✓ Expanding the Department's outreach and support to separated family members

**Members of Household:** Our surveys have revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the Department's unwillingness to recognize unmarried partners on the same terms as spouses. We believe that the Department is applying the Defense of Marriage Act far beyond its legal scope and see considerable room for improvement and flexibility in how MOHs are treated without violating the DMA. AFSA has been working with GLIFAA to develop a series of specific recommendations to address this problem, even if some require challenging the current legal constraints. These include:

- ✓ Funding travel to/from post for MOHs
- ✓ Changing the Foreign Affairs Manual to require Chiefs of Mission to extend the same benefits to MOHs as spouses
- ✓ According MOHs the same within-mission employment opportunities as spouses
- ✓ Including MOHs in post evacuation plans

**Diplomatic Security:** While Under Secretary for Management Fore appears to be pressing DS to expedite the resolution of long-stalled cases of members whose security clearances have been in limbo for as much as 2-3 years, we face a growing feeling among Foreign Service employees that there should be greater transparency and accountability in many of the programs run by DS, including the investigation/adjudication processes for security clearances

as well as the DS "pass through" program for assignment to critical-threat posts. People fear that too much power is vested in DS as the investigator, prosecutor, judge and jury in security clearance cases. There is also concern about the lack of transparency when it comes to DS's recommendations against an employee's assignment to a critical-threat post. First steps might include:

- ✓ Creating a task force, including AFSA, to develop new guidelines for security investigations/adjudications/and assignment recommendations
- ✓ Assigning employees who have lost their clearances, where appropriate and feasible, to positions that do not require a Top Secret clearance and devising meaningful work responsibilities for them.

**Maternity benefits overseas:** While we understand the need to work within existing federal governmentwide laws, AFSA believes that the unique conditions of the Foreign Service require special rules/benefits for female FS employees posted overseas who become pregnant. For many, the three-month medical evacuation mandated by M/MED becomes a severe hardship because the employee must use her own leave and then is forced to go on leave without pay when her accumulated annual/sick leave runs out. This is particularly unfair for female employees who have only a small accumulated leave balance and who may be the sole income-earner in the family. This situation cries out for urgent measures, such as:

- ✓ Granting the employee administrative leave during her three-month medical evacuation
- ✓ Authorizing travel for husbands who are dependent spouses

**Contact reporting requirements:** HR and DS foreign contact reporting rules are grossly outdated, unclear, and sometimes contradictory. Despite many significant changes over the years, these sections of the FAM have not been revised in 19 years. As a result, many FS employees have been curtailed from post, had their clearances suspended and are facing discipline due to alleged violations of contact reporting requirements. AFSA lawyers have received contradictory information on whether certain contacts need to be reported, so our members are understandably confused. We ask that the Department work with AFSA to:

- ✓ Immediately update and clarify 3 FAM 4100 and 12 FAM 260

**Overseas housing:** Our members at foreign posts suffer as a result of 1960s-era regulations that require any overseas housing lease over \$25,000 (a figure that has not been changed in 30 years) annually to receive Washington approval and that impose arbitrary limits of the square footage of overseas housing. We urge you to:

- ✓ Change the rules in order to liberalize these antiquated housing requirements

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**DG Wish List • Continued from page 71**

**Technology in the workplace:** OpenNet Everywhere has launched a long-overdue revolution in the work habits and flexibility of FS employees, who can now answer e-mails and complete unclassified tasks outside the office. Remote-access technology facilitates communication overseas when posts must close for security reasons. In order to bring the Foreign Service into the 21st century, AFSA proposes:

- ✓ Making ONE access universal among Foreign Service employees
- ✓ Expanding the availability/use of laptops and wireless devices (PDAs, Blackberries, etc.)

**Per diem for long-term training:** The declining scale of per-diem in the D.C.-area remains a source of anguish to our members, many of whom find themselves seriously out of pocket at the end of a lengthy training period. The new Cost-Effective Lodging Initiative is a good start to addressing housing costs, but more needs to be done, including:

- ✓ Finding ways to ease the financial burden of the sliding scale, such as providing a flat rate for all periods of training beyond 60 days
- ✓ Establishing different per-diem rates depending on an employee's family size

**Pets in the Foreign Service:** For many employees overseas, pets are their household companions and support structure. We need to:

- ✓ Allow reimbursement of the costs of transporting and quarantining pets
- ✓ Include pets in post evacuation plans

**Outreach to retirees:** HR/RET uses an e-mail-based workload management system to communicate with Foreign Service retirees and provide the information and services they need. This tracking system cannot fully accomplish this task because many retirees — probably more than half — do not have e-mail capability. HR/RET should:

- ✓ Use other methods to communicate with these retirees, in addition to e-mail, and ensure that the period statements of annuity changes are printed out and mailed to all retirees who do not choose to receive them only electronically

Finally, as a general observation, we all share the view that the Foreign Service should honor the experience and expertise of its career diplomats and give them a pre-eminent role in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. Too often, our members today feel as if non-career appointees chosen for a particular ideological point of view and/or personal loyalty are the only ones who play a role in developing policy, while the professional Foreign Service is sidelined. Anything you can do to combat this trend would be welcomed by our membership.

Some of the suggestions in our “wish list” challenge conventional wisdom and seek new ways of doing things. We understand that this fits in with your thinking about the Foreign Service. As we have told you before, we hope you will see AFSA not as an adversary, but as a partner, as a conduit for feedback from members worldwide, and as a source of creative ideas for developing a Foreign Service for the 21st century.

Respectfully yours,



J. Anthony Holmes  
AFSA President



Steven Kashkett  
AFSA State Vice President

# AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

## BOOKFAIR

For months, volunteers have been sorting, pricing and storing books to prepare for the 46th Annual AAFSW BOOKFAIR, which opens on Friday, Oct. 13, at 2 p.m.

in the Exhibit Hall of Main State. Employees, their escorted guests, retirees and their spouses are cordially invited. Between Oct. 16 and Oct. 20, this same group of people will be admitted from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. BOOKFAIR is open to everyone, including the general public, on two weekends: Oct. 14-15 and Oct. 21-22, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. On the last day, some items will be discounted by 50 percent. VISA, MASTERCARD and checks are accepted. Questions? Please call (202) 223-5796.



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**AFSA Awards • Continued from page 65**

guished guests today, Leslie Gelb): ‘Career professionals are being most loyal when they are being candid with their bosses about situations, and when they press for a serious examination of policy.’ Edward R. Murrow, in his famous quote during the McCarthy era, said that ‘we must never confuse dissent with disloyalty.’ It is AFSA’s view that American foreign policy can only benefit from an open and candid debate of the issues among our Foreign Service professionals.”



Lifetime achievement award winner Ambassador Morton Abramowitz with Dr. James Schlesinger.

Dr. James Schlesinger, a former secretary of Defense and CIA director, presented the Lifetime Contributions Award to Amb. Abramowitz, whom he has known for many years. Dr. Schlesinger spoke fondly of Amb. Abramowitz, calling him a marvelous person, imaginative, unbelievably energetic and a splendid public servant inside and outside government. He noted that Abramowitz “habitually told truths for his country,” and was “an aggressive internationalist.”

In accepting the award, Abramowitz offered memories of working with Schlesinger over the years, fondly recalling the 1970s debates between then-Secretary of Defense Schlesinger and then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Abramowitz spoke critically of the Iraq War, commenting that “American foreign policy does not need an exit strategy, but a strategy. Staying the course is not a strategy.” He added that the Foreign Service “has a responsibility to provide candor.”

**Constructive Dissent Awards**

This year’s Constructive Dissent Awards



Award winners at the ceremony, from left: Martine McKinnie, Margaret Riccardelli, Kevin Morgan, Nyda Budig, Richard Sacks and Amb. Michael Guest.

went to four Foreign Service officers and specialists who demonstrated extraordinary accomplishments and professionalism involving initiative, integrity, intellectual courage or constructive dissent. The Christian A. Herter Award was presented to Ambassador Michael E. Guest, currently dean of the Leadership and Management School at FSI, by Amb. Edward Gibson Lanpher. Guest was honored for his efforts to push the State Department to end discrimination against Members of Household and all unmarried partners of Foreign Service employees. In his remarks, Guest thanked AFSA “for giving the issue the attention it deserves.”

The William R. Rivkin Award for a mid-level officer was presented to Richard S. Sacks, from Embassy Panama City, by Charles Rivkin. Sacks called attention to the negative effect that the poor treatment of Panamanian Muslims at U.S. ports of entry was having on America’s image in Panama. His dissent ultimately influenced the Department of Homeland Security’s passenger-screening procedures.

The Tex Harris Award for a Foreign Service Specialist was presented to Kevin B. Morgan, from Embassy Minsk, by Amb. William Harrop, who noted that it was a special privilege for him to give an award to someone who put himself on the line to protect his staff. The winner of the W. Averell Harriman Award was Christopher Allison, from U.S. Consulate Chennai. Seeing problems with the way temporary-worker visas were being processed in South India, Allison challenged the status quo and helped bring about changes in the

procedures. Allison was unable to attend the ceremony, so Caroline Easterling, Harriman’s great granddaughter, presented the award to Allison’s colleague, Nyda Budig, who accepted on his behalf.

**Exemplary Performance Awards**

The M. Juanita Guess Award for a community liaison officer was presented to Martine S. McKinnie, from Embassy

Yaounde, by Jon Clements, son of M. Juanita Guess. McKinnie was honored for providing the warmest possible welcome to embassy newcomers, as well as for the numerous morale-improving activities she organized for the community.

The Delavan Award for an office management specialist was presented to Malgorzata “Gosia” Lamot, from Embassy Kuwait. Lamot was honored for improving morale at the embassy, in part through a program she created called The Healthy Living Lunch Break, bringing many mem-



Sen. Paul Sarbanes receives his award. From left: AFSA President Tony Holmes, Sen. Sarbanes and Director General George Staples.

bers of the embassy community together for exercise and professional development activities.

Amb. George M. Staples, Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources at the State Department, presented a Special AFSA Certificate of Appreciation and Recognition to Senator Paul S. Sarbanes, D-Md., for his extraordinary support of U.S. diplomacy through a long, distinguished career. Sarbanes, who is retiring from the Senate this year, spoke of the importance of diplo-

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## Notes from the Depths of the Bureaucracy

With this essay, *AFSA News* is initiating a new occasional feature, “The System and You,” which will highlight your stories of bureaucratic absurdities faced when navigating life in the Foreign Service. When possible, we will try to get an explanation for the policy or regulation causing the problem and, who knows, maybe even persuade management to make changes, either in regulations or in the interpretation of them. Send your submissions (aim for 500 words) to *FSJ* Associate Editor Shawn Dorman at [dorman@afsa.org](mailto:dorman@afsa.org).

The first installment looks at how a husband and wife, both Foreign Service employees, were penalized for not renting separate quarters while on TDY training in the D.C. area. (Note: As we go to press, we have learned that the claims office is reviewing the case to determine whether an error was made.)

## A Housing Loss

I would like to tell you about a recent incident that I see as a potential obstacle for all government employees, especially couples and partners. My wife and I are both relatively new employees of both the federal government and the Foreign Service. We are currently on temporary duty in Arlington and Warrenton, Va., respectively.

We have all heard cynical stories of government agencies wasting copious amounts of money due to mismanagement or misinterpretation of regulations originally written to protect resources. Unfortunately, many of the stories prove to be true, though in most cases the losses were justified by regulations that have gone astray from their original intentions. Our own experience related to convoluted, drawn-out travel guidelines. This particular incident not only defies logic; it defies plain common sense.

Following the recent submission of two separate expense reports, my wife and I received an e-mail from our financial management specialist explaining that we had calculated the reports incorrectly. As a result, the reports had been recalculated and the total reimbursements were reduced. This e-mail led to a series of phone conversations with the financial management specialist and the office supervisor. At the conclusion of our correspondence, we had a very clear understanding of why our reimbursements had been reduced, though we still could not actually believe it.

While on TDY to Arlington, my wife’s maximum daily lodg-

ing rate was \$180. While I was on TDY to Warrenton (approximately 40 miles from Arlington), my maximum daily lodging rate was \$67. Despite the fact that we both have our own separate travel orders, my wife and I decided to share a room in Arlington for a double occupancy daily rate of \$180. I simply commuted to Warrenton at my own expense.

According to the State Department interpretation of federal travel regulations, Chapter 301: 11-13, the fact that my wife and I decided to share a room (and consequently save the government money) reduced our total daily lodging rate to \$157. Apparently, we needed to split the cost of the daily room rate equally, so my wife’s per diem only covered \$90, while my per diem only covered a maximum rate of \$67. The total thus translated to

a \$700-per-month difference that I had to pay out of pocket.

When we asked if we could just submit one expense report for my wife’s maximum allowable per diem of \$180 per day, we were informed that such an act would be both illegal and immoral. We were told that in the future we should just pay for two separate rooms, regardless of their use. It would appear that in this case, the system is not only encouraging us to waste money, but is penalizing us for not wasting it. □

*Kenya and Nicole Owens are both Foreign Service specialists assigned to Geneva. Kenya has recently completed the core training of his new-hire orientation program, while Nicole has recently been tenured.*

*It would appear that in this case, the system is not only encouraging us to waste money, but is penalizing us for not wasting it.*

## AFSA/TLG SUMMER INTERNSHIP

## AFSA/State Intern Serves Overseas

BY LORI DEC, AFSA SCHOLARSHIP ADMINISTRATOR

Stacy Session, a rising senior from Florida A&M, arrived in Kenya on June 19 to begin her three-month summer internship in the management office of Embassy Nairobi. The internship was sponsored by AFSA and the State Department's Thursday Luncheon Group, known as TLG. This collaborative partnership began in 1996 to help raise awareness of the Foreign Service and increase diversity within its ranks. Each summer, one minority undergraduate or graduate student has the opportunity to explore a career in international affairs at the State Department in a high profile, substantive work environment. The student is mentored by AFSA and TLG members, and receives a small stipend. This summer, for the first time, the internship was done overseas. This is Session's second summer as the AFSA/TLG intern.

For the 2005 internship, Session worked in the State Department's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, in the Office of International Health Affairs, on bioterrorism, biodefense and health-security issues. After developing a D.C.-based perspective on a possible career in international affairs, Session eagerly accepted the overseas opportunity, which helped her more clearly understand what embassy work as a Foreign Service employee would be like.

Like most Nairobi embassy employees, the workday for Session began at 7:15 a.m. She worked on a variety of tasks during her assignment, including updating the management briefing packet for the new ambassador and deputy chief of mission. Session assisted with preparation of the new post differential report and worked on preparations for a visit from the Office of the Inspector General. She collected and analyzed management risk assessment questionnaires from various embassy



Attending a lunch for AFSA/TLG Intern Stacy Session prior to her June departure for Nairobi, from left: AFSA Governing Board Member Joyce Namde, TLG Treasurer Stacy Williams, Session and TLG's president, Amb. Denise Mathieu. Below: Session with a Masai warrior in Kenya.

offices regarding the embassy's Chief of Mission Management Statement of Assurance, temporarily assuming the responsibilities for the charge's assistant. Session also drafted routine letters on such issues as notifying Kenyan vendors that the embassy is exempt from the Value Added Tax.

In her spare time, Session tried to take advantage of all Nairobi had to offer. She visited an ostrich farm and resort and dined on ostrich, went salsa dancing every Thursday night and volunteered at the New Life Orphanage for young children (newborn to age 3) who were abandoned and/or HIV-positive. "It was uplifting to see that the agency had an 80-percent adoption rate," Session tells *AFSA News*. In addition, Session was able to connect with several Florida A&M students who were studying at the U.S. International University in Nairobi.

Session was sad to see her internship end on Aug. 19. "I feel very blessed to have been given such a life-changing opportunity," she says, adding that "the Kenyans were friendly and hospitable, and the Foreign Service Nationals I worked with were so helpful to me as I adjusted to embassy life. I learned a lot about management and the functions and operations of a U.S. embassy. Managers have to deal with a lot of employee complaints and issues. They have to be problem-solvers and good at delegating."

"I have also learned that being an American overseas means so many things to the people in the country where you live and work," Session says. "To some, you're like a movie star and they want to know everything about you and your life back in the States. To others, you may be the enemy or a target for crime. I realized how fortunate I am to live in a country where



opportunity is accessible and my essential needs are met. Every morning when I arrived at work, the visa line at the embassy was very long, because people are desperate to come to America for the opportunity of a better life. I take so many things for granted in the United States, and this internship experience has changed me and made me a better person." □

#### Awards • Continued from page 73

macy, noting that "our diplomatic corps build bridges that endure." He said the job of the diplomat has become increasingly dangerous, adding that there has never been a more urgent need for skillful diplomacy.

"While Senator Sarbanes is, I think, best known around the world for his efforts to promote transparent and improved corporate governance," Holmes said, "we regard him as perhaps the foremost champion of the Foreign Service outside the Service itself."

Holmes presented a Special Award of Recognition to Ambassador L. Bruce Laingen for two decades of leadership and service to AFSA as chairman of the AFSA Awards and Plaque Committee. Amb. Laingen commented that in his position as committee chair, he sometimes felt underemployed, and noted that the committee needs to receive more nominations for the dissent awards. □

**Essay Contest • Continued from page 65**

AFSA established the high school essay contest seven years ago to encourage American high school students to learn more about the functions of the U.S. Foreign Service, the craft of diplomacy and America's role in the world. More than 3,000 submissions have been received since the program began, from students in all 50 states. The contest continues to be one of AFSA's most successful outreach activities. Out of this year's 300 submissions, three outstanding essays were selected as contest winners and the writers were honored at the July ceremony.

Though the contest allows participants to write about any of today's major international issues, all three of this year's winners wrote about international development topics. Eva Lam of Milwaukee, received the first-place AFSA award of \$2,500 for her essay on empowering women in Afghanistan. Second place went to Kimberly Hayward of Oak Lawn, Ill., for her essay on the role of Foreign Service officers in bridging the education gender gap in Africa. Third place went to Karina Legradi of Tampa, Fla., for her essay on the role of the Service in the war on drug trafficking in Colombia and Afghanistan.

Eva Lam thanked AFSA for the "opportunity to familiarize ourselves, as children who aren't children of the American Foreign Service, with this side of American foreign policy that doesn't involve guns and bombs." In particular, she thanked Steve Kashkett and AFSA Executive Director Susan Reardon for their efforts. Lam, a graduate of Rufus King High School, will be attending Harvard University this fall. Karina Legradi, a rising high school senior, told *AFSA News* that she, too, was grateful for the unique opportunity to learn about American diplomacy: "It opened my eyes to the Foreign Service." Kimberly Hayward was unable to attend the ceremony.

The essay contest is sponsored by the AFSA Fund for American Diplomacy and the Nelson B. Delevan Foundation. For more information, go to [www.afsa.org/essay-contest/essay.html](http://www.afsa.org/essay-contest/essay.html).

**Kid Vid Awards**

Ambassador Ruth A. Davis, a former director general of the FS and former director of the Foreign Service Institute, as well as a Foreign Service Youth Foundation board member, presented the Kid Vid Awards. The contest is sponsored by FSF's Transition Center and the FSYF, and honors FS youth between the ages of 10 and 18 for their videos depicting life at post for young people. Oakwood Worldwide Corporate Housing generously donated prize money. Amb. Davis remarked how impressed she was with the winners' technological savvy, creativity and youthful perspectives. She noted that because participants include aspects of their posts' school-

**"It opened my eyes  
to the Foreign Service."**

— Eva Lam, first-place National High School  
Essay Contest winner

ing, recreational activities and community life, Foreign Service families use the Kid Vids to learn about their future posting or choose between posts. All Kid Vids become part of the permanent collection in the Overseas Briefing Center library.

The first-place award recipients were Christian and Patrick Lisko for their video of Valetta, Malta. Davis praised the brothers' lively production for its "engaging narrative, smooth transitions ... and inviting footage of this charming Mediterranean post." Second place went to Annamaria Ward for her video of Quito, Ecuador. Third place was a tie between Sean Patrick Kelly for his presentation of Vilnius, Lithuania, and Anthony Oman and Thomas Litchfield for Helsinki, Finland.

**Foreign Service Youth Foundation  
Community Service Awards**

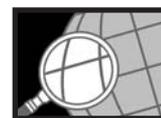
Representative Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., an FSYF Advisory Council member and a former Foreign Service youth himself, was scheduled to present the FSYF/Harry M. Jannette Awards for Community Service. The congressman was

delayed by voting, so his staff member, Sarah Shennings, shared his remarks with former FSYF President Pamela Ward, who stepped in and presented the awards.

These prestigious awards recognize Foreign Service teenagers who demonstrate outstanding leadership in international community service or in service to their peers while facing the challenges of growing up in an internationally mobile lifestyle. The winners demonstrate the power of the individual to improve the lives of those less fortunate. For the first time, Clements International Insurance donated \$3,000 U.S. government savings bonds to the first-place winners. Several representatives from Clements attended the ceremony.

John Alsace of Barcelona and Jessica Himelfarb of Harare received this year's first place awards. Alsace spearheaded a project to provide food to 80 impoverished families at a local children's center. He created a connection between his school and the center to ensure his efforts would continue after he departed post. Himelfarb was honored for her project to paint and remodel a one-room school building used to educate over 60 children, ages 2 to 15. She also raised money for school uniforms, enabling over 50 orphans to attend school, and served as the point person to receive and distribute clothes donated from the U.S.

The Highly Commendable Award went to Nelson Patterson of Harare. Though already accepted to college, Patterson instead spent a "gap year" working in an HIV/AIDS hospice in Zimbabwe that also has programs for HIV/AIDS orphans. At Mashambanzou, Patterson worked primarily on the orphan outreach team, visiting the poorest communities in Zimbabwe and serving as a big brother to hundreds of orphans. He also spent many hours on the "Education for Life" program, offering seminars to help stop the spread of AIDS. On his days off, Nelson volunteered in the learning-support center of Harare International School as a tutor for children with learning disabilities. His sincerity — "I just wanted to help people, I didn't expect to be here" — captured the American spirit of volunteerism of all the winners. □



## Staff News

It is with much sadness that we report the August departures of two valued members of the AFSA staff. AFSA Director of Legislative Affairs Ken Nakamura joined the AFSA staff over 11 years ago and has done a remarkable job establishing and maintaining the association's relationships on the Hill. "It is because of Ken's skills and leadership," says AFSA Executive Director Susan Reardon, "that AFSA can say today that our advocacy and lobbying efforts are a cornerstone of the services we provide our members and of AFSA's standing in the foreign affairs community." Ken has accepted a position as research analyst for the Congressional Research Service.

*Foreign Service Journal* Business Manager Mikkela

Thompson started at AFSA in 2001 and worked in the membership and accounting departments before moving over to the *Journal* in 2002. Raised in the Foreign Service (her father is Ward Thompson, lifelong friend of AFSA), she has been a vital member of the *FSJ* team for the past four years. She not only managed *Journal* business, but played a key role in advertising management and did writing and editing for the magazine as well. She even served as AFSA's unofficial photographer. She has left AFSA to pursue graduate studies full time.

"Many thanks to Mikkela for her years of first-class performance at AFSA," says Ted Wilkinson, Editorial Board Chair. "I hate to see this splendid *Journal* team lose any of its members." □

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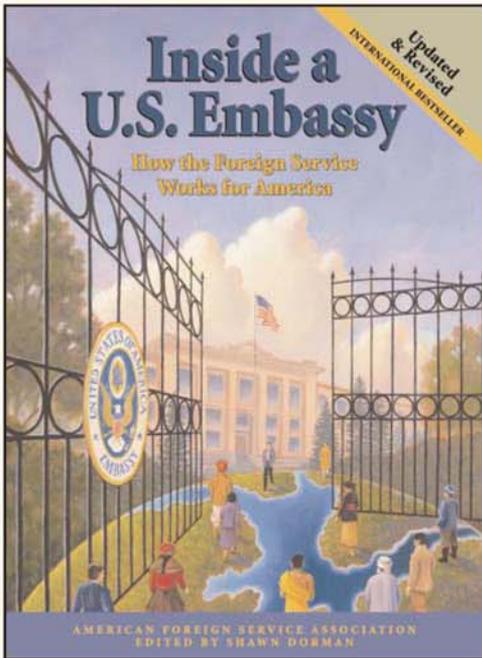
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# BOOKS

## The Paranoid Style

**Empire's Workshop — Latin America, the United States and the Rise of the New Imperialism**  
Greg Grandin, Metropolitan Books, 2006, \$25.00, hardcover, 286 pages.

REVIEWED BY DENNIS JETT

If there is one thing the far right and the far left have in common, it is paranoia. Both political extremes see grand conspiracies in things they oppose. *Empire's Workshop — Latin America, the United States and the Rise of the New Imperialism* argues that Latin America has served as a proving ground for U.S. imperialism for the last 250 years — a history author Greg Grandin sees as a dress rehearsal for what is happening in the Middle East today.

In the process of making this argument, Grandin finds no heroes — only co-conspirators. Both the National Endowment for Democracy and Freedom House are in on the plot. Former President Bill Clinton is included because he “embraced free-market absolutism and American militarism as solutions to the hemisphere’s woes.” As a result, his administration only “served as a bridge between [Ronald] Reagan’s resurgent nationalism and George W. Bush’s revolutionary imperialism.”

In his search for villains, Grandin becomes deliberately misleading or, at least, makes factual errors that some-

*Grandin could have made his central point more effectively by showing how Central America in the 1980s was the proving ground for Iraq today.*

one who teaches Latin American history at New York University should have avoided. For instance, he describes the El Salvadoran military and oligarchy as preternaturally violent, but then adds: “Their solution to the crisis, according to Reagan’s own ambassador, Robert White, was apocalyptic: the country must be ‘destroyed totally, the economy must be wrecked, unemployment must be massive,’ and a ‘cleansing’ of some ‘300 or 400 or 500,000 people must be carried out.’” Grandin gives no hint of what Amb. White, who was a Carter appointee, thought of that idea. Worse still, he neglects to mention that White was removed less than two weeks after Reagan’s inauguration precisely because he believed violence was *not* the answer.

Corporations are also included in Grandin’s conspiracy, but he again resorts to gross distortion to make his case. He asserts private contractors “advised Peru to shoot down a plane that turned out to be carrying not

drugs but U.S. missionaries.” The *Miami Herald* article he cites in making this accusation only states that the contractors “mistakenly helped target” the plane. In fact, they repeatedly warned the Peruvian Air Force jet to hold its fire until the aircraft’s identity was established, but the Peruvians shot it down anyway.

Grandin’s argument would have been better served had he been less ambitious as well as less ideological. He covers a broad sweep of history with no chronological or thematic coherence. And he spends a lot of time blaming capitalism for the world’s woes, leaving the impression that Latin Americans have no responsibility for the shape the region is in.

Grandin could have made his central point quite effectively had he limited himself to showing how Central America in the 1980s was the proving ground for Iraq today. Some of the same apparatchiks, like Elliot Abrams and Otto Reich, pop up in both administrations, and their earlier disinformation operations were clear precursors of Karen Hughes. (If we really cared about public opinion abroad, incidentally, she never would have been placed in charge of public diplomacy. But since propagandizing the audience at home is her main task, she is perfect.)

Grandin could have devoted more time to demonstrating that the death squads we encouraged in Central America are being replicated in Iraq today. The Iraqi security forces are probably contributing more bodies to



the Baghdad morgue every day than al-Qaida and its allies, and it would be nice to know to what extent they were doing so with U.S. government encouragement.

Another useful parallel between the two situations that deserves more careful attention than this book gives it is how the myth of U.S. success in Central America was invented, because it is essential to the myth of Reagan's presidency being a success. It will be interesting to see how the future apologists for the current president will distort events in Iraq to prove he is something other than one of the worst presidents in our history.

---

*Dennis Jett is a retired FSO who served as ambassador in Peru and Mozambique, among many other postings during his 28-year career. He is currently dean of the International Center at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The author of Why Peacekeeping Fails (Palgrave, 2001), he has published over 70 opinion pieces in major newspapers.*

## Leadership by Example

### **Mission to Algiers: Diplomacy by Engagement**

Cameron R. Hume, *Lexington Books*, 2006, paperback, \$24.95, 186 pages.

REVIEWED BY JONITA I. WHITAKER

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired, initiated the Diplomats and Diplomacy book series in 1995 to expand an understanding about the role of U.S. diplomats in world history by the general public. *Mission to Algiers: Diplomacy by Engagement*, the most

recent volume in the series, details the efforts of Ambassador Cameron Hume to strengthen bilateral relations during his tenure in Algeria from 1997 to 2000. He currently serves as chargé d'affaires in Khartoum.

This is Amb. Hume's third published work; he previously wrote *The United Nations, Iran and Iraq: How Peacemaking Changed* (Indiana University Press, 1994) and *Ending Mozambique's War: The Role of Mediation and Good Offices* (U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1994).

*Mission to Algiers* presents a day-by-day chronicle of the embassy's concerted efforts to foster democratization, the rule of law, human rights and a market economy in Algeria following the country's economic tailspin and the canceled elections of 1991, which fueled an Islamic insurgency that would result in the killing of more than 100,000 people. Amb. Hume skillfully relates how his team used the tools of diplomatic tradecraft — principally personal engagement with Algerian counterparts, matched by public diplomacy — to broaden and strengthen the bilateral relationship.

Once he arrived at post, Hume's first priority was getting to know his mission team and address the many challenges they faced. These included the inherent stress of service at a one-year, unaccompanied hardship post; limited Arabic- and French-language skills; a rapidly changing security profile; poor housing and living conditions; rudimentary communications and information technology systems; and limited access to Algerian leaders. Fortunately, all these problems improved with time, paralleling improvements in the bilateral relationship.

Hume's extensive background reading and consultations prior to departure had led him to understand that Algeria faced three challenges in achieving stability and progress: its

search for identity as a former French colony, a single-party political scene, and gross economic mismanagement. Yet because U.S. policy centered on "positive conditionality," with Washington supporting Algiers as it implemented political and economic reforms, the embassy was limited to a reactive role, rather than proactively seeking areas for constructive engagement.

Accordingly, Hume quickly familiarized himself with government, business, media, diplomatic and civil society leaders, probing for areas of engagement. The election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika as president of Algeria in 1997 facilitated those efforts, which eventually opened the door to visits by Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk, congressional delegations, military officers, trade and development officials, and many other high-level individuals and groups.

As the cycle of political violence subsided, and both sides came to value a closer relationship, engagement grew to include a meeting abroad between Presidents Bouteflika and Clinton, expanded U.S. commercial activity in Algeria, and a visit to Washington by Algerian presidential envoys. All these initiatives helped to lay the foundation for a new partnership, as did working together on the Eritrean-Ethiopian border dispute.

Reflecting on the improved ties, Hume underscores that U.S. missions in similar situations should choose the right goals, empower people, collaborate with others, opt for action and use the chief of mission as the "point of the spear." The road to success is often paved with small steps, and sometimes requires the reversal of past policy. For instance, Hume pushed the Federal Aviation Administration to provide Algeria with airport security training, even though insta-

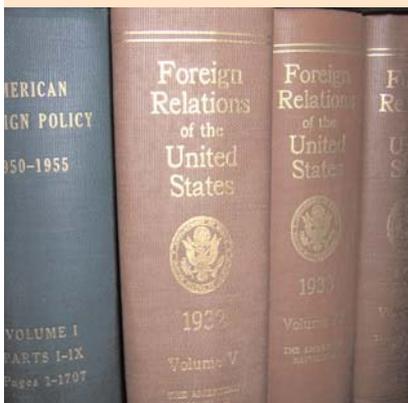


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## BOOKS

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***Amb. Hume's book  
underscores the fact that  
diplomacy remains a  
highly personal  
endeavor.***

---

bility and violence still persisted to some degree.

This book offers many insights for students of diplomacy, as well as for practitioners of statecraft, who seek to learn how an embassy can focus its resources and energy to turn around relations with a country in crisis. But perhaps the key lesson is this: despite advances in communications and information technology, diplomacy remains a highly personal endeavor through which its practitioners can help shape international events. Such work is the essence of transformational diplomacy.

---

*Jonita I. Whitaker is currently management counselor in Khartoum.*

### **Yes, Virginia, There Is an East Asia**

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#### **Chasing the Sun: Rethinking East Asian Policy**

*Morton Abramowitz and Stephen Bosworth, The Century Foundation, 2006, \$15.95, paperback, 156 pages.*

REVIEWED BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Most books on Asian affairs either examine one country or theme in

such depth that they primarily appeal to specialists, or commit the opposite sin, covering so much ground so broadly that they end up being hopelessly glib. I'm delighted to report that *Chasing the Sun: Rethinking East Asian Policy* escapes both those traps, and should interest the many members of the Foreign Service (like this reviewer) who are not Asia hands, but do follow developments in the region.

Co-authors Morton Abramowitz and Stephen Bosworth are both eminent retired ambassadors who draw on their extensive diplomatic experience. Amb. Abramowitz, this year's winner of AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award, is a senior fellow at The Century Foundation (the book's publisher); Amb. Bosworth is dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. The two blend their perspectives, and voices, together so smoothly that it is nearly impossible to tell who is writing at any given point.

Each of the seven chapters (following a foreword by the foundation's president and the authors' own introduction, both worth reading as well) examines the principal bilateral and multilateral issues East Asia poses for the United States. The authors start with the premise that "The era of absolute American pre-eminence in East Asia is over" — though they also challenge the "massive cliché" of China's rise. Instead, they propose a less alarming characterization: "China, East Asia's Community Builder." Their judicious observations about Beijing's behavior, and its effects on its neighbors, are unlikely to change the minds of those who are already firmly convinced the PRC is a dire threat to U.S. interests, but they are still valuable in their own right.

Abramowitz and Bosworth return to the overarching theme of their book

## BOOKS



***Abramowitz and Bosworth proceed from the premise that the era of absolute American pre-eminence in East Asia is over.***

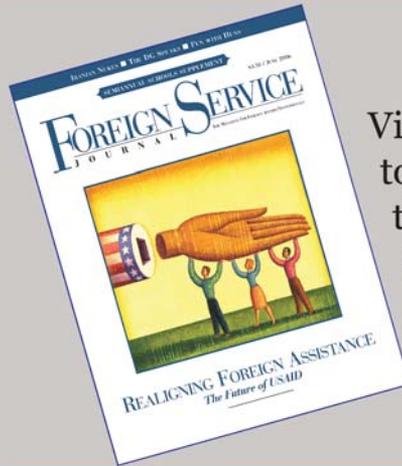


in the concluding chapter, “What Do We Do?” They grant that U.S. leadership in the region remains central on major issues ranging from security and counterterrorism to democracy promotion, trade and investment, but warn that “the exercise of American power is becoming more problematic and Asians themselves must take on more responsibility for regional stability and their own well-being.” They then make thoughtful recommendations for U.S. policy toward each of the region’s major players.

One caveat: In keeping with their geopolitical weight, China, Japan and the Koreans receive the bulk of the authors’ attention. Thus, readers who are interested in Southeast Asia will find somewhat less here to engage them. But that said, *Chasing the Sun* more than fulfills the aspiration Amb. Abramowitz expressed in an interview in this magazine’s July-August issue: “Steve [Bosworth] and I wanted to do a book that would provide a fresh, broad analysis of East Asia, what the U.S. was doing in the area, and what it might do better.” ■

*Steven Alan Honley, an FSO from 1985 to 1997, is the editor of the Journal.*

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# REFLECTIONS

## *I Found Huck Finn in El Salvador*

BY JACK GALLAGHER

President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress programs in the 1960s included a school construction initiative that, with Salvadoran cooperation, extended to the most remote areas of El Salvador. Schools sprouted at the rate of one a day, mostly small, bare-essentials buildings, sometimes with only seven or eight classrooms. These schools also served as community centers where the campesinos could gather and discuss their concerns.

As Embassy San Salvador's cultural affairs officer, I frequently represented our country at the dedicatory ceremonies for the new escuelas. Recalling one of these formal occasions still brings a most joyful smile to my face. It took place in a small agricultural village in the departamento of San Miguel, a hot, dusty area.

When I arrived there I joined Governor Miguel Charlaix on the speakers' platform and delivered our embassy's greetings to the villagers. Gov. Charlaix then walked over to the microphone and, after officially recognizing each of the many dignitaries,

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*Jack Gallagher, a retired FSO (USIA), is a freelancer whose writing has appeared in some 20 publications. He received a Golden Quill award from the Western Pennsylvania Press Association in 2004. Stamp courtesy of the Stamp Corner.*

*He was wearing a  
straw hat and was  
barefoot. "Huck  
Finn is alive and  
well in El Salvador,"  
I thought to myself.*



began delivering his speech.

While the governor spoke, I looked out at the capacity audience. Behind the overflow crowd, but off to one side, I could see a little boy elbowing his way onto the patio. He was wearing a straw hat and was barefoot. It seemed that Mark Twain's ghost had infiltrated the audience, and had brought that lad with him. "Huck Finn is alive and well in El Salvador," I thought to myself.

The youngster's face revealed a lively curiosity. Obviously, he had never before witnessed such an event. It was easy to see that he was wondering why so many people had congregated on the patio. Next, I noticed that this Salvadoran Huck was looking for somewhere to sit. His curiosity had convinced him to stay and watch all the strange goings-on.

Huck walked up and down the

aisles searching for a seat. Not one chair was available, but this little fellow was no quitter. He kept on looking. Suddenly his eyes lit up. He had finally found an unoccupied seat and, with his boyhood logic leading him on, he headed straight for it. When he got there, he sat down quietly — right in the governor's chair on the speakers' platform.

I looked at that marvelous country lad and smiled. He smiled back, totally happy. The audience snickered, which must have surprised the governor, who was concentrating on his speech and hadn't noticed Huck's almost silent capture of the seat of honor.

In a few moments, the governor finished speaking, turned around to walk back to his seat and immediately saw the new straw-hatted and barefoot governor-elect. Instinctively, and with genuine affection, Gov. Charlaix picked up the youngster and held him on his lap until the ceremony ended. I never saw a happier boy.

A number of years after that unforgettable day, the Salvadoran newspapers headlined the sad news that the governor had perished in an airplane crash. At least one Salvadoran boy, now several years older, must surely have wept — and Mark Twain in heaven must surely have been the first to welcome the governor to that celestial realm. ■



# THE SEPTEMBER Concert

The September Concert is a series of free musical performances held in cities around the world on September 11th every year. The Concert of all musical types offers a way for people of all countries to focus on bringing all communities together, reaffirming our hope for peace and celebrating life and universal humanity. The September Concert spreads citizen diplomacy through music.

The September Concert is guided by the following principles:

- Freedom:** All venues and musicians are free to design and organize their events
- Equality:** All music and musicians are treated equally, regardless of genre and background
- Accessibility:** All music is offered free of charge

Be a part of this growing network. Help build The September Concert into the world's largest peoples' concert. Your efforts in organizing an event on September 11th in your community will help to achieve the goal of filling the skies around the globe with music and wishes for world peace. Individuals, groups and organizations like Sister Cities International, a cooperating partner, are welcome.

All participants are urged to sign up on [www.SeptemberConcert.org](http://www.SeptemberConcert.org) so that their concerts are listed. Or e-mail: [contact@septemberconcert.org](mailto:contact@septemberconcert.org)

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