

FRIENDS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE BULLETIN

AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION & DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR OFFICERS, RETIRED

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Edited by Ted Wilkinson

Changing the Guard at the State Department

"Can the State Department Rise Again?" asks the *Christian Science Monitor* in a lead article on January 14 speculating about Condoleezza Rice's move from National Security Adviser to Secretary of State. "The big question in Washington is whether she will reestablish the pre-eminent role of the State Department in foreign affairs, helping the careerists on C Street exert more influence..." Almost concurrently, the Foreign Affairs Council, an umbrella group of 11 organizations representing American diplomats, held a press conference to publicize its assessment of Secretary Colin Powell's four years as Rice's predecessor in the State Department – an assessment that credits Powell with "extraordinary accomplishments."

So why the discrepancy? The Council report credits the Powell team at State with achieving his two key objectives; instilling a leadership culture and overcoming critical management problems. Among the specific improvements were mandatory leadership training, enhanced recruitment, modernized information technology, and upgraded overseas security. Using the increased funding that the Secretary himself convinced Congress was needed, State was able to hire 2,000 new staff above attrition, allowing personnel – for the first time in years – adequate time for training between assignments. Applications for the Foreign Service examination rose from 8,000 in 2000 to 20,000 in 2004. Minority hiring increased from 13 percent to 19 percent of intake. Morale became "robust." As one measure of it, the Secretary in all his appearances before State Department audiences was met with loud and prolonged applause.

Where the controversy arises about the Powell years is where the Council report stops: "This assessment does not address foreign policy questions..." Bob Woodward's insider accounts of President Bush's first term show that major foreign policy decisions often did not go Powell's way, and that others rejected his preference for multilateral solutions. Some conservative critics went so far as to accuse Powell and his Foreign Service advisers of disloyalty (see our 2003 and 2004 bulletins), and to suggest that Secretary Rice would name principal assistants to "clean house." (*continued on page 3*)

Who Are the "Friends of the Foreign Service?"

We'd like to think that the Foreign Service has many more friends than we can reach with this slim bulletin. The bulletin is tailored for people with whom we have been in contact, in one way or another, and who may have a special interest in the Foreign Service – family members of people serving in the Foreign Service of the State Department, the Agency for

International Development, the Foreign Agricultural Service, or the U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service or the International Broadcasting Bureau; members and staff of the committees of Congress dealing with foreign affairs; participants in AFSA's Elderhostel program, etc. If you know someone who would like to receive our bulletins, please contact us at fsfriends@afsa.org or at the address below. Bear in mind as well that we would be pleased to arrange

speakers for your organization on foreign affairs issues.

Friends of the Foreign Service, AFSA, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Towards a National Museum of American Diplomacy

by Amb. Steven Low



Washington's FBI Museum has been an attraction for American tourists since J. Edgar Hoover, and the OSS and CIA are now celebrated in the highly popular Spy Museum. All in all the U.S. government administers 220 museums. Although American diplomacy harkens back to the days of Benjamin Franklin, there is not yet one museum that tells the story of our nation's diplomacy and the people who make it work! For the last five years, however, it's been possible to say we're working on it. The space is there – the ground floor of the northeast corner of the Harry Truman Building, the State Department's home. It will include exhibit space, classrooms, and a separate conference center.

In addition, there are plenty of projected contents for the museum: pictures and memorabilia from historic treaties and other events, video and audio first-person accounts, etc. The intent will be to show how our diplomacy helps to maintain our security, promote prosperity, seek peace and expand American ideals. Visitors should come away with the idea that a vigorous diplomacy often can accomplish our purposes without calling in the CIA or armed forces.

The State Department will provide the renovated space, security and staff for it. What is still lacking is funding for exhibits and presentations, which must come from the private sector. The Foreign Affairs Museum Council, chaired by former Senator Charles Mathias, was created to help with the fund-raising, and has already raised \$1.25 million in seed money, but the project may ultimately cost as much as \$25 million. The first phase of the project has been completed with an exciting initial concept design by the country's leading museum designer which includes many electronic and inter-active exhibits. We need to gather more funds for the second phase – the complete design – which will require \$3 million dollars more. You can ask Steve Low for more details at 2855 Tilden St., NW, Washington, DC 20008; phone (202) 362-0759; e-mail famc@purespeed.com.

A former Ambassador to Zambia and Nigeria and director of the Foreign Service Institute, the author is now president of the Foreign Affairs Museum Council.

Designed for Professionals: The 'Foreign Service Journal'

For readers with an interest in looking deeper into Foreign Service issues, AFSA has been publishing a monthly magazine for 81 years; in effect, since the Rogers Act of 1924 established a modern, career Foreign Service. The magazine contains topical news of interest to Foreign Service people, including relevant information on schools and on taxes, "Cybernotes" on what's available through your internet connections, letters, advertising and feature articles. The majority of the feature articles focus on specific themes of current interest. For example, themes for the last six months have been:

- fighting the war on terrorism (September)
- the U.S. elections as seen by foreign journalists (October)
- books by Foreign Service authors (November)
- the value of medical diplomacy (December)
- reflections on foreign assignments (January)
- the "handoff" from Powell to Rice at State (February)
- the situation in Iraq, two years after the war (March)

The following themes projected (but not final) for the coming months include commercial diplomacy (April), China (May), Foreign Service training and expertise (June), and fiction by Foreign Service authors (July/August). Subscriptions to the *Journal* are \$40 per year and can be ordered directly by e-mail at journal@afsa.org or through the "friends" address on the preceding page.

The Foreign Service and the Iraqi Elections

by W. Stuart Symington



Iraq's Jan. 30 elections were a testament to the spirit of those who voted, those who ran, and those who organized and secured the process. They were an Iraqi success that was supported by the remarkable work of U.S. security forces and the U.S. mission in Iraq. The success of the elections was due to the Iraqi people's conviction that democratic elections were worth risking their lives. Nearly 60 percent of registered voters participated (about the same levels as in the U.S. November 2004 election), despite threats and violence from the insurgents. The process succeeded because most Iraqis were convinced that the elections were reasonably designed and would be fairly administered, with every effort made to reduce security threats to voters.

Before July 1, 2004, the U.S. Foreign Service postwar role in Iraq was limited to individual personnel on loan to Coalition Provisional Authority head "Jerry" Bremer (himself a former FS officer). Bremer reported to the Secretary of Defense.

When Iraq regained sovereignty and the provisional government began functioning, the U.S. sent John Negroponte (also a former FS officer) as ambassador, reporting to the Secretary of State. Negroponte (and his successor) now have a full team of State and USAID FS personnel, together with an expert staff of other civilian agency representatives.

The role today of these FS members is exceptional. Security constraints drastically restrict travel. There is no place in Iraq where our people are not at risk. In the office and in living quarters they are threatened by rockets and mortar fire; outside, every movement exposes them to danger from suicide car bombers or other attackers. Even movements within the U.S. compounds often require "personal protective gear." Housing is spartan. Meals are communal. Outside diversion is nonexistent.

Despite such conditions, FS people helped Iraqis make their elections a success. All over Iraq, FS staff and officers donned flak jackets and helmets and jumped into multi-vehicle convoys, helicopters, and C-130s to do the work of our diplomatic mission. Not confined to the embassy's Green Zone HQ in Baghdad, to consulate-size "Regional Embassy Offices" in Kirkuk, Mosul, Hilla and Basra, or to "State Embedded Teams" (outposts based with military units in Tikrit, Baqubah, Ramadi, Fallujah, Karbala and Najaf), they sallied out to do contact work, deliver demarches, and get "ground truth."

In Baghdad, they traveled the city's mean streets to

encourage political leaders to participate in the process, and to assess election preparations with electoral and UN security officials; in Kirkuk, they underlined the importance of Kurdish participation in regional elections as well as the national race; in Mosul, they flagged security problems and monitored election preparations; and in Tikrit, the Army Division Commander praised his Foreign Service political adviser for her sound advice and straight talk. In Baqubah, they drew on contacts with local leaders to defuse an election eve crisis; in Ramadi, they ignored repeated attacks and kept meeting local leaders and pushing electoral participation; in Fallujah, they ignored ongoing fighting, entering the city with the marines, in order to focus on restoring civilian government, expedite humanitarian aid, and cover the elections.

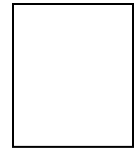
FS members held dozens of interviews and briefings for hundreds of journalists, and organized and escorted media excursions to more than a dozen cities around the country. In Hilla, Karbala, and Najaf, they facilitated press access to Iraqi candidates and voters; in Najaf, FS personnel themselves traveled to Maysan province, meeting political candidates and lobbying for a constitution that would protect the right of all Iraqis.

While some worked the elections, others in the mission made their work possible. Managers solved staffing, operations and supply problems, meeting extraordinary challenges in an environment almost totally lacking in local infrastructure. DS agents were most exposed, escorting daily sorties by action officers on missions, and running to help at the sound of rocket blasts or mortar attacks in the compounds. A Hilla information officer traveled to Mosul to install new communications gear at the height of pre-election violence; office managers volunteered to be election-day observers, calling it the greatest day of their lives. Others helped wounded servicemen. While some worked the elections, others lobbied for reform, convinced the Interim Government to take action that won debt relief, worked to transform security services and advance the rule of law, helped refugees, pushed infrastructure and other development, and advised government ministers. This was the ordinary work of a mission in an extraordinary setting.

The author is a veteran Foreign Service officer who served on temporary duty in Baghdad prior to and during the elections.

Changing the Guard (cont. from page 1)

So far just the opposite has happened. Secretary Rice's choice for deputy, Robert Zoellick, is widely admired for his work as the U.S. Trade Representative in the last four years, and is a veteran of several other senior State Department jobs in President Bush's father's term. An FS officer, Nicholas Burns, has been chosen for the number-three job in State – Under Secretary for Political Affairs – as was the case under Powell. Other appointments are similarly respected professionals, apparently chosen for expertise rather than any ideological leanings. Before her confirmation, Secretary Rice also scheduled a special combined meeting with the Foreign Affairs Council and the State representatives of our (AFSA) Governing Board to hear the current concerns of Foreign Service professionals. After these well-received steps, Secretary Rice was given an enthusiastic welcome from assembled Foreign Service and Civil Service employees when she arrived at State on Jan. 27 to begin her job.



Foreign Service News Briefs

- **The Foreign Service and the Tsunami** – Inundated with demands for assistance and information, FS personnel throughout the affected region sprang into action for help, often in remote locations far from their posts, and the State Department created two Command Center task forces in Washington to coordinate help. The consular task force fielded over 20,000 telephone calls about Americans presumed missing, and visits to its information web site rose to over one million per day. From an initial pledge of \$35 million, the U.S. government contribution to tsunami relief rose first to \$350 million, and now to \$950 million. Responsibility for designing and implementing relief projects falls largely to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).
- **Veteran Foreign Service Officer to Become Intelligence Coordinator** – Leaving one major challenge for yet another, John D. Negroponete will shortly leave Baghdad, where he has been serving as Ambassador since last July, to fill the newly created post of director of national intelligence. The job entails coordination of the nation's 15 separate intelligence agencies (including the CIA, DIA, and NSA) and allocating their budgets, overseeing a new Counterterrorism Center, and briefing the president daily. Ambassador Negroponete is a Foreign Service Officer who served as Ambassador in Honduras, Mexico and the Philippines before retiring. He returned to government in 2001 to become the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. In his new position he will be the first FS officer to serve in a cabinet-level position (apart from ambassadors to the U.N.) since Lawrence Eagleburger (Secretary of State 1992-1993), and before him Frank Carlucci (Secretary of Defense, 1987-1989).
- **Streamlined Visa Rules** – While basic immigration law changes are still a long way from enactment in Congress, new changes in visa rules announced in February for students and scientists visiting the U.S. have made the jobs for American consular personnel abroad a lot easier. After the 9/11 attacks, strict adherence to newly-tightened rules required applicants to requalify for their visits once a year. Frustrated by long delays, many began to look elsewhere for centers of academic excellence. Educational and scientific organizations in the U.S. pressed for changes. As a result, the rules have now been changed to allow students to qualify for four years at one time, and scientists for two years.

Book Corner

Inside a U.S. Embassy, described by reviewers as “an anthology of brief essays and personal testimonies...a fascinating revelation of the tireless men and women who labor to represent America abroad,” has been revised and updated.

Copies can be ordered from www.afsa.org or from the address given on page 1. For readers with a taste for history, dramatic excerpts from the oral histories of 40 FS officers have been assembled in “American Diplomats: the Foreign Service at Work,” available from the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training at www.adst.org.