

FRIENDS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE BULLETIN

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Edited by Ted Wilkinson

Tough Challenges for Today's Foreign Service

When meeting new entrants into the American Foreign Service in the last few years, one is constantly impressed with their maturity and spirit. Many have already had successful careers in the private sector, speak one of the difficult languages of Africa and Asia, and/or have impressive post-graduate academic records. They're going to need all of those skills in today's international environment.

Two challenges face Americans serving abroad in ever greater measure. One is the psychological difficulty of working in an atmosphere of widespread hostility toward the U.S. The other is the increasingly cumbersome need for protection against terrorism. To some extent, the two challenges are interrelated. In an article in the September edition of the *Foreign Service Journal*, Jane Loeffler points out how designs for new impregnable American embassies clash with a need for openness and accessibility to promote public diplomacy. That issue also explores the daunting array of tasks set before the State Department's Diplomatic Security bureau, including the bureau's mission now extends to protecting certain key foreign government leaders as well as our own personnel and facilities. Diplomatic Security staffing has expanded to require 34,000 personnel (including 28,000 guards hired abroad).

The Bush administration has also had to face dramatically rising anti-U.S. sentiment. Previous Under Secretaries of State Charlotte Beers and Margaret Tutwiler were charged with designing new approaches for Public Diplomacy to address the problem. Neither was able to make much progress, and both resigned. Some analysts have blamed the incorporation of the U.S. Information Agency into State in 1999 for downgrading the role of public diplomacy. Whatever the truth of that, a broader assessment in 2003 by a task force led by Ambassador Edward Djerejian concluded that hostility toward the U.S. had reached "shocking" levels, in large part due to the unpopularity of U.S. policies.

Former White House Public Affairs Director Karen Hughes took office as Under Secretary in mid-August to head a renewed effort to improve the U.S. image abroad. Hughes seeks to revitalize public diplomacy focusing on "the four E's – engage, exchange, educate, and empower." Among the elements are vigorous responses to counter misinformation in foreign media; enhanced emphasis on public diplomacy for career professionals; and greater "empowerment" of the private sector to convey the U.S. message abroad. In Djerejian's view, however, reactions to U.S. policies will remain the principal determinant of our image. Hughes' success will likely depend heavily on how the president and Secretary Rice are perceived abroad handling Iraq, Arab-Israeli issues, and multilateral issues like nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea.

Our Conference on U.S.-China Relations

by Michael Ely

While the Foreign Service has always had a core group of Chinese experts and linguists, China has often seemed remote to the American Public, with less impact on our day-to-day lives than neighbors Canada and Mexico.

No longer. China's economy has expanded with astonishing speed in recent years and has gained a greater power status in East Asia and the world. The U.S. welcomes the emergence of China on the world stage and seeks to engage it as a major player in the international community to encourage movement toward democracy and respect for human rights.

In more everyday terms, Americans now need look no further than their gas pumps to see the impact of China, whose rapid increase in oil consumption is a major factor driving up prices. The People's Republic of China has become a super-competitive supplier of the American retail clothing market; Chinese imports have surged since tariffs were eliminated at the beginning of the year, threatening to overwhelm America's remaining higher cost producers. Congressional resistance to the abortive Chinese effort to purchase the U.S. oil firm UNOCAL captured headlines earlier this year.

For the Foreign Service, China's impact is increasingly evident in our relationships with other countries, including not only Japan and North and South Korea in Asia but nations even in our own hemisphere. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is emboldened to affront Washington because he sees Beijing as a major alternative client for his country's oil. An article in the September-October issue of *Foreign Affairs* (which features articles on China written by Asians), examines U.S. thinking concerning potential Chinese investment in Canada's untapped oil-rich tar sands.

To explore the significance of China's growing international role, DACOR is devoting its annual conference this year to Beijing's relations with the U.S. The half-day conference on Friday, Oct. 28 will feature Chinese Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong; former U.S. Ambassador to China James Lilley; and leading academic authorities from George Washington, Georgetown, and Johns Hopkins Universities, and from the Brookings Institution and American Enterprise Institute.

Readers who are interested in attending the conference may contact DACOR's program coordinator, Ms. Sherry Rock, at prog.coord@dacorbacon.org or at (202)-682-0500, ext. 17.

Michael Ely is the president of DACOR. During his Foreign Service career, he served among other posts as economic minister in Tokyo and deputy chief of mission at the US Mission to the European Union in Brussels. Since retirement in 1991, he has served as executive vice president of the Jean Monnet Council and in advisory positions for Commerce and State.

Upcoming Elderhostel Programs

2005

- Oct. 9-14: "U.S. Foreign Policy for the 21st Century" - Chautauqua, NY
- Oct. 9-14: "Challenges and Opportunities as the U.S. Enters a New Age and Time" - Atlanta, GA
- Oct. 28, November 18, and December 9: "Day of Discovery: Iraq 101" - Washington, D.C.

2006

- Jan. 29 – February 3: "The U.S. Foreign Service: Representing America Abroad," - St. Petersburg, FL
- Feb. 19-25: "U.S. Foreign Policy: The United States and Mexico" - Tucson, AZ
- March 12-17: "The Middle East/U.S. Diplomacy/Global Issues" - Washington, D.C.
- March 12-17: "The U.S. Foreign Service: Representing America Abroad" - St. Petersburg, FL
- March 26-31: "The United States and the New Europe" - Washington, D.C.
- March 26-31: "Challenges and Opportunities as the U.S. Enters a New Age and Time" - Atlanta, GA
- April 9-14: "U.S. Diplomacy: Up Close and Personal" - Washington, D.C.

For more information, contact Program Coordinator Janice Bay at bay@afsa.org or (202)-712-1941. You may also visit <http://www.afsa.org/elderhostel>.

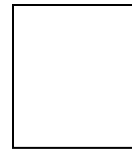
Foreign Service News Briefs

Embattled at the United Nations – In addition to foreign posts, Foreign Service people make up the major share of personnel at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations at 45th St. and First Ave. in New York City (where an imposing new 23-story office building will soon take the place of the obsolescent one, opened in 1961). Their new chief is U.S. Permanent Representative John Bolton, who was sent to New York through a “recess appointment” by President Bush in July. (Bolton’s formal confirmation was held up in the Senate because of his controversial record as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security in the first Bush administration.) Bolton wasted no time in generating new controversy in New York, where Washington directed him and his Foreign Service staff to seek basic changes in a draft package for major U.N. reform. Last-minute compromises were agreed for President Bush and other chiefs of state to sign in mid-September at the U.N. General Assembly, but reformers were disappointed by the limited scope of the final package.

Diplomatic “Special Forces” – Having observed the success of U.S. military “special forces” in action, news anchor Tom Brokaw suggested in an Aug. 14 *Washington Post* op-ed that the Foreign Service adopt a similar concept – a kind of “Peace Corps-plus,” with specialists trained in local dialects and related skills to serve-for-extra pay and benefits in tandem with the U.S. military in remote areas; e.g. in Afghanistan, so as to present a more benign face than one “enclosed in a Kevlar helmet and wraparound sunglasses.” Replying to Brokaw in a letter to the editor, AFSA State V.P. Steve Kashkett noted that selected F.S. people have in fact “served side-by-side with U.S. military units from Somalia to Haiti to Bosnia to Afghanistan to Iraq, doing precisely the kind of outreach work that Mr. Brokaw recommends.” The only missing element has been extra pay for this hazardous duty. To the contrary, Congress has yet to rectify the “locality pay” anomaly that reduces pay for most F.S. people by about 16 percent when they leave Washington to serve overseas. While the *Post* did not print Kashkett’s response, it did publish a letter by F.S. veteran Lawrence Cohen who noted that, as of July 2005, there were already State and USAID F.S. officers assigned to 22 military-civilian Provincial Reconstruction Teams throughout Afghanistan.

U.S.-Mexico Border Drama – Nowhere do the Foreign Service and domestic U.S. government agencies interact more than on our southern frontier, where the U.S. has five consulates in Mexican border cities. The consulates are at Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo and Ciudad Juarez, all facing Texas; Nogales on the Arizona border; and Tijuana on the California frontier. A primary mission for the consulates is to help both governments at the state and federal level control drug smuggling and other cross-border crime. It’s a tough struggle for all concerned. Taking into account kidnappings of Americans and other recent violent crime in Nuevo Laredo, Ambassador Tony Garza took the radical step of closing the consulate temporarily on July 28. Border policing is further hampered by the throngs of illegal immigrants crossing the frontier at less guarded points, in particular the Arizona desert where hundreds have died, and by the bandits who prey on them. In an “act of desperation” designed in part to prod Congress to take badly needed action to channel and regularize migration from Mexico, Governors Bill Richardson of New Mexico and Janet Napolitano of Arizona declared a state of emergency on their southern frontiers in mid-August in order to free up additional funds for border law enforcement.

New Office for Rebuilding Nations – Despite the Bush administration’s early distaste for getting the U.S. involved in “nation-building,” grumbling from Congress about inadequate Defense Department planning for war post Iraq has led to the creation in the State Department of a Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability. The coordinator’s office is to bring together civilian experts to work with the military during interventions in troubled states. According to Coordinator Amb. Carlos Pascual, the office will also monitor a “watch list” of countries at risk of sliding into dysfunction, terrorism and civil strife and seek to prepare for situations requiring intervention.



New President Takes Office at AFSA

J. Anthony Holmes assumed his duties as President of the American Foreign Service Association on July 15, 2005. Prior to his election, he was U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Burkina Faso from 2002 to 2005. As ambassador, he devoted himself to improving the U.S.-Burkina Faso bilateral relationship, eliminating the considerable misunderstandings that existed previously, reducing the gaps in how the two governments see the region and its key issues, and finding mutually beneficial areas of cooperation, including trade, development assistance, education, military relations, development of democracy and human rights, and the fights against HIV/AIDS and trafficking in children.

He was director of the Africa Bureau's Economic and Policy Office from 1999 to 2002, where he worked on a wide array of economic and global issues, including helping the U.S. government and Africa come to grips with the devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic; implementing the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA); tailoring U.S. assistance efforts to take advantage of changing circumstances in both Washington and in Africa; and working on African debt policy. He has spent almost half of his career on African issues, also serving as the Economic/Commercial Section Chief in Harare (1991-1995) and in the economic section in Nairobi (1984-1988). Ambassador Holmes has spent the other half of his career as an economic and, occasionally, commercial officer in Egypt (1980-1982) and in Syria (1982-1984). He also headed the economic sections in Singapore (1988-1991) and in Sweden (1996-1999); and was deputy director of the Office of Sanctions Policy in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (1995-1996).

Mr. Holmes has a B.A. in Comparative Religion and an M.A. in Economic Geography from the University of Georgia, as well as an M.B.A. in International Management from The Thunderbird School. He and his wife Ingalill have two sons.



**Ambassador
J. Anthony
Holmes**

Alert to Mail Readers

Beginning with our next semiannual issue, we will be sending the "Friends of the Foreign Service" bulletin only electronically. We encourage mail readers who also have e-mail to notify us of your e-mail addresses at fsfriends@afsa.org, so that we can continue this free service for you. For those with no access to e-mail, we regret that printing and mail costs have caused us to discontinue postal mailings. Please keep in mind that we continue at your service to arrange speakers for your organization on foreign affairs issues. As before, if your organization is interested in a retired diplomat speaker on such issues, contact Tom Switzer, AFSA Communications Director, at: 800-704-2372, ext. 501; e-mail: switzer@afsa.org.