



# PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

## *Moving Forward Together*

BY SUSAN R. JOHNSON

The impact of globalization and militarization is generating a pressing need to review and rethink the roles of diplomacy and development, both in supporting our foreign policy and national security and in advancing American interests and values. Within the broad framework of this debate, a question arises: how can a professional association and bargaining unit such as AFSA contribute to strengthening our diplomacy and development services as a tool of national power?



There are three aspects of this issue on which I believe AFSA should continue to focus its energies: (1) raising the profile and credibility of diplomacy; (2) enhancing the professionalism and quality of American diplomats and development experts; and (3) protecting and promoting the interests of each of our member agencies. (I will develop each of these objectives more fully in future columns.) I invite readers to share their thoughts on these goals to benefit the newly elected 2011-2013 Governing Board, which will soon set priorities for the next two years.

AFSA has welcomed the commitment of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and outgoing Defense Secretary Robert Gates to diplomacy and development as critical tools of national power, alongside defense. Equally important, they have both consistently sought the resources and domes-

tic political support those functions deserve. As part of this effort, AFSA has strongly supported full implementation of the Diplomacy 3.0 hiring program and completion of the Quadrennial Diplomacy and

Development Review.

As our recent annual reports document, AFSA has been investing in its own capacity building, starting with a renovated building, a modernized Web site and IT communications capacity. We have expanded professional staffing to deepen our bench in the areas of policy, legislative work, labor management and retiree services, as well as targeted use of outside expertise.

AFSA has begun a program to collect and present Foreign Service profiles to demystify our profession and explain what our diplomats and development experts around the world actually do, illustrating the excellent return on investment that diplomacy and development services offer the American taxpayer. We have also issued a new edition of our book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, expanded media outreach, sought out opportunities to testify before Congress, and begun building a broader spectrum of alliances with other groups.

In addition, AFSA continues to work to define and enhance professionalism in American diplomacy and development. We are pursuing this goal

through coverage in the *Foreign Service Journal*, by expanding the quantity and quality of our programming, by participating in the American Academy of Diplomacy's project on diplomatic professional education and training, and working to formulate ethical standards and a code of conduct for today's Foreign Service professionals. This demands more attention and closer cooperation with management and the Foreign Service Institute, as well as with American diplomats who, as master practitioners now in academia, represent a valuable resource.

Effective promotion and protection of the interests of the Foreign Service requires broad understanding of what the key issues are and what strategies are most likely to be effective. Federal government employees across the board have been presented with unprecedented challenges, starting with questions about their relevance and role, but the largest proportional cut in the 2011 and 2012 budgets relates to international affairs. Challenges of this severity to the Foreign Service call for a collective response.

As the 21st Century AFSA Slate's campaign theme, "Moving Forward Together," emphasizes, your support will strengthen our credibility and capacity to speak out on your behalf — whereas lack of interest will diminish our voice. Please share your thoughts at [johnson@afsa.org](mailto:johnson@afsa.org). ■