



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

**H**appy New Year! Once again it's time for my periodic invitation to take advantage of the many opportunities to contribute to the *Journal*.

Each issue of the magazine features a focus section examining various facets of an issue related to the Foreign Service or international relations. This month, as President Barack Obama takes office, we examine the transformational diplomacy initiative, including the Global Repositioning Program, that outgoing Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice launched with great fanfare three years ago.

Whether to retain that approach is one of the key foreign policy decisions the new administration faces, yet to the best of my knowledge, there was no debate about the program before or after it was announced — neither inside nor outside State. And as far as I know, there has been no public assessment of its progress.

To rectify that situation, we are pleased to present Associate Editor Shawn Dorman's article describing how the program has been implemented, both in Washington and in the field, and how it has fared thus far. Her research began last spring in Indonesia, where she was able to meet with the GRP officers at Embassy Jakarta, as well as the deputy chief of mission, the management counselor, the political counselor and others. The U.S. mission to Indonesia has turned

out to represent a sort of best-case scenario for effective utilization of GRP positions. The broader story is not as positive, however.

Shawn repeatedly ran into one disconcerting problem that bears mention: many Foreign Service personnel speaking about their experience with GRP declined to be quoted by name. Some of them even asked her not to mention their post, for fear of retaliation. It should trouble all of us that so few people felt safe going on the record on a subject of professional interest.

The falloff in use of the Dissent Channel and in nominations for AFSA's Constructive Dissent Awards in recent years may be another reflection of this climate. And the fact that the outgoing administration allowed the four-decade-old Secretary's Open Forum to go dormant certainly reinforced the view that constructive dissent is not welcomed.

We follow that article with two others that examine other aspects of the outgoing administration's record on transformational diplomacy: "The Brave New World of Democracy Promotion" by Robert McMahon of the Council on Foreign Relations, and "The Middle Eastern Partnership Initiative: Adding to the Diplomatic Toolbox," by FSO Peter Mulrean.

Looking ahead: To the right is a list of the focus topics our Editorial Board has identified for the coming year

## 2009 EDITORIAL CALENDAR for the *FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL*

### JANUARY 2009

Transformational Diplomacy/  
Global Repositioning Program

### FEBRUARY 2009

The World Politics of Energy  
(PLUS AFSA Tax Guide)

### MARCH 2009

Coping with Separation:  
Unaccompanied Posts  
& Evacuations  
(PLUS AFSA Annual Report)

### APRIL 2009

60th Anniversary of NATO

### MAY 2009

Iraq after the War:  
Relations with Iran and the Region

### JUNE 2009

USAID/MCA & Development  
Assistance  
(PLUS semiannual SCHOOLS  
SUPPLEMENT)

### JULY-AUGUST 2009

FAS and FCS  
(PLUS AFSA Awards coverage)

### SEPTEMBER 2009

Consular Issues

### OCTOBER 2009

Public Diplomacy a Decade after  
USIA's Demise

### NOVEMBER 2009

COVER STORY: "In Their Own Write"  
(annual roundup of books by  
FS authors)

### DECEMBER 2009

The Foreign Service as an Institution  
(PLUS semiannual SCHOOLS  
SUPPLEMENT)

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



(subject, of course, to revision).

Because of our lead time for publication, and the requirement for Editorial Board approval, we need to receive focus article submissions at least three months (and preferably longer) prior to the issue's release date. Thus, we have already lined up authors for the January, February and March issues, but there is still time to submit manuscripts for later months. Submissions should generally be between 2,000 and 3,000 words, though shorter pieces are always welcome.

If those choices don't grab you, or if you feel we have not devoted enough space to a professional concern or functional issue, please consider writing a feature article (also generally 2,000-3,000 words long) for us.

**FS Heritage**, a new department we introduced last year, is off to a strong start. However, we continue to welcome submissions spotlighting U.S. diplomats whose names many of us know only from history books or the halls of State.

Our annual **FS Fiction Contest** continues with the same rules that applied last year: Entrants are restricted to one story of 3,000 words or less, which must be e-mailed to us at [campi@afsa.org](mailto:campi@afsa.org) no later than March 1. We will publish the winning story (selected by the FSJ Editorial Board) in our July-August 2009 double issue, and the other top stories over the fall months. For more details, see the ad elsewhere in this issue, or contact us directly.

We invite those of you who expect to publish a book between now and next fall to send us a copy (along with promotional materials) for inclusion in our annual compilation of recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors, **In Their Own Write**. Sept. 1 is still the deadline for

---

---

*There are many ways  
you can share your  
insights in our pages.  
Let us hear from you.*

---

---

the roundup, which will run in November. For more information, contact Senior Editor Susan Maitra at [maitra@afsa.org](mailto:maitra@afsa.org).

### Share Your Insights

We take seriously our mission to give you "news you can use" — e.g., information about how to advance your career; tips on dealing effectively with the bureaucracy at State and the other foreign affairs agencies, especially when you are trying to resolve a problem; and updates on how AFSA is working to improve working and living conditions for Foreign Service employees and their families.

Much of that coverage is found, of course, within the pages of **AFSA News**. That section offers many different ways for members to share their experiences, thoughts and concerns regarding professional issues, including the following departments: Family Member Matters, Of Special(ist) Concern (a forum for specialists), Where to Retire, The System and You, On the Lighter Side (FS humor), Memo of the Month, and The System and You (notes from inside the bureaucracy). Contact AFSA News Editor Francesca Kelly for more information at [kelly@afsa.org](mailto:kelly@afsa.org).

Another place to look for such items is our periodic **FS Know-How** department. We welcome contributions on topics ranging from managing one's

career and cutting red tape to parlaying one's professional skills in retirement, as well as financial information and guidance targeted to Foreign Service personnel.

There are many other ways you can contribute to our pages, of course. I hope you will share your reactions, positive and negative, not only to this issue but to what you read every month, by contributing to our **Letters** section. Just bear in mind that, as with all periodicals, the briefer and more focused your letter is, the more likely we'll be able to print it in full. (In general, 200 to 400 words is a good target.)

The **Speaking Out** department is your forum to advocate policy, regulatory or statutory changes to the Foreign Service. These columns (approximately 1,500 to 2,000 words long) can be based on personal experience with a professional injustice or present your insights into a foreign affairs-related issue.

Our **Reflections** department presents short commentaries (approximately 600 words long) based on personal experiences while living or traveling overseas. These submissions should center on insights gained as a result of interactions with other cultures, rather than being descriptive "travel pieces." We are also pleased to consider poetry and photographs for publication, either in that section or as freestanding features.

Please note that all submissions to the *Journal* must be approved by our Editorial Board and are subject to editing for style, length and format. For information on how to submit a column, article or letter, please contact us at [authors@afsa.org](mailto:authors@afsa.org) and we will be delighted to respond. For other inquiries — changes of address, subscriptions, etc. — e-mail us at [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org).

Let us hear from you. ■