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# Why This Book?

BY SHAWN DORMAN

**M**any Americans do not know what the Foreign Service is or understand what goes on inside a U.S. embassy. Yet the work done at our embassies and consulates around the world by the people who make up the Foreign Service is vitally important to America — our security, our economy, and our democracy. Every day consular officers help stranded Americans get home. Every day economic and commercial officers assist U.S. businesses to compete overseas. During times of upheaval, political officers are the ones on the front lines keeping Washington informed about the real situation. U.S. diplomats negotiate the international agreements that end the wars, keep the peace, and protect and promote U.S. interests. Foreign Service diplomats and specialists are truly the unsung heroes of American foreign policy.

This book will give you an up-close and personal look into the work and lives of the people who make up the United States Foreign Service. The people you will meet work at big embassies as well as tiny consulates, in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. They are ambassadors and they are junior officers. They are development professionals, press officers, and computer experts. They are a diverse group, but they all share the same mission — to serve their country.

In the Profile section, meet Foreign Service employees in each type of position in a typical U.S. embassy and gain a sense of the key role played by each member of an embassy team. In the Day in the Life section, take a rare hour-by-hour look at what Foreign Service employees actually do on the job, in Kabul and in Vladivostok and elsewhere.

The final section — Tales from the Field — gives you a sense of the extraordinary. Look behind the scenes of some historic events. See how the Foreign Service meets the challenges of today's complex world: the threat of terrorism, the coups, the civil wars, the natural and not-so-natural disasters, and the evacuations.

So come on inside ...