

Why This Book?

By Shawn Dorman

Many 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 around the world 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, Latin America, and the Middle East. They are ambassadors and they are entry-level officers (and everything in between). They are development professionals, press officers, security agents, and computer experts. They are a diverse group, but they all share the same mission—to serve their country.

In the *Profiles* section, meet Foreign Service staff serving in almost every type of position in a typical U.S. embassy, and gain a sense of the vital 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, from Port-au-Prince to Vladivostok and beyond. The *Tales from the Field* section will give you a sense of the extraordinary, as the Foreign Service meets the challenges of today's complex world.

A new section for this third edition covers life and work in the Foreign Service, illustrating that it is not just a job, but a way of life. Beginning with the embassy country team, see how all the pieces of an embassy fit together; how a career is shaped; and how spouses, partners, and children navigate this unique lifestyle. Among other voices, hear from a Foreign Service National what it's like to work with Americans, from a spouse on working in the embassy, and from two young adults on growing up in the Foreign Service.

Input from our readers led us to write another new section, on joining the Foreign Service. Part V offers straightforward step-by-step guides to the complex hiring processes for State Department officers and specialists, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the other foreign affairs agencies.