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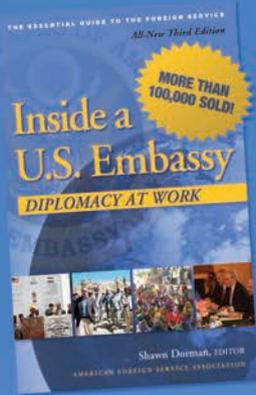
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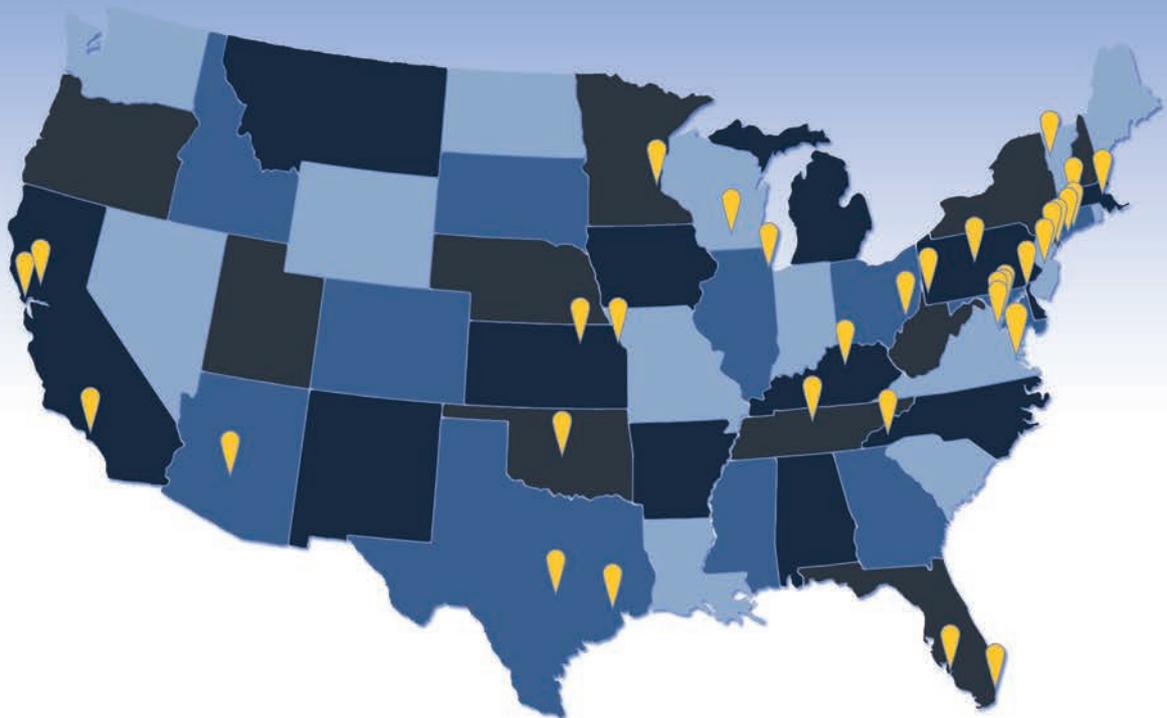
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FOCUS ON THE FOREIGN SERVICE IN VIETNAM

History Revisted / 20

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Viet Cong Attack on Embassy Saigon, 1968 / 22

BY ALLAN WENDT

From Whitehouse to the White House / 25

BY KENNETH QUINN

Mobilizing for South Vietnam's Last Days / 33

BY PARKER W. BORG

Saigon Sayonara / 37

BY JOSEPH MCBRIDE

Finding My Heroes, Finding Myself: From Refugee Child to State Department Official / 43

BY ANNE D. PHAM

Doing Social Work in Southeast Asia / 50

BY LANGE SCHERMERHORN

Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: Lessons for Today / 53

BY RUFUS PHILLIPS

Vietnam Today / 63

BY MURRAY HIEBERT

Return to Vietnam: Observations in 2015 / 66

BY PARKER W. BORG

APPRECIATION

A True Gentleman: Theodore S. Wilkinson III / 83

A lifelong AFSA member, Ted served as the association's elected president from 1989 to 1991 and as FSJ Editorial Board chair from 2005 to 2011.

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

On the cover: On the afternoon of April 29, 1975, Joe Gettier left the embassy against the orders of the U.S. ambassador to save people. With the help of Mel Chatman and Bill Egan, Gettier used barges pulled by tug boats at Khanh Hoi Saigon Port. Photo by Nik Wheeler, courtesy of Anne Pham.

AFSA NEWS

2014 Survey—AFSA Listens to Its Members / 71

2014 Survey—State Members Respond / 72

VP Voice State: Open Plan Offices—Boon or Bane? / 74

VP Voice FCS: Some Good News / 75

Look for Your Ballot: Vote in the AFSA Election / 75

VP Voice Retiree: My Three Laws / 76

AFSA Hosts Va. Congressman / 77

2014 Tax Guide: Clarification / 77

Capitol Hill Panel Discusses Women in Diplomacy / 78

Sinclair Language Award Recipients / 79

AFSA Community: A New Way to Engage / 79

AFSA at the Bureau of Diplomatic Security / 80

Tax News: Foreign Earned Income Exemption Denials / 80

AFSA Welcomes New Interns / 81

Helping Our Afghan and Iraqi Colleagues / 82

COLUMNS

President's Views / 7

How to Find the Next Bill Burns
BY ROBERT J. SILVERMAN

Speaking Out / 16

Citizenship and Unwed Border Moms: The Misfortune of Geography
BY AMELIA SHAW

Reflections / 96

Vietnam: Endings and Beginnings
BY BRUCE A. BEARDSLEY

DEPARTMENTS

Letters / 8

Talking Points / 12

Books / 85

Local Lens / 98

MARKETPLACE

Classifieds / 87

Real Estate / 90

Index to Advertisers / 95

Editor

Shawn Dorman: dorman@afsa.org

Managing Editor

Susan Brady Maitra: maitra@afsa.org

Associate Editor

Debra Blome: blome@afsa.org

Editorial/Publications Specialist

Brittany DeLong: delong@afsa.org

Ad & Circulation Manager

Ed Miltenberger: miltenberger@afsa.org

Art Director

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CONTACTS



www.afsa.org

AFSA Headquarters:

(202) 338-4045; Fax (202) 338-6820

State Department AFSA Office:

(202) 647-8160; Fax (202) 647-0265

USAID AFSA Office:

(202) 712-1941; Fax (202) 216-3710

FCS AFSA Office:

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Assistant Controller

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General Counsel

Sharon Papp: PappS@state.gov

Deputy General Counsel

Zlatana Badrich: BadrichZ@state.gov

Labor Management Specialist

James Yorke: YorkeJ@state.gov

Senior Staff Attorney

Neera Parikh: ParikhNA@state.gov

Staff Attorney

Raeka Safai: SafaiR@state.gov

Staff Attorney

Andrew Large: LargeA@state.gov

Labor Management Counselor

Colleen Fallon-Lenaghan:

FallonLenaghanC@state.gov

Labor Management Assistant

Jason Snyder: SnyderJ@state.gov

Executive Assistant

Lindsey Botts: BottsLK@state.gov

USAID Senior Labor Management Adviser

Douglas Broome: dbroome@usaid.gov

USAID Staff Assistant

Chioma Dike: cdike@afsa.org

MEMBER SERVICES

Member Services Director

Janet Hedrick: hedrick@afsa.org

Membership Representative

Natalie Cheung: cheung@afsa.org

Retiree Counselor

Todd Thurwachter: thurwachter@afsa.org

Coordinator, Retiree Counseling and Legislation

Matthew Sumrak: sumrak@afsa.org

Administrative Assistant and Office Manager

Ana Lopez: lopez@afsa.org

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Kristen Fernekes: fernekes@afsa.org

Director of New Media

Ásgeir Sigfússon: sigfusson@afsa.org

Publications Manager

Shawn Dorman: dorman@afsa.org

Online Communications Specialist

Jeff Lau: lau@afsa.org

Special Awards and Outreach Coordinator

Perri Green: green@afsa.org

Communications and Press Specialist

Allan Saunders: saunders@afsa.org

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Senior Legislative Assistant

David Murimi: murimi@afsa.org

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Scholarship Director

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How to Find the Next Bill Burns

BY ROBERT J. SILVERMAN

Colleagues, I want to share with you the meat of a memo I sent to the participants in the Secretary's senior retreat held on March 11. It previews a specific proposal that AFSA made to the Director General to revise the Schedule B hiring authority and cap the number of political-appointee deputy assistant secretaries.

Over the past months, several of you have raised with me the question of how to identify the next Bill Burns, the next Foreign Service leader.

Finding the next Bill Burns is more akin to farming than hunting. It is not about spotting and bagging the single most-talented person in the bureaucracy.

It is about cultivating and preserving a personnel system that allows talented career people like Bill to rise up. It is about trusting the department's ethos of selecting career employees for the great majority of mid-level manager DAS and most senior leadership assistant secretary and under secretary positions.

Underpinning that ethos is a belief that career employees bring the field experience and perspective critical to crafting and implementing our policies.

This system is in need of the kind of urgent repair that should be doable in the last two years of an administration. Little

by little, position by position, career talent is being marginalized, and it doesn't take long before a lack of opportunity for

advancement leads to a self-fulfilling lack of available career talent.

Let's stay with Bill Burns, and consider two of his positions that led to wider responsibilities. From 1988 to 1991, Bill served as the principal deputy director of the Secretary's policy planning staff, his first major policy job. That position long ago shifted to political appointees. From 2005 to 2008, Bill served as ambassador to Moscow before returning to Washington as under secretary for political affairs. In the last five years, that job has gone, first, to a political appointee and then to a retired FSO.

Now there are other ways for career employees to move up other than Bill's specific path. Probably there are understandable reasons why each of these jobs was taken out of the Foreign Service. But the cumulative effect of removing these and many other positions from the bidding pool is a failure to cultivate the Foreign Service talent system.

I ask your help in prioritizing the advancement of career FSOs because preserving that system is, in my view, best for our country's foreign policy interests.

What is to be done? I suggest two things, one easy and the other harder.

The easier part is to focus on ambassadorships. U.S. law states that they should normally be accorded to Foreign Service members. We should continue to push, through the Deputies Committee and other means, for strong career candidates for each and every one of the remaining ambassadorships in this administration.

AFSA's concern with ambassadorships

is not solely about the number of career versus political appointments. It is also about keeping those with high policy relevance from going political. Focusing on ambassadors is relatively easy because, in the end, nominating them is the president's prerogative, and all we can do is try our best.

The harder part is to focus on senior positions in the department. I suggest as a pragmatic matter focusing on those hired under Schedule B authority. Schedule Bs were originally intended as subject matter experts and technical advisers needed for non-recurring limited-term purposes. These hires are within the sole purview of the State Department.

I suggest two measures. First, let's return Schedule B hiring to its original purpose of technical experts needed for one-off assignments.

Second, let's allow no exceptions to the existing guidance that Schedule Bs not supervise career staff. And let's cap the overall number of political-appointee DASs of any kind.

I ask for your support to allow the Director General to undertake this hard work of limiting Schedule B hires and capping political DASs. If we can agree on this measure, we will have taken an important step to ensure our country will have more career officials like Bill Burns at the top in the future.

Be well, stay safe and keep in touch,
Bob

Silverman@afsa.org ■



Robert J. Silverman is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

Explaining What Diplomats Actually Do

I have the January-February *Journal* on my desk—an excellent issue. I had previously seen Donna Oglesby's writing on the subject of teaching diplomacy, but not the others.

As someone who teaches diplomatic practice to both undergraduates and graduates, I find an extraordinary craving among the young to understand exactly what we do. They are not much interested in theory, but are eager to understand what they might actually do if they joined a diplomatic service, whether American or foreign. They are often disconcerted by the day-to-day work that FSOs do and the substantial disconnect between that and the making of foreign policy.

For all the talk of a notable decline in the State Department's influence in recent years, the Foreign Service remains a highly sought-after career. Those who get through the fine examination sieve are very talented, although often unsure whether they want to make diplomacy a career—i.e., to stay with it more than five to 10 years.

I try to give them a realistic understanding of the challenges, both personal and professional, in a Foreign Service career. Many thanks for exploring the subject so successfully.

Tony Quainton
Ambassador, retired
Co-Director, Center for North
American Studies
American University
Washington, D.C.

Teaching in France

Thank you for putting together your recent focus on teaching diplomacy. It could not have been more timely.

I retired from the Foreign Service at the end of 2014, and one week later

began teaching a class on foreign policy and diplomacy.

The themes evoked by your contributors, particularly those offered by Barbara Bodine and Donna Oglesby, gave voice to questions and experiences I have only begun to consider. I found their insights immensely helpful.

I teach in France, so most of my students are not American. However, they resemble the students Ambassador Bodine describes as having “a very declaratory and directive approach to diplomacy.” I am convinced that FSOs temper that approach with their focus on process and the actual conduct of diplomacy, while hopefully not dampening the students' ardor for change.

Ms. Oglesby gave very good advice when she observed that practitioners have to “structure their own thinking and reflect upon what they might offer students, while being true to who they are.” As someone who is just at the beginning of that process, the January-February *FSJ* was a gift from the heavens.

Philip Breeden
FSO, retired
Aix-en-Provence, France

Russia for Real

It was a pleasant surprise—make that a shock—to read Ambassador James Goodby's “The Putin Doctrine and Preventive Diplomacy” in your November 2014 issue. I honestly did not know there was anyone in the State Department capable of long-term thinking.

After joining the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1979, I worked on programs in the Middle East, South Asia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Russia



and the former Soviet republics. Throughout my career, I sought to demonstrate that the economic development of other countries, even our enemies, benefits the United States in the long term.

During those 23 years I never encountered a single State Department officer who thought beyond the next presidential election—and there were far too few on the USAID side, as well.

Fast-tracking the privatization of Russia in the 1990s was a colossal failure, and probably produced some of the animosity we are now experiencing from President Vladimir Putin. And everywhere we've tried it, regime change has produced results that are probably worse than what we started with.

Expecting real development to come from helicoptered-in technical assistance teams in just two or three years is incoherent and wasteful; doing that in the midst of an armed conflict is insane. When we added democratic governance as a development goal without understanding the interdependence of political and economic systems, and how either one can overwhelm the other, we set the stage for the losses, even tragedies, that followed.

That is why Amb. Goodby's article was like a breath of fresh air rolling across the years of exhaust fumes. We need to reflect on what our real national interests are—not just currently, but 30 years from now—and then think about how best to achieve them without being hijacked by politicians and ideologues who have no idea what they are talking about. That's what the State Department and USAID should be doing. Could anything be more obvious?

Kristin Loken
USAID FSO, retired
Falling Waters, W.Va.

Romania Revisited

Although I never met Kiki Skagen Munshi during our respective Foreign Service careers, I was delighted to discover her long experience in Romania courtesy of your November 2014 issue, in which her excellent novel, *Whisper in Bucharest*, was reviewed.

My twin sister and I were born in Bucharest when King Carol II was on the Romanian throne and my father, Sheldon T. Mills, was a second secretary at the

American legation. I plan to return to Romania this summer and have already contacted the author for guidance.

Ms. Munshi responded immediately to my message and has been extremely helpful.

Best of all, since she returns to the country often, we hope to meet in Bucharest during my visit.

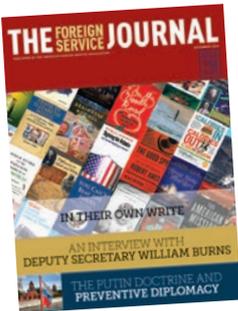
My sincere thanks to the *FSJ* for being the catalyst for a new friendship.

Linda Mills Sipprelle
FSO, retired
Princeton, N.J.

Reaching Out to Military Vets

Thank you, AFSA, for your recent outreach to military veterans in the Foreign Service. In my 33 years of combined government service (military, Civil Service and Foreign Service), I don't recall such an initiative. Outstanding!

I believe it's fair to say that those of us who have been members of the Foreign Service and the armed forces view the nexus of those two institutions as a joint endeavor to make "peace through strength" a meaningful component of



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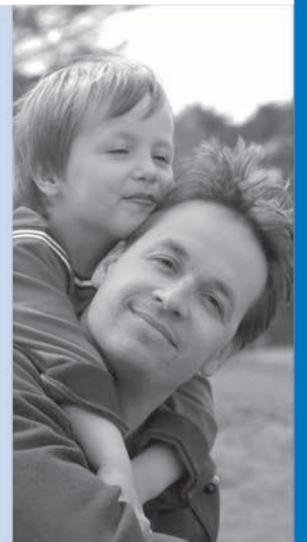
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America's diplomacy and national security. Indeed, all 12 of my Foreign Service classmates in 1981 were either retired or prior military members. That was the norm for the State Department's cadre of communications officers and technicians at that time.

I served as an enlisted sailor in the U.S. Navy from 1975 to 1979, then worked in the Civil Service for both the Army and Air Force before my appointment as an FS-9 support communications officer in January 1981. I retired from the Foreign Service in January 2007.

It should also be noted that a large number of State Department civil servants are also U.S. military veterans. These employees directly support Foreign Service operations abroad, especially within the Bureaus of Information Resource Management and Diplomatic Security.

Thanks again, AFSA, for your expression of interest and your recognition of the vital service provided by America's military veterans across the generalist and specialist corps of the Foreign Service. I'm proud to say that veterans have been and will continue to be a key factor in the ultimate success of the department's global mission.

Timothy C. Lawson
Senior FSO, retired
Hua Hin, Thailand

Taking the Point

The three responses in the March issue to Rachel Schneller's December letter, which called on AFSA to pay greater attention to diversity, certainly confirm that she struck a painful nerve. Ironically, however, the writers' zeal to defend AFSA and the Foreign Service only underscores the point Ms. Schneller was making: To fix a problem, one first has to recognize it.

For instance, retired FSO Herbert

Levin says he doesn't "recall that the folks on the other side of the table ever cared if the U.S. team was composed of Aleut lads or the sons of Vermont hill farmers." Unless Mr. Levin possesses telepathic powers, I'm confused as to how he knows that is the case. Moreover, the very way he frames the discussion mistakes an assortment of white males for genuine diversity.

Retired ambassadors Edward Peck and Edward Marks, both members of the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee, correctly point out that the committee's mission is to honor constructive dissent and exemplary performance—not to strive for a particular set of demographics among the winners. Yet apparently, neither sees anything remarkable about the fact that year after year, most winners of AFSA's dissent awards continue to be white males.

Personally, I think it would be well worth AFSA's time to look for ways to solicit more nominations that reflect the full diversity of today's Foreign Service. In her letter, Ms. Schneller suggested one way to proceed: Each of us could make a conscious effort to mentor colleagues who are not members of our own demographic group, and nominate them for AFSA awards.

Drawing on my experience as the *Journal's* editor (2001-2014), I'd like to propose a complementary approach. Periodically, I contacted each of many affinity groups in the foreign affairs agencies to invite their members to contribute articles to our pages, explaining



the process and offering to answer any questions they might have. I also made clear that all submissions, whatever the source, are approved by the For-

eign Service Journal Editorial Board.

That outreach brought in some good articles over the years, which we very likely would not have gotten otherwise. Admittedly, I never heard anything at all from many of those affinity groups, and only a few of the individuals who did express interest in contributing material to the magazine ever followed through. But speaking as a white male myself, I still think it is worthwhile to make sure everyone knows that all AFSA members are welcome to share their insights and views with their Foreign Service peers.

In that spirit, I respectfully encourage AFSA to use the network of affinity groups to invite all members of those organizations to nominate colleagues for its awards each year. I am confident that such targeted outreach will broaden the talent pool and enhance the quality of the selection process, whoever the winners may be.

Steven Alan Honley
Former FSO
Washington, D.C.

Diversity and Objectivity

We respectfully take issue with FSO Rachel Schneller's letter ("More Diversity on FSJ Pages, Please") in the December 2014 *Foreign Service Journal*. In addition to "valuing diversity for its own sake," as the letter states, Americans value achievement for its own sake, including the special contributions that dissent award winners regularly make to American diplomacy and the integrity of our Foreign Service.

In making the head-turning, improbable assertion that "We are going to be biased in favor of our own demographic," Ms. Schneller in effect contends that the four winners could not have been the most deserving because they were white males. This stands objectivity on its head,

as does her proposed remedy: that the judges “mentor, guide and nominate for awards those who are not like us.” Who, then, in Ms. Schneller’s view, is “us”?

To go in the direction she suggests would put all of us on a slippery slope that would distort both the ideal of diversity and the fundamental premises on which our country is based.

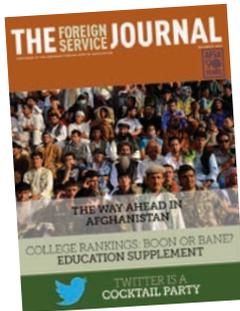
*Robert M. Beecroft
Ambassador, retired
Mette O. Beecroft
Bethesda, Md.*

AFSA Support for Diversity

I would like to publicly thank Rachel Schneller for her letter to the editor in the December 2014 issue, “More Diversity on FSJ Pages, Please.” AFSA enjoys a wide range of views on all kinds of issues, and Rachel’s letter sparked replies from other AFSA members, also published in the *Journal*. That diversity of views is a sign of healthy engagement.

I want to let readers know that AFSA has taken action in response to Rachel’s concern over the lack of diversity among AFSA award winners, a concern I share. This concern does not impinge on the outstanding achievements of our dissent winners last year. As others have noted, the AFSA Awards Committee is dependent on award nominations.

In January and February, AFSA reached out to the different affinity groups in the foreign affairs agencies to talk about the association and its programs, including the AFSA awards program. At a meeting at AFSA headquarters attended by the affinity groups’ leaderships, I met one-on-one with several affinity group heads, to ask them to spread the word about AFSA’s award



programs and encourage nominations from their ranks.

I ask all of you to think of your colleagues and nominate one or more of them for an AFSA performance or dissent award.

There is amazing work being done everywhere by members of the Foreign Service. I want to

encourage you to ensure all of this work is recognized.

*Bob Silverman
AFSA President
Washington, D.C.*

A Clarification

In the January-February *FSJ*, retired FSO Carroll Brown chronicled challenges he faced while seeking consular services abroad in a letter to the editor. Mr. Brown wrote that the State Department’s Benelux desk was unresponsive to his queries.

Unfortunately, while AFSA in good faith attempted to convey Mr. Brown’s queries to the desk on his behalf, an administrative error prevented their proper transmission, resulting in those concerns not being received by the Benelux desk.

As AFSA executive director, I accept responsibility. AFSA has apologized to both Mr. Brown and the Benelux desk for the miscommunication and any inconvenience to those concerned.

*Ian Houston
AFSA Executive Director
Washington, D.C.*

Correction

We regret an error in the obituary for Ambassador Robert V. Keeley in the March print edition of the *Journal*. Though Amb. Keeley was quoted in *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia* (1979), that book’s author is William Shawcross, not Keeley. ■



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One Door Closes... and Another Opens

On Feb. 11, the Department of State suspended operations at Embassy Sana'a and relocated staff out of Yemen. The security situation in Yemen, never very secure, had worsened. The Shiite militia known as the Houthis had overrun Sana'a in September, and the situation on the ground became increasingly unpredictable.

Yemen is the third diplomatic post closed in the past three years, following the closure of the embassy in Syria in February 2012 and in Libya in July 2014.

On Feb. 24, FSO Katherine S. Dhanani was nominated to be the first U. S. ambassador to Somalia since 1991, when the United States closed the mission in Mogadishu following the collapse of the country's government and ensuing civil war.

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, in an address at the U.S. Institute of Peace last June, said the decision to nominate an ambassador was "a reflection of our deepening relationship with the country and of our faith that better times are ahead."

If confirmed, Ms. Dhanani will lead the U.S. mission in Somalia based, for security reasons, in Nairobi. "As security conditions permit," then-State Spokesperson Jen Psaki said in announcing the nomination, "we look forward to increasing our diplomatic presence in



David Sheffer, OBO

The 956-kilowatt array at Embassy Managua is estimated to produce over 1,276 megawatt-hours of emissions-free energy annually, for 27 percent of its needs.

Somalia and eventually reopening the U.S. embassy in Mogadishu."

—Debra Blome, Associate Editor

Finland's LEED Platinum Embassy a First in the United States

In January, the Embassy of Finland in Washington, D.C., became the first mission in the United States to receive the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design "Platinum" certification awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council. Having previously achieved "Green" and "Gold" designations, the Finnish Embassy is only the second Platinum LEED-certified embassy in the world, after U.S. Embassy Helsinki.

The Finns' greening success came in part through everyday measures that can have a large environmental impact, such as composting materials onsite, using high-efficiency water faucets and even providing bicycles for staff members to get around the city.

The State Department has increasingly focused on eco-diplomacy in recent years. At the center of State's Greening Diplomacy Initiative is the Greening Council.

A cross-cutting group with a diverse membership from multiple bureaus, the council is responsible for "overseeing and providing strategic direction on the implementation of environmental performance and sustainability initiatives at State." (For more, see the April 2014 *FSJ*.)

Greening Council Eco-Management Analyst Caroline D'Angelo describes eco-diplomacy as "leveraging our management and operations to help demonstrate our commitment to the United States' policy and economic priorities. It means that we enable our embassies, consulates and facilities to be showcases and tangible demonstrations of Ameri-

Contemporary Quote

“I find it ironic that some of my colleagues are so outspoken about what they consider inadequate security arrangements in Benghazi, a high-risk place to begin with, when they have actually voted against a lot of investments to shore up our embassy security and consular security abroad. I don't think you get to have it both ways.”

—Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), speaking at an AFSA Town Hall meeting on Feb. 9.

can values and innovations.”

The Greening Council strives to facilitate the formation of “green teams” at posts, and also provides the department with sustainability reports to monitor progress. One important program launched in February is a data partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency to install air quality monitoring equipment at select U.S. diplomatic posts overseas.

The Greening Council encourages employee participation. State employees can access an internal “Greening Diplomacy” blog at wordpress.state.gov/eco options. The blog is a forum for exchanging best environmental practices and offers a variety of practical resources. Readers can email or post items about their own initiatives for publication.

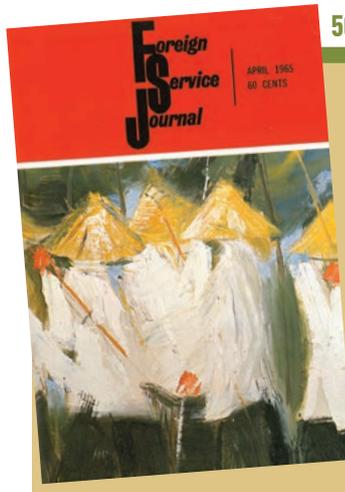
GDI’s site provides links to valuable eco-resources including a *Guide to Green Embassies* and *Post Green Team Toolkit*, designed to help motivated embassy employees form and lead a team at post and to provide information on such eco-options as Energy & Water Audits and Energy Savings Performance Contracts (known as ESPCs).

Audits are the first step in assessing existing conditions to identify areas for improvement. ESPCs allow federal agencies to complete energy savings projects without up-front capital costs or special congressional appropriations. The ESPC at Embassy Managua is reducing the embassy’s grid power demand by 54 percent.

The Greening Council also confers annual Green Diplomacy Initiative Awards. Last year’s top prize went to Mission Thailand’s “Turn It Off” campaign, which saved more than \$900,000 and reduced energy use by 11 percent.

Future goals for the Greening Council include rolling out the “Turn It Off” pro-

50 Years Ago



The April 1965 *Journal* cover is a painting by Ruth Renwick, a portrait artist and the wife of senior USAID official Donald Q. Coster. On her husband’s assignment to Saigon, Mrs. Coster closed her studio in Washington, D.C., and accompanied him to Vietnam. There she achieved the rare distinction of being the only American and the only female member of the faculty of the University of Saigon, where she taught painting—in French, which she speaks fluently—to Vietnamese students.

gram around the world, engaging in public diplomacy and leading by example in eco-diplomacy—and, of course, examining any ideas that users submit.

More information on State’s eco-diplomacy programs can be found at www.state.gov/green.

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Intern

The Quiz

LOST IN TRANSLATION

What are these countries called in English?

1. Shqipëria
2. Hayastan
3. Zhongguo
4. Misr
5. Eesti Vabariik
6. Suomen Tasavalta
7. Sak'art'velo
8. Magyarorszag
9. Bharat
10. al-Urdun
11. Hanguk
12. Lubnan

This quiz was submitted by retired FSO Rob Callard. Find the answers on p. 15.

“Your Online Sweetie Might Be a Scammer”

The Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs reached out to an Internet-savvy audience for Valentine’s Day this year with the publication of a six-point BuzzFeed “listicle” detailing safety tips for those who waded into the dangerous waters of online dating.

The article, “Six Signs Your Online Sweetie Might Be an Overseas Scammer,” includes humorous images relating to each of the six points using pop culture references such as “The Office,” “30 Rock” and “Napoleon Dynamite,” as well as Beyoncé, model Miranda Kerr and, of course, adorable cats.





SITE OF THE MONTH: *North Korea International Documentation Project*

The North Korea International Documentation Project, created by the Woodrow Wilson Center

Korea's First Five-Year Plan" and "Nuclear History." Each collection has from 50 to 300 documents, which include records of conversations, minutes of congressional meetings and journal entries from key players in North Korean political and social life. Its "Modern Korean History" portal has a detailed interactive historical timeline with links to relevant documents for easy browsing.

NKIDP is run by Wilson Center scholar Charles K. Armstrong, a professor of history at Columbia University. In addition to the archive, the project publishes a series of working papers analyzing recently acquired materials and bulletins providing information and news on the DPRK and its leadership. All materials are posted online and are fully downloadable.

By all accounts, the project fulfills its objective: to remedy the distinct lack of information available on North Korea, which contributors to the project consider the main obstacle to sound American policy-making today.

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Intern

in partnership with the University of North Korean Studies in South Korea, gives both scholars and policymakers a fascinating window into North Korean history and politics. The project collects and shares newly declassified documents on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its past and present allies from the United States, South Korea and North Korea itself, organizing them into an extensive online database.

The documents are well curated and gathered into smaller collections by topic, such as "Conversations with Kim Il Sung," "Inter-Korean Dialogue in the 1970s," "North

CA receives many calls from Americans of all ages who have been caught up in international Internet dating scams. Many scam artists pose as American citizens living abroad for business or military service so as not to arouse suspicion.

As CA put it, they "don't all claim to be Nigerian princes. Many come from Canada, Indonesia and other places you might not associate with online fraud."

Tips for spotting an Internet scammer include:

1. Watch out for your partner moving conversations quickly from the dating site to personal email or instant messaging, and discussing personal or emotional details very soon after first contact.
2. Beware of heart-rending stories of sick family members or personal tragedies that can only be fixed with a wire transfer.
3. If your Internet darling sounds too

good to be true—"Ivy League-educated, looks like a swimsuit model, and is really rich, awaiting an inheritance that will come through... any... day... now!"—he or she probably is.

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Intern

Ukrainian Legislator Speaks in D.C.

On Feb. 13, Mustafa Nayyem, newly-elected Ukrainian Member of Parliament and winner of the 2014 Ion Ratiu Democracy Award, gave a talk at The George Washington University on the state of Ukrainian politics and national identity.

Nayyem was one of the journalists responsible for facilitating the transition from online to outdoor protest against the Ukrainian government in November 2013, sparking the Euromaidan Revolution. He has been investigating govern-



Wiki Commons

Mustafa Nayyem at the U.S. ambassador's residence in Kyiv, July 6, 2011.

ment corruption for more than 10 years with various Ukrainian news outlets, and in 2014 he and 14 colleagues established Hromadske TV, an online station promot-

ing independent media.

Nayyem is part of the Poroshenko bloc in Parliament, a group of “Euro-optimists” eager to see further democratization and Ukraine-European Union integration.

In his talk, the Ukrainian MP explained that the government had been promising further E.U. integration for Ukraine for years, but in 2013 the public began to realize that President Viktor Yanukovich had no intention of delivering on those promises.

When Yanukovich postponed the signing of the long-awaited Ukraine-E.U. Association Agreement on Nov. 21, 2013, Facebook was flooded with angry posts critical of what many Ukrainians viewed as a government betrayal.

Nayyem argued that online protests are ineffective, and encouraged people to post just one word—“Ready”—if they were prepared to take their outrage to the streets. That worked, and 3,000 people gathered in Independence Square that night. Continued demonstrations eventually took on a wider significance, and people protested government corruption and human rights abuses, as well.

This led to Yanukovich’s resignation, which Nayyem believes has been Maidan’s only achievement thus far. The revolution, he said, created only the potential for change; Ukrainian politicians are now afraid of public opinion, which promotes accountability, so the real results will only be seen through future elections.

Nayyem sees the parliament as a tool to unite civil society, NGOs and activists, and hopes to convert the coalition into a political party.

Nayyem also believes that Ukraine is much less divided than the Western media has reported, and says that Russian media sources are largely responsi-

ble for the idea that Ukraine is separated into East and West. He points out that the Euromaidan protesters are a diverse group that includes Ukrainian and Russian speakers, as well as migrants from Central Asia.

Although a second ceasefire negotiated in February, “Minsk II,” held into early March, there has been sporadic fighting around the heavily disputed town of Debaltseve, which is controlled by separatist forces. Foreign policy experts have criticized Minsk II, calling it “fragile” and “complicated,” and it is anyone’s guess as to what will come next.

Russian President Vladimir Putin stated in late February that he considers an all-out war between Russia and Ukraine improbable, saying, “I believe such an apocalyptic scenario is unlikely, and hope that it will never get to that point.”

To learn more about the conflict, check out the Council on Foreign Relations’ breakdown of the Minsk II Agreement, the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ day-by-day timeline, which covers multiple new stories a day, and the CSIS policy briefing on the current debate taking place in the United States on the wisdom of arming Ukraine. *NATO Review* magazine also offers an assessment of the role of oil, gas and energy in the conflict. ■

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Intern

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Albania
2. Armenia
3. China
4. Egypt
5. Estonia
6. Finland
7. Georgia
8. Hungary
9. India
10. Jordan
11. South Korea
12. Lebanon



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Citizenship and Unwed Border Moms: The Misfortune of Geography

BY AMELIA SHAW

I love working on the passports line in Tijuana. It's a job that for the most part makes people happy. I get to say "Señor, your passport is approved," which generally elicits a smile—sometimes even a fist pump.

I also get to "make Americans"—a colloquialism for adjudicating citizenship for applicants for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad. All those American moms and dads who bring in little Lupita and Miguelito—their kids are so cute at the window, with their shy "buenos días" or their hair tied in bows.

But there is a very difficult aspect of my job that comes up probably once or twice a week. It's adjudicating the CRBA cases of unwed American-citizen mothers who live along the U.S.-Mexico border.

More than once women have left my window in tears, prompting me to ponder the question of equal protection under the law.

Transmitting Citizenship 101

Here is a little background for you non-consular folks. For a parent to transmit citizenship to a child born overseas, the applying parent needs to prove three things: his or her U.S. citizenship, a bio-



Amelia Shaw joined the Foreign Service (public diplomacy cone) in 2014 after careers in journalism and public health. She is currently doing consular work in Tijuana, her first post.



Vera Zharanova

For families who live in the United States, a CRBA denial can split the home because the Mexican-born child cannot enter the United States.

logical relationship to the child, and that he or she has spent sufficient time in the United States to satisfy the physical presence requirements of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

"Physical presence" was written into the INA as a way to ensure that American-citizen parents had "absorbed American culture and values" enough to pass them on to their progeny (see Foreign Affairs Manual 1133.3). It is also a way to prevent an endless chain of hereditary American descendants—you don't necessarily get to be an American just because your father or your grandfather was.

But what "physical presence" means depends on who is applying. Men and

married women need to show five years of accumulated presence, with two years after the age of 14. Unmarried women need one year of continuous presence, meaning unbroken time—no trips outside the U.S.

And herein lies the rub: a law that was designed to help unwed mothers transmit citizenship has created an unintended gender inequality, at least for women along our land borders.

The Bias of History

Throughout our nation's history, marriage has been a key in determining a woman's nationality. In early 1776, Abigail Adams famously petitioned her husband John Adams to "remember the

ladies” during the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and grant women at least some political rights separate from their husbands.

To this she got a dismissive reply: “I cannot but laugh...we know better than to repeal our masculine systems.” The founding fathers just couldn’t imagine the political status of women as “citizens”—they could not vote, own property, keep their wages or even have custody of their children.

Throughout the 19th century, a woman’s citizenship status was murky territory, usually tied to that of her husband. As of 1907, American women routinely lost their U.S. citizenship when they married a foreign national. It was not until 1934 that Congress allowed married women to retain their citizenship, and granted single mothers the right to transmit U.S. citizenship under the rationale that she “stands in place of the father.”

But what to do about those children born abroad to unmarried U.S.-citizen mothers who did not fulfill the physical presence requirement? Those children were exposed to a significant risk of statelessness, since not all countries grant citizenship as a birth right under the principle of *jus soli* (literally, “right of the soil”).

So in 1952 Congress established the one-year continuous presence requirement for out-of-wedlock births in an effort to help single mothers—and for the vast majority of women in the world, it does. It is generally easier to prove one year of presence in the U.S. than five.

Not so for our citizen-moms along the border.

Borderlands— A Story of Flux

The U.S.-Mexico border is less a line than a wide swath of territory where

movement is fluid. American citizens live on both sides and cross frequently, for a variety of reasons. Salaries north of the border are higher, but apartments in Tijuana are cheaper. The United States has bigger Costcos—not to mention Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s. But Mexico has cheap dentists. Some people cross the border just to get a better price on gas.

And then there is the question of family. Extended families are frequently dispersed along both sides of the border, so visiting aunts and cousins is, for many area residents, a quotidian affair. Many American women of Mexican heritage choose to have their babies south of the border not only because it costs a lot less, but also because it’s closer to grandma.

So when an unmarried American-citizen mom comes up to the window for a CRBA, I brace for the worst. Because if she can’t convince me that she did not set foot outside of the United States for 12 straight months, the likelihood is that I am going to deny her. This is what the law requires.

Proof of such presence, or in consular speak “a preponderance of evidence,” might be that mom moved to Seattle for all of middle school, or that she grew up in Los Angeles and her extended Mexican family was living in the southern state of Chiapas. In these cases, one can argue mom is less likely to have broken the one-year requirement because visiting family requires more than a 15-minute drive across the border.

But for most applicants along the U.S.-Mexico border this is unrealistic. They live on *both* sides of the line, crossing back and forth frequently, without giving a second thought to how it might affect their progeny. These are the women who are in for a nasty shock at my window.



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When Families Divide

The case I find myself thinking about most was a woman who came in to the consulate with a newborn. She had been born and raised in San Diego, had gone to school, to college, and had a career, a life partner and two other children born in California. She was visiting her grandmother in Ensenada when she had complications that led to an unexpected emergency cesarean section in Mexico. During her interview, she candidly mentioned that she has visited her grandmother every few months all her life.

With that on the table, I had no choice but to deny her application. Had she been married, or a man, she would have been able to transmit citizenship, but as an unwed mother she didn't meet the

legal requirement. It was as simple as that.

She was devastated to learn that she would not be taking her tiny baby home to California anytime soon. Through tears she said, "But why? I don't understand. You are breaking up my family."

My assurances that she could obtain citizenship for her child via the Child Citizenship Act offered little consolation. It's hard for parents in this situation to find comfort in a backup plan that costs far



For unwed mothers on the border, transmitting citizenship can be a nerve-wracking exercise to prove that they didn't set foot in Mexico for an entire 12-month period.

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Moving?

more money and takes months or years to achieve.

That was a very bad day for me. I am sure I am not the only Foreign Service officer who has experienced this awkward tension: doing your job right can sometimes feel, well, wrong. But we aren't hired to make the law; we are hired to apply it.

Misfortune of Geography

This section of the INA was designed to help the children of unwed mothers avoid statelessness. But through the simple misfortune of geography, many border women lose. In Tijuana, about 20 percent of all our CRBA denials are unwed mothers who can't prove a year of uninterrupted presence in the United States.

For border moms, the current application of the INA seems both discriminatory and irrational.

Considering that our southern land border stretches from San Diego to the Gulf of Mexico, it is likely that hundreds, if not thousands, of American women cannot transmit citizenship because of this wrinkle in the law.

So the question is: should the law treat Americans differently based on their gender and marital status?

For border moms, the current application of the INA seems both discriminatory and irrational: there is no compelling reason to believe that women who are unmarried are any less adept at "absorb-

ing American culture and values" than are married women, or men.

If it were up to me, I would say the solution is to introduce an "either-or" scenario, where unwed mothers can qualify under either the five-year accumulated presence or the one-year continuous presence requirement.

But it's not up to me. It's up to Congress. And until it changes the INA, I will continue to do my job and apply the law, no matter what I think about it.

I just hope my next case has a happier ending. ■



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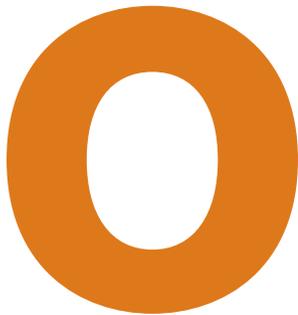
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History Revisited

Editor's Introduction

BY SHAWN DORMAN



In the 40th anniversary of the fall of Saigon to the North Vietnamese Army and the evacuation of many thousands of Americans and South Vietnamese from the country, we take a look back at the Foreign Service role in Vietnam.

Why revisit Vietnam? After all, the history of the war has been

written and rewritten. Yet the civilian side of the story—the work and experiences of Foreign Service personnel who served in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s—is not so well known. At the time, all those joining the Foreign Service knew there was more than a good chance they would be sent to Vietnam. That's what worldwide availability meant.

Service in Vietnam shaped a generation of Foreign Service officers, but do we understand how? As of late 1971, some 600 FSOs—or 20 percent of the Foreign Service—had served in Vietnam, more than half of them with the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program, or CORDS.

In the following pages, we bring you some of the voices of the FS Vietnam generation, starting with an account of the beginning of the end, the 1968 Tet Offensive. First-person narratives of the final days in Saigon from different vantage points follow. And a critical review of the counterinsurgency effort and an analysis and snapshots of Vietnam today round out the presentation. In these stories you will find plenty of drama and tragedy, but also bravery, hope and inspiration. And, not least, lessons for today.

Expeditionary Diplomacy Redux

The Foreign Service experience in Vietnam, and in particular

with CORDS and its predecessor counterinsurgency efforts, was “expeditionary diplomacy” in all but name. Language-trained FSOs serving in the provinces were able to gain a true understanding of the real situation on the ground, not something that was always welcome in Washington, or even at the embassy in Saigon. In addition to reporting, these FSOs were directly involved in leading project work in cooperation with the military. Mortal danger was ever-present. In all, 42 FSOs—most serving with or assigned to USAID—were killed in Vietnam between 1965 and 1975. Their names are inscribed on the AFSA Memorial Plaque at the State Department.

In 1975, out of an extremely tragic situation of a new nation and U.S. ally collapsing, heroes emerged who, collectively, saved thousands of people. The two other U.S. allies in the Indochina war also fell that year. Cambodia fell to the Khmer Rouge on April 17, and Laos collapsed gradually as the Pathet Lao seized power. In subsequent years, the U.S. accepted significant numbers of refugees from both countries.

At the heart of our story is a group of FSOs who, acting largely without instruction (and in some cases without permission) in the face of U.S. government inaction, organized what would become the largest refugee resettlement operation since World War II to rescue at-risk Vietnamese.

Two of them, Lionel Rosenblatt and Craig Johnstone, saw the writing on the wall from Washington and, frustrated that the U.S. government was not planning for the end, set off for Vietnam on their own, helping several hundred Vietnamese get out. In 1976, the two received AFSA dissent awards for their efforts. While Lionel Rosenblatt is not an author in this issue, his insights and recommendations informed our choices for who best to tell the story. For that, I offer this public note of thanks.

In total, some 1.5 million people from Indochina were resettled, approximately one million of them in the United States. Overall, the refugees have done well in their new lands. Today, those same refugees are helping—through all kinds of connections and expanding trade—forging new and peaceful ties between the United States and Vietnam.

The View from Different Vantage Points

Our coverage starts on Jan. 30, 1968, with the first strike of the Tet Offensive. Junior Officer Allan Wendt was on duty at Embassy Saigon that night, and he describes his experience inside the embassy during the attack, keeping up communications with the White House, the State Department and the U.S. military while rockets hit the building. The Tet Offensive was a landmark event that spelled the beginning of the end for the U.S. war effort. The American public and Congress turned against the war effort at that point even though, as Wendt saw it, “pacification was working” and there were signs of progress. But it was too late.

Kenneth Quinn takes us “From Whitehouse to the White House,” from his Vietnam service in the provinces under Chargé Charles Whitehouse to a post inside the National Security Council with a front-row seat to the Washington policy process. He recounts how the diplomatic surge of the early 1970s allowed for extraordinary reporting from the provinces of Vietnam.

Then, in “Mobilizing for South Vietnam’s Last Days,” we follow Parker Borg, who was serving as a seventh-floor staffer in 1975 when he and a few colleagues became concerned about a lack of evacuation planning from Embassy Saigon. The group began meeting in secret to plan. In “Saigon Sayonara,” Joe McBride gives us the ground-floor view from Saigon during the final days before the fall. He describes how, in the absence of leadership from a front office still in denial of the coming fall, FSOs took matters into their own hands to help get people out, by any means possible.

Anne Pham was one of the Vietnamese who was saved by these Americans. In “Finding My Heroes, Finding Myself,” she describes her journey from Vietnam to America, from refugee child to State Department official, and her search to find and thank the FSOs who helped her and her family escape and make new lives in the United States.

In a look at the social impact of more than three million Americans passing through a country of 26 million (think marriage and babies), Lange Schermerhorn describes consular work at Embassy Saigon during that tumultuous period in “Doing Social Work in Southeast Asia.” Taking the view from 1,000 feet, Vietnam expert Rufus Phillips (who served in Vietnam as an Army

officer, a CIA officer, a USAID official and consultant to the State Department) describes the counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam, drawing out the important lessons they offer policymakers today, especially in relation to U.S. assistance to weak and failing states threatened with extremism and disintegration.

CSIS scholar Murray Hiebert then brings us to today’s Vietnam and his take on how much has changed there. And finally, Parker Borg takes us on his 2015 journey to “The New Vietnam.” He returns to the towns in central Vietnam where he had lived and worked in the late 1960s and early 1970s to find a pervasive military presence alongside a friendly and entrepreneurial spirit in the towns and sprawling cities.

In Reflections we revisit Wake Island in 1975. Bruce Beardsley served in Vietnam in the mid-1960s and again in the early-1970s, but was called out of Kabul in April 1975 to help out with the enormous task of refugee processing there.

Learning from the Past

The June 1975 *Foreign Service Journal* editorial called “Losing” begins: “The Vietnam War is over. ... The end of American involvement in Vietnam has been a cause for immediate concern first for practical and then for professional reasons. ... The career Service left behind in Vietnam a record of dedication and sacrifice, and in many cases, of courageous reporting and responsible dissent. Yet as an institution, we also made mistakes. AFSA believes a post mortem of the Vietnam era will be useful to the nation, and that the career Service can contribute greatly to that process. We would welcome ideas on how that might best be done.”

There is little to indicate that such an assessment was ever undertaken. Yet the *Journal* published a number of fascinating articles on Vietnam issues during those years and later. And in reaching out to prepare this issue, we discovered that there is much more remarkable material that Vietnam diplomatic veterans are inspired to share than we could accommodate, even in this expanded focus.

So we have also created a “Vietnam Supplement” on the AFSA website (www.afsa.org/vietnam) as a companion to the April *Journal*. There you will find photos and stories from AFSA members on their experiences in Vietnam, then and now, as well as previous *FSJ* articles on the subject. Taken all together, it could be considered a contribution to the reckoning AFSA sensibly proposed 40 years ago.

Please help carry the conversation forward by sending letters in response to what you read here and your thoughts on lessons learned—or not learned—from Vietnam. ■

Viet Cong Attack on Embassy Saigon, 1968

Allan Wendt was a junior FSO on night duty when the embassy was attacked by Viet Cong commandos. This is his story.

BY ALLAN WENDT

The fortress-like U.S. embassy in downtown Saigon was the citadel of the American presence in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. From this block-long concrete structure, under the direction of the courtly Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, our 500,000-strong expeditionary force and huge civilian assistance program sought to roll back the communist tide.

At 2:30 a.m. on Jan. 30, 1968, I lay asleep on a cot in Room 433 on the fourth floor of the embassy. I was a 32-year-old Foreign Service officer on my second overseas tour of duty and was just beginning my first week-long stint as night duty officer.

Suddenly, the building was rocked by a loud explosion. Automatic weapons fire broke out, and rockets began to thud into the building. The embassy was under attack. As I soon learned, a 20-man Viet Cong commando squad had blown open the wall surrounding the embassy compound and poured into the courtyard. With this strike, the communists launched their famous Tet (Vietnamese lunar new year) Offensive.

Allan Wendt, a retired FSO, served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1971. He also served in Düsseldorf, Brussels, Cairo and Washington, D.C. He retired in October 1995 after serving as the first U.S. ambassador to Slovenia, but returned to the State Department in 1999-2000 to work on Bosnia and Kosovo.

I quickly retreated into the more secure and better equipped communications room where a communications specialist, James A. Griffin, was on duty. A call to the ground-floor Marine security guard post revealed that at least one Marine guard, Sgt. Ronald W. Harper, was alive and functioning. The Viet Cong attackers, at that point, were not in the building.

I took the elevator to the ground floor, where the situation looked bleak. There was considerable damage to the building and another Marine lay wounded and covered with blood. We managed to carry him up to a cot on the fourth floor, the one I had been sleeping on. I soon learned that in the initial attack, four military policemen and one Marine security guard had been killed.

Under Attack and on the Line

Despite an atmosphere of extreme tension, I found I was able to communicate with the outside world. From the fourth floor communications room, I placed and received innumerable telephone calls to and from the White House Situation Room, the State Department Operations Center (where I had previously worked) and the U.S. Military Assistance Command Center near Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport.

An American civilian telephone operator skillfully weeded out nuisance and nonessential calls. I spoke regularly to embassy officers at the offsite command post set up for Amb. Bunker. Civilian and military callers from near and far wanted to know the exact state of play. Were there any enemy fighters inside the building?

How close could hovering helicopters get to the embassy roof (designed as a helipad), and how much ground fire were they drawing? At one point I just held up the phone so the caller could hear the rockets crashing into the building.

As the siege wore on, we pleaded with the U.S. military command for relief. We were told an armored column was on its way. It never arrived. One helicopter finally managed to land on the roof and evacuate the wounded Marine, whom we had carried up to the helipad.

The same chopper also off-loaded two cases of M-16 tracer ammunition, a move I assumed had some purpose I had not divined: there were no M-16s in the building. To my consternation I also discovered that two armed American military personnel, including a Marine whose presence on the roof I had not previously detected, took off in the helicopter—leaving the lone Marine on the ground floor and us few civilians to fend for ourselves.

Almost six hours after the attack had begun, I went again to the roof and was greeted unexpectedly by a platoon of heavily armed paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division. They insisted their orders were to secure the embassy floor by floor, starting at the top, despite my assurances that there were no Viet Cong in the building. By the time they reached the ground floor, the shooting had stopped—18 of the Viet Cong sappers had been killed by military policemen, Marine guards and civilian security personnel firing into the compound, and two were taken prisoner. Dead bodies littered the compound.

The Cleanup

The commander of American forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, arrived on the scene and advised me to have the embassy cleaned up and the employees back at work by noon. This was quite unrealistic. Fighting was raging all over the city. Around midmorning I finally drove home in my bullet-riddled car, which had been parked behind the embassy. The windshield had been shot away, but I could drive the vehicle—fortunately the rainy season was still a few months away.

My superstitious housekeeper immediately insisted on destroying the blue shirt I had been wearing. It was covered



En route to Dalat, in front of an Air America helicopter circa 1969-70, from left to right: Bill Sharpe, USAID; Dang Co, Credit Commercial du Vietnam; Pham Kim Ngoc, Minister of Economy; wife of Dang Co, and son; Allan Wendt, Embassy Saigon; Showane Thach, USAID; Anne Henshaw, USAID legal adviser; Robert Starr, Embassy Saigon legal adviser.

Courtesy of Allan Wendt

with blood from the wounded Marine, and she thought it would bring bad luck. Only late in the day did I receive a call from the embassy informing me that, under the circumstances, I would be relieved of duty obligations for the remainder of the week.

The attack on the embassy revealed our lack of military and civilian preparedness. It was also an intelligence failure. We were in the middle of a real war, but the war was supposed to be in the countryside and not in downtown Saigon. Actually, as I was to learn later, there had been ominous signs of impending trouble, but they were misjudged.

As civilian duty officer, I was ill-prepared. I was given no useful intelligence. I had no training in the use of weapons or first aid. I was very lucky to have survived; the odds were against it. But a few good decisions saved us. At the first shot, a quick-thinking Marine at an adjoining building had dashed across the compound and closed the embassy's thick wooden doors. The architecture of the building with its lattice-work concrete outer wall absorbed the rocket rounds fired into it. The Viet Cong sappers were not of World War II caliber and, fortunately for us, were hit by American and Vietnamese personnel firing down at them from adjoining rooftops.

The embattled Marine on the ground floor, Sgt. Harper, and my colleague in communications, James Griffin, shared all the tasks and never flinched or failed throughout the ordeal. After the attack, the embassy's Marine security detail was increased by 50 percent—from two to three.

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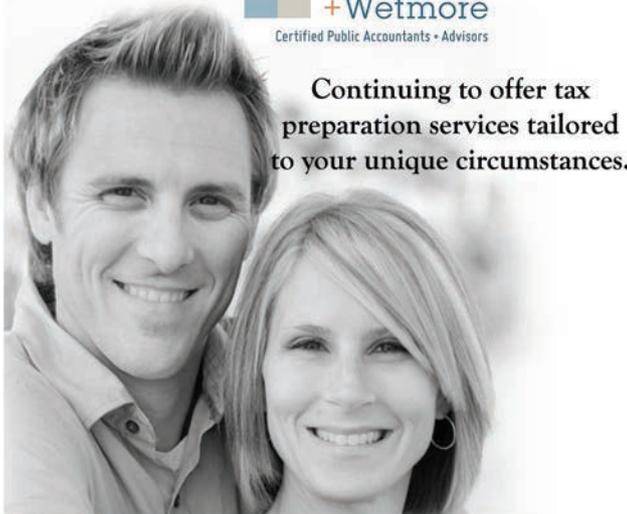
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Staying, Looking Back

I stayed in Vietnam for another 3½ years, even though the tour of duty was only 18 months. The embassy, and Amb. Bunker himself, kept asking me to extend, and why not? I enjoyed my work and found the country fascinating, despite the war all around us.

During my last year there, I served as commercial attaché, with my own office by the river. In practice I became a general-purpose trouble-shooter for the embassy, dealing with such issues as corruption in the port of Da Nang and finding a way to enable the U.S. military to recover brass shell casings from battlefields. (They were being scavenged by enterprising Vietnamese and exported to China via Hong Kong.)

I believed at the time that we were on the right track in Vietnam. Pacification was working. The South Vietnamese economy was developing nicely. Militarily, we were beginning to prevail in the conflict—particularly after Creighton Abrams replaced William Westmoreland. The South Vietnamese military was beginning to hold its own and even win some major engagements. Unfortunately, however, it was too late. Congress had turned irrevocably against the war in spite of all the evidence that the situation was turning in our favor.

Should the U.S. have entered the conflict in the first place? Given our reluctance to see it through, presumably not. Americans have little patience for indecisiveness and stalemate. The U.S. fought the war with serious limitations—such as not invading the North and eschewing strategic bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong until December 1972, just a few months before we withdrew our troops. This restraint stemmed from our fear of escalation, of bringing in China and the Soviet Union, whose intentions we misread.

Yet there are historians who contend today that fighting the war in South Vietnam bought time for other countries in the region to achieve a degree of stability and prosperity. Was it worth 58,000 American lives? No, given the outcome. Was it a necessary war? Again, no, but historians will doubtless continue to study and debate the matter.

Looking back, I recall that just about every FSO tapped to go to Vietnam went willingly and some even enthusiastically. Many served with distinction. The war was controversial, of course, and there was substantial opposition to it at home. With rare exceptions, the American press tended to report only bad news.

Yet for a career FSO committed to serve anywhere in the world, Vietnam was the place to be. At the time, there was no greater calling. ■

From Whitehouse to the White House

From the vantage point of both the field and the National Security Council, one FSO shows the critical role the Foreign Service played in a difficult environment.

BY KENNETH M. QUINN

It would be difficult to overstate the pure joy exhibited by my Vietnamese employees on Advisory Team 65 in Chau Doc province, in a remote corner of the Mekong Delta, on Jan. 27, 1973, when word reached us that the Paris Peace Accords had been signed. Holding hands, they danced in a circle singing “Hoa Binh oi”—loosely translated, “Hello, peace!” or “Welcome, peace!”

None of them likely could have imagined that, just two short years later, the South Vietnamese government would collapse and many of them would be fleeing down the Mekong River, hoping to escape the approaching North Vietnamese Army.

In 1973 I was a rural development adviser on my fourth consecutive tour in Vietnam. I’d been seconded by State to the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1967, right after completing the A-100 orientation course. All of my time “in country” had been as part of the U.S. Military Assistance Com-

mand, Vietnam’s Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program, known asCORDS, part of the unified military-civilian chain of command of the pacification effort. That would now change dramatically, as the U.S. military prepared to completely leave the country and the State Department established four consulates general, including one in Can Tho, the largest city in the Mekong Delta.

It also began a personal odyssey that would allow me, first, to be part of what I call the “Whitehouse Interlude” in Vietnam, a brief but remarkable period in Foreign Service history that deserves to be recalled with considerable pride. This would be followed by a front-row seat at the White House in Washington to the tragic denouement of the South Vietnamese government and America’s epic involvement in Indochina.

I believe that the provincial assignments had a significant impact on many of the FSOs who would shape foreign policy over the next three decades, as they came in direct contact with large numbers of war victims. For example, I always felt that Ambassador Richard Holbrooke’s passion to alleviate the suffering of refugees and his focus on agriculture in Afghanistan both came from his assignment as a provincial adviser in Vietnam. Indeed, the very existence of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration in the State Department can be traced to Vietnam.

Our work there also showed that the Foreign Service could be an invaluable early warning system. In my own case, a decade after writing the first-ever reports on the genocidal nature of the Khmer Rouge, my “provincial instincts” took me in

Kenneth M. Quinn, the only three-time winner of an AFSA dissent award, spent 32 years in the Foreign Service and served as ambassador to Cambodia from 1996 to 1999. He has been president of the World Food Prize Foundation since 2000. Ambassador Quinn spent the first six years of his Foreign Service career in Vietnam, as a rural development adviser in the Mekong Delta and, later, as a political reporting officer along the Cambodian border. That was followed by three years at the National Security Council working on Indochina, including serving on the Weyand Mission to Saigon sent by President Gerald Ford, and acting as the president’s interpreter in Vietnamese at the White House.



The author with Kent Paxton, right, a USAID officer who was instrumental in shepherding the very first refugees arriving in the United States through the U.S. Air Force base outside of San Francisco. He used his own money to purchase tickets for families of FSOs, as there was no system in place to deal with them.

1983 to the far north of Lebanon where I discovered Yasser Arafat reconstituting his PLO military forces outside Tripoli. After 9/11, I wondered whether we might have detected the plans of Osama bin Laden to strike the United States if we had had more FSOs able to travel through remote parts of South Asia and the Middle East, in the way we did in Vietnam.

The Whitehouse Interlude

With the departure of Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker after the 1973 Paris Peace Accords were signed, Deputy Chief of Mission Charles Whitehouse became *chargé d'affaires* and ushered in a spirit of openness and unvarnished reporting. This was reinforced by two Vietnam veterans, Tom Barnes and Frank Wisner, who arrived in Can Tho as the new consul general and deputy principal officer, respectively. They were followed by a flood of mid-level, language-trained FSOs, one in each of the 16 provinces in the Delta, augmented in many cases by Vietnam-

ese-speaking USAID officers. Similar assignments followed in all 44 provinces of South Vietnam.

This “diplomatic surge” produced an amazing body of reporting documenting the shaky security situation and warning of what was to come. Seldom has the Foreign Service fielded so many highly competent individuals in such a dangerous but critically important environment.

For my part, I continued to live and work in the provincial capital of Chau Doc, at the juncture of the Mekong River and Cambodian border. Now a vice consul, I had remarkable experiences during my 15 months there. Besides reporting on Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge, I used a plane and pilot for a week to map the extent of Viet Cong control of the entire Mekong Delta. I also burrowed into the dirt as bullets cracked over my

head when a North Vietnamese Army unit, in a major ceasefire violation, ambushed an American cargo ship I was monitoring on the Mekong River.

My Vietnam assignment came to an abrupt end in April 1974 when an Air America plane landed in Chau Doc with orders transferring me to the National Security Council staff. My move from obscurity to a job at the White House caused quite a stir in Saigon. Suddenly I had appointments at the embassy, including with Ambassador Graham Martin and Tom Polgar, the Central Intelligence Agency’s chief of station.

While Amb. Martin was gracious to me (he even came to my wedding, which took place a few days before I departed the country), I found my one-on-one meeting with him somewhat disquieting. At times, he seemed to drift away in thought during our conversation. Leaning back in his chair and staring at the ceiling, he waxed philosophical about the vagaries of the policy process and the forces that were undermining him.

At the White House: Watergate

Arriving in May 1974, I found the White House beset by the issue that would ultimately play a very significant part in the demise of South Vietnam: Watergate. Less than three months later, I would be standing in the East Room watching Richard Nixon give his farewell address to the nation. Vice President Gerald Ford would inherit a weakened presidency that would be unable to respond forcefully a year later as South Vietnam collapsed.

Still, the military situation remained relatively stable through the rest of that year and into early 1975. There were intelligence reports that the North planned to step up military

Seldom has the Foreign Service fielded so many highly competent individuals in such a dangerous but critically important environment.

action in the central highlands in the spring, but the conventional wisdom was that Hanoi would wait another year so as to influence the 1976 U.S. presidential election. Indeed, the view



Courtesy of Kenneth Quinn

Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger's office on the night of the *Mayaguez* rescue, May 14, 1975. Kenneth Quinn is on the left, Kissinger in the center and Deputy National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft at right.



Courtesy of Kenneth Quinn

Kenneth Quinn meets with President Gerald Ford in January 1977.

in Saigon was so sanguine that Amb. Martin returned to the United States for dental work and consultations in March 1975.

It was therefore stunning when the initial forays by NVA units in Ban Me Thuot province on March 10, 1975, quickly inflicted severe defeats on South Vietnam's 22nd and 23rd divisions—the latter considered one of the better-led units. Now able to mass their forces without fear of punishing U.S. air strikes, the North rained down overwhelming firepower onto the South Vietnamese positions. By mid-March, having secured control of the entire highland area, their attention turned to Da Nang, the major military headquarters in central Vietnam, where the same process began to unfold.

By March 25, the deterioration was so alarming that Pres. Ford held an emergency meeting in the Cabinet Room at the White House with a senior emissary from South Vietnam, labor leader Truong Quoc Buu. I had the extraordinary opportunity to be the president's interpreter as Buu revealed President Nguyen Van Thieu's shocking plan to cede the entire northern half of South Vietnam to the communists.

The Weyand Mission: Return to Saigon

Immediately thereafter, the White House announced a presidential mission to Vietnam, headed by General Fred Weyand, the previous commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, to assess the situation. I was assigned to the trip. Traveling with Weyand and several senior CIA and Pentagon officials on his C-141 cargo plane were Amb. Martin and David Kennerly, Pres. Ford's personal photographer and a Pulitzer Prize-winning combat journalist, with whom I had developed a friendship.

When we arrived at the darkened Tan Son Nhut Airport just after midnight on March 28, 1975, the atmosphere already felt ominous. I had a brief exchange on the tarmac with Station Chief Tom Polgar, who privately expressed his concern that the ambassador, who had consistently downplayed field assessments as too negative, would not report on how calamitous the situation had become.

Amb. Martin invited me to stay at his residence. During the week we were there, I found a sense of impending doom. Members of his Vietnamese household staff approached me, almost

Arriving in May 1974, I found the White House beset by the issue that would ultimately play a very significant part in the demise of South Vietnam: Watergate.

in tears, asking if they would be taken out of the country when the end came. Even Mrs. Martin appealed to me privately for guidance about what to tell her employees, with the clear implication that her husband was not giving her sufficient direction.

While Gen. Weyand and his most senior advisers called on Pres. Thieu and the top military echelon of the South Vietnamese government, I went off on my own about the city talking to Vietnamese contacts and assessing the mood. I learned a lot just watching countless men in South Vietnamese military garb getting off provincial buses, having made their way back from the battlefields after their units had been broken apart and scattered.

For the first time in my life, I truly saw fear in someone's eyes when I spoke to a female relative of an FSO in Washington who had asked me to check on his Vietnamese family. She asked what was to become of them and who would help them escape. Other Vietnamese begged me to take their babies or small children out of the country. At the embassy, several longtime colleagues asked me if I would carry some of their most precious personal possessions out on our plane.

My conversations with two Cabinet ministers and a contact in the prime minister's office made the situation seem even more desperate. In whispered tones, I was told that Pres. Thieu was paralyzed by fear, unable to make a decision, and that expectations of leadership from Independence Palace were nil.

Just a Matter of Time

But it was during my visit with the young Defense Department analysts in the "tank" at the old MACV headquarters that I came to realize that the situation was truly hopeless. There I was able to track on large briefing maps the unobstructed movement of North Vietnamese divisions down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and into the southern battlefields. More than anything else, that stark display of the order of battle showed just how badly outnumbered the South was in terms of main force divisions—almost two to one. If the North continued its offensive, the inexorable



Courtesy of Kenneth Quinn

The author acts as interpreter for Ambassador Leonard Woodcock in a meeting with North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong in Hanoi, March 1977.

flow of this overwhelming force into the south meant the inevitable defeat of South Vietnam.

One of my most riveting conversations was with Al Francis, who as head of the embassy's political-military affairs section had often reflected Amb. Martin's hopeful assessments. He had been consul general in Da Nang when it was overrun just a few days earlier and had escaped on one of the very last flights out. In the chaotic evacuation, he had been controlling the door into the already badly overcrowded U.S. aircraft that was carrying Americans, and some of the Vietnamese most at risk, to safety as the North Vietnamese closed in on the airport.

When one renegade soldier threatened to halt the flight so he could board it, Al had pushed him away. The desperate man pulled out a handgun and fired at almost point-blank range toward Al's face. The bullet left a blackened, curved indentation burned deep into his neck but, miraculously, did not penetrate the skin. He was left with a highly visible scar and a traumatized demeanor. To me, it was a harbinger of what was to come. It was clear that Al now saw the ominous future clearly, even if the ambassador did not.

When I returned to the residence that evening, I wanted to convey to Amb. Martin the hopelessness of the situation as I saw it and the need for urgent planning for an evacuation. The challenge, however, was to do this without losing his ear. The ambassador's reputation was that as soon as he determined that an officer or adviser was a naysayer or had negative views of the situation, he immediately tuned them out. As I endeavored to share my observations, he started to drift away. I could not be sure how much of anything I said actually got through to him.

But from my review of the daily embassy cables, it was evident that, while considered extremely serious, the situation was not being reported as hopeless. As a result, there was no missionwide preliminary planning for an evacuation. This differed markedly from my own judgment that the end could come in a matter of weeks, depending on how quickly North Vietnamese troops would reach Saigon.

Time for a Reality Check

I did three things while in Saigon to try to address these divergent perceptions.

First, I made daily phone calls back to Washington to brief my boss at the National Security Council, Bill Stearman. To his great credit, Bill intervened during the Washington Special Action Group sessions (chaired by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger) to interject my much more pessimistic assessment as a counterpoint to the official reporting.

My second step was to seek a private session with Gen. Wey-

The “Most Accurate” Assessment

On April 24, 2000, 25 years after the Republic of Vietnam fell, Douglas Brinkley published an essay in *Time* magazine on the last days of Saigon. It is striking that, with access to all of the declassified records at the Ford Presidential Library, the historian points to the report by a Foreign Service officer as “the grimmest and most accurate assessment by the Ford administration of America’s final weeks in South Vietnam.”

Brinkley was referring to Kenneth M. Quinn’s April 5, 1975, memo to Henry Kissinger on the results of the Weyand Mission, in which the FSO had stated that South Vietnamese forces “may be totally defeated in as little as three weeks. President Thieu is discredited and almost completely ineffective. He can no longer provide the leadership necessary to rally the country. The morale of the army and civilian population is critically low and bordering on national despair. Fear of the communists is widespread, and people from all walks of life are now searching for a way to flee the country. Panic is seemingly just below the surface, and an imminent attack on Saigon could lose it [for us].”

—Susan Maitra, *Managing Editor*

While Gen. Weyand and his most senior advisers called on Pres. Thieu and the top military echelon of the South Vietnamese government, I went off on my own about the city.

and, during which I painted the picture for him that I had found in terms of the collapse of confidence in Pres. Thieu’s administration, the sense of national despair permeating the civilian and military population and the stark military situation. The general, with whom I had worked from 1971 to 1972 at MACV headquarters, did not disagree with any part of my analysis, and sighed audibly when I mentioned the potential three-week timeframe before the South’s complete defeat.

Finally, I tried to put in place a mechanism that would allow at least some endangered Vietnamese to be evacuated as the end came. I met with two close friends—FSO Lacy Wright and Frank Snepp, the chief intelligence community analyst at the embassy—and expressed my dismay that no action was being taken, even behind the scenes, to prepare for an evacuation. Since we all had individuals we wanted to rescue (for me that included my wife’s family), I proposed that we create our own secret evacuation plan despite the injunction against any planning in the embassy. Lacy and Frank agreed, and we sketched out a safe house system and basic communication plan with phone numbers that could be shared with those Vietnamese we wished to help.

Lacy and I then began making contacts around Saigon. Once back in Washington, I sent dozens and dozens of additional names of relatives, friends and official contacts of State and USAID officers who were now living in the United States, including those from a large group of FSOs who were meeting daily at the department for a similar purpose (see p. 33). Since my office was at the White House, every phone call I made to Saigon went with “flash” precedence, thus ensuring that I always got through and kept the names flowing.

A Long Flight Home

The Weyand Mission ended on April 4. On the long flight back to Washington, I drafted my own memoranda to Secretary Kissinger, both on the bleak prospects for South Vietnam and what



Kenneth Quinn, right, and his wife, Le Son, center, with former Representative Leonard Boswell (D-Iowa) on Jan. 19, 2009, when Quinn received the Army Air Medal for flying/commanding more than 100 hours of helicopter combat operations in Vietnam in 1970 during his assignment as an FSO to the CORDS program. He is the only civilian to have received this medal.

would be needed to deal with the huge number of refugees—as many as a million people—who could seek to flee the country. Dated April 5, 1975, the two memos spelled out that the South could be lost in as little as three weeks.

By mid-April, even as the NVA moved closer and closer to the capital, Amb. Martin still felt that any sign of evacuation activity by the United States would cause what little remained of the South Vietnamese political and military fabric to completely rend, with mass chaos ensuing.

I feared that if this inaction continued, the opportunity to evacuate at least some Vietnamese would be lost completely. So, one evening, when most of the staff had departed, I walked from my third-floor office in the Old Executive Office Building across West Executive Avenue, in the side door of the White House, and up to Deputy National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft's office. Always the last person to leave, Brent was engrossed in one of the multiple red-tagged memos that were stacked on what was technically still Henry Kissinger's desk.

He beckoned me in and, with just the two of us there, I



Secretary of State John Kerry delivers the keynote address at the Foreign Affairs Day celebration at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, District of Columbia, on May 3, 2013.

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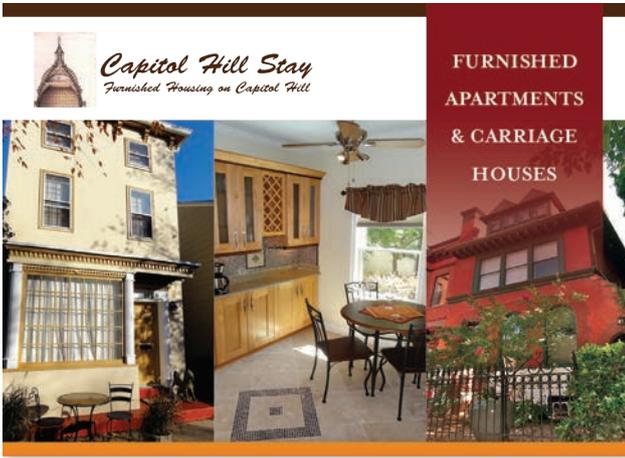
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briefed him on the secret evacuation system that we had set up, which now had many high-risk Vietnamese ready to be taken out of the country. I told him that what was needed was a message to the ambassador from the White House instructing him to immediately begin to evacuate these individuals. I handed him a draft cable which gave the details of our plan, with Lacy Wright as the contact.

General Scowcroft went to the president that night and then sent the message through the White House back channel to Amb. Martin, instructing him to assist these people to leave. This action, in effect, began the flow of Vietnamese out of the country. A trickle at first, over the next week or so more than 100,000 refugees were airlifted out of Vietnam. In his book *Decent Interval*, Frank Snepp wrote that this system eventually saved thousands of Vietnamese civilians.

One last memory of the evacuation is from April 28. When I arrived at work early that morning, I learned that the NSC had just met and advised the president to halt the evacuation due to the threat of attacks on the airport. When I phoned Saigon to relay this information, however, I was told that Tan Son Nhut Airport was not under attack, and that there were still 20,000 high-risk Vietnamese at the airport whom we were about to abandon.

Wondering what I could possibly do to prevent a humanitarian disaster, I ran across to the White House and into David Kennerly's ground-floor office. Out of breath, I explained the desperate nature of the situation. David reacted instinctively. He dashed up to the Oval Office, to which he always had access, and told the president directly that he had an absolutely reliable source who told him there were thousands of refugees stranded at the airport who could still be saved. The president, who was said to consider Kennerly like a son, acted immediately to order the evacuation to continue. Thousands more refugees were flown out of the country that day, until the North Vietnamese bombardment finally forced the airport to close.

The evacuation of the embassy was completed on April 29. The next day, a North Vietnamese tank crashed through the gates of Independence Palace, ending the war and the existence of the Republic of Vietnam. Hoa Binh—peace—had arrived, but few in the South were dancing to welcome it the way my employees in Chau Doc had on Jan. 27, 1973. ■

Mobilizing for South Vietnam's Last Days

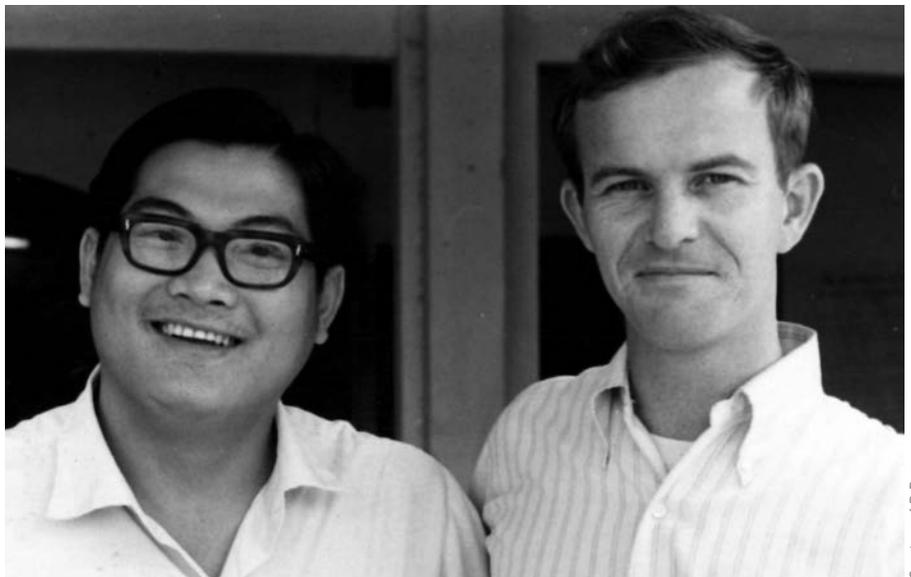
At the State Department, a small group of FSOs worked outside normal channels to prevent a potential human tragedy.

BY PARKER W. BORG

Images of the final days of the American presence in South Vietnam 40 years ago remain vivid in the minds of everyone who lived through those turbulent years, or saw last year's documentary, "Last Days in Vietnam." Less is known, however, about what was happening then at the Department of State.

In addition to what history books have recorded about the role of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, a small group of Foreign Service personnel without responsibilities for Vietnam began working outside normal channels to address the end game there. Their success illustrates what's possible when a small, determined group mobilizes to deal with a crisis.

When North Vietnamese forces took the town of Ban Me Thuot in March 1975, many of us who had previously served at Embassy Saigon or in the provinces believed South Vietnam's end was just around the corner. Yet EAP seemed preoccupied with efforts to obtain supplemental funds from Congress to support past commitments to Vietnam, while our ambassador in Saigon, Graham Martin, was focused on keeping the country together



Parker Borg, at right, with one of his counterparts in Bing Dinh, circa 1969.

Courtesy of P. Borg

and was unwilling to consider any form of evacuation.

Ambassador Martin argued that even contingency planning would undermine the confidence of South Vietnamese authorities, triggering the very crisis we were trying to avoid. We remained convinced, however, that the potential human tragedy from the collapse made planning essential. This was our primary concern.

These were the days before State routinely set up task forces the moment a crisis emerged.

Operating Below the Radar

Working in offices where we had access to some cables and intelligence reports but, with one exception, no Vietnam responsibilities, a small group of us who had all served there began meeting every day at lunch to talk about the deteriorating situation. These below-the-radar meetings took place in Deputy Secretary of State Robert Ingersoll's conference room.

The core group included Frank Wisner (Director for Management in Public Affairs), Paul Hare (Deputy Director of Press Relations), Craig Johnstone (Director of the Secretariat Staff), Lionel Rosenblatt (on the Deputy Secretary's staff), Jim Bullington (who worked on the Vietnam desk and could keep us informed about desk-level actions) and myself (who had been working on Secretary Kissinger's staff). We were joined on occasion by one or two others.

The group worked at two levels. EAP Assistant Secretary Philip Habib accepted our offer to work on issues the bureau was too busy to cover. Deputy Secretary Ingersoll supported us by issuing occasional tasking requests, which permitted us to draft action papers.

Reviewing the embassy's evacuation plan, we found it woefully inadequate for the thousands of American citizens living throughout the country. In addition, we believed that the United

States had an obligation to large numbers of Vietnamese who had worked with Americans over the years and would be endangered under a communist regime.

We estimated that an evacuation plan for Vietnam needed to cover about 6,000 Americans, 4,000 other foreigners (ceasefire observers from the 1973 accords, foreign diplomats and third-country nationals working for the United States), and anywhere from 100,000 to one million Vietnamese. We developed information about commercial aircraft and ships in the area, consulted with Pentagon officials about military evacuation assets and sent forward various evacuation scenarios.

As North Vietnamese troops got closer to the capital in April 1975, the Federal Aviation Administration wanted to close the airport to commercial traffic. We pushed it to keep the airport open and called commercial airlines to increase the number of flights into Saigon.

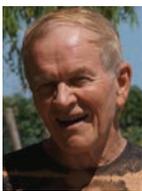
The end seemed near, but nobody had any idea about Hanoi's intentions, how long the South Vietnamese would resist or how violent the last days might be. Amb. Martin continued to oppose planning an orderly departure for American personnel or considering any evacuation for the many Vietnamese who had been associated with the U.S. effort.

His concern was certainly understandable: the Vietnamese numbers were staggering and the implications dramatic. Our figures showed 164,000 current embassy employees and family members, 850,000 former employees and family members, 93,000 close relatives of U.S. citizens, and 600,000 military and civilian officials who likely had close ties to Americans.

Organizing a Task Force

Our second major concern was how Washington organized itself for the end game. These were the days before State routinely set up task forces the moment a crisis emerged. We wanted to keep the department at the center of operations, but argued for an interagency task force that included representatives from the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and various domestic agencies. State agreed to establish an in-house task force, but we kept pressing for it to be an interagency operation to deal with the huge influx of Vietnamese refugees we anticipated would follow the collapse.

On April 18, 1975, the special Inter-agency Task Force was established under the leadership of Ambassador L. Dean Brown, a former deputy under secretary for management. We approached Amb. Brown immediately and volunteered to take leave from our jobs to become his core staff. Key members from other agencies who joined the task force staff at the beginning



Parker W. Borg, a Foreign Service officer for 35 years, served as a district adviser in Vietnam's Binh Dinh province from 1968 to 1969, and as a staff member of the Military Assistance Command Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support headquarters in Saigon in 1970. After the 1973 ceasefire, he returned to Vietnam as a political observer and worked on the Vietnam evacuation effort. He later served as ambassador to Mali and Iceland, and held senior State Department positions in the areas of counterterrorism, narcotics suppression, the international dimensions of information technology and African affairs.

After retiring from the Foreign Service, Ambassador Borg worked on national security issues related to the war in Iraq at the Center for International Policy from 2002 to 2003. He then taught international relations at the American University of Rome from 2005 to 2008 and at the American Graduate School of International Relations in Paris in 2009.

The ambassador's attitude irritated most of us, but two task force members, Lionel Rosenblatt and Craig Johnstone, decided to take direct action.

were Julia Taft from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now Health and Human Services), Clay McManaway from the CIA and Colonel Gerald Rose from DOD, all of whom eventually moved on to other jobs at State.

At about the same time, Amb. Martin finally agreed to an orderly evacuation of Americans and top Vietnamese officials, but adamantly opposed any evacuation planning for other

Vietnamese. He suggested they head for designated points along the coast where American ships would “try” to pick them up.

The ambassador's attitude irritated most of us, but two task force members, Lionel Rosenblatt and Craig Johnstone, decided to take direct action. Without informing anyone, they flew off to Saigon on April 19 to implement their private evacuation plan. En route, Lionel called me to explain that he would call each day, using a pseudonym—to verify his well-being—and provide a status report. Since the task force was in a fluid state during these first days, it took two or three days before their absences were noted.

Amb. Martin was furious when he learned that two FSOs had returned to Vietnam during the draw-down for an unidentified mission. He sent a blistering message demanding their recall and ordered staff members to locate them. In the frenzy of Saigon's last days, the two stashed some 200 Vietnamese former work colleagues in vehicles, slipped them past Vietnamese security and pushed them aboard departing aircraft.

The two errant task force members escaped from Vietnam just days before the end. Once they had left, members of the informal group convinced Amb. Brown that the two should not be disciplined, but welcomed back and their experiences put to use. Others in the department disagreed, however. Eventually, they were summoned to meet with Sec. Kissinger to consider charges

of insubordination; but he acknowledged their bravery and declined to pursue any course of discipline.

Helping Vietnamese Refugees

Chartered U.S. aircraft began making hourly flights out of Saigon on April 22. In addition to Americans and third-country nationals, the planes carried away any Vietnamese who could make it past the gauntlet of security barricades between Saigon and the airport set up by the local authorities to stem panic. The final chaos was beginning.

With the North Vietnamese army poised to enter the capital, we were uncertain whether they intended a violent takeover or would permit an orderly departure of the last Americans. On April 29, President Gerald Ford gave the order to evacuate the embassy by helicopter, setting off the dramatic final hours of the American presence in Vietnam. We monitored the evacuation

from our seventh-floor task force office as best we could, given the primitive communications that existed 40 years ago.

The flights were supposed to end at midnight Saigon time, but continued for three more hours under orders from a heroic Amb. Martin. About 1,000 Americans and 6,000 Vietnamese departed the embassy roof during the final 14-hour liftoff. The North Vietnamese held their fire as the waves of helicopters followed the Saigon River to U.S. naval vessels just offshore.

Once the evacuation was underway, a new set of issues confronted our task force. What would be the destination for the refugees leaving Vietnam? The airlifted refugees went from ships to U.S. bases in the Philippines, and later to other bases on Wake Island and Guam. Simultaneously,

thousands of other Vietnamese fled on private boats to neighboring countries, many of which were hostile to them. This required a wave of diplomatic efforts to permit their entrance, at least on a temporary basis.

Then, where would the refugees go from the temporary staging points? It was understood that some would come to the United States, but how many? Where would they stay until resettlement was arranged? Working with the Defense Department, each service agreed to open portions of one base. The Navy provided Camp Pendleton in California; the Army, Fort Chafee in Arkansas; and the Air Force offered Eglin Base in Florida. When



Parker Borg relaxing at a social event in Binh Dinh, circa 1969.

Courtesy of Parker Borg



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Eglin proved too small, the Army opened an additional camp at Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania.

By early June 1975, about 130,000 Vietnamese refugees were under American control: 56,000 were in the United States, 44,000 were at bases outside the country and 30,000 had already been released from the system. In addition to daily maintenance, the camps needed to provide medical screening, immigration processing and counseling about life in the United States. Concurrently, we pushed a worldwide appeal to other countries through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Red Cross and the Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration, to establish resettlement programs elsewhere to welcome Vietnamese refugees.

Everything Happened So Quickly

To organize the settlement of refugees in the United States, we promptly began holding meetings with a half-dozen voluntary agencies whose work in this field dated back to World War II. These included the International Rescue Committee, Church World Services, Catholic Relief Services and Lutheran World Services. We also contacted local community organizations to facilitate sponsorship and resettlement. We helped all these organizations set up offices at the military camps, which many of us visited to monitor conditions and programs.

In the weeks following South Vietnam's collapse, State proposed legislation (drafted by our task force), testified on its behalf before both houses of Congress, and witnessed Pres. Ford signing into law the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975. This authorized \$405 million for costs relating to the reception centers, resettlement support, medical and welfare services, and the movement of some refugees to third countries. It was also the beginning of what would become the largest refugee resettlement program in the United States since the end of World War II.

Everything happened so quickly in the spring of 1975 that it was hard to tell when one activity ended and the next began. Within two months our task force oversaw the evacuation of Vietnam, established restaging camps, developed sponsorship programs, obtained legislative authorities, began resettling thousands of refugees in the States and promoted the resettlement of thousands of others in third countries.

While all of us on the task force brought our individual knowledge and commitment to its work, events on the ground quickly brought the entire department, and federal government, together to accomplish our goals. But the bottom line was the personal satisfaction we all derived from making a difference on an important national issue. ■

Saigon Sayonara

With the fall of South Vietnam looming, and an ambassador still in denial, FSOs on the ground began taking matters into their own hands to help get people out, by any means possible.

BY JOSEPH MCBRIDE

South Vietnam seemed strangely secure when I reported to Saigon as a first-tour, political officer in late 1974. But signs soon suggested that stability was chimerical. In early January 1975, I pulled late duty to report the translation of President Nguyen Van Thieu's speech to the nation after the North Vietnamese Army had overrun Phuoc Binh, just 90 miles north of Saigon. Thieu rationalized that retaking the jungle town was not worth the cost.

Militarily, he was right, but politically this was a disaster. Phuoc Binh was the first provincial capital the government permanently abandoned after more than a decade of war. Even more dismaying, Thieu rambled on for three disjointed hours. Viet-

nam's president and commander in chief seemed to be losing it.

While the translators worked, I slipped over to the Recreation Association to grab a sandwich. It was "Luau Night" around the swimming pool. U.S. contractors were decked out in orchid leis and served by waitresses in sarongs, all lit by tiki torches. The incongruity stunned me: partying as usual while the NVA racked up the score, less than 100 miles to the north. "This cannot last," I thought.

A Reality Check

But I wanted to see for myself. So in early 1975, I took annual leave for a four-day bus trip over the Tet (lunar New Year) holiday, unarmed and unescorted, deep into the Mekong Delta. No travel clearance was required in those days. (It was a different time and a different Foreign Service; hard to envision in the current era of cocoon-like constriction.) My intent was to poke around the district where I had served with USAID as the sole civilian on a joint military-civilian pacification advisory team from 1969 to 1971. (USAID was my chosen entrée into the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program—the equivalent of a countrywide Provincial Reconstruction Team on steroids.) I wanted to gauge how security had changed on the ground, in a place where I could really judge.

Our former team interpreter, a lasting friend whom I got out a few months later, went with me. We encountered no problems on the road. Vietnamese were astonished to see an American on board, but happy to banter for long hours. Arriving in the district, the army captain now in command was a different matter. Totally flummoxed, he wanted us out of there.



Joseph McBride's Foreign Service career spanned 37 years. He first joined USAID for assignment to the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program in 1969. Following five years with USAID, including a tour in Bangkok, he joined the State Foreign Service in 1974 and was sent to

Embassy Saigon as a political officer. Other career highlights include stints in Rome, Bangkok, Lima, Managua, Bogota, Kandahar and 17 years in Washington, D.C. He also served on the AFSA Governing Board and represented AFSA during negotiations for the Foreign Service Act of 1980. Post-retirement activities include backstopping Afghanistan drug eradication and Darfur peacekeeping.

The incongruity stunned me: partying as usual while the North Vietnamese Army racked up the score, less than 100 miles to the north.

It soon became clear why: his outposts looked like the Maginot Line, because the Viet Cong roamed unchallenged right up to their gates; and government militia to man the walls were scarce on the ground. Caught on the road at sunset, we overnighted with a village notable we knew well. We could sleep in his house, but the Viet Cong were “all around,” he warned. The old gentleman kindly left us with a concussion grenade, as he quickly departed to sleep elsewhere. We high-tailed it back at the break of dawn.

I got what I wanted: a reality test of security on the ground, 1975 versus 1971. The official security rankings for the district—“average for the country”—had not changed in four years. But the place we once knew to be 80-percent secure was now reduced to a hollow eggshell, waiting to be cracked.

Back at the embassy, my trip provoked no criticism. But neither was there a shred of interest in drawing on it for “defeatist” reporting to Washington. My disillusionment was tempered by the explicit warning the department’s director of the Vietnam desk had given me before I left Washington: “Don’t stick your neck out to contest sanitized reporting. We all are perfectly aware Embassy Saigon is selling a concocted story, and nobody back here pays much attention to it.”

Accelerating Collapse

From mid-January to mid-April the NVA rolled up the country rapidly. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam collapsed due to panicked orders from Saigon and incompetent senior leadership, with a few notable exceptions. The 18th Division bought 10 days by a heroic stand at Xuan Loc, northeast of Saigon, before it was overrun.

The imminent fall of South Vietnam was obvious to all of us, but Ambassador Graham Martin adamantly clung to the hope that some political compromise could be worked out. Martin had lost a son, a helicopter pilot, in the war. He could not admit that defeat was a foregone conclusion.

At most, the embassy was authorized to ship home excess files, though shredding and burning were soon to follow. The political section began discreetly identifying particularly high-

risk Vietnamese for possible evacuation. In the end, however, the criteria were too vague and the list too long to be prioritized. For any given Vietnamese, it all came down to who he knew, how lucky he was, and how far his American contact would go to rescue him.

Several weeks before the end, two high-flying seventh-floor staffers took unauthorized leave to come rescue Vietnamese contacts for whom they felt personal responsibility. One morning Deputy Chief of Mission Wolfgang Lehmann barged into the political section, “Does anybody know Lionel Rosenblatt and Craig Johnstone? If they show up, have them report to the front office immediately!” When he left, my boss muttered, “Before reporting in, those two better finish anything they came here to do. Because they’ll be slammed into the first plane out of here.”

Sure enough, within the hour I ran into Rosenblatt and Johnstone climbing the back staircase to see me. I hurried them back out of the embassy before they were spotted and, later, fixed them up with contacts at the Tan Son Nhut evacuation site. Over the next week, to their great credit, they got 30 contacts and their families out before departing themselves on the last commercial flight from Saigon.

A week before the end, the Department of Justice finally authorized “parole status” for the Vietnamese families of the estimated 5,000 private American citizens who refused to leave the country without them. Ken Moorefield, an aide to the ambassador, set up a processing center at the airfield to process these roughly 20,000 people. I soon joined him. We were stamping out “parolees” on the afternoon of April 28, when turncoat government pilots bombed and cratered the airfield. The damage done put an end to any possibility of further fixed-wing evacuation.

We were now down to limited helicopter evacuation from the airfield and the embassy, plus a barge route down the Saigon River. The barges were the brainchild of Mel Chatman and Bob Lanigan, USAID field officers, who had distinguished themselves in chaotic evacuations down the coast from Da Nang and Nha Trang. At the end, the two personally nursed the Alaska Contracting barges down to the sea. But due to the lack of overall embassy planning and execution, these enormous barges went out only half-filled.

That night, I fell asleep, exhausted, on an embassy desktop. In the false dawn of April 29, NVA rockets suddenly rained down from all around the city.

Hitting the Streets

Several weeks earlier I had signed on to drive high-risk contacts down to the Saigon docks for evacuation by sea. “I’m

Dreaming of a White Christmas”—the mission warden code for activating the evacuation—started playing on the radio. It was time to rise and shine ... and make things happen.

Around noon on the 29th, I grabbed a nine-passenger van with a full fuel tank and headed out for the designated safe house where political section contacts were supposed to assemble. I requested Lacy Wright, the deputy in the section, to lead the way for the first run because of his 4/4 Vietnamese. The ticklish part would be negotiating the police guards sealing off the docks to the evacuation barges on the river. I wanted no 3/3 linguistic slipups to block our entry.

The safe house was already swarming with people when we got there, and it only got worse through the day. Word on the street spread fast; it had been an illusion to think we could keep the safe houses secret. Separating out the genuine high-risk cases took time. We each crammed up to 20 people into our vans, but it did not make a dent in the inflow. Lacy sweet-talked us through the police and army barricades for the first run, but he and I got separated after that.

Stuck at the closed-off airport, Admin Officer Don Hayes linked up with the Marines to courageously thwart enraged paratroopers trying to force their way aboard the airlift—or block the evacuation. Political Internal Chief Shep Lowman got stuck with a houseful of high-level VIPs, but despite frantic calls, no vehicles were ever sent to pick them up. In the end, Shep made it back to the embassy by foot, but he could get only three high-level friends through the gate with him. Ken Moorefield was also driving a rescue mission out on the streets, but got stuck cruising around Saigon with two full busloads and nowhere to take them. The airfield and the embassy were buttoned up tight. Tellingly, nobody in charge had alerted Ken about the barges leaving from the docks on the river.

Sadly, snafus and disconnects like these were the rule of the day, not the exception. Those with initiative—who would rather ask for forgiveness than wait for permission—were the only ones who were truly effective. Officers from the Defense Attaché Office at the airfield had control of key assets, personnel to deploy and the nerve to jump the start gun. The rest of us played it by ear the best we could.

Back at my safe house, from all I could tell I was completely on my own. As the city shifted toward chaos, I could only raise the front office on my radio net. I got plenty of “attaboys” and “stick to it as long as you can,” but no useful guidance or info of any kind. Fortunately, the mood on the streets had not yet turned against us. Renegade South Vietnamese soldiers turning their guns on us—not the NVA—was always our biggest security risk. (We knew

The old gentleman kindly left us with a concussion grenade, as he quickly departed to sleep elsewhere.

leaders of the Airborne Brigade were actively plotting to take Americans hostage to ensure their own evacuation.) Beware the wrath of a betrayed ally.

I repeatedly delivered my passengers, and policemen guarding the docks grudgingly accepted handfuls of Vietnamese cash. Toward the end of the day, a young Army officer at a roadblock detained my van. Trouble, I thought. “No. I just want to say thank you for trying,” he said with a salute. The lieutenant declined to climb in with me, saying he would stay with his family. Earlier, a senior embassy translator had declined a similar offer, snapping, “No, I’m Vietnamese. I’m staying.” It sounded like he already had paid his dues to the new order and knew he was safe.

Heading for the Barn

The long shadows of late afternoon arrived, and there had been a long gap with no evacuation helicopters from the Seventh Fleet. Crowds overran my safe house. Two longhaired Saigon cowboys in bellbottoms carried in a desiccated grandfather in an ebony chair—outrageous draft dodgers, not the people we set out to save. On top of it all, my van’s once-full fuel tank was now running on fumes, and gasoline stations were shut down tight. It was time to head back to the embassy.

I radioed that I was coming home. George Jacobson, the ambassador’s longtime special assistant for field operations, asked that I make one more run to pick up his household staff. It was a personal favor. He told me I could siphon gas out of his parked car, “and don’t worry about the taste.” (Jacobson had been dramatically filmed during the Tet Offensive of 1968, catching a pistol thrown up to his bedroom window in time to dispatch a Viet Cong sapper coming up the stairs.) So, gasoline taste in my mouth, I made one more run for the docks.

Back at the embassy I found packed crowds hunkered down, waiting. Earlier wall climbers apparently had been beaten down. Street toughs had cannibalized abandoned cars down to their naked x-frames, motor blocks and all. The vandals were snarly and scornful. But as I inched through them, the tens of thousands waiting around the embassy were imploring rather than angry.

The Marine guard at the main vehicle gate could not let me in.

The place we once knew to be 80-percent secure was now reduced to a hollow eggshell, waiting to be cracked.

Once he cracked the gate, masses of people would break through. He had orders to fire on them if they did. He was right. I threw my Samsonite briefcase over the wall, not wanting to get caught with the two hand grenades inside, if the crowd turned mean.

Baffled, I tried to figure out what to do. Finally, another Marine directed me to the small sally-port gate opening into the consulate. It was buttressed by projecting towers, so that only one person at a time could pass. He asked me to collect the various Americans locked outside and quietly slip them over to that gate. Slowly, mustering every courtesy term I could recall from FSI language training, I worked around to the other side of the compound. “Don’t worry, we’ll have helicopters enough for everybody who wants to go. We are not leaving without you,” I assured one and all. To my relief, they seemed to believe me. Because they wanted to, they had to. What other hope could they have?

I collected about 10 Americans and their families and gingerly slid them to the consulate gate. Two huge Marines in full battle rattle came over the gate. I positioned myself between them as we passed through each person, including a very pregnant woman. Three stout men on the back side of the gate opened and closed it behind each entrant.

The two giant Marines repeatedly muscled the crowd back with their flack-jacketed bulk while snapping the loading slide on their (actually unloaded) M-16s for dramatic effect. I marveled at their cool—despite not understanding the language and being totally vulnerable to a hidden knife or pistol. My job was to pick out those who were to be saved, and keep uttering the implausible promise that we would not abandon anybody. Later, I wrote up the two Marines, and they both got military awards and a coveted assignment to guard duty at the U.S. mission at the United Nations.

Pulling Up Stakes

Inside the compound I stripped to the waist, wringing buckets of sweat out of my shirt. I threw away a filthy gray-striped seersucker jacket that had covered the revolver tucked in the small of my back.

Suddenly, a platoon of some 40 Marines charged out from the

main door of the chancery building, crossed the front lawn and flung their backs against the compound wall. Soon DCM Lehmann appeared, gesturing firmly, and called them back. The Marines recoiled back from the wall and into the chancery building.

What was going on, I wondered? Lehmann, a former infantry officer, came over and cleared up my confusion. “Nobody, nobody else gets into this compound,” he barked to all present. “Understand? And that goes for you, too, McBride!” Half naked, I managed a “Yes, sir.”

It turned out that the CIA station had assembled a bunch of “assets” in a building across the boulevard from the embassy and then arranged for the Marine fleet detachment to mount an assault over the wall and push the crowd back to open a corridor for these chosen few to get to the gates. Given the thousands of people in the street, it’s hard to imagine how this scheme could have worked out, unless the Marines provoked panic by also firing into the air. But once the front office got word of it, the DCM promptly stomped on it.

The DCM’s intervention, however, seems to have been one of a kind. It was the only case that I know of where the front office exercised effective management control over any part of the street-level evacuation. On the contrary, the mission leadership was overwhelmed dealing with Washington and, by all accounts, out of contact with what was going on outside. Those Vietnamese trying to escape either lucked out by having an American protector to provide access to evacuation points—embassy, airport or barge dock—or they were left behind.

Most were left behind—including one agency’s full complement of 200 staffers and their families. Their American supervisors clearly were isolated and out of the loop until the balloon went up. When it did, they were ignored—allegedly misled—and ultimately helpless to save their people. They had gullibly accepted generic assurances that their people would be wrapped up in the overall mission evacuation. No other agency, to my knowledge, was similarly naïve.

I entered the chancery as tropical darkness fell suddenly. The political section was totally empty. Nobody could be found on any working-level floor that I could access. All offices were thoroughly trashed, with IBM Selectric typewriters getting special attention. An odor of alcohol wafted through from time to time. Only when I got to the outer office of the executive suite on the third floor did I find a gaggle of people.

The ambassador’s extraordinary secretary, Eva Kim, and her newsman beau, come to mind. The rest seemed to be largely superannuated hangers-on, serving no purpose at the wake. I saw nobody drinking, but painkiller had clearly been applied

here and there. I received plenty of congratulations and pats on the back. After that, given the DCM's ukase to let no more people in, I could see nothing more to do but wait.

Eventually, a CH-53 Sea Stallion arrived on the landing pad on top of the building. A few Americans were needed to fill out an otherwise overwhelmingly Vietnamese passenger list. At the foot of the stairs to the roof, immediately in front of me, stood an impeccably dressed Europeanist doing his obligatory excursion tour to Asia, complete with perfectly pressed suit, neatly combed hair, starched handkerchief adorning his jacket pocket, polished attaché case and overnight bag. Right then and there, I decided I would never become one of them.

As we started upward, Amb. Martin came out of his private office to pull me aside. Putting his hand on my shoulder, he intoned in a low, southern patrician voice that he knew what I had been doing out on the streets, and he wanted to thank me. Truthfully, I felt honored to be there at the end, to have done all that I could do. For all his foibles, the ambassador had extended

The mission leadership was overwhelmed dealing with Washington and, by all accounts, out of contact with what was going on outside.

a gracious gesture that I had no right to expect.

It was pitch dark as the chopper lifted off the roof, but the tail ramp was down enough to make out scattered fires burning in the distance. Lit by an eerie blue light inside, all I could make out were Vietnamese around me. Some other Americans were aboard for sure, but not many.

Contrary to some accounts, I detected no enemy ground fire reaching up to us. The NVA wanted us gone in time to celebrate



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THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

I grabbed a nine-passenger van with a full fuel tank and headed out for the designated safe house where political section contacts were supposed to assemble.

their victory on May Day, and we were going. They may have painted our choppers with their targeting systems, but they let us go unimpeded. After a while, we landed under floodlights on the USS *Hancock*, a World War II vintage carrier. Those of us with pistols handed them over. I slept for much of the five days' journey to Subic Bay, the Philippines.

“Just a Few More”

The evacuation concluded in the early morning of April 30. Amb. Martin admirably stretched out the evacuation to get out every Vietnamese he could—“just a few more helicopters.” Several inbound crews crashed from vertigo. The exasperated Navy finally resorted to a direct presidential order for the ambassador to get on a designated helicopter, just before dawn. That’s what it took.

Once the ambassador departed for the fleet, “Americans only” for boarding was strictly enforced. In the process, some 400 Vietnamese—including all mission firefighters who had volunteered to stay to the end—were abandoned.

Captain Stuart Herrington, a Vietnamese-speaking DAO officer, had kept the crowd under control by promising that he would not leave until they left. He was utterly devastated to be ordered—forced—to abandon those to whom he had given his personal word. Retired Colonel Herrington deservedly serves as the moral centerpiece of Rory Kennedy’s documentary, “Last Days in Vietnam.” ■

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Finding My Heroes, Finding Myself: From Refugee Child to State Department Official

Amidst the chaos of the last days in Saigon, U.S. government personnel risked their lives to save Vietnamese.

BY ANNE D. PHAM

My journey to America began 40 years ago, when I was plucked out of the Pacific Ocean during the last days of the Vietnam War. While that tumultuous period is fraught with tragedy, there were also many instances of hope and heroism. Indeed, I would not be where I am today were it not for the courage, kindness and compassion of countless personnel from the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development, members of the military and others who risked their lives to save endangered Vietnamese amidst the war's chaotic denouement.

The war in Vietnam was a hot conflict that had emerged from the Cold War global confrontation between the superpowers. It was a war by proxy: China and the Soviet Union funded Communist North Vietnam, while the United States supported South Vietnam and served as its key ally. Canada, Australia, South Korea,

Anne D. Pham is currently a senior State Department adviser in the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources. Prior to that, she served as director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Evaluation, and worked in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Office of the Secretary. Overseas, she has worked in the U.S. missions in Laos and Vietnam. Previously, Ms. Pham was a faculty member in the National Security Studies department at Industrial College of the Armed Forces (now the Eisenhower School), National Defense University.

Philippines and Japan also assisted with various aspects of the U.S.-led effort.

Many South Vietnamese, my father among them, had worked in various capacities in support of the American effort to ensure the freedom and independence of the Republic of Vietnam, a democratic country. Such individuals were at grave risk as North Vietnamese communist forces advanced, yet the U.S. was concerned about the appearance of abandonment that could come with overt evacuation planning. Nevertheless, many American civilian and military personnel scrambled to save the lives of these endangered individuals, sometimes defying orders from their superiors and disregarding their own safety to follow their conscience.

Among them were Foreign Service officers Lionel Rosenblatt and L. Craig Johnstone, who brought attention to the need for evacuation of South Vietnamese employees and associates at risk. After being denied permission to go to Saigon in the spring of 1975, these young diplomats took personal leave, purchased tickets with their own resources and saved several hundred people. Other FSOs, such as Ken Moorefield and Lacy Wright, also made significant efforts to gather people from various locations throughout the city.

15 Minutes to Flee

My father, Joseph Think Pham, came home on the evening of April 29, 1975, and told my mother that we needed to flee for our lives. He had just learned from an American at his workplace that the airport was under rocket fire, and that most roads in and out of Saigon were closed due to the fighting that would soon envelop the capital. The day before, he had witnessed smoke billowing from

It was at this point that brave individuals like USAID officers Joseph Gettier and Mel Chatman sought alternative, last-ditch means to rescue people.

the USAID compound on the northern edge of Saigon.

This would not be the first time my parents had abandoned the life they knew. In 1954, when the country was partitioned, leaving the North under communist authoritarian rule and the South under a nascent democratic government, many Catholics, including my parents, fearing religious persecution, fled south.

Twenty-five years later, my parents again frantically packed up clothes, family photos and music tapes to help us remember our cultural identity. Sadly, we had to leave our two dogs behind.

The original evacuation plan for Americans and those South Vietnamese thought to be at risk depended on the assumption that it would be possible to continue flights from the Tan Son Nhut Airport near Saigon and make use of a limited number of helicopter airlifts from the embassy compound. The North Vietnamese rocket fire on the airport, which left the runways inoperable, created a dire situation.

It was at this point that brave individuals like USAID officers Joseph Gettier and Mel Chatman sought alternative, last-ditch means to rescue people. They commandeered military transport barges that had been used to carry supplies during the war. The two young Americans, both fluent Vietnamese-speakers, instructed the evacuees to board those vessels in the port.

That was how my parents left their homeland with their six young children. Our escape down the Saigon River, with darkness setting in, was a dangerous one. Near Vung Tau Harbor, where the river opens to the Pacific Ocean, we came under rocket fire. Thankfully, as I was only 3 years old, I have only faint memories of the journey. As the barge drifted out to sea, crammed with refugees, my father held me close and solemnly said to my eldest brother: “Take a good look at your country. It will be the last time you see it.”

The next day, we were plucked out of the ocean from our barge and boarded the U.S.S. *Sgt. Andrew Miller*. On the evening of May 2, 1975, the flotilla was directed to the U.S. naval base at Subic Bay, in the Philippines. We were then transferred to Guam, and onward to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, one of several refugee camps that had

been set up to process the influx of refugees from Vietnam and its war-torn Indochinese neighbors. Our helpers at this stage included Richard Armitage, then a young naval officer who would eventually become Deputy Secretary of State.

There were many volunteers who helped us learn English and skills for resettlement and assimilation into American life. Among them was Phyllis Oakley, with whom I later worked when she was a press officer in the State Department’s public affairs office. Another FSO, Theresa Tull, who would later become the first female U.S. ambassador to Brunei, cared for many children, including personally caring for the young children of General Ngo Quang Truong, who stayed behind because he did not want to abandon his troops. Others, like Frank Miller, flew in from neighboring countries as early as March to secretly rescue people.

Resettlement and the Gift of Hope

Growing up in the small New England town of Amherst, Massachusetts, was a stark contrast to living in the tropical heat of Saigon, where I was born. The local people and church in Amherst were welcoming and embracing, giving us clothes and other items to make us feel at home.

Seeing snowfall for the first time was exciting! But in a sad reminder of the life we had left behind, I kept asking my father to take me to see the “big turtles.” Still a young child, I could not grasp that they were in Saigon, at the zoo we had often visited before our departure. My father had to tell me that they were now a beautiful memory to cherish, for we had lost our country.

I remember my father recounting, in vivid detail, the story of how we left Vietnam, saying that he wondered who the young Americans were who had helped to save our family and so many others. He wanted to find them and say thanks—for the freedom we have and for the fact that we are alive. Yet while my parents were, understandably, stuck in the past, America was putting the Vietnam War behind it. Indeed, that process likely began years earlier, with the withdrawal of all U.S. troops in 1973 following the Paris Peace Accords.

As a student from a bicultural background in a small college town, I felt this tension between the past and the present throughout elementary and high school. When the topic of the war or “Vietnam” came up, there seemed to be a negative connotation, a sense of shame and a lack of desire for discussion. It seemed that many wanted to forget the war and the graphic television footage of death and destruction that had been its hallmark. At home, my father continued to recount stories as we ate my mom’s homemade pho soup while prewar romantic love songs played in the background.



Nik Wheeler

With the fall of Saigon inevitable, at-risk Vietnamese climb aboard a barge in Khanh Hoi Saigon Port on the afternoon of April 29, 1975. Joe Gettier, with the help of Mel Chatman and Bill Egan, and against the orders of the U.S. ambassador, left the embassy that day to save people, using barges pulled by tug boats.

While the war remained divisive for Americans, there was bipartisan support for assisting refugees in the years immediately following it. Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) had long been interested in refugee issues. According to Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration Anne C. Richard, “He became the author and driving force behind the Refugee Act of 1980, which moved the country from an ad hoc program to bring refugees to the U.S. to a formal partnership between the government and private organizations with annual goals for refugee admissions.” Others, like Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), have also played an instrumental role in supporting humanitarian programs to reunite families and provide assistance for those who were released from re-education camps.

With congressional refugee admission authorities and funding, Julia Taft, Shep Lowman, Lionel Rosenblatt, Hank Cushing and other FSOs began implementing one of the largest refugee resettlement programs in the world, including approximately

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140,000 refugees who arrived in 1975. Forty years later, they and other waves of refugees have made important contributions to America and other countries—far from the burden that many predicted.



U.S. Army

American military personnel help refugees, including 3-year-old Anne Pham, off a plane at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, in May 1975.



Andrew Marx/Amherst Record Newspaper

The Pham family was sponsored by a local church and Professor Lucien Miller of the University of Massachusetts. In July 1975, from left to right, in the backyard of their sponsor's home, where they stayed: Don, Maria Cuc (Grandma), Theresa, Paul, Mary (mother), Joseph (father) holding Anne, Tony and John.

ocean—nearly half a million by some estimates. The war had continued to take a human toll long after the fighting was over.

While helping the press delegation, I sensed the energy of the younger generation of Vietnamese, eager to learn and yearning for a prosperous future. The country was changing and had moved on from the war years. Then again, many of them were too young to even remember the war.

In fact, the entire Asia-Pacific region was transforming, with increased trade and commerce and

Normalizing U.S. Vietnam Relations: Preparing for a New Future

In 1995, I could sense these solemn sentiments of loss and sadness among the Americans in attendance with the late Secretary of State Warren Christopher at Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi for a ceremony attending the repatriation of American remains. I was among the State Department personnel who assisted with Sec. Christopher's trip to normalize relations with Hanoi and establish a new embassy at President Bill Clinton's initiative.

I thought about the 58,000 American service members who had died in the Vietnam conflict. I also could not help but think about those in my father's generation—the more than one million courageous and committed South Vietnamese military and civilian officers who died during the war, were sent to concentration camps or were executed. Then there were the subsequent waves of "boat people" who perished in the

greater participation in regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The international context and the regional dynamics had shifted with the formal end of the Cold War and demise of the Soviet Union. Walking by the tranquil Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi, I saw turtles and recalled those I'd seen at the zoo as a child. Symbolic of the dynamics of Southeast Asia, there was continuity and change all at once.

As Secretary of State John Kerry wrote in his Feb. 2 op-ed, "From Swift Boat to a Sustainable Mekong," in *Foreign Policy* magazine: "Long ago, those waterways of war became waters of peace and commerce—the United States and Vietnam are in the 20th year of a flourishing friendship." As U.S. Ambassador Ted Osius noted in his arrival in Ho Chi Minh City in February, "A Vietnam that is strong, prosperous and independent, and that respects rule of law and human rights, was, is and will be an indispensable friend of the United States."

Seeking Clarity, Healing and Heroes

When I attended the National War College in 2008, I had an opportunity to meet Henry Kissinger, who said to me, with great emotion: “Out of my entire career, Vietnam and how the war ended pained me the most.” I asked Dr. Kissinger what lesson he learned from Vietnam, and he said: “We should not start a war we cannot finish. No war should end in stalemate.”

I gained a bit more insight in 2009 from a conversation with former Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, who had worked on the Paris Peace talks under then-National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger. Ambassador Negroponte expressed the sentiment that negotiations had been conducted in haste and that perhaps a better peace settlement could have been achieved—with better protections for America’s South Vietnam ally—if there had been greater patience and care. What astonished me most was his bravery. As a young FSO at that time, he had articulated his concerns to Kissinger, that settling on final terms in four days, without adequate consultation with the government of South Vietnam, would lead to a very unfortunate outcome for that country.

That same year, I met Tony Lake, who in 1969 had become special assistant to Henry Kissinger. He expressed the sentiment that if the intent was to end the war from the time the secret negotiations commenced in the late 1960s, there was a moral imperative to do so earlier, so that more lives not be lost. Lake went to Vietnam as a young FSO from 1963 to 1965, but then resigned from the Foreign Service in protest over the war. He later became national security advisor in the Clinton administration.

After these exchanges, I recognized that it is easier to surmise what factors may have resulted in a different outcome in hindsight. To me, the answers appeared to be just as elusive as the insurgents the United States and its Republic of Vietnam allies were trying to track down in the jungles of Southeast Asia. I am hopeful that as documents and sources become available from many countries, reassessment of the war and additional key lessons may come to light as historians continue to battle it out, hopefully with greater balance, objectivity and clarity than in previous decades.

From my father and his South Vietnamese contemporaries I learned that it is important to deeply understand the perspectives of both friends and adversaries.

A Healing Effort

Later, while I was serving on the faculty of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces teaching grand strategy and national security studies, military officers asked me about how I came to this country. This prompted me to search for some of the

individuals who were there during the last days of the war, to share their lessons with the military and civilian students I had the honor of teaching.

I invited my “unsung heroes” to a luncheon ceremony in 2009 at the National Defense University, where then-PRM Assistant Secretary Eric Schwartz commended their humanitarian acts. It was a moving, healing reunion that also allowed a daughter to fulfill one of her father’s wishes: to find the brave young Americans who had saved us to express our gratitude and reconnect threads from the past—a Vietnamese cultural tradition. I told

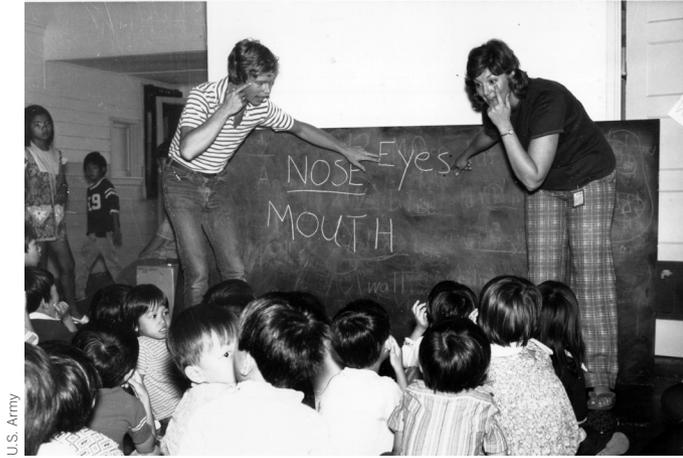
them that despite the controversies and outcome of the Vietnam War, nothing should diminish our memories of their heroic efforts to save lives.

From my father and his South Vietnamese contemporaries I learned that it is important to deeply understand the perspectives of both friends and adversaries, recognize early on when ineffective strategies and tactics are applied and make modifications with changing circumstances because it was a complex war. U.S. patience is also essential: it takes time for democracy to develop and deepen. South Vietnam had been confronting many challenges, trying to unify factions as a nascent, imperfect



U.S. Navy Archives

Young officers with the interagency team help transfer endangered refugees from a barge on to a U.S. Navy ship on April 30, 1975. The Phams’ barge underwent menacing rocket fire near Vung Tau harbor, with nearby boats exploding as they were hit.



U.S. Army

State Department officers, like Phyllis Young, at right, help teach refugee children at the Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, refugee camp.



U.S. Army

A sign at the entrance to the Fort Chaffee refugee camp indicates the number of refugees housed there.



U.S. Army

Anne Pham plays with her brothers, John and Tony, at Fort Chaffee refugee camp in June 1975.

and evolving democracy and a newly sovereign nation. Having cultural sensitivities and respect for our allies, as well as honoring commitments, is important for American leadership and credibility in the long term.

These lessons continue to resonate today in as much as questions pertaining to moral considerations in foreign policy and risk-mitigation in ending wars persist.

Diplomats are often at risk during conflicts, but especially so when wars are ending and new power brokers jockey into positions of authority. It is often during such transitions that the environment becomes most dangerous because military involvement has been withdrawn or ramped down significantly, while nation-building efforts must continue, requiring that American advisers, USAID workers and State Department staff remain on the ground.

The risks in Vietnam were compounded by the fact that there were presidential commitments to aid South Vietnam, as outlined in the Jan. 17, 1973, Nixon letter: “The freedom and independence of the Republic of Vietnam remains a paramount objective of American foreign policy,” and “The U.S. will react vigorously to violations to the agreement.” But, according to Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr., former chief of naval operations, they were never communicated to the U.S. Congress and the commitments were not honored. The Vietnam experience also demonstrated the importance of executive-legislative relations. It is challenging for democracies to continue protracted conflicts without support from lawmakers—clear communications and transparency are essential.

As film director Rory Kennedy emphasized during the Sundance launch of the documentary “Last Days in Vietnam” I attended last year, it is important to think carefully about a strategy for ending wars in a responsible manner and mitigate risks to those who helped America as well as innocent civilians caught in the crosshairs. Kennedy’s Oscar-nominated documentary covers the final hours’ efforts to save lives and the story of those left behind. As Colonel Stuart Herrington, who was on one of the last helicopters from the Embassy Saigon in 1975, notes, “Sometimes there’s an issue not of legal and illegal, but of right or wrong.”

Not everyone was saved though, including more than 400 evacuees left inside the U.S. embassy compound. When a number of my evacuation heroes have expressed sorrow for being unable to save more lives and for breaking promises because of orders from Washington to call off the evacuation prematurely, I asked them to think of me and focus on all the lives they did save and what it has meant for us.

The Strength of America

We cannot change the past, but we must never forget the humanitarian acts that show the importance of the State Department's work. One of the main reasons I wanted to pursue a career in foreign affairs is because I know firsthand the human toll and devastation of war. I recently found my refugee documentation and have made a copy to carry in my handbag, to remind me of how fortunate I am and how I must continue to find ways to do meaningful things for others. It is my hope that future history books about the Vietnam War will include the stories of the brave unsung heroes who followed their conscience and saved so many lives.

President Barack Obama's May 28, 2012, remarks at the Vietnam War Memorial underscored this notion of making peace with the past that resonated with my father and some of the 1975 evacuation heroes in attendance: "As any wound heals, the tissue around it becomes tougher, stronger than before. Five decades removed from a time of division among Americans, this anniversary can remind us of what we share as Americans. That includes honoring our Vietnam veterans by never forgetting the valuable lessons of that war."

Meeting my heroes has taught me there is always hope, even during the darkest hours of our lives, and that we have to keep moving despite adversity. By saving me on that fateful day, they planted the seeds of strength and hope that helped me to achieve

Meeting my heroes has taught me there is always hope, even during the darkest hours of our lives.



Anne Pham, State Department faculty member at the National Defense University, honors her 1975 evacuation hero, Shep Lowman, in December 2009. Foreign Service Officer Lowman was first posted to Vietnam in 1966; he returned in 1974 and saved thousands of lives during the last days of the war.



A healing moment: As a State Department National War College student in April 2008, former refugee child Anne Pham has a special exchange with Henry Kissinger. Dr. Kissinger was both Secretary of State and National Security Advisor during the final years of the Vietnam War.

my dream of working for the State Department.

My hope is to someday represent America abroad as an ambassador. While I may not achieve this goal, I have learned from my unsung heroes that the journey and our life experiences are what enrich us, more than any destination. We must try even when the odds of success may not be high, like finding a way out of Saigon in April 1975. I want to do it for my 1975 evacuation heroes, to make their sacrifices even more meaningful.

While I am a product of a painful chapter in history, I am also a product of the greatness of America, with its diverse society, democratic ideals and opportunity for all. Only in America can a former refugee child become a senior adviser working for the same agency as do the Foreign Service officers who saved her. I am a living testament to the importance of humanitarianism, a core and enduring strength of diplomacy. It is the story of America, and the American dream restored. ■

Doing Social Work in Southeast Asia

Serving in Embassy Saigon’s consular section meant dealing with the social consequences—marriages, births, adoptions—of more than three million Americans coming through a country of 26 million.

BY LANGE SCHERMERHORN

During the decade between 1966 and 1975, more than three million Americans, each spending anywhere from a few months to several years, cycled through South Vietnam, a country of approximately 26 million people (the reunited country in 2014 has a combined population of an estimated 90 million). This massive influx had an enormous impact, some of it anticipated but most unforeseen.

I arrived in Saigon in March 1969 to join the embassy’s consular section, not long after President Richard Nixon announced that the United States would begin drawing down from the high-water mark of approximately 550,000 troops flanked by a sea of civilian contractors. A huge construction projects consortium (RMKBRJ—Raymond International, Morris/Knudsen of Idaho, Brown & Root of Texas and J. A. Jones of North Carolina) was busy building major infrastructure to support military operations.

The combat soldier (tooth) to military support personnel (tail)



Lange Schermerhorn joined the Foreign Service in 1966 and retired in 2001. She spent her first tour as a rotational officer in Colombo, and then served as a vice consul in Saigon from March 1969 through October 1970. She was ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti from 1998 to 2000. Other assignments included Tehran, London, Brussels (twice), the State Department’s Secretariat and other Washington, D.C., assignments.

ratio has escalated in every successive war, reflecting the needs of increasingly sophisticated technology and expanding missions. In Vietnam a very large tail had more time and space for interaction with Vietnamese citizens.

Embassy Saigon had already become our largest post in the world, encompassing an enormous U.S. Agency for International Development mission and a Civil Organization and Revolutionary Development Support program. The job of CORDS was to “win hearts and minds.” The program was staffed, in part, by first- and second-tour Foreign Service officers.

South Vietnam was often referred to sardonically as the “Land of the Big PX.” U.S. government economists had determined that a large military post exchange offering every product imaginable (even fur coats and very expensive jewelry) would absorb much of the salaries and financial incentives paid to U.S. civilian personnel and contractors.

As an incentive to join what ultimately became a coalition of more than 30 countries (the most prominent being a large contingent of South Korean combat troops, but ranging down to a small military medical ambulance unit from Iran), access to the PX was offered to all coalition members. The unintended result was a booming black market for goods alongside the one for currency.

This large international presence also generated a great deal of business for the small consular section, which consisted of a consul general, a consul and three vice consuls. The embassy did not issue non-immigrant visas because Vietnamese citizens required exit permits, which were rarely granted for non-official purposes by a

beleaguered government that did not want its citizens voting with their feet.

Consequently, the consular section's operations were limited to American Citizen Services, which primarily handled deaths and estates, the issuance of immigrant visas to war brides and the processing of adoptions; and performed notarial services.

Bureaucratic Adaptation (aka Social Engineering)

Reflecting its French colonial heritage, Vietnam's justice system required registration in the district of residence and bearing of an identity document commonly referred to as the "Family Book." American military personnel did not have passports, so the government accepted what GIs referred to as "the embassy's permission to get married"—which was actually their own sworn affidavit attesting to their identity and civil status (if previously married), notarized by the consulate. The U.S. military required its personnel who wanted to marry to go through the whole procedure for both the Vietnamese exit visa and the U.S. immigrant visa before granting permission.

As one might imagine, this was a very time-consuming, arduous process involving a birth certificate, police clearances, a medical exam, etc. U.S. soldiers were on a one-year rotation, so many did not complete it. If they managed to gain military permission, they then had to start the formal application process, which required renewing much of the paperwork whose limited validity had expired.

If the couple did not get married in Vietnam, the fiancée as an intending immigrant was not eligible for a visitor's (B-1/B-2) visa. However, there were no immigrant visa numbers available at this time in the category which applied to their cases. This Catch-22 situation in 1970 applied to 100 or so fiancées, and generated considerable congressional correspondence.

One day the head of the Consular Affairs Bureau's Visa Office called from Washington, D.C., to order the issuance of a visitor's visa to one of these cases, citing the interest of a very senior U.S. senator. The consul general responded that on the grounds of equity and fairness, the consulate would take that as an instruction to issue visitor's visas to all of the fiancées in limbo. The Visa Office backed off the request, but that situation eventually led to the establishment of the "K" (fiancée) visa category. (In 1970 non-immigrant categories A-J existed; as of 2015, the list goes through V.)

Cultural Astigmatism

Westerners' linear, legalistic approach to life's problems was not in alignment with a culture where the highest value and importance was placed on family. The opportunity for "fraud," as defined

Embassy Saigon had already become our largest post in the world.

by consular visa regulations, was all too easy in a country where all one needed to obtain a birth certificate was finding two people who would attest that they knew who you and your parents were without any further corroboration.

This became a real headache in adoption cases. All children in Vietnamese orphanages were not necessarily orphans. The exigencies of a long war meant that children with one or even two parents living might be placed in the care of others temporarily. In some cases children may have been placed for adoption either unwittingly or because the surviving parent(s) hoped to ensure a better existence for at least one of many siblings.

One example highlights how one person's "fraud" is another's fulfillment of his or her responsibility to care for and nurture the extended family above all other considerations. A middle-aged U.S. contractor had satisfied all the requirements to obtain immigrant immediate relative visas for his Vietnamese wife and her 5- and 7-year-old daughters by her deceased former husband, a Vietnamese army officer. The momentous day for visa issuance arrived. The consular assistant pointed out a notation on the wife's medical exam stating that "Applicant had a complete hysterectomy 10 years ago." When confronted with this anomaly, the husband explained that the girls were his wife's two orphaned nieces. As she considered herself now their mother, he had obtained birth certificates to that effect.

By some miracle, this happened during the only period in 16 months when two non-preference immigrant visas were available. This allowed the family to complete the process on slightly different terms and leave before the three exit visas expired.

Many Filipinos were hired by U.S. contracting firms. After several years of working in Vietnam, they would appear at the consular section with documentation certifying their service working for the U.S. government at the Subic Bay Naval Base near Manila for 13 or 14 years. That made them eligible for the special immigrant visa available to foreign national employees of the U.S. government. Although originally intended to reward only extraordinary service, over time it has come to be viewed as a benefit by all who complete the required 15 years of service.

Sadly, the Filipinos learned that their service with Pacific Architects and Engineers or other U.S. contractors did not satisfy the

15-year requirement. They had great difficulty in understanding why what looked to them exactly like U.S. government employment legally was not. Even though they were making more money in Vietnam, they felt they were letting down their extended families, who were counting on them to achieve legal residence in the United States and then seek immigrant visa status for their parents and siblings.

Looking Back

By October 1970, when I departed Vietnam, about 350,000 U.S. troops remained in the country. Embassy Saigon was busier than ever. And though I never again served in Asia, my involvement with Vietnam was not yet over. Here are three vignettes I recall vividly from my later Foreign Service career.

Washington, D.C., 1982: I attend the National War College, whose curriculum includes, for the first time since 1975, a two-week segment on Vietnam. The move came at the insistence of several faculty members who said it was past time for study of the war's lessons. The NWC staff who had argued for further delay were

proven right when the heated discussion destroyed the camaraderie carefully cultivated among the student body over the previous months.

Not the least of the surprises was the astonishment among military students when their State Department colleagues noted that between 1966 and 1975, a higher percentage of Foreign Service officers than military officers served in South Vietnam. (Admittedly, large troop deployments were also garrisoning in Germany, Italy and South Korea, among other overseas duty stations.)

Brussels, 1995: The U.S. ambassador to Belgium, where I was serving, receives a group of five new Marine security guards, one of whom is clearly of Vietnamese origin. In the ensuing chat, the Marine reveals that as a 6-month-old child, he had arrived in the United States with his refugee parents, who fled via boat after the fall of Saigon. With heartfelt emotion he exclaims, "I am very proud to be a U.S. Marine."

Quantico, Virginia, 2010: I hear a retired general assert that we talk about lessons learned, but they are only lessons observed. They do not become lessons learned until we apply them. ■

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Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: Lessons for Today

Forty years later, the experience still offers valuable insights
for effective expeditionary diplomacy.

BY RUFUS PHILLIPS

There are lessons to be learned from our counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam that remain relevant today. Chief among them is this: although our understanding and steadfast support can make a significant difference, ultimate success depends on the people we are assisting. Likewise, our insufficient and often mistaken grasp of the insurgent enemy and the cultural and political context of the involved country and its people can greatly contribute to



Rufus Phillips is the author of *Why Vietnam Matters: An Eyewitness Account of Lessons Not Learned* (Naval Institute Press, 2008). His Vietnam involvement occurred between 1954 and 1968, when he served as a U.S. Army officer, CIA case officer, USAID official and consultant to the Department of State. He originated and directed the United States Operations Mission/Saigon's Rural Affairs Office from 1962 to 1963.

Phillips is a senior fellow at the National Strategy Information Center, where he has published papers addressing gaps in our civilian national security capabilities abroad. He is a recognized expert and has provided pro bono counterinsurgency advice to the U.S. embassy in Kabul. He is a member of DACOR and was inducted recently into the OCS Hall of Fame at Ft. Benning, Georgia. He has lectured at the National War College and at the Counterinsurgency Center at Ft. Leavenworth.

failure. These precepts sound simple, but they are often overlooked because we are so focused on ourselves.

Another lesson is that counterinsurgency works when politics and development are as much a focus as security. For lasting effect, counterinsurgency cannot be divorced from political reform and progress from the top down, as well as from the community level up, of the country we are helping. The active support of a majority of the country's population for its government is critical. Countering insurgencies by establishing security through military and police operations is a necessary precondition for political progress, but only indigenous governments that become responsive to their own people can ensure that security endures.

Counterinsurgency in Vietnam went through various phases in terms of what it meant, how it was carried out and how the United States helped or hindered. Understanding the lessons that experience holds for today requires some history.

Early Efforts

Counterinsurgency actually began in Vietnam during the Indochina War (1946-1954) and was known as "pacification." The French created military-civilian teams (called *équipes mobiles*), which performed civil functions in conjunction with military operations aimed at establishing French control over areas dominated by the communist Viet Minh. Such efforts were fatally undermined, however, by French unwillingness to give

The United States did not support the Diem government's effort to reach the rural population by sending civilian civic action teams into the villages until it was too late.

the noncommunist Vietnamese real independence—the prime political cause motivating all Vietnamese.

In the 1954-1955 post-Geneva Accords era, Ngo Dinh Diem emerged as the person who finally achieved complete independence, overthrowing Emperor Bao Dai and establishing the Republic of Vietnam. This gained him widespread support. Underpinning that was a reformed and motivated South Vietnamese army with a positive set of civic action-oriented attitudes toward the civilian population. This ethos earned popular support while defeating sectarian insurgencies, and began to wean villagers' allegiance away from the Viet Minh. The approach owed much to Edward G. Lansdale's advice, based on his involvement in Ramon Magsaysay's successful campaign against the communist Huks in the Philippines and election as president with an overwhelming popular mandate.

Once firmly in power, however, Diem made political errors that were compounded by U.S. mistakes. Most prominent was our decision to take the Vietnamese Army entirely out of the internal security role it had played and convert it into a conventional regular army—trained, organized into corps and divisions, and equipped to confront an overt North Vietnamese invasion (which would not occur for another 20 years).

Despite clear evidence that the North intended to revive its earlier rural-based insurgency, a poorly trained, inadequately equipped Civil Guard took over rural security, supported under the U.S. aid program by a Michigan State University contract team consisting mainly of retired U.S. police officials as advisers. The United States did not support the Diem government's effort to reach the rural population by sending civilian civic action teams into the villages until it was too late.

1961-1963: The Kennedy Era and Rural Affairs

In 1961, when faced with possible South Vietnamese collapse caused by a revived Hanoi-directed insurgency, the John



Courtesy of Rufus Phillips

Rufus Phillips on a 1954 inspection trip to a formerly Viet Minh-controlled area in the Mekong Delta recently handed over to the South Vietnamese Army.

F. Kennedy administration decided to take a stand in Vietnam against further communist expansion in Asia. The watchword was counterinsurgency, but at higher official levels the mission was understood more as a traditional military combat approach with an overlay of Special Forces than as an effort to address the security, political and economic sides of the conflict where it mattered most—at the village level. American military advisers were inserted at all Vietnamese army levels down to the provinces. Initial CIA efforts supported irregular defense forces among the mountain tribes (e.g., the Montagnards) and other home-grown sources of popular resistance to the Viet Cong.

In 1962, following an onsite study of how to get USAID involved in counterinsurgency, the Saigon aid mission was reorganized, with a new special office called Rural Affairs that assigned representatives to each province. (At the time, only



Courtesy of Rufus Phillips

Impressed by civic action deeds, Central Vietnam villagers who had been under Viet Minh control for nine years welcome Vietnamese Army troops in 1955.

three of the aid mission's American staff of 110 were posted outside of Saigon.) The study found that the Vietnamese were implementing their own counterinsurgency approach, the Strategic Hamlet Program—at heart a self-defense, self-government effort focused on the smallest rural settlement, the hamlet. After initial progress, however, the program was stalling; the overly centralized Vietnamese bureaucracy was a significant impediment. Also, the population relocation focus the program started with (based on the British Malaya experience) was ill-suited for Vietnam, where the insurgency was not primarily defined along ethnic lines.

The United States injected the local currency equivalent of \$10 million into the hamlet program. Joint Vietnamese-American committees, consisting of the province chief, the Rural Affairs civilian representative and the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam military adviser, made spending decisions at the provincial level on a consensus basis. The aid supported various self-defense and self-development programs, ranging

In 1962 the Saigon aid mission was reorganized, with a new special office called Rural Affairs that assigned representatives to each province.

from hamlet physical improvements, elections and training for elected officials to hamlet defense militia. Though the USAID provincial representatives had minimum assignments of two years, U.S. military advisers were limited to one-year tours with no extensions, which handicapped their effectiveness.

Hamlet elections encouraged political participation, while



Courtesy of Rufus Phillips

A strategic hamlet school constructed by local self-help groups in 1963.

The U.S.-supported coup against President Diem on Nov. 1, 1963, brought progress to a crashing halt.

the self-help projects—carried out with government-provided materials but using local labor—brought visible physical improvements. Accelerated agricultural and livestock development programs improved farm incomes, often for the poorest

villagers. In fact, for the first time since the insurgency began seriously in 1959, South Vietnam produced a rice surplus for export in 1963.

Rural Affairs also had the flexibility to fund and provide advisers for a surrender program called Chieu Hoi. This program filled a gap in the initial counterinsurgency approach and began attracting defections from the insurgency. Notable among the Rural Affairs provincial representatives were two Foreign Service officers on their first overseas assignment, Richard Holbrooke and Vladimir Lehovich. They were the expeditionary diplomats of that time and the precursors of much greater State civilian involvement in what was to become the Civil Operations and

Revolutionary Development Support program, or CORDS.

While U.S. provincial military advisers strongly supported the local self-development and self-defense program, at upper echelons MACV focused on conventional warfare. The Vietnamese army was advised to undertake large unit sweeps, which often turned up empty-handed as Viet Cong units melted away. This mistake was compounded by the overuse of airpower to attack villages and by blind artillery fire into predetermined areas thought to harbor Viet Cong.

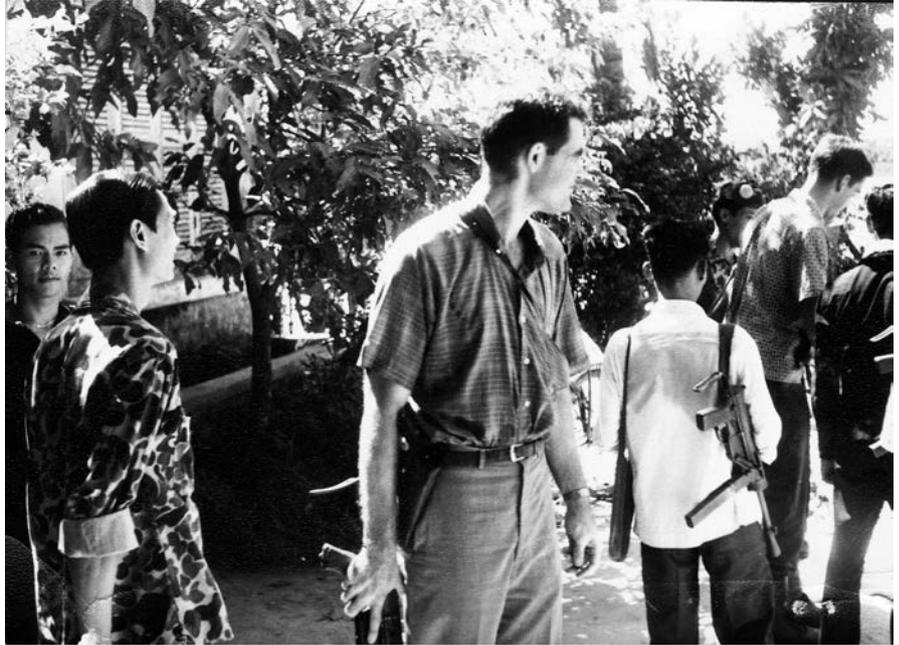
With the exception of one province, where a Vietnamese army regiment was permanently stationed and provided back-up support for the hamlet program, the war was being fought on two different levels. One was local, through the hamlet program aimed at protecting and winning over the civilian population. At most regular Vietnamese army unit levels, however, the main objective was to win the war by killing Viet Cong (with insufficient concern about the adverse effects of such tactics on the civilian population).

1964-1966: Mistakes, Confusion and Decline

The U.S.-supported coup against President Diem on Nov. 1, 1963, brought progress to a crashing halt. The generals leading the coup were initially opposed to continuing the hamlet program. At the same time, almost all province chiefs, good and bad, were replaced; and most paramilitary units providing outside-the-hamlet security were disbanded. Meanwhile, the Viet Cong had already begun a concerted campaign to destroy the hamlet system, particularly in the Mekong Delta, where it was overextended and most vulnerable.

When the junta finally agreed to continue the hamlet effort under a different name, another coup occurred, encouraged by American impatience because the generals were slow to get organized. Now that one person—the new coup leader, General Nguyen Khanh—seemed to be in charge, U.S. officials believed that the war would suddenly be prosecuted with renewed focus and energy.

Instead, Khanh's attempts at one-man-rule backfired; political chaos ensued, and military cohesion declined. The



Courtesy of Bruce Kinsey

FSO Doug Ramsey (center) and USIS FSO Frank Scotton (right). In 1966, as a USAID provincial representative in Hau Nghia, Ramsey was captured by the Viet Cong and held in the jungle under unspeakable conditions for seven years.

absence of an acceptable Vietnamese political way forward undermined everything else, not the least the effort to counter the insurgency. Compounding the confusion, a new USAID mission director decided that much of the Rural Affairs program was wrong. He abolished the joint provincial committees and returned decision-making to Saigon. Just when direct funding of counterinsurgency at the provincial level was most needed, it was largely cut off by our own actions.

Chaos continued into 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson sent in U.S. combat troops to counter the insertion of regular North Vietnamese units that threatened to divide the country in half. The character of the conflict changed when responsibility for winning was taken over by the United States. *We were going to win the war militarily, then give the country back to the Vietnamese.* There was a refocus on counterinsurgency after Henry Cabot Lodge returned as ambassador in mid-1965, but it received mainly lip service from General William Westmoreland, the MACV commander. Lodge brought out Ed Lansdale to coordinate counterinsurgency; but lacking Lodge's strong backing, he was undermined by the various U.S. civilian agencies and MACV.

Each agency ran its own counterinsurgency program until the end of 1966, when a combined civilian effort was attempted.



Courtesy of Rufus Phillips

CORDS representative Mike Bengé at the 1967 opening of a Montagnard handicrafts center he helped create. Captured during the 1968 Tet Offensive, he managed to survive until released in 1973. He received Prisoner of War and Purple Heart medals from USAID in 2013.

In late 1967, for the first time, American support for Vietnamese counterinsurgency became a fully integrated military and civilian effort.

Called the Office of Civil Operations and directed by Deputy Ambassador William Porter, it too failed. Finally, after a pitched interagency battle in Washington in which President Johnson's special assistant for Vietnam, Robert Komer, prevailed, U.S. counterinsurgency was put directly under MACV.

1967-1973: CORDS

In late 1967, for the first time, American support for Vietnamese counterinsurgency became a fully integrated military and civilian effort. Komer was sent to Saigon to head the new Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support, created as a separate MACV command whose civilian chief was answerable directly to General Westmoreland. As the Vietnamese government under Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky and then President Nguyen Van Thieu consolidated itself, it was reorganized to give prime importance and support to counterinsurgency. This provided a Vietnamese counterpart for CORDS.

Ironically, the 1968 Viet Cong Tet Offensive, which undermined American public support for the war, opened the way for CORDS-supported counterinsurgency success. Generally regarded in the United States as a victory for the North, the offensive was actually a spectacular setback in the insurgents' ability to continue controlling the Vietnamese countryside. They lost most of their best political cadre and fighting units in Tet and several subsequent smaller campaigns called "mini-Tet," and significant segments of the population mobilized against them. The nature of American military leadership also changed with the June 1968 replacement of General Westmoreland by General Creighton Abrams, who strongly supported counterinsurgency.

The CORDS civil-military advisory effort extended all the way down to the district level in the provinces. Integrated CORDS advisory missions, involving USAID, MACV, Joint United States Public Affairs Office (United States Information Service) and CIA officials, were stationed at regional (corps) and provincial levels, with smaller advisory teams at the district level. The four regional offices were commanded by senior military personnel,



Courtesy of Ogden Williams

John Paul Vann, the legendary USAID provincial representative who rose as a civilian to become the top CORDS officer in charge of the II Corps region, died in a helicopter crash in 1973.

with one exception: John Paul Vann, a USAID civilian employee (and former military officer). At provincial levels, depending on security conditions, CORDS was headed by a civilian or a military officer. By 1969, the American advisory force in CORDS had grown to a total of about 7,500—consisting of 1,100 civilian and 6,400 military advisers. Of the latter, about 5,800 served in the field and the remainder in Saigon and regional offices.

Although Bob Komer had performed splendidly in organizing CORDS and getting it started in late 1967, his bombastic manner alienated the Vietnamese and angered Gen. Abrams. He was replaced in early 1969 by his deputy, William Colby, who knew how to work with the Vietnamese and ran CORDS in a very open, low-key but effective manner. Backed by Ambassador Ellsworth



Left to right, Dick Holbrooke, Bob Komer (head of CORDS), Dick's brother, Andy, then in the Army, and Vlad Lehovich, in Nha Trang in 1967.

As CORDS grew, its American advisory personnel were becoming better prepared.

Bunker, Colby dealt directly with host-government officials at all levels, from Pres. Thieu on down, on counterinsurgency matters. This helped avoid misunderstandings and improved implementation. He was able to bring trusted and independent information and political judgment to bear at higher command levels, where it counted. No such across-the-board access had existed since the original Rural Affairs operation in 1962-1963.

In 1969 CORDS began supporting a series of nationwide counterinsurgency plans in what was called an "Accelerated Pacification Campaign." Province-by-province plans prepared with Vietnamese participation called for the gradual extension of control outward from hamlets already supporting the government into areas under Viet Cong influence, while postponing contesting areas under complete Viet Cong dominance. A Vietnamese government decision to treat local security force service as a substitute for the regular military draft encouraged

a rapid increase in local defense forces. Counterinsurgency effectiveness was further enhanced by the extension of more local self-government (e.g., elections for village chiefs and councils and for provincial councils).

Equipped with its own funds, CORDS injected supplementary funding at the local level, adding to the larger volume of funds flowing through Vietnamese government channels on a decentralized basis. Rural development programs launched by Rural Affairs were accelerated, and new ones were added. Despite the Thieu government's drawbacks—too much corruption and a lack of openness and political legitimacy—counterinsurgency was strongly backed from the top. Such government actions as fully implementing land reform had a beneficial political effect, particularly in the Delta.

CORDS also supported an intelligence and armed action program directed at the local Viet Cong infrastructure. Originated by the South Vietnamese, it became known as "Phoenix." Armed provincial teams conducted raids against the local insurgency to remove its members from the battlefield by capture, if possible. CORDS advisory instructions clearly emphasized capture, to gain intelligence. While excesses did occur, the program acquired a bad reputation in the United States based largely on unsubstantiated congressional testimony.

North Vietnamese comments after the war would give considerable credit to Phoenix for obliging local Viet Cong political and military cadre to move to neighboring Cambodia.

As CORDS grew, its American advisory personnel were becoming better prepared. A counterinsurgency training center, originally set up in 1964 in Hawaii by USAID, was moved to Washington to train CORDS advisers. Between 1968 and 1973, the Vietnam Training Center turned out 1,845 mostly civilian advisers from State, USAID and the CIA, of which about 250 became Vietnamese speakers. Instruction consisted of a mandatory 10 weeks in the role of an adviser, counterinsurgency concepts, development programs and familiarity with Vietnamese culture, history and language. Some trainees continued with intensive language for up to a year. Center graduates added significantly to CORDS success.

By 1972, counterinsurgency had succeeded in pacifying most of South Vietnam with the indispensable and strong support of CORDS. At the time, the CORDS program did not get the recognition it deserved. After the 1973 Paris Peace Accords, instead of a measured transition to full South Vietnamese control, CORDS support was precipitously withdrawn.

Two years later, when, in the absence of U.S. logistical or air support, South Vietnam collapsed in the face of an all-out conventional invasion by the entire North Vietnamese Army, the CORDS story was buried in the rubble—not to be revived until after 9/11.

Conclusions

Lessons learned from the overall experience, involving both sides of the U.S.-Vietnamese relationship, apply to many fragile countries currently under internal extremist threat.

Some have concluded from CORDS that complete U.S. unity of command is necessary for counterinsurgency assistance to be effective. However, at the probably less-intense scale of continuing U.S. involvement in an advisory capacity to fragile states dealing with incipient and existing insurgencies, what is most essential is civilian-military unity of strategy and effort. This can be achieved if both the civilian and military sides are equally geared up to work together, which puts a premium on skilled civilian participation from the State Department.

Effective service of this kind requires personal capability and specialized training including language, as well as being able to operate more freely in dangerous environments than present security rules allow. This is a large part of why State needs to create a relatively small group of highly trained expeditionary diplomats.

After the 1973 Paris Peace Accords, instead of a measured transition to full South Vietnamese control, CORDS support was precipitously withdrawn.

They would not only help U.S. mission chiefs manage the political and development sides of stabilization efforts in vulnerable states, but coordinate our counterinsurgency advisory efforts, as well. The continuing contest with extremists over the political and security stability of such states requires a longer-term and more focused approach.

In this context, some useful lessons can be drawn from the Vietnam counterinsurgency experience:

- Counterinsurgency cannot succeed without a political strategy which leads to the host country's government gaining the strong support of its own people. This support is critical to long-term stability and cannot be imposed from the top down, but must be earned by deeds that are basically democratic in nature.
- Security is essential for political stability; but without political progress, security will not endure. For the United States, carrying out an effective political strategy with skilled civilian advisory assistance, as well as wise, effective military advice, can be critical.
- Protection of the population (as stressed in the current U.S. armed forces counterinsurgency manual) and winning its support is necessary for success. Although only indigenous governments can ultimately win this kind of struggle, well-informed and wise U.S. support and advice can be essential.
- Success in providing effective help for host-government counterinsurgency is proportional to the amount of mental effort devoted by us to understanding the nature of the country, the aspirations of its people and the insurgent enemy.
- A completely integrated U.S. civilian-military advisory effort is ideal. However, in the current and probable future circumstances of less massive U.S. interventions, our counterinsurgency support needs to be a collegial venture marked by close interagency cooperation with a combined political, military and development focus. There also needs to be an effective organizational focus on the host government side.

In dealing with incipient and existing insurgencies, what is most essential is civilian-military unity of strategy and effort.

- The CORDS effort succeeded to the extent it did not because of its size (which at times was an encumbrance) but because of its most dedicated and knowledgeable participants. Skilled individuals count much more than numbers.

- To be effective, counterinsurgency has to be built by the host government and citizens from the community level up, while simultaneously strongly supported from the top down.

This often runs up against overcentralized authority and control.

- Attitudes of respect for the civilian population and a genuine devotion to their well-being on the part of indigenous government military and civilian officials at all levels are extremely important. The United States needs to play a strong role in insisting on this approach as part of our assistance.

- Most U.S. civilian and military advisers involved in counterinsurgency and stability assistance, to be fully effective in the host country, need specialized training, language capability and longer than conventional periods of assignment. Our support is not likely to be successful unless we have some advisers out in the field, despite the security risks involved.

Finally, intertwined as it is with political progress in enlisting the willing support of the population, counterinsurgency is a long-term process requiring dedication, patience and persistence. After all, we are talking about changing people's minds. ■



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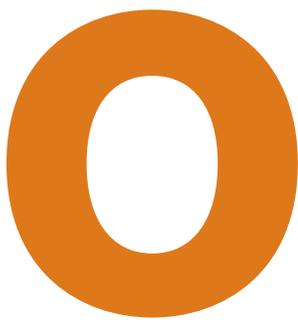
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Vietnam Today

Now known for its dynamic economy, Vietnam has slowly but surely taken its place among the nations of the world.

BY MURRAY HIEBERT



Over the last four decades, Vietnam has morphed from the site of a bloody, protracted war into a country known for its dynamic economy, increasingly cooperative ties with the United States, and front-line status in the dispute with Beijing over the strategically critical South China Sea. During

a visit to Vietnam in late 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry said that no two countries “have worked harder, done more and done better to try to bring themselves together and change history and change the future.”

Vietnam’s roughly 92 million people live on a long, narrow strip of land with a 2,000-mile coast along the South China Sea, at the crossroads between Northeast Asia and mainland Southeast Asia. After Hanoi’s communist troops defeated the U.S.-backed southern forces in 1975 and introduced hard-line socialist poli-

cies, the country’s economy went into a tailspin. Vietnam’s ouster of the brutal Khmer Rouge regime in neighboring Cambodia in 1979 triggered an invasion by China, raised tensions with neighboring countries and deepened its international isolation, including from the United States.

With its economy in shambles, the ruling Communist Party in 1986 courted foreign investors and freed farmers from socialist cooperatives. It also pledged to withdraw its troops from Cambodia and step up its efforts to account for U.S. servicemen missing in Vietnam from the war. In 1994, President Bill Clinton lifted the U.S. trade embargo against Vietnam and normalized diplomatic relations in 1995. That same year, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, established at the height of the Cold War to block the spread of communism, welcomed Vietnam as a member in its regional economic and political grouping.

The Virtue of Trade

Freed from collectives, Vietnam’s farmers turned the country from a rice importer into one of the world’s top rice exporters. The country’s economy has grown an average of about 6 percent a year since 2000, boosting its per capita income to just under \$2,000 a year by 2013. An October 2014 Pew Research Center poll found that a whopping 95 percent of Vietnamese are enthusiastic about the free market, compared to only 70 percent of Americans.

Bilateral trade with the United States soared from under \$3 billion in 2001, when the two countries signed a bilateral trade agreement, to \$35 billion last year. Today both countries are part of the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations that, once completed, are expected to give bilateral economic relations an extra shot of adrenaline.



Murray Hiebert serves as senior fellow and deputy director of the Sumitro Chair for Southeast Asia Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Prior to joining CSIS, he was senior director for Southeast Asia at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, where he worked to promote trade and

investment opportunities between the United States and Asia. Earlier in his career, Mr. Hiebert reported for the Wall Street Journal Asia Edition and the Far Eastern Economic Review. He is the author of two books on Vietnam: Chasing the Tigers (Kodansha, 1996) and Vietnam Notebook (Review Publishing, 1993).

In 2000, Bill Clinton became the first U.S. president to visit Vietnam since the end of the war.

U.S. investment in Vietnam reached \$1.1 billion in 2012 (the last year for which statistics are available), with an Intel Corp. wafer testing facility being the largest single investment by an American firm. Vietnam's electronics exports have soared, and its economy has been more deeply integrated into the global electronics supply chain in recent years since South Korea's Samsung Electronics Co. set up a \$2 billion mobile phone assembly plant in Vietnam and has announced plans for a second one.

Despite the country's relative economic success, its domestic economy is still being held back by slow progress in reforming inefficient, socialist-style, state-owned enterprises that siphon off critical credit and resources from the more dynamic private sector. Cleaning up the high percentage of nonperforming loans in the banking system is also a painfully slow process.

The World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business 2014" report ranked Vietnam 99th out of 189 nations—behind neighbors like Thailand, but ahead of others like Indonesia. U.S. companies cite a number of problems holding them back in Vietnam, ranging from an overextended infrastructure to corruption. Transparency International last year ranked Vietnam 119th out of 175 countries. A related challenge is an inefficient bureaucracy that frequently changes government regulations.

Vietnam's economic reformers hope that ratification of the high-standard TPP agreement, perhaps later this year, will help jumpstart reform in a number of areas by leveling the playing field between the private and state-owned sectors. U.S. companies anticipate that it will open a number of relatively closed sectors in Vietnam, including services. To facilitate Vietnam's accession to the TPP, the U.S. Agency for International Development has invested in a program to promote competitiveness, boost accountability and support biodiversity through customs reforms.

Forging Closer Ties

Political and security ties between Vietnam and the United States have come a long way since the two countries normalized relations two decades ago. In 2000, Bill Clinton became the first U.S. president to visit Vietnam since the end of the war. Since

then, Hanoi and Washington have stepped up high-level visits and established regular political, security and defense dialogues to tackle a raft of outstanding issues. Over the past few years, Vietnam has emerged as an increasingly important U.S. security partner in the region, as the two countries cooperate bilaterally and in multilateral forums.

Hanoi has made great strides in accounting for the nearly 2,000 U.S. military personnel missing at the end of the war. Washington has also started assistance programs aimed at environmental remediation and health support for areas and people affected by dioxin contamination from its use of Agent Orange. Hanoi would also like American help as it searches for its own roughly 200,000 servicemen missing from the war, and assistance in the removal of unexploded ordnance still in the ground in areas of heavy fighting.

Human rights issues continue to pose an obstacle to closer relations. In general, freedom of expression and religion has improved significantly since the early days of the country's reunification. The government does not, however, tolerate activities that it sees as a threat to the Communist Party's grip on power and a regularly rounds up bloggers, activists and dissidents. U.S. officials estimate that Vietnam is holding about 125 political detainees.

The two governments hold regular and frank discussions on these issues, but have not allowed them to derail economic and strategic ties. More detentions may come in the run-up to the ruling party's next congress, slated for January 2016, at which many top leaders will be required to retire. Managing relations with China is another topic that will elicit wide-ranging comment among the country's active (and nationalist) blogger community.

During his July 2013 visit to Washington, D.C., President Truong Tan Sang and President Barack Obama launched plans for a comprehensive partnership between the two countries. The agreement spelled out nine areas of cooperation ranging from political and economic ties to security relations, human rights and cooperation on tackling environmental issues.

Over the past decade, the two countries have taken the first steps to boost military-to-military relations. They have regular bilateral defense talks that explore issues such as military medicine, environmental security, demining, search and rescue, and peacekeeping. In recent years, the two sides have also discussed more active defense cooperation.

Last October, Washington agreed to partially lift its ban on arms sales to Vietnam, which has been in force since the end of the war and has been maintained due to human rights concerns.

The move allows Hanoi to purchase radar and Coast Guard vessels to enforce its marine territory, but it still wants Washington to lift the ban entirely.

Dealing with China

Part of this warming of security ties has undoubtedly been driven by tensions in the economically strategic South China Sea, where Beijing, Vietnam's northern neighbor and longtime communist ally, has pressed its so-called "Nine-Dash Line" claim. In particular, China has occasionally cut the seismic cable of Vietnamese oil exploration vessels and arrested Vietnamese fishermen around the Paracel Islands, which are claimed by Vietnam but have been controlled by China since the 1970s.

Tensions escalated in May 2014 when China moved a deep-water oil rig, accompanied by several naval vessels and scores of other ships, into water off the Paracel Islands to explore for oil. In a standoff over the next two months, the two countries harassed each other's ships, ramming them and firing water cannons. In mid-July, at the height of typhoon season and just before a meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, a regional security dialogue in which China and the United States participate, Beijing withdrew the rig, declaring it had completed its exploration activities.

Despite tensions between Hanoi and Beijing, China is by far Vietnam's largest trading partner and a major investor. China provides electricity to northern Vietnam and supplies many of the inputs for two of its largest exports, garments and rice.

Vietnam appreciates the U.S. approach, which calls for all parties to the South China Sea dispute to manage their differences peacefully and in accordance with international law, while remaining neutral on questions of territorial sovereignty over the sea's land features. However, Hanoi has moved cautiously in expanding its naval cooperation and military ties with the United States, both over concern about irritating China and lingering resentment of the United States among some senior generals.

Hanoi's relations have warmed dramatically with its Southeast Asian neighbors, even though ASEAN once pressured Vietnam to withdraw its forces from Cambodia. Today, Vietnam is one of the most active members of the 10-nation grouping and uses the ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asia Summit as vehicles to challenge China's actions in the South China Sea.

Working together, Vietnam and the United States were a driving force in the 2010 establishment of the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus, an 18-nation security forum whose members include Australia, China, India and Japan, where senior defense officials discuss regional security challenges.

Despite tensions between Hanoi and Beijing, China is by far Vietnam's largest trading partner and a major investor.

Grassroots Efforts Bear Fruit

People-to-people engagement between Vietnam and the United States has been at the forefront of efforts to boost bilateral relations. Over the past two decades, Vietnamese students have become the largest contingent of Southeast Asians studying in the United States. Today there are 16,000 Vietnamese studying in U.S. colleges, some supported by U.S. government programs but most by their families. A key factor driving these numbers is the low quality of university education in Vietnam. It also does not hurt that the United States is viewed favorably by 76 percent of Vietnamese, according to a July 2014 Pew Research Center survey.

Washington and Hanoi are cooperating in efforts to open a private, nonprofit Fulbright University in Vietnam. Congress has approved nearly \$18 million of the \$70 million needed to establish the university, and organizers are now looking for funding from U.S. and Vietnamese companies. The organizers are seeking approval to name an independent board of governors and a guarantee that it will be granted independence in choosing its teachers and curriculum.

The two countries are also increasing joint efforts to address Vietnam's environmental challenges resulting from population growth, industrialization and the impact of climate change. The Mekong Delta in southern Vietnam is threatened by the construction of hydropower dams along the Mekong River by China and Laos, Vietnam's neighbor to the west. The dams disrupt the flow of fish, reduce the arrival of silt and cut the flow of water, resulting in rising salinity in the low-lying Delta. During his 2013 visit, Sec. Kerry announced a \$17 million aid program to help communities in the Delta deal with environmental degradation and adapt to climate change.

Hanoi and Washington are also actively pursuing a possible visit to Vietnam by President Barack Obama this November, when he will be in nearby Malaysia and the Philippines for two regional summits. Whether the visit takes place will likely depend on progress in such areas as human rights in Vietnam, the prospects for increased trade and investment under the TPP agreement and closer military ties between the two countries. ■

Return to Vietnam: Observations in 2015

Forty-five years after serving there, one veteran FSO encounters the new Vietnam.

BY PARKER W. BORG

The dry season's dusty, smoky haze; the blend of cooking smells with more putrid street odors; the seeming indifference about trash; the friendly faces becoming even more so when we identified ourselves as Americans; the apparent joy in trying to speak English; the preference for dollars (currently \$1 is worth 21,000 dong); and the constant noise from honking horns, cackling voices and background music (in restaurants and bars, American pop hits of the 1960s like "Yesterday" and "Like a Rolling Stone" were common) were all familiar. In so many ways, it seemed little had changed since I left Vietnam 45 years ago; but I quickly realized these superficial similarities were only a small part of the story.

I had returned to Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in 1999, but this was my first visit to the towns of central Vietnam—Quinhon, Pleiku, Kontum and Nha Trang, where I'd lived and worked from 1968 to 1970 and again in 1973. This January trip would be a chance to show my wife, Anna, my old haunts for the first time.

Parker W. Borg is also the author of "Mobilizing for South Vietnam's Last Days" in this issue. See p. 33 for his biographical information. All photos are courtesy of Parker Borg.



Parker Borg with five students from Hoa Sen University, a private university in Ho Chi Minh City, in February. The students stopped him on the street and asked to interview him in English about his reactions to the city, explaining that it was an assignment for their English class. Then they requested that he pose with them for this photo. Their friendliness was typical of the reaction Borg and his wife found everywhere in Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh City has become the city Saigon always wanted to be. Free of barbed wire and signs of strife, its broad avenues (frequently renamed for political correctness) were still clogged with traffic, but now they were lined with freshly painted buildings and elegant shopping malls, small shops and more than a few skyscrapers. Vietnamese entrepreneurs seemed to be continuously transforming the economy. One could buy just



Parker and Anna Borg stand at the crossroads in the center of Tuy Phuoc, the district where he worked from 1968 to 1969. (He recognized no buildings from the past.) Low buildings like those shown here sprawl along the roads for three to four miles in all directions outside of every urban area in this part of central Vietnam.

about anything. Some members of our group concluded that the South had clearly prevailed in the postwar period—capitalism had trumped communism. But the story was much more complicated, of course.

We were seeing Vietnam as it appeared in 2015, not what it had gone through in the decades after 1975. In addition to its reeducation programs, the North had established a Stalinist system of political control, implemented land reform, seized private enterprises and even expropriated houses. By the 1980s, rice-producing areas were threatened with famine, the economy was collapsing and inflation had tripled. In 1986, following the lead of Deng Xiaoping in China, the Vietnamese government began to open its economy to market forces. The changes were gradual, but ownership of land, enterprises and homes was eventually privatized. Often properties were returned to their original owners, although there were more than a few stories about socialist cronyism.

We were seeing the new Vietnam, a more entrepreneurial Vietnam, yes. Small shops lined the roads into and out of every settlement. But often the structures were shabby, even though they were of relatively recent origin. A very successful businessman (or somebody with a foreign source of income) might put up a narrow, one-lot-wide, six-story, brightly painted edifice,

particularly in a bigger town, but most buildings were dingy and only one or two floors tall. The newer structures were mostly official: government offices, schools, hospitals and military camps.

The military presence seemed to be everywhere: on former South Vietnamese and American bases and the old district headquarters, all freshly painted ochre, three or four stories high with red-tiled roofs and surrounded by walled compounds. The war was over. Who was the enemy that required such a strong military presence? Likewise, similar communist party offices were part of each district. What were all these party groups meeting to decide? Nothing seemed overt, but a strong political-military presence was evident everywhere.

Sprawl is an easy word to define modern urban life in Vietnam. This increasingly urbanized country now has about 92 million people, twice the number its two halves had in 1975. Of course, old Saigon sprawls, but so does every other urban area, making them virtually unrecognizable to a visitor from the past. At least the old capital had its landmarks; the cities and towns we visited in central Vietnam often did not. Not only had old buildings given way to new, but the urban centers had shifted and been extended for miles in every direction. The old town centers were hard to find.

Heading out of Pleiku and Kontum into areas tradition-



Billboards mark Vietnam's major 2015 celebrations. From left: the 85th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the 125th anniversary of the birth of Ho Chi Minh, and the 70th anniversary of the revolution and National Day (the proclamation of independence by Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi at the end of World War II). On the lower left is a much smaller reference to the 40th anniversary of unification: the image of a tank, entering the gates of the former Independence Palace.

ally inhabited by Montagnards revealed another important difference. All the Montagnards had been settled with size-designated plots of land. Slash-and-burn agriculture had been forbidden. This opened vast tracks of land for Vietnamese settlement, mostly by northerners sent south as pioneers to make productive the newly acquired fields with rice, coffee, cinnamon and other spices. We visited officially sanctioned Jarai, Bahnar and Lac villages. Life goes on in them, but it was clearly a different life from the past, one that required regular interaction with the new Vietnamese majority everywhere. No threat of an insurgency here.

Another omnipresent part of life in the south were the posters and banners noting commemorative events and celebrating life in the socialist republic: flags along the streets (a single yellow star in a red field for the government and a yellow hammer and sickle in a similar red field for the party); banners across streets at regular intervals (also predominantly red with yellow lettering); and many billboards noting that 2015 would be the 85th anniversary of the founding of the Vietnamese Communist Party, the 125th anniversary of the birth of Ho Chi Minh,



Traffic on Le Duan Street near Saigon Cathedral heads toward Independence Palace. The decorations above the street show the Vietnamese government flag on the left and the former Viet Cong flag on the right, along with doves, flowers and the occasional "40" to mark the anniversary. The U.S. consulate general is about six blocks down the street.



The skyline of Ho Chi Minh City as it appears from the circle in front of the Ben Thanh Market. The tall building in the background at center left is the Bitexco Financial Tower, the tallest building in the city, a 68-story structure inspired by the lotus flower. The red sign on the building across the circle says in rough translation: "President Ho Chi Minh lives forever great because of our industriousness."

While monuments commemorated northern victories, they were all victories against the Americans.

the 70th anniversary of Vietnam's independence and the 40th anniversary of reunification with the South. In other places, we saw the leftover billboards from the commemorative events of 2014. Private advertising along the sides of the roads or in towns, however, was non-existent. Entrepreneurs seemed able to publicize their activities in the press, with handouts or on TV, but not with billboards.

While monuments commemorated northern victories, they were all victories against the Americans. We saw no references to the role of southerners in the struggle, except occasionally as

puppets of the Americans. The southern dead did not seem to be memorialized with any of their own monuments or cemeteries. Those southerners who fled after 1975 did so for economic reasons. Hanoi had fought and repelled the Americans.

What does one make of the new Vietnam? A very wise Vietnamese explained that his generation had all gone through "re-education" if they had not been believers. The next generation picked up the message about the Vietnamese victory over the Americans in school. Some believed it; others were skeptical.

He said the really interesting groups are the people under the age of about 35. They are cynical about what they learned in school from professors who couldn't answer questions about history and gave rote answers to their inquiries. They are, however, sufficiently connected to the outside world with cell phones and social media that this matters little. They don't care about history and politics. They want to be connected with their peers in the rest of the world, making money.

This is the new Vietnam. ■

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

GUIDE TO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Company & Web Address	Telephone	Email	Location(s)	Number of Properties	Years of Experience
Cabell Reid, LLC www.cabellreid.com	(301) 263-0880	cr@cabellreid.com	DC, MD, VA	N/A	36+
Executive Housing Consultants, Inc. www.executivehousing.com	(301) 951-4111	info@executivehousing.com	DC, MD, VA	250	29
Gordon James Realty www.gordonjamesrealty.com	(202) 686-6097	contact@gordonjamesrealty.com	DC, VA	300	8
Maedwell Residential www.maedwell.com	(202) 588-7493	info@maedwellresidential.com	DC, MD, VA	50	10
McEneaney Property Management www.mceneaney.com	(703) 790-9090	pm@mceneaney.com	DC, MD, VA	550+	31+
McGrath Real Estate Services, Inc. www.mcgrathrealestate.com	(703) 709-2264	leasing@mcgrathrealestate.com	VA	765	38
The Meyerson Group themeyersongroup@aol.com	(301) 657-3210	themeyersongroup@aol.com	DC, MD	N/A	19
Peake Management, Inc. www.peakeinc.com	(703) 891-5308	info@peakeinc.com	VA	650	32+
PROMAX Management, Inc. www.promaxrealtors.com	(703) 642-5683	info@promaxrealtors.com	VA	650+	26+
Property Specialists, Inc. www.propertyspecialistsinc.com	(703) 247-3350	john@propertyspecialistsinc.com	DC, MD, VA	N/A	30
Real Property Management, Washington, DC www.rpmwashingtondc.com	(202) 813-9993	info@rpmwashingtondc.com	DC, MD, VA	<50	25
Washington Management Services www.wmsdc.com	(240) 383-3151	wmsdc@wmsdc.com	DC, MD, VA	350	35
WJD Management www.wjdp.com	(703) 385-3600	david@wjdp.com	VA	450	30+

2014 SURVEY

AFSA Listens to Its Members

BY JANET HEDRICK, DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES

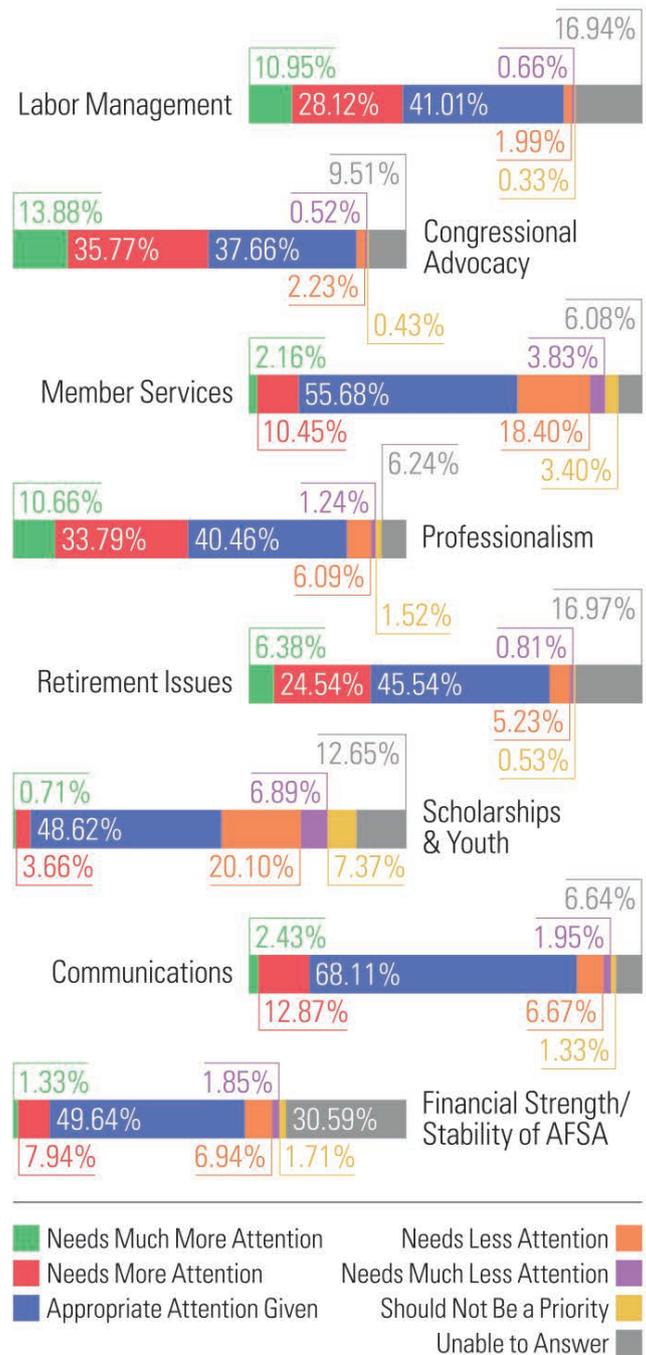
In 2014, AFSA conducted an extensive survey of members' interests, priorities and degree of engagement with the association. We were extremely pleased with the response: nearly 3,500 active-duty, retired and associate members took the survey during the three weeks it was open. (Some non-members also participated.) The results gave us a snapshot of our membership's opinions.

AFSA contracted Capital Development Strategies to conduct the survey, which covered a wide variety of topics related to Foreign Service careers, work-life balance, professional development, security and retiree issues, as well as AFSA-specific engagement questions.

"This was a unique survey that served to confirm that our organization is focused on the priorities of the membership," says AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston. The survey results will allow us "to adjust where necessary, refocus on key items and crystalize our services" and will assist in making decisions regarding policies and priorities, "to ensure AFSA continues to actively represent its active-duty, retiree and associate constituencies at the highest level," Houston adds.

The 2014 AFSA survey was the first of its kind in that it sought input from across all constituencies, specialties,

AFSA PRIORITIES: MEMBERS' ASSESSMENT



CALENDAR

- April 1
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting
- April 6
12-1:30 p.m.
Luncheon
Incoming USAID class
- April 12-16
AFSA Road Scholar Program
Washington, D.C.
- April 14
12-1:30 p.m.
Luncheon
181st A-100 class
- April 15
AFSA Advocacy Day on
Capitol Hill
- April 15
Tax Day
Don't forget to consult the
AFSA Tax Guide!
- May 1
Foreign Affairs Day
AFSA Memorial Plaque
Ceremony
- May 6
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting
- May 10
9 a.m.
Third Annual
Public Service 5K Run/Walk
- May 17-21
AFSA Road Scholar Program
Washington, D.C.
- June 3
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting
- June 9
4-6 p.m.
AFSA Awards Ceremony

JEFF LAU

STATE MEMBERS RESPOND

grades and years of service. It was open to all categories of membership and non-members. The survey response rate was very high by industry participation standards, with 3,478 individuals responding and the responses were instructive.

Significantly, 44 percent of active-duty members believe AFSA is balanced between being a professional association and serving as a union. (AFSA was created as a professional association in 1924, a role it continues to play, and also became the official bargaining unit of the Foreign Service in 1973.)

The survey showed that the main issues active-duty respondents want AFSA to address are: Overseas Comparability Pay (67 percent), employee benefits (53 percent), legislative issues (43 percent), professionalism and ethics (39 percent), working conditions (36 percent) and family/dependent issues (23 percent).

When offered a chance to write in additional priority issues, survey respondents submitted more than 4,000 free-form text comments. Many urged AFSA to pursue raising the mandatory retirement age and equalizing pay and benefits across agencies. Other topics included Foreign Service appropriations, budget and pay issues; overseas security and safety; the evaluations and promotion system; parental leave and the FS

assignment system.

The majority of respondents indicated that they think AFSA is well-balanced and places proper emphasis on labor-management activities, congressional advocacy, member services, professionalism, retirement issues, scholarships, communications and financial strength.

The overwhelming majority of respondents feel connected to, but not active in AFSA (67 percent). The write-in comments to this question have given us some indication of the reasons for this feeling, including "not sure of ways to engage" and "being overseas makes it hard to engage." AFSA is now looking for additional ways to create opportunities for its members to remain active in association affairs while serving overseas or living outside of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

The survey also identified areas where our members feel AFSA should improve and develop. Some respondents noted that the association is not always as responsive to individuals as they would like, and that AFSA seems to be more concerned about generalists' issues than those of specialists.

The survey also showed that AFSA must do a better job of informing members of the work it does on their behalf. Fully 53 percent of active-duty members were not aware of AFSA's Strategic Plan; an additional 36 percent

were aware of it, but unclear about its priorities. Fortunately, we have the communications tools in place to get the information out. Ninety percent of survey respondents read *The Foreign Service Journal*; more than half report that they read the AFSA News section and AFSA.net emails.

The challenge and opportunity exist for AFSA to find ways to communicate that the association is taking steps to confront and address these issues in a manner that will have a valuable impact on our members' lives, careers and satisfaction with the foreign affairs profession.

AFSA has already taken steps to address some of the concerns brought to its attention by this survey (while mindful that the process will not be completed overnight). For example, AFSA has increased support of and funding for advocacy efforts and labor management issues in the 2015 budget.

We will continue to use these results as we plan for the coming year, and as we direct resources toward the priorities the survey showed respondents want AFSA to address: Overseas Comparability Pay, employee benefits, legislative issues, professionalism and ethics, working conditions and family and dependent issues.

You may view select survey responses from members at http://bit.ly/AFSA_2014_Survey. ■

In AFSA's 2014 survey, 1,600 active-duty State members answered additional, State-specific questions. These results are summarized in the infographic on the opposite page, and can be read as a complement to the State Department's own 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

The survey results affirmed many of AFSA's priorities. Overseas Comparability Pay continues to be the number one legislative goal, followed closely by FS-relevant provisions of the Service Members Relief Act.

More than a third of active-duty respondents encouraged AFSA to reform the FS bidding and assignments process.

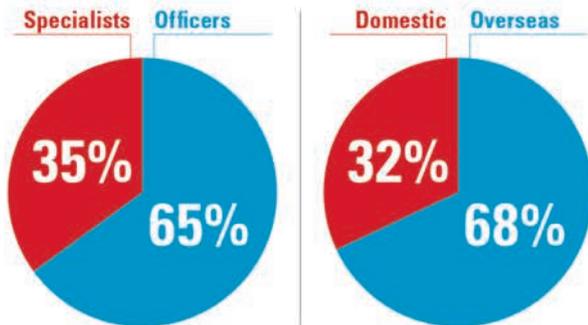
On security, an overwhelming majority believe that the department has not struck the right risk/reward balance, and that it has become more difficult to safely and effectively engage post-Benghazi. Many DS respondents, in particular, expressed the need for an under secretary for Diplomatic Security.

Finally, while members are very satisfied with AFSA's communications on workplace, management and employment issues, too many are unfamiliar with AFSA's strategic plan and overall labor management priorities. ■

2014 AFSA SURVEY: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

In 2014 AFSA commissioned a third-party survey to better understand members' views of AFSA as a professional association and union, as well as their opinions on AFSA's advocacy and labor management priorities. Of the nearly 3,500 responses, 1,600 came from active-duty State members who responded to State-specific questions. Their answers have given us valuable feedback on quality of work/life, career and professional development and security concerns. This infographic is meant to be read as a complement to the general AFSA-wide membership survey.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



Overseas Participation by Bureau

13%	African Affairs
19%	East Asian & Pacific Affairs
26%	European & Eurasian Affairs
12%	Near Eastern Affairs
12%	South & Central Asian Affairs
18%	Western Hemisphere Affairs

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Two-thirds of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that the "pig in the python" problem would have a direct effect on their careers.



And more than two-thirds disagree or strongly disagree that the department recognizes the "pig in the python" problem and has done the requisite analysis and adjustment of positions to ensure satisfying careers for all.

40% agree or strongly agree that slowing promotion rates, limited career advancement, or a lack of professional development opportunities is causing them to consider leaving the Foreign Service.

QUALITY OF WORK/LIFE

 Only 1 in 6 employees believe that the State Department's senior leadership understands the quality of work/life challenges facing Foreign Service employees and has appropriate systems in place to support them.

One-third of respondents say that the lack of adequate childcare facilities is a factor in deciding whether to serve in Washington, D.C.



2/3 Almost 2/3 of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that the department understands the importance of technology to the profession and has the systems in place to support 21st century diplomacy.

SECURITY

1/4 Only a quarter of active-duty State employees believe that the department has struck the right risk/reward balance.

Less than **<10%** of Diplomatic Security agents believe that the department has struck the right risk/reward balance.

 Over half of active-duty State employees believe that, post-Benghazi, it is now more difficult for employees to effectively engage overseas.

 25 percent of Diplomatic Security agents believe that, post-Benghazi, it is now more difficult for employees to effectively engage overseas.

60% of active-duty State employees believe that the department has provided them with the appropriate level of training to safely engage overseas.

2/3 of Diplomatic Security agents believe that the department has provided them with the appropriate level of training to safely engage overseas.

 5 out of 6 respondents note that it is important for AFSA to be at the table when the department makes decisions affecting employee security or exposure to risk.

 4 out of 6 DS agents note that it is important for AFSA to be at the table when the department makes decisions affecting employee security or exposure to risk.



Open-Plan Offices: Boon or Bane?

This month I review the State Department's collaborative open-plan workspaces in light of their increasing use in the public and private sectors (a trend reported in a Feb. 22 *New York Times* article; see <http://nyti.ms/1Gfz45S>). I believe there is a pressing need for employee input into the process.

Islamabad and SA-5: The department's first open-plan embassy is scheduled to open in Islamabad this year. During my March 2014 trip to South Asia, I toured the construction site (see my June 2014 column) and, back in Washington, met with the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations to learn more about the proposed collaborative employee workspaces.

Several months later, I met with the Bureau of International Information Programs to discuss the introduction of collaborative open-plan workspaces in State Annex-5, which would be the department's first open-plan domestic spaces. As part of the required union consultation, IIP arranged for us to visit the General Services Administration's headquarters at 1800 F Street NW, which had recently gone through an impressive multimillion-dollar transformation, and replaced almost all private offices with open-plan collaborative space.

GSA Transformation: On the agency's sixth floor we

met with Dan Tangherlini, then-GSA administrator, in his "office." He greeted us from his triangular desk in the center of the floor and described the transformation's cost savings (\$30 million annually) and employee productivity gains (increased collaboration, efficiency and innovation). To see a photo of the open-plan GSA space, go to http://bit.ly/1800_f_st_nw.

Tangherlini also stressed the importance of a holistic approach and partnering with stakeholders (i.e., unions) to execute the change. He noted that gains could only be realized when matched by investments in enabling technology (IT hardware and software, VoIP phones and wireless signal boosters).

He emphasized that a collaborative open-plan workspace does not mean no offices at all, but rather different types of collaborative spaces of various scalable sizes with ergonomic furniture. He also suggested that agencies wishing to replicate the transformation could use savings from rent and administrative expenses to finance the required investments in technology and furniture.

Working Group: Returning to the State Department, I was struck by the possibilities of collaborative workspaces to transform how we support and conduct diplomacy domestically and overseas.

I was also conscious of the need for a more coordinated approach with extensive employee input.

AFSA has proposed an OBO-Administration-Information Resource Management initiative to organize an employee focus group, with representatives from all three unions (AFSA, AFGE Local 1534, NFFE Local 1998) to consider how the department might be able to take advantage of the potential of collaborative workspaces while avoiding its pitfalls.

Currently, the open-plan workspaces are being designed on a project- and bureau-specific basis, with ad hoc post- and bureau-level employee input. We think that a more centralized employee focus group would ensure that lessons are shared and mistakes avoided.

Representational Space:

Such a focus group could look not only at our internal spaces, but at public areas as well. The reality is that only a handful of visitors to Main State or our embassies will ever see the seventh floor's Mahogany Row or the ambassador's office. The rest of us need adequate space to meet with our interlocutors.

The current overhaul of Main State is a prime opportunity to create modern, IT-enabled, representational rooms for visitors on the ground floor. Such rooms could be booked online and

serviced by staff with representational food and beverage expenses billed back to the relevant office. How often have we had to apologize for the conditions of our meeting rooms and scrounge around in the cupboard, or over to CVS, for some coffee, tea and biscuits?

Rightsizing: While the domestic savings to be realized through the introduction of collaborative workspaces are substantial, the real potential is found overseas, where the construction and administrative costs of classified and unclassified space are considerable. Such savings could then be invested in the technology and accoutrements required for 21st-century diplomacy. Such considerations should be included in the department's ongoing rightsizing exercise.

Change: It has taken me some time to get used to the idea of collaborative workspaces. I was spoiled as an intern with a private office in our historic consulate in Frankfurt. However, in Munich I oversaw the introduction of a modified open-plan space in our consular section and have worked in three such spaces since. The change is taking place across the federal government, and I submit that it would be more successful with employee input than without it. ■

Next Month: Quality of Work/Life at State.



Some Good News

President Barack Obama's Fiscal Year 2016 budget request came on Feb. 2. In place of grand schemes to double its staffing over the next five years we now have a proposal for a modest, nine-officer SelectUSA foreign direct investment increase, plus "adjustments to base."

The latter initiative is designed to do a variety of things: paying the full-year cost of prior-year increases (or decreases); taking into account built-in, "sunset" or no-new-program changes to our budget; and funding operations at last year's inflation-adjusted level.

If all goes well, CS/Global Markets won't exactly starve; it is still "digesting"

its FY 2015 increases for new officers and offices in Africa and Asia, plus additional SelectUSA spending. All in all, it's a good budget for austere times, one that will allow us to replace retiring officers and perhaps even grow a little.

This year, we have two new House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee chairs (the folks who control our budget) whom we need to cultivate and educate. Thankfully, the staff working for these committees has not changed radically, so we have that going for us.

AFSA has your back. We have already reached out to the new Congress and com-

mittee staff, and will have more to report in the weeks and months ahead.

Congratulations, Ambassador Allen!

On Jan. 27, AFSA and the Commercial Service feted Craig Allen's ambassadorial appointment to Brunei. Craig is only the fourth ambassador to come out of the Commercial Service in its 35-year history.

As Commerce's deputy secretary, under secretary and deputy director general noted at the reception, this position requires someone skilled both at trade promotion and trade policy. Before he left, Craig had kind words and advice to those junior

commercial officers who might aspire to be an ambassador one day.

Craig was formally sworn in on Jan. 30 in the State Department's stately Ben Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room. Then he and his family said their goodbyes to Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker before heading off to post. On arrival, he sent her this message: "Thanks for organizing and hosting the party in 3407 last week."

He added, "Thanks very much for supporting me in this immensely long and complicated process. AFSA's and your personal support were instrumental every step of the way." ■

LOOK FOR YOUR BALLOT: VOTE IN THE AFSA GOVERNING BOARD ELECTION

The 2015 elections of AFSA officers and constituency representatives is underway. Details about the election, including the rules, can be found at www.afsa.org/elections.

Candidates' campaign literature, along with a ballot, will be made available to members on the AFSA website. Campaigning through employer email by any member is prohibited (with the exception of the three pre-approved candidate email blasts).

Ballots: Ballots will be distributed on or about April 15 by email if you have a valid email address on file with AFSA, or by printed ballot via the U.S. Postal Service. If you do not receive a ballot by May 6, please contact election@afsa.org.

Ballot Tally: On June 4, at 9 a.m. EDT, the printed ballots will be picked up from the post office in Washington, D.C. Printed ballots must be received at the post office to be counted. Online voting will also be available until June 4, at 8 a.m. EDT, when the voting site will close.

Election Information: Written requests for a duplicate ballot should be directed to election@afsa.org or sent to AFSA Committee on Elections, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. Please include your full name, current address, email address and telephone number. ■





My Three Laws

Neither Newton's nor Einstein's theories are threatened. The first and second laws of thermodynamics remain secure. The universe continues to expand, and according to recent astronomical research the expansion is accelerating. However, based on my experiences, I would like to present three laws specific to the Foreign Service and its people.

Cohen's first law states that embassies and consulates reflect the cultures in which they are located. Since this law is not difficult to conceptualize, most members of the Foreign Service likely concur. A posting south of the border differs markedly from diplomatic life in South Asia. Life in Eastern Europe and East Asia share very little in common—except, perhaps, the legacy of the Ural-Altaic family of languages. Though Iraqi and Irish representatives sit next to each other at the U.N. General Assembly, I suspect no one confuses daily and embassy life in Baghdad with that of Dublin.

Most embassy and consulate personnel are locally employed staff (LES). While they conform to the rules and practices of Uncle Sam, LES do not check their behaviors, laws and customs at the front gate. Extensive effort by the State Department to physically homogenize diplomatic missions cannot wholly account for the human factor.

Thank goodness! What

As an individual's tenure in the Foreign Service grows, the likelihood of running into a familiar face between the State Department's C Street entrance—yes, the one with the flags—and the cafeteria rises at a predictable rate.

would overseas life be like without daily interaction and cultural exchanges between the American and local employees, or local citizens in general? Pupusas in Salvador! Samosas in Chennai! Jollof rice in West Africa!

Cohen's second law focuses on diplomatic leadership. For an embassy or consulate to be most successful, chiefs of mission and their deputies must possess different personality characteristics. We need not look solely at the results of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality inventory to observe that people are different.

But what happens when embassy leadership share similar personalities, for example when both the ambassador and the deputy chief of mission are micro-managers, or strong introverts or emotionally high strung?

Almost inevitably, the results are low post morale and inefficient overall performance, especially when the post is already under stress from local conditions or bilateral tensions.

Such a leadership situation may have multiplier effects. Instead of the emergence of

the best leadership qualities and skills, the worst generally appear and seep down from the top to the entire mission.

Effective, high-performance, high-morale diplomatic posts are usually run by chiefs and deputies who balance each other in leadership, cover all critical interpersonal angles and have complimentary management strengths. When this happens, the diplomatic mission's location is irrelevant. The difficult hardship post becomes a dream assignment. When balance is not achieved, even a cushy, highly sought-after posting may become a nightmare.

Cohen's third law is more formulaic. As an individual's tenure in the Foreign Service grows, the likelihood of running into a familiar face between the State Department's C Street entrance—yes, the one with the flags—and the cafeteria rises at a predictable rate. I challenge anyone who has served at least once overseas or on domestic assignment at Main State to argue otherwise.

The more assignments under your belt, the more people you know. The broader the variety of assignments, for example postings in

multiple geographic regions or bureaus, the number of familiar faces may rise logarithmically. In the course of a normal day, almost everyone visiting or working at Main State transits the first floor corridor—especially during lunch hour!

This law has a corollary. Peak "familiarity," that is, facial recognition, occurs at around retirement. After a multi-decade Foreign Service career, it becomes almost impossible not to (literally) run into someone with whom one has served or worked every few minutes.

After retirement a gradual "familiarity" decline takes place—assuming the annuitant can easily access Main State in the first place. As the years pass, fewer faces are familiar. The ability to remember names and mutual assignments fades, as well.

Above your head, a cartoon balloon may appear. It says: "She knows me, but what's her name? Where do I know this person from?" If this happens to you, don't fret. That particular corridor is full of balloons. I see them all the time. ■

AFSA Hosts Virginia Congressman for Town Hall Meeting



AFSA/DEBRA BLOME

Representative Gerald Connolly (D-Va.) at AFSA.

On Feb. 9, AFSA hosted a town hall-style meeting with Representative Gerald Connolly (D-Va.), a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Rep. Connolly, whose Northern Virginia district has one of the highest concentrations of Foreign Service families in the United States, has extensive connections to the Foreign Service. He even participated in the drafting of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 when he was a congressional staffer. He takes a particular

interest in the future of international development and transparency and accountability in foreign aid.

The event was held in a question-answer format, with AFSA Communications Director Kristen Fernekes moderating the conversation. AFSA members were invited to submit questions by email if they were unable to attend the event in person.

Several asked questions about benefits. Rep. Connolly noted that he supports parity in benefits between the military and the Foreign Service and has voted this way in the

past. He also said he favors the full implementation of Overseas Comparability Pay.

Responding to a question about the decline in the amount of travel members of Congress are doing and the decade-long pullback in the number of congressional delegations, Rep. Connolly said he believed members of Congress should take every possible opportunity to better understand the foreign countries about which they are making policy.

Along the same lines, he urged Foreign Service members to take full advantage of codels and use them as an opportunity to make a positive impression on delegation members who may not have had previous interaction with

the Foreign Service.

Responding to a question about how the Foreign Service can engage with the general public on its role, Rep. Connolly suggested getting involved in civic organizations, such as Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce and schools. They can be key venues for public education.

Rep. Connolly agreed with a member of the audience who pointed out that interest in trade promotion is lacking in Congress. He stated that delaying deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership is dangerous. If TPP fails, other countries will fill the void and set international trade policy for the future, diminishing U.S. global influence.

To see a recording of the event, go to www.afsa.org/ video. ■

—Debra Blome,
Associate Editor

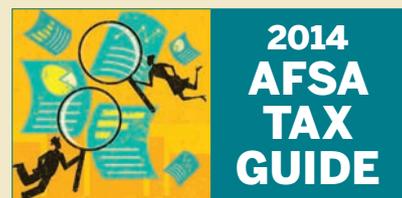
2014 AFSA Tax Guide: Clarification

The following clarifies the tax guide entry for the federal extension.

Extension for Taxpayers Abroad

Taxpayers whose tax home is outside the U.S. on April 15 are entitled to an automatic extension until June 15 to file their returns. When filing the return, these taxpayers should write "Taxpayer Abroad" at the top of the first page and attach a statement of explanation. There are no late filing or late payment penalties for returns filed and taxes paid by June 15, but the IRS does charge interest on any amount owed from April 15 until the date it receives payment.

This extension applies to federal returns. Please check with your home state for the regulations on extensions for state tax filings. ■



ISTOCK.COM/RETROCKET

Capitol Hill Panel Discusses Women in Diplomacy



"Women in Diplomacy" panelists and others. From left: State FSO Ronita Macklin; USAID FSO Croshelle Harris-Hussein; retired State FSO and current AFSA Policy Adviser Janice Weiner; Theresa Vawter and Kate Raulin, from the Women's Congressional Staff Association; State FSO Sarah Budds and AFSA Senior Legislative Assistant David Murimi.

On Jan. 21, AFSA and the Women's Congressional Staff Association co-hosted a panel discussion on "Women in Diplomacy" on Capitol Hill. Aimed at individuals interested in pursuing careers in foreign affairs, the event featured a panel of four current or retired Foreign Service women.

The program began with the panelists giving brief descriptions of their backgrounds, past Foreign Service posts and language skills, and the challenges faced by female diplomats in public and private life.

Ronita Macklin, an FSO who is currently the post management officer for South and East Asian affairs, as well as a member of AFSA's Governing Board, stressed that being an FS employee is a 24-hour-a-day job. Boldness and courage are important in every interaction, she said, so

that you are treated appropriately as a representative of the United States.

During her tour in Kabul Macklin noticed that, as a diplomat, she was an "American" first and foremost. Many of the men she dealt with, even

in that male-dominated society, looked past her gender because she was one of the few Americans they had access to.

Janice Weiner, retired from a 26-year career in the Foreign Service, now works in AFSA's Advocacy Division as a policy adviser. She highlighted the fact that in many societies where FSOs are posted, women are not permitted to play a role in public life. However, this can sometimes be an advantage: women in the Foreign Service can sometimes gain access to meetings at which a man might be considered a threat.

Croshelle Harris-Hussein,

chief of the Strategic Planning and Performance Management Division in USAID's Middle East bureau said the role of an FSO is not only to teach people about Americans, but also to teach Americans about others. Sarah Budds, the country officer for Children's Issues, Strategy and Operations at the State Department, also served on the panel.

Following their presentations, the panelists took questions from the audience of young women that ranged from how to maximize language skills and prepare for the Foreign Service exam to the issue of expressing dissent in the Foreign Service. ■

—Shannon Mizzi,
Editorial Intern

NEWS BRIEF

FOREIGN AFFAIRS DAY IS MAY 1

State Department retirees and Foreign Service retirees of other U.S. foreign affairs agencies are welcome to attend the State Department's annual homecoming event, Foreign Affairs Day. In addition to remarks by senior State Department officials, Foreign Affairs Day also includes the AFSA Memorial Plaque ceremony honoring Foreign Service personnel who have died while serving abroad under circumstances distinctive to the Foreign Service.

Invitations to the Foreign Affairs Day luncheon in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room were mailed in March. If you wish to reserve seats (two seats maximum, \$50 per person), please confirm by sending your RSVP and lunch payment check as soon as possible. Seats are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis and sell out quickly. Payments must be included with the request. If you did not get an invitation, or if you have any questions, please email foreignaffairsday@state.gov.

The AFSA Memorial Plaque ceremony will take place that morning in the Department of State's C Street lobby. At 3 p.m., AFSA headquarters will open its doors at 2101 E Street NW for a Foreign Affairs Day reception for all retirees. ■

AFSA Honors Matilda W. Sinclair Language Award Recipients

Foreign language proficiency is one of the most important skills in today's Foreign Service, essential not only to professional development but also to personal security.

Annually, the American Foreign Service Association recognizes outstanding accomplishment in the study of a Category III or IV language and its associated culture through the Matilda W. Sinclair Language Awards.

AFSA established this program in 1982, thanks to a bequest from Matilda W. Sinclair, a former Foreign Service officer, "to promote and reward superior achievement by career officers of the Foreign Service [...] while

studying one of the Category III or IV languages under the auspices of the Foreign Service Institute." More than \$260,000 has been awarded to those Foreign Service members who have received recognition for their superior language skills through this program.

Any career or career-conditional member of the Foreign Service from the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, Broadcasting Board of Governors or Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is eligible for the award. Candidates may be

nominated by the language-training supervisors at the FSI School of Language, the language instructors at field schools, or post language officers.

Recipients are selected by a committee comprising the dean of the FSI School of Language Studies (or designee), representatives of the AFSA Governing Board, the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee and the general AFSA membership. Each recipient receives \$1,000 and a certificate of recognition signed by the AFSA president and the chair of the AFSA Awards committee.

For further information on the Sinclair Awards, please

contact AFSA's Coordinator for Special Awards and Outreach Perri Green at green@afsa.org or (202) 719-9700.

The 2014 Sinclair Award recipients, all AFSA members, are:

Alexander Bellah, Russian

John Ceballos-Rivera,

Arabic

Rafael Diaz, Greek

Karen Glocer, Arabic

Jonathan Herzog,

Lithuanian

Maciej Luczywo, Georgian

Rebecca Owen, Icelandic

Martin Thomen, Turkish

Elizabeth Threlkeld, Pashto

Brian Timm-Brock, Hebrew

NEWS BRIEF

AFSA COMMUNITY: A NEW WAY TO ENGAGE

AFSA is rolling out a new way for members to participate and stay connected with each other and with us. In the online AFSA Community, members can post comments, exchange ideas and communicate with one another in a closed environment accessible only to other AFSA members.

The AFSA Community is now holding its first discussion on the AFSA 2015 Governing Board election and bylaw amendment. Use the community to discuss a candidate's platform and positions on issues facing the Foreign Service or specific career and professional concerns. You can also weigh the pros and cons of the proposed bylaw amendment to rightsize the AFSA Governing Board in 2017.

Access this discussion by logging into the members-only area of the AFSA website and clicking on "AFSA Community" in the blue navigation tab

at the top of the page. (You must have a personal email address stored in your contact information to access the AFSA Community because work email addresses ending in .gov are inaccessible in the AFSA Community.)

Once on the AFSA Community page, join the AFSA 2015 Governing Board Election & Bylaw Amendment community to get started.

We hope the AFSA Community provides a meaningful way to share your thoughts and collaborate with your colleagues. As our recent survey (see p. 71) showed, AFSA members want opportunities to actively participate, particularly when serving outside the Washington, D.C., area. We are optimistic that this new benefit will allow members to participate in AFSA no matter where they are living.

Questions and comments can be sent to member@afsa.org, with the subject line "AFSA Community." ■



AFSA President Bob Silverman at DS headquarters.

AFSA Hosts Lunch Conversation at the Bureau of Diplomatic Security

AFSA hosted active-duty Diplomatic Security specialists for a “Lunchtime Conversation” at DS headquarters in Rosslyn, Virginia, on Jan. 20. AFSA President Robert J. Silverman and State Vice President Matthew Asada presented an overview of the association’s advocacy, engagement and communications efforts on behalf of DS specialists.

AFSA held similar outreach events at AFSA headquarters in August, the Foreign Service Institute in October and Main State in November. ■

Tax News: Foreign Earned Income Exemption Denials

We have recently heard from AFSA members who report having some difficulty claiming the foreign earned income exemption (FEIE).

Many Foreign Service spouses and dependents work in the private sector or for an international organization overseas, and they are thus eligible for the FEIE—unless they are employees of the United States government. The first \$99,200 earned overseas either as an employee or self-employed, may be exempt from income taxes.

To receive the exemption, the taxpayer must meet one of two tests: 1) the Physical Presence Test, which requires that the taxpayer be present in a foreign country for at least 330 full (midnight to midnight) days during any 12-month period (the period may be different from the tax year); or 2) the Bona Fide Residence Test, which requires that the taxpayer has been a

bona fide resident of a foreign country for an uninterrupted period that includes an entire tax year.

It is important to note that if you work for a company or organization on the local economy you generally have to pay local taxes, and your “tax home” is technically in the foreign country. You will have relinquished your diplomatic status in any matters related to your job, although for matters outside your job you would of course retain the diplomatic status that you derive from your FS employee spouse or parent.

Recently, AFSA members have reported to us that IRS auditors have been denying the FEIE for Foreign Service spouses and dependents under the “bona fide residence” test, on the grounds that diplomatic status overseas does not permit “bona fide residence” in a foreign country.

However, members report

that they have successfully used the “physical presence” test to qualify for FEIE. They have also used this in appealing a denial of the “bona fide residence test.” This test requires that you spend 330 full days during a calendar year actually in a foreign country, not just outside the United

States, so time spent traveling does not count. If using this test, you are advised to record all your travel carefully and to keep copies of visas and tickets so that you can substantiate the 330 days in case of an audit. ■

—James Yorke, Senior Labor Management Adviser

NEWS BRIEF

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS: TWO COMPANIES CONTINUE MERIT AWARDS SUPPORT

Embassy Risk Management and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Program have re-committed to funding three AFSA Academic Merit Awards in 2015.

Open to high school seniors of Foreign Service employees, the merit award program rewards academic and art accomplishments. FEPBlue will fund two \$2,500 Academic Merit Awards for the third consecutive year. Embassy Risk Management, which provides insurance to diplomats overseas, will sponsor a \$2,500 Academic Merit Award for the second year.

The total prizes for the 23 youth Merit Awards, which will be conferred in May, will total \$45,250. Visit www.afsa.org/scholar for complete details. ■

ANNOUNCEMENT

JOIN THE AFSA
SPEAKERS BUREAU!

AFSA seeks new participants for the Speakers Bureau program, which matches members with groups seeking speakers for their events.

Visit www.afsa.org/speakers and fill out the form. You can help to raise awareness of the Foreign Service and pique the interest of America's youth to consider an FS career.

Contact AFSA Retiree Counselor Todd Thurwachter at (202) 944-5509 or thurwachter@afsa.org. ■

AFSA Welcomes New Interns

AFSA is pleased to welcome our group of spring interns.

Advertising: William Read hails from Sydney, Australia, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in American studies and government and international relations from the University of Sydney in November 2014.

Awards: Originally from Charlottesville, Virginia, Kavanaugh Waddell is a senior at The George Washington University studying international affairs.

Communications: Thomas Garofalo, a Connecticut native, is a second-year graduate student at The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, where he studies global communications.

Elections: Brianna Pope is a junior at Bard College, majoring in political studies and modern studies. A San Diego, California, native, Brianna is in Washington, D.C., for a semester-long program at

Georgetown University.

Executive Office: Asma Shethwala comes from Richmond, Virginia. She has a bachelor's degree in medical anthropology from Mary Baldwin College.

The Foreign Service Journal: Shannon Mizzi comes to us from Toronto, Canada. She has a bachelor's degree in history from Royal Holloway, University of London.

Labor Management: Port Orange, Florida, native Stephan Skora is a senior majoring in political science and economics at the University of North Florida.

Scholarships: Tina Yan is a junior international affairs major at The George Washington University. Her hometown is McHenry, Illinois.

We thank departing AFSA interns Sarah Kay, Allan Saunders, Daniel Thwaites, Trevor Smith, Rebecca Mulqueen and Amanda Whatley for their great work this past fall and wish them the best. ■

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AFSA Tax Guide

Read about the latest federal and state tax provisions affecting the Foreign Service in the AFSA NEWS section of *The Foreign Service Journal*.



www.afsa.org/taxguide

AFSA NEWS

Helping Our Afghan and Iraqi Colleagues

BY LARRY COHEN, RETIREE VICE PRESIDENT

Recently, several Provincial Reconstruction Team interpreters and staff with whom I served in Afghanistan contacted me for letters of support. They need these recommendations to apply for Special Immigrant Visas, an employment-based program for Afghans and Iraqis under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

tall hurdle.

My own letters of support, like those of other Americans who worked alongside Afghans in the field, may only fill part of the gap. Because American and international supervisors, many of whom are retired, are scattered to the winds, our Afghan and Iraqi colleagues may need assistance tracking us

If you served with Afghans or Iraqis eligible for SIVs and can commend their performance, consider reaching out to them. At a minimum, keep an ear open, especially with regard to former colleagues who may be active on social media.

You may recall that last year the departments of State and Homeland Security caught flak for extraordinarily protracted SIV processing. Critics accused the departments of making the program overly complicated and agonizingly slow. Whether visa procedures have improved, I cannot say. State says they have.

Due to multiple layers of scrutiny, SIV applicants will likely continue to find that meeting program requirements, which include securing reference letters from a long chain of former military and civilian supervisors, is a

down. Facebook is one tool they use. Word of mouth is another.

If you served with Afghans or Iraqis eligible for SIVs and can commend their performance, consider reaching out to them. At a minimum, keep an ear open, especially with regard to former colleagues who may be active on social media.

For more information on the SIV program, see the January Congressional Research Service report on the Iraqi and Afghan SIV Programs: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homsec/R43725.pdf>. ■

A True Gentleman: Theodore S. Wilkinson III, 1934-2015

A lifelong AFSA member, Ted served as the association's elected president from 1989 to 1991 and as FSJ Editorial Board chair from 2005 to 2011.

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

If one were going to put a Foreign Service character into a novel, one could hardly come up with a better name than “Theodore Stark Wilkinson III.” In keeping with the sheer heft of that triple-barreled moniker, the actual bearer of that noble name was a strikingly tall man with a proud lineage and imposing intellect. Yet he was known to one and all simply as Ted—a gentleman and a gentle man, as his friend and colleague Tom Boyatt aptly puts it.

Ted Wilkinson was born in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 27, 1934, the son of Vice Admiral Theodore Stark “Ping” Wilkinson and Catherine Harlow Wilkinson. His father, a Medal of Honor recipient for the 1914 Veracruz campaign in Mexico, would later serve as chief of naval intelligence. Vice Admiral Wilkinson became commander of the Third Amphibious Force in the Pacific in 1943 and was credited with developing the “leapfrogging” strategy designed to seize control of the Southwest Pacific islands occupied by Japan.

After graduating with a B.A. in political science from Yale in 1956, the younger Wilkinson followed his father’s footsteps into the U.S. Navy. (He later earned a master’s degree in international relations from The George Washington University.) After four years as a naval intelligence officer, Ted joined the Foreign Service in 1961.

Over a distinguished 35-year career, he developed specialties in Latin American affairs and arms control, serving as minister

Steven Alan Honley, a Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997, is The Foreign Service Journal’s contributing editor.



Ted Wilkinson shakes hands with President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico while serving in Mexico City in the early 1990s.

counselor for political affairs in Mexico City (during his second assignment there) and Brasilia, both during the 1990s. He also served at the United Nations and NATO, and in several European and Latin American capitals.

Ted’s diplomatic contributions continued even after he retired from the Foreign Service in 1996. For the next two years, he served on the ambassadorial-level, four-nation Guarantor Support Commission, which helped reach a 1998 accord to end a bloody, long-running border dispute between Peru and Ecuador.

A lifelong AFSA member, Ted served as the association's elected president from 1989 to 1991, and returned to the Governing Board as a retiree representative from 2003 to 2005. He also remained an active participant in the group of former AFSA presidents to whom the current leadership has turned on occasion for experience-based advice. An eloquent member of that cohort, Ted spoke out for the role of America's professional diplomatic service, and made clear publicly and in communication with Congress that the appointment of unqualified fundraisers as ambassadors was counter to our national interest, and a possible contravention of the Foreign Service Act.

The Chairman Is In!

It was during his six-year stint (2005-2011) as chairman of the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board that our paths first crossed. I was truly privileged to work closely with him in my capacity as the magazine's editor.

As with everything he did, Ted took his responsibilities as Editorial Board chairman to heart. He prized incisive writing and strong points of view, even when he disagreed with their content. I still recall several instances where he shook his head over what he viewed as a needlessly provocative Speaking Out column—then not only voted for publication (with judicious editing), but urged his colleagues to follow suit.

In the same spirit, Ted strove to identify and recruit the best possible contributors to *The Foreign Service Journal*. Yet he never forgot that while many of the AFSA members who submit material for publication may not be naturally gifted writers, their insights and concerns deserve attention. He brought a similar humanity to managing the Editorial Board, which is comprised entirely of volunteers who sometimes require a gentle nudge to work well together.

The one drawback to having Ted in that role was the fact that board members traditionally do not write articles for the *Journal*, to avoid the potential awkwardness of the peer review process. Fortunately, that stricture does not apply to book reviews, which fall under the editor's direct purview, and Ted reviewed more than a dozen titles for me. Whether he was assessing a policy study, memoir or novel, those write-ups were consistently well-written and fair, requiring virtually no editing at all.

During Ted's final year on the board (at his own insistence; had it been up to me, he would have been chairman for life!), we twisted his arm to contribute two articles to our pages. One, "Toward a More Perfect Union" (March 2011), referenced AFSA's annual report in the same issue and thoughtfully explored two perennial questions: "Is the American Foreign Service Associa-



Ted Wilkinson shakes hands with Ambassador to Honduras John D. Negroponte while serving in Tegucigalpa in the mid-1980s.

tion adapting well to changing circumstances? And is it serving the interests of its members in the best possible way?"

The second piece was "Mexico's Anguished Decade," part of a focus on Latin America in the June 2011 issue. Though he was writing some 15 years after leaving the Foreign Service, Ted's analysis was firmly grounded in current events. Far from resting on his professional laurels, he continued to teach U.S.-Mexican border studies courses at the Foreign Service Institute, traveled regularly to Mexico and kept up with the academic literature. He contributed frequently to the online journal *American Diplomacy*, on whose board he served, and chaired the Membership Committee of the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs.

Work Hard, Play Hard

Ted was anything but a drudge, however. He avidly pursued his passions for racquet sports, bridge, chess and backgammon, and played poker monthly with several Foreign Service buddies. And above all, he put his family first. He and his beloved wife, Xenia Vunovic Wilkinson, herself a retired FSO, were the parents of Julia, his youngest daughter. Ted had three children—T (who predeceased him), Rebecca and Jennifer—from his first marriage. He was the proud grandfather of four: Maxwell, Madeline Rose, Christopher and Ian.

Ted and Xenia have been longtime supporters of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation. In addition, Ted was a member of Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired, the Metropolitan Club, the Chevy Chase Club and the Society of the Cincinnati.

Ian Houston, AFSA's executive director, recalls that during a phone conversation shortly before Ted died of cancer on Jan. 25, he spontaneously told him: "We love you, Ted." He added that everyone at AFSA regarded Ted as a model board and committee member. I heard many of his colleagues and friends express similar sentiments at his Feb. 7 memorial service.

Ted Wilkinson truly was a paragon. He will be sorely missed. ■

Looking for Patterns

Theology and the Disciplines of the Foreign Service: The World's Potential to Contribute to the Church

Theodore L. Lewis, Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2015, \$22, paperback, 169 pages.

REVIEWED BY RUTH M. HALL

In *Theology and the Disciplines of the Foreign Service*, retired FSO Theodore L. Lewis explores the ways in which his diplomatic career and priestly calling enhanced, informed and enriched each other. Part memoir and part theological discussion, the book draws on the author's 30 years at the State Department and other overseas experiences.

Lewis analyzes how our cognitive patterns—formed by experience in trades, crafts and other disciplines, including the Foreign Service—can illuminate our understanding of the Bible, and clarify its meanings for us as individuals living in modern communities. Early in his career, Lewis “recognized the affinity between the approach of biblical criticism and the critical approach I had developed in the Foreign Service.”

While serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, Lewis worked as a linguist during the occupation of Japan. He then used the GI Bill to earn a master's degree from Harvard, where Lewis, the son of a Quaker mother and an Episcopalian father, turned toward the Episcopal Church.

After Lewis joined the State Department in 1952, his first Foreign Service assignment was in Saigon, where he researched and wrote economic reports on local industries. “Allowing the patterns to emerge,” as he puts it, from the data he collected via his field work helped make up for the absence of reli-

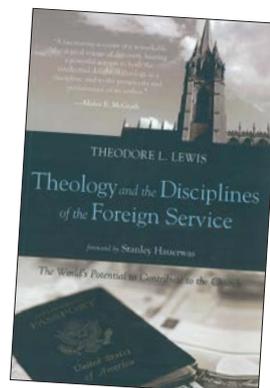
able statistics. After a subsequent tour in Pakistan, Lewis resigned to attend Virginia Theological Seminary, earning a doctorate in divinity.

At seminary his analytical and language skills, as well as exposure to non-Western cultures, helped Lewis master biblical scholarship and criticism. Viewing Roman society in terms of his overseas reporting, for instance, was fruitful. Lewis also observed the same organizational duality in the English Reformation as in the Foreign Service: “a calling forth of talents but at the same time, stifling them.”

In the early 1960s, Lewis rejoined the Foreign Service, returning to Vietnam under challenging circumstances. His theological studies helped him cope with 60-hour workweeks and intense economic reporting demands in the joint embassy-USAID office. Among other things, he visited slaughterhouses in the pre-dawn hours to report on pork supplies, the second-most important food staple after rice and a proxy indicator for Viet Cong control over the provinces.

A later tour in the Congo brought Lewis into contact with the legacy of Apolo Kivebulaya (1864-1933), a priest and evangelist whose work in Boga (eastern Congo) established the Anglican Church there.

Lewis recalls Foreign Service colleagues who committed suicide after the shame of being selected out and deplores the arbitrariness of unfair employee evaluations kept hidden from employees. “Under the regulations existing at the time,” he recalls, “I was not allowed to read [my own evaluation], but only to have it read to me.”



In the mid-1970s, after a meaningful discussion with an International Monetary Fund official, Lewis decided to write a dissent cable, urging the administration to re-establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam early on—but “with little effect. It seemed the resentments from hav-

ing lost the Vietnam War were still too strong.”

Lewis also describes the terrific strain that multiple hardship tours placed on him and his family, including traumas and serious illnesses, as well as how his faith helped him to cope. His connection with various expatriate churches is also vividly described (including photos).

After leaving the Foreign Service in the mid-1980s, Lewis worked on his theological writings at Cambridge and Oxford, partly guided by Alistair McGrath. In 1996 he self-published *To Restore the Church: Radical Redemption History to Now*, which took 25 years to research and complete. Prominent theologian Stanley Hauerwas of Duke Divinity School also influenced him, and wrote the preface to this volume.

That said, any member of the Foreign Service community will find much to ponder in these pages—even readers who have no interest in theology.

Ruth M. Hall is a member of the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board. Since joining the Foreign Service as an economic officer in 1992, she has served in New Delhi, Kathmandu, Frankfurt, Jakarta, Baghdad and Washington, D.C., where she currently works in the Office of Civil Rights.

All About Ambassadors

American Ambassadors: The Past, Present and Future of America's Diplomats

Dennis C. Jett, *Palgrave MacMillan*, 2014, \$40, paperback, 283 pages.

REVIEWED BY TRACY WHITTINGTON

Arriving in Argentina as an entry-level officer in 1973, a young Dennis Jett saw firsthand the damage a “lightweight” political ambassador could do. Despite the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Latin American country, Nixon appointee John Davis Lodge spent more time pushing for coverage of his dinner parties in the society pages than paying attention to whether Peronist officials were open to a relationship with the United States. So begins Jett’s timely new book, *American Ambassadors: The Past, Present and Future of America's Diplomats*.

The volume offers a readable account of the qualifications and career trajectories of these important appointees. After providing a brief history of the position throughout American history, Jett describes the “traditional route” to becoming an ambassador: the Foreign Service exam, the hardships of working overseas, the promotion process and, ultimately, the D (Deputy Secretaries) Committee.

Particularly useful are his candid opinions on why certain Foreign Service cones are under- or over-represented among the top echelon. All FSOs who have their sights set on earning the honorific “Amb.” before their names might want to bookmark these pages.

While Jett recounts the steps for career appointees in a fairly straightforward manner, he turns to a series of examples to illustrate the “non-traditional,” aka political, route to becoming an ambassador. Noting

that “presidents do not appoint non-career ambassadors solely because of merit,” Jett acquaints us with a parade of campaign donors, college roommates, military officers (to give the appearance of strength on national defense) and political allies—all recipients of the ambassadorial title.

He continues with the vetting process and the potential missteps a nominee

can make, may have already made or, worse yet, failed to disclose. Additional chapters explain the duties of an ambassador and where non-career ambassadors generally go (spoiler alert: Western Europe and the Caribbean).

Despite the wealth of information, Jett’s approach

of interspersing extended, dry explanations of government forms with gossipy anecdotes (and more than a few political comments unrelated to the matter at hand) too often entertained without edifying. He relies heavily on oral histories, inspection reports and press briefings.

The former leads to an overabundance of information on the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations’ selection processes, and the latter on the well-known failings of Barack Obama’s non-career nominees (e.g., George Tsunis, Colleen Bell, Noah Mamet) and ambassadors (e.g., Nicole Avant, Cynthia Stroum, Scott Gratton). It’s difficult to draw conclusions from this handful of examples, and Jett doesn’t really try.

The reader waits in vain for the author to pull together all the stories, quotations, interviews and transcripts into a rigorous argument for or against non-career ambassadors. Although he lays to rest a few old tropes (an ambassador who is a presidential pal can get easier access, for example),

he leaves many others unrebutted.

When the author does tackle tough questions—what makes a good ambassador (Chapter 5), or whether the arguments for political appointees are valid (Chapter 7)—he soon gets sidetracked by comparing presidential letters of instruction or listing outstanding international treaties. He barely skims the philosophical surface of the issue before backing off and offering prescriptions that are both uncontroversial (greater transparency in campaign contributions) and relatively minor (greater congressional interest in the language qualifications of nominees).

I finished *American Ambassadors* dismayed, not by what the book is—a solid treatment of the subject—but by what it could have been. Jett missed an opportunity to systematically examine how non-career chiefs of mission harm (or benefit) all aspects of diplomacy and a diplomatic career: the mentoring of entry-level officers, embassy management, political and economic reporting, public diplomacy work, the development of career officers, ethics and U.S. standing in the world, to name a few.

With the general public and political pundits weighing in freely on the merits of campaign donor appointees, stronger conclusions from a respected career ambassador and academic would have been welcome. ■

Tracy Whittington, a Foreign Service public diplomacy officer since 2005, works in the Foreign Service Director General's Office of Policy Coordination. She previously served in Kinshasa, Montreal, the Operations Center and La Paz. A member of the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board, she is the author of Claiming Your History: How to Incorporate Your Past into Your Present and, with her tandem spouse, Eric, A Street Dog's Story: The Almost 100% True Adventures of Labi.



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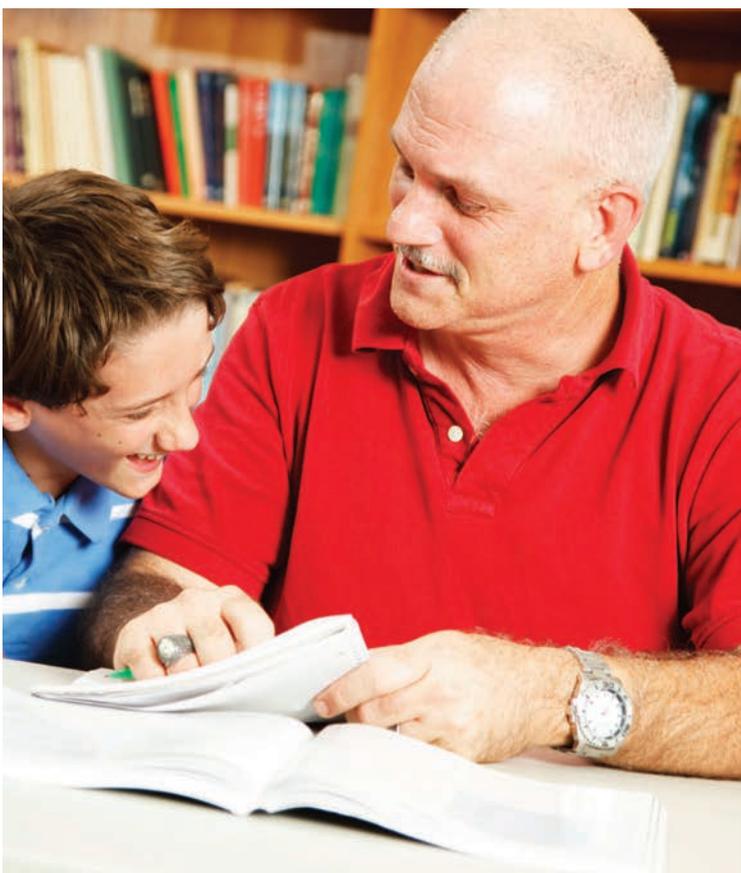


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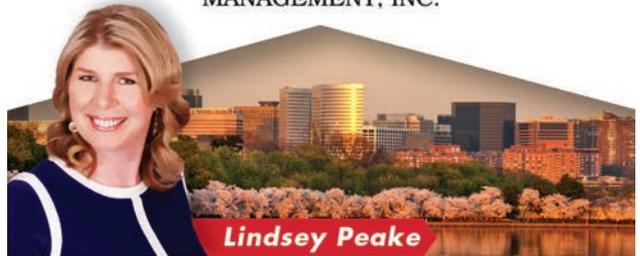
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Expat Youth Scholarship Contest / 90
Foreign Affairs Day 2015 / 31
Join the FSJ Editorial Board / 41

CLASSIFIED ADS

Classifieds / 87, 88, 89

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND TAX SERVICES

AFSA Tax Guide 2014 Online / 82
Ameriprise Financial / 81
First Home Mortgage / 42
MCG Financial Planning / 81
Ryan + Wetmore / 24

HOUSING

Arlington Court Suites / 19
Attaché Corporate Housing / 36
Capitol Hill Stay / 32
CAS—Corporate Apartment Specialists / 24
Extended Stay Housing Online / 89
Residence Inn / 9
Signature Properties / 32
SuiteAmerica / 36
TurnKey Housing Solutions / 82

INSURANCE

AFSPA—Disability Insurance / 9
Clements Worldwide / 4
Embassy Risk Management / Inside Back Cover
Federal Employee Defense Services / 11
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MISCELLANEOUS

AFSA Planned Giving / 2
Archive of FSJ Education Articles / 90
Change of Address / 18
Family Liaison Office, Dept. of State / 17
Foreign Service Youth Foundation / 62
Fund for American Diplomacy / 42
Inside a U.S. Embassy / 3
Marketplace / 15
U.S. Foreign Service Commemorative Coin / 52

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Cabell Reid, LLC / 91
Executive Housing Consultants, Inc. / 91
FSJ Guide to Property Management Online / 70
Gordon James / 95
Maedwell Residential / 94
McEnearney Associates, Inc. / 94
McGrath Real Estate Services / 93
Meyerson Group, Inc., The / 91
Peake Management, Inc. / 91
Promax Management, Inc. / 94
Property Specialists, Inc. / 93
RPM—Real Property Management / 95
Washington Management Services / 93
WJD Management / 92

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Vietnam: Endings and Beginnings

BY BRUCE A. BEARDSLEY

The end of one national adventure ushers in the beginning of another. Thus it was for Vietnam, and for me.

April 1975. The little news from Vietnam available at Embassy Kabul was grim. I had arrived in Afghanistan four months earlier, and almost immediately the steady beat of the North Vietnamese Army's march on Saigon could be heard. Provincial capitals, whole provinces, major cities—they all fell to the onslaught.

I had served in Vietnam for 2½ years, first in the Army (1965-1966) and later, after language training, as a junior FSO in one of the provinces (1970-1972). With each day's news my thoughts returned to the green jungles and rice paddies I had known, and especially to the Vietnamese friends and colleagues still there. Were they alive? What were they doing? How had it come to this?

As the ineptitude of the embassy's response and Washington's dithering became apparent, I was even more distraught. What could I, or anyone, do? Then, out of the blue, a message: I was to take the next flight east to assist with the evacuation from Vietnam. Unfortunately, the next flight to New Delhi, the first step of the journey, would not depart for two days. In the interim, I put my office in order and tried to relearn a few words of Vietnamese.

Bruce Beardsley retired from the Foreign Service in 2000 following a 31-year career. He served in Vietnam, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Denmark, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Mexico and Kosovo. Since then he has accepted several short-term assignments in the Balkans with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and participated in more than 30 training exercises in Germany to help prepare soldiers bound for Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo. He lives in southwest Florida. Photos are courtesy of Bruce Beardsley.



Having been given initial incoming processing, Vietnamese evacuees line up for resettlement processing by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (now the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service) on Wake Island in May 1975.

Flights and time zones blurred: Delhi, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Guam and, finally, Wake Island. Wake was to receive and shelter the human overflow from Guam, and ultimately the island housed some 12,000 evacuees. Reception arrangements were already underway. The U.S. Immigration Service had a small team in place, and a pair of U.S. Agency for International Development evacuees had been sent there, while the U.S. Air Force shouldered the bulk of the logistical responsibilities.

The USAID guys moved on shortly after

my arrival, so I was left with the title "Civil Coordinator" and no staff, no job description and little guidance. The strongest ray of encouragement was the willingness with which the Vietnamese evacuees pitched in to run the camp. Once the basics of food, shelter and medical treatment were organized, I increasingly devoted my time to unique or intractable problems.

Many of those involved families who had left Vietnam together, but had become separated along the way. Another group wanted to return to Vietnam—typically they had been ship or aircraft crew members with no choice about departing. We also had several hundred with relatives in countries other than the United States.

I'll never forget one person with whom I spent many hours. A very nice fellow, he had been a ranger captain and aide to a

A crowd watches the U.S. team interview their colleagues to determine resettlement eligibility and priority interviews in Pulau Bidong, Malaysia, in August 1979. This island held about 45,000 Vietnamese refugees at the peak in 1979.

senior South Vietnamese general. In late April the general had taken him on a reconnaissance flight; but instead of flying over the battlefield, without warning the general ordered his chopper out to sea to join the many helicopters landing on vessels of the U.S. Seventh Fleet. My new friend told me his U.S. contacts had assured him they would see to his family's safe evacuation when the time came. Alas, they hadn't.

I sent inquiries to all refugee processing camps, but only received negative replies. My friend insisted he be allowed to return to Vietnam, as he could not imagine life without his family. We could not know what would happen there, but many feared there would be a bloodbath. I told him his rank and position practically guaranteed that the new government would not allow him even to visit his family. He would be better off going to the United States, with the hope of their joining him later. He was adamant, and as far as I know was among those who eventually returned to Vietnam—and imprisonment.

The heartache involved in this captain's case was in part offset by the hundreds of family reunions I was able to arrange on Wake, a happy result of my cables to Guam and the department. I was also able to get Washington to overturn a decision to indefinitely delay any resettlement from Wake, and enjoyed seeing smiles on the faces of those who were among the first from Wake to resettle in the United States.

After a couple of months, I was medi-



vated to Clark Air Base in the Philippines, and from there returned to Kabul. I was happy to leave Wake, but remained in contact with a few of the refugees I met there for several years. That experience laid the groundwork for my later refugee work in Malaysia, Thailand and Kosovo.

It is now 40 years since the evacuation, and 50 years since I was among the first U.S. combat troops sent to Vietnam. I still wrestle with the ghosts of Vietnam. My evaluation of our efforts in that war has evolved over the years, but I am still critical of myself and my country. What could I have done better? What should we have done differently?

But life, and the world, move on. I resumed trips to Vietnam in the mid-1980s, and from the first was overwhelmed by the friendly reception I



Bruce Beardsley interviews a family for resettlement in Kota Bharu, Malaysia, in September 1979. Though his language ability had returned sufficiently to conduct interviews without an interpreter, he used a volunteer (to his left) to assist with Chinese speakers and to help keep interview notes.

received—not only from officials (who weren't always that warm), but from the many people on the street with whom I spoke.

Now one of "my" former first-tour officers, Ted Osius, has recently arrived as the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam, something hard to have imagined four decades ago. Even if one era ends on a sour note, another one begins. Let us hope that this will be a better chapter. ■



We had to stop to let this shepherd and his sheep go by in the town of San Pelayo, in the Burgos region of northwestern Spain last November. I was in the area visiting a U.S. citizen in prison there, one of my responsibilities during my six-month rotation in American Citizen Services in the consular section of Embassy Madrid. ■

*A first-tour, consular-coned FSO, Julie Akey joined the Foreign Service after serving in the U.S. military, teaching English and starting a nonprofit to help improve education in Haiti. She is the author of *Haiti, My Love* (2012), a collection of stories drawn from her experience living and working in the country.*

Please submit your favorite, recent photograph to be considered for Local Lens. Images must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi at 8 x 10") and must not be in print elsewhere. Please submit a short description of the scene/event, as well as your name, brief biodata and the type of camera used, to locallens@afsa.org.



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