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PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

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**On the Cover:** In September, the International Visitor Leadership Program's "Womens' Entrepreneurship in the Americas (WEAmericas)" initiative brought 17 women from South America to the United States. After touring Washington, D.C., the group split up to visit different parts of the country. This group of six—from Mexico, Paraguay, Cuba, Haiti, Brazil and Uruguay—traveled to Kalamazoo, Michigan. There, hosted by Colleagues International, Inc., a nonprofit community-based member of Global Ties U.S., the young women explored local government support for female entrepreneurs, microloans and alternative funding sources, and youth and female leadership development programs. They posed for this photo during a break between appointments. Photo courtesy of Cultural Vistas.

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# Refining Our Message

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

I promised in my last column to report back to you on the best ideas from the AFSA Governing Board retreat, where we tackled the challenge of describing the mission of the Foreign Service in compelling terms that resonate with the American people.

What do we in the American Foreign Service do? **We deploy worldwide to protect and serve America's people, interests and values.**

I tested this formulation when I represented AFSA this month on the Hill and at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Gala (see AFSA News for more). It worked. To anyone who has ever despaired when greeted with a blank stare after explaining to a fellow American, "I am in the Foreign Service," I am delighted to report that I was able to start a meaningful conversation every time I used this formulation to explain what we do.

I went on to say that we believe that the American Foreign Service may be the only organization in the world able to make this claim—itsself a great conversational hook. As far as the AFSA brain trust can determine, no other U.S. government entity can claim to be globally deployed; and, as far as we can tell, no other non-American entity can claim to

have a platform in virtually every country in the world. The Vatican comes close, but our reach is greater. I can think



Ambassador Barbara Stephenson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

## The Foreign Service deploys worldwide to protect and serve America's people, interests and values.

of no better focus group to consider this formulation than readers of the *FSJ*. Please send your feedback and suggestions to [president@afsa.org](mailto:president@afsa.org).

At the retreat, we also created lists of action verbs to describe what we do—beyond "we write memos and go to meetings." We **serve, communicate, lead, negotiate, protect, champion, prevent, solve, inspire, influence, challenge, unite, build and empower**. Every one of these verbs resonates with me and stirs up powerful, proud memories from a long, rich career as an American diplomat. The verb that most resonated with me, though, was this one: we *understand*.

I have been doing this so long, serving my country overseas for so many decades, that I had almost forgotten how remarkable this is and what it means for America—almost like breathing, I had forgotten how essential it is that we understand.

In virtually every country in the world, Americans can count on a platform, the U.S. embassy, staffed by career members of the Foreign Service who speak the language, appreciate the culture and know how to get things done in that country—from shipping things in and out and making the communications lines work to getting an audience with just the right people.

This global platform constitutes an enormous advantage for our country. Americans from all walks of life benefit from our global presence. American businesses benefit from our ability to make the right introductions, convene the right stakeholders, advise on communications strategy and point out pitfalls to be avoided. Americans in the country as tourists, students, researchers or families seeking to adopt, all benefit from having a home base, an embassy staffed with members of the Foreign Service who know the host country and have Americans' backs.

Because we are all over the globe and we understand the countries where we live and serve, we are able to protect and serve individual Americans and to advance America's foreign policy interests. We are able to identify the intersection of American interests and values and the interests and values of our host country. We *understand* as a first step to making common cause.

Why does it matter to America to have a career Foreign Service representing our country's interests abroad? Because we get better at delivering for America with each successive assignment. That is the heart of the Foreign Service experience and our value to our country. ■

# Welcoming Visitors, Building Bridges

BY SHAWN DORMAN

It is my great pleasure to introduce this month's focus on the International Visitors Leadership Program on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. Like baseball and apple pie, what's not to love about a program that brings potentially influential visitors from around the world to the United States to get an up-close and personal view of our country via "citizen diplomats" in numerous U.S. cities?

From its beginnings in 1940 till today, some 200,000 people have taken American journeys through this program. Participants travel in small groups and most often have a chance to see several U.S. cities during what is usually a three-week trip.

The program is sponsored and run by the Department of State, managed out of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and implemented by dozens of partner organizations and community-based members deploying thousands of volunteers to welcome the visitors. IVLP participants are nominated by U.S. embassy staff.

Our tour of the IVLP is led by Global Ties, which used to be the National Council of International Visitors, a nonprofit that works with partner organizations nationwide to implement the program. FSO Robert Zimmerman introduces us to the IVLP and shares 12 stories from participants. Global Ties President Jennifer Clinton and

Senior Program Manager Jelena Putre offer a look to the future of the program, and ideas for sustaining and renewing it.



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

My own limited experience with the IVLP convinced me that it was a great tool to expand relationships and build bridges between countries, between various embassy departments and among visitors sharing common interests.

While serving as a political officer at Embassy Jakarta in the late 1990s—a time when Indonesian students were leading a pro-democracy movement that ultimately helped push the Suharto regime from power in 1998—I welcomed the chance to nominate five youth leaders representing an interfaith alliance to the program.

I have stayed in touch with two of the alums, and here's what Edward Tanari said recently when I asked what he took away from his experience almost 20 years ago:

"After returning to Indonesia, we were

motivated to formalize a powerful civil society in Indonesia. We each took on roles in various fields. Three of us (including me) took a political path. One chose to work with nongovernmental organizations, and one took the path of election organizer (under the Suharto regime, elections never took place democratically). The civil society program in the United States was very beneficial for the youth activists for learning and for motivating us to rebuild Indonesia for a better future."

All five went on to serve their country in various leadership capacities in government and civil society. There can be no question that offering a personal U.S. experience to potential foreign leaders at a formative age is a potent contribution to international understanding with unique benefits for the visitors and their countries as well as for the United States.

In *Speaking Out*, James Rider suggests an approach to measuring the success of public diplomacy programs. Through an interview with retired *Chicago Tribune* foreign correspondent Richard Longworth, author of a 1977 "Primer for Diplomats," FSO Cecile Shea spells out the value of diplomacy.

Please take a look at our 2016 Editorial Calendar and see if any topics spark your interest. Reach out to us if you'd like to write for a particular issue, or let us know if you have an idea for another article.

We accept submissions for Letters, *Speaking Out*, Reflections, Features, Local Lens, FS Know-How and FS Heritage all year long, so do be in touch ([journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org)) and add your voice to the conversations. ■

## 2016 Editorial Calendar

<b>Jan-Feb:</b>	Mental Health Care for the Foreign Service
<b>March:</b>	Women in the FS
<b>April:</b>	Migration
<b>May:</b>	Life after the FS
<b>June:</b>	The FS Career
<b>July-Aug:</b>	Corruption
<b>Sept:</b>	AFSA Awards and Dissent
<b>Oct:</b>	The U.S. Elections Through a Foreign Lens
<b>Nov:</b>	In Their Own Write
<b>Dec:</b>	Russia, 25 Years After the Fall of the USSR

## Shades of Decisions

Ted Strickler's impressive cover story article in the October *FSJ* ("Working with the U.S. Military—10 Things the Foreign Service Needs to Know") should be required reading for everyone who works at the Department of State. His first point alone ("The Basics") provides essential information that I've never seen presented in such a concise, useful manner.

Based on my own, more limited experience, I offer two other observations that might be helpful to FSOs working with our military.

The first is that military service members embrace and promote a culture of ceremony, recognition and reaffirmation that leads to a sense of belonging, celebrates teamwork and maintains continuity.

A lot of FSOs consider this kind of thing hokey and trite. I know I did for a long time. I was wrong. Military slogans and ceremonies do exactly what they are supposed to do, which is build esprit de corps and recognize individual contributions to the group.

Public events to confer promotions and medals demonstrate commitment to recognizing achievement, while change-of-command ceremonies reinforce hierarchy and continuity. Retirement ceremonies not only recognize individuals' contributions, but are a collective exercise in reviewing institutional progress.

FSOs who are uncomfortable with these rites and rituals (as I often was) are missing the point and should, as Ted mentions, use their cross-cultural skills to learn to appreciate and accept their value.

The second point I would underscore



is that the military wants to make decisions and do things, while the Foreign Service is more deliberative.

Strickler touches on this in his second point, but I would add that the military's devotion to "planning"—both in terms of allocation of resources and as a guiding principle—means that they sometimes create the momentum to do what they have planned.

This is where FSOs' "deliberative" nature can be useful. Just because someone planned something doesn't mean it's a good idea, or that the plan should be executed.

FSOs can sometimes spot weaknesses in a plan—or whole plans that should be shelved—and mitigate the negative repercussions acting on it might have had. I offer a simplistic analogy: Painters you called to give you a quote show up on a rainy day ready to paint your house. They are all set to start, with the equipment and vats of neon-green paint unloaded in the driveway. You, however, live there and know that neon green will probably not go over well with the neighbors, so you suggest another shade. And you propose waiting for better weather.

*David Ballard*  
FSO, retired  
Reston, Virginia

## A Better Way to Advance World Food Security

Michael McClellan's October article, "A Closer Look at Advancing World Food Security," reflects a misguided belief that markets, technology and international trade hinder global food security. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The world produces more food now per capita than at any time in history, thanks to new technologies

like genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Markets, when allowed to work, incentivize farmers to produce more efficiently and provide tremendous variety to increasingly wealthy and urban consumers.

Similarly, international trade is critical to balancing out regional swings in production and price spikes, and represents a safety net against famine.

As for McClellan's portrayal of U.S. agriculture, farm wealth is at record levels and our farmers are better stewards of the land than ever. This is all happening while U.S. farms—the vast majority of which are family-owned—help to feed a planet whose population is expected to grow to more than 9 billion.

And speaking as a Foreign Service agricultural officer who has served in some of the same countries as McClellan, I am shocked that he advocates increased use of draft animals or would otherwise condemn farmers to traditional agriculture.

Reading the article, I see more clearly the wisdom of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, which established a corps of career FSOs who deal exclusively with agriculture, including food security. The Foreign Agricultural Service is the eyes, ears and voice of U.S. agriculture overseas.

Monitoring global food production and trade and advancing the interest of U.S. agriculture are tasks best left to an agency purpose-built for the task.

*Paul Spencer*  
EAS FSO  
Washington, D.C.

## "Generalist" Has to Go

Cheers to Ambassador Ronald Neumann ("A Report from the American Academy of Diplomacy," July-August *Journal*) for highlighting the insidious creep of the term "Foreign Service gener-

alist” into the State Department’s human resources lexicon.

A quick review of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 shows there is no such position. The title is and has always been “Foreign Service officer.” FSOs are not mere dabblers in diplomatic and consular work, but like their Foreign Service specialist counterparts have honed skills. We should use the correct term to recognize that fact.

On another note, I enjoy your monthly feature of a quote from the *Journal*, “50 Years Ago.” I suggest you consider varying it with other periods from the *FSJ* archives—e.g., “90 Years Ago” or “75 Years Ago.”

Thanks for a fantastic magazine.

*Stuart R. Denyer*

*FSO*

*Embassy Algiers*

## Civil Service-Foreign Service Relations

With all due respect to Larry W. Roeder Jr. (“Seeking Parity Between the Civil and Foreign Services,” October Speaking Out), he seems either ignorant of or unwilling to acknowledge the profound differences and conditions of employment that distinguish the rank-in-job, domestic Civil Service (GS) personnel system from the rank-in-person, worldwide-available, up-or-out Foreign Service—or their very different evaluation systems.

I also remain perplexed as to what the career of his father has to do with Mr. Roeder’s call for privileging domestic employees at the expense of the Foreign Service and those who comply with its requirements. If Mr. Roeder and others want to take FSO positions abroad, I sug-

gest they take the exam and enter into the Foreign Service, with all its rigors and sacrifice, as other FSOs do.

If Mr. Roeder finds Foreign Service jobs so desirable—especially at senior levels—then perhaps he should have chosen the more rigorous personnel system designed to prepare him for those jobs years ago!

*Stephanie Smith Kinney*

*SFS, retired*

*Washington, D.C.*



## Parity Is Not Equality

Larry W. Roeder Jr.’s Speaking Out column makes a compelling case that foreign affairs officers (FAOs) like him are a real asset to the Foreign Service, the State Department and the other foreign affairs agencies.

Speaking as a former Foreign Service officer myself, I have never understood the tendency of far too many FSOs to disparage their Civil Service colleagues.

As Mr. Roeder rightly says, “modern diplomacy needs a strong Civil Service as much as a strong Foreign Service.”

Furthermore, as his own career demonstrates, many FAOs perform well in certain overseas positions. For that reason, in cases where no qualified FSO has bid on such a slot, FAOs should be considered for an excursion tour to fill vacancies—as has been State’s practice for at least 30 years that I know of (and quite possibly longer).

In the process, however, we need to preserve the fundamental distinction between FSOs and FAOs, which is this: Foreign Service members commit to being available for worldwide service

throughout their careers, albeit with the possibility of limited waivers because of health or other factors. In contrast, FAOs are not expected to serve overseas, and are never penalized for turning down an overseas assignment.

Moreover, until the Foreign Service Act of 1980 is repealed or rewritten, there is simply no legal basis for allowing FAOs “the opportunity to convert directly to the Foreign Service at equal rank”—much less be considered for an ambassadorship, as Mr. Roeder advocates.

All that said, I strongly support treating members of the Foreign Service and Civil Service equally, valuing each cohort for its respective contributions to diplomacy. But that is not the same as parity, which would imply that the two personnel systems are functionally the same. They are not.

*Steven Alan Honley*

*Former FSO*

*Washington, D.C.*



## Yes to 360s

I write to disagree with William Bent’s September Speaking Out column, “The State Department Needs to Reevaluate Its Use of 360-Degree Reviews.” His logic about best practices in implementing such reviews is seriously flawed when applied to the

Foreign Service assignment process.

Few leaders, myself included, would consider offering a position to an officer with five or more years’ experience who did not have at least four to six colleagues who could vouch for his or her skills and experience.

Unlike the private-sector environment that Mr. Bent references, one-third of the Foreign Service changes jobs every year, based on many hundreds of

hiring decisions. Because it is obviously impractical to interview the dozens of bidders on each position, the 360-degree process is a vital element complementing the officer's résumé and statement of interest.

In other words, State's use of 360 references is not about professional development. It is about matching the most qualified officers with the positions where the department needs them.

While I doubt it was his intention, the only way to implement Mr. Bent's misguided recommendations would be to move to directed assignments for everyone. Surely AFSA does not support such a process, where officers have little or no influence over where they are assigned.

*Brian T. Neubert*

*FSO*

*Washington, D.C.*

## The Wonderful World of Expositions

Thanks to Matthew Asada for the great and informative article on "World's Fairs Today" (October), as well as the history of State Department involvement in world expositions.

Like him, I attended a world's fair (Vancouver, 1986) in my youth and spent several days at the 1992 Seville Expo while in school.

Despite the limited U.S. pavilion, I thought it was a fantastic forum for a nation to display itself and imagined doing that kind of work one day. Sadly, by the time I joined the Foreign Service, the U.S. government was no longer giving much support to such events, as Mr. Asada notes.

Based now in Paris, I visited this year's Milan Expo during my family's summer vacation. It was great seeing my older daughter—about the same age I was when I first went to one—enjoy and

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learn so much. Even for a Foreign Service kid, there is nothing like having the world's nations together in one place and getting to sample each one's offerings.

The Olympics and the World Cup do it for sports, but the expo does it for people, business, history and culture—and this year, food.

Thanks to Mr. Asada and the *FSJ* for the historical overview and the recommendations on what support Washington might give to the next major expo: Dubai 2020.

*Kristin M. Kane*

*FSO*

*Embassy Paris*

## The U.S. Presence at Expo 2015

I found Matthew Asada's October article very interesting. As a citizen of the current host country, Italy, I concur with his description of the importance of the American presence at such world's fairs. I was surprised to learn that their political value is underestimated, if not disregarded, in Washington.

Such an event has political implications, starting with the bid for hosting it. Even though the Cold War and the need for a "kitchen debate" are history, current international tensions demand U.S. attendance in settings that promote cultural encounters and offer occasions for soft power displays and dissemination.

Moreover, U.S. participation cannot depend on private funding, as this would undoubtedly affect content choices.

Exhibitions are expressions of national identities: educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and the government should all have a say. This doesn't mean that corporations are not shaping national and international culture, but government should go some way to delegitimize their overt

intervention in political matters.

I have to confess that I found the U.S. pavilion in Milan somewhat underwhelming. The landscape design of the vertical farm was not adequately explained, and the menu rotation of the food trucks was hard to follow.

Some countries excelled in elegance—for example, the Azerbaijani pavilion with its amazing glass spheres, which cost less than most other exhibits.

Others explored the expo's main theme, sustainable and responsible (food) development. The beehive-inspired British and farm-inspired Belgian pavilions, for example, showcased advancement in food research and future prospects for nutrition, respectively.

Since beauty, originality and inventiveness were the elements attracting visitors, I wish the USA had done more. I hope it won't miss the next chance to shine.

*Anna Romagnuolo*

*Former AFSA Intern (2000)*

*Assistant Professor of English, Tuscia University*

*Viterbo, Italy*

## What Really Happened in 1953

The review of my book (*Memories of an Agent for Change in International Development: My Flight Path into the 21st Century*) in your October issue is fair, except for one item: your reviewer's take on the 1953 "coup" to oust Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh.

Maria Livingston quotes one of my statements (p. 61 of my book), then dismisses it as "second guessing" and counter to the revealed truth. But she ignores my subsequent citation (p. 75) of Ray Takeyh's July 2014 *Foreign Affairs* article and his conclusions.

That article, “What Really Happened in Iran—The CIA, the Ouster of Mosaddeq and the Restoration of the Shah,” argues that, while we and the British did sow the seeds of an uprising against Mosaddeq, our efforts failed. But then a truly popular uprising, led by civilians, materialized in support of the shah.

Takeyh writes: “Since 1953, and especially since the 1979 Revolution that toppled the shah, the truth about the coup has been obscured by self-serving narratives concocted by Americans and Iranians alike. ...The theocratic revolutionaries have been assisted in this distortion by American accounts that grossly exaggerate the significance of the U.S. role in pushing Mosaddeq from power.”

Please share this clarification with your readers (along with my email: lu@rudel.net). Some of them are likely to be involved in future dealings with Iran.

*Lu Rudel*  
*USAID FSR, retired*  
*Flinton, Pennsylvania*

## Corrections

In the November roundup of recent books by Foreign Service authors, “In Their Own Write,” William R. McPherson’s career was mistakenly described on page 37 as including postings in Korea and the Philippines. McPherson, the author of *Climate, Weather and Ideology: Climate Change Denial*, served overseas in Japan and Switzerland only.

Also, in “A Bibliography of USAID Authors” on page 40, John Pielemeier’s email address is listed incorrectly. Please direct any correspondence to him at [Jpielemeie@aol.com](mailto:Jpielemeie@aol.com).

We regret the errors. ■

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## Historic Trade Deal Is a Tough Sell

On Oct. 5, U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman sat on a stage in Atlanta, Georgia, with counterparts from 11 other Pacific Rim nations and announced that they had reached a deal on the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The announcement was a milestone in an historic five-year process, during which the United States participated in more than 20 formal and informal negotiating rounds to arrive at the 30-chapter trade pact.

Touted as the largest regional trade agreement in history, the TPP involves countries whose collective economies equal roughly 40 percent of global gross domestic product. The bloc of 12 countries comprises the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Vietnam, Chile, Brunei, Singapore and New Zealand.

According to USTR, “[The TPP is] a high-standard, ambitious, comprehensive and balanced agreement that will promote economic growth; support the creation and retention of jobs; enhance innovation, productivity and competitiveness; raise living standards; reduce poverty in our countries; and promote transparency, good governance, and enhanced labor and environmental protections.”

But, as it turns out, the TPP may not be all rainbows and butterflies. Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO, has said the deal is “not worthy of the American people and the American worker.” Doctors Without Borders claims the TPP is “the most harmful trade agreement ever for access to medicines,” while the citizen opposition group Expose the TPP is calling it the “dirtiest trade deal you’ve never heard of.”

The fact that the negotiations were done in secret, and in consultation with

major corporations, has undermined the agreement’s credibility. Its details were finally released on Nov. 5, a full month after its announcement, and are now undergoing a 90-day review before facing an up-or-down vote in Congress.

For proponents, the timing of the deal—the economic component of President Barack Obama’s pivot to Asia—couldn’t be more inconvenient. It’s anybody’s guess as to whether the Obama administration has what it takes to convince enough Democrats and Republicans to gamble on the agreement’s merits during an election year.

Already, all three Democratic presidential candidates have disavowed the TPP, citing a general lack of protections for American workers.

There is a lot to unpack in the pages of the deal, but there are many positive attributes to be sure. For instance, the pact eliminates or reduces tariffs on goods traded between partner countries—a major plus for U.S. exporters who currently face astronomical barriers (some agricultural exports face tariffs as high as 700 percent!).

Non-tariff advantages include strong labor and human rights protections requiring parties to allow workers the right to organize and bargain collectively. It also aims to eliminate forced and child labor and obliges TPP countries to adopt minimum wage laws and occupational safety standards.

Even the environment benefits: provisions to combat wildlife trafficking (e.g. elephants and pangolins), the illegal harvest and timber trade, and illegal,



The humble pangolin, a poster child for the scourge of wildlife trafficking, is expected to be a beneficiary of the TPP.

DAVID BROSSARD/CREATIVE COMMONS

unreported and unregulated fishing represent an important opportunity to turn the tide for the better on these issues on a global scale.

Still, the Obama administration has a steep uphill battle on its hands. A simple search on Google or look through Twitter or Facebook reveal news article after news article, video after video, meme after meme, knocking the TPP. It seems interest groups representing all walks of life have a reason to hate the deal.

Official statements by Ambassador Froman and President Obama posted to USTR and White House websites—however attractive and interactive—are unlikely to be enough to convince voters that the TPP is not just a Trojan Horse for big business.

The clock is ticking, Mr. Obama. You need a full-court, public-relations press on this one.

—Maria C. Livingston, Associate Editor

## Report Critiques Public Diplomacy and Broadcasting

The Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors must dedicate more resources to audience research, analytics, and process and impact evaluations.

## 50 Years Ago

### The First Foreign Service Day

**I**t was nine o'clock, Friday, November 12, in the wood-paneled and glass-roofed main floor conference room in the State Department. Only five minutes to go before the opening of the First Annual Foreign Service Day Conference. ... At nine the attendance count stood at 206. More arrived later. The count of ambassadors was 40. ...

In came the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, in a beaming mood. He was marked down for "Welcome" and he did not fail to welcome all the guests. He discussed the world we live in, its problems and the outlook. It was no cursory briefing, it was an incisive analysis. According to subsequent comments of the listeners, it was precisely the kind of thing they had been hoping for.



There were also analyses by other senior officers. ... All these were on a level with the Secretary's: thoughtful, candid exposés of the shifting world situation. They were intended for that room only and hence not even a summary will occur in this compte-rendu. ...

After lunch the conference got down to practical affairs. ...The first speaking was William J. Crockett, deputy under secretary for administration, who said: "This is the homecoming of the Foreign Service. ... We want this day to be symbolic of the fraternity that exists between active and retired Foreign Service officers. ... We are beholden to you; the present hangs heavily on the past you created. ... The American Foreign Service is second to none in the world."

"How," asked Mr. Crockett, "can retired officers help the department?"

The answer:

"In maintaining their interest in the Service and in foreign policy."

"In taking part as retired officers in the life of their community."

"In giving support to the concept that some change is inevitable."

A talk by Richard I. Phillips, deputy assistant secretary of State for public affairs, brought out the fact that many radio stations need speakers on foreign affairs and ways will be studied to establish contact between the stations and retired Foreign Service officers. Many participants were interested in establishing liaison between the department and the foreign policy associations that exist in many American cities. ...

William B. Kelly, director of the College Relations Program, asked the help of retired Foreign Service officers in the recruitment of potential entrants to the Foreign Service. ...

The first Foreign Service Day was an indubitable success. If some participants had originally contemplated the day merely as a chance to meet old friends, they rapidly expanded their view. ... The whole burden of the program was ways and means of encouraging retired officers to aid the department through diverse activities in their own communities. This will be the fundamental theme for all future plans.

—From "The First Foreign Service Day," a report in *The Foreign Service Journal*, December 1965.

That's according to the 2015 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting Activities issued by the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy on Sept. 22. This recommendation is making a repeat appearance—it was in last year's report, as well—despite some progress on building capacity to measure and evaluate program outcomes.

The report has traditionally been used

to itemize major PD and international broadcasting activities at State and the BBG. This year, the numbers show the two agencies spent a combined \$1.8 billion, or 3.53 percent of the international affairs budget in fiscal year 2014.

The post with the largest PD budget was Afghanistan, at \$56.5 million; the costliest BBG language service was MBN Alhurra (Iraq), at \$28.1 million; and the most expensive educational and cultural

exchange program was the International Visitor Leadership Program Division, at \$1,138 per day.

An analysis section gives kudos to the Bureau of International Information Programs for its increasingly strategic approach to managing American Spaces, the consistently high performance of the Bureau of Public Affairs' media hubs, and the innovative programming by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural

Affairs through its online platform The Collaboratory.

The report's authors visited five U.S. missions in FY2014—Algeria, Hungary, Moldova, Kenya and South Africa—and offer their views of the missions' struggle to balance administrative work with

engaging their respective foreign audiences. Not surprisingly, a common theme is the chronic lack of resources.

The report includes more than 20 recommendations for strengthening and modernizing PD and broadcasting efforts. The recommendations also reflect the pri-

orities of the Obama administration, with a focus on countering violent extremism and negative Russian influence, and influencing youth through programs like the Young African Leaders Initiative and the Youth Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative.

—*Maria C. Livingston, Associate Editor*

## SITE OF THE MONTH: Public Diplomacy NGOs—A Top Five

### University of Southern California's Annenberg Center on Public Diplomacy • [www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org](http://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org)

USC's Annenberg Center is a leader in public diplomacy research and a recipient of the State Department's 2008 Benjamin Franklin Award for Public Diplomacy. The center's website is a treasure trove of resources for anyone interested in the theory and practice of global engagement and intercultural relations. And the CPD Blog is a great place to keep up with recent PD scholarship applied to current affairs.

### Global Ties U.S. • [www.globaltiesus.org](http://www.globaltiesus.org)

Global Ties U.S., with more than 100 member organizations, facilitates international exchanges in the private, public and nonprofit sectors, "connecting global leaders and creating networks of problem solvers" from 45 American states and 15 countries.

### Center for Citizen Diplomacy • [www.centerforcitizendiplomacy.org](http://www.centerforcitizendiplomacy.org)

The Center for Citizen Diplomacy advocates person-to-person contact as the best strategy for cross-cultural engagement. The CCD provides citizen diplomats with the tools and the platform to acquire "global fluency" and to approach other cultures with compassion, curiosity and openness. The Center runs student exchanges and higher education programs, facilitates virtual meetings, and holds summits and forums on public diplomacy.

### Sister Cities International • [www.sistercities.org](http://www.sistercities.org)

Sister Cities International promotes citizen diplomacy by providing resources to help create and strengthen global urban partnerships. Member cities or states are matched with a "sister city," and participate in exchange programs and activities designed to "promote peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation—one individual, one community at a time." To date, more than 545 American cities have partnerships with 2,100 cities in 145 countries.

### Public Diplomacy Council • [www.publicdiplomacycouncil.org](http://www.publicdiplomacycouncil.org)

The Public Diplomacy Council is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the study and practice of (and responsible advocacy for) PD. The PDC focuses on public diplomacy as a key instrument of national power and a true profession: "the ability to weave public diplomacy into strategy is a characteristic of successful foreign affairs professionals." The PDC provides fellowships and training opportunities.

—*Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Assistant*



## Contemporary Quote

“ If you go to a country for a week, you can write a book. If you go for a month, you can write an article, and if you go for three months, you can’t write anything. ”

—Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel, in his keynote address to the CPD Forum: *Global Leadership in Public Diplomacy*, Oct. 15, at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C.

## Still Not Quite There

On Oct. 21, Executive Women @ State, the Office of Civil Rights and the Secretary of State held an open forum titled “Seeking Diversity in the Senior Ranks” at the State Department. Participants included Secretary John Kerry, Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson, Director General of the Foreign Service Arnold Chacón and Executive Women @ State representative Susan Stevenson.

Speaking to a packed house in the Marshall Auditorium, Sec. Kerry focused on gender bias, acknowledging that we have come a long way in terms of diversity in the department, but that there is still work to be done. Women are not advancing as rapidly as men, and the Bureau of Human Resources will continue to focus on increasing both recruitment and retention of women.

Kerry reported that today 40 percent of all assistant secretaries and 30 percent of ambassadors are female, whereas just 20 years ago, only 1 in 10 ambassadors was a woman. He did not, however, note that most of today’s female assistant secretaries and ambassadors are political appointees.

Progress has been made, but it’s time to take a harder look at how unconscious bias affects both sexes in the workplace, Kerry said, adding that the department will be conducting more thorough exit interviews and focusing on work-life balance to create an empowered culture where both sexes

can raise children and work simultaneously. He also stressed mentoring as a key in encouraging women to take on leadership roles at State, saying everyone should both have and be a mentor.

Kerry called America’s diversity a strength: “It defines our country. When we empower women in diplomacy, diplomacy succeeds in empowering everyone. There is something for everyone to do.” He invited employees to give constant feedback on hiring and promotion processes. The goal is to reach a point where promoting women in foreign policy is completely unremarkable, and no longer something that needs to be celebrated.

Director General Arnold Chacón then answered questions posed by Executive Women @ State’s Susan Stevenson and members of the audience. Topics included increasing telework opportunities overseas, combating implicit bias, removing names on EERs (which the department is looking into), spousal employment and how it affects women, and increased transparency in the Foreign Service assignment process, particularly for tandem couples.

Chacón encouraged employees to join State’s many affinity groups and, especially, to mentor within them. He also stated that the department has approved a Cox Foundation proposal to investigate gaps in mentoring opportunities at State.

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Assistant



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## “Our Diplomats Must Continue Representing Us in Dangerous Places...”

On Oct. 22, in an appearance before the House Select Committee on Benghazi, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton took the opportunity to reflect on the critical role of diplomacy and diplomats in national security.

The tragic Sept. 11, 2012, incident has been investigated by seven congressional committees and a nonpartisan Accountability Review Board, in addition to U.S. law enforcement agencies.

In her opening statement, Clinton said she was appearing to honor the service of

the four Americans who died that day—Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods.

“As Secretary of State, I had the honor to lead and the responsibility to support nearly 70,000 diplomats and development experts across the globe,” Clinton stated. “I knew and admired Chris Stevens. He was one of our nation’s most accomplished diplomats. ... Losing any one of them, as we did in Iraq, Afghanistan, Mexico, Haiti and Libya during my tenure, was deeply painful for our entire State Department and USAID family, and for me personally.”

Clinton offered several lessons from the Benghazi tragedy. “First, America must lead in a dangerous world, and our

diplomats must continue representing us in dangerous places,” she said. “Chris Stevens understood that diplomats must operate in many places where our soldiers do not, where there are no other boots on the ground, and safety is far from guaranteed. In fact, he volunteered for just those assignments.”

“Make no mistake, the risks are real,” she added. “Terrorists have killed more than 65 American diplomatic personnel

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*Chris Stevens understood that diplomats must operate in many places where our soldiers do not, where there are no other boots on the ground, and safety is far from guaranteed.*

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## Daniel Pearl Music Days Event at State

On Oct. 19, a musical performance was held at the State Department in honor of the 14th annual Daniel Pearl World Music Days. Two State Department “house bands” played for a small crowd in the Dean Acheson Auditorium: the Lost Agency Ramblers and the T-Tones.



The Lost Agency Ramblers play at the State Department, Oct. 19.

The Music Days’ events are held each October as “Harmony for Humanity” concerts in memory of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl, who was kidnapped and murdered by extremists in Karachi in 2002. Friends and family formed the Daniel Pearl Foundation in 2002 to “promote cross-cultural understand-

ing through journalism, music and innovative communications.”

The Lost Agency Ramblers call themselves “a loose confederation of current and former denizens of State’s public diplomacy bureaus who gather at noon on Fridays to have fun making music.” For the last eight years, they have dedicated their weekly sessions to the memory and music of Daniel Pearl.

Ahead of the Oct. 19 gig, the band warned: “Your presence at this event might be construed as membership in the Ramblers.” This band absolutely has fun playing music together.

T-Tones is the choral ensemble that originated in the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the mid-1990s before the agency was absorbed by the State Department as the new “T Bureau” for Arms Control and International Security.

—Shawn Dorman, Editor

since the 1970s and more than a hundred contractors and locally employed staff. Since 2001, there have been more than 100 attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities around the world. But if you ask our most experienced ambassadors, they’ll tell you they can’t do their jobs for us from bunkers.”

“Retreat from the world is not an option,” Clinton stated. “We need creative, confident leadership that harnesses all of America’s strengths and values. Leadership that integrates and balances the tools of diplomacy, development and defense.” ...

Second, Clinton observed, “We have a responsibility to provide our diplomats with the resources and support they need to do their jobs as safely and effectively as possible.”

Finally, Clinton evoked the long history of bipartisan cooperation on foreign policy and national security in America. “Not that we always agree—far from it—but we do come together when it counts,” she said. ■

—Susan Brady Maitra,  
Managing Editor

# Proving Public Diplomacy Programs Work

BY JAMES RIDER

Last year, the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, a bipartisan committee established in 1948 to assess and appraise the United States' PD activities, released a report, "Data-Driven Public Diplomacy: Progress Toward Measuring the Impact of Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting Activities."

Like many similar reports over the years, the ACPD study is generally optimistic about the success of the State Department's public diplomacy programs. It further assumes that recent advances in data collection and analytics will help us better demonstrate their success, by proving their impact.

At the same time, the report takes a hard look at the current state of public diplomacy evaluation, making it clear that "progress toward" measuring the impact of public diplomacy is not the same thing as actually being able to measure it.

The uncomfortable truth that this report and others like it highlight is that after more than 70 years of institutionalized public diplomacy activities, we still can't empirically verify the impact of most of our programs.

A consequence of this failing was highlighted by the State Department in its 2013 inspection of the Bureau of International Information Programs.

**Ironically, as public diplomacy programs have become more strategically focused, they've also become harder to manage and evaluate.**

The Office of the Inspector General's findings raised serious questions about the lack of an overall public diplomacy strategy at the department: *The absence of a departmentwide PD strategy tying resources to priorities directly affects IIP's work. Fundamental questions remain unresolved* [emphasis added]. *What is the proper balance between engaging young people and marginalized groups versus elites and opinion leaders? Which programs and delivery mechanisms work best with which audiences? What proportion of PD resources should support policy goals, and what proportion should go to providing the context of American society and values? How much should PD products be tailored for regions and individual countries, and how much should be directed to a global audience?*

These questions are relevant for everyone involved in public diplomacy work, not just IIP. I believe that the main reason we are still left with so many "unresolved fundamental questions"

about the nature of our work is because of our continued inability to measure the impact of our programs. It is impossible to accurately allocate resources to priorities when you don't actually know what works.

But why haven't we been able to measure our impact? A review of recent studies suggests some answers.

## We Do Not Value Evaluation

One reason has to do with the longstanding deficiencies of public diplomacy measurement and evaluation regimens. An astonishing fact highlighted in the advisory commission's report is that in 2013 the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA, the PD bureau that manages our best-known educational and exchange programs) allocated only .25 percent of its budget for program evaluation. The percentage allocated by other PD bureaus and offices was not much higher.

For comparison, the report notes that the industry average for evaluation spending is 5 percent. The University of Southern California's "Resource Guide to Public Diplomacy Evaluation" says



James Rider is a mid-level public diplomacy-coned Foreign Service officer who is currently the political-economic section chief in Libreville. He previously served in Caracas and Tel Aviv. In 2013, he won AFSA's W. Averell Harriman Award, recognizing constructive dissent by an entry-level Foreign Service officer.

that evaluation experts recommend that “8-10 percent of the budget of any program should be invested in evaluation,” and that the Gates Foundation spends “a reported 15 percent on performance measurement.”

While the commission’s report does stress that PD leadership has started to pay more attention to measurement and evaluation, Vice President Joe Biden’s oft-quoted admonition to federal agencies—“Don’t tell me what you value; show me your budget, and I’ll tell you what you value”—seems appropriate here. By budgetary metrics, we do not value evaluation.

Moreover, the evaluations we do carry out often lack rigor. The report notes that many public diplomacy evaluations tend to focus more on outputs than outcomes, exaggerate results, and seem to be designed less as a tool for improving or discontinuing certain programs and more as an exercise in “placating Congress.”

## In Search of the Holy Grail

One reason we haven’t been able to satisfactorily measure public diplomacy’s impact is that doing so is extremely difficult, if not impossible. In fact, many public diplomacy scholars refer to evidence of the impact of PD as “the holy grail” of their profession.

The evaluation guide mentioned above lists many of the problems that make PD programs so difficult to measure. Here are two of the most intractable factors:

- **PD work involves intangibles.**

Documenting verifiable changes in awareness, perceptions and attitudes requires an investment of considerable time, effort and skill. Doing so over a long period of time amplifies the challenge considerably.

- **Results may not be directly attributable to PD intervention.** It is often difficult to draw a straight line of causation between a PD program and its desired result. Time, external events and other actors complicate the cause-effect equation.

Related to these problems is the difficulty in establishing appropriate program objectives in the first place. While the PD training department at the Foreign Service Institute has done a great job teaching officers how to design “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound) objectives, most objectives that meet those stringent criteria are measureable in terms of *output* (people trained, people reached, number of participants) rather than the *impact* we are ultimately looking for (understanding acquired, minds changed, etc.). Output is merely what you did. Impact is what you *achieved*.

It is no doubt because of these challenges that many PD officers traditionally do not value measurement and evaluation. Why spend time and resources on an evaluation whose results will be, at best, indeterminate?

## Grandier Objectives, Larger Target Audiences

Another major challenge in assessing the impact of public diplomacy programs is that we have increasingly set grandier and more ambitious goals for our foreign policy in general, and our PD programs specifically.

Over the years, PD work has become about much more than just increasing understanding of the United States and its values. Many PD programs are about trying to instill our values in other societies, remaking other cultures in our image. Reflecting this change in scope, today’s PD programs are increasingly

in line with integrated country strategies (ICS). Practitioners try to “move the needle” on common ICS objectives like strengthening democratic norms and institutions, encouraging entrepreneurship and economic reform, and empowering girls and women.

Take, for example, the Young South-east Asian Leaders Initiative and the Young African Leaders Initiative. Both programs target tens of thousands of 18- to 35-year-olds across large regions, with the objective of creating young leaders (through leadership training and professional development), then empowering them to bring about fundamental changes in their societies (through grants and other funding).

As a result of their participation in these programs, these youth are expected to start businesses, advance women’s rights, bring about democratic reforms, create initiatives to protect the environment and implement many other noble social projects in their home countries.

Compare these grand objectives with the relatively modest aims of one of our longest-running public diplomacy programs, the International Visitor Program (now the International Visitor Leadership Program). Created in the 1940s, the IVLP has the objective of “increasing mutual understanding” among a relatively narrow target audience of “up-and-coming leaders and elites” through a one-time guided tour of the United States.

Ironically, as public diplomacy programs have become more strategically focused, they’ve also become harder to manage and evaluate. Measuring an “increase in understanding” among a small defined group of elites and tracking them into the future is difficult, but not impossible. But evaluating and

attributing the impact of new businesses, democratic reform efforts and the empowerment of women brought about by U.S. government-funded leadership training and skills-building courses is a far more daunting task.

Measuring the impact of public diplomacy programs will become more and more difficult as we shift resources away from educating a manageable target group of elites about the United States (propaganda) toward trying to instill democratic values and empower broad swaths of civil society to reform their countries (development).

### Art, Science or Religion?

In light of the problems we have had in proving the impact of our PD programs, a logical question arises: How do we justify continuing to implement and expand programs without sufficient evidence of their effect?

I've posed this question to many of my PD colleagues over the past few years. The most common response is that public diplomacy is an art, not a science. As long as your programs are strategically focused, they assure me, you shouldn't worry too much about measuring the impact. After all, any PD officers worth their salt know "in their gut," from site visits and anecdotal evidence, whether a program is working or not.

While I have been known to say similar things myself in the past, I now find that claim unsatisfying (to be satisfied by anecdotal evidence alone is to be self-satisfied). By continuing, year after year, to evangelize about the greatness of democracy, proselytize on behalf of multiculturalism and preach the importance of equality without significant proof that we are in fact having any real impact, we make ourselves vulnerable to the charge

that we do so largely on the basis of faith. One might argue we are closer to practicing a religion than to implementing an effective foreign policy program.

Even though it's true that many government programs, domestic and foreign, continue to be funded despite their inability to live up to the congressional requirement that federal agencies be "accountable for achieving program results," we should not be complacent. Our inability to prove the effectiveness of our programs should bother us, because it impedes our ability to make intelligent decisions about our funding priorities.

For example, when the State Department proposed cuts to the Fulbright Europe program in the Fiscal Year 2015 budget to increase funding for newer initiatives, there was a large outcry from Fulbright alumni, some of whom published opinion pieces and started an online campaign ([www.savefulbright.org](http://www.savefulbright.org)) arguing that cutting the program would have dramatic negative consequences for our foreign policy. Many of the arguments relied on rhetoric that was full of fallacious reasoning (e.g., appeals to history, anecdotal evidence, slippery-slope arguments, begging the question).

That's not to say that the Fulbright Program hasn't had great impact; it could very well be our most effective public diplomacy effort. But without evidence to help us weigh the cost-effectiveness of one program compared to another, we won't ever have a way to adequately and dispassionately adjudicate budget disputes. Rhetoric will continue to rule the day.

### What Is to Be Done?

Is there a way we can move from our current "faith-based" public diplomacy model toward a more evidence-based



American Foreign Service Association/Scholarship  
AFSA.org/Scholar

American Foreign Service Protective Association  
afspa/FESB  
afspa.org/dental

Asheville School  
ashevilleschool.org

Basis Independent McLean  
McLean.Basisindependent.com

CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield  
fepblue.org/2016benefits

Clements Worldwide  
Clements.com

Dulwich Collegel, Shanghai  
dulwich-shanghai.cn/

Embassy Risk Management  
Embassyrisk.com

The Fountain Valley School  
fvs.edu

The Hirshorn Company  
Hirshorn.com/USFS

McGrath Real Estate Services  
McGrathRealEstate.com

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model? Possibly, but it will necessitate a shift in the way we think about our work. Here are a few recommendations, some of which echo those made in the advisory commission's report and others like it.

**1. Increase evaluations.** As many have argued, we need to dramatically increase resources for independent evaluations, and we need to approach that process with more seriousness and honesty than we have in the past. We need to get away from the idea that by aggressively evaluating our programs, we are somehow fashioning our own noose. And we need to be prepared to discontinue programs that do not show evidence of impact. While some PD programs may be difficult to measure, that's no excuse for not trying.

**2. Reduce the number of PD programs.** There are so many programs, initiatives and exchanges run by so many different State Department offices that PD officers spend their time in a frantic scramble, trying to keep up and execute as many as possible. The proliferation of programs has tended to result in quantity being preferred to quality, with very little time left for evaluation and measurement. As PD scholar Bruce Gregory has argued, PD officers need to learn how to "prioritize ruthlessly" and "say no" to programs that fall outside strategic goals. Only by reducing our focus will we ever have the time and ability to measure and evaluate the impact of our interventions.

**3. Focus mainly on mid-level elites.** Focusing limited resources on up-and-coming mid-level elites remains the more cost-effective and target-efficient PD programming. It is cost-effective because resources go toward cultivating those with greater potential impact in their societies; and it is target-efficient

because future leaders are easier to identify at the mid-level than as youth. Most important, programs targeting a defined cohort of mid-level elites are easier to track and evaluate than those that do not. Our relationship with mid-level elites continues as they move up the ladder to become senior elites, giving us ample opportunity to continually measure and evaluate the impact of our investment. We should rethink programs targeting the very young and other non-elite groups, as they are almost always "drop-in-the bucket" gambles or photo ops.

**4. Stop "fill-in-the-blank" diplomacy.** Too often in public diplomacy, "innovative" is just a buzzword meaning little more than "new." It seems that every week brings with it the proposal of a new genre of PD: fashion diplomacy and flash-mob diplomacy are just a few recent examples. Most of these are novelties, not well-thought-out program proposals based on thorough analysis and planning. A truly innovative program would be one that is designed in a way to measure its own impact. We currently have a great enough variety of programs to last a lifetime. Let us focus our efforts on measuring and evaluating our current projects, before we chase new butterflies.

Will we ever find the holy grail of measurable PD impact? Perhaps not. But we must not let our inability to measure impact enable an "anything-goes" approach. With greater rigor and investment in evaluation, we can go a long way toward becoming a more evidence-based discipline (in every sense of that word).

And, who knows? Maybe the evidence we gather will reveal that we've been even more effective than we thought. ■

# SOFT POWER, HIGH IMPACT

**America's premier exchange program is 75 this year. In this compilation of personal experiences, participants offer insight into its unique effectiveness.**

BY ROBERT ZIMMERMAN

**O**ne of U.S. foreign policy's groundbreaking soft power initiatives is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year: the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. Though it is not widely known and operates quietly, with a current budget of \$90 million, the impact of the IVLP is significant. The program has helped launch the careers of many world leaders, as well as civic leaders, while strengthening ties with our allies and advancing U.S. interests. As America's leadership debates the balance between hard and soft power, this time-honored and proven initiative demonstrates how the United States can show its best face to the world while achieving its goals peacefully.



*Robert Zimmerman is an FSO who has served overseas in seven countries over the past 22 years. Currently assigned to Washington, he is doing an excursion tour with Global Ties U.S. (formerly the National Council of International Visitors), a nonprofit that works with*

*more than 100 partner organizations in 44 U.S. states and 15 foreign countries to help implement the International Visitor Leadership Program.*

*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.*

About 5,000 foreign nationals visit the United States annually through the IVLP. Some 345 former and current heads of government have visited under the aegis of the program. Their ranks include Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Indira Gandhi, Nicholas Sarkozy and Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias, all of whom participated early in their careers. Two current Latin American presidents, Brazil's Dilma Rousseff and Uruguay's Tabare Vazquez, are also among the 200,000 foreign alumni from 190 countries who have taken part in the program over the past 75 years.

International exchange alumni are prominent in a host of fields. Many business and economics professionals who participated in the IVLP have become economic or finance ministers in their home countries. IVLP also generates business for the United States.

The impact of international exchanges has not escaped the attention of our senior policymakers. In testimony to Congress in 2003, then-State Department Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Charlotte Beers noted that "50 percent of the leaders of the global coalition against terrorism had been International Visitors."

"Simple exchanges can break down walls between us, for when people come together and speak to one another and share a common experience, then their common humanity is revealed," notes President Barack Obama. One of U/S Beers' successors, Judith McHale, called exchanges "the single most important and valuable thing we do."

## Why International Exchanges?

One key goal of any government-managed exchange program is the casting of the host country in the best possible light in the minds of a foreign audience. Another objective is sharing knowledge that overseas visitors can use when they return home as well as facilitating an exchange of ideas. Federal agencies have for decades invited foreign scholars, experts, military personnel and researchers to our country to meet American counterparts in fields from museum management and public health development, to international trade and foreign policy, to name but a few.

Since 1940, the United States has invited these would-be leaders from around the world on short-term visits under the auspices of the International Visitor and Leadership Program. U.S. embassy officials identify and nominate candidates whose careers are still unfolding but who have already demonstrated the potential to become influential at home.

Visitors take part in programs that last from a few days to three weeks. While Washington, D.C., is often their first stop, nearly all participants go on to visit three to four cities across the United States. The program operates on the premise that foreign participants will gain a realistic picture of the United States by spending time there. Visitors see firsthand how American society and politics “work,” leading to understanding if not admiration.

Most International Visitor Leadership Program funding ultimately filters back to the United States, to be spent on services provided by U.S. firms. For example, the 1978 Fly America Act (Public Law 95-473) has been interpreted to require the use of U.S. carriers where possible. The entire program takes place in the United States, to the benefit of its hotels, transportation companies and contractors. Many participants bring extra funds with them to purchase gifts for families and friends at home. Some even extend their stay to see more of the country on their own.

The IVLP’s “Gold Star” program brings alumni who have made a significant impact in their home communities back to the United States to share their insights and to discuss new strategies with their American counterparts.

I reached out to the network of individuals and organizations that made the International Visitor Leadership Program a global success in search of a few stories to share, and heard from many wonderful people, far more than we could include here. The following selection of personal accounts by participants offers abundant testimony to the program’s vitality and effectiveness.



## Finding Common Ground

BY SAID ELKAOUKAJI

The U.S. government has a large number of people-to-people programs, but from the perspective of this son of Morocco, I know of none that has touched the lives of me and my fellow countrymen more than the International Visitor Leadership Program. Indeed, my life was turned around for the better, thanks to the invitation the U.S. State Department extended to me to participate in this initiative in 2004.

I have been a teacher for more than 25 years, and have focused on the underprivileged youth of my native land since 1994. From the beginning, I made it my business to be as close to my students as possible. An effective teacher must view his or her students as individuals and begin the relationship with a cardinal rule: never treat them as empty vessels to be filled with information. As I see it, pedagogy mandates that we take on the roles of social workers, psychologists, mentors and tutors.

Unfortunately, the need to wear “more than one hat” at a time in the classroom is sometimes lost on my colleagues. Many complain about overcrowded classes; students of varying ability in the same classroom; and the link between low family income and student performance.

In the United States, I learned that the techniques I practice are integrated into the fabric of teaching. On my return to Morocco, I tried to implement the excellent work I saw in the course of my travels to several U.S. cities. The projects I work on focus on three scourges that continue to plague communities in Morocco: fundamentalism and intolerance, drug use and prostitution.

I helped launch Morocco’s Access Micro-Scholarship Program, an initiative offering English-language instruction to underprivileged youth in more than 90 counties. We started with only 17 pupils and now have many more, thanks to continued U.S. State Department engagement.

My IVLP experience motivated me to organize a trip for 11 students and two teachers from Dakhla, a city of about 55,000 located in the Moroccan Sahara (the region referred to abroad as the “Western Sahara”). The group spent a week in Casablanca on a program that included visits to sites that showcase

the best of our diversity and tolerance. We took them to the American Cultural Center, the American Language Center and the Moroccan Jewish Museum. Our students were surprised to learn of the Jewish presence in our land, which predates the Muslim conquest.

Dear to my heart are the projects I created that bring Moroccan and American students together. My goal here is to bridge the gaps and find common ground between our peoples. All of my initiatives begin with a statement of principles and objectives, and end with an evaluation—a technique I saw practiced with great effect in the United States.

I recently had the good fortune to be recognized by the State Department as a “Gold Star” IVLP alumnus. This meant a second trip to the United States in 2015, where I learned about the technology now available to enable teachers and students to use social media and Skype as effective learning tools. I was particularly pleased to learn that volunteerism lacks a mandatory age of retirement. My hosts in Nebraska demonstrated that hospitality to guests is not an exclusively Moroccan cultural trait, but part of the American social fabric, as well.

I am committed to sharing my Gold Star experience with as many of my countrymen as possible. By working together, we can break down the artificial barriers of misunderstanding that keep us apart. I am truly grateful to the individuals who participate in the IVLP, including its managers, volunteers and participants, for showing us how we can better our communities and leave a positive legacy to our sons and daughters.

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*A teacher in his native Morocco, Said Elkaoukaji is a Gold Star alumnus of the International Visitor Leadership Program.*



## Making Friends in Uruguay

BY FRANK E. BAXTER

I love Uruguay. From the moment I arrived there in September 2006 to begin my assignment as ambassador, I knew Uruguay and I were going to get along well; perhaps even be best friends for life. In fact, we are! The people of this South American republic, tucked in neatly between Argentina and Brazil, are as warm and courteous as you will find anywhere on earth.

Still, there were some points of contention between me and the wonderful country my wife and I would call home for about three years. The Uruguayan coalition government, which assumed power the year before I arrived, contained prominent factions that took a not-so-rosy view of the United States. Polling in those days revealed more than a little anti-Americanism. I was determined to strengthen the bonds between our two nations.

One exchange still stands out from the rest for me. We had invited a number of Uruguayan public school teachers and administrators to visit their counterparts in the United States, at our expense, but we soon found they weren't keen on going! The teachers belonged to organizations that ascribed to a number of negative stereotypes about the United States. I stepped in to convince them their trip would be invaluable to them professionally, and even more importantly, would benefit the children they teach. Eventually, they agreed to go.

On their return to Uruguay, they had only positive things to say. As I anticipated, the America they saw, and Americans they met, allowed them to throw by the wayside years of stereotyping and negativity. All were open to continued contact with our institutions and to future exchanges, which would involve visits by U.S. experts and professionals to the South American republic's cities and towns. Thus was built a positive relationship between our embassy and a plethora of Uruguayan institutions responsible for the curriculum and instruction of the country's young people.

This experience and many others quickly convinced me about the high value we should ascribe to international exchanges. Technology empowers young people with access to instruction and ideas the youth of my generation could only have dreamed of—a very good thing, in my opinion. Still, there is no substitute for the person-to-person encounters international exchange programs offer. These experiences may lead to an indelible positive impression and even enhance a bilateral relationship should these visitors advance in their careers (they often do). This salient fact ought to be on the menu that all U.S. chiefs of mission receive before beginning their assignments; perhaps near the section highlighting high-end plates of American or Uruguayan beef.

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*U.S. ambassador to Uruguay from 2006-2009, Frank E. Baxter is co-chairman of Alliance College-Ready Public Schools in Los Angeles, and chairman emeritus of the global investment bank Jefferies and Company Inc.*



## Indianan, Mother of Many

BY BETTY BLEDSOE

I am a proud Indianan from DuPont, a small town in my state's rural south, where my parents owned a grocery store. I have four brothers and sisters. I was born with disabilities and have dealt with physical and medical challenges my whole life. I often have to use my purple wheelchair or purple scooter to get around.

I'd dreamed of being a mother since I was 6 years old—I wanted to adopt 60 children! To date, I have had the privilege and honor to help parent 242 children of all ages! No, that's not a misprint—you read the number correctly. My life has been blessed, and I am living out all of my dreams. I am also the guardian of six children and foster parent to one. I had two children biologically and adopted 11 more. Twelve still live at home with me full time. All are from the United States, with the exception of one adopted son from Ethiopia. Most of my children came to me with physical, medical, mental and emotional challenges.

The International Visitor Leadership Program has also helped fulfill my dreams. This wonderful endeavor allows my family to know the world without the logistical difficulties of traveling to its four corners. Thanks to the wonderful people we have met through the program, I am able to bring the world to my children.

I homeschool all of my children, and I want them to learn about citizenship and naturalization. My family became involved in the IVLP after attending naturalization ceremonies in and around my hometown, Indianapolis. At one such ceremony, I met two ladies who worked for the Indianapolis International Center. They were the first to tell me about the program and asked whether I'd be interested in hosting dinners. I said, "Sure! I cook for 13 to 15 every day—what's a few more at a dinner table that has 10 leaves and seats up to 24?!"

And so my family began hosting dinners for the foreign visitors who came to Indianapolis as part of their tour. Without exception, these guests are a tremendous asset, making a huge impact on my family. Each visit is an amazing experience. We have met people from Indonesia, Burma, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Pakistan, Vietnam, Australia, China, Korea, Sweden, Iceland,



Betty Bledsoe with her family at the 2014 Global Ties National Meeting. Bledsoe was honored with the 2014 Volunteer of the Year Award.

France, Zambia, Austria, Russia, Cuba, Mexico, Spain, Brazil and the United Kingdom, among other countries!

My children interact with the guests, learning where they are from and what they do. They watched the blind deputy mayor of Paris serving food; they taught our guests from Africa how to bowl, played soccer with two visitors from Brazil in our backyard and rode mini-scooters around our playroom with guests from China.

My autistic daughter makes handmade wash cloths for the guests to take home as gifts. Another similarly-affected child makes presents of her pictures for our guests. My sons enjoy trading U.S. coins for foreign currencies. The kids get so excited each time we host. Their world grows as they meet people, and simultaneously shrinks as they develop international friendships.

Entertaining 13 male visitors from Saudi Arabia was one of our most memorable experiences. They had three interpreters and a liaison, and wouldn't make eye contact with us at first. I realized this was culture at play, of course, and did my best to be patient and not offend them by serving pork, for example. And as time passed, they began asking questions and engaging us. They even served the food and cleaned up, something they admitted they had never done in their lives!

We get phone calls, letters and cards from the guests we have hosted over the years. We really love the time we have with each of our guests, whether we bring them to the local bowling alley, sit around the living room singing "Amazing Grace," watch a Pacers game or visit the canal in the center of Indianapolis.

The IVLP is great for the United States. By participating, we see how people can communicate with one another while discovering the similarities between cultures.

My visitors often ask why I adopt and take in so many children. “I’m blessed” is my response. Though my life has its challenges, I have an amazing “village,” despite being a single mother of many. I am particularly grateful for the expanded horizons the program has brought to my family. We can all make a difference, one person at a time.

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*Betty Bledsoe lives in Indianapolis with 12 children and has devoted her life to helping more than 240 children in need.*



## Sometimes It Is the Small Things That Count

BY KYLE MOYER

I had a strong interest in politics, public policy and international relations from a young age. As an undergraduate, I did an internship with the Arizona Council for International Visitors (now Global Ties Arizona) managing programming for visitors traveling to Arizona under the auspices of the State Department’s International Visitor Leadership Program—and it changed my life. I loved the work, which opened countless doors professionally. I had the opportunity to gain access to virtually every political leader, public policy professional and community stakeholder—connections that I would have never been able to make on my own.

Through this networking, I sought and obtained entry-level positions with dozens of campaigns. I was fortunate to be granted an interview with our governor, who was seeking reelection at the time. I was nervous. She asked if I was “the young man who brought the delegation from Poland to see me last year?” That one simple question precipitated a 45-minute conversation on international exchanges, citizen diplomacy and foreign policy. Instead of discussing political campaign strategy or my minimal qualifications for a position with her campaign, I could discuss the IVLP!

At the conclusion of our discussion, the governor stood and

thanked me for joining her, but mentioned nothing about a job. I politely said, “But Governor, I’m actually here for a job interview.” Without missing a beat, she replied: “You had the job five minutes into our conversation.”

I went on to serve as the governor’s speechwriter, communications director and key strategist. Over the past 12 years, I have owned a respected political consulting and government relations practice, and I remain involved in the International Visitors Leadership Program. I first served as a member of my local international visitor council, and later as board chair. Eventually, I served on the national board of Global Ties U.S., where I recently completed a two-year term as national board chairman.

Without question, my involvement with the program has proven the most rewarding and consequential experience of my professional life.

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*Kyle Moyer is principal of the Scottsdale, Arizona-based firm Moyer and Company.*



## A Cocoa Tree Grows in Baltimore

BY JANINE BRANCH

The January 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince, gravely damaged the country’s already struggling economy, as well. Two years after that catastrophe, U.S. government officials, representatives of nongovernmental organizations and Haitian journalists traveled to Baltimore. There, they met entrepreneurs with experience applying creative solutions to local social problems. The delegation, sponsored by the U.S. State Department’s International Visitor Leadership Program, visited Baltimore with the help of a local nonprofit, the World Trade Center Institute.

The Haitian delegation’s itinerary included a meeting with Taharka Brothers Ice Cream Company, a Baltimore benefit corporation operated by young high school and college-aged African-American men. After two hours of brainstorming on how to create a sustainable future for young people from Haiti and Baltimore, the Haitian visitors and Taharka Brothers agreed to explore a partnership. Their efforts brought them to the door



COURTESY OF GLOBAL TIES U.S.

Representatives of Taharka Brothers Ice Cream and De La Sol Haiti accept the 2014 Citizen Diplomat award in Baltimore, Maryland.

of the De La Sol Haiti cooperative.

Based in Plaisance in northern Haiti, De La Sol Haiti was founded by a visionary mother-and-daughter team from Alabama with an altruistic streak. This NGO has worked with farmers for more than 10 years, exploring vanilla cultivation and developing a cacao business. Beginning in the summer of 2013, 20 to 50 pounds of cocoa per month were shipped from the mountaintops of Plaisance to Taharka in Baltimore, thanks to an agreement born out of this IVLP visit to our city and a lot of innovation and hard work in Haiti.

This unique partnership continues to work out well. Taharka won *Baltimore Magazine's* "Best of Baltimore Award" in 2013 for their high-quality ice cream. With enormous effort and perseverance, De La Sol Haiti invested in a cocoa processing facility that grew into a working export service. This facility employs 13 Haitian farmers and is rapidly expanding today. This is significant in a country where unemployment stands at between 80 and 90 percent. These chocolate exports pay for antibiotics and youth education, saving lives. Taharka and De La Sol Haiti jointly won the 2014 Citizen Diplomacy Award from Global Ties U.S.

This agreement also demonstrates how effectively a State Department initiative can collaborate with local community-based organizations like ours. Working together, we grow partnerships across borders, while striving to educate and connect businesses both here and abroad. Small-scale farmers and business people facing tough market conditions are the immediate beneficiaries.

In the end, consumers and would-be entrepreneurs in Baltimore and Plaisance, Haiti—two areas in which first and second chances and opportunities are few—have proof that their

prospects can be uplifted in our increasingly globalized world. In fact, they can taste it.

*Janine Branch is the senior manager of professional exchanges and program development at the World Trade Center Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, and played a key role in the Taharka Brothers Ice Cream–De La Sol Haiti cooperative development.*



## Soft Power Against Apartheid

BY DAN WHITMAN

I had my first International Visitor Leadership Program experience in 1969. At the time, I was a French language interpreter on contract to assist Télésphore Yaguibou, then an IVLP visitor and a mid-level foreign ministry official from Burkina Faso (Upper Volta in those days). One evening that summer, while walking with me across a bridge over Rock Creek Parkway, he announced: "Mon cher Daniel, I would like to come back here one day." He returned the following year as Upper Volta's ambassador to the United States.

Over the past 46 years, I have had the pleasure of traveling across the United States more than 50 times with IVLP participants and also worked with them in my role as a Foreign Service officer in the seven countries in which I served.

I believe in the program. For those seeking a reason for its existence, allow me to offer my experience with participants from South Africa during the late 1970s. Profound change was imminent, but few saw it coming. I interpreted for French-speaking African leaders, who were joined by South Africans, during their visit to the United States.

The U.S. embassy in Pretoria was pushing the transformation envelope in those days, though quietly. One of the U.S. government's principal tactics to fight apartheid at the time was inviting students and professionals from South African's majority black population to the United States in significant numbers, cracking open the seemingly unshakeable clouded glass ceilings. In doing so, our diplomats outsmarted apartheid every day for about 20 years.

Bringing emerging South African leaders to America involved tact and skill. The apartheid regime worked hard to

prevent the travel of the candidates we selected for participation. The regime had an array of tools to prevent this, including exit visa restrictions, harassment and imprisonment. U.S. Information Service staff administering the program nevertheless made travel arrangements, banking on the regime “blinking” rather than risking further international isolation.

Apartheid had a negative effect on all of South Africa’s social and ethnic groups (including its supposed beneficiaries), though some suffered more than others. From my point of view, U.S. soft power diplomacy helped the country in the long term, by empowering future leaders and tempering the perceptions of its past and present. When change took root in South Africa, especially after Nelson Mandela’s release from prison in 1990, cadres had already been formed and were ready to take up the political, economic and social direction of the country.

My South Africa experience led me to write *Outsmarting Apartheid* (2014), which offers 40 first-hand accounts from beneficiaries and administrators of IVLP. Their stories continue to inspire me, now as then, in the same way the invitees were moved to do great things upon visiting the United States for the first time.

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*Dan Whitman is a professor at American University in Washington, D.C. He was a career Foreign Service officer whose posts included Haiti and Cameroon, where he served as public affairs officer.*



## Building Support for Mental Health Care in South Africa

BY GITA HARIE

It may be my imagination, but when I meet people abroad, and I tell them I’m from South Africa, I feel they see me as an unofficial representative of the “rainbow nation.” World opinion associates my country with the peaceful transition from apartheid, a successful World Cup soccer tournament in 2010 and, of course, Nelson Mandela.

Still, while South Africa has seen profound and positive change over the past three decades, all of us accept that we have a long way to go. I see the challenges every day in my job as executive director of Durban and Coastal Mental Health, my country’s largest mental health organization. We have 25 projects underway: seven residential care centers, eight protective training workshops, eight day care centers and two social work regions. During the last fiscal year we had 56,021 clients.

I’m very grateful to the managers of the fantastic International Visitor Leadership Program for helping me confront my challenges head-on. My participation in the program contributed tremendously to my professional and personal development, inspiring and motivating me to direct mental health services in South Africa to greater heights.

I can trace a lot of what I have accomplished to my experience in 1998, the year I visited the United States. I met a lot of first-rate practitioners during my visit. On return, I initiated the Service User Empowerment Program, which Durban and Coastal Mental Health uses to empower its clients with self-advocacy skills. I also began a jobs training program for individuals with mental health issues. Finally, I committed my organization to entrench itself in rural South Africa, an area long in need of mental health support.

Earlier this year, the IVLP invited me back to the United States as a Gold Star alumna to discuss what I had achieved since my first visit 17 years ago. I visited six American states, holding symposia with policymakers, students, mental health practitioners, academics and patients. I also had the privilege of meeting volunteers and “typical” U.S. citizens. Families invited me for dinner, including one that gave me four days of “home hospitality” in Montana.

I’ve learned a lot about America, its families and its approach to mental health. Obtaining outside perspectives on one’s chosen course of study is invaluable and serves as a counterweight to the tendency to resist change. I am continuing to analyze what I’ve experienced, with the goal of determining how my practice can adapt America’s best practices models.

I also gained a perspective on the United States that differed markedly from the way the country is often portrayed in films and other media. Aside from the hospitality and the profound professional experiences I had in America, I learned that yours is a “rainbow country,” too.

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*The author is the executive director of Durban and Coastal Mental Health in South Africa.*



# Not Everyone Needs to Win a Nobel Prize

BY MARILYN SAKS-MCMILLION

I've met many hundreds of International Visitor Leadership Program participants over the past 19 years. I started with Delphi International and remained with the organization after it merged with World Learning, a programming agency that handles several hundred participants each year.

We can never predict how a U.S. experience will affect our invitees. But I trust they will be transformed and do good work once they return home. For example, I remember a quiet judge from Moldova, who was serving on its Higher Judicial Chamber when he visited the United States on a program that highlighted anti-corruption and our justice system. Today, he's president of his country.

Not every participant has to be a would-be chief of state, of course. Once I programmed a group focused on ways to prevent domestic violence. As part of the tour, we visited a battered women's shelter in Washington, D.C. Though not well off by any means, the visitors were so moved by the shelter's professionals that they spontaneously donated more than \$100 to the staff.

I was particularly impressed by a Cameroonian journalist. With my encouragement, he applied for and obtained a World Learning leadership grant to gain mentorship and funds for a social enterprise. Now he has his own news site, which combats myths and ignorance about science and health issues across

Africa, and has won prestigious awards from the International Center for Journalists.

When I'm asked about the impact of the IVLP, I also think of Nobel Laureate Tawakkol Karman of Yemen. A journalist for Yemen's National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, while also serving as its executive manager, she participated in a program on investigative journalism in 2005.

One of 25 journalists for whom I was responsible, Tawakkol came to the United States hoping to learn about our politics and obtain skills she could use in her work.

I remember encouraging these reporters to "look behind the curtain" and discover the diversity of the United States and its decentralized political system. Asking questions is very important, I told them, adding that the only "bad questions" are those not asked.

The program encompassed six cities, and allowed the group to see America as a vibrant democracy of many voices. One of the group's translators told me Tawakkol expected to be treated differently because she wore a headscarf, but was pleasantly surprised not to encounter any negativity on that account.

Our visitors were also surprised by the rights journalists enjoy. Foreign media often cover a fictional America that speaks with one voice, and the degree of public debate they found here was unexpected. Travel to small media markets was particularly enlightening, and everyone expressed pleasure with their experience at the University of Missouri's School of Journalism. I believe that the openness, friendliness and eagerness to share, which the group experienced during their visit, helped them to put aside preconceived notions and misperceptions.

Tawakkol reached the international stage a few years ago, earning the title "the Mother of the Revolution in Yemen." The Nobel Peace Prize committee gave her the award in 2011. As luck would have it, I met her again in September 2014, with her husband in tow, at a presentation she gave at the U.S. Institute of Peace. With a warm embrace, Tawakkol called me her "teacher" and said her IVLP trip was an experience she remembered in her head and heart.

I was humbled, and never felt a greater sense of accomplishment, knowing the visit had sparked something inside her.

*Marilyn Saks-McMillion is a program officer with World Learning, Inc., in Washington, D.C.*



2011 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Tawakkol Karman (far right) with fellow IVLP participants during a 2005 visit to the ABC News affiliate in Providence, Rhode Island.



# Kindness and Assistive Technology from Utah

BY ALICE WILLIAMS

As the Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy’s marketing and communications coordinator, I’ve had the pleasure of meeting a range of inspiring and passionate individuals who visit our state through the International Visitor Leadership Program and commit to do positive work on their return home. I am touched by each and every participant with whom we work. It’s a privilege to host them. Allow me to share the story of an act of generosity that fully defines the term “citizen diplomacy.”



Abdel Ouorou Bare’s Beninese basketball team participated in a tournament for wheelchair-bound players.

In July, the Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy hosted a group of IVLP participants from many different African countries for a program, “Disability Issues in the United States.”

The program was designed to acquaint participants with the policies, best practices

and challenges involved in improving access, opportunities and quality of life for individuals with disabilities. All participants were advocates for the rights of the disabled. Most struggled with a disability themselves or had a similarly challenged close family member.

Their visit to Utah was life-changing.

We arranged a lot of meetings with peer organizations for our visitors, but the one to the Utah Center for Assistive Technology stood out. That organization helps people without the means to afford assistive technology, and designs smart and practical tools for people with disabilities. Many African countries cannot obtain the technology-dependent tools that are common in the United States, which support improved access for people with disabilities.

After the meeting, Utah Center staff presented two wheel-



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chairs to Abdel Ouorou Bare for his Beninese basketball team; a tune-up for the wheelchair of Burkina Faso's Ismael Traore; and an electric wheelchair, new wheels and a modified wheelchair for Senegal's Sanghone Diop.

As our African visitors' guide would tell us later, "they had never experienced this sort of kindness on the part of strangers. They will not forget this experience, ever."

Abdel and his basketball team went on to participate in a basketball tournament for wheelchair-bound players, sponsored by the U.S. embassy in Benin. These extraordinary gifts could never have been bestowed without the valuable work of the IVLP, which regularly changes the lives of people from around the world.

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*Alice Williams is the marketing and communications coordinator for the Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy in Salt Lake City.*



## Museum Management Lessons

BY IVAN STANIC

In April 2007, I participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program titled "Cultural, Performing and Visual Arts Management in the United States" at the invitation of the U.S. embassy in Belgrade.

My visit to America was a unique opportunity to study new methods and models of cultural management, aesthetics and life. I greatly benefited from the experience, which broadened my interests, changed my way of thinking and radically influenced my work. In a number of fields, American cultural and artistic practices are useful and adaptable outside your country. And, perhaps more importantly, my visit to America changed the way I think about the United States—for the better!

I launched Belgrade's "Night of Museums" by collaborating with a group of young, enthusiastic local artists. Our work began the year before I embarked on my visit to the United States, but the experience I gained in the United States allowed me to improve this project. Eight years later, I still use what I learned to aid me in my work at Belgrade's Museum of Science and Technology.

Our visits to Washington, D.C., Buffalo, Rochester, Seattle, Austin and New York City were all invaluable. They gave me insights into how your key institutions work, including the Smith-

sonian Institution, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Experience Music Project, the Seattle Art Museum and the George Eastman House, among others. Our American counterparts were forthcoming, welcoming and eager to share their experiences and knowledge.

Acquainting oneself with different practices, ways of doing business and application of knowledge, and establishing contacts with counterparts from American cultural institutions are critical to making international exchanges work.

In 2009, I organized a workshop titled "Museums Today: Changes and Continuity." Thanks to the IVLP, two key figures came to Belgrade to participate: Brent Glass, the former director of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, and Mintz Ward, the executive director of the Coby Foundation. The two conducted a workshop for Serbian museum managers that the U.S. embassy, the Fund for Arts and Culture in Central Europe and the Serbian Ministry of Culture jointly supported.

Even today, six years later, my Serbian counterparts tell me the workshop was "one of the most useful seminars in which they had the pleasure to take part."

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*Ivan Stanic is the manager for marketing and public relations at the Museum of Science and Technology in Belgrade, Serbia.*



## Starting Up Exchanges with Iraq in the 1980s

BY JAMES BULLOCK

In 1984, I was all set to work in our embassy in Riyadh, when I was asked at the last minute to take on a higher-priority assignment instead: reopen the U.S. Information Agency's operation in Baghdad, in anticipation of the imminent restoration of diplomatic relations between Iraq and the United States. Although the political stakes were high, expectations were low. Saddam Hussein's police state was in tight control of anything foreign and ever watchful for enemies while fighting a desperate war against Iran. No one expected successful public diplomacy in that environment. As a result, I had a free hand to do what I could.

Despite having had a small U.S. interests section in Baghdad

since the early 1970s, earlier attempts to relaunch an International Visitor Leadership Program exchange in Iraq hadn't gone well. No Iraqi could afford the risk of being selected by the embassy for a trip that could be seen as a reward for something—the Iraqi government wanted to control selection to all largesse. USIA headquarters, however, had a long-standing rule: only embassy officers could nominate candidates for the program. We eventually managed to put together a successful workaround with a bit of good luck and some creative bending of the rules.

First, USIA sent us one of the first Arabic-capable personal computers available, which we used to prepare letter-perfect Arabic-language correspondence quickly, freeing up staff time. This was crucial, because all substantive communications between the embassy and the Iraqi government had to be transmitted through formal diplomatic notes.

The procedures for issuing exchange visas were much simpler in those days, as well. I kept the forms in my office and could assemble the entire application package in under an hour. Our consular colleagues gave us head-of-line privileges for exchange visas. But identifying good exchange candidates remained our big problem. Most Iraqis were still loath to have any contact with us.

Here's how we solved it: We compared USIA's group program offerings with embassy priorities (identifying candidates for individual travel would have been too much), putting together a tentative plan for our ambassador to approve. Next, I would "socialize" the plan with our police contact, agreeing to solicit nominations from the Iraqi government via a diplomatic note, in exchange for a commitment to respect our selection criteria. We prepared a separate and detailed diplomatic note for each U.S. thematically organized group into which we sought to add an Iraqi participant, describing in detail what kind of individual was being sought "to represent Iraq." Finally, we gave copies of the notes to our police contact, and waited.

Back in Washington, USIA's visitor program managers agreed to this highly unusual procedure and asked only that we verify candidates' bona fides, which we were generally able to do because the Iraqis honored their commitment to send us only highly qualified nominees.

Time was our remaining challenge. Would-be Iraqi visitors could not contact us until they had completed a police-managed "orientation" program detailing what was expected of them during their visit to the United States. Our exchange programs had fixed schedules involving participants from many other countries. Typically, the Iraqi invitees would arrive at the embassy, without warning, on the very last day we could still get them onto a flight to Washington in time for the start of the program.



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## IVLP's Latin American Roots

The International Visitor Leadership Program dates back to the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. Thanks to a jarring incident with a heckler at a Buenos Aires peace conference in 1936—a firsthand experience of America's image problem in the hemisphere—President Roosevelt directed his administration to enhance the profile of the United States in Latin America. Given the United States' isolationist mood at the time, progress was slow.

The State Department's first visitor arrived in December 1940. Father Aurelio Espinosa, director of the College of Cotacollao in Quito, Ecuador, met scholars in Washington, Baltimore and at Princeton, Fordham, Harvard and Northwestern universities, as a participant in the Hemisphere Leader Program. Magdalena Petit, a novelist and critic from Santiago, Chile, was the first female participant.

By mid-1941, programs became more numerous and the State Department created cultural attaché positions in the embassies to help manage them. By the end of 1943 approximately 250 visitors—educators, lawyers, government officials, medical specialists, men and women of letters or the arts and journalists—had come from Latin America on the program.

The precursor of the State Department's Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau, known then as the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and led by Nelson Rockefeller, also ran exchange programs. These emphasized training for Latin American professionals in fields ranging from journalism to engineering. U.S. government exchange programs grew during the Second World War to include up-and-coming professionals from China and the Middle East.

Realizing the success of such programs, Representative Karl E. Mundt and Senator H. Alexander Smith introduced a bill in 1948 to codify the necessity of U.S.-sponsored exchanges. The "Smith-Mundt Act" calls, in part, on Congress to appropriate funds for "an educational exchange service to cooperate with other nations."

Entry into the program is by official nomination at U.S. embassies and consulates in countries around the world. During what is typically a four-city visit, participants are hosted by "citizen diplomats," who arrange professional and cultural interactions, as well as welcome them into their homes.

The professional meetings, small and large, are the heart of the programs. This year, for example, Afghan farmers went to Oregon to learn sustainable beekeeping. The State Department partnered with Bloomberg Philanthropies to convene foreign mayors and city sustainability officials with U.S. counterparts to address climate issues. And since 2010, 184 sub-Saharan female entrepreneurs have focused on economic development and social advocacy to create more than 17,000 jobs in their communities.

After their programs, IVLP alumni have become vocal experts in politics, art, science and business in their countries; they have become Nobel Prize winners; and 335 became heads of state. Alumni include:

- The world's second female head of state, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
- Four U.K. Prime Ministers—Margaret Thatcher, Edward Heath, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown
- Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, whose tumultuous relationship with the U.S. ripples into current events
- Former South African President F. W. de Klerk, who after his 1976 IVLP trip was convinced race relations in his country must be addressed
- Current Guinean President Alpha Condé, whose cabinet is the first all-civilian government in Guinea
- Former Mongolian Prime Minister Norovyn Altankhuyag
- First female Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard
- Current Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico
- Former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who, with then-Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize

To date the IVLP has brought more than 200,000 people from more than 190 countries to the United States to examine today's issues with Americans in their companies, government offices, news organizations and communities. At the program's core, participants leave the United States with a wealth of knowledge and an expanded professional network. The hope is that having first-hand experiences with Americans will broaden their world outlook.

—FSO Robert Zimmerman and retired FSO Andrea Strano

Identifying good exchange candidates remained our big problem. Most Iraqis were still loath to have any contact with us.

We had just hours to do everything: obtain personal data on a visitor (who technically hadn't yet been approved by USIA headquarters), explain the program, verify credentials and get all of this into an immediate telegram to USIA. Once the cable was on its way, we prepared a comprehensive visa application package; escorted the candidate to the consular interview; purchased a round-trip air ticket; and issued travel funds. All of this was done by one junior USIA officer (me) and a very hard-working Iraqi staff assistant. A month or so later, when the visitor returned from the United States, we were allowed a single debrief to discuss what impact the program had made. Ongoing relationships between returning visitors and the embassy, an expected result of exchanges elsewhere, were discouraged

by the Iraqi government.

Was all this effort worth it? Absolutely! Did we hurt the program by bending the nomination rules? I don't think so. Iraq sent us top-quality participants to whom we would otherwise have had no access at all. The IVLP consistently made positive impressions on a broad spectrum of that country's professionals following a long period (1968-1984) when there had been practically no U.S. presence in Iraq at all. Ours was a unique response to a unique challenge. ■

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*James Bullock is a retired Senior Foreign Service officer whose extensive diplomatic career included assignments in Europe and the Middle East.*

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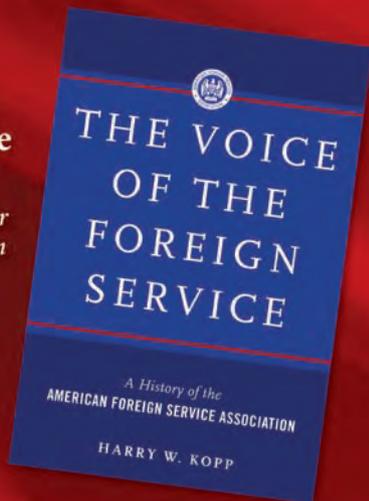
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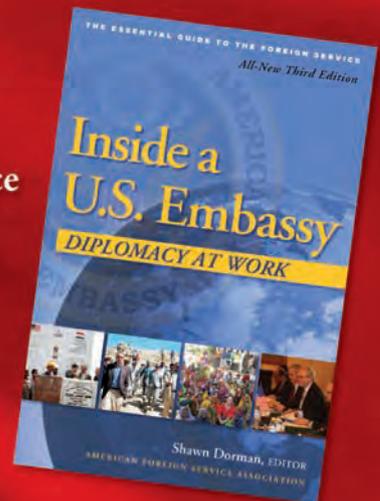
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# Looking to the Future

**IVLP's partners and stakeholders are examining the challenges ahead and exploring ways to renew the program to ensure continuing success.**

BY JENNIFER CLINTON AND JELENA PUTRE

**F**or the past 75 years the International Visitor Leadership Program has been the flagship exchange program of the U.S. government, helping increase international understanding of American decision-making and foreign policy goals. The program has fostered positive perceptions of the U.S. government and the American people.

IVLP embodies a “whole of society” approach. It “takes a village,” indeed, to run this program that brings 5,000 participants to the United States each year—including U.S. embassy personnel around the world who identify up-and-coming leaders for the program, 90 State Department employees of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ Office of International Visitors who manage the program, seven Washington, D.C.-based implementing partner organizations and some 94 entities based in 44 states, known as community-based members. These local groups deploy about 40,000 individuals, mostly volunteers, to ensure the program’s success.



*Jennifer Clinton (left) is president of Global Ties U.S., an implementing partner of the Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program.*

*Jelena Putre is senior program manager for Global Ties U.S. and a former public affairs specialist for U.S. Embassy Belgrade.*

Whether they are career diplomats or political appointees, U.S. ambassadors often describe IVLP as one of their most effective high-level relationship-building tools. The cadre of alumni speaks for itself. The initiative is responsible for a global network of leaders and professionals who have shared their American experience with their colleagues, families and friends at home. An untold number of partnerships have been created, thanks to the contacts which began as encounters between IVLP participants and their American counterparts.

When we look at the International Visitor Leadership Program in the rear-view mirror, we see a strong and respected pillar of public diplomacy. Things seem a bit less clear on the road ahead. The roller coaster effect that implementing partners in Washington and across the country have been experiencing year in and year out in a very uncertain budget climate has made administering IVLP a greater challenge than it should be.

How does a tried and tested program like the IVLP evolve and meet the ever-increasing demands of the U.S. government in a world where “better, faster, cheaper” is the new norm? This high-touch, relatively high-cost and labor-intensive initiative must be able to combat a rising American sentiment described recently by Donna Oglesby in *The Foreign Service Journal* (“Diplomacy Education Unzipped,” January-February 2015): “Americans are far less interested in managing international relations through perpetual systemic engagement. They want to either avoid or fix



CASSANDRA MCGUINNESS/MINNESOTA INTERNATIONAL CENTER/COURTESY OF GLOBAL TIES U.S.

IVLP participant from Nigeria Doris Philip Balami Yaro, the executive director and founder of Gabasawa Women and Children Empowerment Initiative, meets students during a school visit in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 2014.

problems, transcending the never-ending compromises of diplomacy, which seem to many both old-world and old-hat.”

How can the IVLP evolve to meet the changing dynamics? Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel has called on his colleagues at the State Department and the wider public diplomacy community to take more risks and “get caught trying” new solutions to both old and new challenges. In that spirit, Global Ties U.S. (formerly the National Council for International Visitors) turned to its IVLP partners and the broader diplomatic community to pinpoint the specific pressures the program faces and asked interviewees to offer recommendations on how the program might renew itself to ensure continuing success over the next 75 years.

The challenges and accompanying recommendations they offered fell into four primary categories: budget, role of technology, IVLP brand and alumni engagement.

### **Budget Issues: Is This the Cadillac We Can’t Afford Anymore?**

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy’s 2015 Comprehensive Annual Report released in September contains a listing of the most expensive and least expensive ECA exchange programs based on cost per participant per day. The IVLP sits at the very top of that list as the most expensive program at \$1,138 per participant per day.

“If we can find a way to combine both in-person and virtual experiences, I think we can achieve an impactful but more cost-saving format.”

—Michelle Kulikauskas, *Cultural Vistas*

During the last 20 years the number of IVLP participants has grown steadily. From 2008 to 2011, the number of participants peaked at approximately 5,250 a year. Since 2012, the number has slowly decreased, and in 2014 it was 4,665, in spite of the fact that federal funding for the program had increased. The overall budget for the program is just under \$90 million.

Despite a modest overall increase in the program budget, the fact is that the dollar is not stretching as far as it used to. For example, the price of airline tickets over the past 40 years has increased nearly 30 percent, even after an adjustment for inflation. More recently, hotel rates have been steadily increasing as the economy rebounded during the past three years.

To solve budgetary challenges one must either cut costs



MARK ROBERTSON/PIEDMONT TRIAD COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS/COURTESY OF GLOBAL TIES U.S.

Thai IVLP participants Amarit Charoenphan (left) and Teerawat Charoenrat (right) meet Ms. Pat Chatley, owner of Pad Thai Restaurant in Greensboro, North Carolina.

or increase revenue. There is no doubt that the best course of action is to increase the revenue side of the equation. Global Ties U.S. and other organizations like the Alliance for International Exchange have turned up the volume on advocacy efforts for exchange program funding. We have shifted the conversation to emphasize the strategic role exchange programs play in advancing economic development at home and abroad and in helping support national security objectives.

These messages are resonating, especially when we are able to draw a direct line between current foreign policy goals by country or region like Iran, Ukraine and Cuba or by issue area, such as climate change, countering violent extremism or entrepreneurship. We will continue to forge ahead to find and cultivate congressional champions. Given the environment on Capitol Hill, however, we consider holding the line on current funding levels a victory.

We are left with cutting costs. The Department of State has taken a number of steps, such as having fewer projects with more participants. This approach decreases the per-person cost. In addition, projects are going to fewer cities, decreasing transportation costs. Cost-effective alternatives are also being pursued. Where appropriate, the IVLP partners with businesses and professional associations to enhance exchange projects at little or no cost.

In addition to cuts in logistics expenses, a number of individuals recommended finding savings by streamlining the roles of the different program partners. Some suggested carving out more defined areas of focus to help reduce the overlap and perceived redundancy between the Department of State program officers

A new name could be the signal of a new era for the program and a rallying cry for recommitment to its next phase.

and nonprofit programming partners. One idea is to give the Department of State an even higher-level strategic, policymaking and evaluation role, while relying on national and local partners to implement IVLP itineraries on the ground.

Reexamination of the length of the program is another proposal. In the 1940s, visits to the United States required three months of a guest's time. Today, program length averages three weeks. Most of those interviewed agreed that many participants have difficulty being away from their jobs for extended periods.

### The Role of Technology

Most stakeholders we interviewed recognize the need to better leverage technology to enhance rather than replace the exchange experience. At the same time, they note that we as a community have not quite found the sweet spot of how and where to effectively insert virtual elements into the experience.

One of the national program partners, Cultural Vistas, designed and implemented the first all-virtual IVLP in 2014.



ENRIQUE MEZA-SAN DIEGO DIPLOMACY COUNCIL/COURTESY OF GLOBAL TIES U.S.

In front of a majestic Joshua Tree, IVLP participant from China Mr. Pengfei Wang gladly accepts Joshua Tree National Park Community Outreach Ranger Mr. George Land's prestigious ranger hat.

Despite a number of technical, time-zone and participant “log-in” challenges, Michelle Kulikaukas described the experience as “eye-opening” for both Cultural Vistas and for participants: “Virtual exchanges are a great, cost-effective way of connecting people from other countries on issues of mutual interest and importance. Our participants were also able to learn about new initiatives and the individuals championing them. However, the personal connection and cultural experience is somewhat lost. If we can find a way to combine both in-person and virtual experiences, I think we can achieve an impactful but more cost-saving exchange program format.”

Provost Christopher Washington of Franklin University, one of the most advanced academic institutions in the field of online learning, speaks to the potential benefits of using technology to support professional exchange programs: “Modern information and communications technology and social platforms used to engage professors and students situated anywhere in the world can also be used to nurture interactions among exchange participants, their hosts and other exchange program stakeholders. For example, surface contact can occur through video chat rooms before travel arrangements are made, allowing for the development of deeper relationships during the actual visit. Social platforms can also be used to share information related to exchange program goals and activities, to enable ongoing discussions and to support problem solving collaborations that may continue well beyond the in-country visit.”



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Argentine IVLP participant Hector Alfredo Alcano, with the Mountain Rescue Patrol of the province of Mendoza, shares a coffee with Grand Teton National Park Ranger Jim Springer.

The use of technology is an area that can and should be explored further. Continuing to test the integration of virtual components on a small scale is a good way to build momentum and learn what works and what does not. At the same time, we don't have to reinvent the wheel, and should be open to learning from higher education, where tremendous strides in online learning and participant engagement have already been made.

### Identity and Visibility

Modernizing the IVLP brand is another area to look at. Two categories of opportunity present themselves. Consider the IVLP name. While widely recognized by its alumni, U.S. government agencies, U.S. embassies and U.S.-based partners, the initiative is unknown outside of these circles. "It is a description, it is not a name," claims Annette Alvarez, Global Ties Miami. The IVLP brand has survived for 75 years, with minor tweaks. But in a very crowded and brand-conscious world, a name that speaks to impact instead of the once popular use of acronyms could carry more weight at many levels. The opportunity is ripe, given that we have just celebrated IVLP's 75th anniversary: A new name could be the signal of a new era for the program and a rallying cry for recommitment to its next phase.

The second area of opportunity involves rethinking the way

we have communicated the overall success of the program. IVLP touts its very prominent alumni base of more than 330 heads of government or state—an impressive achievement. But since the end of the Cold War, there have been more participants from civil society than from foreign governments and political parties. This trend reflects the diffusion of power that is taking place all around the world. Non-state actors and non-traditional leaders have an increasing influence over citizens, especially young people, and are in a position to shape global public opinion and generate positive feedback to U.S. foreign policy and American values in various world regions.

Michael Mabwe, an IVLP alumnus from Zimbabwe, believes that in the countries where the U.S. government does not have healthy relationships with incumbent governments (his own, for example), the networks of citizens, communities and non-state IVLP participants remain a critical avenue to advance U.S. interests and promote American values.

It is easy to show photos of Anwar Sadat and Margaret Thatcher, two of the most notable IVLP alumni. The IVLP and wider public diplomacy community must be able to convey the same level of prestige and notoriety through stories of alumni who are changing the face of their societies, yet lack name recognition. According to Patricia Harrison of World Learning, "there is a tremendous opportunity to spotlight the incredible difference alumni are making—but we have to work harder to get the message across."

### The Power of Alumni

During the past decade, the Department of State has done a first-rate job engaging, empowering and connecting IVLP alumni and other State exchange participants both at home and abroad. Next year, the State Alumni Office in partnership with World Learning will launch a series of regional seminars for exchange alumni around the world. In addition, the role of alumni coordinator has been elevated in most embassies around the world. Supporting and facilitating establishment of alumni associations is crucial for obtaining the long-term benefits of the program and for demonstrating its value and importance. "IVLP alumni are brand ambassadors," says Peggy Parfenoff, executive director of WorldChicago. She argues that alumni are directly tuned into the latest progress in business, government and civil society sectors and help to identify the next generation of emerging leaders and potential IVLP candidates. Often, alumni are able to reach parts of the country that embassy staff have difficulty reaching.

At present, the Office of International Visitors (ECA's

It is easy to show photos of Anwar Sadat and Margaret Thatcher... [We] must be able to convey the same level of prestige and notoriety through stories of alumni who are changing the face of their societies, yet lack name recognition.

implementing division) and the State Department's Alumni Office are two separate entities. IVLP programming partners in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere are being encouraged to find creative ways to integrate alumni into programming. Unfortunately, there is no funding to allow them to connect to past IVLP participants in any significant way. Many program partners and alumni have expressed concerns about "ownership" of alumni. Though universities face a similar dilemma, many successful examples of alumni offices working more closely with academic departments lead us to believe it is very possible to integrate IVLP alumni into the current participant experience.

Generating program multiplier effects will require a continued strategic commitment in both organizational and financial terms. Global Ties U.S. has worked to integrate alumni organizations into its membership base for two strategic reasons. IVLP alumni seek technical assistance in their capacity-building efforts at home. Not unlike our domestic nonprofit members, they look for guidance and support on nonprofit best practices, volunteer engagement, fund development and governance. In addition, the alumni organizations are eager to expand the partnerships they made as IVLP guests and form new ones. Global Ties U.S. can serve as a conduit back to American institutions to support the ongoing work of alumni.

Those of us who are keenly aware of the power of the relationships built by the IVLP must help carry it forward. If we don't continue to evolve, or "disrupt," the program, someone else will. We can maintain the greatness and prominence of the program by responding strategically to the challenges confronting it with improvements that ensure increasing success for another 75 years. And we must do so. Our future depends on it. ■



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# THE USEFULNESS OF COOKIE-PUSHING

Retired *Chicago Tribune* foreign correspondent Richard C. Longworth discusses his 1977 “Primer for Diplomats,” a concise and still timely survey of the duties of diplomats and the importance of diplomacy.

BY CECILE SHEA

**F**rom January 1977 through September 1979, Reverend Andrew Young—a former executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a former member of Congress and a hero of the Civil Rights Movement—served as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Young, who had spent his life speaking bluntly and, as a member of Congress, independently, was ill-suited to the life of a circumspect administration official. He garnered attention overseas and caused heartburn in Washington with blunt, not-always-aligned-with-U.S.-policy statements. He described Zimbabwe’s 1979 election as “neofascist” and referred to the government of South Africa as “illegitimate,” a sentiment no doubt shared by many Americans but not accurate as a matter of U.S. foreign policy. His musings that Cuban troops in Angola could be viewed as a force for stability angered many in the United States.

Six months into Young’s tenure as ambassador, and in

response to the civil rights icon’s apparent difficulties adapting to his new job, *Chicago Tribune* foreign correspondent Richard C. Longworth wrote his “Primer for Diplomats.” Appearing in the July 10, 1977, *Tribune*, Longworth’s remarkably timeless piece was both an explanation of why diplomacy mattered and a concise survey of the duties and responsibilities of an American diplomat.

Intrigued both by Longworth’s forceful opinions on what makes a good ambassador and his obvious familiarity with how embassies operate, I sat down this past summer with the two-time Pulitzer finalist to ask what inspired him to write the primer almost 40 years ago.

**Cecile Shea:** *A theme of your piece seems to be that even extremely accomplished individuals may not be cut out for diplomacy.*

**Richard C. Longworth:** Not everyone is cut out to be an ambassador, any more than good businessmen make good politicians or good journalists make good managers. Some do, most



*Cecile Shea, AFSA’s 2003 post representative of the year, is the State Department Fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. Her previous postings include Canada, Thailand, Israel, Scotland, Pacific Command and Japan. The views presented in this article are her own and not necessarily those of the State Department or U.S. government.*



*Richard C. Longworth reported from more than 80 countries during his career. After retiring from journalism in 2013, he became a distinguished fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, where he has focused on globalization’s effects on the Midwest and on the role of global cities in the 21st century. Longworth’s books include *Global Squeeze* (1998) and *Caught in the Middle: America’s Heartland in the Age of Globalism* (2009). Cecile Shea interviewed Mr. Longworth in Chicago on Aug. 21.*

don't. Diplomacy, like any profession, requires certain skills and personalities. Andy Young's record on civil rights and in politics is stellar, because they suited his abilities and personality. But he was a poor ambassador because he wasn't content to subdue his personal beliefs and abide by the rules of the profession. In other words, a good man in the wrong trade. I think my point is that diplomacy is terrifically important and, by and large, is best not left to amateurs. I admire professionals in all trades, and diplomacy is no exception.

**CS:** *In "Primer," you criticize Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy and argue that our nation should rely on on-the-ground diplomats. Do you think there is a role for Kissinger-style diplomacy? What should be the balance between special emissaries based in D.C. and the ambassador and his or her staff who are resident in the country?*

**RCL:** Generally speaking, I think diplomacy is best done by people on the scene who know the territory, know the personalities, establish personal relationships and have to live with the consequences. The same, incidentally, goes for journalists. Parachute journalism has its place, but you can't beat a resident correspondent who can see a story developing and knows how it developed.

That said, as far as parachute diplomacy [goes], this isn't a hard and fast rule. There are occasions when a Washington big shot like Kissinger can be useful, if only because he has clout in the White House and the people on the scene know it. Secretary of State John Kerry probably was crucial to the Iran negotiations for this reason (and also because we have no formal embassy there, only a special interests section: this limits the scope and depth of our knowledge about the place).

**CS:** *When I first read "A Primer for Diplomats," I was amazed at how little has changed since the 1970s in terms of how embassies and the Operations Center function. How did you learn so much about embassy operations?*

**RCL:** Journalists and diplomats cover the same beats, see each other all the time and talk shop. This was especially true in Moscow and Vienna, where we all covered the communist countries and needed to swap info just to keep up, and in Brussels, where journalists and diplomats spent many late nights waiting for European Economic Community (later European Union) ministers to emerge from their closed meetings to tell us what was going on. All this allowed for a lot of beer and a lot of chat—and I just listened.

*Continued on page 46*

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# Primer For Diplomats

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BY R. C. LONGWORTH

**I**n this season of debate over Andrew Young and his diplomacy by insult, spare a thought for the practice and usefulness of cookie-pushing. (...)

The point is not whether Young's opinions are right or wrong; much of what the outspoken ambassador has said may have needed saying. The point is whether a man in Young's position is the person to say them, and whether he has damaged himself and his nation by doing so.

Much of the flap over Andrew Young comes from the general American confusion over what diplomacy is and what diplomats do. It is a confusion that clearly is shared by Young himself.

The definition of diplomacy lends itself to epigrams: "the art of handling a porcupine without disturbing the quills," "the fine art of diving into trouble without making a splash" or, according to Ambrose Bierce, "the patriotic art of lying abroad for one's country."

More seriously, diplomacy is the way countries get along with each other and adjust their national rivalries without going to war. When diplomacy fails, it fails noisily. When it succeeds, it does so quietly and in private, and is likely to be ignored.

A good diplomat tries to get the most for his country short of war—"to get other nations to do what you want them to do," in the words of an American diplomat. To this man, "a

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successful negotiation is one in which you get less than what you hoped for and more than you thought you'd get."

To men like this, the way to get other nations to do your bidding is not to call them racists. The way to shift the South African government is not to urge its overthrow. There may be people in the U.S. government who can usefully perform these functions, but diplomats have other chores.

These chores, often hidden behind the diplomatic niceties known as cookie-pushing, break down into two general categories:

- **To find out what's happening in the country where the diplomat is stationed and report back to his government.** This involves knowing the movers and shakers, detecting trends, spotting events that Washington must hear about. This often is a journalistic job, although the diplomat is more specialized than the average foreign correspondent, and his copy is written for the eyes of the State Department back home.
- **To make sure that the American government's views get across to governments abroad.** This is done by "representations," which can mean anything from an ambassador's formal call on a foreign minister (to present a protest or even an ultimatum) down to a consul's visit to a Mexican jail warden to request better treatment for young Americans locked up for pot-peddling.

Specialists within the embassies may be assigned to maintain links with Swedish trade unions, to renew passports for American tourists in Italy, to help exporters sell goods in Thailand, to set up trade fairs in Russia, to register the birth of American babies born in Egypt, to ship home the bodies of Americans who die in Nigeria, or to hold the hands of junketing congressmen and their wives. (...)

Everyday diplomacy proceeds at a measured pace, as embassies run Uncle Sam's errands abroad. In a crisis—in the Middle East, say, or in Cyprus—the pace speeds up frantically.

Such a crisis might involve embassies in a half dozen capitals or more. Each sets up a special command post, usually with the ambassador at the helm and with diplomats acting as so many reporters, contacting their sources, trying to find out what's going on and what it means.

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## Successful negotiations can usually be best handled by diplomats who understand the needs and problems of the other side.

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Back in Washington, all this comes into the Operations Center on the seventh floor of the State Department. This center is manned around the clock and has empty rooms next to it that can be turned into special task force offices during a crisis. Into these rooms come the experts on the crisis area. The policy-makers—the Secretary of State and his aides—have offices just down the hall and are in constant touch.

Reports from ambassadors on the scene come in hourly, or more often, by telephone or Telex. Instructions and queries go back to them from Washington. Sometimes special negotiators are dispatched from Washington. Sometimes the diplomats on the scene are left to make the representations, get the information and offer the analyses on which American policy is based.

All this activity takes place within a framework of rules, manners and customs, developed over centuries, as arcane and as impenetrable to outsiders as the behavior of lawyers or clerics. Much of this pomp and protocol looks silly to laymen, but it does grease the wheels of the world's business.

Harold Nicolson, the British author-diplomat, says the word "ambassador" comes from a Celtic word for "servant." An ambassador, he implies, is the servant of his sovereign—of his king or president—sent abroad to faithfully represent that sovereign, no matter what his own views might be.

The ancients, like modern American presidents, frequently used "political" ambassadors: Louis XI once sent his barber on a mission to Burgundy. But over the centuries, the idea of the professional diplomat grew, embodying the kind of special qualities outlined by a 17th-century French diplomat, François de Callières: *Apart from owning sound judgment and an observing eye, a good diplomat should be*

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*quick, resourceful, a good listener, courteous and agreeable. He should not seek to gain a reputation as a wit, nor should he be so disputatious as to divulge secret information in order to clinch an argument. Above all, the good negotiator must possess self-control to resist the longing to speak before he has thought out what he intends to say. ... The negotiator must possess the patience of a watchmaker and be devoid of personal prejudices.*

He must also possess courage and kidneys of iron—the first to face the anti-American terrorism that kills an average of two U. S. diplomats each year, the second to handle the incessant diplomatic receptions and partying that diplomats themselves detest but seem powerless to stop. (...)

Diplomats go where they're told. Those who go to outbacks like Ouagadougou face two years of dysentery and boredom. Others get the dream assignments of London or Paris. Most are somewhere in between.

Diplomats can be amusing company in private, but most are aware that, when abroad, jokes translate poorly. Some of the best ambassadors of this century have been dry and self-effacing to the point of dullness. (...)

There is another area where the professionals fault men like Andrew Young, and that is the necessity that an ambassador's words clearly represent his government.

When Young pops off, no one is quite sure whether he speaks for President Carter or is merely scratching one of his own itches. Carter and the State Department have had to spend considerable time making omelets out of Young's dropped eggs.

To such criticism Young responds that, even as an ambassador, he remains his own man. This misses the key point of diplomacy—an ambassador is never his own man but is the representative of his sovereign. Or, as the ancient Celts had it, a "servant."

An ambassador does not have the luxury of speaking his own mind. Rather, it is his lot to be forever speaking somebody else's mind. (...)

Another problem: ambassadors have to be hired guns on occasion, sometimes defending one policy one day and its opposite the next, depending on the whims and twists of his government. In an imperfect and hypocritical world this is a necessary task, and diplomats accomplish it with dignity by never identifying themselves personally with any one policy. (...)

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## **When diplomacy fails, it fails noisily. When it succeeds, it does so quietly and in private, and is likely to be ignored.**

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One question remains: In this era of summits and SSTs, of instant communication and satellites, of summits and Kissinger-style shuttle talks—in this era of personal diplomacy, who needs diplomats?

Britain's Lord Chalfont has written that diplomats suffer from "the dottier forms of populism"—the distrust of anyone who speaks French, drinks champagne and wears tailcoats in the daytime. But Chalfont acknowledged the more serious challenge to traditional diplomacy posed by the modern, jet-age diplomacy of Henry Kissinger. To this, he replied: "The Lone Ranger style of diplomacy epitomized by the Blessed Henry may be very long on glamor, but it turns out to have been rather short on actual achievement (...)."

The reason why such peripatetic diplomacy accomplishes little has been frequently analyzed. It is that successful negotiations can usually be best handled by diplomats who understand the needs and problems of the other side; who have the opportunity to prepare every clause and sub-clause; who are not harried into hasty agreement by the political pressure of publicity; and who can hang around after the ink is dry, to make sure the agreement is carried out.

Diplomacy, like any profession, has its share of misfits, goldbrickers and incompetents who survive solely by bureaucratic apple-polishing. [British author-diplomat Sir Harold] Nicolson warned that even the best may "become internationalized and therefore dehydrated, an elegant empty husk."

But most diplomat-watchers are convinced that the elite corps of diplomats, operating on less than half of one per cent of the national budget, are patriotic professionals whose quiet wiles probably do more to keep the peace than the broadsides of an Andrew Young. ■



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*Continued from page 43*

**CS:** *There aren't a lot of foreign correspondents left overseas. It's really a shame. I've always found my relationships with reporters to be mutually beneficial and professionally enriching. How important were your relationships with American and other diplomats?*

**RCL:** Depends on the place. In places like London and Paris, where information is open and local officials are available, there's no reason for diplomats to act as middlemen between journalists and their sources. We can get everything we need from government officials, business people, etc., the same way we do here—with a phone call or a lunch. In more authoritarian places, where information is limited or guarded, correspondents get their info where they find it, and often check with diplomats. Or if a journalist is parachuting into a place where he doesn't live, embassies are excellent sources of background briefings, to bring the correspondent up to date fast.

A note here: this doesn't necessarily mean getting a briefing from the U.S. embassy. I often found American diplomats too much on message, loath to give any facts or opinions that violated the current line of U.S. foreign policy. Generally, the British or Germans were best and most professional. But wherever I was, if I didn't know the territory, I always made a point of calling at the embassies of neighboring countries. Generally, these countries hated each other, so sent their best diplomats to keep an eye on their neighbors. What they said was tainted, of course, and couldn't be used without verification; but you do pick up a lot of gossip that way.

If I may say so, the decline in the number of U.S. correspondents abroad handicaps American foreign policy. As I mentioned, diplomats and correspondents often cover the same story. Sometimes these stories conflict (just as two correspondents covering the same story might file conflicting or differing stories, with different facts and different emphases). I suspect diplomats hate it when HQ responds to a cable by quoting a conflicting article in *The New York Times*. But the *Times* guy might be right. Sometimes, the embassies get it right, and sometimes (Vietnam, Iraq) they don't. But if there are no correspondents on the scene, who's to know?

**CS:** *To be fair to my colleagues from Saigon and Baghdad, sometimes people aren't that interested in what we have to say. Our official Dissent Channel came about to give officers in Saigon a way to get "the rest of the story" to the senior folks at State. I completely agree with you on the importance of journalists in educating the American people on what's going on around the*

world and keeping those of us in the public sector on our toes. Without journalism, how can we have democracy?

**RCL:** You won't get an argument from me on that. Democracy is based, first and last, on an informed electorate. Voters who are ignorant of what's going on in, say, China or today's Pakistan are, by definition, unequipped to cast a ballot.

**CS:** Speaking of the importance of journalism to a democracy, as long as most Americans have online access to reporting from the few newspapers that still have foreign bureaus, does it really matter that, say, the Chicago Tribune doesn't have any foreign bureaus anymore?

**RCL:** Oh yes. Most Americans may have online access to foreign news, but that doesn't mean they read it. How many people bother to go to the *Times* site, or *The Guardian* or *Le Monde Diplomatique*, to catch up on foreign news? Too many Americans get their news from networks like Fox or CNN. Some of those networks never had foreign correspondents; the rest barely pretend now to cover foreign news. Otherwise, Americans

get their news (to the degree that Americans get any news these days) from local papers. These papers, fighting to stay in business, focus relentlessly on the local-local-local beats and bury foreign and national news way inside. My job, when I was overseas, was to target my stories especially to a Chicago audience, which often got me on the front page. The readers may have wanted only the sports news, but they had to get past my story to get it. It's easier now to read a paper and get no foreign news at all.

**CS:** Do you have any advice for members of the Foreign Service dealing with the U.S. press?

**RCL:** We often do the same work but for different bosses. A diplomat's main job is to represent and further the interests of the U.S. government. A correspondent's main job is to get the facts and present them to the reader, even if they cause heartburn in Washington. Our first obligation is to the reader, and almost not at all to our government. We feel our job is to create an informed electorate. No diplomat would object to this, but the path to this end (again, see Iraq or Vietnam) can be pretty rocky. ■

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## Foreign Service 101 on Capitol Hill

The American Foreign Service Association recently partnered with the Foreign Affairs Congressional Staff Association to host a panel titled “Strong Diplomacy in Today’s World: U.S. Foreign Service 101.” The event was held on Oct. 15 at the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill and included panelists AFSA

President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, Retiree Representative ad interim Ambassador Pat Butenis and Foreign Service Officer Ramon Escobar.

During the past three years, AFSA has co-hosted a number of learning sessions on the Foreign Service for Hill staffers in coordination with congressional affinity groups. This year’s partner, FACSA, is a bipartisan-bicameral group that promotes professional development for those working in Congress who are interested in issues related to the conduct of foreign affairs.

Addressing an audience of more than 85 legislative assistants, fellows and interns, Amb. Stephenson described the Foreign Service as an indispensable asset to national security and highlighted its distinction as the only organization in the world whose members are deployed around the globe.



AFSA/LINSEY BOTTS

AFSA Retiree Representative ad interim Ambassador Pat Butenis (left), AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson (center) and Foreign Service Officer Ramon Escobar (right) speak about the mission of the Foreign Service to congressional staffers.

She then explained how certain threats to the Foreign Service workforce pose serious challenges to the effectiveness of our diplomatic efforts and, thereby, American interests overseas. Hiring of entry-level officers has fluctuated wildly, from more than 700 in 2010 to only 280 this year. This has created a bulge of mid-level officers competing for available positions under the rotation system required by the Foreign Service’s competitive up-or-out promotion system, while not generating sufficient entry-level officers to handle the growing demand for visa work—and possibly contributing to a shortfall of seasoned mid-level FSOs seven to 10 years in the future.

The panelists gave a brief presentation on how they came to enter the Foreign Service and offered a few

vignettes from their individual experiences as professional diplomats. Speakers touched on everything from the process of joining the Foreign Service to the effects of security leaks on how embassies conduct business, and the realities of a mobile lifestyle to balancing risk with effective diplomacy.

Following an engaging Q&A, AFSA hosted a meet-and-greet happy hour at Tortilla Coast on Capitol Hill. The gathering provided another opportunity for congressional staffers to meet members of the Foreign Service, including representatives from the Young Professionals at USAID group, the Blacks in Government Carl T. Rowan Chapter at State, and the Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship Program. ■

—Shannon Mizzi,  
Editorial Assistant

## CALENDAR

December 2  
12-2 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

December 3  
2-3:30 p.m.  
**“Emerging U.S. Security Partnerships in Southeast Asia”**

December 25  
**Christmas: AFSA Offices Closed**

January 1  
**New Year’s Day: AFSA Offices Closed**

January 6  
12-2 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

January 15  
**Deadline: Sinclair Language Awards Nominations**

January 18  
**Martin Luther King Day: AFSA Offices Closed**

February 3  
12-2 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

February 6  
**Deadline: Community Service and Art/Academic Merit Awards**

February 15  
**Presidents’ Day: AFSA Offices Closed**

February 18  
2-3:30 p.m.  
**AFSA Book Notes: “Foreign Policy Breakthroughs”**

February 28  
**Deadline: AFSA Dissent & Performance Awards Nominations**



## Get a Job! The Challenges and Frustrations of Bidding

*This issue's State VP Voice is by guest columnist and AFSA Governing Board State Representative Margaret "Nini" Hawthorne.*

If you have been in the Foreign Service for three tours or more, you have been through the stress and complexities of bidding and lobbying for your onward assignment. If you've been in more than 20 years, as I have, you've done this many, many times—and it just doesn't get any easier.

I've been impressed by the number of people who have weighed in on the Oct. 6 Sounding Board post "Bidding is Bad Enough Without the Bureaus Breaking the Rules" and by the cogent arguments that many have made. Clearly, this issue has hit a nerve.

Both bidders and bureaus face enormous challenges during the bidding process. Bidders are trying to get a job that interests them and will help further their careers and/or meet family and personal needs. The bureaus are trying to fill all their jobs with the best people they can find. In an ideal world, every person would be slotted into the right job for him or her and for the bureau.

But we don't live in an ideal world and the Foreign Service bidding and lobbying process has gotten so convoluted and complicated that almost nobody is

satisfied. The bidding season is beginning to look like the U.S. election cycle—it seems to start earlier every year, drag on forever, and generate a great deal of stress.

The frustration and anxiety that people feel and the thousands of hours taken away from our work for the department and the American people are hard for bidders, burdensome for the decision-makers and people providing references and endorsements, and bad for the Service.

The system we have today was perhaps more effective when the Service was smaller and there were fewer distortions (e.g. Priority Staffing Posts linked assignments). Now, thanks to staffing challenges like the "pig in the python," competition is greater and extensive lobbying has become the norm. A seriously flawed 360 process has made the effort even more stressful (See William Bent's article in the September FSJ).

Not all of these problems can be fully eliminated. We all know that people are inclined to hire people they know are good from personal experience, bureaus want to "take care of their own," and plum jobs will be heavily bid. We also know that if we want to serve in Paris, Sydney or Cape Town, we probably should serve in another position in those bureaus to become known

**The frustration that people feel and the thousands of hours taken away from our work are hard for bidders, burdensome for the decision-makers and people providing references, and bad for the Service.**

first (though not always).

There have been a number of interesting proposals from colleagues and those commenting on the Sounding Board such as: Do directed assignments for all jobs; shorten the time between issuance of the list of available positions, promotion lists, bid deadlines and handshakes; identify one point of contact for compiling the short lists and collecting bidders resumes and employee profiles; and go back to a "reference" system whereby three to five people are asked about the suitability of the bidder for the particular job instead of using generic "360 centers."

Others propose discouraging the practice of asking additional "heavy hitters" to weigh in on a person's behalf; compelling bureaus to do a better job of identifying up front the skills and characteristics they want for a particular position, so as not to waste bidders' time on jobs they have very little chance of getting; and

giving the Bureau of Human Resources a stronger role in matching bidders and jobs.

These ideas merit discussion. It's a condition of our Service that we rotate every two to three years. That's how we build the deep bench of experienced Foreign Service leaders we need.

At AFSA, we are focused on ways to make the Foreign Service stronger. To that end, we welcome a continuing dialogue with the Director General and our members about how, collectively, we can revamp this process. Please send your ideas to [afsa@state.gov](mailto:afsa@state.gov). ■

*Margaret "Nini" Hawthorne is a career Foreign Service officer, currently serving as the director of the Crisis Management Training Division at the Foreign Service Institute. She was formerly the deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires in Belize.*



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP. Contact: mark.petry@fas.usda.gov or (202) 720-2502

## Workforce Planning Overdue at FAS

In Ambassador Barbara Stephenson's October President's Views column, she hit on the most pressing issue facing Foreign Service officers in the Foreign Agricultural Service today, one which will have important repercussions over the course of the next decade—workforce planning. Indeed, today the goal of creating a “cohesive, robust, resilient and confident” FSO corps seems a long way off.

Instead, we are now in a state of crisis as a result of situationally expedient decisions made a decade ago. The number of FAS FSOs is at a historic low—20 percent lower than 10 years ago, despite the number of offices remaining roughly the same and U.S. agricultural trade

**With ever-higher demands placed on so few FSOs, we would do well to consider whether we will be able to provide them with the leadership training and mentorship they require.**

growing in value and complexity.

For example, we now have about the same number of FS-1 officers as overseas positions, leaving no room for officers to take advantage of training or fill Washington positions. The next 10 years will bring even greater challenges, as the high rate of retirements continues to decimate the upper ranks.

large number of stretch positions (40 percent of all assignments in 2014-2015), greatly reduced time in Washington to reconnect with FAS culture, officer burnout, higher rates of voluntary separation, skewed bidding incentives and increasing demands by Civil Service employees to serve multiple overseas assignments.

The least noticed, but perhaps longest-lasting impact will be on the leadership training available to existing officers. With ever-higher demands placed on so few FSOs, we would do well to consider whether we will be able to provide them with the leadership training and mentorship they require. FSOs are accustomed to getting on-the-job training, but we also know that many hidden problems result when corners are cut to accommodate immediate needs.

The “bulge” of officers that came into FAS in the late 1980s is rapidly shrinking due to Time-in-Class and Time-in-Service limits, but the cohort behind them is shockingly small. It is small because of painfully meager incoming classes in the mid-2000s. All of this has contributed to a severe shortage in the middle ranks, especially FS-1 and FS-2 officers. We need to dramatically improve our workforce planning to be able to fulfill our mission going forward.

As I noted optimistically in my October column, a new officer recruiting system is leading to large and talented new classes of officers coming into FAS. However, these FS-3 officers and trainees need years to gain the necessary experience to take on leadership roles. This leaves FAS with a critical and worsening shortage of trained officers to serve as head of post or to fill other higher-level positions.

The leadership shortage is manifested in many ways, including an extremely

FAS' Office of Foreign Service Operations has made progress on workforce planning and its execution. However, management and human resource officials don't seem to share OFSO's sense of urgency. We at AFSA, in collaboration with our members, must do more to educate FAS as to why this is such a critical period.

We are in the midst of a crisis and need to make sure FAS doesn't mortgage the future integrity of the Foreign Service in order to keep the lights on today. ■

## JOB SEARCH PROGRAM RECEPTION



On Oct. 30, the American Foreign Service Association and DACOR teamed up to host the graduation reception for the most recent Job Search Program class at the Foreign Service Institute. AFSA was pleased to honor the Foreign Service employees who were retiring from diplomatic service, and looks forward to welcoming them as retiree members of the association and continuing to work on their behalf to protect their Foreign Service legacy and help them navigate their retirement.



## Reflections on Human Capital and Talent Management

We are in volatile times, and the decisions we make, both inside and outside of the U.S. Agency for International Development, matter. Although evaluation is a complex endeavor—how does one accurately measure how much of USAID’s work generates goodwill or helps people avoid difficult situations?—we should, in the words of Mother Teresa, “do it anyway.”

A recent article in the *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, “Doing Well by Doing Good: The Impact of Foreign Aid on Foreign Public Opinion,” provides compelling evidence that USAID’s work in the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, has significantly and positively affected how recipient countries regard the United States. This, in turn, has made it easier for the United States to make progress on its foreign policy goals in these countries.

The authors’ findings imply that when the United States seeks cooperation on an issue important to foreign audiences, the consequences could lead to—imagine this—a virtuous race to the top for other emerging powers providing foreign aid.

As a superpower, the United States has had the luxury to assume a foreign policy approach that has not always included a thorough self-evaluation process. But, the effort to evaluate is

worth it. As the PEPFAR case illustrates, a changing world and the welcome expansion of democratic governance suggest that public opinion abroad will become increasingly important to

### **A stronger, more united USAID is possible, if only we learn from our past and use the basics in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 as the foundation for our future.**

the practice of international relations.

Meanwhile, USAID is in the midst of a different sort of self-evaluation. Mass hiring under the Development Leadership Initiative led to growing pains within the agency.

With increasing numbers of non-career employees occupying policymaking positions, USAID was placed under intense pressure to support the expanded workforce. Consequently, management made the controversial decision to hire a professional, non-FS chief human capital officer (CHCO) as the director of human resources.

As many know, the CHCO has abruptly departed. This experience has taught us that, though there are many great government personnel experts, FS expertise and appreciation *must* be a requirement for this job.

Even long-term USAID civil servants have opined that, as the HR head of a

foreign affairs agency, the CHCO should understand the unique aspects of the Foreign Service assignment and promotion system at USAID (e.g. Foreign Service officers, locally employed staff, Foreign

Service limited appointees, personal services contractor authority) and not just the Civil Service system.

Acting Administrator Alfonso Lenhardt recently affirmed his belief that when you take care of people, they take care of everything else. The CHCO’s departure is an opportunity for USAID to live up to that belief and rebuild trust among its FSOs.

A diverse team headed by Senior Foreign Service Officer Sharon Cromer is now completing an assessment of the Human Capital and Talent Management Office: The goal is to ensure USAID is taking care of its people to the best of its ability.

At this critical juncture, it would be wise to “get back to the basics” by looking to the Foreign Service Act of 1980 as the cornerstone of agency policy.

Congress made it clear, through Section 101 of the act, that a career Foreign Service is necessary. The objective of the act was to

strengthen the U.S. Foreign Service by “assuring, in accordance with merit principles, admission through impartial and rigorous examination, acquisition of career status only by those who have demonstrated their fitness through successful completion of probationary assignments, effective career development, advancement and retention of the ablest.”

Section 307 further stresses the career aspect by stating that a candidate for appointment as a career FSO may not be initially assigned to a grade higher than FS-4.

In addition, the act calls for members of the FS to be “representative of the American people, aware of the principles and history of the United States, informed of current concerns and trends in American life, knowledgeable of the affairs, cultures, and languages of other countries, and available to serve in assignments throughout the world.”

FSOs need to know that their leadership is fighting for them, not against them, and that all actions taken will be in accordance with the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to strengthen and uphold the integrity of the career Foreign Service.

A stronger, more united USAID is possible, if only we learn from our past and use the basics in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 as the foundation for our future. ■

## Changes to Danger and Hardship Differentials

The U.S. Foreign Service deploys worldwide to protect and serve America's people, interests and values. Fulfilling this mission—to represent our country around the globe—means living in some dangerous places, including places with no significant U.S. military presence.

Members of the Foreign Service have a long history of accepting the risks inherent in doing their jobs, based in part on a bedrock belief in the importance of an American diplomatic and development presence, even in the most challenging environments.

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 recognized this risk by authorizing the provision of a danger pay allowance “on the basis of civil insurrection, civil war, terrorism or wartime conditions which threaten physical harm or imminent danger to the health or wellbeing of the employee.”

When the Department of State announced earlier this year that it intended to make

changes to post danger and hardship differentials (see 15 State 27856), AFSA reached out to management seeking to understand fully the department's proposal and its implications.

By law, AFSA was unable to negotiate the amounts adjusted or posts affected because the new regulations apply to employees governmentwide.

However, AFSA *does* have the right to consult with management prior to the implementation of any such changes. While the department made the decision to implement the changes despite AFSA's proposal to delay implementation until Jan. 1, 2016, management did accept many of AFSA's proposals to mitigate some of the changes' adverse effects (see 15 STATE 48886).

**Fair Share Bidding:** Employees already assigned to a post that drops below the 15-percent threshold as a result of the new designations will receive credit for their service at the post so

that they will not be considered fair-share bidders in the next bidding cycle.

**6/8 Eligibility:** If the tour of duty for a post increases due to changes under the new rules, employees will be allowed to serve the tour in effect when they were assigned to that post and still meet the 6/8 eligibility requirements for restarting the period of continuous domestic assignment.

**2014 Bidders:** The department will extend fair share and 6/8 provisions to all employees assigned in 2014 who have not yet arrived at post. They will, however, be subject to the updated danger and hardship rates.

The department was unable to accept AFSA's proposal to grandfather allowances for Foreign Service employees, because allowances are a component of the Department of State Standardized Regulations covering all civilian employees overseas.

Similarly, the department

could not agree to grandfather employees participating in the Student Loan Repayment Program, because benefits are disbursed pursuant to a 12-month term, and eligibility of positions is subject to change on a yearly basis.

The changes to danger pay and hardship differentials went into effect on Sept. 6. See 15 STATE 104596 for complete details on how these changes affect your post.

AFSA thanks all members who shared their concerns regarding the reforms. We agree that this change has taken place at a time when it is more challenging than ever to carry out our mission. You may email us at [afsa@state.gov](mailto:afsa@state.gov) or call (202) 647-8160 if you have any questions on this issue. ■

—*Maria C. Livingston,*  
Associate Editor

### APPLY FOR AFSA YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

The children of AFSA members (active-duty or retired) can now apply for college aid at [www.afsa.org/scholar](http://www.afsa.org/scholar). Graduating high school seniors can apply for academic and art merit awards and a community service award, each worth \$2,500. Current college undergraduates can apply for need-based financial aid scholarships ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

The application deadline for the merit award program is Feb. 6, 2016. The deadline for the need-based financial aid scholarships is March 6, 2016. Not all who submit an application will receive an award.

For more information, contact AFSA Scholarship Director Lori Dec at (202) 944-5504 or [dec@afsa.org](mailto:dec@afsa.org). ■



## ISSUE BRIEF

## Update on Meritorious Service Increase Disputes

On Sept. 3, the Foreign Service Grievance Board ruled in favor of AFSA's implementation dispute, which it had filed on behalf of the 554 Foreign Service employees who never received the monetary component of their Meritorious Service Increases awarded by the 2013 selection boards.

The FSGB decision found that the Department of State breached a provision regarding MSIs in the 2013 procedural precepts for the selection boards—a negotiated agreement with AFSA. In its ruling, the board directed the department to retroactively pay the 2013 MSIs, with interest, dating back to Nov. 3, 2013—the effective date of promotions.

On Oct. 3, the department responded by filing exceptions to the FSGB's decision with the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board. It also requested that the FSGB temporarily stay its order to retroactively pay the 2013 MSIs, pending an FSLRB decision. The Grievance Board granted the request. Thus, 2013 MSI payments continue to be withheld, though interest is still accruing.

The FSLRB must now assess whether the Grievance Board's decision is deficient because it is contrary to any law, rule or regulation, or on other grounds similar to those applied by federal courts in private-sector labor-management relations. AFSA has 30 days to respond to the department's exceptions.

### Background

For more than 30 years the department and AFSA have negotiated and agreed on the procedural precepts (i.e., the “ground rules” for selection boards). The precepts include provisions relating to the award of MSIs to employees who were not promoted, but whose performance was of sufficient quality that an MSI was deemed appropriate by the selection boards. For approximately 30 years prior to 2013, MSIs were paid to whatever number of employees the selection boards recommended, up to a percentage limitation of the competitive class specified in the precepts.

**2013 Sequester:** In February 2013, as the federal government instituted precautionary financial measures in preparation for the 2013 sequester, the Office of Management and Budget issued a memo to the heads of all agencies stating that “increased scrutiny” should be paid by agencies in “issuing discretionary monetary awards to employees, which should occur only if legally required, until further notice.”

On March 1, 2013, President Barack Obama signed an order issuing a budget sequestration. On March 8, 2013, the under secretary for management issued a directive ordering a freeze on monetary awards to department employees.

On April 4, 2013, OMB issued another memo stating that discretionary monetary awards should not be issued while sequestration is in place, unless issuance of such awards is legally required. OMB said, “[l]egal requirements include compliance with provisions in collective bargaining agreements governing awards.” OMB also said that quality step increases (the civil service equivalent of an MSI) were not considered discretionary awards.

On April 9, 2013, the department proposed the inclusion of new language in the precepts relating to MSIs. The new language stated that “If restricted by policy, regulation or budget from granting step increases of cash awards,” the department would recognize employees through a statement to their files, annotation of their scorecards and granting of bidding privileges. The proposal also stated, “if authorized, [the Bureau of Human Resources] will implement all MSIs and cash payments in lieu thereof as of the effective date of the promotion.”

AFSA agreed to the department's proposal due to its concerns that employees would be furloughed if it did not agree to suspend MSIs during sequestration. However, AFSA understood the new language to refer to policy, regulations or budget restrictions imposed by OMB, and that once these restrictions were lifted, HR would implement MSIs and cash payments as of the effective date of the promotion.

When OMB and the Office of Personnel Management jointly issued a memo establishing budgetary limits on awards paid during fiscal year 2014 on Nov. 1, 2013, and when the president signed the fiscal year 2014 appropriations act on Jan. 17, 2014, AFSA argued that the conditions in the precepts had been met and State was required to pay the 2013 MSIs.

The department declined to do so, arguing that the Foreign Service Act of 1980 gave the department the sole discretion to either pay or not pay MSIs and that the “if authorized” language in the precepts referred to the department's discretion, and not to any action by OMB or OPM.

**Dispute Details:** AFSA filed an implementation dispute with the department on May 16, 2014. On June 30, 2014, the

department denied the dispute. This move prompted AFSA to file an appeal with the Foreign Service Grievance Board on Aug. 5, 2014. On Sept. 3, 2015, the FSGB ruled in AFSA's favor.

The board found that the department's discretion to award MSIs conferred by selection boards is not sole and exclusive, but is subject to collective bargaining with AFSA. It also found the following:

- The parties' consistent past practice demonstrated that the department always paid MSIs to those identified by the selection boards, up to the percentage cap in the precepts.
- The new language in the 2013 precepts did not grant the department discretion to refuse retroactive payment of MSIs after OMB and OPM lifted the restrictions on awards.

**Foreign Service Labor Relations Board:** As previously noted, the department filed exceptions to the FSGB's decision with the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board. The FSLRB was established under the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to, among other things, review implementation disputes. The three members of the FSLRB are Chairperson Carol Waller Pope (who is also chairperson of the Federal Labor Relations Authority), Ambassador (ret.) Herman (Hank) Cohen and past Director of Labor Relations at the former United States Information Agency Stephen Ledford.

### 2014 MSI Dispute

The 2013 implementation dispute is distinct from AFSA's 2014 dispute, which AFSA filed when State implemented a

5-percent cap on the number of people who would receive MSIs, even though the precepts stated that the percentage cap was 10 percent.

The department denied this dispute, arguing that the department had the discretion to either pay or not pay MSIs to whatever number of employees it chose. AFSA appealed to the Foreign Service Grievance Board in February 2015 arguing that—as the FSGB found in its decision in the 2013 MSI case—the department was bound by its past practice of paying MSIs to all of those employees rank ordered by the selection boards, up to the 10 percent cap that the parties agreed to in the precepts. This case continues to make its way through the FSGB process.

### 2015 MSIs

On Oct. 1, State released the 2015 promotion list. In it, the department listed employees recognized by the 2015 selection boards “as demonstrating potential to serve at higher levels.”

On Oct. 16, the department notified AFSA that it had established the appropriate level for conferral of MSIs at the rate of 5 percent of the competitive group. AFSA believes the department's actions violate the 2015 precepts and plans to file a third implementation dispute. The 2015 procedural precepts require the department to pay MSIs up to the 10-percent cap specified in the precepts. ■

—Sharon Papp, General Counsel

## NEWS BRIEF

### REMINDER: NOMINATIONS FOR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE AWARDS

The American Foreign Service Association is now accepting nominations for its six awards recognizing exemplary performance.

The **Nelson B. Delavan Award** recognizes the work of a Foreign Service Office Management Specialist.

The **M. Juanita Guess Award** is conferred on a Community Liaison Office Coordinator who has demonstrated outstanding leadership.

The **Avis Bohlen Award** honors the volunteer accomplishments of a family member of a Foreign Service employee at post.

The **Mark Palmer Award** is granted to a member of the Foreign Service for distinguished achievement in advancing democracy, freedom and governance during one or more assignments.

The **AFSA Achievement and Contributions to the Association Award** is for active-duty and retired members of AFSA.

The **Post Rep of the Year Award** is for the AFSA post representative who demonstrates sustained and successful engagement with AFSA membership at post.

Recipients are presented with a monetary prize and are honored at a ceremony in June in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room at the State Department.

Deadline for nominations is Feb. 28, 2016. For details on the awards and to submit an online nomination, go to [www.afsa.org/performance](http://www.afsa.org/performance). Please contact Foreign Service Profession Awards Coordinator Perri Green at [green@afsa.org](mailto:green@afsa.org) or (202) 719-9700 for more information. ■

## AFSA Hits the Congressional Caucus Circuit



LEFT: (l-r) Former Foreign Service Officer Pat Contreras, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, CNN Political Commentator Maria Cardona, FSO Ramon Escobar and American Israel Public Affairs Committee National Outreach Director Jeff Mendelsohn at the CHCI gala. RIGHT: (l-r) Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) with AFSA Governing Board State Representative Lawrence Casselle at the CBC dinner.

The American Foreign Service Association’s advocacy efforts ensure that the Foreign Service has a voice in the halls of Congress and among key stakeholders within the federal government. This work is critical for securing the necessary resources and the rightful recognition and benefits that

our members deserve. Not only does AFSA meet with legislative interlocutors on a weekly basis, we also take every opportunity to liaise with stakeholders in settings beyond Capitol Hill. Most recently, AFSA representatives connected with lawmakers, members of the media, special interest groups,

private sector leaders and celebrities at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s 45th Annual Legislative Conference Phoenix Awards Dinner and the 36th Annual Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Awards Gala. The Phoenix Awards Dinner, held on Sept. 21, honored those who have worked

tirelessly to advance equal rights and protections for African-Americans. The CHCI Gala took place on Oct. 8 and celebrated the outstanding accomplishments of Latino leaders who are making a positive difference in their communities. ■  
—*Maria C. Livingston,*  
*Associate Editor*

### ON THE LIGHTER SIDE Vodka, Anyone?

While serving in Monrovia, I received an unexpected visit from a Soviet diplomat whom I knew socially. Juri closed the door firmly behind him, which prompted me to ask cheerfully if he was defecting. “No,” came the peevish reply, “but I am here on a sensitive subject.” He related that his embassy had been hosting so many visiting groups from Moscow that now, on

the eve of the great October Revolution holiday, the chancellery was out of vodka. Aware that our commissary had a commissary well stocked with spirits, he asked if I could arrange for the sale of four cases—no, make that six cases of vodka. Although I was happy to stimulate U.S. exports, I cautioned Juri that our vodka was Smirnoff, no doubt an anti-Bolshevik enterprise. Juri

waived his hand irritably and whispered conspiratorially, “Vodka is vodka.” With those words, I called the commissary, set the price and accepted a wad of 20-dollar bills from Juri. That afternoon, I entered the USSR compound in my heavily laden VW station wagon. The next day at the reception, I noticed that there were no Smirnoff bottles. Clearly, the capitalist vodka had magically found its way into proletarian bottles. When I raised my glass to

Juri, he gave me a sheepish grin and shrugged. ■  
—*Thomas Johnson,*  
*Retired FSO*

*Thomas Johnson served with the U.S. Information Agency and Department of State for 25 years with assignments to Asunción, Mexico City, Monrovia, Heidelberg, Frankfurt and Singapore. After retiring, Johnson worked on anti-corruption in State’s Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and on document declassification.*

## Retirement Planning in Uncertain Times

On Oct. 8, the American Foreign Service Association hosted the 11th installment of its Speaker Series on Federal Benefits, “Planning for Retirement.”

Two expert financial planners—G.B. Bose and Patrick Beagle of D.C.-based firms Washington Retirement Planning Specialists and WealthCrest Financial Services—spoke to active-duty and retired members of the Foreign Service about tax reduction and family wealth planning, investment strategies and financial risks in retirement.



Speaker Patrick Beagle warns audience members against underestimating how much time they will spend in retirement.

Bose kicked off the session by offering conventional wisdom on how to get the most out of the Thrift

Savings Plan—participants should contribute at least 5 percent of their incomes to get the full agency match,

diversify their portfolios to include riskier funds for larger returns and wait as long as possible to begin drawing retirement benefits. He also underscored how solid tax planning—more than asset management—is paramount to financial security in retirement.

In particular, he explained how the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2006 that went into effect in 2010 is “the best deal, bar none, that the U.S. government has ever offered to its citizens.” The law enables

*Continued on page 58*

### NEWS BRIEF

#### REMINDER: NOMINATIONS FOR DISSENT AWARDS

The American Foreign Service Association proudly recognizes constructive dissent within the system with four separate awards. The **W. Averell Harriman Award** is for entry-level (FS-6 through FS-4) officers; the **William R. Rivkin Award** is for mid-level (FS-3 through FS-1) officers; the **Christian A. Herter Award** is for Senior Foreign Service officers; and the **F. Allen “Tex” Harris Award** is for Foreign Service specialists. Recipients receive prize money and travel expenses to attend and be honored at a ceremony in June in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room at the State Department.

Nominate someone—or yourself!—for one of these awards. The nomination deadline is Feb. 28, 2016. For more details on the awards, and to submit an online nomination, visit [www.afsa.org/dissent](http://www.afsa.org/dissent). Please contact Foreign Service Profession Awards Coordinator Perri Green at [green@afsa.org](mailto:green@afsa.org) or (202) 719-9700 for more information ■

### NEWS BRIEF

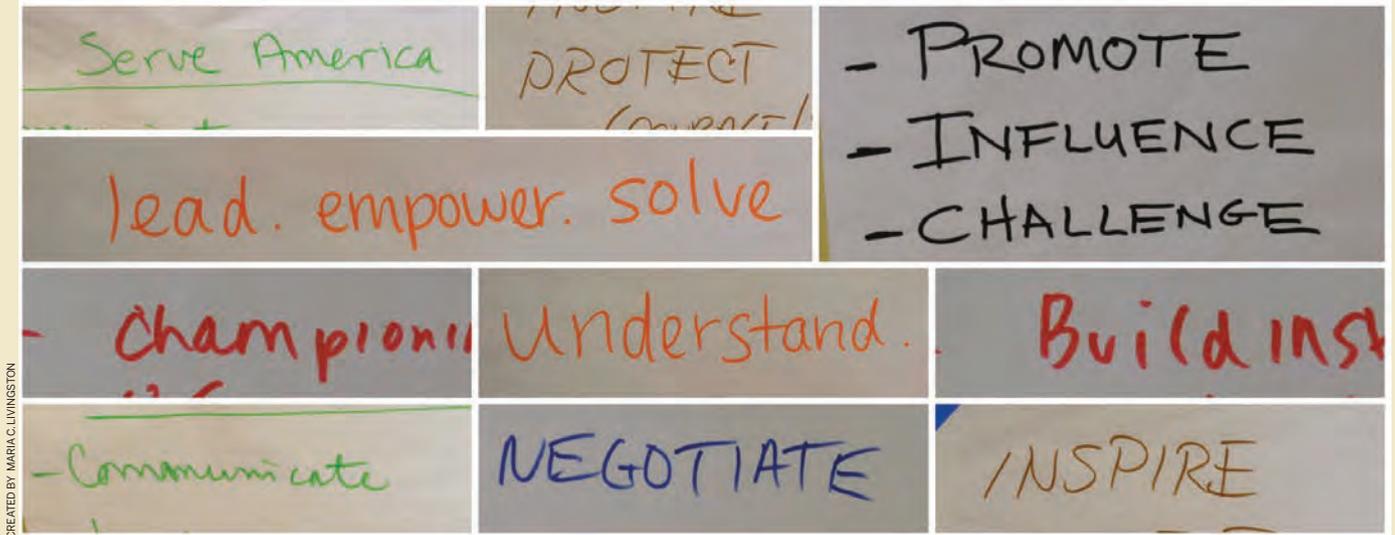
#### NEW AFSA GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER

On Sept. 29, Youqing Ma was appointed to the American Foreign Service Association’s Governing Board as a Foreign Commercial Service representative. Ma joined FCS in October 2011. Her first assignment was with the Indiana Export Assistance Center in Indianapolis. She next served at the American Institute in Taiwan, where she led a team helping American companies to expand sales and services in Taiwan. She is currently a commercial officer with SelectUSA in Washington, D.C.



Prior to the Foreign Service, Ma was the senior policy director for former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa on trade promotion. She also has a background in banking and international supply chain management. ■

## What Does the Foreign Service Do?



The American Foreign Service Association held its annual Governing Board retreat on Oct. 6.

During the gathering, participants had a brainstorm-

ing session on how best to describe what it is that the Foreign Service does. That is, what sets it apart from other institutions, and why should the American people care?

This photo captures a few of the words that Governing Board members came up with.

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson

gives her readout of the takeaways from the retreat in her President's Column on page 7. ■

—Maria C. Livingston, Associate Editor

### Retirement Planning • Continued from page 57

people with annual adjusted gross incomes of more than \$100,000 to convert funds from their tax-deferred individual retirement accounts (IRA) to tax-free Roth IRAs, as long as they pay upfront taxes. While this option is not for everyone, paying tax now to allow tax-free accumulation in a Roth IRA in perpetuity can maximize the size of one's after-tax nest egg.

Beagle then described a bleak outlook for Social Security. By 2025, the number of workers paying for one retiree's benefits will decrease from three to two,

owing to aging baby boomers and a decreasing U.S. birth rate. And because people are living an average of 16 years longer than the previous generation, he warned of the possibility of a substantial increase in taxes and decrease in benefits. He also cautioned that future federal revenue shortfalls mean that retirees could potentially receive lower Social Security benefits than they have been promised.

According to Beagle, Social Security's uncertain future should prompt everyone to take every opportu-

nity to shore up the other two sources of retirement income: pensions and personal savings. For instance, federal employees' failure to contribute at least 5 percent of their incomes to TSP has resulted in the Office of Personnel Management having to return more than \$1 billion in unused, matching TSP funds to the government each year.

He also addressed how to manage common financial risks, including volatile markets, inflation and accessibility by dividing one's accumulated wealth into different

"baskets," and subsequently diversifying investment within each.

Speakers took audience questions for more than an hour. A wine reception immediately followed the presentation to allow representatives from both companies to mingle with attendees.

To view a video of the full presentation, go to: [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video). ■

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Assistant



## AFSA Governing Board Meeting October 7, 2015

**September Governing Board Minutes:** On a consent motion from Retiree Vice President Tom Boyatt, the board approved the Sept. 2 Governing Board minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Foreign Service Titles:** On a consent motion made by Retiree VP Boyatt, the board reaffirmed AFSA's internal guidance to refer to members of the Foreign Service as either "Foreign Service specialist" or "Foreign Service officer," and not "Foreign Service generalist." The motion passed unanimously.

On a motion made by Treasurer Charles Ford, the board agreed to form a working group to clarify internal AFSA guidance governing the appropriate use of "officer" and "specialist" when referring to members of the Foreign Service in each of AFSA's five constituent agencies/departments. The motion passed unanimously.

**Awards and Plaques Committee Applicants:** On a motion made by Retiree Representative Dean Haas, the board approved the appointment of the following Foreign Service members to serve on the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee for the period October 2015–October 2017:

AFSA FCS VP Steve Morrison, USAID FSO Todd Andrews, State (ret.) FSO John Bushnell, and active-duty FSOs Annie Pforzheimer, Sandy Robinson and Bridgette Walker. The motion passed unanimously.

**AFSA Memorial Plaques Criteria:** On a motion by Retiree VP Boyatt, the board did not approve changes to the criteria governing who is eligible to be considered for inclusion on the AFSA Memorial Plaques, located in the Department of State's C Street Lobby. The proposed change would have limited eligibility to career members of the Foreign Service.

**Retiree Representative:** On a motion by Retiree VP Boyatt, the board approved the appointment of Ambassador (ret.) Patricia Butenis to serve as AFSA retiree representative ad interim.

**2013 Meritorious Service Increase Implementation Dispute:** The board discussed the implications of the Sept. 3 ruling by the Foreign Service Grievance Board in favor of AFSA's implementation dispute on behalf of the 554 members of the FS who did not receive the monetary component of their MSIs awarded by the 2013 selection boards (see page 54 for details on the case). ■

## Lunch with the 8th CA-LNA Class

On Oct. 26, the American Foreign Service Association hosted a welcome luncheon for the 8th Foreign Service Consular Adjudicator Class at its headquarters. In photo: AFSA Staff Attorney Andrew Large explains the many ways that the association's dedicated labor management staff stands ready to assist AFSA members (e.g., security clearance questions, employment performance evaluations, disciplinary issues, etc.). ■



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# FAFSA Reform: What Does It Mean for You?

Improvements in the FAFSA are slated for the 2017-2018 academic year.

BY SHANNON MIZZI

In September, at North High School in Des Moines, Iowa, the Obama administration announced a series of changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (or FAFSA) filing process. The reforms are intended to make the process faster, more transparent and hassle-free for the approximately 22 million people who submit FAFSA applications each year.

The FAFSA is an online form that college and trade school students—both new applicants and ongoing enrollees—must fill out annually to see how much federal financial aid they are eligible to receive. According to the website of the Office of Federal Student Aid, a branch of the

Department of Education, “many states and colleges use FAFSA data to determine eligibility for state and school aid.”

The FAFSA must be filled out annually for as long as a one attends college, and is acknowledged as a yearly struggle by many students. New reforms aim to change all that.

## What Will Be Different?

Two major changes, which will come into effect for the application process for the 2017-2018 academic year, will enable students to submit their FAFSA forms several months earlier and use IRS tax return data from two years prior to the year of expected college enrollment.

With the first of these changes, students will be able to submit the FAFSA as early as October in the year prior to enrollment, rather than having to wait until January in the year of enrollment, as they currently do. This new October timeline aligns more closely with the beginning of the college application process, and will allow students to examine

their options more thoroughly.

The second change allows students to use electronic tax return information from the year before they are filing their FAFSA form. For example, students entering school in 2017 will be able to use their family’s 2015 tax return information in their October filing, rather than having to use information for 2016, which they may not be able to get until April 2017.

Currently, submitting in January and correcting IRS data in March or April means that students do not receive accurate estimates of federal aid until April or May. This makes financial planning and deciding which school to attend based on scholarships or school-based financial aid very difficult. In some cases it has discouraged financially insecure students from accepting offers altogether.

Part of an overall effort to make college more accessible and affordable, these changes will remove a significant hurdle for a sizable portion of the population.



*Shannon Mizzi is the FSJ's editorial assistant. A graduate of Royal Holloway, University of London, she formerly served as the Journal's editorial intern.*

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**About 2 million college students did not apply for Pell Grants last year, despite being eligible.**

According to the White House, “Learning about aid eligibility options much earlier in the college application and decision process will allow students and families to determine the true cost of attending college—taking available financial aid into account—and make more informed decisions.”

Students will also have access to a new IRS data retrieval tool (DRT) that populates FAFSA fields with information directly from the IRS database, drastically reducing human error. The White House has emphasized the time-saving aspect for colleges, which will no longer have to verify student-entered financial data, as well as for students. Seven years ago it took families an hour to fill out the FAFSA; with the changes, it will take about 20 minutes.

### Making Aid Accessible

The Office of Federal Student Aid currently offers more than \$150 billion each year to more than 13 million students in higher education under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (1965). More than 65 percent of all full-time college students receive some form of federal financial aid.

Yet, according to the Department of Education, about 2 million college students did not apply for Pell Grants last year, despite being eligible; and many



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**“Applying for financial aid has been so cumbersome and poorly timed that many students don’t bother.”**

—Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

more students never apply to college because they don’t know federal funding is available.

“Applying for financial aid has been so cumbersome and poorly timed that many students don’t bother,” Secretary of Education Arne Duncan told reporters during a conference call in September. A White House statement at the same time made it clear that a simplified process “could encourage hundreds of thousands

of additional students to apply for and claim the aid they are eligible for—and enroll in college.”

Despite these positive changes, some have expressed concern about whether colleges will move deadlines for providing financial aid information to match the new federal timeline. However, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, an organization that covers institutions attended by 90

percent of undergraduates, has stated that it expects many colleges will align themselves with the government deadline leading up to 2017-2018.

Another concern is that many private universities use the College Board’s College Scholarship Service Profile, rather than FAFSA data, to assess students for financial aid. But the College Board has already expressed support for the reforms and may also restructure its own deadlines in the near future.

Note: It is important for applicants to remember that for the 2016-2017 academic year, students still cannot submit the FAFSA until January. Beginning in 2017-2018, students will be able to submit in October 2016. ■

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# Options for Educating Foreign Service Kids

**For most Foreign Service families, the education of their children is a primary bidding concern. Here is an overview of the many options.**

BY LEAH WALLACE

**N**ot too long ago, I spoke with a new Foreign Service officer who had stopped by the Family Liaison Office to talk about all the changes he saw ahead for his family. While excited about his decision to join the Service, his feelings were accompanied by the litany of questions that frequently arise for new members of the Foreign Service: What have I gotten my family into? Where can my family live while I'm in training? What will our lives be like? How can we navigate this new lifestyle?

Foreign Service parents have the wonderful opportunity to offer their children the chance to learn about and explore cultures around the world. For example, children may pick up one or more languages while living in other countries. Indeed, many consider the

possibility of their children becoming “global citizens” a major benefit of the Foreign Service lifestyle. The diverse experiences our children will have living and learning abroad will give them a leg up in the college application process, as many colleges consider students who have grown up globally a valuable asset to their student communities.

However, these perks are also accompanied by challenges. In fact, a primary bidding concern for most Foreign Service families is the education of their children. Fortunately, the State Department—believing that Foreign Service families should have educational opportunities as equal as possible to what they would have in the United States—offers an array of schooling options and allowances for families serving overseas.

This article will provide a brief overview of these options, as well as tips on

how to manage the transition back to the United States and what to do if your post is evacuated.

## The Scholastic Smorgasbord

International schools are a popular option for many Foreign Service families. These schools are independent institutions and have their own admissions policies. Often there are several to choose from. Most parents enroll their children in the international schools with an American curriculum because they believe this may positively impact their students' transitions over time. Nevertheless, there are frequently British, French and local schools that some families find to be attractive options.

Parents should be aware that it is their responsibility to contact schools directly about their impending arrival at post. They must also complete the schools' application processes. The community liaison office (CLO) may have information on the schools where post's families currently send their children or have sent them in the past. CLO offices

---

*Leah Wallace, a Foreign Service spouse, served as education and youth officer in the Family Liaison Office for five years. She has an M.A. in special education and has taught in Fairfax County, Virginia, as well as at the American Embassy School in New Delhi. Her two children grew up overseas, attending international schools before going to U.S. colleges.*

## International schools are independent institutions and have their own admissions policies.

may be contacted by using the following email configuration: CLOpostname@state.gov (e.g., CLOLima@state.gov).

Homeschooling and virtual school programs have multiplied and flourished over the last two decades. Different program protocols exist. Many offer International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement credits. Some have rolling start dates; others have more traditional beginning and completion dates. This can be an important option for Foreign Service families that find

their transfer dates are “off-cycle” from more traditional semester timelines.

Some Foreign Service students attend boarding schools. These institutions offer wonderful opportunities, especially continuity during the high school years when kids may be more reluctant to relocate. There are many boarding schools in the United States, as well as overseas. Some U.S. boarding schools may be located close to relatives, which may be attractive to some Foreign Service families; but overseas boarding

schools located closer to the family’s post can make home visits easier for the children.

Families considering boarding school may want to look at those accredited by U.S.-based educational associations, a factor that may be important when transferring to a new school or applying to college. Also, many offer I.B. and A.P. credits. Others have specialty programs in sports, arts, sciences, robotics and ecology, to name a few. There is even a boarding school in Vermont with a working farm, where the students are responsible for growing their own food and caring for the animals.

What about children with special needs? Unlike public school systems in the United States, independent schools

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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement December 2011

### College Applications Checklist for 11th-Graders

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

**W**hen it comes to college admissions, junior year of high school is crunch time. This is when you're expected to take the most challenging courses, get the best grades and start racking up those SAT or ACT scores. Junior year is the last full academic year that factors into acceptance decisions from colleges. It also provides an opportunity to bring up a mediocre grade point average and polish your resumé.

In addition, you can finish—yes, finish—a whole swath of the applications process in 11th grade so that you do not get hit with a ton of pressure the next fall.

This no-nonsense, month-by-month guide from December through August of your junior year will help you get a head start on the college application process and sail through your senior year.

*Francesca Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse, is a college applications essay tutor and writes frequently on educational issues. The college applications checklist for 11th-graders in the December 2011 issue of the FSJ is available online at [www.afsa.org/educationarticles](http://www.afsa.org/educationarticles).*



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## Fortunately, the overseas landscape for special needs education has improved over the past 15 years.

overseas are not legally required to provide educational opportunities to all students. Historically, independent schools have not provided many accommodations for students with special needs.

Fortunately, the overseas landscape for special needs education has improved over the past 15 years. Advances in technology have made the successful delivery of speech and occupational therapy via the Internet a much more viable option. And many international, independent schools now

provide support for students with mild learning disabilities.

Families should be aware, however, that even when a school offers this support there are often limitations, including spaces available in these programs. Also, international educators—like members of the Foreign Service—are mobile; and, therefore, special needs services offered at a school one year may not be available the next.

Foreign Service parents must do their pre-bidding homework to decide

if their children's special needs will be adequately supported by the programs and resources available at post. If a parent has a child with special needs or suspects a child may need learning support, they should contact the Department of State's Child and Family Program at [MEDCFP@state.gov](mailto:MEDCFP@state.gov).

### About Education Allowances

CFP can inform families of the special needs services available at certain posts and give information on how to access the Special Needs Education Allowance. Also, the Office of Overseas Schools ([www.state.gov/m/a/os](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os)) can supply information about special education services provided by their regional education officers.



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## Foreign Service families with children should be well versed in education allowances.

Foreign Service families with children should be well versed in education allowances. State's Office of Allowances has an excellent Frequently Asked Questions page on its website ([www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21944.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21944.htm)). Each post has different allowances, which include an "at-post" and "away-from-post" education allowance that are subject to change every year. The "at-post" allowance may be used at whatever local school parents deem to be best suited for their child. The "away from post"

allowance may be used to send a child to a boarding school.

While the Department of State gives families the freedom to choose the school that they think is the best fit for their children, there are limitations on the allowances that will be paid for school expenses. For instance, there are certain qualifications (e.g., mileage between the post and the school) that may apply in the computations.

Also, no education allowance is available for U.S.-based schooling if

one parent resides in the United States, even if the Foreign Service parent is posted abroad. It is the responsibility of families to be aware of these limitations when making school choices for their children.

### Coming Home

Some Foreign Service parents argue that the move from an overseas school to one in the United States is the most difficult transition for their children to make. Although it is natural to expect that bringing children to their home country would be easy, parents are often surprised at the reality: many American-passport-wielding Foreign Service children regularly encounter some difficulty integrating back into their own



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country's school system.

Sometimes these difficulties may be social in nature. I personally know families whose children come back for high school or college extremely excited to be "home," only to discover that they don't easily fit in with the other kids who have grown up in the United States.

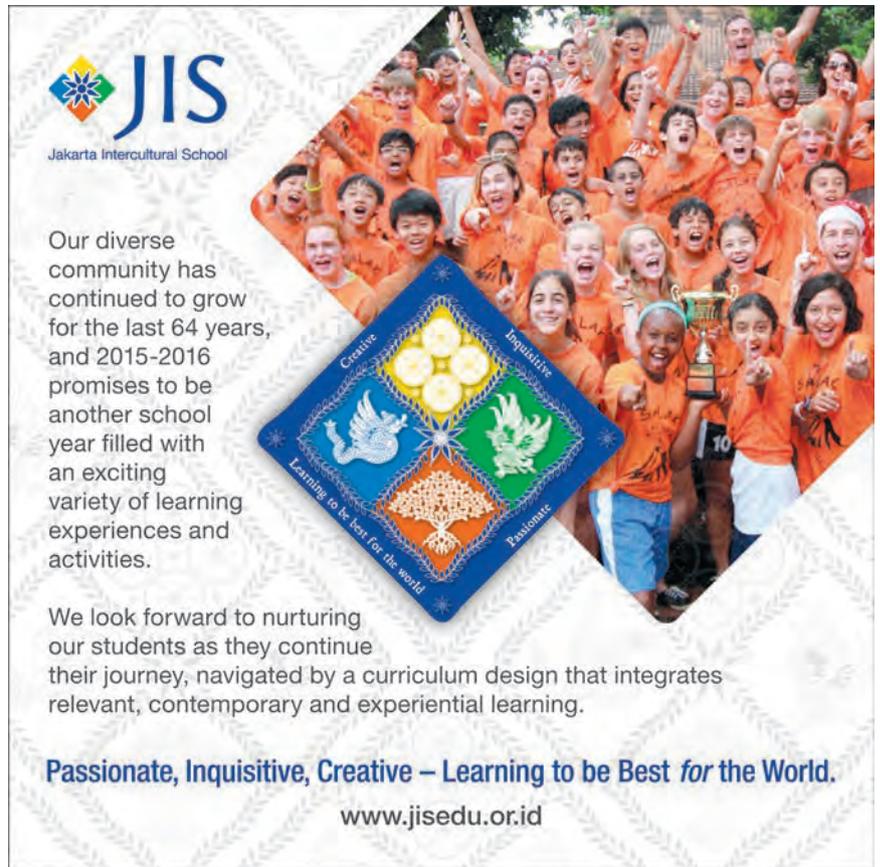
Other difficulties may arise in sports, for example. Such was the case for one young student who had been on the starting soccer team at her overseas school, but on returning to the United States found she had missed the entire preseason and was, thus, ineligible to play soccer that year.

A child's reaction sometimes depends on the length of time he or she has been overseas. At other times, it depends on how much integration the child has had while on home leave.

In addition, parents need to keep careful school records when they transfer their children to new schools. It is helpful to keep lists of textbooks and syllabi to enable new school officials to evaluate how to award credits and appropriately place students into their new classes.

As an example, math and U.S. history credits—often necessary graduation requirements for Foreign Service students—can be particularly difficult to transfer. Some institutions do not even offer U.S. history. Fortunately, there are numerous excellent online U.S. history programs that are available for students overseas.

As for math, some international schools follow an integrated math curriculum, which lumps together an array of math subjects within one year. In other words, a term of geometry and a term of algebra might be combined into Math 9, while at another school the entire year of 9th grade math may



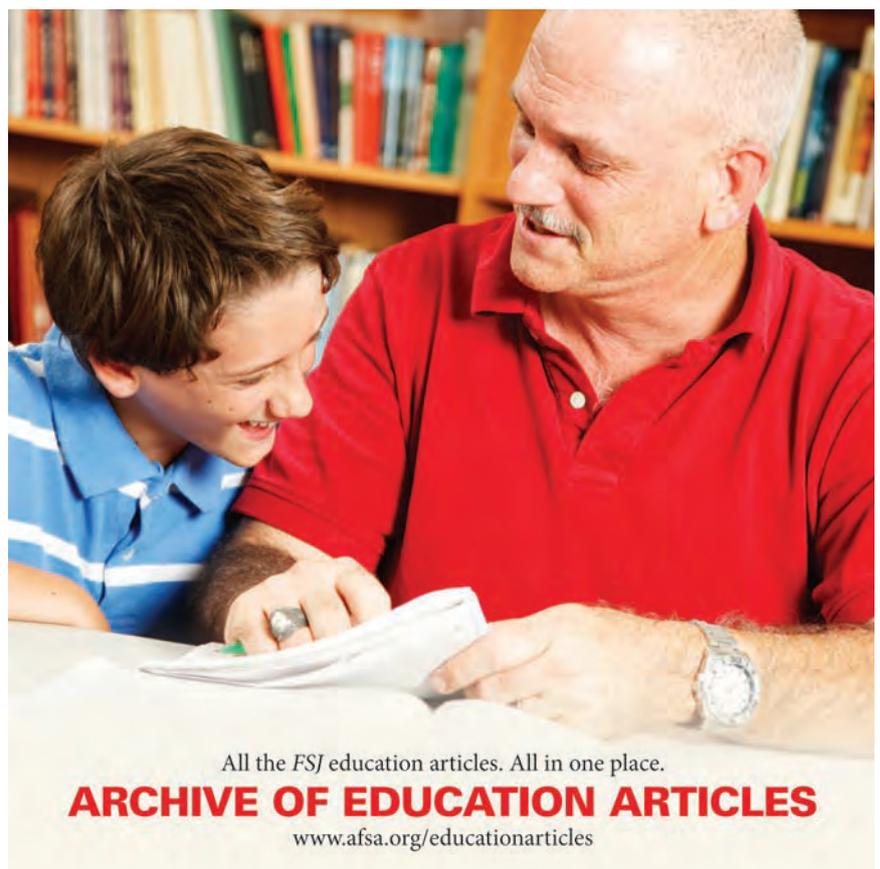
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## The asymmetry in curricula can be problematic when transferring between schools.

focus on geometry only. The asymmetry in curricula can be problematic when transferring between schools.

For families coming back to Washington, D.C., there are excellent school districts to consider. All of these districts have wonderful websites with information on their requirements, jurisdictions, curricula and points of contacts for new families. The major challenge faced by families returning to the D.C. area is that enrollment in most local school systems requires a physical

presence and a current local address. Families might want to consider this obstacle when organizing their transfer dates. One parent and the children may leave post earlier than the Foreign Service employee to establish a residence in the D.C. area for purposes of enrollment in their local school system.

### Evacuations

Finally, I offer here a quick word on evacuations and education. During my time working in the Family Liaison

Office there were multiple evacuations that forced families to leave in the middle of the school year. In this Foreign Service life, it is not uncommon for families to relocate without knowledge of how long their evacuation will last.

Often, because evacuations last three or more months, parents are compelled to enroll their students in a local school at the family's safe haven location. Enrolling in a local school can provide much-needed structure for children while on evacuation status. In my experience, all schools in the D.C. metropolitan area worked with our Foreign Service families to provide as much continuity as possible for the students.

Also, many overseas schools have virtual school curricula and programs



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set up to support their students if they are evacuated for any reason. Some families opt to use the virtual school program exclusively; while other families choose to use the virtual school program in conjunction with enrolling in a local school.

In any event, keeping in touch with the overseas school is important to ensure the most optimal outcome for evacuated students.

### You're Not Alone

All Foreign Service families should be aware of the extensive resources available to them when contemplating their education options at their onward assignments. The Family Liaison Office should be the first stop for all FS families seeking guidance and resources. In particular, the FLO education and youth team is happy to answer any questions parents have regarding options for their children's education and can be reached at [FLOAskEducation@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov).

In addition, the Foreign Service Youth Foundation is a D.C.-metropolitan-based group that provides many activities for returning Foreign Service families. They have meet-ups for teens and middle schoolers, publish newsletters for all ages and organize outings year-round for the entire family.

FSYF sponsors annual contests for Foreign Service children to display their artistic, writing, scholastic and community service projects. They also have an established community where Foreign Service children can meet other Foreign Service kids who understand their lifestyle. For more information, please email the foundation at [FSYF@FSYF.org](mailto:FSYF@FSYF.org). ■

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# Multilingual Matters

## How Foreign Service Students Can Make the Most of Language-Rich Experiences Abroad

BY MARYBETH HUNTER AND CHRISTINE BROWN

**A**ny Foreign Service employee would agree that one of the joys of Foreign Service life is to experience the language of the host country. In fact, many argue that learning the native language opens up countless opportunities for personal and cultural enrichment for Foreign Service families. And who among us learns that language with the most ease and gusto? That's right; it's our Foreign Service youth.

While English-language education is available at most posts worldwide, more and more Foreign Service families are choosing to educate their children in a language other than that spoken at

home. To find out more about this trend and to uncover the advantages and challenges of educating a child in a foreign language, the Family Liaison Office spoke to Regional Education Officer and Office of Overseas Schools resident language expert Christine Brown.

**Family Liaison Office:** *What are the advantages and potential pitfalls of raising a bilingual child?*

**Christine Brown:** Over the last 15 years there has been much research conducted on the benefits of learning one or more languages. Scientists have noted that new neural pathways are formed when children learn and use more than one language. It appears that the more complex the second language, the greater the neurological gain. The science suggests that learning linguistically complex languages or multiple languages from an early age into adulthood may give a profound cognitive boost.

Researchers outside the United States have also looked at the impact that learning other languages has on one's native

language ability, especially in the areas of reading comprehension, executive brain functioning (memory, reasoning, problem solving) and creativity. In the United States, researchers have pointed to a correlation between early language learning (as well as the number of years of language study) and improved scores in English and mathematics on statewide assessments. Likewise, for many years the College Board has reported that students who have studied language for four consecutive years or longer have higher SAT scores.

One challenge Foreign Service parents face is what to do when their children's learning of a second language is interrupted when moving to other schools and countries. Sometimes parents seek tutors to help students maintain or gain a higher proficiency in that language as they move around the world. At other times, this is impractical.

Nevertheless, parents should rest assured that students actually use the strategies they gained learning their first foreign language to make more rapid progress in a second foreign language.



*Marybeth Hunter (left) is an education and youth specialist in the State Department's Family Liaison Office.*



*Christine Brown, a regional education officer, is the Office of Overseas School's resident language expert.*

Simply explaining these advantages to children helps them keep a positive attitude about learning the next language.

Just as students must build upon different mathematics concepts from algebra to calculus, there is a similar value in learning and being exposed to multiple languages.

**FLO:** *How long will it take for a Foreign Service child to become fluent in a second language?*

**CB:** That depends on the length and type of exposure to the language. Today, language educators use the term “proficiency” to describe progress in terms of speaking, writing, listening and reading; whereas in the past, we tended to measure these skills in isolation. For

example, many of us learned languages years ago by studying and being tested on the grammar of the language.

Today, there are national assessments that measure a student’s language proficiencies over time in ways similar to the oral and writing proficiency scales and assessments used by the Foreign Service Institute. We have adapted those scales and assessments to the K-12 environment, and researchers have determined how much time and under what circumstances language proficiency improves.

As a result, we now know that students who begin languages at an earlier age generally have better pronunciation than older learners. We also know that the amount of time

necessary for English speakers to learn all domains (reading, writing, etc.) of certain languages is much greater than with others. For example, English speakers reach higher proficiencies in Romance languages much faster than they do in Mandarin, Japanese, Korean or Arabic. Children who are exposed to a language in the classroom, at home and in social environments make faster progress through all domains of language use.

The research also shows the benefits of placing students in partial or full immersion language settings. That is, when the language program is carefully planned to include content from other subject areas (e.g., science and music)

*Continued on page 86*

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# SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Go to our webpage at [www.afsa.org/education](http://www.afsa.org/education)

School	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution	Percent Boarding	Percent Int'l.	Levels Offered	AP/IB*	TABS Common Application	Accept ADD/LD	Miles to Int'l. Airport	International Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage**	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
<b>■ ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR HIGH</b>													
Indian Mountain School	89	250	50/50	37	12	PK-9	N/N	N	Y	52	N	N	54,500
<b>■ ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH</b>													
Barrie School	90	325	50/50	NA	25	PK-12	Y/N	NA	Limited	31	Y	NA	15,500-29,650
Basis Independent McLean	81	300	50/50	NA	NA	PK-12	Y/N	N	Limited	14	N	N	22,000-25,500
Bolles School	89	1,665	51/49	5	3	7-PG	Y/N	Y	Y	23	Y	N	46,830
Hampshire Country School	91	25	All boys	100	5	3-12	N/N	N	Y	65	N	N	56,200
International School of Minnesota, The	79	330	51/49	9	35	PS-12	Y/N	N	N	16	Y	Y	35,650
Rochambeau, The French International School	75	1,030	47/53	NA	48	PS-12	N/N	N	Limited	25	N	N	21,265
<b>■ JUNIOR HIGH/SENIOR HIGH</b>													
Grier School	76	310	All girls	85	45	7-12	Y/N	Y	Y	120	Y	N	51,700
Hargrave Military Academy	68	300	All boys	92	12	7-12, PG	Y/N	N	N	76	Y	N	32,800
Saint Stanislaus	91	361	All boys	20	5	7-12	Y/N	Y	Y	20	Y	Y	24,960
St. Margaret's School	75	135	All girls	80	30	8-12	Y/N	Y	Limited	50	Y	Y	47,300
Stoneleigh-Burnham School	87	137	All girls	65	35	7-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	100	Y	N	53,708
<b>■ SENIOR HIGH</b>													
Asheville School	65	285	50/50	80	19	9-12	Y/N	Y	N	42	Y	Y	49,270
Besant Hill School of Happy Valley	74	100	50/50	85	40	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	80	Y	N	51,915
Christchurch School	92	205	67/33	70	30	9-12	Y/N	Y	Y	50	Y	Limited	47,600
Fountain Valley School, The	66	240	50/50	70	26	9-12	Y/N	Y	N	75	Y	N	50,650
George School	69	540	51/49	53	26	9-12	Y/Y	Y	N	40	Y	N	54,600
Kent School	94	570	53/47	90	30	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Limited	90	Y	Limited	56,500
New Hampton School	78	325	58/42	80	25	9-12, PG	Y/Y	Y	Y	70	Y	N	55,900

\* Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate. \*\* Dec. 25-Jan. 1.



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School	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution	Percent Boarding	Percent Int'l.	Levels Offered	AP/IB*	TABS Common Application	Accept ADD/LD	Miles to Int'l. Airport	International Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage**	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
<b>■ SENIOR HIGH • CONTINUED</b>													
St. Mark's School	69	360	53/47	75	22	9-12	N/N	Y	N	30	N	N	55,500
Tilton School	71	255	63/37	75	28	9-12, PG	N/N	Y	Y	75	Y	Y	57,200
Worcester Academy	62	490	51/49	35	21	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	48	Y	N	49,420
Wyoming Seminary	93	441	55/45	40	22	9-12, PG	Y/N	N	N	13	Y	Y	48,900
<b>■ OVERSEAS</b>													
Berlin Brandenburg International School	70	700	50/50	20	65	K-12	N/Y	N	Y	15	Y	N	43,000 <sup>c</sup>
Carlucci American International School of Lisbon	79	650	50/50	NA	60	PK-12	N/Y	N	Limited	22	Y	NA	9,344-21,790
Dulwich College Shanghai	63	1,500	50/50	NA	100	PK-12, PG	N/Y	N	NA	20	Y	Y	12,594-
Frankfurt International School	83	1,790	50/50	0	80	K-12	N/Y	N	Limited	19	Y	N	23,123
International School Frankfurt-Rhein-Main	91	900	50/50	NA	72	PK-12	Y/Y	N	N	6	Y	N	13,000-20,600
Jakarta Intercultural School	75	2,500	50/50	NA	85	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	24	Y	N	19,500-32,100
John F. Kennedy School Berlin	83	1,680	50/50	NA	50	K-12	Y/N	N	Limited	15	Y	N	None
Kingham Hill School <sup>a</sup>	64	304	60/40	60	22	6-12	Y/N	N	Y	66	Y	N	23,737-54,411
Leysin American School in Switzerland	76	340	50/50	100	80	7-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	75	Y	N	88,000 <sup>c</sup>
Ridley College	94	640	55/45	55	33	K-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Y	41	Y	Y	42,150 <sup>b</sup>
St. Stephen's School	86	274	47/53	14	61	9-12, PG	Y/Y	N	N	12	Y	N	38,300 <sup>b</sup>
TASIS The American School in England <sup>a</sup>	85	740	50/50	27	45	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	8	Y	N	58,500 <sup>c</sup>
TASIS The American School in Switzerland <sup>a</sup>	85	730	50/50	36	75	PK-12, PG	Y/Y	Limited	Limited	40	Y	N	83,000 <sup>c</sup>
Woodstock School	87	500	50/50	100	55	5-12	Y/N	N	N	150	Y	N	23,000

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<b>■ SPECIAL NEEDS</b>													
Brehm Preparatory School	88	75	70/30	98	7	6-12, PG	NA	N	Y	50	Y	Y	73,100
Gow School, The	72	150	91/9	90	33	7-12, PG	NA	N	Y	20	Y	Y	63,600
Kildonan School, The	91	80	65/35	60	8	2-12, PG	NA	Y	Y	90	N	N	70,000
Oakland School	93	50	50/50	40	7	3-8	NA	N	Y	75	N	N	49,450
<b>■ DISTANCE LEARNING</b>													
TTUISD	96	Texas Tech University Independent School District. K-12 and accredited HS diploma; bachelor's through graduate programs.											
Stanford Online High School	IFC	Western Association of Schools & Colleges-accredited, diploma-granting independent school (7-12). Global and academically motivated student body, American college-preparatory education. Advanced academic program (AP and university-level courses). Student services and vibrant student life. State Department covers tuition. <a href="http://www.ohs.stanford.edu">www.ohs.stanford.edu</a>											
<b>■ POST SECONDARY</b>													
Florida Institute of Technology	95	9,110	73/27	30	30	B.A., B.S., M.S., Ph.D.	Y/N	NA	Y	3	Y	Y	45,950
Stanford High School Summer College	60	Attend Stanford University during the summer. Students aged 16-19 choose from 145 different courses in over 30 departments. Take courses taught by Stanford faculty & scholars. Earn Stanford University credit. <a href="http://summercollege.stanford.edu">summercollege.stanford.edu</a> .											
<b>■ OTHER</b>													
AAFSW	93	Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide. Publisher of <i>Raising Kids in the Foreign Service</i> . A volunteer organization that supports employees, spouses, partners and MOHs. <a href="http://www.aafsw.org">www.aafsw.org</a> .											
DACOR	93, 94	DACOR Bacon House Foundation offers Dreyfus scholarships to children & grandchildren of FSOs attending Yale or Hotchkiss. <a href="http://www.dacorbacon.org">www.dacorbacon.org</a> .											
FLO	12	Family Liaison Office, Department of State. Information and resources for Foreign Service families. Contact <a href="mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov">FLOAskEducation@state.gov</a> . <a href="http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm">www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm</a> .											
FSYF	84	Foreign Service Youth Foundation. A support network for U.S. Foreign Service Youth worldwide. <a href="http://www.fsyf.org">www.fsyf.org</a>											

\* Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate. \*\* Dec. 25-Jan. 1.



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*Continued from page 78*

and delivered in the target language, students develop higher proficiencies in the language at a faster rate.

And, finally, students who study English as a foreign language need about seven years of full or partial immersion to acquire the deep academic language skills required to function as a native English speaker in a classroom. Of course, they are able to communicate at a surface-level proficiency much sooner.

We see the same progress for American students who have surface-level communication skills in a foreign language, but lack the hours of intensive exposure needed to perform in school as a native speaker. Educators should be careful not to overestimate students' academic language ability.

## Research shows that literacy in any foreign language increases a child's thinking capacity.

**FLO:** *Should literacy skills in the second language be taught?*

**CB:** The research shows that literacy in any foreign language actually increases a child's thinking capacity. What's more, literacy is a critical skill for anyone hoping to use their second or third languages in the real world.

In the 1980s, American researchers negated some of the old notions about language study—mainly that students should not be exposed to the printed word until they reached an advanced

stage of speaking proficiency.

The new research shows that all students, even those working to improve their native English language abilities, learn best in a so-called “print rich” environment.

In addition, English speakers require more time to learn languages that use characters and symbols that are radically different from the Latin-based alphabet.

*Continued on page 90*



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May 7—register by Apr. 8  
June 4—register by May 5  
These dates are tentative.

Please note that in some countries, you must register for an SAT test date — about 10 days earlier than the above registration dates — through an international representative. Check the College Board website for more details.



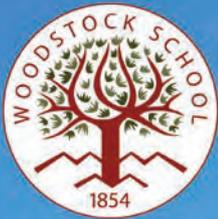
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## Resources for Foreign Service Families Raising Bilingual Kids

Adapted from Foreign Service Institute Course MQ 851 "Raising Bilingual Children"

### On Raising Bilingual Children

- **"Raising Bilingual Children"** – Evening course offered by the Foreign Service Institute.
- **"A Guide to Raising Bilingual Children"** – CNN article by Amy Paturel, freelance writer on food and nutrition, health and travel.
- **"10 Steps to Raising Multilingual Children"** – Resource from the Multilingual Children's Association.
- **"Raising Bilingual Children"** – Resource from the Linguistic Society of America.
- **Topics of Interest on Language Learning** – Resource from the Center for Applied Linguistics.
- **"Raising a Bilingual Child: The Top Five Myths"** – Article by Roxana A. Soto, freelance journalist and co-founder and co-editor of SpanglishBaby.

- **"Raising Bilingual Children: The First Five Steps to Success"** – Article by Christina Bosemark, founder of the Multilingual Children's Association.

### Language Learning Resources

- **Office of Overseas Schools, U.S. Department of State**
- **"Why Children Should Learn a New Language While Abroad"** – Article by the Betsy Burlingame, founder of ExpatExchange.com.
- **"Cognitive Benefits to Learning Language"** – Article featured on the website of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages .
- **"Ways to Introduce Your Kids to Foreign Languages"** – PBS article by freelance journalist and HapaMama blogger Grace Hwang Lynch.

- **"Bilingual Babes: Teach Your Child a Second Language"** – Parents.com article by freelance journalist Ilisa Cohen.
- **MuzzyBBC** – Early childhood language learning courses by the BBC in collaboration with Early Advantage.
- **DinoLingo** – Language learning resources for children.
- **Funbrain** – Online language learning games for children.
- **LangoKids** – Fun language learning materials for young children.
- **RosettaStoneKids** – Interactive language learning software for children.
- **Family Liaison Office, U.S. Department of State**

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Brehm School is a unique family style boarding school for students with complex learning disabilities, grades 6-12. Brehm is a forerunner in serving students with dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, auditory processing disorders, NVLD, aspergers and language-based learning disabilities. Brehm students go on to college, find fulfilling careers and become successful entrepreneurs.

The one of a kind Brehm experience offers:

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Brehm has joined forces with **The Arrowsmith Program**:

Brehm has forged a powerful partnership with the Arrowsmith Program to become an even more powerful force for positive change in the lives of students with complex learning disabilities and differences. The Arrowsmith Program focuses on strengthening the underlying weak cognitive area, thereby improving the ability of that area to contribute to the learning activity. It addresses the root cause of the learning disability.



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Continued from page 86

**FLO:** *Is immersion education an appropriate choice for all Foreign Service children?*

**CB:** We know that adolescent students may have greater anxiety about being placed in full or partial immersion classes than younger learners. Some schools have perfected collaborative ways to tackle higher-level immersion classes.

In these schools, there are two teachers in each classroom, and information is provided in English if a student does not understand. Other schools hire bilingual staff who toggle between languages when students do not understand. Parents of older students need to make sure the program they are considering is well-researched and well-developed.

**FLO:** *How can I support my child's learning at home when I do not speak the immersion language?*

**CB:** First, take heart that you have done the right thing by being in the Foreign Service and giving your children the chance to live in another country and experience another language (or two, or three). In fact, Foreign Service parents have a unique opportunity to encourage bilingualism in their children.

Certainly you can convey the importance of the language learning process to your child by studying another language yourself. As I visit posts, students tell me how excited their parents are for them to learn languages—an opportunity many of them never had.

As a parent, you should not only

encourage your children to make friends with native speakers at school, but should also seek to actively engage with these friends and their parents in a way that shows respect for the local languages and cultures.

Valuing language learning at the same level as other school content will send a message to children and to the school that you know how challenging yet important it is for your child to build their language proficiency. You can reinforce this message by arranging family outings focused on local cultural and language events and helping your children acquire interesting books, magazines and technological support for learning and improving their language skills.

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Given the history of our two countries and the need after World War II to foster an understanding between young Americans and Germans, this experimental school was created to provide a safe place where children, parents and staff could learn from one

another. The concept was the brainchild of forward-thinking educators from Berlin who could see a world where mutual trust and respect were built through the learning of one another's languages and cultures in a joint institution.

Today, after more than five decades of hard work and commitment to the model, the school community is still committed to this mission. Thousands of JFK students have gone on to play enlightened and powerful roles in society. The students with whom I spoke would not trade this experience for anything, and they know they are changed because of their abilities to live and learn in another language.

The staff is also unique. For them, each day is filled with the challenges of learning about each other and learning together. Their teaching has evolved from their own respective culture-centered instruction methods to a more informed and multifaceted approach to teaching and learning.

While the John F. Kennedy School may be unique in design and history, the mission and vision of language and culture proficiency is shared with language teachers around the world. These educators believe that language is at the heart of the human enterprise and that learning the language and culture of other countries is at the core of being globally prepared for the future. ■



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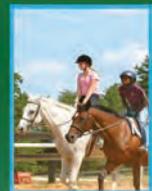
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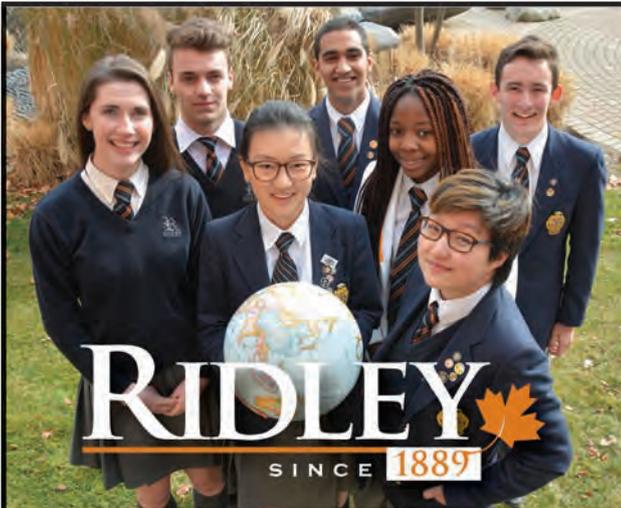
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## Lessons Learned— Or Well-Taught, at Least

### Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful Diplomacy

Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri, editors,  
*Oxford University Press, 2015, \$29.95/  
paperback, \$12.99/Kindle, 304 pages.*

REVIEWED BY BARBARA K. BODINE

In the popular mind, shaped by the media and reflected in Congress, diplomacy is what a state does to bide its time between wars—a view not that far off from the definition of an ice-hockey game. It is the absence of sufficient power or will to bend the world to your chosen vision, a synonym for duplicity in the guise of good manners...and it generally fails.

Not only is this the conventional wisdom, but too often it informs the teaching of diplomacy (or international relations or whatever one chooses to call it). The Department of State, home to most of America's diplomats, worries that insufficient attention is paid, in the training and education of our own diplomats, to “lessons learned”—generally understood to be the anatomy of failures—a skill assumed to be an art form within the military.

Robert Hutchings, former dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin and a former chairman of the U.S. National Intelligence Council, and his colleague at the LBJ School, Jeremi Suri, have combined their backgrounds as scholars and practitioners to edit a volume that pushes back against this diplomatic defeatism. Their book, *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs*, has the unambiguous subtitle “Cases in Successful Diplomacy.”

These nine case studies are not all American successes or conventional geopolitical victories, and only one—on development and humanitarianism in

Taliban-era Afghanistan—covers events in this century. Arranged chronologically, they begin in the immediate aftermath of World War II, working through the rise of diplomacy in the developing world, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, normalization of American relations with China and the Camp David Accords before ending with the emergence of the European Union and Mexico's role in crafting the North American Free Trade Agreement.

One hopes that the next edition will capture two latter-day cases: the Iranian nuclear agreement and normalization of relations with Cuba.

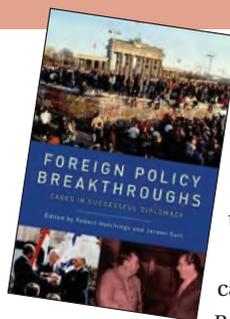
Hutchings and Suri are not cheerleaders for diplomacy, but scholars who recognized a gap in the literature on how diplomacy is conducted and to what end—beyond what they refer to as “synthetic treatments” of the varied aspects of diplomacy and statecraft.

They note that the rich body of memoirs rarely provides deep analysis of specific events or issues, while those works focused on theory and logical exposition lack the drama, disorder and confusion of diplomacy as it is practiced in the real world.

I would add that, approached through the prism of public policy scholarship, “diplomacy” is too often reduced to mechanics and tactics subject to quantitative analysis, stripping out the fundamental variable: the human factor.

Curiously, Hutchings and Suri critique previous multi-author volumes as too broad and potentially uneven. They distinguish their own example of the genre as part of the lost art of case studies.

But more importantly, they choose to explore the lessons of what worked, to discern patterns and practices that can be applied going forward—rather than the



forensics of what failed, which tend to be idiosyncratic.

With its wise selection of both cases and authors, *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs* makes a strong argument for the value of the case study method in diplomacy and provides the tools any scholar or practitioner-turned-academic would need to craft a course on the art and the science of diplomacy. (Full disclosure: I head the institute that inherited the Pew Case Studies program and have focused on the very need for replenishment and update that Hutchings and Suri call for.)

As a bonus, the authors' introduction and conclusions can stand alone as a primer for any student, new diplomat or concerned citizen who wishes to understand what makes diplomacy unique: the convergence of vision with detail, of patience and perseverance, of leadership and delegation, and of the value of realism.

Each of the case studies in this superb book illuminates each of these lessons. Whether they are of equal quality and value may depend more on the perspective and pedagogical needs of the reader than inherent scholarship.

Taken together, they do demonstrate that diplomacy properly understood and practiced can continue to make the breakthroughs we all aspire to and the world needs so badly.

*Foreign Policy Breakthroughs* is already on my syllabus. ■

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*Barbara K. Bodine, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, served as ambassador to Yemen from 1997 through 2001, among many other assignments. Ambassador Bodine is currently Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy and director of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service.*

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# Would You Like A Cup of Tea?

BY JOSH GLAZEROFF

The hospitality of other cultures is something we Foreign Service types come to appreciate over the years. In my time overseas, I have often noted how open others are to us, newcomers to their country and visitors to their homes or places of work.

I can just about guarantee that I will be offered tea or coffee when visiting any other foreign ministry in the world; I certainly wouldn't predict the same at Main State. There is a lesson there for all of us as we engage in diplomacy and aim to access others' cultures.

In my five years in India, I saw a spirit of welcoming in every scenario in which I was someone's guest. Whether invited for dinner, visiting a store or coming for an official meeting, I was offered a connection, in many cases, a physical one—a drink, a bowl of nuts or some cookies.

The gestures sound formulaic, but are meaningful. Human beings are social creatures, and we like those times when someone reaches out to touch us, even if not by hand. The idea that this other person wants to engage us, symbolized in the food or drink, opens us up to dialogue and building a relationship.

My professional role could have gotten in the way of these connections, but I think the cultural norms were too strong. As a consular officer with oversight of

Was I teaching them the importance of doing the right thing, or were they teaching me? It is a life lesson I continue to ponder.

the visa process, I conducted site visits to quite a few people's homes to verify the information on their applications.

On many occasions, I was in a position of actively questioning someone's honesty in their own living room. Yet on no occasion did they fail to ask, "Would you like some tea?" No matter how difficult the line of inquiry I brought to their home and no matter how serious the potential impact on their immigration to the United States and the future of their family, I was a guest and someone with whom to connect.

The best illustration of this willingness to help came on a site visit to a house where we suspected a fake "son" was living. It was a very rainy day, and we had done quite a bit of driving to a more rural area before getting out of the vehicle. We headed inside, were offered the obligatory drinks and commenced our investigation.

Interviewing the family and reviewing their documentation, we got a clear indication they had fabricated a relationship solely for immigration purposes. Confident in our findings, we confirmed for the family that they were now ineligible for visas and would not be traveling

to the United States. We packed up our things and headed back out into the rain with big smiles for our excellent work.

So, what happened next? Of course, we got stuck in the mud. The skies had opened up. My colleagues and I were in our suits. Even with our best efforts, there was no way to push the vehicle free. Trapped right outside our interviewee's home!

India came to the rescue.

Those very same family members we had accused of fraud five minutes earlier came running out to the vehicle and, working together, we got it loose. Free again to drive away, we waved at those who had gone against our regulations and balanced that against all that they had just done to help us. Was I teaching them the importance of doing the right thing, or were they teaching me? It is a life lesson I continue to ponder.

Perhaps we should reconsider how we "task" one another via email without making a real connection. If we did try to get to know others better, if we did buy that cup of coffee, if we understood others' sincere policy differences, we might just come up with ways for us all to do our jobs better. ■



*Josh Glazeroff is a Foreign Service officer who has served in Santo Domingo, Durban, New Delhi and Washington, D.C. He previously served on the FSJ Editorial Board and is a current member of the AFSA Governing Board.*



**T**he Old Bridge, or Stari Most, built by the Ottoman architect and urban designer Mimar Sinan in the early 16th century in the town of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, spans a deep valley of the Neretva River. The town was developed as an Ottoman frontier town. During the conflict in the 1990s, most of the historic town, including the Old Bridge, was destroyed. The bridge has since been rebuilt through the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization, which has designated the area an UNESCO World Heritage site. The reconstructed Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar is a symbol of reconciliation, international co-operation, and the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities. ■

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*Lani Tedjomuljono, the spouse of retired FSO Gary Gray, served with her husband in Jakarta, Dili and Kuala Lumpur. She was born in Jakarta, Indonesia.*

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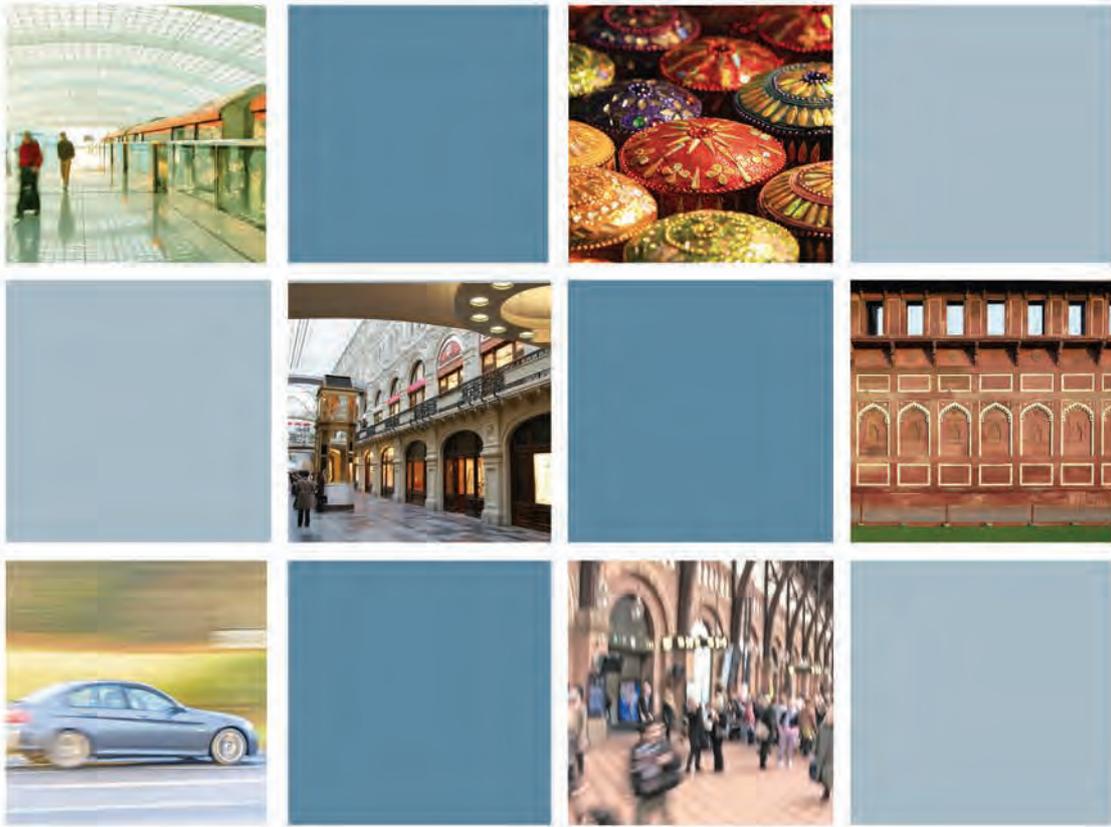
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