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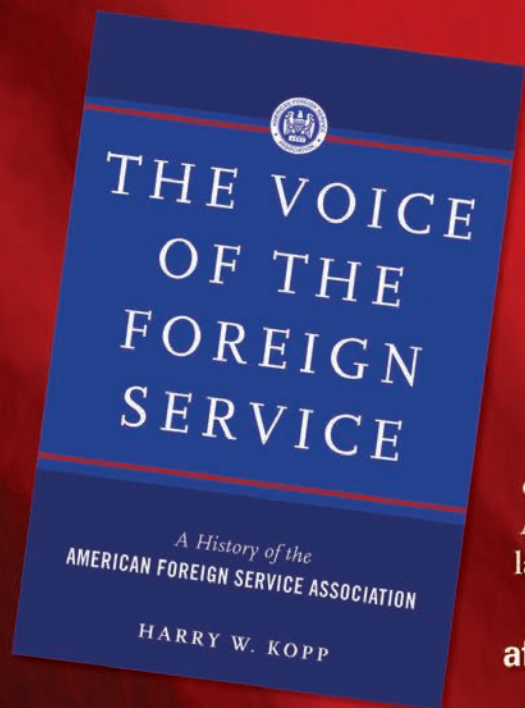


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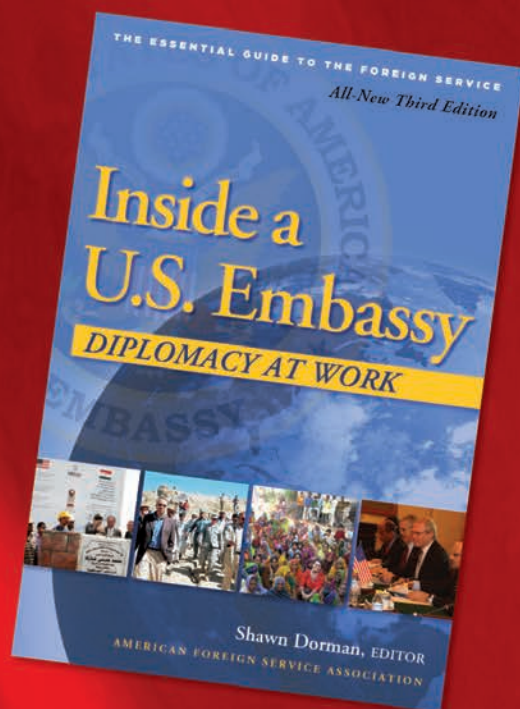


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On the Cover—Photo courtesy of the Payne Fellowship Program/Marina Montgomery. Payne Fellows gather at the National Press Club. Top row, from left: Mariela Medina Castellanos (2016), Tracey Lam (2014), Taylor Adams (2013), Ellexis Gurrola (2016) and Hoang Bui (2016). Bottom row: Suegatha Kai Rennie (2016), Jolisa Brooks (2016), Stephanie Ullrich (2016) and Brittany Thomas (2016).

Taking Stock and Looking Ahead

BY ERIC RUBIN

As I write this column, we are two months away from November's elections. By the time you read it, only a month will remain before we and our fellow citizens make choices that have the potential to affect our lives, and those of our children and grandchildren, for many years to come.

I don't claim to know how the elections will turn out, and I would not even want to try to prognosticate. What I will say is that every one of us, as proud citizens of the United States, must vote. And we must also comply with the Hatch Act that governs political activity of federal employees.

This year has been a year unlike any in recent memory. Historians will debate and assess how we as a country and we as a planet coped with the challenges that came our way, challenges that are ongoing.

For now, though, it is worth taking stock of what we have accomplished as a Service and as an association under trying circumstances. Beginning last fall and continuing into this year, we stood up—as a union and association, as a Service and as patriotic Americans—to support and defend our colleagues who

were compelled to participate in the legal process of impeachment.

Just when we thought we had put that crisis behind

us, COVID-19 hit and changed everything. The Foreign Service and AFSA have been in battle mode ever since. We've all helped support our global community through authorized departure, ordered departure, separation of dependents, medical quarantine and crisis-level staffing shortages.

We've worked with the leadership of our agencies to support bringing new members of the Foreign Service on board virtually, an unprecedented experiment that is now paying dividends every time a new class of talented and dedicated Americans joins us.

We've faced the national crisis of conscience over fundamental issues of race and ethnicity in America, and its impact on our Service and our agencies. As the September *Journal* and this edition demonstrate, AFSA is determined to play a role in shaping our response to these challenges and in shaping the Foreign Service of the future.

As this difficult year draws to a close, the unfinished business of bringing the Foreign Service back to the central role in American foreign policy formulation mandated in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 remains. That means having Senate-confirmed senior Foreign Service officers serving as Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries, or their equivalents, in all six of the agencies we represent. Right now, among those six agencies there are only two Senate-confirmed FSOs serving at the domestic policymaking level.

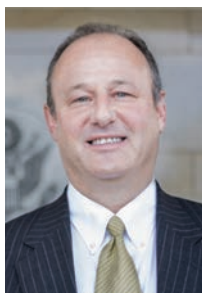
Our elected leaders need the advice and contributions of senior career experts before they make critical foreign policy decisions. There is no substitute for experience, and our members collectively bring thousands of years of experience to their jobs every day.

The Senate's role of advice and consent to senior appointments must also be restored, so that those carrying out the American people's business have the endorsement and confidence of two branches of government, as the Founders intended.

AFSA will work hard for change in the coming year: more career officers in chief of mission positions, a more diverse and inclusive Service, and more hiring in all the foreign affairs agencies to compensate for years of under-recruitment and a generational challenge in terms of retirement and retention.

AFSA has not always stood firm in defense of our members and our profession in the face of unjustified attacks and discrimination. We stand firm now, and we will continue to do so going forward. It is hard to imagine what 2021 will bring, after the disorienting changes and challenges of 2020. But we will be there for our members and for the essential national institution that is the U.S. Foreign Service.

We count on our members to let us know how we can do better, and to stand together in solidarity as we look ahead to the next set of surprises. ■



Ambassador Eric Rubin is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

Editor-in-Chief, Director of Publications
Shawn Dorman: dorman@afsa.org

Senior Editor
Susan Brady Maitra: maitra@afsa.org

Managing Editor
Kathryn Owens: owens@afsa.org

Associate Editor
Cameron Woodworth: woodworth@afsa.org

Publications Coordinator
Dmitry Filipoff: filipoff@afsa.org

**Business Development Manager—
Advertising and Circulation**
Molly Long: long@afsa.org

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CONTACTS



www.afsa.org

AFSA Headquarters:
(202) 338-4045; Fax (202) 338-6820
State Department AFSA Office:
(202) 647-8160; Fax (202) 647-0265
USAID AFSA Office:
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STAFF

Executive Director
Ásgeir Sigfússon: sigfusson@afsa.org
Executive Assistant to the President
Richard Bruner: bruner@afsa.org
Office Coordinator
Therese Thomas: therese@afsa.org

PROFESSIONAL POLICY ISSUES
Director of Professional Policy Issues
Julie Nutter: nutter@afsa.org

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pavlovich@afsa.org

COMMUNICATIONS

Director of Communications
Ásgeir Sigfússon: sigfusson@afsa.org
Manager of Outreach and Internal Communications
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MEMBERSHIP

Director, Programs and Member Engagement
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Member Operations Coordinator
Tomoko Morinaga: morinaga@afsa.org
Coordinator of Member Recruitment and Benefits
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Dolores Brown: brown@afsa.org

LABOR MANAGEMENT

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Sharon Papp: PappS@state.gov
Deputy General Counsel
Raeka Safai: SafaiR@state.gov
Senior Staff Attorneys
Zlatana Badrich: BadrichZ@state.gov
Neera Parikh: ParikhNA@state.gov
Labor Management Counselor
Colleen Fallon-Lenaghan:
FallonLenaghanC@state.gov
Senior Labor Management Advisor
James Yorke: YorkeJ@state.gov
Labor Management Coordinator
Patrick Bradley: BradleyPG@state.gov
Senior Grievance Counselor
Heather Townsend: TownsendHA@state.gov
Grievance Counselor
Benjamin Phillips: PhillipsBE@state.gov

Continuing the Conversation: Toward a Diverse, Inclusive Foreign Service

BY SHAWN DORMAN

The recent months of unease and disruption have presented a unique opportunity to look in the mirror, face the realities of inequality baked into our society and our institutions, and consider practical measures to effect real change. For these reasons, we have decided to keep the focus on race, diversity and inclusion for a second edition.

Judging from the response to our coverage so far and the new and renewed activity on the subject, members of the U.S. Foreign Service and the foreign affairs community more broadly are determined to put this opportunity to good use.

How gratifying it is to hear that an *FSJ* article inspired readers, giving many confidence and hope and a sense of community. So it has been with Julie Chung's September essay, "The Making of a Real American Diplomat," a reflection on her personal journey from child immigrant from Korea to senior-level diplomat for the United States of America.

Julie Chung received an outpouring of support and thanks from colleagues around the world (as well as FS candidates, think-tanks and the Hill) for

sharing her story. The article was viewed thousands of times in the first two weeks

Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.



from release. Other articles in the September edition have also struck a chord, contributing to broader discussions and planning now ongoing inside the foreign affairs agencies.

It is clearly an important time to put a spotlight on these issues. The mandate for a Foreign Service that represents the diversity of America appears to be an idea whose time has (finally) come.

The September focus, "Addressing Race, Diversity and Inclusion," included six articles that not only describe the problems but offer recommendations for change, actionable proposals for creating a more diverse, inclusive and equitable Foreign Service. We pick up from there in this issue, bringing in voices from USAID, the Foreign Agricultural Service and from 10 of the employee affinity groups, all working toward "Making Diversity and Inclusion Real in Foreign Affairs."

Stacy D. Williams shares "One Bureau's Model for Moving Forward," describing the establishment and the purpose of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Diversity Council. With innovative programs and outreach, this relatively new but already effective council could be worth replicating in other bureaus and agencies.

Valerie Brown introduces us to "Diversification in the Foreign Agricultural Service." Starting her Foreign Service career 19 years ago as the only Black woman FSO in FAS, and currently co-chair of the Civil Rights EEO Committee for FAS, she's the right person to tell this story.

And over at USAID, Youshea Berry serves as chair of the Payne Advisory Group and brings us the story of "Boosting Diversity at USAID" through the Payne Fellowship program.

Richard A. Figueroa looks at the State Department's record of resistance to implementation of "even basic EEO standards."

In "Needed: A Management Mindset," Charity L. Boyette makes a strong case that to strengthen the Foreign Service through diversity, State must prioritize management tradecraft in hiring, tenure, promotion and assignments decisions.

Elsewhere, in a practical and convincing *Speaking Out*, Warren Leishman explains why everyone should "Stop Shipping Your Personal Vehicle!" And Jonathan Rickert reflects on encounters with "Nixon in Moscow, March 1967."

The special FS Heritage package, "McCarthyism Revisited," includes Gerald Loftus on "The Exile of a China Hand: John Carter Vincent in Tangier," Felicity O. Yost on her father's recollections in "A Time of 'Great Malaise'" and excerpts from John W. Ford's 1980 article on his firsthand experiences during "The McCarthy Years Inside the Department of State." Lessons for today shine through in each piece.

In his column AFSA President Eric Rubin requests your feedback on how AFSA can do better, considering the trials of 2020 and preparing for the challenges—and opportunities—ahead.

Please keep in touch and help continue the conversation. ■

The Roots of State's Racist Legacy

I was moved by the candor and courage of Ambassador Michael McKinley's Speaking Out, "Changing Mindsets on Race at State," in the July-August *Journal*. There is indeed, as he underscores, an urgent need for a "genuinely open conversation about racism at State" as part of the broad national debate now swirling around us.

Understanding the roots of our legacy of institutional racism requires examining the ways in which the architects of our institutions built their racial biases into how the Foreign Service functioned in its early decades. One of the few books to focus on this issue is Martin Weil's ironically titled *A Pretty Good Club: The Founding Fathers of the U.S. Foreign Service*.

Weil draws on a wide range of unpublished manuscripts and personal interviews to paint a convincing portrait of how racial bias became embedded in the nascent Foreign Service through such devices as the examination and assignment process: "The oral interview before a panel of Foreign Service officers was really all that mattered. ... The standards were those of a fashionable Washington club. 'Is he our kind of person?' No one who clearly was not would pass. If a black slipped through the net, he was sent to Liberia until he resigned."

Some of the most striking evidence of the racial views of one of the first generations of FSOs is contained in the diaries of George Kennan, edited by historian Frank Costigliola and published in 2014. It is jarring to read of Kennan's complaint, after returning to the United States from Moscow in 1937, that the "buses to Alexandria are full of negroes and unhealthy, unbeautiful whites."

The following year, in an unpublished



book draft Kennan advocated denying Blacks voting rights since "we are kinder to those who, like our children, are openly dependent on our kindness than to those who are nominally able to look after themselves."

Thirty years later, during his first visit to Africa, Kennan would write that there was no reason "to suppose that a reversal of South African policy designed to force racial integration on a reluctant white population by legislative enactment would have consequences any more attractive than those which just such a policy seems to have produced on many a number of great American cities."

As we approach the outskirts of the centenary of the Rogers Act, signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge on May 24, 1924, we should not forget that on that very same day Coolidge also signed the National Origins Act of 1924, deemed a "triumph for racial theory and racial classification."

Although the leaders of the new Foreign Service did not succeed in convincing Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes to approve regulations to prohibit Blacks from entering the new Service, they managed, as noted above, to practically achieve their goal through other means.

Coming to terms with the tarnished legacy of our founders, in my view, will contribute to the conversation that Ambassador McKinley so eloquently calls for.

Bob Rackmales
FSO, retired
Belfast, Maine

State Is Not a Bastion of Racism

Ambassador Michael McKinley's contribution to the July-August *FSJ* relates personal and family experiences with racism within the Department of State.

In line with the old Foreign Service adage that one always fires back at criticisms of one's country, I would respond that in 26 years in the Foreign Service, I never witnessed an example of white on Black racism, never heard one racial slur coming from a colleague. Rather, racial conversation turned on "affirmative action," on what could be done to recruit minorities. The ambassador suggests that, in general, things are going downhill at State. Why should that be?

Although the ambassador claims that the vast majority of State employees do not consciously discriminate, he lets no one off the hook; rather, he places the blame for endemic racism on "underlying mindsets," on the "waters of inadvertent bias." Now, that goes really deep, deeper than actual behavior and performance, and deep into the realm of "thought control."

Thought control, Merriman-Webster tells us, is "the practice by a totalitarian government of attempting ... to prevent subversive and other undesired ideas from being received and competing ... with the official ideology and policies." Does the ambassador envisage corrective psychotherapy or, even, the use of microchip brain insertions?

This insistence on some unending presence of white superiority in the Department of State, this suggestion of the need for the department to exert power over the whole employee—even over their thinking—amounts to despotism. As someone once noted: “Liberty is independence not only from the tyranny of a king but from that of an employer.”

Further, it was not fitting for the ambassador to have publicly kicked the institution that has given him so much professional success. With tone and content, his contribution suggests that the Department of State is what it is not, a bastion of racism.

The writer should have kept his unfortunate private encounters within the department, if not to himself, and not broadcast them for the world to see.

Richard W. Hoover

FSO, retired

Front Royal, Virginia

Restoring Order

The July-August *Journal* reports that more than 500 former U.S. officials have signed a statement in opposition to “the use of the U.S. military to put down peaceful protests” (Talking Points, “NatSec Professionals Respond to Use of Military on U.S. Streets”).

This is a position no one disagrees with, and no official has advocated otherwise. So it is unclear what the purpose of the statement is.

Presidents of both parties have called on the military to restore order in moments of crisis. This is not just permitted under the Constitution; it’s an obligation for the president to preserve domestic tranquility.

Perhaps the authors of the statement have a view on how much violence against our fellow citizens is tolerable and how overwhelmed local officials

have to be to warrant extraordinary action being taken. Reasonable people can disagree on this.

I don’t know if any of the signers had to stand by and watch a business they had put their life’s savings into looted and burned. Nor do I know if any of them or their loved ones were beaten, blinded, hit by a brick or killed during “mostly peaceful” riots.

I hope they have not suffered so. But if they had, they might have a different perspective on this issue.

Dennis K. Hays

Ambassador, retired

Reston, Virginia

More Honest Evaluations

I’m prompted to write by Bill Burns’ article earlier this year in *The Atlantic* about what the State Department should do to reinvent itself in a post-Trump era, perhaps after 2020. One thing it could do is to make the personnel evaluation process more honest.

For decades, State sought fairness by offering the employee a look and a “review” of his supervisor’s performance evaluation. Meant to eliminate the occasional injustice, what it mostly did, however, was to produce a negotiation process between supervisor and employee that neutered real evaluations and allowed the mediocre and worse to “get by” because their bosses didn’t want to face confrontation with underperforming employees.

But if FSO supervisors are not to be trusted in the main to be just and honest in their evaluations, then they cannot be trusted at all, and that would be a damning indictment of the Service. I do not believe it.

My proposal is this: Performance evaluations should no longer be shared with or reviewed by those rated. Yes,

there is a trade-off here—we will have to accept the occasional mistake (or even injustice) in exchange for getting rid of “Casper Milquetoast” evaluations that promote the mediocre.

There is one possible ameliorative, which may already be in effect: If promotion boards are to put total faith in the evaluator, let them first review all or the majority of their previous employee evaluations to get a sense of the evaluator’s credibility.

That may require a greater investment of time by promotion boards, but if we’re always urging more positions for a “float” to support adequate language training for officers, why should we not be willing to invest more time in identifying and promoting the “best and the brightest” who are to be the core of the Foreign Service?

Marc E. Nicholson

FSO, retired

Washington, D.C. ■

CORRECTION

In the September editor’s letter, we erred in referring to author and retired Minister-Counselor James Dandridge as “Ambassador (ret.)” While he did serve as *chargé* at two posts, he did not receive an ambassadorial appointment during his career. That said, we continue to think of this senior statesman as an ambassador!

Share your thoughts about this month’s issue.

Submit letters to the editor: journal@afsa.org

IN RESPONSE TO THE JULY-AUGUST FOCUS ON PANDEMIC DIPLOMACY

Consulate Monterrey Helps Secure U.S. Food Supply During Pandemic

BY REED LANGERUD

I arrived in Monterrey last fall as a first-tour consular officer, eager to adjudicate visas in one of the highest-volume posts in the world.

I was briefed about the high season from March to June, when 3,000 or more Mexican workers gather on the sidewalk in front of our consulate every day before dawn, as part of a carefully orchestrated route to supply U.S. farms with labor in time for harvest.

Colleagues hustled all winter to prepare our team with the knowledge and resilience for the workload surge. We held workshops and training sessions, and even set up a relaxation room for the needed breaks. We were ready. But just as this year's peak season arrived, COVID-19 hit, and everything had to immediately change.

No longer could we guide thousands of workers a day through our waiting room for interviews. At the same time, farmers' concerns about getting the workers they needed for harvest reached a fever pitch. Workers on H-2 visas carry out a large portion of U.S. farm and other manual labor. In FY 2019, U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide issued more than 300,000 H-2 visas. Monterrey

Reed Langerud joined the State Department in 2019 and is a first-tour consular officer serving in Monterrey, Mexico.

Farmers' concerns about getting the workers they needed for harvest reached a fever pitch.



accounted for nearly two-thirds of them.

As the world's largest processor of H-2 visas, Consulate General Monterrey was in a critical position and had to act quickly to help avoid a catastrophic labor shortage. But we also had to mitigate the public health risks posed by our intake process.

In coordination with Embassy Mexico City and Consular Affairs Bureau colleagues in Washington, D.C., our section sprang into action. We implemented social distancing procedures in the office and waiting room, split our workforce into teams to minimize contact and halted all interviews beginning March 24. Our managers even made masks for everyone to wear at the office.

We cleared a plan for demonstrably approvable H-2 workers to be issued visas without in-person interviews, while maintaining secure adjudication. Individuals with a potential ineligibility

still required an in-person interview. We expanded our remote team processing H-2s to include adjudicators throughout Mexico, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Officers in Monterrey oversaw these adjudications and also pitched in with the work of local staff, printing and pasting visa foils.

With our new global corps of H-2 adjudicators coordinated by the Kentucky Consular Center, we have been able to satisfy visa demand, a remarkable feat. Farms will still face challenges because of falling demand from restaurants, distribution disruptions and the hurdles of implementing public health recommendations at worksites. However, with the help of Consulate General Monterrey, concerns about manual labor shortages have been alleviated.

Though the relaxation room is on hiatus for obvious reasons, the sense of camaraderie and pride at securing a critical link in the U.S. food supply chain is exactly what our team needed at this moment to maintain morale. Sure, I did not experience the peak season I expected. But I have been able to see something much more remarkable: the adaptability, responsiveness and calm of my colleagues as we drastically overhauled operations and procedures without an interruption in service.

I am hopeful that Americans—and communities around the world—will continue to find new ways to come together and support one another through this crisis. ■

Diplomacy and the Foreign Service

BY GEORGE LAMBRAKIS

As an old-timer with 31 years of service in State and USIA, I was impressed by Christopher Smith’s effort in the May *FSJ* (Speaking Out) to describe U.S. diplomats as managers of American power after his 15 years as a diplomat, often working and studying with the U.S. military, and espousing the military’s specialization as the only way for State to impress its professionalism on others in the U.S. government and its citizens.

Smith calls for much more formal training on the specifics of diplomatic action than now available for U.S. diplomats (but available to the military), an argument that I take to heart as a former director of training assignments in State’s Career Development Office.

But in the July-August *FSJ*, Ambassador (ret.) Michael Cotter retorts that becoming expert on one or two countries would mean abandoning the sacred principle of worldwide availability and would expose officers to the old charge of “going native” clientelism (Letters, “FSOs

George Lambrakis served with the U.S. Information Agency in Vietnam and Laos and with the State Department in Guinea, Germany, Israel, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Lebanon, Iran, Guinea-Bissau, Swaziland, and in Washington, D.C., and New York City. He subsequently taught international relations and diplomacy for two decades in London and Paris. He recently published a memoir, So You Want to Be a Diplomat?

Should Not Be Specialists”). Thus, the argument is drawn once again, as often in the past, of generalists vs. specialists.

We are thereby in old territory, with arguments that are useful to review. I had my own crack at this in the *FSJ* some years ago (“Is the Foreign Service Still a Profession?” June 2011), but have since had time to reconsider.

First, as British Prime Minister Anthony Eden once exclaimed (perhaps conscious of his mistakes in the Suez crisis): “Events, my boy, events!” A key strength of the Foreign Service is that it is always on guard, day and night, to changes in the political, military, economic or public relations environments everywhere in the world, and is usually able to come up with recommendations to address those changes in America’s interest.

This is not “managing power,” but it certainly sets State apart from every other government organization (including the National Security Council, lodged near the president in the White House). This also makes the Foreign Service more relevant to wise foreign policy than even the many-voiced press.

Second, after the diplomatic service was put on a professional basis with the Rogers Act of 1924, it was “Wristonized” in the 1950s, so that diplomats now help make policy in Washington, as well as continuing to report on events abroad that the policy is meant to address.

The task at home is not the same as abroad, and different people are differently talented in each case; but the change was intended to make sure that policymakers in Washington recognize the need to act within changing environments—not just among Americans at home, but also among governments and populations abroad.

Third, those environments abroad almost always include situations of war and peace. Still, I would not use the term “management of power” to describe U.S. diplomacy, Christopher Smith’s clever distinctions of soft, sharp, smart and hard power notwithstanding.

Surely policies to promote democracy, humanitarian values, peace and cooperation all rely at least as much on virtue at home and effective persuasion abroad as on U.S. “power” abroad (especially in an age of “America First”).

Smith quotes Harvard’s Professor Samuel Huntington at length. But Huntington’s starting point was always the military, and his theories of political development (which I studied at Tufts’ Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy) were based on his appreciation for efficiency of action as exemplified by militaries around the world.

American diplomats are not American soldiers, even if Secretaries of State like General Colin Powell can make valuable contributions, such as introducing specific leadership training (which people like me had to learn on the job) and getting extra money from Congress, which is traditionally much more responsive to the military than to State.

Christopher Smith correctly notes that one reason why the American public knows less about its diplomatic service than its military is the huge difference in numbers. He argues that an additional reason is that diplomats have not defined



for the public “who they are and what they represent.”

Yet State has always tried hard to address gatherings of people interested in foreign affairs at universities, public conferences, world affairs councils, businesses, think-tanks, military organizations and more.

One reality is that far more American families are personally affected by family members in the military, and those relations being killed or wounded when fighting abroad—and this is reflected in Congress.

So what is to be done? Clearly, there is a need for some area or country specialists within the political, economic and public diplomacy cones; some politico-military specialists (like Christopher

Smith and me); and some specialists in other functional areas like nuclear issues or climate change as those areas grow in importance around the world.

But we shall always need generalists, as well. (Secretary of State Henry Kissinger imposed a program in the 1970s requiring at least one assignment elsewhere, even for area specialists.) At the very least, generalists who attain senior ranks often act as umpires weighing the zeal of specialists in the overall balance of American policy as seen from the White House.

All officers must serve at home and abroad, but some will be more attracted to, and be better at, one job or the other. The Service is already sensitive to this, and natural selection usually tends to the assignments.

Finally, there is certainly a need for much more training guided by Foreign Service practitioners, along with outsiders, and a recognition by selection boards that people in training might also merit promotion (to reduce the tendency of high-flyers to avoid long-term training assignments).

But this will take more money from Congress and is only likely to happen gradually, with much work needed on State’s presence and connections both in Congress and beyond the NSC, in the White House, to explain State’s unique selling points—continuous enlightened reporting from abroad, and the ability to prevent wars or pick up the pieces once the U.S. military has done its job. ■



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Political Ambassadors: Where the Candidates Stand

The president appoints all U.S. ambassadors. The use of ambassadorial positions as rewards for campaign donors and “bundlers” is not new; it is a relic of the old spoils system of government. Though long the norm, the practice is not only controversial; it violates the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

According to Section 304.32 of that law:

“(1) An individual appointed or assigned to be a chief of mission should possess clearly demonstrated competence to perform the duties of a chief of mission, including, to the maximum extent practicable, a useful knowledge of the principal language or dialect of the country in which the individual is to serve, and knowledge and understanding of the history, the culture, the economic and political institutions, and the interests of that country and its people.

“(2) Given the qualifications specified in paragraph 1, positions as chief of mission should normally be accorded to career members of the Service, though circumstances will warrant appointments from time to time of qualified individuals who are not career members of the Service.

“(3) Contributions to political campaigns should not be a factor in the appointment of an individual as a chief of mission.

“(4) The President shall provide the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, with each nomination for an appointment as a chief of mission, a



report on the demonstrated competence of that nominee to perform the duties of the position in which he or she is to serve.”

Over decades, the average number of “political” as opposed to “career” ambassador appointments has been in the range of 30 to 40 percent, with 60 to 70 percent coming from the career Foreign Service. The Trump administration has appointed more political ambassadors than any president since Ronald Reagan.

Eighty-one out of President Trump’s 189 ambassadorial appointments, or 43 percent, have been political, according to the AFSA Ambassador Tracker—a fact highlighted in an Aug. 18 NPR report, “Under Trump, More Big Donors Are Named Ambassadors—and Controversies Have Followed.”

As AFSA President Eric Rubin told *The Guardian* on May 30, “We are concerned that the percentage of political appointees is higher than at any time in recent history, and also with the number of nominees who do not appear to be qualified for their positions.”

Contemporary Quote

“The [State] Department has a long-standing policy of limiting participation in partisan campaigns by its political appointees in recognition of the need for the U.S. Government to speak with one voice on foreign policy matters. The combination of department policy and Hatch Act requirements effectively bars you from engaging in partisan political activities while on duty, and, in many circumstances, even when you are off duty.”

—State Department Memo “Rules on Political Activities” from State Legal Adviser, updating employees on the restrictions on political participation while in any State Department position, released Dec. 3, 2019.

In 2020, the only presidential candidate to promise not to nominate political donors as ambassadors was Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.).

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden “has refused to rule out giving ambassadorships to big-time campaign donors and fundraisers,” *Politico* reported on Aug. 11. “Instead, he’s indicated that, if he wins the presidency, he’ll continue the longstanding, bipartisan practice.”

Last December, according to the Associated Press, while campaigning in Iowa, Biden said, “I’m going to appoint the best people possible. Nobody, in fact, will be appointed by me based on anything they contributed.” He added: “You have some of the people out there ... that are fully qualified to head up everything from being the ambassador to NATO to be ambassador to France ... who may or may not have contributed.”

Ambassador Rubin has reiterated that presidents should follow the requirements of the Foreign Service Act of 1980. According to the Aug. 11 *Politico* article, Rubin noted that the law indicates that “political appointments as ambassadors should be rare and that all nominees must be fully qualified. That is the law of the land.”

“Diplomacy in Crisis” Report Issued

Senate Democrats released a report on July 28 blasting the Trump administration’s management of the State Department. The 46-page document, “Diplomacy in Crisis: The Trump Administration’s Decimation of the State Department,” was prepared for the Committee on Foreign Relations by its minority staff.

“The Trump administration’s negligence and its attacks on our diplomatic corps, who serve on the frontlines of our global pandemic response, have left diplomats devoid of leadership and cost the United States valuable time in preparedness and response efforts,” the document states.

“Every day, our diplomatic professionals work to ensure American safety and security, sometimes placing their lives on the line in their patriotic service. In

exchange, they must be guaranteed the support of their leadership and a work environment free from politicization and discrimination,” the report continues.

The report makes 10 recommendations to bolster the State Department:

- Rebuild and retain expertise in the State Department’s ranks;
- Reduce barriers to restoring lost expertise and for former diplomats and civil servants to return to the department;
- Promote more career employees to senior positions;
- Increase diversity at senior ranks and throughout the department;
- Formalize the State Department’s exit survey process;
- Initiate a review of how the “corridor reputation” system at the department enables or exacerbates the challenges outlined in this report;

- Restore and commit to minimum vetting standards;
- Prioritize and fill senior leadership slots;
- Maintain an independent inspector general; and
- Enforce accountability for improper personnel practices and management.

Ambassador (ret.) Tom Shannon, who served as Under Secretary for Political Affairs from 2016 to 2018, praised the report. “For me, the recommendations in this report are the beginning of a larger conversation about what needs to be done—in the executive branch and in the legislative branch—to ensure that the Department of State and its officers—Foreign Service and Civil Service—can conduct the analysis, the interagency work, the implementation and the diplomacy necessary to ensure the peace and pros-

Site of the Month

Covid Controls: A Travel Dashboard (www.covidcontrols.co)

Trying to figure out where you are allowed to travel in the midst of the pandemic? Check out the Covid Controls dashboard for all the latest info.

The dashboard lets you see on a color-coded map which countries people can travel to, as well as whether you will need to lock down on arrival. You can also drill down to individual American states to see what restrictions you might face.

The dashboard also contains a variety of COVID-19 statistics, such as the number of deaths or currently sick, as well as how things are trending around the globe.

To see current restrictions on American travelers, select “United

States” from the Travel History (Last 14 Days) dropdown menu on the home page.

The site, which is updated daily, tracks more than 500 official sources, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, local tourism boards and official foreign travel advisories.

The dashboard was launched by a team of researchers who met at the Singapore–Massachusetts Institute of Technology Alliance for Research and Technology.

“We were a team conducting

research at the intersection of big data, design and travel,” Mohit Shah, one of the creators, told CNBC. “We created it because we saw there was no comprehensive Covid-19 dashboard specifically geared toward travelers, especially at a time when the situation is changing so rapidly.”



perity of the United States. Nothing less is at stake and nothing more is at risk.”

Ambassador (ret.) Barbara Stephenson, a former AFSA president and now vice provost for global affairs at UNC–Chapel Hill, added: “This report focuses on issues that have long been important but have become increasingly urgent. The Department of State and the Foreign Service, in particular, are not in good

shape. We as Americans need these vital institutions performing at the top of their game as we face rapidly rising competition, competition for global leadership.”

Asked for comment on the report, a department spokesperson said, “The State Department’s swagger is fully back,” according to the July 28 *Politico*.

“From day one, Secretary Pompeo has delivered on advancing the interests

and values of the American people both here at home and around the world,” the spokesperson said. “At the core of this success is the dynamic and talented team that forges ahead each and every day with one mission, and toward one future.”

Pompeo Overturns Tradition, Speaks at RNC

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo broke with tradition—and his own department’s policy—when he recorded a political speech from Jerusalem that aired on Aug. 25 at the Republican National Convention.

According to media reports, previous Secretaries of State—mindful that they represent the United States as a whole, not one political party—have not even attended a political convention for several decades, and none have spoken at a convention in 75 years.

Recent guidance from the State Department came in the form of a July 24 cable, “2020 Hatch Act/Political Activities” (20 State 71636). The cable states: “It is important that the department’s employees ... adhere to the Hatch Act and department policies in their own political activities.”

Further, the cable states: “Presidential and political appointees and career SES are subject to significant restrictions on their political activity; they may not engage in any partisan political activity in concert with a partisan campaign, political party, or partisan political group, even on personal time and outside of the federal workplace.”

Israel-UAE Peace Deal

The Trump administration helped broker a peace deal that was announced between Israel and the United Arab Emirates on Aug. 13.

The UAE becomes the third Arab

50 Years Ago

Black Students and the Foreign Service

“What do black students want? Who are their real leaders? Why aren’t there more blacks in the Foreign Service of the United States?”

When I was stationed in West Africa some of these questions were frequently raised by African students and cabinet officials, and my answers were second-hand. Thus I was pleased to spend part of last summer in a training program for 40 New Jersey ghetto teachers.

It meant working with a cross-section of young blacks in their early 20s and translating this experience into language that might say something about this segment of current America to non-Americans. ...

Some of the interns asked about life in Africa, but only a few were interested in the Foreign Service, in part because of an ingrained hostility toward the Establishment, but also because few have been exposed to the Foreign Service. It has not figured as a career option for most of them to date. “You live in a different

world,” one intern said. “I would no more think of going through the door of the State Department than you would about having lunch in the Soul Kitchenette.”



It is time for change on both sides. If U.N. statistics are reasonably correct, more than half the world’s population is under 30 years of age, and the majority of that population is non-white. By honestly and clearly discussing “the black experience” as a central part of American his-

tory and culture, we are helping find another bond between audiences in the Third World and the United States; and to the extent that the Foreign Service pursues an energetic minority recruitment program in the United States, it helps close the generation and color gap which confronts America in its representation abroad.

—Former Public Affairs Officer
Frederick Quinn, excerpted from
his article with the same title,
October 1970 FSJ.

HEARD ON THE HILL

Diplomats' Tremendous Work

[We were] forced to pull back thousands of our diplomats and their families, but you didn't just pack up and go without a thought of your fellow Americans. Instead the department launched an unprecedented mission to help return more than 100,000 Americans safely home. All of us who participated in that are greatly appreciative of the department's work in that regard.

In some cases, this involved convincing countries to reopen their airspace for flights and roads for transport. In other places, you even chartered planes to get our American people home. There are lots of folks who may never come in contact with the department, yet now there are more than 100,000 Americans who can personally attest to the tremendous work that the department



does for our people every day, and the challenges get more numerous and complex.

We want to support a State Department that is up to the task, fully funded, staffed and equipped to advance U.S. national interests on all fronts.

—Chairman Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho), at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, "Review of the FY 2021 State Department Budget Request," July 30.

Diplomacy's Strength

Of course, as we all know, the strength of our diplomacy starts and ends with the strength of our diplomatic corps.

—Ranking Member Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, "Review of the FY 2021 State Department Budget Request," July 30.

country, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, to normalize relations with Israel. As part of the deal, Israel agreed to suspend plans to annex part of the West Bank.

"Normalizing relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates is a historic step that will enhance the security and economic interests of both countries," NBC quoted Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) as saying. "This breakthrough is a powerful example of how diplomacy can bridge historic divides and advance the United States' interests."

On Aug. 19, *The New York Times* reported that the Trump administration is planning to sell F-35 stealth fighters and advanced drones to the Emirates, but that "without the support of the Israeli government, it is unlikely Congress would support the sale." Netanyahu, the *NYT* reports, has strenuously denied "that he gave even tacit consent for the sale of the F-35s ... as part of recent diplomatic negotiations with the White House."

Al Jazeera reported Aug. 20 that President Donald Trump expects Saudi Arabia

to join the Israel-UAE peace deal, but that Riyadh said it won't join an agreement until Israel "has signed an internationally recognized peace accord with the Palestinians."

Diversity & Inclusion Proposals Go to State Management

Three State Department employee affinity groups sent a memo to Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun on July 8 requesting reforms they say would "enable employees of color to successfully thrive and rise through the ranks of the Department of State."

The three groups—the Thursday Luncheon Group, Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association, and Blacks in Government—Carl Rowan Chapter—called for six reforms in the areas of accountability, retention and career advancement.

The groups urged the department to reform the FS selection board process "by mandating the inclusion of an affinity group representative on all boards."

They also said any Foreign Service or

Civil Service member subject to an equal employment opportunity complaint of merit should be excluded from serving on any selection board for two to five years, as determined by the Director General of the Foreign Service.

The groups requested the creation of a new office to address toxic workplace dynamics and reports of microaggression and discrimination.

They also requested that the bureaus of Global Talent Management and Medical Services provide Foreign Service mentoring and counseling services to support employees of color at every stage of their careers.

They also said that the department should include "Diversity and Inclusion Effectiveness" as a fourth tenet of employee evaluation reports, and that senior performance pay should be linked to the promotion of diversity and inclusion. ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Cameron Woodworth and Shawn Dorman.

Stop Shipping Your Personal Vehicle!

BY WARREN LEISHMAN

I am not a “car guy.” While I enjoy the freedom of the open road and appreciate the large SUV that has followed our family from post to post, courtesy of the federal government, it is the “utility” of the SUV that is key for me and, perhaps, for many others in the Foreign Service. Although we might really enjoy our particular ride, we recognize that the hazards of overseas life are likely to bring scratches, dents, fender benders and definitely a lot of hard miles. One best not become too attached.

Yet under current practice, foreign affairs agencies are spending millions of dollars each year shipping privately owned vehicles (POVs) around the world for members of the Foreign Service like me. I would prefer to purchase a vehicle on arrival at post but have chosen not to repeatedly because it doesn’t make economic sense.

Simply put: The lack of good information about the relatively closed and quite limited markets for expat cars at most posts makes it difficult to find the right car at a fair price.

Rather than risk it, many FS members



Warren Leishman is a USAID Foreign Service officer serving as the supervisory resident legal officer at the agency’s regional

mission in Accra (although currently teleworking from West Virginia). Previous assignments include Jordan, Ethiopia and Washington, D.C. This article reflects his personal views and not necessarily those of USAID or the Department of State.

On a practical level, everyone would benefit from a more formalized method for gathering and sharing information about the local duty-free vehicle market.

choose the default approach of shipping a vehicle to post. This can result in, to use my latest experience, shipping a well-used vehicle with an optimistic Kelly Blue Book value of \$7,000 from Amman to Accra at a shipping cost to the U.S. government of \$2,400, not including demurrage and in-country transport. This is not the economic decision I would make if I were footing the transport bill myself.

By my rough estimate, the State Department spent more than \$21 million shipping POVs in 2018. Based on data from the Transportation Management Office, Foreign Service members shipped more than 4,500 POVs to and from overseas posts that year. The costs are enormous, and they do not take into account the substantial in-house administrative and logistical work hours required to get all those vehicles from point A to point B.

Another Option

What if FS members were given a choice when planning a permanent change of station (PCS): ship your vehicle to post at government expense, or receive a POV stipend? That stipend could be used for the purchase of a new car at post, applied toward public transport costs or used however you see fit.

The stipend could be calculated as

a flat rate depending on destination (e.g., from continental U.S. [CONUS] to West Africa, one to Europe, one to South America) or as some portion of the quoted shipping cost. Either approach would result in substantial cost savings for the government, and the increased flexibility would reduce some of the hassles associated with the PCS process.

Adding this allowance would not require any major regulatory changes or legislative fixes. The Secretary of State already has the authority to pay expenses related to a PCS under 22 U.S.C. Section 4081. The stipend could become part of the benefits package administered by the Office of Allowances. Like the Foreign Transfer or Home Service Transfer Allowances, the POV election would be another section of the SF-1190 to complete at the time of transfer.

This new approach would shift some burden to FS members to more carefully consider their options at the new post. On a practical level, everyone would benefit from a more formalized method for gathering and sharing information about the local duty-free vehicle market.

So often, transitioning officers and specialists are guided only by a handful of classified ads in the post newsletter and anecdotal chatter. The uncertainty this

Average POV Shipping Costs, 2018

(in U.S. dollars, including ELSO storage charges but not demurrage or other local costs)

	<i>Number of Vehicles</i>	<i>Cost per Vehicle</i>	<i>Total</i>
Overseas Post to Overseas Post	658	\$3,816	\$ 2,510,928
Overseas Post to CONUS	1,772	\$4,507	\$ 7,986,404
CONUS to Overseas Post	2,074	\$5,252	\$10,892,648

Source: Department of State Transportation Management Office

causes during the already stressful PCS process likely leads some to ship their vehicle by default. Under the new stipend system, the general services officer could work with the community liaison office coordinator to provide more systematic data about local vehicle sales.

By supporting and incentivizing Foreign Service employees to make informed decisions about buying or shipping POVs, it is likely that the number of vehicles shipped between posts or from post to CONUS would decrease substantially, while shipments from CONUS to post would probably remain stable. As a result, the supply of duty-free cars on the market at posts would theoretically increase, likely lowering asking prices or at least providing a wider selection.

Some of us would still choose to ship a car to post but then sell it there, likely raising the quality of available POVs. In addition, sellers might be more willing to negotiate if they knew their stipend could make up at least some of a shortfall in sales price. Buyers might similarly be willing to increase an offer, knowing that the stipend increases their purchasing power.

Purchase at post will mean less awkward time relying on sponsors, new friends and taxis on arrival at a new assignment while waiting for a shipped vehicle to (finally!) catch up with us. Eventually, there will be a treasure trove of shipping and market data from across the globe that could lead to an interesting case study for any of our able economists.

Additional Benefits

This proposal would also help FS members avoid running afoul of local laws and lesser-known department regulations. For example, some countries have restrictions on the age of POVs that can be imported into the country, but there is usually no corresponding requirement that vehicles be shipped out of country as they reach that threshold. In most cases, POVs could be brought into the country and remain there in the expat market.

Similarly, encouraging local buying would protect FS members from subsequent changes in import requirements or restrictions, such as a recent decree in Ghana assessing an import tax (poten-

tially borne by the employee) on POVs with an engine size greater than 2.9 liters.

The four-year replacement rule found in 14 FAM 615.4 would still apply, but only to the actual shipment of a POV from the United States. So if you receive the stipend, you would not be permitted to ship a POV at government expense until four years had passed from any prior POV shipment from the United States, but you could receive the stipend for another PCS in the intervening four years.

Each Foreign Service member would be able to choose the best approach for their situation, with the stipend serving as an additional incentive to buy and sell locally, thereby increasing the size of the local market.

In addition to the convenience and cost savings that would result from this approach, another important benefit of this change would be to limit the global harm caused by sending so many cars on the high seas. The negative environmental impact of international shipping is well documented, and the threat to our oceans is only getting worse.

The International Maritime Organization estimates that annual carbon dioxide emissions from shipping were equal to 2.2 percent of all global human-made emissions, and that rate is rising. By reducing the number of POVs shipped, the department would be cutting its carbon footprint and its contribution to ocean pollution.

Moreover, lowering our reliance on the international shipping industry will reduce U.S. government participation in a sector that, according to vulnerable populations advocate Caritas Internationalis, "is often characterized by inadequate salaries, difficult work conditions, violation of human and labor rights, forced labor and trafficking. A large

The result: fewer FS cars in transit, less spent by the department on shipping each year, a smaller administrative burden and less negative impact on the environment.

number of people employed as seafarers ... are vulnerable and potential victims of trafficking.”

The benefits of this approach seem pretty clear. If we had the option of a POV stipend instead of shipment, some portion of us would accept the allowance. The result: fewer FS cars in transit, less spent by the department on shipping each year, a smaller administrative burden on embassy staff all the way from expeditors to the warehouse workers to the motor pool to management counselors, and less negative impact on the environment.

In a time of diminishing budgets and climate change, shouldn't every effort be made to maximize scarce resources? ■

Speaking Out is the *Journal's* opinion forum, a place for lively discussion of issues affecting the U.S. Foreign Service and American diplomacy. The views expressed are those of the author; their publication here does not imply endorsement by the American Foreign Service Association. Responses are welcome; send them to journal@afsa.org.



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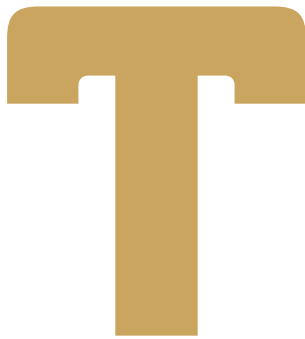
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Needed: A Management Mindset



MICHAEL AUSTIN



he first half of 2020 forced all of us to reconsider what we previously “knew” to be true. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted nearly every element of life, work and play, revealing fault lines in the American public many suspected existed only on the fringe. One of the deepest of these fault lines erupted following the deaths of

George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many other fellow citizens, demonstrating yet again the devastating reality of institutionalized racism.

As the collected voices of protestors grew louder, Americans across the social, economic and political spectrums were forced to reckon with their own—often unrecognized or unacknowledged—biases, prejudices and assumptions that enable the systems keeping significant portions of our population in perpetual second-class status. For members of the U.S. Foreign Service, that introspection was often visceral and shocking, as current and former colleagues shared deeply personal accounts of racist treatment by their fellow citizens, employees of other agencies and—most shamefully—their colleagues in Washington and missions abroad.

In the midst of this reckoning, several past and present members of the foreign affairs community—inspired both by the courage of the colleagues who volunteered their experiences and the fervent desire as representatives of the United States to do better, to demand better, to be better—began to collect ideas for reforming the Foreign Service to address the processes that per-



Charity L. Boyette is chief of staff in the Office of Audit, Risk and Compliance at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, where she is also pursuing a Ph.D. in public administration. From 2009 to 2018, she was a U.S. Foreign Service officer, serving overseas in Lagos, Krakow and Brussels, and with domestic assignments as a line officer in the executive secretariat and as a deputy A-100 coordinator at the Foreign Service Institute.

Achieving meaningful change requires a fundamental shift in the Department of State’s handling of its most important asset: its people.

BY CHARITY L. BOYETTE

petuate inequity, hamstring efforts to diversify the workforce and block the diplomatic corps from benefiting from the wide range of backgrounds, experiences, capabilities and cultures found in the American population.

Reading through the many proposals offered up on social media threads, it was clear that achieving meaningful change requires a fundamental shift in the Department of State’s handling of its most important asset: its people. To meet the challenges ahead, the Foreign Service and its officers *must* prioritize management tradecraft in hiring, tenure, promotion and assignments decisions to be able to set—and meet—aggressive goals to strengthen itself through diversity.

The Management Skill Set

Management, as a skill set, is far too often ignored in favor of leadership or dismissed as an automatic corollary to technical competence. The latter is a frequent problem in all industries; it is assumed that the ability to do a task well also confers the ability to manage other people who do that task. A significant body of study exists disproving that theory, but it continues to thrive, including in the Foreign Service.

Among the reasons for its perpetuation is the frequent conflation of management and leadership, which happens when the characteristics we expect our “leaders” to display are actually examples of good management—namely, thinking strategically, facilitating organizational change, setting goals and amassing sufficient resources to achieve them. Ask any FSO to describe the best officer they’ve encountered during their career, and, inevitably, the attributes are more practical than esoteric, with descriptors like “fair,” “goal-oriented” and “pragmatic.” Because good managers move the organization forward, they are always leaders; unfortunately, however, the reverse is not necessarily true.

The absence of a management mindset in designing and implementing the systems that support the people and practices of the State Department is most apparent in the process of selecting new officers, awarding tenure and promotions, and making officer assignments; and a direct line connects the continuing struggle to diversify to this deficiency. “Management skills” as a

“Management skills” as a category does not factor into the Foreign Service Officer Qualifications (the “13 Dimensions”) used to select new FSOs.

category does not factor into the Foreign Service Officer Qualifications (the “13 Dimensions”) used to select new FSOs; the closest thing to it, “Initiative and Leadership,” focuses exclusively on the officer’s own ability to “assume responsibility,” “persist” and “influence,” with no expectation of *directing, enabling* or *improving* the performance of others.

With this narrow scope, it is not surprising that many officers view success solely in terms of their own actions, a mindset that is reinforced through the development of the employee evaluation reports (EERs) on which tenure and promotion decisions are based. Used to following the EER narrative formula of explaining “what I did, and why it mattered,” many officers are understandably challenged by shifting to “what we did, and how I facilitated that” at later points in their careers.

The bigger problem, for many, is that those team lead roles often start much earlier. While the majority of first-tour officers are assigned to busy consular sections with multiple levels of supervision, a fair number are called on to manage teams straight out of their A-100 orientation course, either due to the nature of their position or an unexpected need once arriving at post. General services officers (GSOs), for instance, often supervise large teams of locally employed (LE) staff, and decisions of which officer to assign to that role at entry level are usually driven more by existing language skills or the ability to meet training timelines than inherent management capability. Yet these are the people who have direct responsibility for the parts of the “FS life” that tangibly affect every overseas officer, including housing, travel and maintenance services—activities for which real management skills are essential.

Haphazard Performance Management

Performance management is one of the most difficult—and critical—responsibilities of every organization. Even the best candidate selection system will yield employees who struggle to excel in the abilities necessary for a successful career. The

department’s approach to performance management, however, is so haphazard, inconsistent and lacking in independent measures as to render it useless as a tool for evaluation.

The EER, on which all tenure and promotion decisions are based, contains only three narrative sections: one is completed by the employee, one by the employee’s direct supervisor (the “rater”) and a third by another evaluator (the “reviewer”) who is generally the rater’s supervisor or another senior-level officer. The lion’s share of the writing comes from the employee, who provides a brief description of their work during the rating period; objective evaluation of one’s own performance is not the goal. While both the rater and reviewer statements are expected to evaluate the employee, those assessments are inherently subjective in nature and too often focus on future potential rather than recent performance.

Further complicating the performance management process is the complete lack of *objective, measurable* criteria on which to base evaluations. EERs become a case of comparing apples to oranges (and mangos, bananas, peaches, too), even when the roles held by officers are relatively the same. As a result, tenure and promotion panels must infer officer competency; under these circumstances, the ability to write well becomes the most influential factor in rising to the top of the tenure and promotion lists. This allows insider knowledge, including coded language, to disadvantage officers whose abilities would otherwise distinguish them on a more level playing field.

There is a belief among FSOs that promotions reward good EERs and assignments reward good officers. Is that truly the case? The current open assignments “bidding” process suggests the opposite. For officers past entry level, the system of pursuing their next assignment is every bit as subject to bias and inequity as the tenuring and promotion processes. Officers identify upcoming vacancies that meet their preferences for role, location, language requirement and living situation, and then “lobby” for assignment to those positions. A common first step is contacting the incumbent to learn more about the duties and demands and then reaching out formally to the person designated to select the candidate.

... and a Capricious Assignment Process

What should follow is a structured evaluation and interview process, wherein candidates demonstrate they possess the necessary skills and experience to succeed in the new role in response to questions designed to evaluate thoroughly and objectively the candidates’ qualifications. Candidates submit references from former supervisors, colleagues and subordinates

to provide additional context for their previous performance. Mission and office senior leadership, in consultation with each other and bureau stakeholders, assess bidders' strengths and weaknesses, weighing them against the particular needs of the role, to identify the best person to fill the vacancy.

In practice, this rarely happens. Every FSO knows someone who received a "handshake" offer for an assignment without speaking to anyone about it, and they know of colleagues who were pushed out of contention by other FS members lacking the requisite grade, experience or practical skills. Decision-makers do not receive training on how to evaluate either the positions they fill or the candidates they interview in terms of identifying critical skills and abilities to ensure an effective match between the two, nor do they have any quantitative measures of the candidates' performance.

The only "external" evaluations are the recommendations completed by former colleagues *selected by the candidate*. Decision-makers are, therefore, forced to rely on highly subjective material in selecting officers for assignments, including the favorable endorsement of the cadre of highly placed friends, former colleagues and senior leaders deployed by officers to lobby on their behalf. Compounding these problems is the fact that many decision-makers will themselves move on before or shortly after the new officer arrives, meaning they have no "skin in the game" in their own decisions.

Here, the lack of fundamental management skills can have far-reaching negative consequences for entire sections and missions. No matter how busy they are with other tasks, effective managers understand the criticality of having the right people in place; staffing decisions are among the most important actions they will take during their careers, and they prioritize them accordingly. Officers assigned to roles they are unable to fill successfully jeopardize the ability to meet mission goals, undermine morale and set a poor example for more junior officers to follow. FSOs empowered to make assignments *must* ensure they identify selection criteria objectively and base candidate evaluations on those standards instead of personal connections or gut instinct. The latter has been shown repeatedly to favor those who resemble the decision-maker, thereby inhibiting diversity at all levels of the Foreign Service.

The Value of Road Maps and Data

For entry into the Senior Foreign Service, the department has issued (and revised) a checklist of requirements; interested officers must take personal responsibility for ensuring they meet the minimum necessary to put themselves forward for consideration.

Why has State not taken a similar approach to tenure and promotion requirements, focusing on tangible, measurable skills? These "road maps" would provide raters and reviewers with tools to evaluate officers, while allowing tenure and promotion panels to compare apples to apples. Similarly, with quantitative data, FSOs who supervise others (including LE staff, whose performance and development are often severely neglected in favor of their FSO colleagues) can be evaluated on how well they manage their team members.

On a more macro scale, performance data provides leaders at all levels of the department with ongoing feedback on how well their workforce is executing the policies and projects that advance U.S. foreign policy, as well as gauging the engagement and satisfaction of that workforce. The importance of this last component cannot be overstated: Like all professionals, FSOs expect—and deserve—to be valued, respected and treated fairly. When those elements are absent, job performance suffers as officers disengage or separate from the department, imposing obstacles to policy execution and leading to an incalculable loss of the knowledge, experience and mentorship so critical to a profession that relies heavily on learning the job by doing it.

While training can enhance management tradecraft, it seldom instills the recognition of its intrinsic value effectively. The Foreign Service Institute's financial management courses, for example, teach *how* to reconcile fiscal statements, not *why* reconciling them is necessary. Too often, FSI's management tradecraft training prioritizes a hodgepodge of outdated tools over foundational skills in planning, executing and evaluating based on data, mission goals and a strategic mindset. These are the skills fundamental to *every* role, at *every* level in the Foreign Service, from the entry-level first-time control officer to the chief of mission rallying her team through a global pandemic.

Prioritizing strong people and project management puts the focus squarely on skills that advance the department and reflects the evolving realities of the 21st-century workplace. Incorporating good management tradecraft has the dual benefit of enhancing engagement while leveling the playing field for all officers. Strong managers empower their team members by ensuring they have the resources they need to execute their jobs, including materials, training, coaching and, when necessary, correction. Most importantly, they instill confidence that their team members will be treated fairly, evaluated on their contributions, valued for their inherent diversity and vigorously defended if the first three are threatened. The best performing organizations demand adherence to this mindset; as envoys of the American experiment, the professionals of the U.S. Foreign Service deserve nothing less. ■

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State's Problems Are Not New: A Look at the Record

Despite a decades-old legal mandate, diversity has simply not been a priority at the State Department.

BY RICHARD A. FIGUEROA



Richard A. Figueroa has been with the U.S. Foreign Service for more than 30 years as a Foreign Service officer, a re-employed annuitant and an eligible family member. He has served in Moscow, Brussels, Managua and Dili, among many other overseas and

*Washington, D.C., assignments. Born and raised in Puerto Rico, he received his undergraduate degree from Yale University and a Juris Doctor from Columbia University School of Law. He represented himself in a 10-year legal battle against the State Department over discrimination in promotions, winning a landmark employment law decision, *Figueroa v. Pompeo*, from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 2019.*

Diversity problems at the State Department are not new. The Government Accountability Office report, GAO-20-237, “State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity,” published in January, echoes findings that were first reported by GAO in a June 1989 report bluntly titled “State Department: Minorities and Women Underrepresented in the Foreign Service.”

That women and minorities at State in the 21st century still suffer from systemic discrimination in assignments and promotions (recruitment to a much lesser extent) reflects the low priority State human resources staff and senior leadership assign to equal employment opportunity (EEO) compliance, and their attitude about the fact that a legacy system, predating even the 40-year-old Foreign Service Act of 1980, whose roots harken back to when the State Department was exclusively white and male, is still functioning perfectly.

The State Department’s decadeslong resistance to implementation of even basic EEO standards is as legendary as it is dismaying. Criticism of State’s record comes from all corners:

- The State Department’s resistance to change earned harsh criticism from Federal Judge Stanley Sporkin, who presided in the Thomas discrimination case, a class action suit brought in 1986 by African American Foreign Service officers and resolved by consent decree in 1996. “The arrogance of your office is

The State Department's decades-long resistance to implementation of even basic EEO standards is as legendary as it is dismaying.

beyond belief," Judge Sporkin boomed at State Department lawyers in 1994. "Eight years is unbelievable. It's a disgrace, absolute disgrace. ... You reject every type of proposal, everything, and it just isn't right." (See "A House Divided: Racism at the State Department" by Bruce Shapiro, Chapter 9 in *Diversity and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Reader* [Routledge, 2004].)

- The State Department inspector general reported in 2006 that State's Office of Civil Rights was not giving sufficient attention to "monitoring upward mobility programs" and "performing Equal Employment Opportunity Commission-required barrier analyses that are critical to identifying and eliminating barriers to equal opportunity." The IG stated: "Although barrier analysis is not a new discipline, S/OCR does not have a comprehensive program to carry out that analysis. Barrier analysis requires adequate data collection and careful scrutiny of such factors as the human resources programs designed to increase diversity in the Department ... and the upward mobility programs for underrepresented employees. S/OCR has never had adequate staff devoted to this function." (See Department of State Inspector General's Report of Inspection of the Office of Civil Rights, ISP-I-06-41, June 2006.)

- "I believe the State Department has the worst record of the hiring of minorities, particularly of Hispanics. This is something that I have been pursuing since my days in the House on the International Relations Committee. This is something I have pursued on this committee, and I do not seem to get anyone's attention. [I]t ... cannot continue this way," stated Senator Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), speaking at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during confirmation hearings for Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield in February 2012. (See the transcript, "Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 112th Congress, Second Session, February 7 through November 28, 2012.")

The hubristic attitude of State Department human resources personnel and senior leadership is the reason the department has for decades ignored or defied Equal Employment Opportunity Commission mandates most federal agencies dare not

overlook. For example, in 2016 the director of State's Office of Civil Rights, John Robinson, confirmed that his office was not conducting barrier analysis, as required by the EEOC and recommended by the GAO in its 1989 report. Robinson told me this in a deposition during discovery proceedings related to my lawsuit against the department, adding that it was because the Under Secretary for Management never gave him resources for this activity.

Similarly, State ignored the recommendation in the 1989 GAO report that it comply with a mandated Special Emphasis Program for Hispanics, breezily stating in its 2015 annual EEO filing under Management Directive 715 (MD-715) that "S/OCR addresses Hispanic employment issues on an ad hoc basis, though no official Special Emphasis Program is in place." Until 2016, State also failed to comply with record-keeping obligations required by federal regulations from the Office of Personnel Management and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (such as the requirement to preserve for one year any notes written by promotion board panel members). In 2006 State's Bureau of Human Resources abruptly and unilaterally stopped reporting Foreign Service diversity statistics to OPM for inclusion in the annual federal workforce report.

What is most troubling is the lack of urgency that top officials have displayed in statements they make out of public earshot regarding deficiencies in retention and promotion of women and minorities. For example, the failure to address decades of deficiencies in the retention and promotion of Hispanic officers was the subject of a meeting in April 2011 between former Director General of the Foreign Service Nancy Powell, then Human Resources Deputy Assistant Secretary Robert Manzanares, and the leadership of an affinity group, Hispanic Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies. According to the notes HECFAA representatives made during the meeting, DG Powell said that "State wants a better story to present to Members of Congress with an interest in increasing Hispanic representation at State." But at the same time, they reported, she "cautioned ... that things would not change overnight and that it was important to manage expectations."

DG Powell's words in 2011 amount to a stunning admission of State's inability to level the playing field for Hispanics specifically, but also for women and other minority groups. Fully 22 years after the 1989 GAO report urged State to address the underrepresentation of women and minorities in the Foreign Service, five years after a 2006 inspector general report on S/OCR criticized the failure to monitor upward mobility programs for Hispanics, and two years after State declared in its

FY 2009 MD-715 report that Hispanic underrepresentation is an EEO barrier, nothing had changed.

In the aftermath of the tragic murder of George Floyd, with renewed vigor for addressing systemic discrimination inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement for racial justice, we now have a unique opportunity to reform “the system” and get rid of the “old boy network” that has prevented the State Department from truly representing the “face of America” overseas, one that reflects the richness of cultures and diversity of this country. Already some new initiatives are surfacing, such as the barrier analysis working group now reporting to the Director General, bureau-based diversity and inclusion working groups, and several Y-tour appointments for senior diversity and inclusion advisers.

To see these efforts through to real change will take initiative and leadership from the very top, the kind that former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance showed in 1977 in plucking an African American FSO from an undesirable assignment for appointment to a prominent policy position. Secretary Vance took that extraordinary step because of his personal commitment to

Most troubling is the lack of urgency that top officials have displayed in statements they make out of public earshot regarding deficiencies in retention and promotion of women and minorities.

diversity and because State’s Bureau of Human Resources failed to present him with a diverse senior officer list from which to pick his most trusted advisers. That African American officer, Terence Todman, went on to several ambassadorships and assistant secretary positions, eventually reaching the rank of Career Ambassador. ■



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The Payne Fellowship: Boosting Diversity at USAID

Launched in 2012, the Payne Fellowship has proven itself a valuable program.

BY YOUSHEA BERRY



COURTESY OF THE PAYNE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM/MARINA MONTGOMERY

Payne Fellows gather at the National Press Club. Top row, from left: Mariela Medina Castellanos (2016), Tracey Lam (2014), Taylor Adams (2013), Ellexis Gurrola (2016) and Hoang Bui (2016). Bottom row: Suegatha Kai Rennie (2016), Jolisa Brooks (2016), Stephanie Ullrich (2016) and Brittany Thomas (2016).

The Donald M. Payne International Development Graduate Fellowship program was established in 2012 to attract outstanding emerging leaders from historically underrepresented backgrounds, as well as those with financial need, to international development careers in the USAID Foreign Service. With strong congressional support, the program is funded by USAID and administered by Howard University's Ralph Bunche International Affairs Center. Since its inception, the Payne Fellowship has opened the door for qualified, educated and diverse young professionals to help USAID leverage their experiences as development professionals and diplomats.



Youshea Berry, chair of the Payne Advisory Group, serves as the deputy assistant general counsel for legislation and policy at USAID. She is a former congressional staffer and served in USAID's Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs when the Payne Fellowship program was created in 2012.

The Program's Namesake: Rep. Donald M. Payne Sr.

To date, 39 fellows have graduated and joined the USAID Foreign Service, and 20 more are currently completing the program.

At the same time, over the past few months, several news articles, letters to the USAID Administrator and a Government Accountability Office report have all pointed to the lack of diversity at USAID, particularly in senior leadership positions. Simultaneously, there have been several internal dialogues and “listening sessions” at USAID about implicit bias, institutional discrimination and racism. The civil protests and anti-racism efforts in the United States and around the world highlight the difficult balancing act that Foreign Service officers navigate in terms of the American ideals of freedom and equality, and the implementation of those ideals in the United States and abroad.

When coupled with other effective programs and initiatives, the Payne Fellowship is poised to help USAID address some of these issues.

An Effective Program

As an international affairs hub producing a pipeline of future U.S. diplomats, Howard University's Bunche Center plays a critical role in administering the Payne Fellowship program. The Bunche Center is also home to two flagship State Department diversity programs, the Rangel and Pickering Fellowships. The reach of the center's network and the prestige of these programs ensure a competitive pool of applicants for the Payne Fellowship annually.

The diversity of program participants is central to its success: 86 percent are from underrepresented ethnic and racial backgrounds—primarily Black (34 percent), Hispanic (25 percent) and Asian (19 percent). In addition to ethnic and racial diversity, the fellows come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and must demonstrate financial need. They also represent a wide array of undergraduate institutions and academic disciplines. Many fellows have worked in the private sector or in nonprofits and advocacy programs. A significant number have served in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps and Fulbright programs, proving their dedication to public service and international causes.

After successfully navigating a highly competitive process, Payne Fellows commit to serve a minimum of five years in the USAID Foreign Service, with the anticipation that they will remain with the agency after their formal fellowship commitment ends. The fellowship provides support for a master's degree, including tuition, fees, living expenses and two 10-week internships during the summer: the first on Capitol Hill and the



Rep. Donald M. Payne Sr.

In 2009, the late Congressman Donald M. Payne Sr. (D-N.J.) traveled to Somalia to engage in strategic dialogue and to witness firsthand the social, economic, security and political challenges facing the war-torn country. As he departed Mogadishu airport, an Islamist insurgent group based in East Africa, al-Shabaab, bombarded his plane with mortars. Shortly thereafter, Rep. Payne, a longtime champion of USAID, spoke passionately before Congress about the need to build the capacity of the Somali people by investing in their unity government. He urged that technical assistance and financial support be provided so Somalia could progress and lead the regional fight against terrorism and piracy.

Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle respected Rep. Payne and frequently looked to him for leadership on global development issues. His legislative record was expansive and historic, including brokering the major trade agreement with the continent of Africa—the African Growth and Opportunity Act—and crafting legislation to authorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the President's Malaria Initiative.

Moreover, he vocally and presciently declared the systematic murder of people in Darfur a genocide and was recognized in Congress for having the most supportive record on issues regarding the Northern Ireland peace process. President George W. Bush twice appointed Rep. Payne to serve as a congressional delegate to the United Nations.

Congressman Payne tirelessly fought for the advancement of international cooperation and development, particularly in Africa and the Western Hemisphere for decades prior to his death in 2012. When USAID administrator Rajiv Shah launched a new junior Foreign Service fellowship program later that year, it was fittingly named after Rep. Payne.

Aysha House, a former congressional staffer who now serves as senior adviser and interagency coordinator for the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security at USAID, said of Rep. Payne: “I was proud to be in the presence of someone who believed so deeply in the power of international development. From combatting the pressing global challenges of poverty and hunger, violence and piracy, injustice and accountability in government to access to education and so much more, Rep. Payne was our steadfast champion.”

Ms. House and career FSO Lorraine Sherman, both of whom were working in the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs at the time, played a significant role in establishing the Payne Fellowship program.



COURTESY OF THE PAYNE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Payne Fellows from the 2015 cohort strike a pose. From left: Jeanne Choquehuanca, Keisha Herbert, Berhan Hagos, Lea Claye and Marvin Crespin-Gamez.

second at a USAID mission overseas. One of the key features of the program is mentoring. Payne Fellows are promptly paired with seasoned USAID mentors to help them enhance their skills and knowledge while gaining an early understanding of the values and mission of the agency.

A 2015 Payne Fellow, Keisha Herbert, learned about the fellowship while she was living in an indigenous village in Guatemala as a Peace Corps volunteer. Her Peace Corps service and her work as a diversity and inclusion training and programs specialist in a U.S. public hospital sharpened the skill set she would later employ as a new FSO, which included fluency in Spanish, an understanding of cross-cultural competency, and recognition of the importance of diversity and inclusion. Herbert now serves as a program officer at USAID/Jordan.

Jacqueline Rojas, a 2017 Payne Fellow, says: “In my short time as a USAID Foreign Service officer, I’ve witnessed policymaking, diplomacy and the effects of U.S. foreign assistance in action. Thanks to my graduate education and experiences through the Payne Fellowship, I have felt equipped to handle whatever challenge comes my way—whether it be working to develop a resource to help agency staff improve their private sector engagement efforts through collaborating, learning and adapting or helping a USAID mission design its new country development cooperation strategy.”

Rojas explains that supportive team members and access to the fellowship’s mentors have been crucial to her ability to navigate her early career as an FSO.

The Payne Fellowship has strong congressional backing.

More than 40 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate actively support its funding and growth through the annual appropriations bills that fund USAID. In a joint letter to the House State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, for example, the late Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.) and Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.) requested increased FY 2020 funding for USAID to honor the legacy of Rep. Payne and “his lifelong efforts to increase diversity in international affairs and support foreign policy and assistance strategies that are inclusive of diverse and underserved populations.”

Challenges Persist

The Government Accountability Office’s June report on USAID, “Mixed Progress in Increasing Diversity, and Actions Needed to Consistently Meet EEO Requirements,” showed that the overall proportion of racial or ethnic minorities in USAID’s full-time, permanent, career workforce increased from 33 to 37 percent from 2002 to 2018, but that the direction of change for specific groups varied: For instance, the proportion of Hispanics rose from 3 to 6 percent, while the proportion of African Americans in full-time, permanent, career positions fell from 26 to 21 percent, and the proportion of racial or ethnic minorities was generally smaller in higher ranks.

The gaps and potential barriers that GAO identifies directly mirror and affect the experience of Payne Fellowship alumni who are in the early stages of their USAID careers. “Now as a first-tour officer with USAID ... I am the only African American in the USAID post here in Jordan, and the total number of USAID officers who are people of color is around five,” Keisha Herbert observes. “The current racial tensions in the U.S. have put the spotlight back on diversity and inclusion, and embassies around the world are feeling the pressure to diversify recruitment and better represent the demographics of the U.S. abroad.”

For her part, Herbert is seizing the opportunity to contribute and lead on efforts to increase diversity and inclusion at the embassy: “I’m helping to lead this mandate ... here in Amman and have received genuine support, guidance and buy-in from senior leadership. I’m not sure how long it’ll take for the diplomatic corps to completely reflect the diversity of the U.S. throughout its ranks, but the conversation is starting, and I hope the momentum continues to build and achieve the goal.” The Payne Fellowship’s contribution to this effort cannot be overstated.

Take, for instance, Chigozie Okwu, a 2017 Payne Fellow. While he values the opportunity to serve at USAID, he candidly reflects on how the presence of Black mentors and, conversely, the lack of other Black faces at internal and external meetings,

bear on his experience as an environment officer. “During my time, there have been many other Black development professionals who have supported and championed my success and place at USAID. These strangers helped create a more welcoming environment for me by providing tips to help me navigate the federal bureaucracy or sharing experiences about life at USAID,” he says. “However, I am acutely aware of, sometimes, being the only Black person in the room, and people always make sure to emphasize that I am ‘articulate.’” Okwu observes that there are not many midcareer Black environment officers at the agency, and it is often difficult to fully discuss how micro- and macro-aggressions in the workplace affect his experience. He notes that, despite these challenges, “I do believe that I am extremely fortunate to have this career and have to find a balance between all the aspects of working for USAID.”

Several USAID FSOs who entered the agency through the Payne Fellowship program report that they have endured stigmatizing and condescending comments by other agency staff who assume that the Payne Fellowship gives fellows an unmerited

“free pass” into the agency. In fact, the reverse is true—the vetting and application process for Payne Fellows is extremely rigorous and competitive. “The number of applicants for the Payne Fellowship has steadily increased throughout the years while maintaining a high concentration of underrepresented talent in the applicant pool,” states Payne Fellowship Program Director Maria Elena Vivas-House. “Applicants come from virtually every state and even some U.S. territories and attend hundreds of undergraduate institutions.”

Educating others about the Payne Fellowship program may help reduce the apparent stigma that former Payne Fellows have identified. In a July 2020 internal USAID newsletter, “Frontlines,” USAID Counselor Chris Milligan addressed the issue. “The Payne program enables the agency to attract top-notch talent. It also strengthens our core value of diversity by encouraging the application of members of historically underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service, as well as those with financial need,” he wrote. “Obtaining a Payne Fellowship is extremely competitive; more than 500 impressive candidates applied for the 10 positions avail-



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2019 Payne Fellows at AFSA with Representative Donald M. Payne Jr. From left: Rose Quispe, Bemnet Tesfaye, Michelle Ngirbabul, Natalie Fiszer, Susan Ojukwu, Jessica Hernandez, Rep. Donald Payne Jr., Niesha Ford, Meklit Gebru, Marianna Smith and Avani Mooljee.

able this year. As a comparison, the acceptance rate for a typical Foreign Service position is 4 percent—which means the Payne Fellowship is at least twice as competitive. Candidates for the Payne Fellowship undergo a rigorous selection process; a panel of interviewers review each candidate’s experience and career objectives, grades and writing skills, language(s) and potential to represent our agency.”

Next Steps

The Payne Fellowship will increase from 10 to 15 officers in 2021. That’s not enough. By comparison, the Rangel and Pickering Fellowships bring in 90 fellows annually, and the programs are expanding for 2021.

Further, though the composition of the fellowship cohorts has been ethnically diverse, it has been predominantly female—only one Black male has completed the program since its inception. To ensure broader gender representation, increase professional development opportunities, and expand the recruitment and retention of stellar, diverse talent, the program has deepened its relationship with two key partners. They are USAID’s Development Diplomats in Residence—with one diplomat recently serving at Morehouse College, an all-male Historically Black College and University in Atlanta—and the USAID-based alumni of the International Career Advancement Program. Members of the latter formed a Payne Advisory Group more than a year ago to help identify opportunities to improve “the felt experience” of the fellows once they join the agency.

The advisory group meets regularly with staff of USAID’s Bureau of Human Capital and Talent Management to elevate concerns and help expedite solutions within the agency. For example, when the summer placements at missions and in congressional offices were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Payne Advisory Group identified a diverse cohort of USAID leaders to serve as situational mentors, launched a “virtual office hours” series for off-the-record conversations with agency leaders, and hosted “virtual coffee chats and meet-and-greets” with leaders of USAID employee resource groups and other USAID networks. Ultimately, the increased coordination among HCTM, the Foreign Service Center, DDIRs, Payne Advisory Group representatives and Payne

program staff at Howard University has led to better transitions for Payne Fellows into the program and agency during this extremely uncertain time.

Since the program is new, retention data is limited. Fellows who have completed the program are current FSOs. Only a handful have met the tenure requirement, and they are still with USAID. The return on investment for the Payne Fellows’ graduate school education and professional development is high, and the U.S. government and USAID’s partners around the world benefit when they see America’s diversity represented abroad. Fellows also benefit directly from and value this experience.

Yet there is a continued need for broader recruitment and retention efforts beyond the Payne Fellows program, particularly given the limited number of fellowships available each year. There is also a concern that it is easier for agency leaders to focus on recruitment rather than working to resolve retention issues around promotion and tenure for minority FSOs. USAID must ultimately ensure that all managers are held accountable for their efforts in hiring, retaining, empowering and promoting qualified individuals from underrepresented groups.

There is a growing call across our nation, and from within USAID, to address the effects of institutional racism. In this regard, it is appropriate to pause and reflect on Rep. Payne’s legacy. Not only did he put his life at risk in Mogadishu in 2009, while advocating for democracy and human rights, he never stopped fighting for equality and fairness for all Americans. Neither should we. ■

Diversification in the Foreign Agricultural Service

Launched five years ago, USDA's Office of Civil Rights is working alongside the FAS to create a more engaging and empowering environment.

BY VALERIE BROWN

"Diversity" is one of those words next to a box to be checked and a word that is included in the conversation because it is the right thing to do. But it is when that word is applied that it has power.

When it is absorbed, it has meaning. When it is followed through



Valerie Brown is co-chair of the Civil Rights EEO Committee for the Foreign Agricultural Service. Currently serving in Washington, D.C., as the senior director of Asia operations at USDA, she is looking forward to her upcoming assignment as the head of USDA's office in Dubai. During graduate studies in agricultural economics, she worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Sri Lanka. She joined FAS in 1995 as a civil servant, and entered the Foreign Service in 2001. She has served in London, Mexico City, Taipei and, most recently, Shanghai. She recently co-founded "Real Women Wine," a group focused on women empowerment and wine education, and also mentors young people and women.

on, the word "diversification"—the process of becoming diversified, of adding variety—has impact and sustainability. It instills trust.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service understands the importance of applying, absorbing and following through on diversification. At the helm of change is the Office of Civil Rights Director Adriano Vasquez. He arrived at USDA five years ago, ready to take on the task of advocacy, and decided to combine the efforts of the USDA's numerous affinity groups by creating the Civil Rights EEO Committee. This committee is charged with looking at the entire landscape and creating a more engaging, encompassing and empowering environment for all, not just for some.

I am personally compelled to be a part of the diversification story for USDA's Foreign Service. As a single mother, I have raised three boys and two girls: one of my children is biracial, two are African American and my two adopted children are Mexican. They grew up on three different continents, so the experiences and lessons I learned in the area of diversity are endless. I learned from raising my children in this dynamic world that how we approach diversity is key to how successful we are as a

Why was there only one African American woman FSO in FAS, and why was I the first to take the test?

department and, more importantly, as a society. As a mother and a Foreign Service officer, I believe in change, hope and promise.

I confronted the importance of diversity early on in my FAS Foreign Service career. Nineteen short years ago, I took the Foreign Service exam, and from what was explained to me, I was the first African American woman to go through that process. At the time, there was only one African American woman diplomat in the department, and her name was Mattie Sharpless. She worked herself up the ranks overseas, and eventually she became USDA's first African American woman ambassador.



Yet I was to be the first to take the exam. And as with any fairy tale, there were trials and tribulations on my journey. That is what makes every story more interesting and makes every character stronger. The question that needed to be asked then was, Why? Why was there only one African American woman FSO in FAS, and why was I the first to take the test? Fast-forward to the present day, and the landscape has changed. Is it perfect? Not at all, but steps are being taken to rectify the barriers and issues that plague us.

What has FAS learned about being an all-inclusive foreign affairs agency in the years since I took the exam? We have learned that a change of this magnitude must be collaborative. All opinions matter; they have a place and need to be addressed. The stories and legends that can engulf a small agency must be heard and learned from, to be able to dispel them or to right the wrong.

The Office of Civil Rights is a key partner to work alongside the Foreign Service in this endeavor. It adds that essential perspective that can enhance the corps and help work toward widening the net through recruitment and onboarding of new officers. The OCR within FAS has conducted climate surveys and assessments, compiling various people's perspectives across the agency. As a result, it was able to identify what triggers exist that may lead to barriers. Another important outcome was the realization that diversity means different things to different people. Perceptual filters play a role in how employees see diversity, and that is a launching point for where change must begin.

As an African American woman representing the U.S. agricultural industry in foreign lands, I am more often than not the only person who looks like me at the table, in a reception or at the podium. Often I get to be the one to educate the people I encounter overseas about the United States—who we are, what we look like, and who we are still striving to become. As an organization, we are deliberately focused on outreach to the next generation of Foreign Service officers. Who are they? What will they look like? Where will they come from?

We understand that it is up to us to decide. We want to build up the community that we live in, and we know better than anyone else that the only way we can continue to grow and prosper is to continue to seek change. We in the FAS have chosen to start the dialogue. We have decided to initiate the change. We are diversifying, on purpose.

As Mary Parker Follett, an early 20th-century consultant and pioneer in organizational theory who has been called the "mother of modern management," once said: "Unity, not uniformity, must be our aim. We attain unity only through variety. Differences must be integrated, not annihilated, not absorbed." ■

One Bureau's Model for Moving Forward

With a spotlight on State's lack of diversity in the senior ranks, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs has stepped forward with a practical program to create real change.

BY STACY D. WILLIAMS

Institutional change may seem daunting, but with committed staff dedicated to addressing systemic challenges that have left valuable employees behind, positive change can occur. The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Diversity Council has provided the advocacy necessary to stimulate action toward dismantling systemic racism and address other issues that prevent the bureau from realizing its full potential. During the summer of 2018, immediately following a town hall on diversity conducted by Acting Assistant Secretary Francisco "Paco" Palmieri, several participants met and drew up a game plan establishing the WHA Diversity Council.

Several months later, the WHA Diversity Council Core Group fleshed out the structure and values for the council, created a comprehensive intranet website, and launched an employee

profile page featuring both Foreign Service and Civil Service staff. The council also identified 10 workstreams to advance specific issues; these include policy communications, speaker series, statistical analysis, Foreign Service bidding and Civil Service development, to name a few.

Today, with persistence and support from across all leadership levels, including from Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Julie Chung, WHA's Diversity Council is putting into practice policy, programming and processes to advance its key pillars: recruitment, retention and professional development.

Constructive Advocacy

WHA's Diversity Council has sought a range of speakers from both within and outside the State Department to generate discussion, debate and ideas for change. Speaker series events



Stacy D. Williams is chair of the Diversity Council in the State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. A native of Shreveport, Louisiana, he began his career at the State Department as a Presidential Management Intern in 1997 and has held Civil Service assignments in the Office of the Inspector General, the Under Secretary for Management's Office, the Office of the Director General, the Bureau of Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. He played a key role in the emergency humanitarian response to the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, working in the Operations Center. He is currently deputy director in the Office of Haitian Affairs. He has also served as president of the Thursday Luncheon Group, the oldest employee affinity group at State. He received the International Career Advancement Program's 2016 Signature Diversity Award.

have included a talk on “Words Matter” and a well-attended December 2019 roundtable on “Walking the Talk on Diversity,” which drew participants from across the department and included on the panel Virginia Governor Ralph Northam’s very first chief diversity officer, Janice Underwood. We hosted speakers on racism and microaggressions for domestic audiences, drawing more than 200 participants, as well as for deputy chiefs of mission (DCMs) and principal officers.

At the 2020 WHA DCM/Principal Officers conference, Diversity Council members pitched posts to set up their own diversity and inclusion councils, using the WHA Diversity Council as a resource. Posts across the Western Hemisphere are standing up and expanding their diversity council mandates and creating a bureau-wide network to share best practices. In addition, two intergovernmental agencies—the Inter-American Foundation and the Millennium Challenge Corporation—requested and received briefings to help the organizations strategize and set up their respective approaches moving forward on diversity and inclusion for staff in Washington, D.C., and throughout the field.

Members of the WHA Diversity Council have served as diversity and inclusion advisers by participating in conference calls with DCMs, reviewing posts’ concept papers, and providing best practices lists and other reading and resource materials. One DCM noted that the council’s “deep understanding for the complexities of the issues, appreciation for the essential role of leadership and practical guidance to take us from concept to council were enormously useful.”

WHA was one of the first bureaus to disseminate a message standing against discrimination and reaffirming our core principles on diversity at a town hall following the death of George Floyd. As a result of those discussions, the WHA Diversity Council identified 15 actionable steps that the bureau and the department can take to ensure every employee is treated fairly and has a fair shake with regard to development, advancement and participation in bureau policy. Many members of the WHA Diversity Council also serve on employee affinity groups and have forged partnerships across these groups.



BLAKENEY VASQUEZ



The WHA Diversity Council sponsored a presentation by Janice Underwood, Virginia’s chief diversity officer, to more than 60 participants at the State Department on Dec. 3, 2019. WHA PDAS Julie Chung, at left, with Janice Underwood. Inset: Janice Underwood presents “Walking the Talk on Diversity.”



LITAH MILLER

The WHA Diversity Council Core Group, from left: John Crippen, Litah Miller, Miriam Murray, Maria Apud, Stacy D. Williams and Blakeney Vasquez.

A Forward-Leaning Agenda

The council is currently leading discussions on new workstreams following several blog posts from former State Department Consular Fellow Tianna Spears, and engaging the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency to improve practices at border checkpoints. The bureau is focusing on establishing and coaching “first responders” so officers know there is always someone they can turn to.

Discussions are also underway to establish sponsorship programs for Foreign Service and Civil Service officers and develop a midlevel program modeled after the Powell Fellows program advanced during the mid-2000s. Additional plans are underway to enhance outreach to contractors, office management specialists and interns. The bureau is also working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to join forces on diversity

issues. The collective experiences of 2020 led WHA to release its own diversity pledge on July 24 (see sidebar, below).

The council has established a Microsoft Teams site (TEAM WHA: Diversity and Inclusion Councils Forward!) to facilitate opportunities for all WHA embassies and consulates to discuss best practices as they develop their respective goals. Likewise, the group is constantly seeking talented, diverse officers and continues to support WHA’s ongoing efforts for the summer 2021 bidding season.

Through its innovative and forward-leaning work, the council has made WHA a model of how to better understand and promote diversity and inclusion, one that other bureaus actively seek to emulate. For more information or guidance, please contact the WHA Diversity Council Core Group at WHADiversityCouncilCoreGroup@state.gov. ■

WHA Diversity Council Pledge

We believe strongly that the [State] Department and the Bureau should look like the United States and reflect America’s diversity at all levels.

We embrace diversity not only because it is right, but because it works: diverse teams are more likely to have a wide range of ideas and better outcomes, challenge conventional wisdom, innovate, and produce more thorough analysis to advance the Bureau’s mission and goals.

We are committed to focusing our collective efforts moving forward on the recruitment, retention and development of talented staff.

We strive to be the Bureau of choice for the Department’s top talent in all its diverse forms. We are building a cadre of leaders at all levels through active outreach to Employee Affinity Groups, other Diversity Councils, international affairs agencies, and interns who will contribute to the success of the Department wherever they serve.

WHA is committed to developing and promoting active mentoring and sponsorship programming.

We value and actively seek diverse candidates. We will dedicate ourselves to creating a work environment in which they can succeed.

We take affirmative steps to recognize and mitigate unconscious bias, including by strongly encouraging all staff to take the requisite online training on this issue.

We promote a vibrant, innovative, and results-focused Diversity Council in which all are empowered and invited to participate.

We welcome and embrace the contributions of every member of the team and seek to ensure that everyone understands the important role they play in our mission.

We are also empowering and coaching Deputy Chiefs of Mission, Directors, Deputy Directors and first line supervisors as they strategically develop entry and midlevel staff so that they are seen, heard, respected, and valued so that no officers are left out and each has full opportunity to succeed.

We honor the value of each employee and will take all possible measures to reduce or remove obstacles in Washington and in host countries so that all employees and their families may serve with dignity further reducing undue stress and harm.

We hold ourselves, our staff, and leadership accountable for building and supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace by incorporating those values in work requirement statements/commitments and acknowledging them through performance reviews and annual award processes, as appropriate.

We respect each other, invest in one another, and we succeed together as one.

Making Diversity and Inclusion Real in Foreign Affairs

Reports from the Employee Affinity Groups



The employee affinity groups (EAG) of the foreign affairs agencies are on the front lines of advocating for a more diverse and inclusive Foreign Service, one that, as the Foreign Service Act of 1980 mandates, should look like America. In connection with our September and October focus on addressing and advancing diversity and inclusion, we reached out to the affinity groups. We asked two questions: What are your main challenges? What steps do you recommend to advance diversity and inclusion in your institutions? We heard from 10 of them, and we thank all the affinity groups for their important work.

—Shawn Dorman, Editor in Chief

MICHAEL AUSTIN

TLG: The RARE Talent Initiative

By Irvin “Irv” Hicks Jr.

Founded in 1973, the Thursday Luncheon Group (TLG) supports the diversity and inclusion of African American and other underrepresented Foreign Service and Civil Service personnel under the auspices of the Recruitment, Advancement, Retention and Empowerment (RARE) Talent Initiative.

TLG was established by a handful of Foreign Service officers from the U.S. Information Agency, USAID and the State Department who met each Thursday of the month over lunch—hence the name—to discuss issues of concern to Foreign Service and Civil Service employees in each department.

TLG is concerned that the State Department’s lack of progress, and in some areas regression, in terms of advancement and promotion opportunities for African American Foreign and Civil Service staff members may result in an increase in departures from the organization, particularly at the mid- and senior ranks. The January 2020 Government Accountability Office report on the lack of diversity at the State Department points to the existence of historical and systematic racial disparities African American Foreign and Civil Service officers continue to face that undermine the department’s diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategy.

The group is currently working on five priority efforts as part of the RARE Talent Initiative. The first, submitted in collaboration with Blacks in Government—Carl Rowan Chapter and the Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association on July 8, recommends a series of joint D&I reforms to Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun and Director General of the Foreign Service Carol Perez.

The second—a plan to hold a Juneteenth commemorative event at Main State—has been implemented. On June 19, the Deputy Secretary, the Director General, regional bureau principal deputy assistant secretaries (PDAS), the presidents of fellow affinity groups and 30 others gathered in State’s Hall of Flags courtyard for a George Floyd memorial that included a moment of reflection lasting 8 minutes and 46 seconds, to mark the time the police officer held Floyd down, resulting in his death.

TLG’s third endeavor is to set up a mock selection board whereby 20 Foreign Service officers have their 2017 through 2020 employee evaluation reports (EERs) assessed by a team of ambassadors (active and retired) to determine their competitiveness for promotion and career trajectory. The purpose

of this unprecedented initiative is to provide participants with a candid assessment of their EER narratives and assignment choices so that they have additional insights into their prospects for promotion. Participants also receive coaching and mentoring to empower them as they seek future career opportunities.

Fourth, TLG is establishing the George Floyd Mentorship/Sponsorship program, which will link TLG Foreign and Civil Service members with senior leaders in regional and functional bureaus. This program will focus on helping participants hone their tradecraft and networking skills to bolster their competitiveness and opportunities to advance and secure promotions, particularly at the senior ranks.

Finally, the group is securing 501(c)(3) status to pursue and accept donations to establish TLG chapters nationwide for Foreign Service and Civil Service recruitment of candidates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and members of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs.

These initiatives aim to make real progress toward several goals, namely:

- Increased African American representation in the senior ranks of the Foreign and Civil Service, particularly at the assistant secretary, PDAS, deputy assistant secretary, director and deputy director levels.
- Increased chief of mission and deputy chief of mission representation in all regional bureaus, particularly in the Bureau of European Affairs and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs to support and lead department efforts in the great-power competition vis-à-vis China and Russia.
- Greater professional development and excursion tour opportunities for Civil Service officers, and increased representation of African Americans in the senior executive ranks of the Civil Service.
- An increase of at least 50 percent or better in the number of African American officers promoted in comparison to the 2019 rate of promotions.

TLG stands ready to assist the department with improving the recruitment, advancement, promotion, retention and empowerment of African American and other underrepresented Foreign and Civil Service officers (from entry to the senior ranks).

We invite new membership to help promote diversity and inclusion reform initiatives throughout the State Department, and to help ensure that the department’s culture and workplace environment enables all Foreign and Civil Service officers to



reach their full potential in the service of the United States of America—at home and abroad. To see our agenda and membership structure, please contact us at thursdayluncheon.org.

Irvin “Irv” Hicks Jr. recently joined the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs after serving as the senior negotiator for the Political-Military Bureau’s Office of Security Negotiations, and foreign policy adviser (POLAD) for the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa based in Djibouti and as deputy chief of mission in Nouakchott. He has also served in Guinea, Nigeria, Brazil, Gabon, Sierra Leone, Mauritius and Burundi, in addition to Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the State Department, he worked for the African American Institute, Entrepreneurs International and the U.S.–South African Leadership Exchange Program, and was a corporate executive for General Motors’ Africa and Middle East Operations.

HECFAA: Emphasizing Recruitment Resources and Career Advancement

By Greg Pardo, Sandy Perez-Rousseau, Annika Betancourt, Camelia Valldejuly and Rosalina Wackford

The Hispanic Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA) has worked since 1982 to promote a foreign affairs workforce that reflects the rich diversity of the United States, including through strengthening the recruitment, retention and advancement of Hispanics and Latinx at the Department of State. Despite such long-standing efforts, the Government Accountability Office’s January report found that Hispanic representation only grew from 5 percent to 7 percent in 16 years. The GAO also noted the continued lower rates of representation by all racial and ethnic minorities in the senior ranks.



To remedy this, HECFAA has four recommendations: (1) increase resources for recruitment and pipeline programs; (2) ensure the retention and advancement of midlevel officers by expanding career advancement programs; (3) increase mentorship and sponsorship for Hispanic employees to increase the pipeline of employees eligible for senior positions; and (4) ensure transparency and accountability in hiring decisions.

In March the HECFAA Executive Board sent these proposals directly to regional and functional bureau senior leaders interested in recruiting and retaining diverse candidates, including

several who admitted they had a long way to go. The board has also served as a resource to some bureaus and posts that previously lacked a diversity council or any diversity or inclusion initiatives. Numerous members working domestically and overseas serve on these councils, in addition to their day jobs, to improve their workplaces for all employees.

Mindful of the power of collaboration, we continue to partner with the department’s other employee affinity groups, the Bureau of Global Talent Management and State’s Office of Civil Rights to collaborate, share best practices and amplify existing efforts to increase inclusion and recruit and retain diverse staff. On March 11, HECFAA and other EAGs met with members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and presented several key areas for Congress to assist the department in these efforts.

A strong sense of community is what makes the HECFAA family special. During the chiefs of mission conference in February, we welcomed five Latinx ambassadors for a breakfast with members; and we will host our annual Hispanic Heritage Month event in October, highlighting the important contributions by Hispanics to U.S. diplomacy. HECFAA has also held numerous career advancement sessions, some in partnership with other EAGs, on bidding, professional development opportunities outside the department, and management and supervisory skills in the virtual environment.

To secure the next generation of diverse leaders, we are directly engaging with Latinx youth and pressing the department on increasing institutional outreach to Hispanic-Serving Institutions and communities with majority Hispanic populations. Our members conducted numerous speaking engagements with Latinx high school and college students interested in careers in foreign affairs.

To ease the financial burden for one unpaid State Department intern, we secured a stipend, in collaboration with the American Foreign Service Association, and are working to continue and expand this initiative. Though Hispanics constitute 17 percent of the U.S. labor force and counting, we only represent 7 percent of the State Department. Retention and advancement of current diverse officers provide a visible and attractive example for the new talent the department seeks to recruit. HECFAA remains hard at work in each of these areas.

The authors compose the executive board of HECFAA. President Greg Pardo is a Foreign Service political officer serving in the Office for Israel and Palestinian Affairs. Vice President for Civil Service Sandy Perez-Rousseau is a foreign affairs officer in the Office to Moni-

tor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. Vice President for Foreign Service Annika Betancourt is a political officer currently serving as acting deputy director of the Office of Andean Affairs. Secretary Camelia Valldejuly is a contractor in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Treasurer Rosalina Wackford is a budget analyst in the Bureau of Information Resource Management.

DAG: Victories and New Initiatives

By Heather M. Pishko

The Disability Action Group (DAG) is an employee affinity group that advocates for the full and equal participation of people with disabilities at the U.S. Department of State. We focus on career enhancement, accommodation and inclusion. Most importantly, we provide a safe space for employees to share their stories, frustrations and fears. Our membership includes people who have lived with disabilities for a long time and others who have recently become disabled, as well as advocates and allies.

This spring DAG spoke with the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee about the GAO's recent report on diversity and inclusion at State. We took the opportunity to raise the department's 2018 decision to remove the "gap memo" from the Foreign Service promotion process. Gap memos were used to explain a long-term absence from work, including for medical treatment. Without this memo, promotion panels were left to interpret such absences in any way they wished, which often resulted in speculation about performance issues. After the meeting on Capitol Hill, the department released a cable reinstating the gap memo, specifically mentioning medical issues as a valid reason for filing one. The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations is now preparing an amendment to the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (with our input) requiring that the gap memo remain available.

As this year's bidding season kicks off, DAG has already attended a number of bureau-hosted recruiting events in coordination with other EAGs. Unfortunately, at several of these gatherings, disabilities weren't even mentioned; or if they were, it was only in the context of family members who may have special needs and require accommodation. Thus, we are appealing to bureau and department leaders to remember: Recruiting employees that represent the diversity of the United States also means recruiting employees with disabilities.

We are aware that many employees are reluctant to disclose their disabilities while job searching for fear of disadvantaging themselves, either because of straight-up bias or because of an office or post's known preference to avoid making necessary accommodations. However, DAG has heard from several of our members that posts are eager to hire a diverse range of employees and are willing to take every step needed to accommodate all disabilities. Even special incentive posts are workable for some disabilities!

We are hopeful that our outreach efforts will encourage employees to have the confidence to work with posts in exploring options for accommodation at the beginning of the job search process. This is the best way to get a clear picture of what is needed and allows the department the time needed to complete accommodations prior to employee arrival. We also remind colleagues that there are legal recourses that can be sought if they have been discriminated against in the hiring process.

One way State can advance diversity and inclusion as it applies to employees with disabilities is to remove all barriers in the workspace before anyone needs to ask. Posts, especially, would be smart to retain at least one accessible residence in their housing pool and proactively work toward ensuring accessible workplaces even in the absence of a current employee need. State has committed itself to hiring more employees with disabilities; thus, the need for accommodation will only increase in the future, and offices and posts that are prepared will benefit by attracting the best and brightest talent.

To support posts overseas in their attempts to become more welcoming to employees with disabilities, DAG has created a Post Representative program. We are currently recruiting individuals serving at posts worldwide to help us form and refine this effort. People interested in this leadership opportunity should reach out to Post Representative Coordinator Elizabeth Daugharty and follow the Post Representative channel on the DAG Microsoft Teams site (information on how to join is below).

This fall, DAG plans to send out a survey asking both Civil Service and Foreign Service employees about their experiences with promotions, because there is no data on this topic. We hope that employees with disabilities will participate so that we can obtain data to launch conversations on the promotion of people with disabilities at the department.

A final note: Membership in DAG is free and simple. You can join by visiting our SharePoint site at <https://bit.ly/2D6j8JY>. You can also join the DAG Microsoft Team by selecting "join team"



at the bottom of the Teams list, and then entering code 0p7xfcw to be automatically added to our team.

Heather M. Pishko, chair of the Disability Action Group, is an office management specialist in the Political Training Division of the Foreign Service Institute's School for Professional and Area Studies. She joined the Foreign Service in 2006, and has served in Helsinki, Lima, Frankfurt and Belgrade, in addition to domestic assignments in Fort Lauderdale and Washington, D.C.

AAFAA: Innovating to Expand Diversity and Inclusion Conversations

By Tina Wong

In a time of destruction, create something.

—Maxine Hong Kingston, Asian American author

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association (AAFAA) has been creating messages of hope, acts of solidarity and a community of resilience. Quarantine has forced us to find new and effective ways to engage the entire department in advancing diversity and inclusion.

In May we shared the Vietnam boat refugee story of Lauren Vuong and the courageous American crew who saved her and many others through a screening of the film “Finding the Virgo,” followed by a Q&A with its directors. We called for action to confront the rise of coronavirus-related stigma and race- and ethnic-based discrimination within and outside the workplace. To raise awareness of and fight against hate, the AAFAA Board and members joined community leaders across the nation in our first-ever poem in honor of Asian American heroes and volunteers in the COVID-19 pandemic response directed by AAFAA Secretary Liz Liu.

We also hosted a senior leaders panel led by Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Julie Chung, Mumbai Consul General David Ranz and Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Hugo Yon to highlight the incredible contributions of our domestic and overseas colleagues to repatriate Americans. We strengthened allyship with many of our fellow employee affinity groups through professional development sessions

on “Engaging with the 7th Floor” and “Mentoring vs. Sponsorship.” We have so much progress to be proud of, but our work is far from done.

As our nation has now celebrated the 244th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, we reflect on one of its principles—equality. We acknowledge that America’s independence offered freedom only to some, and it took a civil war for African Americans to be freed from slavery. Now, more than a century later, waves of courageous protests have set into motion a long-overdue national conversation about equal rights for all. Throughout this summer, AAFAA joined forces with other employee affinity groups (EAGs) in a collaborative and constructive call for equal opportunities for women and people of color across our ranks.

In partnership with the Bureau of Global Talent Management’s former Deputy Assistant Secretary Mirembe Nantongo, the Secretary’s Office of Civil Right Diversity Management and Outreach team, and the South Asian American Employee Association (SAAEA), we began an open conversation to explore ways to advance a more fair, transparent, accountable, diverse and inclusive institutional culture.

In addition to ongoing consultations with AFSA and the Diplomatic Security Diversity and Inclusion teams, the AAFAA Board met with Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Atul Keshap and Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Ervin Massinga to discuss challenges facing our community, including biases and outdated assumptions in the DS security clearance process that often lead to Asian Americans being disproportionately affected by assignment restrictions.

We elevated our voices through dialogue with Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun. Along with leaders of the Hispanic Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies, Arab Americans in Foreign Affairs Agencies, and SAAEA, I represented AAFAA and discussed opportunities for State leadership to improve our institutional culture to advance diversity and inclusion. For the second year, we brought together the voices of EAGs to engage regional bureau leadership to share best practices in Foreign Service bidding and recruitment outcomes.

This year, we launched a new series of EAG conversations with functional bureau leadership on both Foreign Service and Civil Service diversity and inclusion initiatives in hiring and retention. In response to the killing of George Floyd and subsequent nationwide protests, AAFAA hosted listening ses-



sions to advance diversity, inclusion and allyship. One featured San Francisco State University Chair of Asian Studies Russell Jeung, who shared the historical parallels and unique histories between Asian Americans and African Americans and our necessary active role in our nation's struggle for justice.

AAFAA's pursuit of equality and racial justice within and outside our institution begins with everyday allies and volunteers. As with the work of diplomacy, the efforts to further diversity and inclusion are long-term, but progress is forged through vigilance and "walking the talk." Today and every day, AAFAA stands with our colleagues and engages our leaders to take care of our people—to confront systemic racism in our institution and to build up our diplomatic corps to fully represent and embrace the diversity of our nation.

Tina Wong is the 2019-2020 president of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association and a Foreign Service officer currently serving in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.

SAAEA: Developing a Pipeline Program

By Rona R. Rathod

Founded in 2009, the South Asian American Employee Association (SAAEA) is one of the State Department's officially recognized employee affinity groups (EAGs) and a strategic partner with the department in promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion. One of SAAEA's primary missions is enhancing the recruitment, retention and promotion of South Asian Americans through direct advocacy to State management, liaising with Congress, fostering professional development and partnering with other affinity groups to amplify our efforts to ensure the department's workforce reflects the diversity of the United States.

Given recent tragic events in our country, our unified voice with partner affinity groups has never been more important. With a renewed focus on diversity and inclusion, it is necessary to acknowledge that progress still needs to be made at State and that we all have important individual and collective roles in the process. In partnership with the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association, the Bureau of Global Talent Management's diversity and inclusion team and State's Office of Civil Rights,



SAAEA organized an Open Conversation in June to address how employees can support one another on an individual and organizational level to evolve institutional culture and stand up to bias and discrimination.

The event—which included nearly 200 participants from around the world—offered a space to discuss personal stories, reflections and ideas. Participants discussed fear of interrupting bias because of the potential impact on “corridor reputation,” the importance of empathy and listening, and the role of managers in creating an inclusive work environment. In addition to the Open Conversation, the SAAEA board has been in close contact with regional bureaus and posts around the world to help set priorities for diversity and inclusion (D&I) councils.

Beyond the department, this summer SAAEA engaged with the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations leadership to frame two congressional hearings on diversity at State, noting that an inclusive State Department strengthens foreign policy efforts. Specifically, the hearings sought to examine structural racism within our system, highlighted in a January 2020 Government Accountability Office report indicating that promotion rates for women and minority communities at State are lower than they should be. Remarks from the hearings focused on ensuring that gatekeepers for recruitment are diverse and that both promotion and performance reviews fold in developing diversity among the ranks.

Not surprisingly, our members and the data have echoed the challenges to being promoted to the senior ranks for Asian Americans. In the January GAO report and other State data, information about Americans of South Asian descent is aggregated with data for Asian Americans as a whole, making it difficult to decipher. Nevertheless, that data shows that the number of Asian Americans at the department tends to reflect U.S. demographics at entry- and midlevels but drops precipitously at the Senior Executive Service and Senior Foreign Service levels. Anecdotally, SAAEA understands that the barriers preventing Asian Americans from advancing to senior positions also prevent South Asian Americans from advancing.

This is the crux of SAAEA's advocacy work. We are probing not only which obstacles thwart the career progression of our constituents, but also how SAAEA—in concert with our partners from other affinity groups—can encourage State's senior management to break those barriers down, create a more level playing field for minorities and increase retention into and at the leadership levels.

Hearing the voices of employees encouraging State to create and maintain a level playing field for the advancement and retention of all employees will be critical to our success.

Assignments and promotions at the department are fundamentally linked to one's network and opportunity. Therefore, it is important to connect more of our members to senior leaders to expand their networks and opportunities. Without senior leaders making more intentional efforts to mentor, sponsor and provide opportunities to people of color, the department is unlikely to see an improvement in representation at the upper levels.

What can we do? SAAEA is in the early stages of developing a pipeline program that would provide sponsorship to employees from the early days of their State career, guiding them toward acquiring the necessary skills, knowledge and networks to reach our senior ranks. Such a sponsorship program would encourage employees to pursue opportunities and assignments that will prepare them to be positive leaders and effective policymakers. It would channel people toward applying for positions with more responsibility that they might not otherwise consider, thus creating a cadre ready to excel in the Senior Foreign Service.

Of course, SAAEA requires the buy-in of State's leadership to bring this to fruition. Hearing the voices of employees encouraging State to create and maintain a level playing field for the advancement and retention of all employees will be critical to our success. As an affinity group, we advocate for institutional change and represent our members' views directly to senior leaders. SAAEA looks forward to continuing advocacy for the betterment of not just our members, but the State Department as a whole. SAAEA is open to all department employees with an affinity for South Asia, diversity and inclusion. Interested colleagues can email SAAEA@state.gov.

Rona R. Rathod joined the Foreign Service in 2004 and is currently serving overseas at the U.S. consulate general in Mumbai. Before that, she served as a special adviser in the Office of the Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation. Other Washington, D.C., assignments include a year in the Bureau of International Security, a detail assignment to the office of Senator Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), and assignments to the Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and International Scientific Affairs, and the Operations Center. Other overseas postings include Lome, New Delhi, Kabul and Vilnius.

AAIFAA: Collaborating to Make a Difference

By Nadia Farra and Mahmoud El-Hamalawy

The Arab-Americans in Foreign Affairs Agencies (AAIFAA) employee affinity group is playing a concerted and strategic role in coordination with other employee groups to champion diversity and inclusion in the State Department. As Arab Americans reflect on movements across the country, such as Black Lives Matter, that seek to raise awareness, self-reflection



and lasting actions against racism and discriminatory practices, members of the community are simultaneously reflecting on their own identity and how they can contribute their experiences and support to the nationwide discussion.

As the name suggests, AAIFAA's membership goes beyond the State Department and includes foreign affairs and development professionals at the U.S. Agency for International Development and at the Departments of Homeland Security, Treasury and Commerce, among others. Many of our members have lineage from across the Arab world; others are interested in the region, Arabic language and culture. This combination strengthens the community's collective experience and reach.

Many Americans of Arab or Middle Eastern heritage face some of the same biases that other communities experience, but not all. This is why AAIFAA works in coordination with other employee groups to amplify messages about the national security importance of diversity and inclusion and having a federal foreign affairs workforce that reflects the American people. Arab Americans also have a unique challenge: Because individuals with Middle Eastern or North African ancestry are officially categorized as Caucasian or "white" (a point of contention for many in the Arab American community), there is no disaggregation of data that speaks to the community's representation or achievements.

AAIFAA advocates on behalf of the Arab American community in the federal government by partnering with other employee groups and identifying opportunities for members to ensure those with an "Arab" or "Middle Eastern" background are represented and at the table. The group is also keenly aware that many of its members do not face the type of systemic racism that many of our Black colleagues face both inside and outside the office, including in foreign posts.

GRACE: Reflections on Diversity and Inclusion

By the GRACE Steering Committee

For our most recent initiative, AAIFAA worked with fellow employee groups to address toxic behaviors and improve representation at the Department of State by creating a diversity and inclusion checklist that has been shared with senior leadership, beginning with the regional bureaus. The checklist is a compilation of simple but effective steps each principal deputy assistant secretary can utilize to address representation issues and unconscious bias, and hold accountable those who demonstrate harmful behavior. Using the checklist effectively will also help promote better discussion and problem-solving, as well as boost morale, and therefore support retention.

Standing together with the other employee groups and speaking with one voice gives tremendous weight to our goals of encouraging diversity and holding harmful individuals accountable. AAIFAA has raised its organizational profile and collaborative spirit among other employee groups, and we look forward to continued efforts and coordination for future campaigns and initiatives.

We realize that more needs to be done—and now is the time to do it. Staying active as an employee group despite the restrictions of COVID-19 and social distancing, the organization is finding creative ways to continue engaging and advocating for its membership. By canceling social events where AAIFAA once promoted professional networking and showcased exhibits, music, cuisine and stories, we are putting more focus on the work we can do to advance and promote Arab American representation at all levels of management and policy in the federal interagency community.

To do that, AAIFAA is committed to coordinating efforts, initiatives and meeting notes, and to working alongside colleagues in other affinity groups and allies in leadership roles to advance our collective cause together. Through collaboration, AAIFAA and other employee groups are making a positive difference for the U.S. Department of State and our national security.

To learn more about AAIFAA, write to AAIFAABoardMembers@state.gov.

Nadia Farra, chair of Arab-Americans in Foreign Affairs Agencies (AAIFAA), is the senior Syria desk officer in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department. She joined the Civil Service in 2011 as a Presidential Management Fellow at USAID. Mahmoud El-Hamalawy, communications officer for AAIFAA, is an outreach officer in the Bureau of Global Public Affairs at the State Department. He worked as a producer for Al Jazeera TV's Washington bureau before joining State in 2018.

Diversity and inclusion are core tenets of the Christian faith, and GRACE, as the State Department's first employee affinity group based on religion, seeks to advance these principles in the department and beyond. GRACE's mission is to promote a culture at State that embraces the ability of employees to manifest religious belief in the workplace.



It is commonly thought that one's religious background and beliefs should be a private part of one's identity that is not discussed. GRACE's perspective, however, is that one's religion is key to our individual and cultural identity and should not have to be hidden or suppressed, including in the workplace. One's faith background can play a significant, positive role in one's work, as evidenced by the lives of leaders who have recently passed away, including John Hume, C.T. Vivian and John Lewis. Beyond religious freedom, GRACE also seeks to contribute to the broader conversations and policy changes that help ensure improved diversity and inclusion in the department.

Religious liberty is a foundational principle in the Constitution and other sources of law. Accordingly, in 1997 the Clinton administration released guidelines affirming the right of religious expression in the federal workplace and prohibiting discrimination based on one's religious (or nonreligious) beliefs. More recently, the Trump administration has reinforced these guidelines and emphasized their importance. Nearly a quarter century since the Clinton guidance was issued, GRACE members and adherents of other faiths still have concerns about expressing their faith or exercising religious practices in the workplace.

As a multicultural organization, GRACE is also aware of—and takes seriously—the unique challenges facing our members of color at State. GRACE welcomes open and honest discussions that provide the foundation for the mutual understanding necessary to advance positive change. Racism of any kind runs contrary to the core Christian tenet that all people are made in the image of God and are therefore valued, unique and to be celebrated. It is out of our love and reverence for God that we are called to love others.

The Christian church is diverse in itself, encompassing people of all backgrounds who help each other grow in their faith and understanding. We are grateful for the support of State's Office of Civil Rights and the affinity group community in combating all forms of racism at the department, and we look forward to working together in this effort.

GRACE consistently engages with senior leadership, hosts discussions among department employees and invites outside speakers to help address the challenges of diversity and inclusion. At GRACE, we seek to partner with the department and the church to grow in this area, and we welcome our colleagues of all religious and nonreligious backgrounds to engage with us as we progress on this journey together.

If you'd like to learn more about GRACE and be part of our ongoing conversation, please email the Steering Committee at GRACE-SteeringCommittee@state.gov.

The GRACE Steering Committee is led by President Al Murphy and Vice Presidents Al Gombis and Logan Krusac. Al Murphy is a foreign affairs officer in the Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Al Gombis is an FSO and currently director of the Office of Global Criminal Justice. Logan Krusac is an FSO and currently special assistant in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

glifaa: Promoting LGBT+ Issues at State

By Steven Alan Honley

Ever since its March 8, 1992, founding as Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies, glifaa has been a strong advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT+) employees at State and other foreign affairs agencies. (The plus at the end of the abbreviation encompasses various other subsets of the community: asexual, intersex, queer and questioning.)

Overall, gains achieved over the previous quarter century of advocacy, particularly in terms of protection from discrimination, remain largely intact today at the State Department. Fortifying that trend, in June the Supreme Court issued a landmark decision, *Bostock v. Clayton County*, declaring that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects all employees against

discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Glifaa President Jeff Anderson hails the organization's progress, but notes: "There's much still more to be done for LGBT+ equality." For example, LGBT+ employees still can't serve in many countries around the world with diplomatic privileges and immunities for their same-sex spouses or partners. As Anderson points out, "This closes the door on a number of career opportunities, which can, in turn, have a direct effect on promotions and career trajectories." In addition, transgender employees and their family members face a complex set of regulations, policies and procedures that affect everything from medical and security clearances to passports.

Overseas, glifaa's post representatives spearhead a small grants program that directs funding to assist local organizations in foreign countries on specific projects. For example, at the initiative of Mission China, glifaa donated \$500 to a community organization in Wuhan to purchase masks to use when delivering medication to HIV-positive patients.

In addition, glifaa recently partnered with the National Museum for American Diplomacy to tell the organization's story in a digital exhibit: "Serving with Pride: The History of LGBT+ Pride in Foreign Affairs Agencies."

Asked about glifaa access to State Department management, Anderson says: "We have a very productive relationship with many senior department leaders, and continue our work at the highest levels to advance the issues important to our 1,000-person network." The group is actively working with State's leadership to develop more equitable policies and guidelines on issues affecting family members.

Mindful that the number of countries that accredit same-sex spouses has plateaued, glifaa also uses its meetings with State officials to urge them to make foreign accreditation of spouses of American LGBT+ employees a priority. It emphasizes that posts shouldn't wait until someone with a same-sex spouse has been assigned to press the issue with host governments. Similarly, State should use its full range of tools, including reciprocity, to encourage countries to accredit our family members.

Anderson notes that Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun spoke recently at a virtual event organized by glifaa and the Atlantic Council on U.S. government engagement on LGBT+ issues globally. Deputy Secretary Biegun's predecessor, Ambassador John J. Sullivan, has been a great advocate for



Summary of glifaa's 2020 Agenda

Protecting LGBT+ Foreign Affairs Employees from Discrimination

- Engage the State Department and glifaa members regarding potential changes in Title VII employment discrimination protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Participate actively in the department's diversity and inclusivity initiatives;
- Urge the Human Resources Bureau [now GTM] to strengthen protections in processes vulnerable to discrimination against LGBT+ employees; and
- Work with the department to ensure nondiscrimination announcements, and that all diplomatic cables and literature include the LGBT+ community.

Promoting Accreditation of Same-Sex Spouses

- Actively advocate with the Office of Career Development and Assignments and regional bureaus to increase the number of posts that fully accredit same-sex couples and LGBT+ families; and
- Advocate for a nonvoluntary Separate Maintenance Allowance for families and spouses that cannot join the officer due to an accreditation issue.

Advocating for Transgender Employees & Eligible Family Members

- Advocate for the department to establish written guidance for transgender employees in the workplace similar to those in effect in the private sector and some other federal agencies;
- Engage with the Office of Medical Services to request that all departmental medical personnel consistently follow current

patient sensitivity and clinical treatment protocols for transgender, gender-diverse and intersex patients;

- Increase engagement of transgender, gender-diverse and intersex employees and family members; and
- Speak up for transgender individuals through public statements and appearances at significant events.

Expanding Front Office Advocacy

- Engage with the Management Bureau and other bureaus to issue recruitment announcements with nondiscrimination and diversity and inclusion statements;
- Engage in quiet diplomacy with the 7th floor and bureaus to advance issues of importance to glifaa members; and
- Create a database of current and retired leaders glifaa can engage with when needed to advocate on behalf of members and support LGBT+ initiatives.

Strengthening glifaa as an Organization

- Ensure glifaa's legal status aligns with the department's legal requirements and the Foreign Affairs Manual and, if needed, register glifaa as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization;
- Organize frequent educational, professional and social activities, including a regularly scheduled, monthly networking event for members and allies;
- Increase support for activities organized by glifaa post representatives abroad;
- Improve glifaa's communications strategy and modernize the website and social media accounts; and
- Expand glifaa's presence at Capital Pride; the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia; the Transgender Day of Remembrance; and other LGBT+ events.

LGBT+ issues and continues in this role now as ambassador to Moscow. He spoke at various Pride Month events and shared his experience working with the LGBT+ community during a "Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter to Me" State Department event this year. Reach glifaa at board@glifaa.org.

Steven Alan Honley, a State Department FSO from 1985 to 1997, and editor in chief of The Foreign Service Journal from 2001 to 2014, is a regular contributor to the Journal. He is a founding member of glifaa and the group's third president (1994-1995).

GSM@AID: Helping USAID to Live Its Values

By Danielle Carnes

Gender and Sexual Minorities at USAID (GSM@AID) unites professionals with a diverse range of backgrounds and experience around a central mission: to improve the recruitment, retention and promotion of gender and sexual minorities at USAID, with a special emphasis on the needs of

our local hire employees. While GSM@AID focuses entirely on LGBTI+ employees at USAID, we coordinate closely with glifaa on issues that affect our overlapping constituencies across the foreign affairs agencies.

Although GSM@AID is one of the world's largest international development agencies, many of our employees live and work in cultural contexts where LGBTI+ rights are not protected. One of GSM@AID's greatest challenges is ensuring that, no matter what country they work in, the USAID work environment permits our LGBTI+ colleagues to bring their whole self to work every day.

This is not always easy. According to a November 2019 report from F&M Global Barometer of Gay Rights at Franklin and Marshall College (fandmglobalbarometers.org), 69 percent of countries have a "failing" score on a gay rights index, and 76 percent have a failing score for trans rights. These indices represent a whole-of-being measure of discrimination and civil protections, including legal discrimination, de facto discrimination, LGBTI+ rights advocacy, socioeconomic outcomes for LGBTI+ people and societal persecution.

With our offices in locations with varying levels of discrimination, danger and criminalization, it is essential that our employees everywhere have meaningful, ongoing support. This, however, can look vastly different depending on the context, which points to another challenge we face in advancing acceptance and inclusion for LGBTI+ people.

It is challenging to support LGBTI+ rights when the country you live in has criminalized homosexual acts. It is hard to be fully present in the office when the country you live in (whether the United States or overseas) and perhaps even your colleagues refuse to recognize your true gender and name. So it is critical that the agency and its employees actively ensure that all our staff are able to participate as full members of the USAID workforce, and that no one faces discrimination on account of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

To that end, GSM@AID is doing the following:

- Developing training material to improve the level of staff interaction with potentially confusing or awkward topics;
- Preparing a management package for mission leadership to operationalize values of protection for LGBTI+ staff;
- Reviewing and updating USAID policies to incorporate LGBTI+ protections across the entire employee life cycle; and
- Researching ways to protect staff in environments where they feel unwelcome or unsafe due to their identities.

USAID's values statement reads, in part: "We recognize and



acknowledge the strength that comes from diversity." It states that we "advance equality, foster equal opportunity and address inequality within our Agency and in our work." These values are impossible to realize without conscious and deliberate efforts to create a space where everyone's contribution is valued. The members of GSM@AID are working hard to help the agency live our values in everything we do and harness the diverse talent we need to succeed in our mission. GSM@AID can be reached at gsm-board@usaid.gov.

Danielle Carnes is the chair of the employee resource group Gender and Sexual Minorities at USAID (GSM@AID). She entered the Civil Service as a Presidential Management Fellow in 2016, and now serves as a program officer in the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management. As founder and chair of GSM@AID, she helps USAID achieve its development objectives by leading efforts to create safe and inclusive work environments for marginalized and underrepresented staff. She received the 2017 glifaa Employee of the Year Award for her contributions to transgender equality at USAID.

PRFA: Working Against Bias and Misinformation to Realize Opportunities

By Christina Tilghman

The Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association (PRFA) advocates on behalf of members to senior leadership on diversity and inclusion issues, and creates opportunities to support retention, recruitment and morale-boosting efforts



through networking, career development and community service activities. Established in 2010, PRFA has more than 700 members serving with distinction at U.S. missions around the world.

Many PRFA members share experiences of enduring toxic behaviors in the workplace such as microaggressions and being second-guessed, undermined, harassed, and deemed unqualified, signaling a widespread problem of discriminatory behaviors and perceptions within the State Department. There is also persistent bias and a misunderstanding

Foreign affairs agencies must recognize that America's greatest strength is our diversity and create a cadre of foreign affairs professionals truly representative of our country.

of the fellowship program itself. A common, yet false, impression of these programs is they are an easy way into the Foreign Service for minority candidates. However, becoming a Pickering or Rangel Fellow is a highly competitive process, and the fellows must fulfill all requirements, including the written and oral examinations, to officially join the Foreign Service.

Such misperceptions hinder prospects for officers of color to ascend to the senior-most ranks in the Foreign Service. PRFA continues to regularly engage senior department leaders to develop accountability measures, advocate for an equitable assignments process to ensure selected candidates reflect our

diverse and exceptionally talented workforce, and work with key parts of our institution to pilot innovative approaches to change how senior leaders tackle these issues at missions overseas.

Foreign affairs agencies must recognize that America's greatest strength is our diversity and create a cadre of foreign affairs professionals truly representative of our country. This also requires agencies to actively address systemic disparities by ensuring diversity and inclusion efforts are well resourced, allocating ample staff and a sizeable operational budget. Most importantly, any entity within a foreign affairs agency explicitly responsible for diversity and inclusion issues should possess the full authority to implement such initiatives in order to effectively shift organizational culture and foster an inclusive, diverse workforce. PRFA can be reached at PRFABoard@state.gov. ■

Christina Tilghman is president of the Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association. She joined the Foreign Service in 2010 and has served in Canada and South Africa, as well as in several assignments in Washington, D.C.

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A Time of “Great Malaise”

The experience of a distinguished career FSO offers a look into the dark side of mid-century America.

BY FELICITY O. YOST

After relentless FBI investigations, congressional hearings and State Department security interrogations, the prognosis was dire: It would be a time of “great malaise in the Department such as I have never seen before.” Writing this in 1980, Ambassador Charles W. Yost, my father, was referring to the federal witch hunts that began in the 1930s and lasted through the 1950s and McCarthyism.

What follows are my father’s own experiences during that tumultuous time, which arguably resonate today. He was a loyal American and successful diplomat who was subjected to repeated investigation in the search for communists in the State Department. He took good notes.

Moving into the Crosshairs

Following World War I, in the early years of the USSR, it was not unusual for young diplomats to visit that country. In fact, Yost writes in his memoirs, it would have been foolish of him to ignore the part of Europe where some of the boldest social



Felicity O. Yost, the daughter of the late Ambassador Charles W. Yost, worked for 37 years in the United Nations Department of Public Information and as a U.N. election monitor. She is now writing a biography of her father, tentatively titled The Only Brave

One in the Room: Charles W. Yost and the Golden Age of Diplomacy, from which this account is drawn.

and political experiments were occurring. As a result of his trips there in 1929 and 1933, the future Cold Warrior acquired insights into the Russian psyche.

His third trip, in 1934, would eventually have disconcerting consequences, however. Before embarking, Yost made his booking through the Open Road travel agency and, once in Moscow, attended classes at the Anglo-American Institute of the First Moscow University (all while awaiting word whether his Polish girlfriend would marry him).

He first became aware that this trip was a problem only in 1943, when his aunt reported that the FBI had questioned her about his communist leanings and attendance at a Moscow university. It was the beginning of a decadeslong investigation into Yost and his alleged communist sympathies and connections. Ten years later, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) branded the Open Road agency a “Communist Front Organization” and the university a forum for communist propaganda.

Long before HUAC’s investigation into Yost, his connection with certain questionable State Department colleagues caused his “infant file to grow like a plot of mushrooms in the darkness of the FBI vault,” as he recalled later. It all began in 1935, when the department established the Office of Arms and Munitions Control after passage of the first Neutrality Act by Congress. The Neutrality Act prohibited the export of “arms, ammunition and implements of war” from the United States to foreign nations at war and required U.S. arms manufacturers to apply for an export license. At the new State office, Yost and Joseph C. Green were tasked with registering and issuing, or rejecting, export



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

HERBERT J. MEYLE

licenses to U.S. entities engaged in defense-related trade. But because space was in short supply at the department, they were squeezed into the Western European division.

Yost's association with individuals with whom he worked would put him in the crosshairs of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. There was, for instance, Noel Field, a young Quaker "who was liked by all," as Yost recalled. Field, however, turned out to have been a Soviet spy, as did several others: Michael Straight of the department's Eastern European division was unmasked by the Venona Project, a secret U.S. Army counterintelligence program, for recommending Yost's recruitment to his KGB colleagues. Laurence Duggan, chief of the department's Latin American division, who Yost reports was "considered a man of such great promise," was an active Soviet spy during the 1930s and 1940s and died under suspicious circumstances.

Harry Dexter White of the Department of the Treasury was a Soviet spy who died mysteriously while being investigated by HUAC. Henry Julian Wadleigh, an economist, turns out to have passed classified department documents to the Soviets. And Alger Hiss, whom Yost found "supercilious and inclined to carp and nitpick," was also found to have been attempting to recruit Yost to the communist cause.

KGB documents reveal that Yost was targeted for his left-leaning views, but the attempts to recruit him were done, as he later wrote, "so subtly that I was blissfully unaware." In those days the State Department was relatively small, and employees knew each other and regularly consulted and socialized. In fact, some who turned out to have been spies belonged to a weekly

A meeting at the State Department in 1950. Secretary of State Dean Acheson is at the head of the table, with John Foster Dulles, then adviser to the Secretary of State, to his left. Charles Yost is at the lower right. Inset: Yost, at left, with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in 1958 at the State Department, as Dulles announces Yost's appointment as U.S. ambassador to Morocco.

foreign affairs discussion group that included Yost and was held at the home of another colleague. Until these individuals were unmasked, in some cases decades later, their department colleagues remained ignorant of their work as Soviet spies.

Success Leads to More Attention

As the witch hunts intensified with the Truman and Eisenhower Loyalty Review Board investigations of State Department employees, and Yost was placed under further scrutiny, he benefitted from the support of department mentors and friends. Yost's FBI file shows that among those who testified on his behalf were Leo Pasvolsky and Dean Acheson. Pasvolsky was a remarkable man who is largely forgotten even though he was a principal author of the United Nations Charter. Dean Acheson, whom Yost considered "by far the best Secretary of State under whom I served," also played an early role, nurturing Yost's aptitude for troubleshooting, which Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Ford and Carter would call on, too, in times of crisis.

Loyalty Oaths in America

Oaths of loyalty are an old and honored American tradition. The Constitution provides in Article VI that “the Senators and Representatives ... and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution.” The Pledge of Allegiance, a loyalty oath that dates from the Civil War, is regularly recited in public forums.

The loyalty oaths that proliferated after World War II, however, added a condemnation of communism to the affirmation of American ideals.

Under the Taft-Hartley Act (1947), labor union leaders had to swear that they were not communists and did not favor the overthrow of the government. Different levels of government soon levied similar requirements on various targets, including residents of federally assisted public housing; employees of the state of California, the city of Chicago, the county of Los Angeles and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; as well as students in New York State high schools and students receiving aid under the National Defense Education Act.

President Harry S Truman’s loyalty program, imposed by executive order on March 21, 1947, required every federal civilian employee to submit to a loyalty investigation carried out by loyalty boards established in every government agency. A loyalty board could order the dismissal of any employee if it found “reasonable grounds” to believe that the employee was disloyal. Those grounds could include membership or “sympathetic association” with any group or “combination of persons” that the U.S. Attorney General

designated as subversive. Employees under investigation had no right to counsel and could be denied access to the evidence against them.

President Dwight Eisenhower’s program, imposed by executive order in March 1953, shifted the focus from purging the disloyal to purging security risks, not just in certain agencies but across the government. Security risks were broadly defined, including those whom the government saw as social misfits—persons who were “not reliable or trustworthy” or whose conduct was considered “infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful.”

The results of these programs are hard to pin down. Most of the investigative files have been destroyed, and there are gaps in the record. Landon Storrs, in her 2012 book, *The Second Red Scare*, estimates that from 1947 to 1953, 4.75 million employees submitted loyalty forms to investigators. Between 1947 and 1956, says Storrs, 2,700 federally employed civilians, 750 military personnel and 5,400 contract workers (mostly in port security) were dismissed; many others resigned before investigations were complete. An unpublished 1964 study by Rutgers Professor Paul D. Tillett estimated that 6.5 million people were investigated, leading to thousands of dismissals, with consequent loss of livelihood and “suicides, mental illness, and the breakup of families.”

For all their sweep and personal devastation, the loyalty investigations caught not a single spy. In time, the U.S. Supreme Court and lower courts invalidated much of the federal loyalty program, and many other loyalty oaths, as failing to protect due process and infringing on freedom of speech and association.

—Harry W. Kopp

Another key ally was found in Edward Stettinius. Though Yost recognized Secretary of State Stettinius’ limitations, he also credited him with implementing critical reforms to the antique and rigid department—reforms that survived countless reorganizations over several decades.

In January 1945, Secretary Stettinius offered Yost the position of executive secretary of his new “Policy Committee,” which would evolve into the Policy Planning Staff under Secretary

George Marshall and George Kennan. Yost’s additional duties included preparing a daily two-page summary of cables, reports, memoranda, Allied messages and “magic” intercepts for President Roosevelt. Yost’s summaries, which became a standard department exercise, resulted, he later wrote, in his transformation into “one of the best-informed individuals in Washington, except about purely military planning” during the last year of the war.



From left, President Richard M. Nixon, Secretary of State William P. Rogers and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Charles Yost at the U.N. General Assembly in 1970.

Stettinius also nurtured Yost’s expertise in U.N. affairs by directing him to assist with writing the crucial Chapters VI and VII of the U.N. Charter during the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, and assigning him as his aide and principal drafter at the 1945 San Francisco Conference. Yost served Secretary of State James Byrnes, who replaced Stettinius in July 1945, at the Potsdam Conference before being posted to Thailand as U.S. Minister.

Yet Yost’s revolving high-profile positions had an unwelcome result—namely, the renewed attention of FBI Director Hoover. As a result of President Truman’s Executive Order 9835 (also known as the Loyalty Order, which established the Federal Employees Loyalty Program in 1947), anonymous accusations were being made about many employees and would end the careers of an untold number. Yost’s own career would soon hang in the balance.

The Perils of Dangerous Thoughts

In 1949 it became apparent that U.S. policy on China was in disarray. As the Chinese civil war was raging, the Truman administration found itself caught between the department’s “China hands,” those who were recommending liaising with Mao’s communists because they would most likely prevail, and the Republican-led “China Lobby,” those who were pushing for expanded U.S. support for Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek.

Acheson directed his team to undertake a historical study that would defend against critics who blamed the administration for “losing” China. The result was the China White Paper, which some historians assert was principally authored by Yost.

Acheson directed his team to undertake a historical study that would defend against critics who blamed the administration for “losing” China.

It caused a firestorm. It also renewed Republican assertions that the Democrats had in fact “lost” China, to which Yost retorted: “Chiang Kai-shek lost China because he was in charge.”

Despite evidence presented to the loyalty boards (see sidebar, p. 54) supporting their patriotism and independence, including Yost’s testimony for John S. Service, most of the China experts at State were fired or forced to resign. As a result, Yost believed, FSOs who would have helped the United States navigate China affairs—and who could have predicted and possibly prevented U.S. entry into the Korean and Vietnam wars, as well—had now been eliminated. But the situation was about to get worse. In 1950 Senator Joseph McCarthy claimed that he had a list of “known communists” in the State Department.

For Yost, the loyalty boards and McCarthy era represented a time of “sickness that disfigured and weakened America.” And in 1950, prior to assuming his duties as minister to Greece, he found there would be no letup. FBI Director Hoover ordered a new investigation into Yost, admonishing his agents:

Yost's revolving high-profile positions had an unwelcome result—namely, the renewed attention of FBI Director Hoover.

“This is one of the oldest pending LGE [Loyalty of Government Employees] Cases. Further delay will not be tolerated.”

The FBI subsequently put Yost's house under surveillance and tapped his phone; spoke with his family, neighbors and former professors; contacted credit bureaus, the passport office and the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police; and questioned Yost's colleagues on three continents. When Conrad Snow, chairman of the Department of State Loyalty Security Board, interrogated him, Yost retorted he was “bitter and indignant” that his loyalty was being questioned. Friend, diplomat and Nobel Peace Prize winner Ralph Bunche echoed that sentiment when his loyalty was similarly questioned.

The 1953 election of President Dwight D. Eisenhower brought no respite. In his maiden speech to department employees, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles stated that he expected loyalty. It soon dawned on Dulles' staff that neither the Secretary of State nor the president would reciprocate. What's more, Eisenhower replaced Truman's Order with Executive Order 10450, which examined character as well as political beliefs.

Within a month, State's Office of Security questioned Yost while he was on home leave. The officials called it an “interview and not a hearing,” but it was neither. It was an interrogation. They informed Yost that source names would be withheld, and that source statements would become part of his official file. Two months later, the loyalty board summoned him back from Greece for another round.

Fortune Smiles

For many years, department colleagues wondered how Charles Yost had survived the Truman and Eisenhower purges. The answer lies in Yost's dictum that the basis for a successful Foreign Service career was shaped by “who you knew, what you knew, and luck.” In addition to department Secretaries and former bosses such as Ambassador-at-Large Philip Jessup and Ambassador Llewellyn “Tommy” Thompson, the “who,” in this case, were two ultraconservative Republicans whose support during that era proved crucial: Hiram Bingham III and the aforementioned John Foster Dulles.

Senator Hiram Bingham III was the father of Yost's fellow diplomat and friend Hiram (Harry) Bingham IV. When the senator became chairman of the Loyalty Review Board, he personally urged J. Edgar Hoover to declare Yost “eligible on loyalty” to remain in the Foreign Service. (Hoover backed down but did not abandon his determination to have Yost discharged or jailed.) Yost's long-standing connection to the Dulles family began in their hometown of Watertown, New York. The minister who married Yost's parents, Allen Dulles, was the brother-in-law of one Secretary of State, Robert Lansing (responsible for recommending a diplomatic career to Yost), and the father of John Foster Dulles.

Family loyalty may be the reason why Foster Dulles was motivated to call Yost an exceptional diplomat and loyal American, and why his sister, Eleanor, testified that Yost was “as loyal as President Eisenhower.”

Lest We Forget

The year 1969 would be the last time Yost was subjected to an FBI background check—and the issue of his alleged communist ties would once again arise. He had been nominated as ambassador to the United Nations, the first FSO to achieve that distinction. The irony that President Richard Nixon, a former member of HUAC who spearheaded the investigation of Alger Hiss, made the appointment was not lost on my father. Yost, however, was livid when in making his announcement of the U.N. appointment, Nixon added that he had chosen to look past the Yost-Hiss association—thus raising the long-forgotten issue of Yost's alleged communist ties for the press.

As Yost recalls in his memoirs, these witch hunts left deep scars, which some, including he, never got over, and from which the Foreign Service did not recover for many years. In an unpublished 1964 paper, “The Social Costs of the Loyalty Programs,” Rutgers Professor of Political Science Paul Tillett quotes FSOs who lamented that in the State Department the process resulted in a Foreign Service that “was dying at the roots and suffering attrition.”

In his memoirs, Charles Yost issued a warning we would do well to heed in the 21st century. Stating that the “monomania and the intemperance of the Radical Right [was] a much more serious, because more indigenous, threat to American democracy,” he observes: “There lies buried not too deep under the skin of American democracy a strain of bigotry and know-nothingism that demagogues can tap with frightening ease; leaders concerned for liberty should be eternally vigilant against it.” ■

The Exile of a China Hand

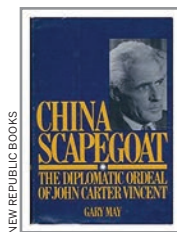
John Carter Vincent in Tangier

For the sin of accurately foreseeing the success of Mao Tse-tung's communist insurgency, Foreign Service "China hands" were accused of disloyalty and punished.

BY GERALD LOFTUS

Mark Twain, traveling on one of the first American cruise ships, stopped in Tangier, Morocco, in 1867 and called on the American consul. "I would seriously recommend to the government of the United States," he later wrote in *The Innocents Abroad*, "that when a man commits a crime so heinous that the law provides no adequate punishment for it, they make him consul general to Tangier." The life of the lone American diplomat and his family in this North African outpost struck Twain as "the completest exile that I can conceive of."

Almost a century later, Foreign Service Officer John Carter Vincent spent his last assignment (1951-1953) in a sort of political



The cover of historian Gary May's definitive biography of FSO John Carter Vincent, published in 1979.

exile in Tangier's International Zone, where a consortium of powers represented by diplomats from European and American legations governed what was a city-state prior to Morocco's independence in 1956. Though never guilty of Twain's "crime so heinous," Vincent found himself caught in the vise of McCarthyism, which asked "Who lost China?" to communism. His offense: years of honest Foreign Service reporting from wartorn China.

In the offices of what had become the American legation in Tangier's medina (walled city), Minister John Carter Vincent—whose other titles were diplomatic agent and consul

general—was a world away from the previous focus of his diplomatic career. A member of what was called the "China Service" (the State Department's corps of language-trained China experts), Vincent had spent much of the 1920s through the 1940s reporting from a country successively devastated by internecine fighting among warlords and invasion from Japan, then riven by civil war between nationalist and communist forces. In 1945 he was appointed director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, precursor to today's assistant secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific affairs. He was the most senior "China hand" on active duty in the Foreign Service.

A self-described "New Deal liberal," Vincent had come to see Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalists as hopelessly corrupt, and

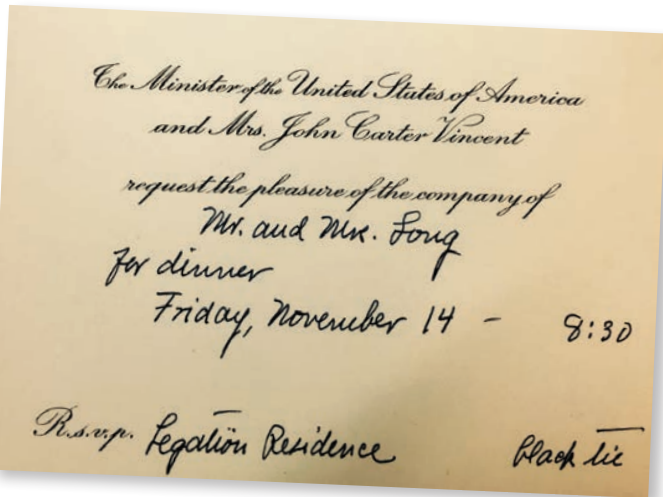


Gerald Loftus, a retired State Department Foreign Service officer who lives in Brussels, was resident director of the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies from 2010 to 2014. He is the author of Lions at the Legation & Other Tales: Two Centuries

of American Diplomatic Life in Tangier (Tangier Legation/Fondation Jardin Majorelle, 2018). In the early 1990s, both as political chief in Algiers and principal officer in Oran, he was in contact with the opposition during Algeria's first democratic elections, prior to their cancellation and ensuing civil war. Mr. Loftus has donated his honorarium for this article to the AFSA Legal Defense Fund in honor of his colleagues who continue to speak truth to power.

finally, international rule. The city was variously depicted in forgotten B-list films as a haven for spies, gangsters and general naughtiness. But its black market was real; whether in gold bullion or nylon stockings, the Tangier International Zone beat all records.

COURTESY OF GERALD LOFTUS



The invitation to a black-tie dinner hosted by Minister John Carter Vincent and Mrs. John Carter Vincent at the legation in Tangier.

States recognized as part of a French protectorate with its administration in Rabat. While sympathetic to Moroccan aspirations, the United States was more attentive to French concerns. Paris hosted the headquarters of the new NATO alliance and provided valuable

base rights in Morocco to the United States.

Under the headline “TANGIER: Nylon Sid & the Jolly Roger,” the Dec. 29, 1952, issue of *Time* magazine recounted the sensational story of a modern-day American pirate: nylon stocking trafficker Sidney Paley. The United States had jurisdiction over this “gentleman of the export business” who was charged with committing piracy on the open sea. While he did not personally preside over the trial in the legation’s Consular Court, John Carter Vincent must have found the proceedings a momentary distraction from his own woes, and perhaps even some comic relief: “Nylon Sid,” after his conviction, swore off piracy and told reporters that he would return to his original occupation—smuggling.

In a December 1952 first-person telegram, Vincent describes his call on the French resident general in Rabat. As in China, the main Moroccan political movements were nationalist and communist, referred to by Vincent as “the Istiqlal and Commie Parties,” both of which Paris had just outlawed. His use of “Commie” may have been simply the telegraphic shorthand in use at the time; but in view of the accusations against him boiling to a crescendo at that very moment, was it perhaps an attempt to burnish his anticommunist credentials? Legation political officer (and future ambassador to Mexico) Joseph Jova said of the McCarthy influence on his own drafting from Tangier: You “had to be careful. One would have been foolish not to watch what one was reporting, putting the proper caveats in to make sure it was an all-American point of view.”

But the distraction was brief: Vincent learned that his own case was coming to an ominous juncture. On Dec. 12, 1952, the Loyalty Review Board wrote to the Secretary of State “In Re: Case of JOHN CARTER VINCENT, Chief of Mission, Tangier, Morocco,” recommending “that the services of Mr. John Carter Vincent be terminated.” Vincent was suspended, no longer cleared to read even his own telegrams. While observing a not-so-merry Christmas, he awaited further word from Washington.

Vincent’s China experience during the anti-foreign agitation of the 1920s was echoed in Tangier during the pro-independence riots in the spring of 1952. Troops were sent in from the Spanish zone and from the French protectorate, and American employees of the Voice of America relay station started to carry handguns in case they were caught up in the anti-European violence. For American writer Paul Bowles, a longtime resident of the city, “Tangier was never the same after the 30th of March 1952.” As in China a quarter century earlier, John Carter Vincent was witness to the beginning of the end of a colonial regime.

Parallels with China

Internationally administered Tangier was literally a world away from the China that Vincent knew well, but there were parallels. He had experienced China under various regimes—Japanese occupation, European Shanghai concessions, Nationalist- and communist-ruled regions and warlord territories—and found that Morocco had its own kaleidoscope of jurisdictions and interlocutors.

And in another area, a November 1952 dispatch, “Modifications in the International Regime of Tangier,” illustrated Vincent’s familiarity with the question of extraterritoriality. In China, the status of Americans through their treaty rights had been a constant source of tension with the Chinese authorities. The young, first-tour vice consul had organized the evacuation of hundreds of American citizens from provincial China when nationalist anarchy threatened those very protections, at one point shouting “American gunboat!” to disperse a threatening crowd.

During the 1950s Morocco had emerged from the wartime occupation of Tangier by Francisco Franco’s Spain, which continued to hold the northern fifth of the country while France retained the rest. As minister of the legation and its diplomatic agent, John Carter Vincent was accredited not only to the International Zone, administered by Tangier’s “Committee of Control,” but was consul general in Morocco, which the United

The Last Post

Despite his regular complaints, the record shows how attached Vincent became to what was to be his last post, even performing matchmaking duties there: a reception he hosted resulted in the marriage of another future American ambassador, Thomas Enders, to Gaetana Marchegiano, daughter of an Italian administrator of the International Zone.

There were occupational hazards to living in close quarters within the medina, however, as the April 12, 1952, *New Yorker* reported: “When the American minister entertains on his terrace, he is never quite sure if the neighboring housewives will not unintentionally bombard him with garbage or drape him with errant laundry.”

Vincent also joined in the revelry at the Tangier Press Club’s annual charity event, christened the “Pirates’ Ball,” featuring a caricature of “Nylon Sid” Paley, dressed in a bandana and sporting a cutlass. The guests were treated to a surprise appearance by a tuxedoed Paley himself. All very appropriate to *Turbulent Tangier*, the title of a 1956 book by Aleko Lilius chronicling the final years of the International Zone.

The outpouring of support for Vincent and his wife, Betty, after the world learned he had been suspended from his duties following the loyalty board’s announcement was recorded in a Dec. 26, 1952, *New York Times* article, “Tangier’s U.S. Colony at Vincent Farewell.” Lauding the Vincents’ support for the new American school and for the arts, the article notes the “indignation” of American expatriates, several of whom had “written protests to their congressmen” on Vincent’s behalf.

Political officer Joseph Jova sympathized with Vincent (“a very fine person”), but later opined that his wife should have been more circumspect instead of “sounding off,” which did not, perhaps, help her husband’s cause. The new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, did revoke John Carter Vincent’s suspension in early 1953, but he was still forced to retire as of March 31. The Vincents departed Tangier, arriving back in the United States as private citizens on April 29, 1953.

In early 1967, a pensive John Carter Vincent returned to Morocco, where he was sketched by Marguerite McBey, an American artist who had settled in Tangier. McBey, who was selective in her invitations (“She’d reject duchesses if she thought they were boring,” wrote a friend), would likely have wanted to learn more



A pensive John Carter Vincent on a return visit to Tangier in 1967, drawn by artist Marguerite McBey.

about his persecution during the McCarthy era. Vincent’s trip down memory lane might well have included a visit to the old legation building, which by then housed the

Foreign Service Institute’s Arabic language program for diplomats.

A few years later, Vincent had a chance to revisit a country he’d known since the beginning of his career: China. In the summer of 1971, during the excitement over President Richard Nixon’s announcement of his upcoming visit to China, a *New York Times* article mentioned that Premier Chou En-lai had invited the “China hands” back to Beijing. John S. Service accepted the offer immediately; but Vincent, touched by the Chinese Premier’s invitation, wrote to his “Dear and Esteemed Friend” promising a visit “next year.”

That was not to be, however: John Carter Vincent, whose China policy recommendations were finally being acted on a quarter century later by Nixon (ironically, one of McCarthy’s congressional anticommunist cohorts), died on Dec. 3, 1972. At his funeral, he was remembered by a friend as “an old-fashioned Southern gentleman.” Today, he and the other victims of McCarthyism have largely been vindicated as upstanding truth tellers, while tormentors like Roy Cohn—McCarthy’s right-hand counsel—have had their hypocrisy and corruption unmasked.

The turmoil over “Who lost China?” was echoed in the 1980s, after the fall of another autocratic U.S. ally, the shah of Iran. Again, Foreign Service careers suffered. At the Foreign Service Institute, “Contacts With the Opposition” (the title of a Georgetown University symposium), a how-to on avoiding being misled into a regime-friendly mindset, became a theme in improving Foreign Service reporting from the field. This evolved during the 1990s, in places like Algeria, and informed approaches in dealing with the rise of “political Islam.”

Whether from China in the 1940s, Algeria in the 1990s or from somewhere else today, Foreign Service reporting can involve an element of danger—and not just because of local instability. As John Carter Vincent and the “China hands” learned to their cost, and as American diplomats continue to find, telling it like it is can be a high-risk occupation when Washington doesn’t like what it hears. ■

The McCarthy Years Inside the Department of State

From the FSJ Archive

BY JOHN W. FORD

The following is excerpted from an article by the same title in the November 1980 Foreign Service Journal. The article carried this note about the author: “John W. Ford, is a retired Foreign Service officer. Over twenty-seven years ago Mr. Ford held the position in the Department of State which today is that of deputy assistant secretary for security. Mr. Ford occupied his position at the height of the campaign of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy against alleged communists in the US government and at the time was under frequent subpoena by McCarthy, various congressional committees and a New York grand jury. He was threatened by the McCarthy committee staff with contempt of Congress for alleged interference with a congressional witness who took to the McCarthy committee material from security files of the department on some of our highest-ranking Foreign Service officers. Eventually Mr. Ford was placed on indefinite probation and removed from his position.”



Few people who lived through the McCarthy era in the Department of State can ever forget the fear, intimidation and sense of outrage which permeated Foggy Bottom. As an officer of the Foreign Service (now retired), I found myself caught up in that political whirlwind in which reputations were placed in jeopardy, integrity questioned, and disloyalty frequently presumed rather than proven.

Most of us had for guidance during that period only our own moral principles and convictions and above all our belief that the American people would demand fair play and due process. In the long run this proved correct. In the short run though, many fine, loyal, decent, courageous officers of our domestic and foreign service suffered frightful traumas.

The public mood of the United States in the early 1950s was hostile to diplomacy generally and to diplomats specifically,

a situation we tend to forget but one brought home to me with frightening suddenness on my return from Paris to Washington in late 1951.

ABC Anchorman Frank Reynolds captured a part of that mood most vividly this past Foreign Service Day when he observed that his audience “needed no reminder of the painful fact that distinguished public servants, Foreign Service officers of great integrity, have in the past been punished and even banished from the Service for daring to report to Washington what Washington did not wish to hear, and reporting with detachment and accuracy and sometimes indeed with prophesy the meaning of political and military events abroad that did not support the domestic political positions of higher officials in this country.”

It was a period when Senator Joseph McCarthy had reached the height of his power and he was feared by the highest echelons of the United States executive branch. “Positive loyalty” was demanded by our highest officials in the Department of State. As happened in my case and that of other colleagues, following an appearance before Senator McCarthy there was loosed a flood of letters and postcards directed toward “unfriendly” witnesses and containing the repeated taunts of “communist,” “traitor,” and “red rat.”

In March of 1951, I was on special assignment to the USSR in the combined interest of the British, Canadian and United States governments and their embassies in Moscow—to search for and hopefully uncover the latest clandestine listening device being used by the Soviets—a miniature electronic microphone, activated by a radio from some distance away. My traveling companion, Joseph Bezjian, worked for me as electronics technician. Months later he was honored by the Department of State for his fine work which led to the discovery of an advanced miniature listening device hidden in the Great Seal of the United States—a wooden replica hanging in Spaso House, the ambassador’s official residence.

This seal was expertly carved, and beneath the eagle's beak were barely visible pin holes made by a jeweler's drill which admitted voice waves to the diaphragm of the miniature microphone. For this and other ultimately successful assignments I was "rewarded" with a Washington job. Little did I realize then what a return to Washington would mean with Senator Joseph McCarthy producing random lists of alleged communists within the Department of State and the Foreign Service.

First, however, with the late Charles E. ("Chip") Bohlen, who would soon become a prominent target of the McCarthy campaign, and with key officials of the Department of State, I conducted briefings concerning the Moscow "find."

The most memorable of these briefings was with Secretary of State Dean Acheson who also was to become one of McCarthy's favorite targets. ...

As I settled into the Washington job the cold war was raging in full. The laws of evidence that I had learned in law school were being totally disregarded and replaced by massive presumptions of guilt—from personal as well as institutional associations. ...

Senator Joseph McCarthy and certain other members of Congress questioned the nomination by the Eisenhower administration of Chip Bohlen to be the next ambassador to the Soviet Union. ... The most highly advertised bit of "evidence" was a tape recording, allegedly containing Ambassador Bohlen's voice. This tape purportedly implicated him in activities which made him a security risk. Secretary Dulles called me to his office, where the security office file and the FBI reports on Ambassador Bohlen were assembled on his conference table. I was instructed to bring a tape recorder.

As I entered Secretary Dulles's office, I was introduced to Senators Taft and Sparkman. The secretary, with a flourish, instructed me to review with the senators the files on Mr. Bohlen. The secretary noted, however, that allowing the senators to see these files was "without prejudice to the concept of executive privilege."

Neither senator found anything incriminating in the files, and then we proceeded with the tape recording. Unfortunately, the extension cord for the recorder was too short, the quality of the tape was poor, and the volume potential of the recorder was low. This meant that Senators Taft and Sparkman and I had to lie down on the floor of Secretary Dulles's office in front of his desk and listen to the recording. I certified in a document that it was not Ambassador Bohlen's voice. That was also evident to all present. Shortly thereafter Ambassador Bohlen was cleared and took off for his new assignment.

Nerves were constantly on edge in the department. This led to over-reaction whenever relatively minor incidents occurred. ...

There was a general sentiment and belief in the department during the McCarthy years that there was telephone and mail censorship. ...

The promotion list was held up for many months under new requirements while the loyalty of long-time officers of the domestic and Foreign Service was subjected to so-called full-field investigations. Key officials of the office of security were interrogated at length, accused of removing files or covering up. As a consequence, they were either transferred or left voluntarily.

I had opposed Senator McCarthy in his efforts to obtain the "raw" files of officials of the Department of State for use by his committee. C. P. Trussed in a special edition of the New York Times recorded my bitter exchange with Senator McCarthy and the senator's frustrated response of "I give up," in an article of February 21, 1953. I had removed from access to security files an office of security agent who took notes and references from those files to McCarthy. Roy Cohn of the McCarthy Committee threatened me with contempt of Congress for intervening with a congressional witness.

It was in July 1953 that I received a beautifully worded memorandum from the bureau of security and consular affairs giving me unsolicited "sick leave." ...

The McCarthy era was an unforgettable experience. But one conclusion I came to ... was that not one single case of disloyalty to the United States surfaced during my period. Cases involving the temptations and social weaknesses to which all persons are subject, yes. But the dominant characteristics shown in the thousands of files I had an opportunity to review then were loyalty, devotion, and intelligence on the part of our Department of State people, both domestic and Foreign Service.

In going over these recollections of those unfortunate days of the McCarthy era, it behooves us to recall that somehow it all began because of foreign policy reverses, concerning which only history could make an assessment. To try to preempt history may perpetuate the kind of bitter quarrels of the McCarthy years that a few of us can still remember vividly even after a quarter of a century has passed. As Winston Churchill said before the House of Commons in June 1940, during the Battle of Britain: "If we open a quarrel between the past and present, we shall find that we have lost the future." ■

AFSA Memorial Plaque Expansion Planned



The current AFSA west wall memorial plaques.

On Aug. 19, the AFSA Governing Board approved a major expansion and renovation of the AFSA Memorial Plaques displayed in the C Street Lobby of the Harry S Truman Building in Washington, D.C.

This is the first major project undertaken to celebrate the centennial of the 1924 founding of the U.S. Foreign Service and AFSA.

AFSA's goal is to unveil the 10 new plaques at the annual

plaque ceremony on Foreign Service Day in May 2021.

The project will accomplish four things.

First, it will provide additional space for future inscriptions. There are currently only eight spaces open. The project will install new panels on each of the six pillars in the C Street Lobby that the State Department reserved for AFSA in 2011.

If the sad toll of deaths of Foreign Service members in the line of duty continues in the future at the same rate as it has since the end of the Vietnam War, that would provide space for 50 more years of inscriptions.

Second, the project will allow the addition of 69

Continued on page 72

CALENDAR

Please check www.afsa.org for the most up-to-date information. All events are subject to cancellation and/or rescheduling.

October 14
Postponed: Annual AFSA Awards Ceremony

October 19
Columbus Day: AFSA Offices Closed

October 21
12–2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

November 11
Veterans Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

November 18
12–2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

November 26
Thanksgiving Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

ANNOUNCING THE 2020 AFSA AWARD WINNERS

LIFETIME CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

Edward J. Perkins

CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT

David Heddleston

F. Allen "Tex" Harris Award for a Foreign Service Specialist

Lindsay Dana

W. Averell Harriman Award for an Entry-Level Officer

Monica Smith

Christian A. Herter Award for a Senior Foreign Service Officer

Julie M. Stufft

Christian A. Herter Award for a Senior Foreign Service Officer

Jason Smith

William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer

EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

Rick Bassett

Avis Bohlen Award for an Eligible Family Member

Jennifer Mauldin

M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Officer

Jennifer A. McCoy

Nelson B. Delavan Award for an Office Management Specialist

Runner-Up: Jean A. Monfort

Alexandra Shema

Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy

Rafael P. Foley

Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy

Jason Vorderstrasse

AFSA Achievement and Contributions to the Association

James Yorke

AFSA Special Achievement Award

Look for profiles of all the recipients, and an interview with the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy recipient, in the December issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*. ■



Blind EERs: Would They Make Sense?

Thanks to those of you who took the time to fill out our recent survey on “Implicit and Explicit Racial Bias in the Foreign Service Workplace.”

The survey results, which we have shared with the Global Talent Management bureau and the Director General’s office, hopefully will help shape new policies and initiatives that can mitigate the microaggressions and other conscious or unconscious manifestations of bias in the Foreign Service.

In the survey, AFSA asked folks what they think is the most important issue that we should address. The top response was to push for “blind” Employee Evaluation Reports—EERs that do not include the rated employee’s name and are gender neutral—so there is no indication of race, gender or ethnicity for promotion panels members to (perhaps unconsciously) ponder.

Implementing Blind EERs. Admittedly, implementing gender-neutral EERs throughout the Foreign Service would be a huge undertaking. If extended to all, the personnel files of FS members would have to be scrubbed for names and gender pronouns.

Some have suggested that the department implement a blind EER pilot program only for new hires going forward.

In any event, it certainly makes sense for AFSA to have this discussion with GTM and others—and we will—especially since so many of our survey respondents have pointed to it.

What Else Could Be Done? The department implemented some welcome, if relatively modest, changes to the EER process in 2015, including eliminating class-wide reviews and focusing on goals, outcomes and results rather than tasks, activities and output.

Given what our members say, however, it may make sense to look at a more in-depth revamping of the EER process, with an eye to what has worked in the private sector or elsewhere and what may help drive diversity and inclusion.

AFSA believes the following larger ideas deserve further discussion. In this time of soul-searching on racial and social justice in our country, we should not be afraid to consider new approaches or reconsider old ones.

Narrative versus Quantitative Measurement. As is well known, EERs are based on a narrative from ratee, rater and reviewer. There is currently no quantitative measurement.

While the relative merits of each approach have a long history of debate within the Foreign Service, it may make sense to revisit

whether some form of quantitative tool can be of use to often-overworked promotion boards.

Elements of the U.S. military and many firms in the private sector employ some quantitative measure to assess their employees.

Again, it is entirely possible that this approach does not provide a more objective way of promoting State’s FSOs and specialists, but it should be a point of discussion.

360 Feedback. Anyone who has applied for an assignment in the Foreign Service—especially of a management or leadership nature—has gone through the 360 process. You are asked to provide a list of subordinates, peers and supervisors to get a more complete view of your abilities.

Might this feedback also be applied to the EER process, which currently includes only what your boss and boss’s boss think? This 360 feedback, which currently also employs a quantitative measure, could also include feedback on the employee’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Again, this approach is something that has been employed successfully in the private sector and elsewhere.

MSI Gender-Neutral Nomination Forms. As many of you know, AFSA negotiated with the depart-

ment in 2015 to create a three-year pilot program, extended for a fourth year in 2020, which uses gender-neutral Meritorious Service Increase award nomination forms.

Preliminary data for 2019, as documented in an April *Foreign Service Journal* article, did not show a statistically significant difference, but rather a slight decrease, in the number of women and minorities getting MSI awards. (See afsa.org/evaluation-reform-state-work-progress.)

It may be that this holds true for 2019. But we do not yet have enough data to definitely say that gender-neutral nomination forms don’t help at all in getting us to a more diverse and equitable Foreign Service.

It’s Complicated. Given the idiosyncratic nature of the Foreign Service, any large-scale change in the current process, especially one that takes into account the imperative of diversity and inclusion, needs to be done carefully and with a healthy comment period.

For a provocative article on one former FSO’s opinion of the department’s evaluation process, please see James Thomas Snyder’s article, “The Price of Promotion,” at <http://bit.ly/price-of-promotion>.

Please let us know what you think about these issues at member@afsa.org. ■



Some Shining Stars Amid the COVID Dark

Over the past six COVID-driven months, I've seen USAID FSOs demonstrate their resilience and dedication even as they find themselves and their families slogging through bureaucratic morasses.

I have also witnessed colleagues from the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management step up to these rising challenges, providing new levels of support even as they face their own COVID-related stressors.

While the challenges are likely to intensify over the coming months, I want to recognize these accomplishments.

FSOs and their families face an unprecedented situation. As schools are starting—or not starting—around the world, many FSOs are in temporary locations, some unable to travel to their next posts, others unable to leave their current posts. Many are

unsure where their children will attend school.

Some are separated from families and are bearing heavy workloads and unyielding stress, even as they continue to help combat COVID-19 and advance the agency's mission.

Single FSOs may face challenges of isolation and loneliness, exacerbated by the pandemic's toll. In addition to school uncertainty, many EFMs are carrying their own workloads. Jobs have been interrupted and family care duties increased.

Thank you all—and thank you to your families. And please know that AFSA will continue to advocate on your behalf.

Throughout this period, I have seen the agency make great strides in its support of FSOs. The COVID Task Force, comprising dedicated colleagues from across bureaus and offices, has presented a

The speed, clarity and comprehensive nature of most task force responses show how the agency can better deliver services.

model of the responsiveness, engagement, communication and candor that have been long sought by FSOs.

The task force may not always have the answers, and unfortunately may provide responses that disappoint FSOs; but the speed, clarity and comprehensive nature of most task force responses show how the agency can better deliver services.

Unfortunately, the task force is being phased out. In my opinion, this is premature, as the pandemic certainly is not following suit. Regardless of the task force's formal future—it is a temporary construct—the agency should take the lessons learned and institutionalize this employee-oriented model.

To its credit, HCTM has also continued to recruit and hire career Foreign Service officers. I have had the great pleasure of welcoming two classes over the past few months. Our newest FSO colleagues have diverse personal backgrounds and impressive professional experience, a broad array of language skills and a commitment to USAID's mission.

AFSA looks forward to continued career-FSO onboarding and welcoming new members.

The technical, operational and tragic human tolls of the pandemic continue. But USAID and FSOs are rising to these challenges, and I am greatly appreciative of all. ■

Benjamin Phillips Joins AFSA LM as Grievance Counselor



Benjamin Phillips

Benjamin Phillips has joined AFSA's Labor Management team as a grievance counselor.

Ben recently graduated from the Washington College of Law at American University.

During law school, he clerked for the AFSA LM

team from August 2018 to August 2019 and assisted with legal and regulatory research and representing members in their grievances.

He also served as a student attorney in the Washington College of Law's Civil Advocacy Clinical Program,

where he represented clients in cases related to employment issues.

As grievance counselor, Ben represents members on various issues at every stage of the grievance process. He is excited to return to AFSA and to continue assisting our members. ■



The Foreign Service Act of 2022?

Why doesn't the Foreign Service mandatory retirement age (65) match the age at which full Social Security benefits are available (age 67 for those born after 1959)?

Because making that common-sense adjustment to the mandatory retirement age would require amending the Foreign Service Act of 1980. And opening that law to amendment could prompt harmful proposals to raise the minimum retirement age or reduce retirement benefits.

In recent decades, neither AFSA nor the Director General of the Foreign Service has judged that a risk worth taking.

But pressure is clearly building to review and replace the 40-year-old Foreign

Service Act. Depending on the outcome of the November elections, that effort could move forward quickly. If it does, AFSA will need to play an active role in that process. The fundamental question to be answered is whether America today still wants a career Foreign Service.

Career diplomats are hired and promoted on merit principles. We start at entry level and then serve decades in assignments of ever-increasing responsibility, gaining keen understandings of the affairs, cultures and languages of other countries and learning how to coordinate and integrate the efforts of agencies working overseas.

We spend an average of two-thirds of our careers

overseas, mostly in difficult or dangerous locations. We are accompanied by our family members at most posts, including locations where employment opportunities for spouses are poor and educational facilities for children are below U.S. standards.

If America does still want a career Foreign Service, then its members need a viable career path. Members who have spent 10 to 15 years serving in tough spots should not find their career advancement suddenly stopped by an influx of mid-level hires (which is being proposed on the Hill).

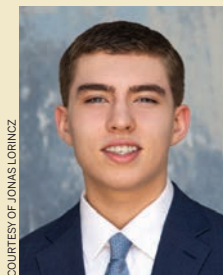
Instead, other ways should be found to increase Foreign Service expertise in areas such as climate change and

addressing persistent imbalances in diversity.

If America still wants a career Foreign Service, then its members need to play a leading role in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. That cannot happen if more than 40 percent of ambassadorial positions and almost all assistant secretary positions continue to be filled by political appointees.

If the Foreign Service Act is reopened in the next few years, we retirees will certainly have suggestions and insights to contribute to the process. But the current generation of Foreign Service members—working through AFSA, as the “Voice of the Foreign Service”—should take the lead on charting their future. ■

AFSA Names High School Essay Contest Winner



Jonas Lorincz

The American Foreign Service Association's national high school essay contest completed its 22nd year with nearly 440 submissions from 36 states.

Three randomized rounds of judging produced this year's winner, Jonas Lorincz, a junior from Marriotts Ridge High School in Marriottsville, Maryland.

In his essay, “Verification, Mediation, and Peacebuilding: The Many Roles of the U.S. Foreign Service in Kosovo,” Jonas focuses on the importance of interagency cooperation in mediating the crisis in Kosovo. He looked into how diplomats and other civilian agencies engaged in peacebuilding throughout the conflict.

Jonas will travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with a member of the State Department's leadership. He will also

receive a full tuition scholarship for an educational voyage with Semester at Sea and be celebrated at a reception at the United States Institute of Peace, a co-sponsor of the contest.

Claire Burke was this year's runner-up. She is a junior at Mill Valley High School in Shawnee, Kansas. Claire will attend the international diplomacy program of the National Student Leadership Conference next summer.

There were eight honorable mentions:

- Grace Cifuentes – Concord, California
- Grace Lannigan – Easton, Connecticut
- Seryung Park – Tenafly, New Jersey
- Vynateya Purimetla – Troy, Michigan
- David Richman – Norfolk, Virginia
- Madeleine Shaw – Bloomington, Indiana
- Sara Smith – Fargo, North Dakota
- Jack Viscuso – Northport, New York ■



Hill Advocacy During the Pandemic

During the early phase of the coronavirus pandemic, AFSA's focus was on working with Congress to repatriate Americans from around the world and obtain emergency funding for that purpose.

In its supplemental funding packages, which became law in March, Congress appropriated nearly \$2.4 billion in additional funding for the international affairs budget. The supplemental funding helped support the evacuation of U.S. citizens, maintain consular operations and protect vulnerable populations from COVID-19.

AFSA cultivated bipartisan support for the Foreign Service, especially among appropriators, which helped more than 100,000 Americans return home safely.

With in-person events canceled, AFSA wanted to make sure that Foreign Service Day was still recognized this year, and that the work of diplomats during the pandemic was honored.

The Senate Foreign Service Caucus co-chairs, Senators Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), introduced and oversaw passage of the annual Foreign Service Day resolution in May. This resolution is an important show of Senate support and highlights the vital work diplomats have done during the pandemic.

Since March, AFSA has regularly provided updates

to Congress on safety concerns from our diplomats, as many of them returned home to the United States.

The State Department's Pearson Fellows have been instrumental in helping AFSA communicate these concerns from our membership to lead on the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations committees.

Our advocacy has included proposals to resolve roadblocks presented by the pandemic: We insisted on the need to continue onboarding Foreign Service A-100 and specialist classes and proposed it be done virtually; and we emphasized the urgency of confirming FS members on promotion lists.

As spring turned into summer, Congress was interested in lessons learned from the pandemic and the top concerns of the Foreign Service on returning to work in D.C. or to posts abroad.

We worked with existing congressional caucuses of Foreign Service supporters—including two of the co-chairs of the House Diplomacy Caucus, Representatives Ann Wagner (R-Mo.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.)—to provide them insights on the toughest aspects of life as a diplomat during the pandemic.

We hope to build on these efforts and grow support for AFSA initiatives such as Foreign Service parity with the military.

Advocacy on long-term

AFSA has welcomed the opportunity to share our members' feedback with the Hill, as more bills to increase recruitment and retention of minorities in the Foreign Service have been introduced.

issues such as diversity in the Foreign Service has also come to the fore. Representatives Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) and Karen Bass (D-Calif.), both subcommittee chairs on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, have sought AFSA's ideas and input on diversity.

AFSA has welcomed the opportunity to share our members' feedback with the Hill, as more bills to increase recruitment and retention of minorities in the Foreign Service have been introduced.

AFSA was heard and supported as the House passed

its Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bills near the end of the summer, which included a \$1.2-billion, or 2 percent, increase to the base international affairs budget and an additional \$10 billion for coronavirus relief.

AFSA hopes Congress will consider these positive outcomes stemming from our advocacy efforts during the pandemic when it finalizes a FY21 spending package, in future coronavirus relief packages, and as lawmakers look to set priorities for the 117th Congress. ■



Tuesday, November 3, 2020 is the next federal Election Day. Visit AFSA's website at afsa.org/afsa-voter-registration-guide for a voter registration guide that makes it easier for you and your family to register to vote.

The guide includes voter registration deadlines for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, as well as information on requesting absentee ballots.

If you would like to check on your registration status, visit vote411.org or nationalvoterregistrationday.org. ■

AFSA Member Survey on Bias in the Foreign Affairs Agencies

As part of AFSA's effort to play a constructive role in advancing diversity and inclusion in the Foreign Service, we need to better understand our members' experiences with racial bias in the workplace.

To that end, AFSA developed a survey to explore the breadth of bias experiences and to uncover ideas on how best the foreign affairs agencies can combat these biases. The survey ran from July 23 to Aug. 3.

Out of approximately 13,000 active-duty AFSA members, 1,630 responded to the survey. That 12.5 percent response rate is broadly similar to the response rate we received with our previous member survey, on COVID-19.

We received responses from members in all the foreign affairs agencies: from State, 1,424 respondents or 87 percent; from USAID, 170 or 10 percent; from the Foreign Commercial Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service, 1 percent each, with 16 respondents apiece; and one response each from APHIS and USAGM.

The survey covered four areas of inquiry. The first section asked respondents to describe their perceived experiences with bias, using categories such as not being promoted, not receiving preferred assignments, not being included in work projects, being included but being substantively ignored, and being the target of inten-

tional microaggressions.

The next section focused on what possible measures would mitigate or help eliminate bias in the workplace. We then asked white members, the overwhelmingly majority in the Foreign Service and the majority of our respondents, how they could better contribute to fighting bias in the workplace.

As Congress introduces legislation to help bring about a more inclusive Foreign Service, AFSA will use the results to shape our input.

Finally, we asked what policies AFSA should promote on behalf of our members.

Bias in the Workplace. Of all the forms of bias, intentional microaggressions was the most common category of complaints. In aggregate, 27 percent of respondents reported experiencing what they perceived as intentional microaggressions.

The spectrum was wide, however, when race and gender were compared: 14 percent of women, 63 percent of Black males and 72 percent of Black female respondents reported being the target of intentional microaggressions, while 6 percent of white males reported the same.

Other examples of bias

had broad-ranging results as well. For example, the next highest category of reported bias was "being included but my opinion was not valued," which was chosen by 15 percent of all respondents but by 35 percent of Black respondents.

Overall, 51 percent of respondents reported experiencing no bias in the

and a small number reported reverse discrimination.

Improving the Situation.

Of the choices for actions that would help eliminate bias, members focused on three priorities: (1) increasing awareness in agencies of white privilege and the lived experience of Foreign Service members of color (20 percent); (2) committed leadership support for diversity and inclusion (19 percent); and (3) a recognition of the assumptions white colleagues might have of Foreign Service colleagues of color (18 percent).

On the question to white respondents on how they could better contribute to the fight against bias, members prioritized leadership support as a necessary component in helping them be better allies in the fight against bias (37 percent).

Behind leadership support, they ranked having more information on the lived experience of non-white Foreign Service members (21 percent) and having opportunities for honest discussions (13 percent).

AFSA Advocacy. It is clear from the survey that our members believe name- and gender-blind employee evaluation reports have merit: 29 percent of respondents listed EERs as their number one choice for AFSA

Continued on next column

Expanding Our Outreach, With Your Help

advocacy. Changes to assignments (21 percent) and promotion procedures (20 percent) were also listed as high priorities.

In reviewing our survey results, we see that the foreign affairs agencies have much work to do before the Foreign Service succeeds in building a truly inclusive institution. As Congress introduces legislation to help bring about a more inclusive Foreign Service, we will also use the results to shape our input.

AFSA is committed to doing everything we can, including looking deeply at our own board composition, to ensure we are representing you as fairly as we can.

Going Forward.

Thanks to everyone who responded to the survey. Your voices are incredibly important to our advocacy.

As we promised, the survey results have been shared with State management, including senior leadership, and will be shared with other AFSA constituent agencies. We will also post the survey results, by agency, on the AFSA website.

If you have questions on the survey results, please contact AFSA Director of Professional Policy Issues Julie Nutter at nutter@afsa.org. ■

AFSA formally launched its public outreach campaign on Sept. 22 with the online panel discussion, “Foreign Service on the Front Lines: Bringing Americans Home,” cohosted with the National Museum of American Diplomacy.

This program featured stories from active-duty Foreign Service officers who provided first-person accounts of the efforts to repatriate Americans at the onset of the pandemic.

Through our public outreach campaign, “The U.S. Foreign Service: Our First Line of Defense,” we aim to highlight the important role that the Foreign Service plays in our national security.

This message and the materials we have developed are designed to illustrate this work in ways that will resonate with new audiences.

We need your help to broaden the constituency for the Foreign Service.

We are asking retired members to help us share the story of the Foreign Service locally, or further afield through virtual outreach opportunities. While traditional speaking events are not currently possible, virtual engagements may open new opportunities and new audiences.

We stand ready to support your outreach efforts and have developed a variety of materials that are at your disposal. We hosted a webi-

We stand ready to support your outreach efforts and have developed a variety of materials that are at your disposal.

nar in early September with retired members to share how to get involved in this campaign and the resources available, including a tutorial on virtual platforms.

If you missed the webinar and/or are ready to get involved, please email AFSA Strategic Messaging Coordinator Nadja Ruzica at ruzica@afsa.org.

We also ask all our members, including those on active duty, to join us in magnifying our reach on social media networks.

Social media is an easy way to share information and stories with many people, no matter their location. And we have developed a social media toolkit to make it easier for you to be more active (if you are not already)

in this medium.

You can use ready-made messages, create your own or just repost our social media posts—it’s that easy. The toolkit and other materials can be found on our campaign page at afsa.org/first-line-defense.

Keep an eye on the AFSA Media Digest daily for reminders and suggested messages.

We need are looking especially to our retired members in your home communities, to assist in achieving our goal of reaching new audiences across the United States and to ensure broader support for the Foreign Service.

The time is now, the resources are available— are you ready to join us? ■

Things you can do:

- Join the roster of messengers by contacting AFSA Strategic Messaging Coordinator Nadja Ruzica at ruzica@afsa.org.
- Familiarize yourself with the materials on our member page at afsa.org/first-line-defense.
- Reach out to your local community college and other community organizations to explore virtual opportunities to share AFSA’s message.
- Follow AFSA on social media and share the tweets and posts with your community, friends and family.

AFSA's Legal Defense Fund Comes to the Rescue

BY KEN KERO-MENTZ

Last October, Congress subpoenaed a number of AFSA members during its impeachment proceedings against President Donald J. Trump. Several testified publicly before Congress, others privately.

We realized that the legal fees AFSA members were incurring could quickly wipe out a lifetime of savings. We also realized that the \$22,000 in AFSA's Legal Defense Fund—established in 2007—would not last long.

AFSA's Governing Board and staff sprang into action. We updated the standard operating procedures (SOP) for the LDF to ensure we had adequate checks and balances, and put out alerts to our members, asking folks to chip in.

The response was incredible, demonstrating once again the true meaning of "esprit de corps." Some members shared AFSA's appeal on social media, encouraging their own friends and family to support the LDF. We set up an easy-to-use "donate here" feature on AFSA's webpage.

Within weeks, as donations came in, we were able to reassure members in need that we would be able to help. During this stressful time, as one recipient said, the LDF "came to the rescue."

So here we are a year later, and the story of the

In one year, the LDF raised nearly \$750,000 from more than 2,650 individual donors.

LDF continues. The good news is that, in one year, the LDF raised nearly \$750,000 from more than 2,650 individual donors—nearly 90 percent of whom are AFSA members.

We've assisted more than a dozen members and worked closely with their attorneys, when possible, to ensure that the LDF's funds will last. And that's important because just last month, another member called us, concerned that he would require an outside attorney to assist him as some senators continue to pursue investigations of past dealings in Ukraine.

AFSA's legal team also developed a list of law firms willing to work with members at reduced rates or on a pro-bono basis during this particularly challenging time.

Since its inception, the LDF has assisted members from State, USAID and FCS, and is here to help those who meet the criteria outlined in the fund's SOP, which can be found at bit.ly/afsaldf.

By carefully managing the LDF's resources, today we have roughly \$325,000 in the fund and have paid legal fees of nearly \$420,000.

And although bills continue to come in, the pace has slowed.

The pride I felt watching our Foreign Service colleagues fulfill their obligations to the Constitution by testifying before Congress

while courageously speaking truth to power was second only to the pride I had at the response from AFSA members, and our friends and families, in supporting the LDF.

We don't know what the future holds, but our members deserve to know that—when needed—AFSA is here for you. ■

Ken Kero-Mentz is chair of the five-member Legal Defense Fund Committee.



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, Aug. 19, 2020

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the AFSA Governing Board met via Zoom conference on Aug. 19.

The board made the following decisions, which will need to be ratified at the next in-person Governing Board meeting, according to AFSA bylaws.

APHIS: The Governing Board appointed Russell Duncan as the APHIS representative to the board. He replaces Jeffrey Austin.

Memorial Plaques: The board adopted recommendations to fund the expansion of the AFSA memorial plaques, at a cost of up to \$64,720, in the lobby of the Department of State Truman building.

The board also approved placing the name of a Foreign Service officer on the memorial plaques.

Elections Committee: The board appointed Dao M. Le to serve on the AFSA Committee on Elections.

Legal Defense Fund: The board approved disbursement of \$52,430 from the Legal Defense Fund to pay the legal fees for a member who testified before Congress last year during the impeachment hearings. ■

USAID Rep Trevor Hublin Joins AFSA Governing Board

Trevor Hublin has joined the AFSA Governing Board as a USAID representative. He replaces Lorraine Sherman, who has moved on to an overseas assignment.

Trevor joined the Foreign Service in 2009 and currently works at the Bureau for Africa, coordinating USAID's efforts promoting democracy, human rights and governance. He serves more than 26 USAID operating units in Africa, providing policy and technical assistance to guide USAID's DRG aims on the continent.

He has served overseas, most recently in Central

America with the regional mission in El Salvador. There he coordinated work on migration, citizen security and human rights across Central America from 2017 to 2019.

He served with USAID/Ethiopia from 2014 to 2016, leading the Democracy and Governance Office and its democracy and conflict portfolios. Before that, he served with USAID/Sri Lanka from 2011 to 2014 as the director of the Office of Governance and Vulnerable Populations, managing the transition from relief to development following the end of the civil war there.



Trevor Hublin

From 2009 to 2011, Trevor served with USAID/Afghanistan as the development adviser on a provincial reconstruction team and at

the mission in Kabul managing stabilization programs across the country.

Prior to joining USAID, he served for seven years as a U.S. Marine Corps officer and saw service in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chad, Georgia, Japan and South Korea.

Trevor earned a master's degree in international relations from Syracuse University and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Marquette University.

He is married to Josephine Hublin, a scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and has two daughters. ■

AFSA Welcomes Several Incoming Classes



On Aug. 13, Foreign Service generalists and specialists participate in a virtual Flag Day during their Foreign Service orientation.

Nearly 200 new Foreign Service officers and specialists were hired (virtually) in recent months by State, USAID and the Foreign Commercial Service. AFSA held online welcoming sessions for them.

On July 31, AFSA hosted a welcoming session for 19 new Foreign Commercial Service officers. AFSA President Eric

Rubin, AFSA FCS VP Jay Carreiro and AFSA Director of Programs and Member Engagement Christine Miele made presentations to the incoming officers.

On Aug. 5, AFSA welcomed the 12 members of the incoming USAID C3 #17 class. Amb. Rubin, AFSA USAID Vice President Jason Singer and

AFSA USAID Representative Trevor Hublin spoke to the group in an online session.

On Aug. 6, AFSA welcomed the 144 members of the combined 157th and 203rd Foreign Service orientation class. Of the 144 new Foreign Service members, 86 are generalists and 57 are specialists; 67 are women, and 77 are men. The A-100 (generalist FSO) participants included 30 Pickering and Rangel Fellows. Broken down by career track, the class included 16 consular, 16 economic, 12 management, 24 political and 18 public diplomacy officers.

The specialists included six construction engineers, three human resource officers, five information management specialists, two

information management technical specialists, six office management specialists, two regional English language officers, a regional medical officer, a regional medical officer psychiatrist, two medical providers, 25 special agent candidates, two security engineering officers and three security technical specialists.

Amb. Rubin, AFSA State Vice President Tom Yazdgerdi and former Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security Greg Starr made remarks to the new Foreign Service officers.

Ordinarily, AFSA invites incoming classes to its headquarters for an in-person welcoming lunch; we plan to resume those lunches as conditions allow. ■

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Email: mcgfin@verizon.net

AFSA NEWS

Memorial Plaque
Continued from p. 63

names of early American diplomats and consular officers dating back to 1794 whose deaths in the line of duty were unknown when AFSA unveiled the original plaque in 1933 (see "Honoring Early Diplomats and Consular Officers" in the March 2020 *Foreign Service Journal*, p. 53.)

Third, the project will replace the four side plaques that were installed in 1985 beside the two large older plaques. Those side plaques honor colleagues killed overseas in recent decades but also intersperse the names of several dozen colleagues dating back to 1836 who were recognized only in recent years.

The result is a jumble of dates of death. Visitors often ask why the names appear to

be in random, not chronological order. Re-inscribing the side plaques will allow the integration of the historical names with the modern names to provide a chronologically coherent, dignified commemoration of our fallen colleagues.

Finally, while inscribing or re-inscribing the 162 names, the project will add the cause of death. Between 1933 and 1965, AFSA included the cause of death with each name to on the original large plaque.

It is unknown why AFSA stopped that practice. It could have been due to sensitivities about the large number of State and USAID officers dying in the Vietnam War. However, for visitors to the plaque, seeing the cause of death tells more about the colleague's sacrifice than just reading the place ■

Social Security Tax Deferral

Many AFSA members have contacted us about the Social Security tax deferral described in a Sept. 3 Department Notice.

We recognize that this is not welcome news for many, who would much rather not have their biweekly pay reduced in the first three months of next year in order to make up for the taxes not paid. AFSA has expressed opposition to the department and made the case that members should be allowed to opt out of the deferral.

However, instructions from the Office of Management and Budget have stated that the deferral is mandatory and that there will be no opportunity to opt out.

AFSA will continue to advocate on the Hill for options and alternatives regarding this executive order, including the ability to opt out of the tax deferral. ■

Insights into Russia's PD Challenges

Russia's Public Diplomacy: Evolution and Practice

Edited by Anna A. Velikaya and Greg Simons, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, \$119.99/hardcover, \$89.00/e-book, 285 pages.

REVIEWED BY VIVIAN S. WALKER

At first glance, *Russia's Public Diplomacy: Evolution and Practice*, an edited volume on the practice of public diplomacy by Russian scholars and practitioners, might be dismissed as official promotional material. After all, co-editor Anna A. Velikaya is directly affiliated with the Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Foundation, an institution run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and founded by former President Dmitry Medvedev in 2010 to improve Russia's global reputation. And the opening dedication, by a senior Russian diplomat, offers over-the-top praise for the book's "paramount importance in the prevailing international situation."

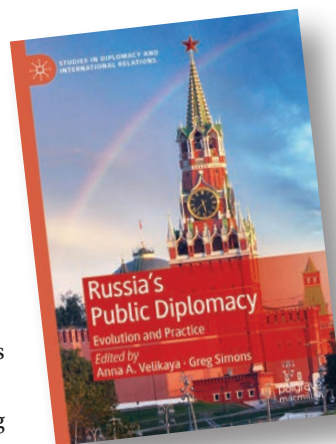
Don't let that fool you. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in truly understanding the nature of Russia's information and influence activities. Though neither written nor priced for the casual reader, it is a valuable resource for libraries and university courses' reading lists.

We are drowning in expertise about the threats posed by Russian malign influence strategies and calls for ever-more-aggressive measures necessary to combat them. But we don't actually know enough about the prevailing context for Russia's public diplomacy initiatives—including origins, key actors and institutions, resourcing and objectives—

to address their effects. *Russia's Public Diplomacy* is, in this respect, a significant resource.

First, this volume reveals that official Russian thinking about the nature of public diplomacy is in many ways identical to the U.S. government model, beginning with the "Russian" definition of public diplomacy—"to understand, inform and influence foreign audiences in the service of national interests."

Moreover, nearly every chapter cites Joseph Nye's universally appropriated definition of soft power as the ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction rather than coercion or inducement. Scholar Nicholas J. Cull's ubiquitous



Russia's Public Diplomacy's real value lies, however, in its illuminating insights into Russia's unique public diplomacy challenges. For example, as several contributors point out, the Soviet legacy of secrecy and repression casts a long shadow on current efforts to "illuminate" Russia. Even today, "dissent is often confused with disloyalty" (p. 269) and challenges to the official government narratives are discouraged.

Satellite television juggernaut *Russia Today*, the centerpiece of Russia's international broadcasting apparatus, boasts a jaunty "Question More" motif, but its openness to actual disagreement is exclusively rhetorical. In addition, "direct

We cannot win this two-sided information war until we know how and why the Russians play it.

public diplomacy taxonomy, familiar to U.S. PD practitioners, is taken as gospel. The basic elements of the U.S. government public diplomacy toolkit—education and cultural exchanges, international broadcasting entities, digital platforms, development initiatives, business and science diplomacy, and civil society engagement—are all cornerstones of Russian public diplomacy.

And, like the United States, Russia wants to project itself as a viable great-power competitor. Indeed, Russian public diplomacy is fixated on the projection of a Russia resurgent, as articulated in the "Russian World" narrative.

interaction with external civil society and expert communities" is still "very politically sensitive" (p. 269) and, therefore, represents another impediment to effective public engagement.

Though their quality is somewhat uneven, each chapter contains useful and, in some cases, previously unavailable information on the nature and practice of Russian public diplomacy, including funding and resource data. Olga Lebedeva's historical overview presents a good rundown of key institutions and actors. Natalia Bubnova's essay on Moscow's policy of international cooperation addresses soft power failures but also

illustrates the degree to which Russia's inherent sense of victimhood mitigates against viable soft power projection.

Elena Stetsko's discussion of the role of civil society in Russian public diplomacy offers context for the emerging role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the international donor community. And the chapters on regional PD initiatives provide fresh insights into prevailing foreign policy trends.

A number of chapters candidly address the degree to which Russia's aggressive behavior toward Georgia in 2008—and, more recently, Ukraine—works against its ability to project a positive image as a reliable strategic partner. Several contributors acknowledge that, strategic justifications aside, Russia has paid a high price for its effort to preserve its territorial integrity. Moreover, "Russia's weak economy and internal problems such as social injustice, socioeconomic discrepancies, corruption and dysfunctional legal system" (p. 270) undermine the projection of a positive national narrative.

As one contributor notes, somewhat wistfully, "If the current model of [modern Russia's] social and political development was to change in a positive direction, it could ... revolutionize strategic communication" (p. 229).

Not surprisingly, the book offers a relatively harsh critique of "Western" (read U.S.) use of information and influence strategies. "In Russia, PD is perceived as aiming to create an objective and favorable image of the country, without undermining the efforts of other actors" (p. 271). By contrast, the United States combines "public diplomacy," or engagement through education and culture, with "strategic communication," defined as the effort to confront and undermine foreign propaganda and violent extremism.

This somewhat specious distinction between public diplomacy and strategic communication serves to underscore Russia's frequent assertion of the irreproachability of its influence measures. And it reframes Russia's active disinformation campaigns as mere benign perception management in defense of national interests.

The editors of this volume also take issue with the "coercive democratization" allegedly embedded in U.S. government influence strategies, arguing that Russia aims to build alliances, while the West, instead, seeks to impose "Western" values such as a human rights agenda, transparency and the rule of law. As co-editor Anna Velikaya argues in a separate publication, in Russia, "PD is an instrument of dialogue rather than containment."

Indeed much of the book is devoted to laying out the main elements of Russia's "peaceful" messaging as a counterpoint to aggressive Western policies: multilateralism, the key role of the United Nations in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and "non-interference" in the domestic affairs of target nations, a direct reference to the perceived role of "Western" NGOs as enforcers of democratic values.

In *Russia's Public Diplomacy*, Velikaya and Simons have rightly underscored the fractious nature of the global information environment, in which "narratives and knowledge production are used by the competing sides to bestow legitimacy upon their causes and to erode the perceived legitimacy of their opponents" (p. 7). We cannot win this two-sided information war until we know how and why the Russians play it.

Further, this book reveals the hollow core of the "Russian World" narrative that aspires to restore a sense of national power and identity. The truth is that Rus-

sia lacks the soft power resources necessary to attract foreign publics. The better we understand its public diplomacy deficits, the more likely we will be able to offer a credible counternarrative.

Vivian S. Walker is executive director of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. A retired diplomat, she is a faculty fellow at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy and has taught at Central European University's School of Public Policy, the National War College in Washington, D.C., and the National Defense College of the United Arab Emirates. She is a current member of the FSJ Editorial Board.

Changing Course

Mission: Career Transition—A Career Change Guide for Intelligence, Military, Foreign Affairs, National Security, and Other Government Professionals

Alison Pentz Bouwmeester, APB Books, 2020, \$18.99/paperback, e-book available, 248 pages.

REVIEWED BY KENNETH DEKLEVA

For many Civil Service and Foreign Service employees, making the decision to retire after a lengthy career of public service brings on transitional challenges that can test the resilience of even the most adaptable diplomats.

The Foreign Service Institute does a superb job of preparing its retirees for such a transition, both through its retirement planning seminar and career transition courses. I know because I took—and benefitted greatly from—the instruction provided therein when I retired in 2016.

But I sorely wish that *Mission: Career Transition—A Career Change Guide*

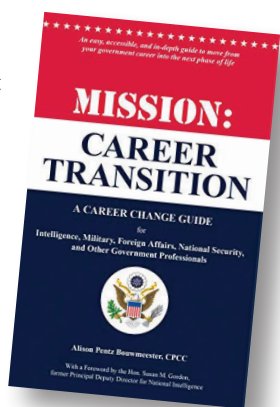
The real strength of the book lies in the interviews and direct quotes peppered throughout in response to specific retirement and transition challenges.

had also been available to me at that time. A true gem, it should be mandatory reading for any State Department employee planning and transitioning toward retirement.

A longtime CIA veteran, Alison Pentz Bouwmeester worked in the private sector for several years before starting her own coaching firm to assist U.S. government employees transitioning from careers in public service. She follows a logical framework in her book, from an employee's first considerations regarding transition and retirement, to the practical, financial, logistical, emotional and social changes one can expect. She provides excellent worksheets that guide employees through various steps, not unlike similar materials provided in the FSI courses.

But the real strength of the book lies in the interviews and direct quotes peppered throughout in response to specific retirement and transition challenges. Coming from a group of accomplished State, intelligence community, military and national security professionals ranging in rank from FS-2 to SFS equivalent who have trodden this path before, these interviews are wise, poignant, compelling and informative.

They are also humbling, when one realizes that the challenges of transition can be as daunting for the highest senior executives in the U.S. government as for midlevel employees. The human side of such stories gives Bouwmeester's book an added sense of both emotional power and



nuance at the same time.

This book is not only good to read both before (even several years ahead of actual retirement) and during one's transition, but also afterward, for one of its salient takeaways is that retirement

is not one transition, but many. The interview subjects gracefully acknowledge that there are many steps on each path.

The book is also meant to be reread, shared and discussed with colleagues—another test of a good read. Reading it brought back wonderful memories of service, tremendous colleagues, incomparable life and work experiences, and gratitude for the oath that we all took at our swearing-in ceremony.

Other State employees planning their transition and retirement may reflect, too, on having served our great country in one of the finest organizations and most important missions in defending it. Bouwmeester has done the national security, diplomatic and intelligence community a great service in writing this book. ■

Kenneth Dekleva, M.D., is currently an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas. He served in the State Department as a regional medical officer/psychiatrist from 2002 through 2016, retiring at the rank of Minister-Counselor.

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Nixon in Moscow, March 1967

BY JONATHAN B. RICKERT

Sometimes the course, if not the fate, of a country may hinge on an action as seemingly insignificant as a diplomatic snub. At least that appears to be the case where Russia and Romania are concerned. Let me explain.

Former Vice President Richard Nixon visited Moscow March 16-21, 1967, as part of a private tour of European capitals to burnish his foreign policy credentials in the run-up to his renewed bid for the presidency. Ambassador and Mrs. Llewellyn Thompson hosted him at Spaso House, the official residence, and he slept in the so-called Nixon bedroom, where he had stayed as vice president in July 1959.

During that earlier visit he had engaged in the famous “kitchen debate” with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev at the American National Exhibition in Moscow. (Thompson had been on his first tour as ambassador there at the time.) Nixon was now seeking to meet with Soviet leaders and hoped, if possible, to pay a visit to his former adversary, the by then “retired” Khrushchev.

But the Soviets would have none of it, flatly rejecting any and all appointment requests. This left Thompson in an awkward position—what could he do to fill the time of his underoccupied, high-level guest?

In fact, there were not many options. Nixon started with a visit to the embassy, where he addressed a staff meeting. The Thompsons then hosted a luncheon for him at Spaso House with the British, German and Italian ambassadors.

There being nothing much else for him to do in Moscow, Nixon then traveled to Tashkent, Alma-Ata and Samarkand, accompanied by an embassy escort. On his return, the Thompsons held a big dinner for him with the American and foreign press corps. And that was the extent of his program.

Since I was living at Spaso House as Thompson’s staff aide at the time, I had several meals with the former vice president and the chance to observe him at close quarters. Not surprisingly, he held forth knowledgeably and articulately about foreign affairs. In my presence at least, he was always polite, friendly and even jovial, though the latter characteristic appeared somewhat forced; he just did not seem to be naturally at ease around others, no matter how hard he tried.

At the same time, he successfully concealed the disappointment he must have felt about being snubbed by the Soviets, who apparently regarded him as a political has-been. Or possibly they simply did not want to do anything that would help advance the strongly anticommunist

Nixon’s White House ambitions. Who knows?

Leaving Moscow, Nixon traveled next to Bucharest, where he was warmly received. The high point of his stay was his meeting with Romanian Communist Party General Secretary Nicolae Ceausescu, who had reached the top leadership post only in 1965 and had not yet become a megalomaniacal autocrat and the so-called “Genius of the Carpathians” and “Danube of Thought.”

According to various accounts, the meeting went smoothly, with Nixon engaging the Romanian leader on China, among other topics. The former vice president got on well with Ceausescu and apparently was struck by the vast difference between his reception in Moscow and in Bucharest.

After becoming president, and reportedly against the advice of his senior aides, Nixon chose to make his first trip to the Soviet bloc not to Moscow but a triumphal return to Bucharest, in August 1969. That surprising event helped put Romania on the international map in a new way, and it was still being talked about enthusiastically when my wife and I arrived there on assignment nearly two years later.

While the reasons for the Soviets’ cold shoulder to Nixon in Moscow remain unknown as far as I am aware, it certainly spurred the growth of U.S.-Romanian relations and emboldened Romania’s efforts to achieve greater independence within the Warsaw Pact. And that presumably was not at all what the Soviets had expected—or intended. ■



Retired Senior Foreign Service Officer Jonathan B. Rickert spent the majority of his 35-year career either in or dealing with Central and Eastern Europe. His final two overseas posts were as deputy chief of mission in Sofia and then Bucharest. He served as Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson’s staff aide at Embassy Moscow from 1967 to 1968.

On a cool June morning, I took this photo in Reykjavík's Old Harbor. This past summer, I was able to escape the COVID-19 oppressiveness of Washington, D.C., and spend time teleworking from the world's northernmost capital. You can see some of Reykjavík's landmarks in the photo, including the Harpa Concert and Conference Center and the spire of Hallgrímskirkja church. A pair of unusually cranky eider ducks is quacking loudly just out of frame. ■

Ásgeir Sigfússon is AFSA's executive director and director of communications. He has rarely been more appreciative of his dual U.S.-Icelandic citizenship than he was this summer. He used the wide-angle lens option on his iPhone 11 to take the photo.

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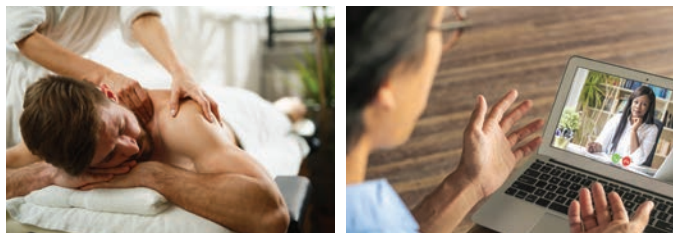
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