

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

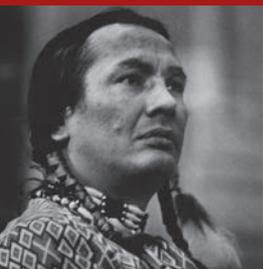
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APRIL 2013



AFSA: THE UNION TURNS 40

RECALLING SOS for DOS



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AFSA and the Foreign Service: The Road Ahead

BY SUSAN R. JOHNSON

Not for the first time in the nearly 90 years since the Rogers Act established the Foreign Service as a professional career cadre and the backbone of the United States diplomatic service, our Service faces an existential crisis. But we also, to borrow from the Chinese, have an opportunity for renewal.

After two terms as AFSA president, I use the term “existential” because support for the very concept of a professional career diplomatic service, with a disciplined and agile personnel system based on merit, rank in person and worldwide availability, seems to have eroded significantly. This is true not just at the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development and other foreign affairs agencies, and in Congress, but within our own ranks.

In the “State of the Union” article on p. 27 of this issue—part of *The Foreign Service Journal's* coverage of AFSA's 40th anniversary as a union—four of my predecessors reflect on AFSA's role and responsibility to advocate for a professional career Foreign Service. They argue persuasively that carrying out that function is not a typical defense of “union” turf, but represents a commitment to the higher purpose of strengthening America's diplomacy. Against this backdrop, I see the following main challenges for AFSA.

First, we must rebuild support for the professional Foreign

Service by increasing awareness of its unique value.

Second, AFSA should continue to call attention to the importance of fostering institutional leaders imbued with long-term perspective, Service discipline and a commitment to producing broad-gauged senior diplomats able to provide sound foreign policy advice and to lead its implementation.

Finally, AFSA needs to strengthen its own institutional capacity for advocacy and negotiation to push this ambitious agenda.

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 says a professional, career Foreign Service “must be preserved, strengthened and improved in order to carry out its mission effectively in response to the complex challenges of modern diplomacy and international relations.” Are these challenges not much more complex today?

Between 1924 and the 1970s, the Foreign Service presence within the leadership of the State Department and USAID grew slowly but steadily. But since 1980 its share of top positions has steadily declined (from about 60 percent to 24 percent today) while political patronage has increased. For the last four decades,

more than 70 percent of ambassadorial appointments to key posts in Europe and Asia have been political, undermining the very concept of a nonpartisan, professional diplomatic service.

This disheartening trend is

just one, albeit significant, feature of the decline of the professional character of the Department of State and USAID—and its stature. The Foreign Service can no longer claim a lead role in the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy; instead, it is being relegated to a secondary function of staff support to an outside elite that sets and manages policy.

To help rebuild a strong, effective Foreign Service and increase public appreciation of its important role, AFSA must pursue efforts in three directions. First, we must identify the factors that undermine the Foreign Service as an institution, highlighting areas that require attention to reform the Service. This will be the subject of my next column.

Second, AFSA must devote serious thought to defining the requirements of diplomacy as a profession and how they apply to the individual American diplomat today. And third, AFSA must expand its advocacy on behalf of the Foreign Service with the Secretary of State, the White House and Capitol Hill—for example, by working with members of Congress to establish a Foreign Service caucus.

In order to accomplish these objectives, especially strong and effective advocacy, AFSA will have to build its own institutional capacity. Among other things, this may necessitate restructuring its professional staff and clarifying the role of its elected governing board.

As always, I welcome your input. Please write me at Johnson@afsa.org. ■



Susan R. Johnson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

Unite the Development Organizations

The article by Ben Barber in the January *FSJ*, “The Millennium Challenge Corporation: Off to a Good Start,” was informative and well balanced.

However, in my opinion, the MCC should not exist. The significant resources used to create and run it should have been used to bolster USAID instead.

The MCC is another one of the too-numerous spigots for U.S. economic development assistance. The largest and most prominent of these is, of course, USAID. There are also the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Trade and Development Agency (which I briefly headed), both of which were created in USAID.

Others include the State Department, which directly manages many aid programs, and several other departments (Treasury, Justice, Agriculture, etc.), as well as the Peace Corps. In addition, the Department of Defense conducts some assistance programs that once were under the purview of USAID.

Each of these programs has its own political appointees, superstructure, policies, budget, personnel, offices, lobby groups, supporters on the Hill and the like. The result is gross overlap, confusion, inefficiency and waste of the taxpayer’s money. I guesstimate that between a quarter and a third of our total assistance may be thus squandered.

Our peers at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (where I once represented the United States) periodically criticize this confusion, as do many of our client countries. This system seems designed as much to

provide jobs to appointees, bureaucrats and consultants as to promote economic development.

Moreover, the Millennium Challenge Corporation is built on questionable premises. First, it seeks to work only in well-performing developing countries. But over time, there is no clear distinction between good and poor performers. Instead there are gradations, with countries moving up and down the scale. Barber notes that Madagascar, Mali, Armenia and Nicaragua have gone from good to poor in just a few years. Others that appeared to be poor performers now look good. Such variations are bound to continue.

Second, the MCC stresses capital projects. But again, there is no absolute distinction between most of those and other types of aid, such as technical assistance. Indeed, aid programs generally encompass more than one of these categories.

Third, the MCC tries to be more “businesslike” than USAID. But foreign assistance is not a business. Rather, it is a tool of foreign policy, with different objectives. In any case, USAID uses standard economic assessments to achieve the best results from its projects.

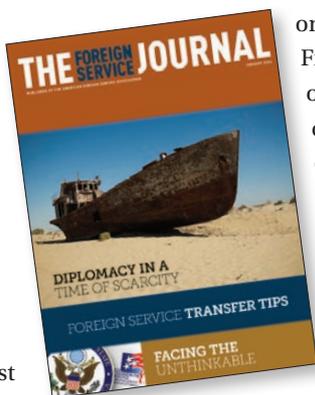
Finally, the MCC seeks to jolt recipients into more rapid development with large injections of money. But its resources are meager. A few hundred million dollars spread over several years is modest compared to the total domestic and external resources available to most developing countries.

Moreover, money is just one factor holding back growth. Culture, history, ethnic and religious rivalries, misman-

agement, corruption and other factors usually are far more important.

To improve our inefficient and wasteful foreign assistance apparatus, I suggested possible solutions in two issues of *The Foreign Service Journal*, November 2009 and December 2010 (archived at www.afsa.org/foreign_service_journal.aspx). One idea is to combine all or most of these spigots into USAID (perhaps with a new name), making it again a strong, independent agency. The other option would be to merge USAID—which currently has functions within State or straddling the two agencies—and the other spigots completely into State as a development bureau and specialty/career track.

Raymond Malley
Senior FSO, retired
Hanover, N.H.



Fortress Embassies

I am not surprised that a regional security officer, especially one who entered the Foreign Service after 9/11, supports New Embassy Compounds (also known as “fortress embassies”). But longer-serving FSOs and retirees may well have a different view of the impact of such structures on both our own diplomats and host-country nationals.

I served in Copenhagen from 1973 to 1975. This was during the Vietnam War, which most Danes opposed, often quite vociferously. The back of our embassy faced the back of the Soviet embassy, separated by a cemetery. You can imagine the dark comments that evoked.

Our building was situated on a main avenue and featured a ground floor walk-in library that was well used every day. It was guarded by a lone Danish policeman outside and a single Marine inside. On one after-hours occasion, the policeman was distracted by an attractive

young woman long enough for her male accomplice to lower the American flag by the entrance and make off with it. (It was recovered in Sweden some days later.)

Meanwhile, around the corner, the Soviet embassy stood secretively behind high walls, its entrance protected by grim-looking guards. We Americans used to loftily boast that our open, welcoming embassies reflected our society, while Soviet embassies accurately reflected theirs.

Sadly, we cannot make that boast today. Rather, we appear both fearful and fearsome behind our new walls and moats. We are now often located far from the center of the capital, where we used to hold prime real estate that served as a positive statement about our relationship with the host country. Think of the beautiful Canadian, Swedish and Finnish embassies in Washington, for example.

I cannot accept the assertion that host-country nationals are unconcerned with how our embassies look and how difficult they may be to enter on official business. (Regrettably, visits to American libraries are already a thing of the past.)

Back when our current embassy in London was built, it provoked howls of protest about its massive size. It was even topped by a fierce eagle seemingly ready to dive into Grosvenor Square. There was no real security issue then, but aesthetics did, and do, matter to the local population.

The fortress concept may well be necessary in places like Kabul and Bagdad, but its strict worldwide application does American values a disservice.

*Harvey Leifert
FSO, retired
Bethesda, Md.*

Fortress America

I write in praise of the December 2012 *Journal*, in particular “Beyond Fortress America” by Jane Loeffler; “Building the Bonds of Trust” by Joshua Polacheck; and “Reasons for Hope in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” by Kristin Loken.

I’ve just returned from a country where I served many years ago. While the U.S. mission is still in the same place, it appears from the outside to have been transformed into a Fortress America with a highly unfriendly appearance. I did not attempt entry.

Compounding the poor impression were the tales of woe I received from visitor-visa applicants, including complaints that the enormous application fees required each time they applied were not refunded when they were

denied a visa. I have heard the same from another country, and assume the problem is general. Maybe too many embassy personnel are hunkered down in their respective forts to be able to go out and learn what’s really going on outside.

At the very least, a large portion of the stratospheric visa fees should be returned to unsuccessful applicants. The whole non-immigrant visa issuing system must be sanitized and made rational. The immigrant visa sector requires major reform, too.

Turning to policy, much of our current fortress mentality derives from the Middle East enigma, now extended to Central and South Asia. Everyone (at least in the U.S.) seems to have forgotten that Britain, not we, more or less created the modern Middle East when it exploited the defeat of the Ottoman Empire after World War I.



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We seem to have rushed to inherit the troubling results from Great Britain.

Britain today may not be what it once was, but I believe her diplomatic skills remain sterling. To remove the onus from our back and to save our lives, treasure, reputation and good will, I recommend we encourage her to establish and head an international commission to resolve the problems of her creation, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations.

Regarding the Afghanistan conundrum, I was very encouraged to learn in early February about British Prime Minister David Cameron's imminent talks in London with Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai and Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari. Let's hope there's some noteworthy progress prior to this letter's publication.

I hope *Foreign Service Journal* readers will take up this debate.

Louis V. Riggio
FSO, retired
Hollywood, Fla.

More Memories of Reginald Bartholomew

The December 2012 letter by David T. Jones regarding the passing of Reginald Bartholomew provided a wonderful description of the great confidence several U.S. presidents and Secretaries of State had in the ambassador. As Mr. Jones highlighted, his leadership style was striking and always energetic. Yet, in addition to the "dark side of his brilliance," there were angels, too—as I learned while serving under Amb. Bartholomew 30 years ago in Beirut.

Oct. 23, 1983, is a historic day in the annals of the U.S. Marine Corps. That day, 241 warriors were lost in what has been called the largest non-nuclear explosion ever. That day was also Amb.

Bartholomew's first at post.

I was on temporary duty there as a junior communications officer, alone in the office that morning. While an explosion had been heard earlier, its origins were not immediately known. Under-scoring the importance of U.S. government diplomatic communications, the ambassador's first briefing was with the Communications Programs Unit.

As I briefed him, the audible signal of flash traffic suddenly rang out. The next thing I knew, the ambassador and I were trying to decipher a series of flash cables which, one by one, screamed out an escalating horror: 20, 53, 125, 180...Marines confirmed dead. That earlier explosion was now fully, yet very sadly, understood.

Given the situation, I was nervous. I was a bit shaky too, dropping one flash telegraphic tape to the floor. The ambassador noticed it, I'm sure. It was one of many moments in my Foreign Service career that would test my professional ability and composure.

As he started to leave, Amb. Bartholomew paused at the door and said, calmly but firmly, "Tim, our work here has just become a lot tougher. But in honor of all those Marines, our outstanding team here, including you, will see it through." The ambassador's words helped me regain focus. And it was then that I saw an angel or two.

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

Professionalism vs. Diversity?

Foreign Service Specialist Krishna Das's paean to diversity (January Letters) prompts me to ask: Which does Mr. Das consider the higher priority for State, attracting diversity or attracting

top talent? If it is the former, all of the specialist's diversity cheerleading—that State is “like one big family...amplified by camaraderie and close relationships,” etc.—cannot obscure the fact that the taxpayers are getting the short end of the stick.

Hiring and promoting people with a view to their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and skin color necessarily promotes both the exclusion and the non-retention of top talent. Whatever its origins and background, top talent goes where it can compete freely and with least limitation, not where its prospects are confined to this or that group created by some Equal Employment Opportunity counter of ethnologic beans.

And how is diversity working out for State, and for the taxpayer? According to AFSA President Susan Johnson (see “Building a Truly Diverse, Professional Foreign Service,” December *FSJ*), the Foreign Service is failing to “bind a diverse group of officers and specialists into a cohesive cadre.” Nor do Foreign Service members share a “common understanding of their mission and of their role in achieving it.” So the Service needs the infusion of a “consistent, career-long ethos of excellence, discipline and professionalism.”

All of this suggests to me that there must be a destructive tension at State in the relationship between professionalism and the search for diversity, at least in the way that search is carried out.

I do not believe that the professional problems raised by the AFSA president are as amenable to structural and training reforms as she goes on to suggest. Besides, why should State be tasked to train up officers in the ways of “excellence, discipline and professionalism”? Are new FSOs no longer expected to have such qualities?

Perhaps the source of the difficulty lies with Foreign Service recruitment. Are recruiters, examiners and EEO monitors so beguiled by diversity that, too often, they judge a book by its cover? Are they sufficiently tuned to the importance of values, to the need to seek and reward not only top talent, but optimal educational and cultural formation, as well as dedication to country?

Without such basics coming in at the bottom of the State employment pyramid, there can be no effective Foreign Service.

Richard W. Hoover
FSO, retired
Front Royal, Va.

CORRECTIONS

In the obituary for Michael Bricker (February, p. 65), retired Senior FSO Timothy C. Lawson, who shared his recollections of Mr. Bricker, was inadvertently misidentified. When he served with Mr. Bricker in Seoul, Mr. Lawson was an information management officer, not the deputy chief of mission.

In the March issue, there is a typographical error in the caption on p. 33. The assistant secretary of State for population, refugees and migration is Anne Richard, not “Richards.”

We regret the errors. ■

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State Releases a Mobile App for FS Careers

In January, the State Department's Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment launched *DOS-Careers*, a well-designed and user-friendly free app for anyone interested in a Foreign Service career with the State Department. HR/REE, as the office is known, has been an early adopter of social media and other Web-based tools for reaching potential and current Foreign Service candidates.

The office began using social media in 2005 and has continued to expand its online profile ever since. Rachel Friedland, its recruitment marketing consultant, has been pushing for an app for several years. When the opportunity arose for funding through the Information Resource Management Bureau's Innovation Fund, HR/REE seized it.

Overall, the State Department has made great strides in shaking its longtime reputation as a technological laggard. Beginning in 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell made upgrading access to, and use of, information technology a top priority, starting with granting access to the Internet to employees on their desktops in Foggy Bottom and overseas.

Today, there are numerous Twitter feeds, YouTube channels, flickr photostreams, blogs and Facebook pages coming out of the department and embassies worldwide, and State is now seen as a leader among federal agencies in this regard.

This *DOSCareers* app was developed and published by MetroStar Systems,

Overall, the State Department has made great strides in shaking its longtime reputation as a technological laggard. Beginning in 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell made upgrading access to, and use of, information technology a top priority, starting with granting access to the Internet to employees on their desktops in Foggy Bottom and overseas.

though all the content is provided by HR/REE. It offers generalist and specialist career track descriptions, videos of employees from different tracks, Foreign Service Officer Test sample questions, and information about the selection process, including a flowchart of the exam and the hiring process (that could be a bit clearer in distinguishing between Foreign Service officer and Foreign Service specialist steps to the job).

The app also includes useful links to Diplomats in Residence and recruitment events around the country. These information sessions and career events have grown in number in recent years, and the app can help users find and keep track of what's happening in their area. Users can also set up calendar alerts for upcoming events. One especially useful feature is an interactive map for events.

The app's name seems unfortunate, however, given that "DOSCareers" is not

widely recognizable to the public, and the app is somewhat difficult to find if you don't already know the name. In searches of the iTunes and Google Play app stores for "Foreign Service," "Foreign Service Exam," "State Department" and

"Diplomacy," the app did not show up at all. A search for "FSOT" does get you to *DOSCareers*, which is listed after a number of unofficial test prep apps.

A few users have expressed concern about the size of the app, rather large at 50 MB. However, early reviews are generally quite positive. *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Intern Jeff Richards, speaking as a member of the target audience for the app, commented: "I think it's really great! I especially like the quizzes and the information about the tests. The app is very fast and extremely interesting and useful, and it has a great interface."

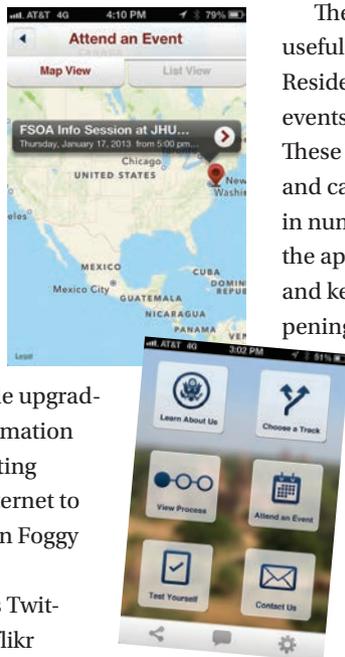
—Shawn Dorman, Associate Editor

Attacks on the Press Mount Worldwide

On Feb. 14 the Committee to Protect Journalists released *Attacks on the Press*, a yearly assessment of global press freedom (or the lack thereof). The study documents an unprecedented rise in the number of journalists killed and imprisoned during the past 12 months, as well as the success of many governments in instituting state censorship and cracking down on independent reporting.

"When journalists are silenced, whether through violence or laws, we all stand to lose because perpetrators are able to obscure misdeeds, silence dissent and disempower citizens," notes CPJ Deputy Director Robert Mahoney.

The Committee to Protect Journalists identified 70 journalists who lost their



lives in the line of duty during 2012, a 43-percent increase from 2011. (On average, over the past two decades a journalist has been killed in the line of duty every eight days.) More than 35 reporters are currently missing.

The report identifies 232 journalists who were placed behind bars because of their work last year, an increase of 53 from 2011. That is the highest total since the organization began conducting the survey in 1986.

To spotlight growing threats, the 2013 edition of *Attacks* also features CPJ's new "Risk List," which identifies the 10 places experiencing the most significant downward trends during 2012. Those developments included:

- High murder rates and entrenched impunity in Pakistan, Somalia and Brazil;
- The use of restrictive laws to silence dissent in Ecuador, Turkey and Russia;
- The imprisonment of large numbers of journalists, typically on anti-state charges, to thwart critical reporting in Ethiopia, Turkey, Vietnam, Iran and Syria; and
- An exceedingly high fatality rate in Syria, where journalists faced multiple risks from all sides in the conflict.

A United Nations plan to strengthen international efforts to increase security for journalists—which is being implemented with CPJ support—aims to create safer conditions for reporters around the world. But the plan, along with a five-year-old U.N. resolution that calls for the protection of journalists in conflict zones, requires full implementation in order to guarantee a free and safe press.

An expanded print edition with exclusive essays by leading journalists is published by Bloomberg Press, an imprint of Wiley, and is available for purchase.

That book includes thematic essays on the anti-press offensive by non-state

“MR. NUNN: When the Secretary of Defense says three or four times that one of the biggest priorities

he has is to see the State Department budget and diplomacy reinvigorated, you know something is pretty important there, and that's the message he gave. So, I think we've got to think much broader than simply the budgetary issues. There are a lot of things at stake here.

MS. FLOURNOY: I agree that we aren't facing existential threats. Even though the nature of our power is changing and what it means to be a unique superpower is changing, we still have a unique role and unique responsibilities to protect our interests, many of which are vital beyond our shores. That requires U.S. engagement and assistance.

So, I think we're in a situation where we don't want to be the world's policemen. [And] I also agree with Sen. Nunn's key point that we're not going to have a very successful foreign policy if one instrument has historically been on steroids and everything else is on life support.

—Former Senator Sam Nunn, D-Ga., and former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy, speaking during the Brookings Institution's Feb. 22 panel discussion, "Real Specifics: 15 Ways to Rethink the Federal Budget—Part I: Budgeting for a Modern Military."

SITE OF THE MONTH: *Freebook Sifter*

Freebook Sifter makes it easy to find free e-books for download to a Kindle device on Amazon.com. The site's founders, Michael Powell and Jürgen Horn, who also operate Lastminute-Auction.com, update its database daily, removing books which are no longer free and adding any which have just come in. (*Freebook Sifter* currently features more than 36,000 free e-books.)

Users can sign up for e-mail alerts or subscribe to a New Books RSS Feed.

Powell and Horn also operate Criticker.com, a film recommendation engine and community, and an entertainment blog, *Random Good Stuff*.

—Steven Alan Honley, Editor

actors in Africa; the weakening of the inter-American human rights and press freedom system; the looming media vacuum in Afghanistan; China's relationship with the foreign press; mobile security; self-censorship in Mexico; citizen journalists in Syria; censorship by extremists on stories of religion; coverage of oil in Africa; and the prospects for a global press freedom charter in a time of increasing challenges.

—Steven Alan Honley, Editor

You've Got Mail!

There has certainly been plenty of gloom and doom lately about the future of snail mail, beginning with Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe's January announcement that the United States Postal Service will end Saturday home delivery in August. But there is also some good news: A recent study by the National Bureau of Economic

Research found that USPS remains the most efficient national mail delivery system in the world.

Alberto Chong, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes and Andrei Shleifer, NBER researchers, set out to analyze the factors that promote efficient government service. They sent letters to non-existent business addresses in 159 countries (10 per country) to determine which governments would be able to return all of the letters to the sender, and how long it would take to do so.

Only around 60 percent of the letters were returned, and the average global return time was six months. But USPS not only returned all of the false-address mail, but did so almost three times faster than other industrialized states, including Canada, Norway and New Zealand.

The NBER researchers attribute this efficiency to the USPS' high-quality

management and technology. For example, the effective utilization of a postal code database renders delivery more efficient and promotes the detection of errors. (The researchers also found that countries using the Latin alphabet had a higher rate of return.)

As further confirmation, an Oxford Strategic Consulting assessment found that America has the best postal service among the 20 largest economies in the world. This high level of efficiency is especially impressive when one considers that USPS handles around 40 percent of the world's mail.

—Jeff Richards, Editorial Intern

Dennis Does the DPRK

Basketball star Dennis Rodman has always been a colorful figure, but his recent visit to Pyongyang at the invitation of North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un may represent a new high (or

Launching the U.S. Diplomatic Center and Museum

In her March President's Views column, Susan Johnson highlighted the Jan. 25 reception in the Benjamin Franklin Room that marked the official launch and start of the construction phase of the United States Diplomacy Center, which will be located at the 21st Street entrance of the State Department.

Outgoing Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, joined by former Secretary of State James A. Baker, Deputy Secretary William Burns and Ambassador Elizabeth Bagley (the project's chief fundraiser), among other luminaries, attended. A video of the event is now available for viewing.

Secretary of State John Kerry has asked Ms. Bagley to continue her fund-



raising efforts, which recently brought in a million-dollar pledge from General Electric. As of late February, the Foreign Affairs Museum Council was holding more than \$13 million, and another \$3.5 million for the project was in the State Department's Gift Fund. The General Services Administration recently issued

the invitation to bid on construction of the external pavilion.

As President Johnson noted in her column, AFSA has long endeavored to explain to the American people, whom we have the privilege to represent overseas, what diplomacy is and why they should support a premier, professional diplomatic service. The USDC will serve as an important vehicle for this effort, and deserves and needs our concrete support.

We invite all AFSA members to visit www.afsa.org/usdc to make a contribution, and watch for regular updates on our campaign to make the U.S. Diplomacy Center a reality.

—Steven Alan Honley, Editor

low, depending on your point of view) for cultural exchanges.

In an acerbic March 4 blog posting, *Washington Post* media analyst Eric Wemple draws from Rodman's responses to questions from George Stephanopoulos of ABC News as "Five

Reasons to Thank Dennis Rodman for Canceling Media Appearances":

1. GS: Were you aware of [Kim Jong Un's] threats against the United States?

DR: I hate the fact that he's doing that.

2. GS: What about the perceptions

that you're propping up the regime?

DR: The kid's only 28 years old.

3. GS: Do you really believe what you said about how they're great leaders?

DR: I saw people respect him and his family—that's what I mean about that, great leaders there.

4. GS: [Kim Jong Un] wants a call from President Obama?

DR: 'I don't want to do war'—he said that to me.

5. GS: What did he tell you about America, and what did you learn about him?

DR: He loves basketball. And I said the same thing, I said, 'Obama loves basketball.' Let's start there.

As Wemple comments, "Never before has a single interview on 'This Week' so elevated the profession of diplomacy.

On the other hand, Joel Witt and Jenny Town argue in a March 7 *Foreign Policy* blog posting ("A Very Special Envoy") that President Obama should make "Dennis the Menace" his man in Pyongyang.

Witt and Town concede that it "certainly hasn't helped Rodman's argument that North Korea is now threatening to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike against American targets in response to new United Nations sanctions. Still, while there is a strong element of truth to these criticisms, Rodman may be onto something here."

After all, they note, the Obama's administration's policy of "strategic patience" doesn't seem to be producing results. Moreover, North Korean leaders have a history of issuing 'on-the-spot guidance'—pronouncements that instantly set policy. So "reaching out directly to Kim Jong Un might not be such a bad idea, particularly since he is still new on the job."

—Steven Alan Honley, Editor ■

50 Years Ago

The following owes its inception to a cocktail party and a record of "The Pirates of Penzance," and is respectfully submitted with apologies to Mr. Gilbert:

I am the very model of a Foreign Service officer:
A savant and a wit, an epicure and a philosopher;
I know old Greek and Latin, and at Saxon I'm spectacular,
I read at sight from Beowulf and speak in the vernacular.

I talk of art and music with an air aloof and critical,
And think it is in bad taste if the discussion gets political.
But if you want a savant or a wit or a philosopher,
I am the very model of a Foreign Service officer.

I pass the tea at parties and my manners are incredible,
I know a hundred kinds of cheese and just when each is edible.
My palate is renowned and I've a flair for things sartorial;
I make up splendid seating lists for fetes ambassadorial.

I know a bit of India—I've been there for a stop or two.
Now please don't talk development—I think it isn't proper to.
But if you need an epicure, a sage or a philosopher,
I am the very model of a Foreign Service officer.

I've vaguely heard of Africa—it's somewhere south of Sicily—
And now that I have heard of it, I shall avoid it busily.
All economic theories I deprecate with suavity,
And feel administration is deplorable depravity.

Our consular affairs are still to me a thing of mystery,
And I know no diplomacy and even less of history.
Still, if you want a savant or a wit or a philosopher,
I am the very model of a Foreign Service officer.

—"FSO Piracy" (*Letters to the Editor*), by Goodwin Cooke; *FSJ*, April 1963.

Unionization, AFSA and the Foreign Service

BY DAVID T. JONES

Today is not “the best of times” for unions. The portion of the U.S. work force that is unionized has fallen to 11.3 percent—just one in nine employees. That’s the lowest level since the 1930s.

Outside the Beltway, diplomats rank far below warriors—and the Foreign Service remains subject to confusion in American minds with the Foreign Legion and the Forestry Service.

So what do these ominous trends portend for the American Foreign Service Association? AFSA advertises its anomalous hybridization as both a union and a professional association as a strong suit, but critics see it as possessing the weaknesses of both and the strengths of neither.

First, I would argue that AFSA fails the essential test of a professional association: the ability to determine the credentials and qualifications for entry into the career, or to ensure that members are periodically recertified for membership. There is no professionally designed preparatory regime of study, or AFSA-devised examination structure for FS entry.

Nor are there any “technical requirements” for joining the Foreign Service, such as entry-level proficiency in a foreign language. There is no post-admission “diplomacy academy,” other than A-100’s vague familiarization course,

and no systemic schedule of continuing education, such as characterizes law or medicine. Has AFSA ever made a systematic, sustained effort to push for the introduction of such requirements?

Diplomats of other nations are appalled at our willy-nilly selection process, identifying individuals (often with no experience in government, international relations, U.S. diplomatic or institutional State Department history), and dispatching them abroad labeled “diplomats.” If they are successful, it reflects individual expertise, not systemic preparation.

Asleep at the Switch

Although AFSA is legally barred from employing the strongest weapon a union can wield—the ability to take direct action/strike to defend its members’ interests—there are many other steps it could take. Instead, we whine, importune and send the equivalent of a flaccid note of protest when management tromps on our toes.

AFSA also has little provenance over assignments, the essence of a Foreign Service career. The powers that be can arbitrarily assign (or remove) individuals from assignments, and we cannot grieve such actions. An ambassador doesn’t like you? Out you go. Someone more powerful has a “favorite” in mind for a position?

Even a director general’s decision can be reversed, without recourse.

Oversight is a joke, as well. State hasn’t had a permanent inspector general in more than four years, yet AFSA has taken no action to pressure the department or the administration to rectify the situation. Has it even issued a blistering press release deploring the signal this glaring dereliction of duty sends?

As a “directed service,” we have many of the liabilities of armed forces personnel without commensurate compensation, benefits or recognition. For instance, how forcefully has AFSA lobbied Congress to eliminate the caps on payments to Foreign Service retirees in When Actually Employed positions?

For that matter, AFSA still hasn’t succeeded in obtaining full Overseas Comparability Pay for non-Senior Foreign Service members serving overseas.

Given AFSA’s failure to fulfill its responsibilities on behalf of the Foreign Service bargaining unit, its members should be exploring the possibility of asking the American Federation of Government Employees or some other organization to represent them.

That ‘70s Show

Having been present at the creation—the vote determining that AFSA, rather than AFGFE, would become the exclusive bargaining agent for members of the U.S. Foreign Service in the Department of State and the other foreign affairs agencies—I still vividly recall the combination of arrogance and ignorance that prevailed

David T. Jones, a retired Senior FSO, is a frequent contributor to The Foreign Service Journal. He is the editor of The Reagan-Gorbachev Arms Control Breakthrough: The Treaty Eliminating Intermediate-Range (INF) Missiles (New Academia Publishing, 2012), and co-author of Uneasy Neighbo(u)rs: Canada, the USA and the Dynamics of State, Industry and Culture (Wiley, 2007).

among those voting at that time.

It was an era when the “old boy/old school tie” dominated. Diplomats were gentlemen (overwhelmingly), while most union members were industrial workers, more familiar with factory shop floors than embassies. Those endorsing the AFSA option—and I was one of them—blithely expected continuation of the historical precedent of lifetime careers leading to retirement, rather than up-or-out defenestration.

We were wrong. And AFSA’s 1970s-era paradigm needs to be rethought and fundamentally reinvented—or jettisoned.

Without saying so in picket lines or manifestos, the Foreign Service rank-and-file implicitly recognizes AFSA’s feeble effect on their professional lives. The attitude is most evident in membership and election participation.

At the time of the 2011 Governing Board elections, nearly a quarter of the Foreign Service’s 12,000-plus active-duty personnel were not AFSA members. I have heard from many who have joined AFSA that a big incentive was access to legal services to fight the vagaries of Bureau of Diplomatic Security charges—not any ideological belief in the value of unions. Another indicator of widespread apathy is the fact that only a quarter of Foreign Service retirees choose to retain their AFSA membership.

Historically, few AFSA members have ever bothered to vote in the biennial Governing Board elections (20 percent in 2007; 23 percent in 2009). For the 2011 elections, the results were even more pitiful: reportedly, just a sixth (16.7 percent) of all members voted, and only 9.1 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot for the AFSA State vice president.

One reason for such widespread voter apathy might well be the ad hominem bitterness that tainted the 2009 elec-

AFSA’s 1970s-era paradigm needs to be rethought and fundamentally reinvented—or jettisoned.

tions. Responding to crossfire charges of procedural violations, the Department of Labor—which certifies the results of all union elections—took a more hands-on role in the 2011 elections.

It would certainly seem that most AFSA members don’t regard the elections as personally meaningful. Think about that for a moment. Foreign Service personnel are among the most politically aware, intellectually engaged citizens; it’s reasonable to assume that something close to 90 percent of them voted in the 2012 presidential election. Yet they can’t be bothered to take part in an AFSA election.

A “union” with such a pitiful participation rate risks being regarded as a paper tiger by State Department management. That perception, in turn, renders AFSA ineffectual in advocating its members’ interests, which sets up a vicious cycle.

Revamping AFSA’s Election Process

As this year’s elections proceed, AFSA needs to deliver on its commitments to engage AFSA members and attract new support. That point should be self-evident, but apparently is not.

Toward that end, here are some specific reforms it needs to adopt as soon as possible. (Most of them apply just as much to all other AFSA activities and operations, not just biennial Governing Board elections.)

Campaign Fatigue. The election cycle is much too long. Currently, the initial call for nominations goes out to the membership in November during even-numbered years, yet the process is not completed

until the following July, with installation of the new Governing Board.

We are now in the 21st century, and the process urgently needs to be streamlined. After all, we are no longer burdened by tiny posts communicating with Washington only by monthly pouches.

I am therefore pleased to note that beginning this year, AFSA is offering secure electronic voting for Governing Board positions. (Paper ballots will still be available, as well.) That hopefully will lead to a much more reasonable timeline for the electoral process, and boost participation.

Opening Up the Process. Long-serving members of the Governing Board and AFSA’s various committees—regardless of their competence—should turn over more often. (If there are no candidates for positions, they should go empty.) There should also be a focus on greater diversity in committee appointments, particularly with regard to members from outside State.

Speaking of openness, there should also be far greater transparency in regard to announcing the agenda for the Governing Board’s monthly meetings and reporting the meeting minutes. The board should institute roll-call voting, as well.

Change at the Top. Term limits for AFSA officers open the door to much-needed generational renewal. The coterie of retirees and aged officers who have long run AFSA badly needs expansion. It should be the exception rather than the norm that Governing Board leaders are older than the U.S. president.

Yes, experience and seniority have value—but so do energy and vigor. Up-

and-out rules and time-in-class limits have created a tranche of “young retirees” for whom annuities are necessary, but not sufficient, for post-Foreign Service lives. These members are “moving on,” and AFSA needs to do more to engage their post-9/11 experience and perspective—both to benefit from their immediate operational insights and to enlist their energetic promotion of Foreign Service interests throughout the government, on Capitol Hill and elsewhere in the U.S.

Promoting Professionalism

We also need to launch a drive to redeem the term “elitism.” Far from being a dirty word, it is more vital than ever, now that the United States can no longer assume innate power will make up for the

AFSA needs to do more to engage its newer members’ experience.

shortcomings of its diplomats.

AFSA needs to endorse a “core curriculum” for prospective Foreign Service candidates; present a model oral examination (the graduate record exams should suffice for the “written”); require 3/3 competence in a world language and/or comparable competence in a “hard” language upon entry; and reinstate rigorous mid-career and Senior Seminar training, combined with regular professional recertification.

Moreover, a direct defense of professionalism—a naming of names—against

the frequent incompetence of political appointees must be a top priority. AFSA should present a list of qualified career professionals for the most prominent posts and give the equivalent of a negative American Bar Association review for nominees selected without AFSA endorsement.

There are certainly many diverse challenges facing the Foreign Service in the second decade of the 21st century. The key to addressing them will be to engage the Foreign Service community and leadership of the foreign affairs agencies with vigor and creative imagination. ■

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PAVING THE WAY FOR UNIONIZATION

A series of reforms during the 1960s transformed AFSA into an effective, energetic advocate for the career Foreign Service.

BY HARRY W. KOPP

Forty years ago, in elections held during 1972 and 1973, Foreign Service employees at the Department of State, the U.S. Information Agency and the Agency for International Development chose the American Foreign Service Association to be their sole representative in talks with management. It was a great victory, but not necessarily the one the leaders of the movement that earned it had set out to win.

The officers who took control of AFSA in 1967 had intended to use the association as a platform for reshaping the Foreign Service and its role in foreign policy. But when events offered them a different opportunity, they were quick to seize it.

The American Foreign Service Association in the late 1950s and early 1960s was a quiet place that operated out of a couple of rented rooms. Its assets in 1960 were worth less than \$200,000, including \$95,000 in a dedicated scholarship fund. AFSA was, in the judgment of one of its members, “an effete club of elderly gentlemen whose headquarters could not be located and who took care never to fight for any cause.”

Others had similarly harsh words for the state of the Foreign Service as an institution. A report prepared by President John F. Kennedy’s transition team said that the Service suffered from “professional deformations,” due to its vast increase in size and the “trauma of the Dulles-McCarthy years.”

The report went on to note that the whole Department of State exerted a “tremendous institutional inertial force,” and “even such a distinguished career group as the Foreign Service has failed to keep pace with the novel and expanding demands of a changing world.” George F. Kennan, then in private life, dismissed the senior men in the Service as “empty bundles of good manners.”

The Postwar Foreign Service

In particular, the Foreign Service was struggling to absorb new personnel. With new postwar responsibilities, the Service had grown tenfold in a single decade: from about 800 employees in 1940 to about 8,000 in 1950. In 1948, when a blue-ribbon commission recommended combining the Foreign Service and the State Department’s Civil Service corps, Secretary of State George C. Marshall said no. His successor, Dean Acheson, did likewise when he received a similar recommendation two years later from another panel.

But when Henry Wriston’s commission recommended a partial merger of Foreign and Civil Service employees in 1955, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles agreed. Over the next two years, to the dismay of many old-school officers, the Foreign Service took in about 1,500 State Department civil servants,

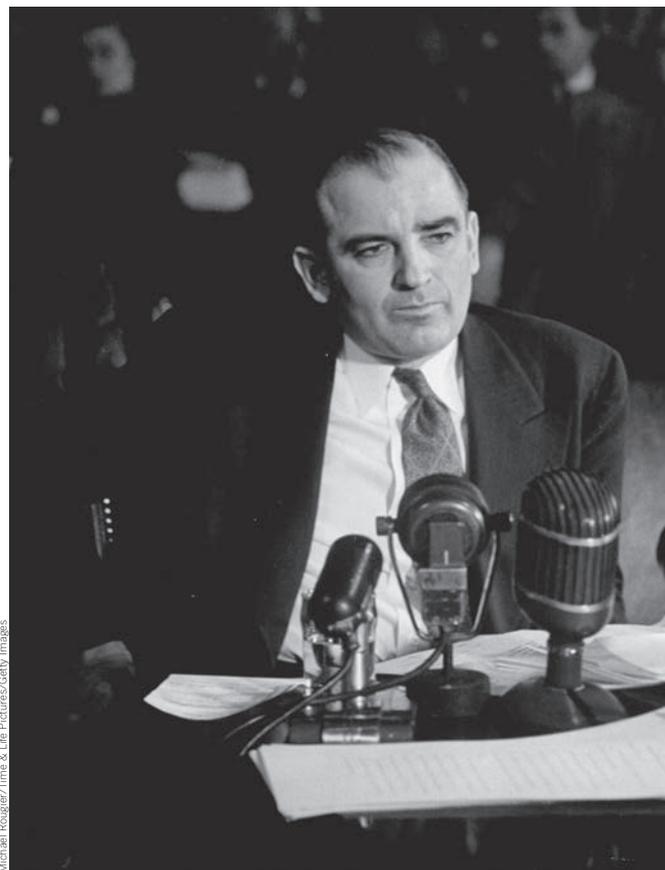
Harry W. Kopp, a former FSO, is the co-author (with the late Charles Gillespie) of Career Diplomacy: Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service (Georgetown University Press, 2008). He is now at work on a history of AFSA.

As late as the 1960s, AFSA was still widely dismissed as “an effete club of elderly gentlemen...who took care never to fight for any cause.”

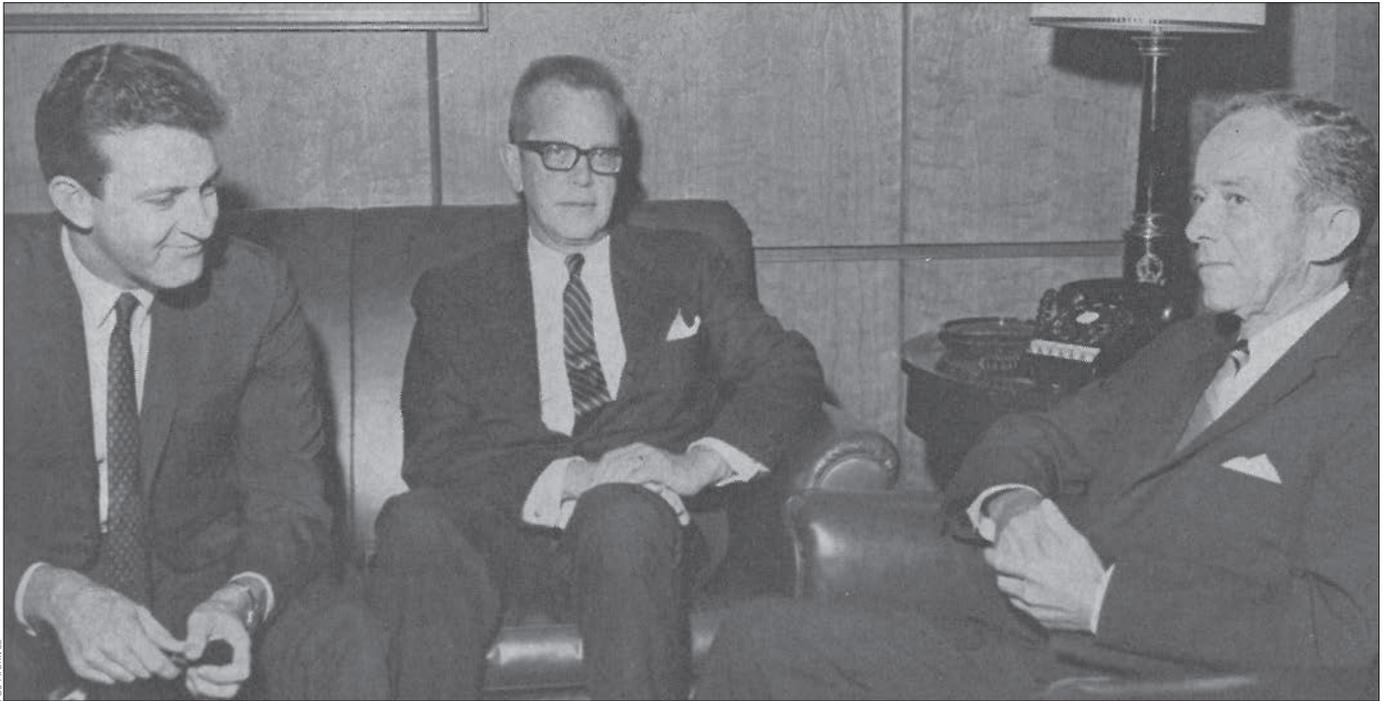
whose Washington jobs were opened to Foreign Service personnel.

This transformation of the Service from a small, collegial body to a more democratic, if bureaucratic, organization took place during a time of vicious political pressures.

In the early 1950s Senator Joseph McCarthy, R-Wis., and his allies accused members of the Foreign Service of pro-communist sympathies; the leadership of the department, also under attack, did not defend its personnel, many of whom saw their careers destroyed. Even after McCarthy’s fall in 1954, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles demanded “positive loyalty” that punished candor and rewarded conformity.



Above: In the early 1950s Senator Joseph McCarthy, R-Wis., accused members of the Foreign Service of pro-communist sympathies. On p. 19: AFSA members and staff depart for a day of lobbying on Capitol Hill.



AFSA President Ambassador Foy Kohler, at right, confers with outgoing Board Chairman David H. McKillop, center, and new Board Chairman Lannon Walker, left, in September 1967. A 31-year-old FSO-5, Mr. Walker was “the youngest and least senior chairman of the AFSA board within living memory,” the *Journal* reported at the time. Walker led the “Group of 18” slate put together by the “Young Turks” to run for AFSA’s electoral college in the 1967 election, pledging to choose AFSA’s new board from among themselves.

For these and other reasons, by 1960 many Foreign Service officers were dissatisfied with the structure, management and culture of the Service. The Kennedy transition team noted growing frustration among “young, imaginative, all too often circumscribed” FSOs. These new officers began to use their social organization, the Junior Foreign Service Officers Club, to agitate for institutional change.

A Lost Opportunity

This widespread dissatisfaction with, and within, the Service offered an opportunity that AFSA failed to seize. Pres. Kennedy’s 1962 executive order on labor-management relations touched off a surge in membership in public-employee unions—but not in the Foreign Service.

Well before that opening presented itself, Robert McClintock, chairman of the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board, had argued in a 1958 memorandum to AFSA’s board of directors that the association should provide leadership to its members and assert itself more vigorously on their behalf with the department, Congress and the public.

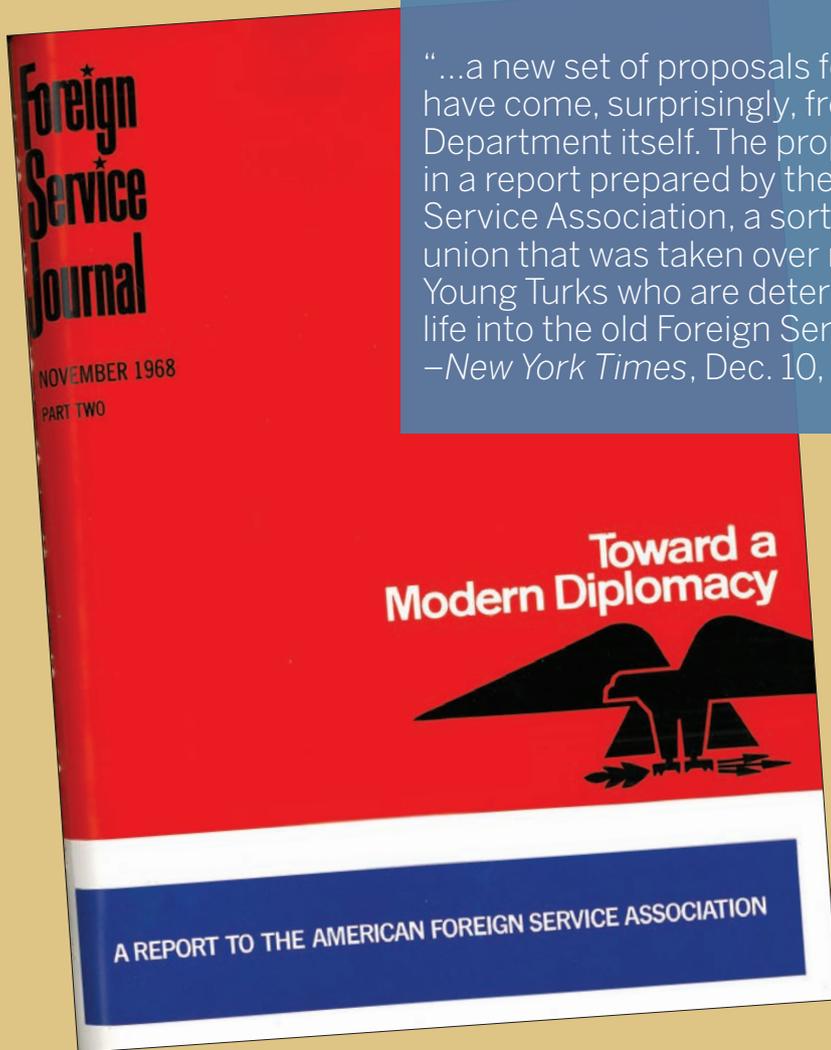
When the chairman of the 1957-1958 AFSA Board of Directors, E. Allan Lightner Jr., left office in October 1958, he

reported that the board had “only partially come to grips” with the questions raised in McClintock’s memo. Lightner had come into office, he said, “raising soul-searching questions having to do with the fundamental nature of the association and its potentialities for better serving its membership,” and he left the board unsatisfied.

When board chairman Hugh Appling gave his valedictory report in 1962, he noted that the board had discussed “the propriety and desirability of...taking an interest in pending legislation affecting the Foreign Service.” But though it appointed an ad hoc committee to examine the issue, the board took no further action.

AFSA’s hesitation did not pass unnoticed. Foreign Service officer Jack Armitage wrote to the *Journal* in 1962: “It is a fact known to all that there is little, if any, deeply felt association with AFSA on the part of the membership. Large numbers [of members of the Service] do not even belong. ...I would submit that AFSA has no meaningful concept of what the Foreign Service should be and of what it—the association—should do to develop, sustain and maintain it.”

Armitage was right about membership. In 1961, AFSA had fewer than 3,600 active members, out of an eligible pool about



“...a new set of proposals for reform which have come, surprisingly, from within the State Department itself. The proposals are contained in a report prepared by the American Foreign Service Association, a sort of diplomatic trade union that was taken over recently by a band of Young Turks who are determined to breathe new life into the old Foreign Service.”
 –*New York Times*, Dec. 10, 1969.

“The next President and his key advisers should read a short exercise in self-criticism by some Young Turks of the American Foreign Service Association.” –*Evening Star*, Oct. 22, 1969.

“...to reorganize the State Department’s organizational structure so that, in their view, State can recapture a leadership in conducting the nation’s foreign affairs that it has gradually lost over the past 20 years.”
 –*National Observer*, Oct. 21, 1969.

twice that size. He was also right about its reticence and caution. AFSA President Lucius Battle said in September 1963 that “AFSA ‘must speak up’ on issues affecting the welfare of the Foreign Service, though it should be careful to...avoid public differences with those in authority.”

Signs of Life

As the decade grew more turbulent, AFSA became more active. In 1964, the board established a formal liaison with the noisier, more aggressive Junior Foreign Service Officers Club and set up a Committee on Career Principles to examine “the relationship of current policy and administration to the strengthening of the Foreign Service as an instrument of foreign policy [emphasis in original].” A planning committee established in 1966 urged AFSA to solicit contributions from donors, act as ombudsman for members’ grievances, and explore affiliation with the American Federation of Govern-

ment Employees and the National Federation of Professional Organizations.

In 1967, when AFSA Vice President Outerbridge Horsey appeared before a House subcommittee to support an administration proposal to raise all federal salaries by 4.5 percent, it was, according to AFSA Board Chairman Dave McKillop, “the first time the association has testified on the Hill.”

At the same time, however, AFSA in the early 1960s was poorly structured to challenge management or to engage in sustained effort of any kind. Until 1965, officers and board members served only one-year terms, and until 1969, they were elected indirectly by a college of 18 officers and staff chosen by the active membership.

This body by tradition chose as the association’s president a high-ranking officer. Between 1961 and 1966, the presidents of AFSA included two serving under secretaries (Livingston Merchant and U. Alexis Johnson), two serving assistant secretaries

(Lucius Battle and Douglas MacArthur II), and one career ambassador (Chip Bohlen).

These were not men with the time, independence or (for the most part) inclination to confront the department's management or the administration on workplace issues. The burden of leadership therefore fell to the chairman of the board of directors, who, of course, had a full-time job of his own in the department.

The Rise of the Young Turks

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the movement that transformed AFSA began outside the organization. It was customary at that time for junior officers to spend their first two tours overseas and then take an orientation course at the Foreign Service Institute before a Washington assignment. When Lannon Walker returned from consecutive tours in North Africa and took that course in 1966, he discovered that concerns about the Service he'd thought were unique to his own experience were widely shared among his colleagues.

He responded by organizing a small group of like-minded officers to look at two connected sets of issues that were not so very different from those identified by Pres. Kennedy's transition team: a State Department unable to provide the inter-agency leadership in foreign affairs that the president expected of it, and a Foreign Service unable to break away from old rigidities in policy formulation and personnel management.

The Lyndon B. Johnson administration had already addressed State Department leadership in a National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM 341, dated March 2, 1966) that sought to replicate in Washington the "country team" approach used in American embassies around the world, with the Secretary of State or his designee taking the role played by the ambassador abroad. The officers' group supported this approach. The Service, they wrote in an internal memo, had seen a "steady erosion of [its] influence in the conduct of foreign affairs" leaving, in the absence of reform, "considerable doubt as to the validity of the concept of a career Foreign Service."

The officers were forward-looking reformers (the *Foreign Service Journal* called them "positivists"). But they were also looking back to a Golden Age that never was. The unreal-

The reformers saw AFSA's odd election system as a way to demonstrate the broad support they believed their ideas had across the career Service.

ized model in the Foreign Service Act of 1946, which provided for a single career Service working for all foreign affairs agencies and administered by a director general independent of the Department of State, seemed to them nearly ideal. Such a structure, they

wrote in an internal memorandum, would allow the Foreign Service to perform its "proper role...not the conduct of foreign affairs, but rather their direction"—meaning their management and coordination.

The reformers also called for "openness," a word that in the language of the day had several meanings: respect for candor and dissent; encouragement of initiative; close and informal relations between members of the Foreign Service and members and staff of Congress; interaction with academic



CSJ Archives

The Foreign Service Club in the new AFSA building at 2101 E Street NW opened on March 24, 1969. The main dining room seated 72 and the upstairs lounge accommodated 25.

specialists, journalists and the general public; and personnel exchanges with other agencies.

The reformers, who came to be known as the Young Turks, drew heavily on earlier studies (among them: the Hoover Commission Report of 1948, the Rowe-Ramspeck-de Courcy Report of 1951, the Jackson Subcommittee Report of 1960, and the Herter Committee report of 1962) and on management theories then prevalent in large industrial and financial companies. Many of the reformers' ideas had found expression in a bill sponsored by Representative Wayne Hays, D-Ohio, a member of

The “Young Turks” drew heavily on earlier studies and management theories then prevalent in large industrial and financial companies.

the House Foreign Affairs Committee. This bill was the subject of lengthy hearings, but it never reached the floor of the House.

The Write-In Campaign

What was novel about the reformers' approach was the way they pressed their case. They saw AFSA's odd election system as a way to demonstrate the broad support they believed their ideas had across the career Service.

By this time Lannon Walker had been assigned to the department's executive secretariat, a position that allowed him to



Idar Rimestad

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

AFSA President Foy Kohler, who was State's deputy under secretary for political affairs, thought that the election of the reformers would bring the association the “independence and vigor” and “combative concern” that would cause agencies to want to consult before making major changes in administrative or personnel policies. But Kohler's seventh-floor counterpart, Deputy Under Secretary for Administration Idar Rimestad, saw things quite differently.

Soon after becoming AFSA board chairman in 1967, Lannon Walker recalled in a recent interview, he was summoned: “I got word that I'm con- voked by Idar Rimestad. A rough-tongued guy. I went. He had every execu- tive officer in the building there. And he looked at me and said, just who the hell—he didn't say hell, actually, he said f***—do you think you are? You don't represent anybody, and you're not going to get anything.”

Idar Rimestad, a career officer, gave a similar account in a 1990 interview. “I took Lannon Walker aside and said, ‘You see that certificate on the wall, signed by the president? I think you will see my name on the top. Where in that certificate does it say that I am to abdicate my responsibilities to the Foreign Service Association? It doesn't, and I don't intend to do it!’ So AFSA and I had an adversarial relationship; very much so. I think they were wrong.”

In reply to Rimestad's challenge, Walker and the newly elected Young Turks called an open forum meeting that packed the Dean Acheson Audi- torium and demonstrated that AFSA had the backing of its members. The change of administration in 1969 led to the replacement of Idar Rimestad by William Macomber, who was sympathetic to the reform agenda. He engaged AFSA fully in the shaping of management policy, well before the associa- tion's certification as a union in 1973.



The “Bray Board,” headed by Lannon Walker’s fellow reformer, Charles W. Bray III, steered AFSA from January through December of 1970. The board participated in *Toward A Modern Diplomacy* and prepared the way for AFSA’s later victories in representation elections and negotiations with management. Pictured here, from left to right, are: George B. Lambrakis, Alan Carter, Erland Heginbotham, Barbara Good, Richard T. Davies III, Bray, William G. Bradford, Princeton Lyman, William Harrop and Robert Nevitt.

establish connections throughout State. He organized a group of 18 officers (staff, as specialists then were called, were not included) at junior, middle and senior grades from State, USIA, and USAID to run as a slate for AFSA’s electoral college, pledging to choose AFSA’s board from among themselves.

“I got the AFSA bylaws,” Walker said in a recent interview, “and saw there was provision for a write-in ballot.” Among us, “we knew at least one person in nearly every mission we had,” which enhanced the prospects for success of a write-in campaign. Walker’s fellow reformer, Charles Bray, had become staff assistant to Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Foy Kohler, then serving as AFSA’s president. Bray helped to secure Kohler’s support for the effort and his pledge to stay on as president if the reformers were successful.

As the reformers moved from internal debate to political action, their objectives became more concrete and more sharply focused on the interests of AFSA members. Their campaign platform made no reference to the Foreign Service Act of 1946 or the desirability of an independent Foreign Service. It instead called for defending the professional interests of AFSA’s members, and advancing their personal well-being.

AFSA, the group’s platform declared, “can and should expect to be heard” on personnel and administrative policies. Members “should be able to bring their professional grievances and problems to the association” and receive “prompt and energetic assistance.” Employees of USAID and USIA “can

and should expect equal privileges and representation” with employees of State.

About 200 candidates were listed on the ballot; another 46, including eight of Walker’s Group of 18, competed for write-in votes. When the balloting ended on Sept. 10, 1967, the entire Group of 18 had won election; even the least-supported among them had been named on 507 of the 1,782 ballots cast. The group met as the electoral college on Sept. 18 and named Lannon Walker, then an FS-5 (equivalent to today’s FS-3), chairman of the board. Control of AFSA thereby passed to the reformers.

Building Momentum for Change

Over the next two years, AFSA pushed hard on all fronts: for sweeping reform of the Foreign Service, notably with publication of the study *Toward a Modern Diplomacy* in 1968; for recognition and enhancement of the Service’s professional standing, with greater openness and protection for constructive dissent from administration policy; for more generous and equitable policies on allowances and leave, and more transparent policies on assignments and promotions; and for changes in AFSA’s bylaws to democratize the organization, improve its governance and strengthen its finances.

The new board also bought the building at 2101 E Street NW, putting to rest the old jab that AFSA’s headquarters could not be located.

The drive to overhaul the government's entire foreign-policy machinery, which had given impetus to the reform movement, energized scores of officers—58 individuals, all volun-

teers, are listed as contributors to *Toward a Modern Diplomacy*, which incorporated the work of the Committee on Career Principles. But it ultimately proved unproductive. The association had far greater success with professional and workplace issues, especially after the change of administration in 1969 brought new people and fresh thinking to the department's management (see box, p. 24).

By the end of 1969, the Nixon administration had issued a new executive order on labor-management relations, and the AFSA board had declared that bread-and-butter issues are the "bedrock of AFSA's concerns." Soon thereafter, the board resolved to seek recognition as the labor organization for

As the Sixties grew more turbulent, AFSA became more active.

the Foreign Service in all foreign affairs agencies. AFSA by then had a record to run on: the association had already successfully consulted with management on transfer allow-

ances, kindergarten allowances, temporary housing, travel for dependent college students, and other issues.

These bread-and-butter issues seem a long way from the fundamental changes in the government's foreign affairs structure that were the reformers' original goal. But it was the accumulation of successful interventions with management, not the construction of a grand design for policymaking, that brought AFSA credibility with Foreign Service employees and victories in representation elections in State, USIA and USAID. These victories allowed the association to become what the reformers wanted it to be: the voice of the career Foreign Service. ■

Foreign Affairs Day

May 3, 2013

The Annual Homecoming for Foreign Service and State Department Civil Services Retirees

There will be a luncheon at 1 p.m. in the Benjamin Franklin Room. Reservations are first-come, first-serve. \$50 per person.

In the afternoon, there will be a reception to honor AFSA Scholarship winners at AFSA headquarters at 21st and E Street.

To RSVP, please e-mail foreignaffairsday@state.gov with your full name, retirement date, street address, e-mail address and phone number.



Secretary of State John F. Kerry with the President of Liberia, H.E. Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

PAST AFSA PRESIDENTS SPEAK OUT THE STATE OF THE UNION

Editor's Note: We invited past presidents of the American Foreign Service Association to reflect on AFSA's 40th anniversary as a union. Thanks to all who responded.

Never Again

By Thomas D. Boyatt

When I was invited to contribute a few thoughts to this issue on the 40th anniversary of AFSA's certification as exclusive employee representative at State and the other foreign affairs agencies, my first reaction was, "We just did that."

Actually, we did that 10 years ago, when we celebrated the 30th anniversary of our election victories. *The Foreign Service Journal's* coverage of that milestone in its June 2003 issue describes with verve, accuracy, color and context what really happened to AFSA and the Foreign Service during that tumultuous decade (1970-1980). The articles, all available on AFSA's Web site at www.afsa.org/FSJ/0603/index.html, are well worth a (re)read. Veterans of that era will enjoy the opportunity to relive and reflect on those heady days, while more recent FSOs will gain an appreciation of where we are today and how we got here.

“Thanks to the efforts of about 20 AFSA presidents and Governing Boards over the past four decades, the organization today has enormous capacity.”

—Retired Ambassador Thomas D. Boyatt (AFSA President, 1975)

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight one dimension of that era which did not emerge fully in the earlier coverage, but ties together past, present and future. I call it: “Never Again.”

Don’t Tread on Us

It’s worth keeping in mind that virtually all of us “Young Turks” who led the struggle to reform the Foreign Service during the 1960s and 1970s had been junior officers, or college students contemplating a diplomatic career, during the 1950s. That decade began with the destruction of the lives and careers of the “China hands,” and continued with the rampage of Senator Joseph McCarthy, R-Wis., against the State Department and the Foreign Service.

We’d also witnessed the damage done to the careers of excellent officers by the efficiency reports of politically appointed ambassadors. It seemed that the State Department and Foreign Service were convenient punching bags for whoever came along with a complaint.

We were committed to changing those terms of reference. Experience had proved that the concept of a benign political leadership of the State Department protecting career officers was a myth, so we were determined to make AFSA so strong that we could protect ourselves without reliance on others.

My wife, Maxine, captured our sentiments when she made me a needlepoint battle flag. It depicted a coiled snake ready to strike, with the letters AFSA on its coils. Below was a legend stating, “Don’t Tread On Me.”



Ever since the 1970s, AFSA has been ready to fight for the Service. Thanks to the efforts of about 20 AFSA presidents and Governing Boards over the past four decades, the organization today has enormous capacity to fight any McCarthyist effort. It has millions of dollars in an operational reserve and a strong balance sheet on which to borrow even more if necessary; well-developed mechanisms for reaching out to the media, Congress and the public at large; and more than 16,000 dues-paying members willing to fight, if necessary, to vouchsafe AFSA’s power.

So I pity any future McCarthy who goes after our Service. The most he or she could hope for would be a bloody political and/or legal standoff. The more likely outcome would be the demagogue’s defeat.

“Never Again” is not an idle boast. We should think about that, as well, as we celebrate our 40th anniversary—and look ahead.



Ambassador Boyatt testifying on behalf of AFSA on Capitol Hill in 2007.

Thomas D. Boyatt, an FSO from 1959 until 1985, served as ambassador to Colombia and to Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and chargé d'affaires in Chile, among many other postings. Currently the treasurer of AFSA’s political action committee, AFSA-PAC, Ambassador Boyatt was AFSA’s president in 1975, and has also served as its State vice president, treasurer and as a retiree representative. He is currently

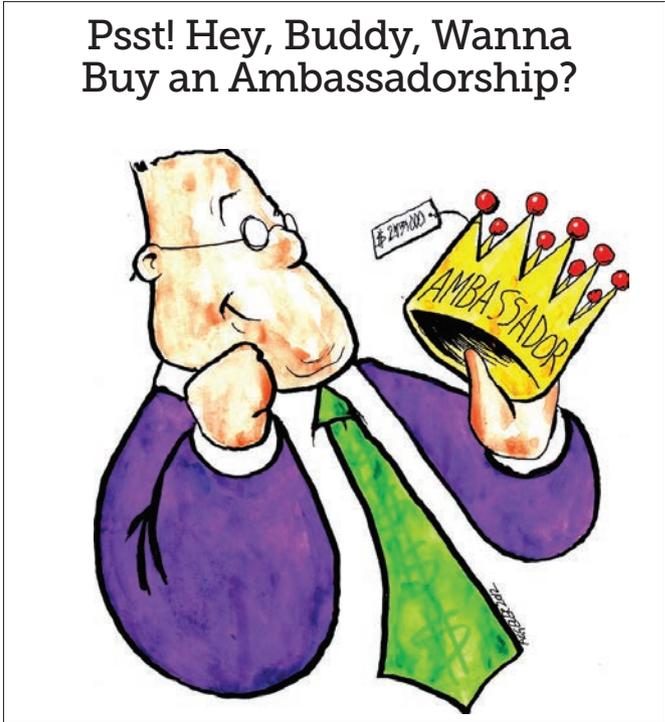
president of the Foreign Affairs Council, chairs the Academy of American Diplomacy’s “Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future” project, and lectures, teaches and consults.

Fight the Good Fight

By Ted Wilkinson

A FSA's becoming a union 40 years ago reinforced one of the Governing Board's primary duties: maximizing the professionalism of the American diplomatic service. A large part of that effort is the constant struggle to keep chief-of-mission and agency leadership positions in the hands of career Foreign Service officers. As current AFSA President Susan Johnson and others have documented, there is an accelerating trend away from assigning career Foreign Service officers to top-tier State Department jobs—even as the number of such positions proliferates.

The job of defending the Foreign Service against non-career incursions should be a lot easier than it is. After all, the legislative and executive branches of our government are already on our side, at least in principle. Congress bestowed on us a benign governing statute, the Foreign Service Act of 1980, which states



“AFSA should continue to fight the good fight for the appointment of truly qualified individuals to key positions, both overseas and in Washington itself. After all, Congress itself set that standard in the Foreign Service Act of 1980.”

—Ted Wilkinson (AFSA President, 1989-1991)

that “positions as chief of mission should normally be accorded to career members of the Service,” and “contributions to political campaigns should not be a factor in the appointment.” In response to questions during his campaign about awarding ambassadorships to donors, President Barack Obama sounded as though he had actually read the statute and agreed with it.

Alas, the president's first term proved that little has changed. Nor is there any reason to hope for significant improvement during his second.

The dreary rollout of donor nominations that followed Pres. Obama's inauguration four years ago was all too reminiscent of President George H.W. Bush's first two years, when I served as AFSA president. Some of us had hoped that Bush's own diplomatic experience and military service would lead him to place a premium on professionalism. Sadly, an inept White House appointments staff shuffled donor rolodexes instead, sending a stream of scarcely vetted nominations to Capitol Hill.

Ignoring the 1980 statute's provision that “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 the nominee,” the Bush 41 White House staff made the mistake of sending identical boilerplate nominations for the ambassadors to Australia and Spain. Senator Paul Sarbanes, D-Md., picked up on this, and AFSA went to court to have all the nominations made public. That release revealed just how careless and cavalier the nomination process had become; for instance, the nominee for Guatemala was expected to be a fine ambassador to Venezuela.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee at least debated some of the nominees' qualifications, and split on party lines in reporting them to the Senate floor. But in the end the Democratic opposition abandoned principle to go along with “the system,” and the candidates were approved by large majorities. Only one, a New York donor with more social than professional qualifications, fell by the wayside—and only because she

imprudently had the residence measured for curtains before her candidacy was voted on.

Money Talks

Why is it so hard to abandon a practice that no one really likes? In an excellent Speaking Out column in the November 2012 *Foreign Service Journal* (“Psst! Hey, Buddy, Wanna Buy an Ambassadorship?”), retired Ambassador Dennis Jett points to the geometric growth of presidential campaign costs, which has driven out all thought of anyone other than donors for the “plum” chief of mission posts (and some others). As former President Jimmy Carter lamented recently, it wasn’t the 2010 *Citizens United* decision by the Supreme Court that first opened the floodgates to astronomical sums of campaign money, but rather the candidates’ own decisions (including Obama’s) not to use the public financing available to them, because it came with a ceiling on campaign spending. Now, if *The New York Times* and other sources are to be believed, the White House is sorting through the list of 2012 donor bundlers to carry out the unenviable task of fitting more round pegs into square holes overseas.

Maybe we should be happy that new chiefs of mission with deep pockets are going to the posts with the heaviest representational expenses in their host countries. Or maybe we can console ourselves with the thought that who heads our embassies may be less important in a world of instant communications.

Then again, nothing casts doubt on the importance of an embassy like sending a chief of mission whose chief qualification is his or her checkbook. Such appointments tend to suggest that the host country does not really matter in the eyes of the U.S. administration. After all, dangerous key posts in crisis zones are still reserved for career officers.

The history of donor appointments over the past 50 years is replete with embarrassments; Amb. Jett’s article points out two among President Obama’s first-term appointees. As long as the practice continues, there are sure to be more.

Regrettably, until the embarrassments prove so as to reach a tipping point, AFSA’s leadership may be destined to go on crying in the wilderness of American politics. Even so, AFSA should continue to fight the good fight for the appointment of truly qualified individuals to key positions, both overseas and in Washington itself.

After all, Congress itself set that standard in the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

Ted Wilkinson was AFSA president from 1989 to 1991, and chaired the FSJ Editorial Board from 2005 to 2011.

Reach Out to Capitol Hill

By Dan Geisler

Among the many actions that AFSA undertakes in its role as a federal labor union, one that I find to be of particular importance, and recommend it continue to emphasize, is its advocacy work on personnel and professional issues on Capitol Hill.

During my term as AFSA president (1997-1999), State Department staff did not track legislation affecting federal workers. That was considered to be the job of the Office of Personnel Management. Only AFSA monitored and influenced legislation on such matters as the retirement system and health benefits.

Was that important? Absolutely! The Foreign Service is governed by different statutes than the Civil Service, and if new legislation does not incorporate changes into our governing statutes, we lose benefits.

“The 40-year mark is a golden opportunity to expand AFSA’s profile on the Hill by working to organize formal House and Senate caucuses of legislators who are interested in supporting American diplomats.”

—Dan Geisler (AFSA President, 1997-1999)

AFSA met regularly with professional staff from both sides of the aisles of both chambers, often at their request, to voice our concerns about the department’s management, personnel planning and budgeting. We were invited to testify before House and Senate committees considering federal worker legislation, and furnished information Foggy Bottom couldn’t, or wouldn’t, provide.

At one point, the chief of staff of Senator Jesse Helms, R-N.C., who was no friend of the Foreign Service, solicited AFSA’s input on a bill the senator planned to introduce to “strengthen” the Foreign Service promotion system—by instituting a process of mandatory selection out of a certain percentage of officers and specialists every year. Sharon Papp, our general counsel, pointed out numerous, serious flaws in the draft, including provisions that conflicted with existing federal civil rights laws.

FSJ Photo Archives and Josh Dorman



AFSA has a lively tradition of advocacy on behalf of the Foreign Service on Capitol Hill. Here is a sampling of recent activity. Top left: AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston, AFSA USAID VP Francisco Zamora and former AFSA Presidents John Naland and Dennis Hays with Sen. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla., in 2008. Top right: American Academy of Diplomacy President Ambassador Ron Neumann and AFSA President Susan Johnson testify on Foreign Service staffing in the Senate on March 8, 2011. Second row left: USAID VP Francisco Zamora, Ian Houston, former AFSA President F.A. “Tex” Harris, former AFSA President Tom Boyatt and former AFSA State VP and board member Willard De Pree with Senator Richard Lugar, R-Ind., recipient of AFSA’s Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy in 2007. Second row right: Ian Houston, Rep. Christopher Van Hollen, D-Md., and former AFSA President Tony Holmes. Bottom left: John Naland and Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Ill. (now a senator), in 2007. Bottom right upper: Former AFSA State VP Steve Kashkett testifies in Congress on PTSD in June 2007. Bottom right lower: Jim Kolbe, former representative from Arizona and now adviser on foreign policy to the German Marshall Fund of the United States, with AFSA President Susan Johnson and Ian Houston in 2012.



When the bill was called up, AFSA enlisted Senator Paul Sarbanes, D-Md., to speak against it on the floor, using points AFSA provided, in detailed, persuasive terms. That intervention effectively killed the Helms initiative.

AFSA was also the voice of the Foreign Service community on the Hill in the wake of the August 1998 bombing of our missions in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. We were asked to testify alongside Admiral William Crowe, chair of the Accountability Review Board formed after that tragedy, and used that forum to point out how the department’s management policies had

exacerbated the losses we suffered—much to the dismay of the senior State Department officials who were sitting behind us waiting to testify.

A Foreign Service Caucus

The 40-year mark is a golden opportunity to expand AFSA’s profile on the Hill. One concrete step would be to persuade sympathetic representatives and senators from both parties to organize formal House and Senate caucuses of legislators who are interested in supporting American diplomats, and then use them to advance

List of AFSA Presidents (and Chairmen) from 1960 to the Present

Year(s) in Office	Name	Title	Year(s) in Office	Name	Title
2009-present	Susan R. Johnson	President	1973-1974	David H. McKillop	President
2007-2009	John K. Naland	President		William C. Harrop	Chairman
2005-2007	J. Anthony Holmes	President	1972	Theodore L. Eliot Jr.	President
2003-2005	John W. Limbert	President		William Harrop	Chairman
2001-2003	John K. Naland	President	1971	Theodore L. Eliot Jr.	President
1999-2001	Marshall Adair	President		Charles W. Bray III	Chairman
1997-1999	Daniel F. Geisler	President	1968-1970	Philip Habib	President
1997	Alphonse F. La Porta	President		Lannon Walker	Chairman
1993-1997	F.A. "Tex" Harris	President	1967	Douglas MacArthur II	President
1992-1993	William A. Kirby Jr.	President		David H. McKillop	Chairman
1991-1992	Hume Horan	President	1966	U. Alexis Johnson	President
1989-1991	Theodore Wilkinson	President		John H. Stutesman Jr.	Chairman
June 1987-1989	Perry Shankle	President	1965	Samuel D. Berger	President
May-June 1987	Frank Young	President		W.T.M. Beale	Chairman
July 1985-May 1987	Gerald Lamberty	President	1964	U. Alexis Johnson	President
July 1985	Robert Keeley	President		Taylor G. Belcher	Chairman
1982-July 1985	Dennis K. Hays	President	1963	Lucius D. Battle	President
July 1981-1982	Charles S. Whitehouse	President		Elbert G. Matthews	Chairman
May-July 1981	Antheas de Rouville	President	1962	Charles E. Bohlen	President
1980-May 1981	Kenneth Bleakley	President		William Boswell	Chairman
1978-1979	Lars Hyde	President	1961	Livingston T. Merchant	President
1977	Patricia Woodring	President		William L. Blue	Chairman
1976	John D. Hemenway	President	1960	G. Frederick Reinhart	President
1975	Thomas D. Boyatt	President		Thomas S. Estes	Chairman

Source: www.afsa.org/list_of_afsa_presidents.aspx

our legislative agenda and increase our bargaining leverage with management.

Forming a congressional caucus requires two elements: a lead legislator and a compelling, bipartisan issue. For a leader, try Representative Chris Van Hollen, D-Md. The son of a Foreign Service officer and influential in his party, he has a strong constituent interest in the Foreign Service, given the number of FS families in Montgomery County, Md. (His predecessor, Connie Morella, noted that demographic in a sidebar conversation when I testified before a committee on which she served.)

Ask Rep. Van Hollen to assign a staff member to be the caucus coordinator and to work with AFSA to recruit at least 10 other members, five from each side of the aisle. Then expand the circle from there, based on member constituent and policy interests. Next, ask him to help recruit a Senate counterpart with whom he would be comfortable.

The compelling issue? The safety of Foreign Service officers, specialists and their families serving abroad.

In the wake of the 1998 attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam,

AFSA deplored the cycle of attention and neglect that characterized the State Department's approach to security, a cycle traceable from Beirut in 1983 to Benghazi in 2012. Foreign Service employees and their families have seen security consistently take a back seat to policy, as soon as the memory of the most recent tragedy begins to fade.

The Benghazi Accountability Review Board report stated: "One overall conclusion in this report is that Congress must do its part to meet this challenge and provide necessary resources to the State Department to address security risks and meet mission imperatives." From decades of experience, AFSA can state with confidence that Congress will not do this spontaneously, and the executive branch will not insist that it be done.

To remedy this, AFSA should enlist a caucus of senators and representatives willing to make a sustained commitment to the safety of our people. That's what unions do.

Dan Geisler, president of AFSA from 1997 to 1999, is vice president of Eisenhower Fellowships.

AFSA: Advocate for the Foreign Service

By John K. Naland

Unless you have served on the AFSA Governing Board, you may not fully appreciate the extent to which AFSA's officers and professional staff members work behind the scenes to advocate for the interests of the Foreign Service.

Sometimes agency management officials propose major changes to personnel policies to address a real or perceived problem. When such a proposal would harm the long-term health of the Foreign Service, AFSA steps in to advocate against short-sighted measures.

For instance, it became clear by 2001 that the cumulative effect of hiring below attrition during the mid-1990s was massive mid-level staffing gaps. State management responded by proposing to discontinue promotion boards for generalist FS-4s, instead automatically promoting them all after two years in grade.

AFSA pointed out that there would inevitably be at least some officers who had not demonstrated their readiness for increased responsibilities, so promoting such individuals would undermine the up-or-out system on which the Foreign

Service is based. State reconsidered and set the generalist FS-4 to FS-3 promotion rate that year at 90 percent instead of 100 percent.

That same year, after Secretary of State Colin Powell said that all Foreign Service members should take leadership and management training prior to promotion, State proposed to AFSA that the promotion precepts be revised to allow a relatively long phase-in of the new requirement. We opposed the delay in implementation, noting the likelihood that the employees who needed such training the most would put off taking it unless motivated by a looming deadline. State agreed to accelerate the phase-in.

In both these examples, please note that AFSA—although a union—temporarily disadvantaged a few of its members in order to advance the long-term interests of the profession.

Throughout AFSA's existence as a union, its quiet, behind-the-scenes advocacy has also been active on Capitol Hill. Well-known examples include lobbying to narrow the overseas pay gap and to increase funding for Foreign Service staffing embassy security. Another, now almost forgotten, example is



Employees from the foreign affairs agencies joined AFSA in a "Rally to Serve America" in April 2011.

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"As we look ahead to the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Foreign Service by the Rogers Act of 1924, it is fair to ask whether our personnel system is optimally configured for diplomacy in the 21st century."

—John K. Naland (AFSA President, 2001-2003 and 2007-2009)

AFSA's 2003 victory in securing an exemption for the Foreign Service from a new tax on the sale of a primary residence.

Congress had earlier changed the law to excuse most home sellers from paying capital gains tax—as long as they had lived in the house for two of the five most recent years. That, of course, disadvantaged Foreign Service members who serve overseas.

After State declined to add the issue to its legislative agenda, AFSA took it on. Working with lobbying groups for the military (which was similarly affected), AFSA succeeded in getting the tax code amended. As a result, a decade later many Foreign Service members continue to save tens of thousands of dollars when selling their houses.

AFSA's victories on issues such as the overseas pay gap and capital gains taxes obviously provided pocketbook benefits to individual members. But they also protected the long-term health of the Foreign Service as a whole, by removing potential disincentives to overseas service.

Thus, AFSA's long history of advocating for the interests of the Foreign Service is not the record of a stereotypical union defending its turf, but rather the mark of a professional association seeking to strengthen American diplomacy.

AFSA must continue to play this role in the future. As we look ahead to the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Foreign Service by the Rogers Act of 1924, it is fair to ask whether our personnel system (last updated during the Carter presidency) is optimally configured for diplomacy in the 21st century.

As it did a generation ago, in contributing to the drafting of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, it would be wiser for AFSA to take the lead in reform efforts than to leave it to others—well-intentioned or not—to chart the future of our profession. ■

John K. Naland was AFSA president from 2001 to 2003 and from 2007 to 2009. He is currently director of the Office of Retirement at the Department of State.

SOS for DOS, 13 YEARS LATER

Back in 2000, a group of FSOs led efforts to publicize and elevate the need for change at State. Is it time for another grassroots campaign?

BY TED STRICKLER

In early August 2000, a handful of State Department employees from both the Civil Service and the Foreign Service met for lunch at the now defunct Les Halles restaurant on Pennsylvania Avenue. The animated conversation during the noon hour had little to do with the food, but rather focused on the group's concerns about the diminished role and capacity of the State Department and the urgent need for wide-ranging reforms. Some of us were familiar with a 2000 Senior Seminar research paper, "Developing Diplomats for 2010," which provided useful background for our discussions.

The group was dismayed over the impact of budget cuts on departmental operations at home and abroad, and frustrated in dealing with the department's structural rigidities. While the rest of the world was rushing to embrace Internet-based computer technology, for instance, State continued to limp along with outdated Wang equipment. Its internal procedures were so clogged that it took two years to implement a reform as simple as printing diplomatic notes on



letter-sized, rather than legal-sized, paper.

Throughout the 1990s, Foggy Bottom had tried to cope with reduced funding by hiring at just 75 percent of Foreign Service officer attrition, 50 percent of FS specialist attrition and 50 percent of Civil Service attrition. As a result, vacant positions and long staffing gaps became the norm at most embassies and consulates. And as the August 1998 terrorist attacks on our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam had shown, our buildings were not safe places from which to conduct the nation's diplomatic business.

We adjourned from lunch that day with a two-part resolve. First, we would reach out to our State Department colleagues and seek their personal accounts of the impact of the financial and management shortcomings on departmental operations at home and abroad.

Second, we would craft a message of needed change and reform and address it to the next Secretary of State.

As a shorthand description of our effort, we adopted the slogan, "SOS for DOS."

Numerous colleagues described their battles to cope with the consequences of inadequate resources, often compounded by poor management.

Horror Stories from the Field

As our campaign slowly gained momentum, we heard from numerous individuals who described their battles to cope with the consequences of inadequate resources, often compounded by poor management. Here are a few examples:

- Junior officers at an Asian post attempted to form an informal, unofficial JO association, but were met with resistance and eventually blocked by post management. They were told not to worry about anything other than their individual careers and to “look out for yourself and nobody else.” What started as a very enthusiastic group of new officers eager to work in the consular section ended with many pronouncing themselves “demoralized.” Several considered resignation.
- An economic counselor serving at a Latin American post reported being told that the post did not have blank compact discs available, or funds to buy them, to make 20 additional copies of a CD-ROM detailing anti-counterfeiting techniques for distribution to the host government banking community.
- In a moving and graphic letter of resignation from the Foreign Service, one officer expressed a passionate belief in “the importance of our mission,” but went on to say that “the professional environment has finally become untenable for me. There is no more ‘more’ that I can do with less and less.”
- An office management specialist working for the ambassador at a post in Africa described her assignment as “going back in time,” referring to the outdated IT equipment and lack of classified e-mail capability at post. Similarly, an information program officer lamented the department’s lack of a “baseline communications system to give everyone in the field desktop access to OpenNet, full-service Internet and ClassNet, and all incoming/outgoing cable traffic.”

Part of the Problem—and the Solution

We quickly realized that for any reform effort to be successful,

During his 34-year Foreign Service career, Ted Strickler served in Somalia, Ethiopia, Germany, Sudan, Egypt, Switzerland and Italy. A member of the SOS for DOS steering committee, he was later the 2002 winner of AFSA’s Christian A. Herter Award for constructive dissent by a Senior Foreign Service officer.

it had to be embraced by the rank and file, as well as by management. Fortunately, while management tended to analyze problems from a macro, top-down perspective, we saw the issues from the inside and from the bottom up.

In discussing how to publicize our message, we knew that numerous previous studies of the State Department, some by prestigious think-tanks, had produced little in the way of meaningful results and enduring change. We were determined not to produce yet another report that few would read and that would end up on a dusty shelf. Instead, we agreed that we should draft a letter expressing our collective views and have our Foreign Service and Civil Service colleagues endorse it.

Furthermore, since our initiative could be seen as criticizing the outgoing administration, we decided to address our concerns to the incoming Secretary of State, in the hope that he or she would be more open and receptive to our views. After 11 drafts, we released the final version of our letter on Oct. 20, 2000, which declared: “The Department of State is ill-equipped and ill-prepared to meet the foreign policy challenges of the 21st century. Outdated procedures and chronic resource shortages have taken their toll. The organizational structure is dysfunctional, its staff overextended...and the State Department’s traditions block needed change.”

We therefore sought the new administration’s “support, involvement and leadership to undertake a long-term, nonpartisan effort to modernize and strengthen the Department of State.” In closing, our letter stated: “The country needs a well-equipped, adequately staffed and modernized foreign policy institution,” and called for “bold and decisive steps now to deal effectively with the problems of today, while preparing for the challenges of the future—a future that is as close as tomorrow.”

A Parallel Campaign

Lacking access to Facebook or other social media, we pursued our campaign by buttonholing colleagues in the department cafeteria during the noon hour and with e-mails to overseas colleagues. AFSA pitched in by setting up a dedicated Web site containing the text of the letter and related SOS for DOS material.

Initial support grew slowly, before three developments that

We quickly realized that for any reform effort to be successful, it had to be embraced by the rank and file, as well as by management.

gave the campaign traction occurred. First, Foreign Service Director General Marc Grossman confirmed in October 2000 that he would not raise any objections to the substance of our message or methods of garnering support.

Second, Election Day (Nov. 7) produced a muddled outcome rather than the decisive decision we had anticipated. This gave us additional time to ramp up the number of signatures for our letter, which stood at an anemic 138 at that point.

Third, the Open Forum highlighted the SOS for DOS campaign in a well-attended meeting on Nov. 9. That meeting continued for almost two hours, with nonstop comments and suggestions from the floor. On Dec. 5, Open Forum Chairman Alan Lang distributed a summary of the meeting (the unedited transcript ran to 80 pages) as an all-hands telegram to the field.

The confluence of these events reinvigorated the steering committee (see box), which decided to set a goal of a thousand signatures for the letter that would be delivered to the next Secretary of State. Of course, we had no way of knowing then that it would be Dec. 12 before we even knew the name of the next president, let alone the name of the next Secretary of State: General Colin Powell.

We also asked our Foreign Service and Civil Service colleagues to identify specific problems and offer their ideas for how to fix them. This elicited dozens of concrete examples.

Before the holiday season, the steering committee adopted a symbol: a small, notched blue ribbon, inscribed with “SOS for DOS.” As further evidence of his support, Director General Grossman agreed to wear the ribbon after we updated him on the progress of the campaign.

The new year began with a Jan. 3 article in the *New York Times*, headlined “From His Perch, Powell Scans the World.” The article reported that “Blue, lapel-sized ribbons, snipped with a symbolic cut, are appearing on diplomats’ jackets this week as part of an organized campaign suggesting that the general eliminate ‘blue-ribbon’ commissions set up to study a department whose employees feel unappreciated and underfinanced.”

The article stated that State Department employees had written an accompanying manifesto urging Gen. Powell to “choose action over words” to help bring America’s diplomacy into the 21st century. The article quoted our manifesto—“The era of quill

pen diplomacy is over”—and noted that “SOS for DOS” meant that there was an emergency at the State Department. Shortly after the article appeared, we zoomed past our original goal of 1,000 signatures to reach 1,129. So we set a new goal of 1,500.

On Jan. 24, 2001, Curt Struble and I met with Grant Green, who headed the transition office and would soon become under secretary for management. He received us warmly and spent 45 minutes discussing the SOS for DOS initiative. We emphasized the broad, grassroots support for fundamental change at State and the conviction that the institution’s resource problems require better management, in addition to more financial resources. Green assured us that he saw a great deal of common ground between our letter and Colin Powell’s own view of State’s problems.

Meeting Colin Powell

On Monday, Jan. 29, when the signature count stood at 1,474, we were notified that our requested meeting with Secretary Powell would be at 11 a.m. the following Friday, Feb. 2. (The supporter count reached 1,614 that evening.)

Representing the steering committee, Curt and I met with Sec. Powell, who received us in a warm and gracious manner. We summarized the history of the initiative, emphasizing its future-looking orientation and pointing out that it had begun before anyone knew the outcome of the presidential election or who would be the new Secretary of State. We described how the effort was focused on presenting the message of needed reform at State and highlighted the commitment of the signers to support

SOS for DOS Steering Committee

Ted Strickler, DS/OFM
Curt Struble, WHA/BSC
Glen Johnson, VC/VO
Frank Moss, CA
Stephanie Kinney, M/DGHR
John Campbell, FSI
Wayne Logdson, WHA/EX
Christina Gross, EUR/PRP

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Throughout the 1990s, Foggy Bottom had tried to “do more with less” —with predictable results.

the Secretary as he worked to deal with the problems.

Sec. Powell assured us that his staff had kept him informed on the campaign, which had given him a better understanding of employee concerns before he took office. He then responded to several points raised in the letter, beginning with a declaration that he was not just the foreign policy adviser to the president. He used the phrase, “I own this building,” to signify that as the head of the State Department, he would provide the leadership to ensure that it worked.

The Secretary went on to acknowledge that many of State’s problems would take time to fix. But he urged State employees to let him know what could be done to solve the problems that really annoyed people and drove them “crazy.” He cited his Jan. 25 decision to establish day care facilities at the Foreign Service Institute as an example of how he liked to get things moving.

By now, it was clear that Sec. Powell was serious about exploring ideas to improve the department. He asked us to forward to his staff a summary of the numerous suggestions the campaign had generated.

With the help of several energetic student interns, we cataloged and summarized the hundreds of ideas that formed the basis of the final SOS for DOS report. The document we submitted to Under Secretary for Management Grant Green on Aug. 6, 2001, contained more than 100 recommendations addressing staffing, the need for modernized information technology, enhanced professional education, improved relations with Capitol Hill and the Department of Defense, and a greater focus on the training and development of entry-level personnel. We noted that the comments could help identify underlying issues and urged management to deal with those root causes, not just the superficial symptoms.

In response to the report, Under Secretary Green wrote that “the SOS for DOS process emphasizes that management is a crucial element for the State Department and perhaps the key factor affecting employee morale. Our management team will continue to do all we can to improve the way the department operates.”

Most importantly, the SOS for DOS effort helped to publicize and elevate the need for change at State, with the reform effort

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Our campaign symbol was a small, notched blue ribbon, inscribed with “SOS for DOS.”

being reported in newspaper articles and quoted in congressional hearings. The outpouring of support from our colleagues at home and around the world reinforced our belief that we could help bring about a modernized and strengthened Department of State. It also may have served as a safety valve for expressing pent-up feelings of irritation and abandonment.

A Lasting Legacy

Nearly 13 years later, the collective memory of the SOS for DOS campaign has faded, and its impact has been diluted with time. But several aspects of that effort may have enduring value.

First, the SOS call for change and reform challenged the department’s employees to recognize and accept their role in advocating for change and embracing subsequent reforms. We didn’t just complain about deficiencies and dysfunction, but sought to address and solve those problems. As many of the original supporters of the campaign have moved up the career ladder to senior, influential positions, they will have new scope for that drive and commitment to championing change.

Second, SOS for DOS is an instructive model for the large influx of new personnel over the past 10 years. Many of them are probably unaware of the “Young Turk” tradition that was so much a part of the Foreign Service in the late 20th century, and set the stage for our initiative.

Third, the campaign sent a loud message that the State Department needed forceful leadership. To be successful, a Secretary of State must be adept at dealing with both foreign policy issues and the organizational complexities of budget, finance and personnel despite the demands of constant travel and international crises.

Our initiative highlighted the fact that a Secretary of State cannot focus on policy issues to the exclusion of organizational ones, but must provide leadership in both spheres. Sec. Powell “got it,” and our hope was that his successors would, too.

The extent to which they did can certainly be debated. But at a minimum, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton should be commended for overseeing the production of the department’s first-ever Quadrennial Diplomatic and Development

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Review. That process prompted a number of organizational changes and realignments that show initial promise.

Those reforms are still a work in progress, and will require several years of continued effort to ensure a permanent impact on departmental operations. Fortunately, the Senate now has mandated that the QDDR be submitted to Congress every four years, giving the process institutional longevity and the potential for achieving genuine long-term change and reform at State.

Time for a New SOS?

As the new Secretary of State, John Kerry brings a depth of personal and professional experience to Foggy Bottom unmatched by most of his predecessors. From his tenure in the Senate and as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he should be well versed in the department's budgetary and staffing shortfalls. Hopefully, he will engage as vigorously on those essential management concerns as with policy issues.

Writing in the October 2012 issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*, Shawn Dorman explains that the new Foreign Service generation (those hired after 9/11) confronts many of the same problems we addressed in our call to action 13 years ago. She quotes new hires who describe a "stifling State Department culture" where "new ideas never go anywhere" and change proceeds at a "snail's pace," and notes the need for "outside-the-box responsiveness."

Perhaps the time has come for another SOS for DOS campaign. Fundamental change at State depends first and foremost on action by its own personnel. We remain convinced that it is still possible for individuals to make a difference when they come together.

Back in 2000, we tapped into the underlying spirit, enthusiasm and dedication of all State Department employees, Foreign and Civil Service alike, to maintain and strengthen the nation's premier foreign policy establishment. We leave it to those who follow after us to carry on that role. ■

2013 ANNUAL FS AUTHORS ROUNDUP

Watch for the November *FSJ*'s annual roundup of books by current and former members of the Foreign Service and their families.



MY BREAKFAST WITH RUSSELL MEANS

Looking back on an experience in San José, an FSO gains insight into the hubris of men in power and the “perverse, unpredictable logic” of war.

BY STEPHEN J. DEL ROSSO

San José, Costa Rica, in the mid-1980s resembled what Casablanca must have been like in the early 1940s. All sorts of characters of diverse political stripes and reputations mingled in cafés and nightspots as the Contra-Sandinista war raged on in neighboring Nicaragua and, occasionally, spilled over the border.

As a young diplomat in the political section of the embassy, one of my tasks was to report on the Nicaraguan opposition. This required meetings with a colorful assortment of its representatives, many of whom had noms de guerre like “El Diablo” and “El Loco.”

On Dec. 30, 1985, I was summoned to the ambassador’s office and, in the presence of the CIA station chief, instructed to go to the coastal Caribbean town of Limón to “find out what Russell Means is up to there.” I took that to mean I was supposed to casually check up on the activities of Means, an American Indian Movement activist who was once on the FBI’s most-wanted list.



Photo courtesy of Stephen J. Del Rosso; Inset: Ernie Leyba/Denver

Del Rosso at Poas Volcano National Park, Costa Rica, in 1985. Inset: Russell Means.

As was often the case in Central America during the 1980s, Washington's plans did not work out quite as anticipated.

An Inspired Invitation

I flew out to Limón early the next morning in a Costa Rican Civil Guard airplane, dressed not as a tourist—as I had been advised—but, conspicuously, as a Foreign Service officer, in my usual suit and tie. There I tried to locate my quarry, still not quite sure about my mission or how I would carry it out.

As I anticipated, Means, a 6'2" American Indian man with long braids, clearly stood out in a town populated primarily by the descendants of African slaves who worked in the nearby sugar cane fields. So I only had to ask a few questions of locals to determine that he had checked into a hotel near the center of town.

I asked the hotel clerk for his room number and, with a mixture of curiosity and apprehension, went and knocked on his door. After a few moments, a gruff, clearly annoyed Means opened the door and asked what I wanted. I immediately identified myself and said I'd been tasked to inquire about his intentions. Before he had a chance to slam the door, I had the inspired idea to invite him to breakfast; much to my surprise, he accepted.

Over eggs and pinto de gallo, an initially suspicious but increasingly forthcoming Means explained that he was about to set off with a small group of other Indian activists, including the Nicaraguan opposition leader, Brooklyn Rivera, to travel by fishing boat to the eastern Nicaragua coastal region populated by Miskito Indians. The Miskitos had long bristled under central rule of the Spanish-speaking mestizos in the Nicaraguan capital of Managua, and had at one time opposed the right-wing regime of Anastasio Somoza.

When the Sandinistas deposed Somoza and attempted to reassert control over the Miskito coast, relations became frayed and the indigenous groups took up arms against the revolutionary regime. Means, a longtime critic of the U.S. government and advocate for progressive causes, intended to take what he called "an information-gathering trip" to assess the situation for himself.

Stephen J. Del Rosso was a Foreign Service officer from 1982 to 1991. He is currently the Carnegie Corporation of New York's director for international peace and security.

I wished him well and attempted to return to San José before the New Year holiday began. It took most of the day to arrange a flight (there was not yet a modern road from Limón), but I finally was able to get the Civil Guard to fly me home later that evening. The none-too-pleased pilot was pulled out of a New Year's Eve party and, with his open champagne bottle in hand, drove me to the airport. Against what should have been my better judgement, I stayed on the little two-seater plane even after it ominously stalled on the runway. After a few swigs of champagne, the pilot was able to jump-start the aircraft and, somehow, flew me back home. I dutifully reported what I had learned to the ambassador.

Bad Timing

A few weeks later, I discovered that colleagues of the CIA station chief had arranged for Means and his companions to bring along a radio transmitter so they could communicate with agency personnel during their journey.

To evade Sandinista surveillance, the agency had instructed Means to speak only in Lakota, the language of the Sioux tribes of America's northern plains. But as a flummoxed station chief informed me soon after the travelers set out, Means apparently didn't speak Lakota. (I don't know whether he really couldn't, or simply chose not to.) Thus, the best-laid plans of America's spy agency and its unwitting Foreign Service co-conspirator came to naught.

Toward the end of January 1986, the agency got word that Means and his party had been pursued and even shot at by the Sandinistas during their journey. There were sketchy reports that some of the travelers had been wounded and would soon be coming ashore in Limón. So it was not surprising that the ambassador would again dispatch me there to locate the beleaguered travelers and arrange a press conference for Means to tell his side of the story. His anticipated demonization of the Sandinistas was expected to be a real propaganda coup for the U.S.

I succeeded in meeting up with a bedraggled Means, who had apparently been grazed by a Sandinista bullet, and others in his party who had suffered more serious injuries. Means was livid and eager to tell the world about what he considered the Nicaraguan regime's treachery and oppression of the Miskito Indians.

A hastily arranged press conference soon followed in San José, during which he and other Indian leaders did just that, much to the delight of the Reagan administration. Means even implied that he supported the ongoing U.S.-backed war to oust the Sandinistas.

If we learned anything from that tumultuous period, it should be that no one has a monopoly on truth or virtue, and that war ought to be pursued only as a last resort.

But as was often the case in Central America during the 1980s, Washington’s plans did not work out quite as anticipated. Though the press conference came off without a hitch, and the *New York Times* and other news outlets reported on it, Means’ denunciation failed to generate the hoped-for media buzz.

Instead, it was drowned out by the revelations of what soon became known as the Iran-Contra affair. That debacle would prove the undoing of the U.S. ambassador and station chief in Costa Rica, as well as several officials back in Washington, D.C. Their ranks included Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and CIA Director William Casey, who were both indicted for their roles in the plot.

The Persistence of Folly

President Ronald Reagan survived the scandal and the inimitable Russell Means went on to other pursuits, in Hollywood and elsewhere. And a certain young diplomat went on with his Foreign Service career for a few more years.

The death of Russell Means last October prompted me to reassess all the pieces of a puzzle I observed so many years ago in San José, but was unable to put together at the time. The events called to mind the hubris of men in power who believe that wars can be shaped and controlled to serve their interests with scant regard for unintended consequences.

If we learned anything from that tumultuous period, it should be that no one has a monopoly on truth or virtue, and that war ought to be pursued only as a last resort. As he railed against the Sandinistas after his ordeal in Nicaragua, Russell Means’ heart was in the right place and his message to the world was sincere and well-intentioned. One might even say the same for some in the U.S. government.

But even that was not enough to make a difference in a war which—like all wars—had its own perverse, unpredictable logic and, ultimately, showed “wise” men to be fools. ■



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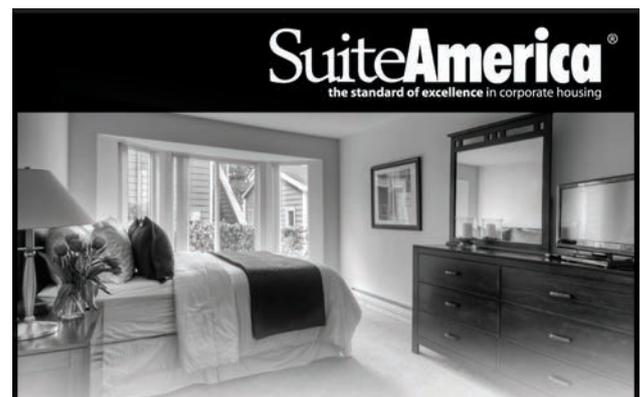
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2012 USAID Survey Results Reveal Some Improvement

BY FRANCISCO ZAMORA, USAID VP

This survey covers the concerns and thoughts of USAID's Foreign Service officers for the 2012 calendar year. The 20-question survey, conducted electronically, had a response of 442 participants, a lower number than in previous years, but still significant. A much fuller analysis of the results is available through *The Vanguard* newsletter on the AFSA Web site (www.afsa.org/USAID).

It is our hope that the information from this survey will aid the agency's leadership when making decisions that affect our employees and programs.

Profile of Responders:

The profiles of responders coincide fairly close with current demographic data. A majority of them, 85 percent, are assigned overseas; 53 percent are male and 47 percent are female. Almost 50 percent of respondents are at the FS-4 or FS-3 levels, and 63 percent are 45 years of age or younger.

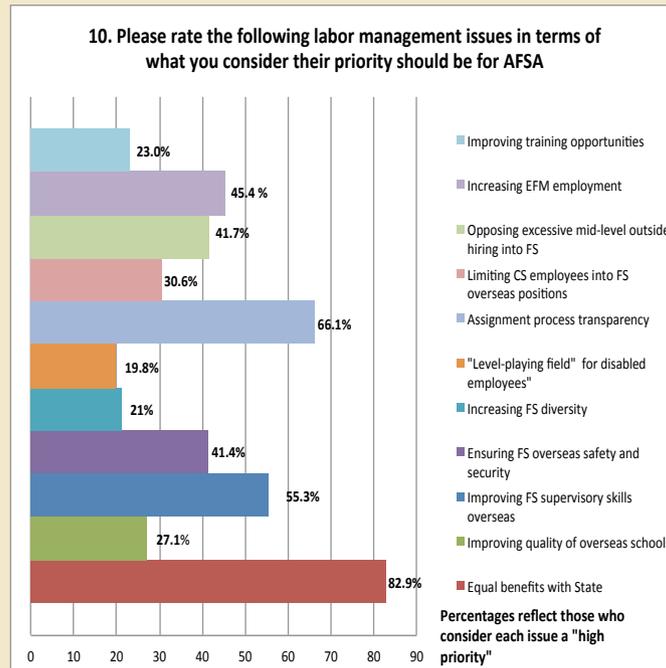
Of these respondents, about 31 percent are unmarried and 41 percent are not parents. Three percent reported that they were pregnant or had a partner currently pregnant. Overall, USAID FSOs are new to the agency, trending to a younger age cohort with the majority under 45 years of age.

With regard to diversity in the Foreign Service, 83 percent of FSOs classify themselves as Caucasian. The least represented ethnic group, when compared to national civilian labor force levels, continues to be Hispanic-Americans at 6 percent (NCLF, 14 percent). African-Americans represent 8 percent of the work force (NCLF, 12 percent) and 6.8 percent are Asian-Americans (NCLF, 4.7 percent).

FSO Lobbying and PR Priorities:

As in previous years, USAID FSOs place high priority on keeping their retirement package (84 percent; Question 9), and maintaining Overseas Comparability Pay (79 percent; Question 9). Nothing else comes close to these two concerns, as threats to the national budget, such as "Fiscal Cliffs," "Furloughs" and "Sequestration" are frequently mentioned. AFSA is keenly aware of this and has legislative staff working diligently through lobbying and media outreach in partnership with other unions to protect our benefits.

Labor Management Issues:



Of all labor management issues, the highest priority (Question 10) for USAID FSOs is to "assure equal benefits with State" (83 percent). Glaring inequalities in benefits between the two

USAID Survey continued on page 48

CALENDAR

- 4/3/2013
12:00 - 2:00 PM
AFSA Governing Board Meeting
- 4/7 - 4/10/2013
AFSA Road Scholar Program
- 4/10/2013
2:00 - 3:30 PM
Federal Benefits Speakers Series: "Geriatric Care and Health Management"
- 4/15/2013
Deadline: AFSA High School Essay Contest
- 5/1/2013
12:00 - 2:00 PM
AFSA Governing Board Meeting
- 5/3/2013
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Foreign Affairs Day/AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony
- 5/5/2013
8:00 AM
Public Service Recognition Week 5K Run/Walk
- 5/22/2013
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
AFSA Book Notes: "Master Class"
- 5/27/2013
Memorial Day: AFSA Offices Closed
- 6/2 - 6/7/2013
AFSA Road Scholar Program
- 6/5/2013
12:00 - 2:00 PM
AFSA Governing Board Meeting



A Jury of Our Peers

For as long as people have been thinking about the behavior of other people, they have shared a single common view: “If you behave like me, you are good. If you behave differently, you are bad.” This works well as a determinant of normalcy in a homogeneous society or organization, but quickly breaks down as a group becomes diverse.

As early as the Middle Ages, a jury of one’s peers solved the problem. A peer is someone like you in as many respects as is practical, and presumably shares, or can at least understand, your own point of view. The value of the opinions of one’s peers is recognized not only in our legal system, but also in academia, the arts and, indeed, our own profession of diplomacy. It forms, for example, the underlying basis for the promotion and tenure boards, which review the performance of Foreign Service members and weigh them against both absolute standards and each other. Having personally observed numerous aspects of that process, I can attest that it works well in the vast majority of cases.

The adjudicators in security clearance and discipline cases, and the Office of the Inspector General investigators, are not Foreign Service members. Many investigators and deciding officials differ substantially from the Foreign Service employees they are reviewing in terms of age, background, experience, philosophy, cultural exposure and outlook. In my opinion (and AFSA’s perception), this has contributed to a small but significant number of problems.

When employees perceive the process as unfair, they not only mistrust the findings but become reluctant to cooperate with these offices. This also has the effect of stifling initiative and innovation, since deviation from a narrow norm could subject the employee to punishment.

The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review report urges FS members to take calculated risks in order to advance the State Department’s mission. However, we need assurances that risk-taking will not be interpreted as malfeasance. That requires that those doing the interpreting understand fully what we do.

Peer perspective is especially important in issues of judgment, morality and personal conduct. We have seen a dramatic increase in instances of “morality police” cases, ascribing improper or even criminal intent to private actions by employees and family members. There are some actions that are universally recognized as wrong, imprudent or illegal by most Americans. But increasingly, we are seeing not only

consensual sexual relationships being described as disgraceful, but even cases in which parenting styles are challenged.

Few areas of conduct are more subjective than sexual relationships. The propriety of otherwise identical scenarios will vary greatly with the circumstances, intentions, beliefs, status and identities of those involved.

So will parenting styles, especially as many FS members have foreign-born spouses or partners. Parents who bathe with their preschool-age children, or allow their toddler to sleep with them, or kiss their 7-year-old child goodbye with a quick peck on the lips, are not perverts or pedophiles, but merely have different parental styles than do the investigating agents. Those with a broader view than just law enforcement should review allegations involving such personal issues.

We think it important that a number of practices, many already enshrined in the Foreign Affairs Manual, be rigidly

adhered to and enforced:

- Investigators should objectively gather the facts, not just with an eye towards supporting a criminal indictment or disciplinary case, but solely with an eye towards creating the fullest picture possible of the issue or event. Investigative reports should never include the investigator’s opinions or recommendations.
- There should be absolute separation between the adjudicators or deciders of a case and the investigators. Those who make a decision should have no investment in the investigation itself, nor should the investigator have any input—beyond objectively gathered facts—into the process.
- At the earliest possible moment, before a decision is made, the findings should be reviewed and analyzed by people who are the peers of those being reviewed, and the opinions of those peers given weight in any assessment. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Office of Human Resources and the Office of the Inspector General should all create and use advisory groups, drawn from FS members in their own ranks, as well as other FS members, to regularly review cases or issues where perspectives might vary in a diverse society.
- DS and OIG should endeavor to staff adjudicative functions with employees from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, and establish procedures for group review of cases. In offices where decisions routinely require assessments of personal behavior or judgment, the office staff involved in the case should represent a diverse range of perspectives and backgrounds. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP.

A Kinder, Gentler and More Productive Workplace

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is engaged in a cultural transformation initiative with the goal of making the agency a premier organization with an engaged and motivated work force. Unfortunately, we are falling short of this goal.

FAS is a great agency that does work that is vital to rural America, so it should be one of the best places to work in the government.

As reported in the 2012 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, more than half of Foreign Agricultural Service employees responded negatively when asked whether our leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workplace. For the goal to have meaning, the words need to be backed up with behavior change that starts with the top ranks.

FAS has always been an intensely mission-focused agency, with little patience for spending a lot of time praising good work or tolerance for anything less than 100-percent dedication to work and career. The attitude could be summed up as “We thank you every day for the work you do—it’s called a

paycheck.” Given the current budget environment, it is hard to argue with that.

However, this viewpoint may have contributed to a culture of negativism that is turning out to be counter-productive. While negative feedback and criticism (and, in extreme cases, yelling and bullying) can get results in the short run, a more positive work environment is much more productive over the long haul.

As we work to implement the department’s cultural transformation goals, we need to focus on what motivates people to excel and go the extra mile. One of those intangibles is a feeling of being valued. Day-to-day positive feedback, which costs nothing and may be more important for morale over the long run, goes beyond the formal awards program. To quote former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, we need to combat the “nattering nabobs of negativism.”

FAS is a great agency that does work that is vital to rural America, so it should also be one of the best places to work in the government. While it won’t solve all of our problems, highlighting the positive, and treating all employees with the respect and appreciation they deserve, are a good place to start. ■

NEWS BRIEF

Notice: AFSA Officer Election

The 2013 AFSA Officer and Governing Board election is under way. Details about the election, including the rules, can be found at www.afsa.org/elections.

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

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

- **Ballot Tally:** On June 6, at 9 a.m., the printed ballots will be picked up from the post office in Washington, D.C. Printed ballots must be received at the post office to be counted. Online voting will also be available until June 6, at 9 a.m., when the voting site will close.

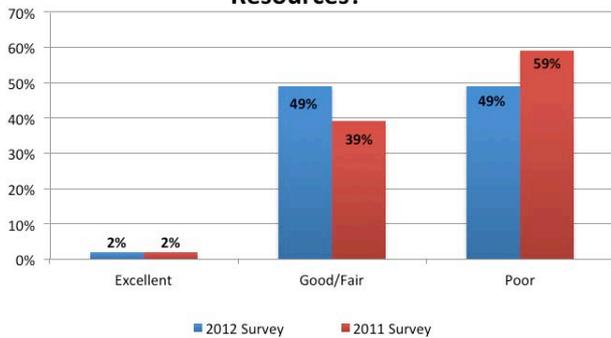
- **Election Information:** Written requests for a duplicate ballot should be directed to election@afsa.org or sent to AFSA Committee on Elections, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C., 20037. Please include your full name, current address, e-mail address and telephone number.

NEWS BRIEF

Support the New U.S. Diplomacy Center and Museum

The new U.S. Diplomacy Center and Museum will showcase the history and importance of diplomacy and development. A groundbreaking at the 21st Street NW side of the Department of State will take place this summer. AFSA strongly supports this project and is coordinating a donation campaign. We invite every member of the Foreign Service to show support by making a secure, modest contribution at www.afsa.org/usdc. To learn more about the USDC, please visit diplomacy.state.gov.

15. Overall, how would you rate the services provided by the USAID Office of Human Resources?



USAID Survey continued from page 45

agencies still exist, which the USAID leadership has yet to resolve: full language training for spouses and partners at the Foreign Service Institute; lower Washington per diem rates; unequal lodging arrangements while training in Washington; ineligibility for FSI day-care services; and some overseas incentives.

However, the most serious problem is low entry-level salaries, which, after a personal appeal to the Administrator, the agency has finally indicated it will look into. Other high priorities (Question 10) include: increasing transparency in assignments (66 percent); improving supervisory skills of FS supervisors (55 percent); and increasing Eligible Family Member employment opportunities (45 percent).

Satisfaction Issues at Post:

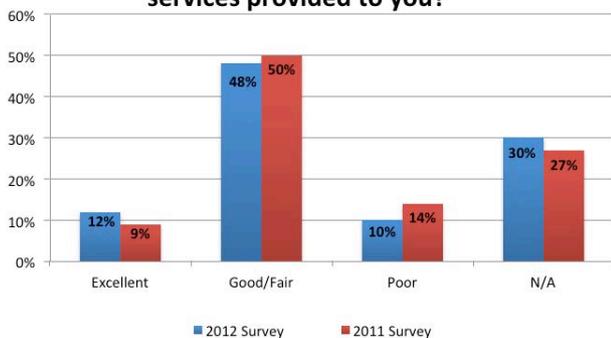
The only issue at posts that received a high “not satisfied” rating (56 percent) remains the “Consolidation of Administrative Services” under the International Cooperative Administration Support Services agreement. The ICASS consolidation has now been universally implemented overseas and has had sufficient time to correct previously identified problems. However, the survey indicates that little progress has resulted, at least for USAID FSOs. Major complaints still exist regarding exorbitant costs and continued poor, unequal customer service compared to before ICASS, when USAID provided these same services to its employees.

USAID Support Offices:

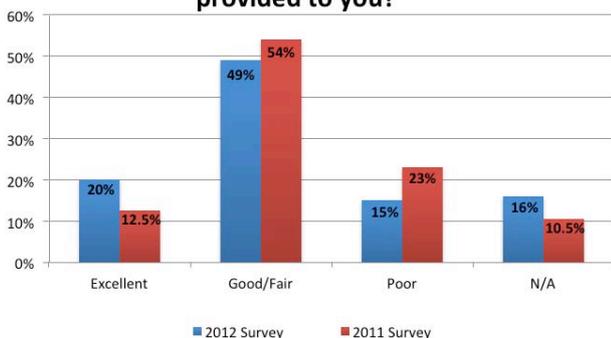
The support services of Human Resources, Financial Management and Travel and Transportation (Questions 15, 16 and 17, respectively) have now been followed over the course of three annual surveys. Improvements have been made in the following areas:

- **Human Resources:** The Human Resources Office improved its scores (Question 15) in the 2012 survey compared to 2011. Its “poor” rating was reduced from 59 percent in 2011 to 49 percent in 2012. Its “good” rating improved from 39 percent in 2011 to 49 percent in 2012. This shows real progress. While there were some negative comments made about the office’s performance, there were also laudatory expressions of the good work and support that the HR staff had provided throughout the year. This is the first survey year showing significant improvements and, possibly, the beginning of an encouraging trend.
- **Chief Financial Management:** The Office of the Chief Financial Management (Question 16) also improved its rating between the two surveys by reducing its “poor” rating from 14 percent in 2011 to 10 percent in 2012.
- **Travel and Transportation:** The Travel and Transportation

16. How would you rate the Office of the Chief Financial Management and the services provided to you?



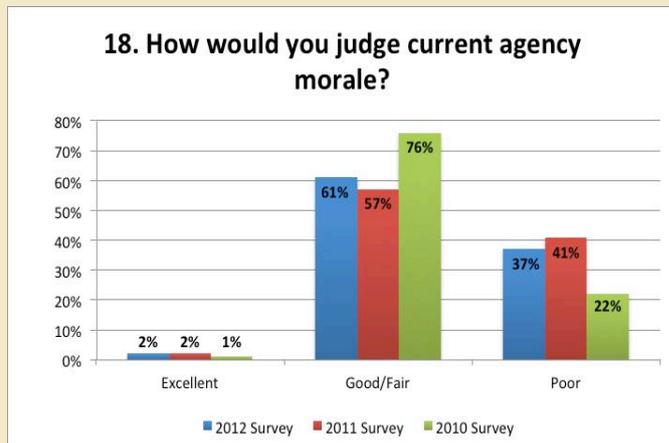
17. How would you rate the Travel and Transportation Division and the services provided to you?



Division (Question 17) likewise made significant improvements. Its “poor” rating went from 23 percent in 2011 to 15 percent in 2012. Its “excellent” rating went up from 12 percent in 2011 to 20 percent in 2012 during the same time period. The office received many comments of appreciation from FSO clients.

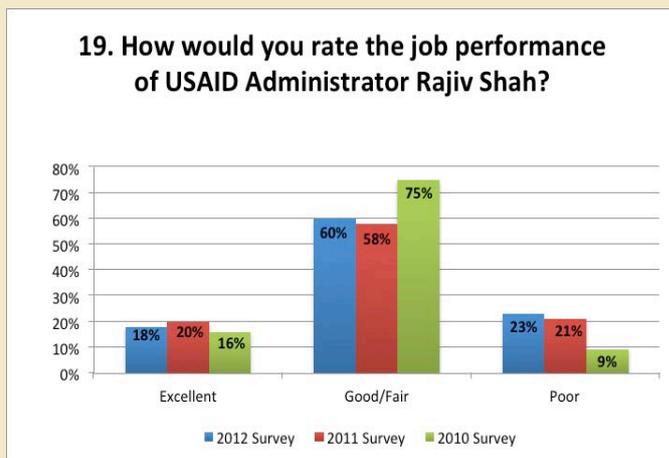
Agency Staff Morale Levels:

A “good to fair” morale rating (Question 18) has remained consistent with that of the previous year at 57 percent in 2011 compared to 61 percent in 2012. The decline in the number of respondents whose morale is “poor,” from 41 percent in the 2011 survey to 37 percent in 2012, is encouraging. However, an agency where four out of 10 employees remain dissatisfied, must do better.



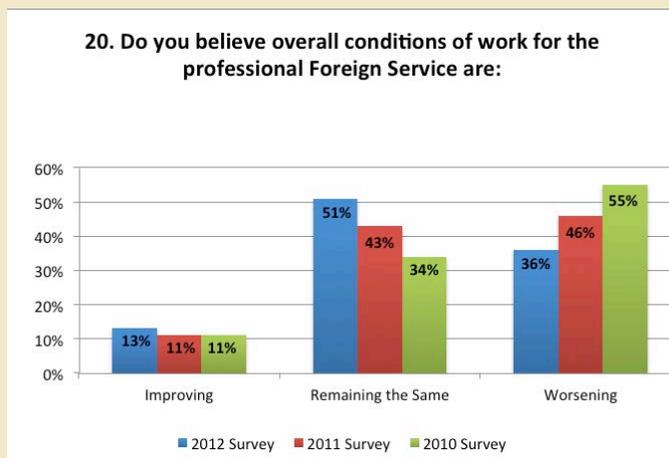
The USAID Administrator’s Performance Rating:

The “poor” rating for the Administrator (Question 19) increased from 9 percent in the 2010 survey to 21 percent in the 2011 survey, and to 23 percent in the current 2012 survey. While those figures are worrisome, his overall approval rating (fair, good, excellent) for 2012 stands at a substantial 78 percent.



Overall Working Conditions at USAID:

The current 2012 survey (Question 20) indicates a sizable perception that overall conditions of work are worsening, with 36 percent of respondents feeling this way. Nonetheless, the survey trend indicates there has been an improvement over the last three years; in the 2010 survey the level was 55 percent and in the 2011 survey the level was at 46 percent.



Concluding Analysis:

The survey has clarified several important issues:

- We have all been aware that the agency has changed significantly over the last three to four years due to increased hiring under the Development Leadership Initiative, which is now placed on hold. More than half of our FS staff have been with USAID fewer than five years and are younger and with different personal needs than FSOs in the past. Due to their demographic status, it is reasonable to predict that a sizable portion of the staff will begin to have children. This may mean there will be a greater need for more support services in areas such as education, medical and employment for companions. FSOs are greatly concerned with work-life balance and may make career decisions based on that aspect, which could include the option of leaving the agency.
- Compared to previous years, morale has slightly improved,

USAID Survey continued on page 50



USAID Alumni Association Continues to Grow

The U.S. Agency for International Development Alumni Association was formed in 2009 by a group of former employees who wanted a professional association to 1) add informed voices to the national debate on development and foreign assistance; 2) encourage alumni to volunteer their time and expertise to strengthen USAID and the broader development community; and 3) facilitate social and professional networking among USAID retirees.

Now entering its fifth year, UAA has over 750 registered alumni who stay in touch through www.usaidalumni.org, monthly newsletters and events for those who live in the greater Washington, D.C., area. The UAA is also exploring events for alumni, both in the U.S. and overseas.

In addition, a growing number of UAA members have worked with USAID as volunteers on critical development issues in a variety of ways. For example, 11 UAA volunteer mentors were recently paired with USAID staff in the Europe and Eurasia Bureau in a four-month pilot project to determine the feasibility of having retirees mentor active-duty USAID staff in field missions, using Skype and other distance methods.

In 2012, at the request of USAID, the UAA launched an urban initiative to tap alumni

expertise on urban policies and programming. Building on the success of the initial effort, UAA's urban team now is helping to organize four workshops with USAID and other partners on such topics as urbanization, the environment and sustainability in Asia, urban development pathways in Africa, financing cities in Latin America and urban governance.

UAA also has begun working with former USAID Foreign Service Nationals in the Washington, D.C. area to create a local FSN network and produce a handbook for FSNs and third-country-nationals overseas, who may resettle in the United States under the Special Immigrant Visa program, or who already are residing in the U.S.

UAA welcomes former staff who have served for at least two years at USAID, including former Foreign Service officers, Civil Service employees, political appointees, fellows, FSNs, personal services contractors and other direct contract staff.

We urge all potential members and anyone interested in USAID and development issues, registering for the alumni directory or making a membership contribution, please check out www.usaidalumni.org. For more information, please send an e-mail to kshort@usaidalumni.org. ■

USAID Survey continued from page 49

- Compared to previous years, morale has slightly improved, but responses show that conditions are still not at their optimal level. The most critical negative perception is that USAID FSOs are being treated unfairly in comparison with State Department FSOs. There continue to be complaints from overseas FSOs that the ICASS consolidation system is highly unfavorable to USAID's needs. This is an area that requires special attention by the Administrator if he is to implement all of the USAID Forward initiatives expected of his staff.
- One of the most encouraging findings is that there are positive developments in the Office of Human Resources. In spite of some caustic remarks about HR, the current 2012 survey shows a positive 10 percent gain compared to the previous survey in 2011. In fact, several officers praised specific sections and individuals in HR for their improved customer service. And though the office's "poor" rating is still close to 50 percent, which is unacceptable for any organization, this is the first indication that things are beginning to turn around. We can only hope it will continue.

It is our role to ensure top service for all USAID FSOs, which is our primary focus and reason for generating this survey. We will use the survey's findings to provide you with the best possible service and support. ■

NEWS BRIEF

AFSA-PAC Seeks Your Support: Help Get Our Voice Heard on the Hill

The annual solicitation for the American Foreign Service Association Political Action Committee arrived in members' mailboxes in March. AFSA-PAC is our vehicle for making our voice heard on Capitol Hill. It is completely bipartisan as its bylaws state that donations must be split evenly between Republican and Democratic members of Congress.

Please help AFSA raise the profile of the Foreign Service with those making important decisions about our profession's resources and future. To make a donation, please return the reply card included with the mailing. We greatly appreciate your support.

To learn more about AFSA-PAC, please visit www.afsa.org/afsa_pac.aspx.

AFSA's First Virtual Student Foreign Service Intern

BY ANTHONY ROSS

I had few expectations when I applied to the Virtual Student Foreign Service (an internship program launched by former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton) in mid-summer last year.

Therefore, it was with great surprise and delight that I got a call from Perri Green, AFSA's coordinator for special awards and outreach, inviting me to fill the AFSA e-Intern position in late December.

Admittedly, I was unfamiliar with the work of AFSA and its role in maintaining the Memorial Plaques at the Department of State. I was also initially puzzled as to how my background as a graduate student in East Asian studies, would be helpful in bringing the project of finding more about those listed on the plaques to fruition.

As it turns out, my academic preparation has been invaluable to my success in the research, collection and organization of biographical data related to members of the diplomatic community who lost their lives overseas. Scouring archives for snippets of life histories has been, at times, arduous (the Internet does not always easily yield its secrets), but

always worthwhile to piece together a more complete picture of the individual. In a small way, I like to think I have helped to keep alive the memory of those whose stories had yet to be told.

Working on the Memorial Plaques has made me seriously consider a career in the Foreign Service.

When difficulties arose in my searches, a triangulation approach was often most helpful: using multiple sources to fill in gaps and to

verify the accuracy of dates and places. Not only did the process introduce me to useful online resources like Ancestry.com and the Google News archive, but it also taught me much about America's diplomatic engagement with the rest of the world.

I am currently working to compile the information in a way that makes it easily accessible to AFSA members and others who might be interested in finding out more about our diplomatic heroes.

Working on the Memorial Plaques project has helped me to become a more efficient researcher, and to consider a Foreign Service career. It has also given me a better perspective on the risks that the diplomatic community confronts each day as it works to promote world peace and cross-cultural understanding. ■

NEWS BRIEF

Federal Benefits Speaker Series: "Geriatric Care"

On Wed., April 10, at 2 p.m., the fifth program in the Federal Benefits Speakers Series will feature Carol Kaplun, the Nurse Care Manager at Iona Senior Services. She will speak on "Geriatric Assessment, Assistance and Care Management," a topic of importance to many. The event will take place at AFSA headquarters, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. The series has previously focused on Medicare, federal health benefits and the Thrift Savings Plan. All events are available for online viewing at www.afsa.org/AFSAvideos.aspx.

For questions regarding these events, please contact Bonnie Brown, AFSA's Coordinator for Retiree Benefits and Legislation, at brown@afsa.org or (202) 944-5509. RSVPs should be sent to

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AFSA at the Oscars

BY DONNA AYERST, AFSA NEWS EDITOR

AFSA's December screening of "Argo" at a theater in Georgetown proved to be a great success, with hundreds attending. That success, the awards the film was winning, combined with director and star Ben Affleck's award acceptance comments highlighting the Foreign Service, got the wheels turning.

"We should go to the Oscars!" said AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston at a weekly staff meeting. After the laughter died down, we started thinking it might be a possibility, as remote as it seemed—AFSA at the Oscars? Really?

I have always believed that if you don't ask, the answer will always be no. So with that in mind, I checked out the press page on the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science Web site, filled out the online form requesting credentials and hit the send button.

Two days later I was speaking with the AMPAS fellow in charge of issuing the coveted pass. Two days after that (along with 20 pages of forms to fill out), I received an e-mail notifying me that *The Foreign Service Journal* and *AFSA News* had been approved for a credential to the Interview Room on Oscar night! Whoa!

All of a sudden, I was going to the Oscars, formal attire required. Get a dress: check. Get the shoes: check.



(Left to right) Producers Grant Heslov, Ben Affleck and George Clooney pose backstage with their Oscars® for best motion picture of the year for "Argo."

Matching earrings: Uh? Check.

Opening Scene: Sacramento Airport, Feb. 19, five days before the event. I board a flight to Burbank to do a security walk-through, an unexpected requirement, at the Oscar ceremony site. That turned out to be a good thing; as we wend our way through the labyrinth of the block that is to become Oscar Central, I wonder if I could do this trek on my own.

Cut to the big night (actually, most of the day): You think getting into the State Department without a badge

is difficult? The Oscars can beat that any day. They close Hollywood Boulevard and all of the streets around the Dolby Theater—for blocks. LAPD is everywhere. A mega-bomb squad vehicle is parked out front.

Multiple checkpoints require you to scan the barcode on your credential, open your gear and remove all of that extra jewelry, before passing through a body scanner. Remember, *multiple* checkpoints.

I arrive at 9 a.m. to drop off my computer, then return at 1:30 p.m. to stand in line

for security. I finally enter the Interview Room at 2:15 p.m. and stay there until 10:50 p.m.

The room is a very large space in the Loews Hollywood Hotel, adjacent to the theater. It is filled with long rows of tables set perpendicular to the stage where each Oscar winner will come immediately after receiving the golden statue. In the middle of the tables is ABC's telecast camera. Giant video screens hang throughout the room.

Printed signs at each of the more than 300 seats indicate where to sit: Voice of America, BBC, *Allure*, *Vanity Fair*, all the major networks, CNN, *Le Monde*, *New York Times*, *The Foreign Service Journal*, European media and reps from all over the world!

Also at each seat is a sign with a number on it. Mine is 138. A moderator is up front and she will select who gets to ask the winners a question, like at an auction. She says she will only select five or six journalists per winner. At this point, I am thinking, if "Argo" wins best picture, every arm in the room will go up, waving their number, and the odds of getting called on go way down.

A couple of well-seasoned journalists sit to my left, trying to outdo one another with stories from their combined 40-some years covering the Oscars. Across from me is a

young woman from the University of Southern California's *Daily Trojan* newspaper. Next to me is a Japanese woman from Osaka who is having trouble with her Internet connection.

Once the ceremony starts, it takes awhile before the first winners come back to the interview room. When they do, it is mostly winners in technical categories. The moderator reminds us to please ask them questions, as it would be embarrassing if no one raises a number.

A lot of table conversation ensues about the food that is served. The veterans agree that the Oscars has the best food of all of the various award ceremonies—they even have shrimp! I can't help but wonder why this is such a big deal; you can get frozen shrimp at Costco.

Things really ramp-up when the celebs start appearing: Jennifer Lawrence is funny; so is Daniel Day-Lewis. Quentin Tarantino is amazing in a unique way (but you probably already have your own opinion). Anne Hathaway is emotional.

The journalists' questions border on weird. Some are incomprehensible. Big cheers go up for the "Life of Pi" and its best director winner, Ang Lee. Our little group is starting to think that "Argo" might lose the big enchilada. I keep the faith and wonder what to do if it does win.

Cut to the White House: The First Lady of the United States of America, with members of the military service behind her (where are the members of the Foreign Service?), is presenting the award for best picture!

The moment has arrived. My mind goes blank. I hatch a plan to walk up to the front of the room so that the moderator can see me frantically waving number 138 (I was out of her field-of-vision thanks to ABC's megacamera). And the winner is—"Argo"!

I quickly make my way to the front, stand there in my Macy's ball gown, waving my number 138. A couple of journalists ask their question, but then, out of all of the numbers waving in the air, she calls 138!

"Hello. I'm Donna Ayerst from the American Foreign Service Association in Washington, D.C." (producers Ben Affleck, George Clooney and Grant Heslov all turn to look at me. Fainting is not an option.) "Your movie and also the comments you've made at all of the awards ceremonies has really raised the image and the profile of the Foreign Service, something that we don't get very often. We don't get much play. But I would like to invite you, all three of you, to the plaque ceremony that we have in the Department of State on May 3, where we honor fallen

Foreign Service officers."

After an interruption from the moderator asking me if I have a question, Affleck answers: "I don't know if we can come, but we do have, all of us, a tremendous respect for what the Foreign Service sacrifices and goes through and that we, I think, gained further appreciation for as we shot the movie and visited the State Department. I know Secretary Clinton a little bit and Secretary Kerry a little

bit better...I've really picked up an appreciation for what the State Department does, what our Foreign Service does, what they sacrifice."

AFSA at the Oscars. What an historic night!

Last scene: A woman in a navy blue, sequined ball gown is driving west on the Santa Monica Freeway by herself. She smiles all the way to the coast. ■

LIFE IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE



AFSA Congratulates the 2012 Sinclair Awards Winners

BY PERRI GREEN, COORDINATOR FOR SPECIAL AWARDS AND OUTREACH

Proficiency in foreign languages is a crucial attribute for all Foreign Service personnel. The American Foreign Service Association's Sinclair Language Awards program recognizes language students for outstanding accomplishments in the study of a "hard" language and its associated culture.

The Matilda W. Sinclair Language Award program was established in 1982 by a bequest from Ms. Sinclair, a former Foreign Service employee, to AFSA. The purpose of her bequest was to "promote and reward superior achievement by career officers of the Foreign Service of the United States while studying one of the 'hard' languages under the auspices of the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State."

Any career-conditional Foreign Service member from the foreign affairs agencies (Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the International Broadcasting Bureau) is eligible.

Language-training supervisors at FSI's School of Language Studies, language instructors at field schools

and post language officers nominate candidates for the award. Winners are selected by a committee comprised of volunteer AFSA members, representatives from FSI, a member of the AFSA Governing Board and the AFSA special awards and outreach coordinator. Winners receive a check for \$1,000 and a certificate of recognition signed by the AFSA president and the chair of the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee.

AFSA congratulates this year's ten winners of the Sinclair Language Awards and commends the School of Language Studies at FSI for its dedication in preparing students of hard languages for the intense challenges of modern diplomacy.

THIS YEAR'S WINNERS ARE:

Anne Casper—Kinyarwanda
Vanna Chan—Lithuanian
Rebecca Danis—Pashto
Spencer Fields—Albanian
Christina Le—Greek
Dan McCandless—Dari
Robert Mearkle—Arabic
Nina Murray—Lithuanian
Roshni Nirody—Japanese
Kristen Pisani—Greek

More information on the Sinclair Awards is available at www.afsa.org/sinclair_language_awards.aspx. ■

More on Managing Your Thrift Savings Plan

BY MATTHEW SUMRAK, ASSOCIATE COORDINATOR FOR RETIREE COUNSELING AND LEGISLATION

Note: This is a continuation of the article, "AFSA Speaker Series: TSP Pre-Separation Briefing," which appeared in the March 2013 issue of AFSA News:

In order to elect an in-service withdrawal, the participant must be 59½ years of age or older. It is very important to know that an in-service withdrawal may be made only once and must be for at least \$1,000 or up to the entire amount in the account.

By choosing to do an in-service withdrawal, the participant is prohibited from receiving a partial post-service withdrawal after separation. Also, a mandatory 20 percent federal tax is withheld when the in-service withdrawal is sent directly to the participant. However, any amount sent to another qualified account is not taxed.

For post-service withdrawals, there are several important aspects to be aware of:

- Every separated participant with an account balance of less than \$200 will receive an automatic cashout.
- Once post-service contributions are prohibited, participants may still transfer funds from their traditional IRAs or other eligible employer retirement plans.
- After April 1, once a participant turns 70½ and is separated from service, he or she must take Required Minimum Distributions from their TSP account. The current RMD is 3.65 percent of your account total. If participants fail to take out the RMD by April 1, they will incur an IRS penalty of 50 percent of the RMD amount.
- Each year going forward after the year in which you turn 70, you must take an RMD. Therefore, it is essential to submit form TSP-70 by April 1 of the year after turning 70.

A lively question-and-answer session followed Urban's presentation.

You may view the seminar at www.afsa.org/AFSAVideos.aspx. To view the presentation slides, please go to www.afsa.org/Portals/O/tsp_event_slides.pdf. For more information on the TSP, please visit www.tsp.gov. ■

Corrections to AFSA News, March 2013:

Page 45: The Governing Board photo caption did not include those members not pictured: Andrew Winter, Tim Corso, Molly Williamson.

Page 60: In the bottom right photo, the merit winner is Marshall Richards, not Basil Smitham. Apologies to all.

Amb. Christopher Van Hollen Scholarship to be Established

BY LORI DEC, AFSA SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR

On Jan. 20, longtime AFSA member Ambassador Christopher Van Hollen passed away at the age of 90 from complications associated with Alzheimer's disease. Born in 1922, Amb. Van Hollen served in the U.S. military from 1943 to 1946. He received his undergraduate degree from Haverford College in 1947, and a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1951.

Christopher Van Hollen joined the Foreign Service

in 1951, and served in India, Pakistan and Turkey. He was appointed U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives in 1972. He also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, and ran the department's senior seminar before his retirement in 1979.

Later, Amb. Van Hollen was a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and then served as director of

the American Institute for Islamic Affairs. His son, Rep. Christopher Van Hollen Jr., D-Md., represents Maryland's 8th district in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In memory of Amb. Van Hollen, AFSA is collecting contributions through the AFSA Scholarship Fund to establish an undergraduate financial aid scholarship in his name for a child of a Foreign Service employee. Secure online contributions can be made via credit card

(using PayPal) by visiting www.afsa.org/vanhollen. Checks, payable to the AFSA Scholarship Fund (with "Van Hollen Scholarship" in the memo field) can be sent to the American Foreign Service Association Scholarship Program, 2101 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20037.

For additional information, please contact AFSA Scholarship Director Lori Dec at (202) 944-5504 or dec@afsa.org. ■



GET READY! PUBLIC SERVICE 5K RUN/WALK MAY 5

AFSA is a sponsor of the inaugural **Public Service 5K Run/Walk** on May 5, at 8 a.m., at Washington, D.C.'s Anacostia Park. The event celebrates **Public Service Recognition Week 2013**, and is organized by the Public Employees Roundtable. All proceeds will go to the Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund.

Advance registration is required. For more information and to register, please go to publicservicerecognitionweek.org/events/.

AFSA is featured on the event poster, and t-shirts with the slogan, "America's Diplomats-Serving You Around the World," will be available.



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USAID Officer Receives His Purple Heart After 40 Years

BY JENNIFER LOWRY, COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

Nearly 40 years have passed since retired U.S. Agency for International Development Foreign Service officer Michael D. Bengé spent time as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. On Feb. 13, Bengé finally received the Purple Heart in recognition of the wounds he suffered while in captivity.

David E. Eckerson, USAID counselor, presented the medal at a ceremony at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

THE PURPLE HEART

The Purple Heart is a military medal given in the name of the president of the United States to every service member (and some civilians) who is wounded while serving in a war or other specified incursion.

AFSA also presented him with new Medals of Heroism and Valor, replacements for the original medals he had received, but which were later stolen from his home. Family, friends and colleagues joined in celebrating Mr. Bengé's achievements.

CAPTURED

On Jan. 31, 1968, FSO Michael Bengé was captured near Ban Me Thuot, South Vietnam, when he tried to rescue several people working with International

Voluntary Services (a private nonprofit organization founded in 1953 that placed American volunteers in development projects in third world countries) during the Tet Offensive.

For the next five years, he was held in a Prisoner of War camp. Prisoners were chained together, forced to move from encampment to encampment and, when stationary, were kept in cages with nothing to eat but boiled manioc.

NEAR DEATH

While in captivity, Bengé contracted cerebral malaria and was near death. When speaking of his bout with malaria, Mr. Bengé said, "I still had some strength left and I made up my mind that I wouldn't give them the satisfaction of seeing me die."

He credits his strength to his colleagues and friends who were also taken prisoner with him; the same friends he sadly watched die and was forced to bury. His will to survive continued to keep him alive for more than 27 months in solitary confinement.

MEDALS OF HEROISM AND VALOR

After he was released, Bengé was awarded the Medal of Heroism and the Medal of

Valor for his acts of courage and bravery while in Vietnam.

RETURNING HOME

"It was great to return to America and be back in a country, even with all its social ills, where one can enjoy the freedom of speech, the freedom of thought and the freedom of political choice in the free world. These are things that a

are still unknown to those in the lands where I was held as a POW," reflected Bengé.

Michael Bengé resides in Falls Church, Va., and is a single parent to two daughters. He remains active in Prisoner of War/Missing In Action affairs, and continues to be interested in Southeast Asian political issues. ■

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The Practice of Peacebuilding

Reconstruction and Peacebuilding in the Balkans: The Brčko Experience

Robert William Farrand, Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, \$39.95/hardcover, \$31.19/Kindle Edition, 289 pages.

REVIEWED BY ADAM MOORE

One of the most contentious issues during the 1995 Dayton Peace Talks was the territory encompassing the north-eastern Bosnian city of Brčko (which was controlled by the Republika Srpska) and its surrounding areas (most of which were controlled by the Bosniak-Croat Federation). Failing to come to terms, the contending sides agreed to settle the issue through international arbitration.

In early 1997, the designated tribunal issued an initial award establishing an international supervisory regime. This body was charged with recreating multiethnic local institutions and facilitating the return of ethnically cleansed former residents. Two years later it issued another award, which directed the supervisory regime to establish an autonomous, multiethnic district in the entirety of the Brčko area.

Retired Ambassador Robert ‘Bill’ Farrand served as the first supervisor of the Brčko area (later designated the Brčko District) from 1997 to 2000. *Reconstruction and Peacebuilding in the Balkans: The Brčko Experience*—part of the ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy Series—is a richly detailed account of his three years in that position.

He has organized his book thematically around several key issues: the supervisor’s political authority (vis-a-vis

both local officials and other international actors); freedom of movement; the return of displaced people; the process of re-establishing democratic, multiethnic, local government and the rule of law; and providing a solid foundation for economic revitalization.

As this diverse list indicates, navigating these challenges in a postwar setting requires not just a deft diplomatic touch, but also effective management skills, a healthy tolerance for complexity, and the ability to juggle multiple crises at once.

One of the more fascinating claims Farrand makes is that professional politicians such as, say, the mayor of a large city, may possess the best combination

The critical insight Farrand offers is that how peacebuilding is done is as important as what is to be done.

of personal qualities and skills to handle the demands of post-conflict civilian administration. I am not sure if I agree; it certainly didn’t work in the case of Hans

Koschnick, the former mayor of Bremen who led a similar, European Union-run administrative mission in Mostar.

Still, the broader point that Farrand makes about the importance of identifying individuals with the right mix of temperament and skills for such missions deserves consideration.

Those who are not intimately familiar with Bosnia may find the narrative confusing in places, especially given the numerous actors, events and political issues he covers, and the lack of a clear, chronological structure. However, careful readers will find their patience rewarded

with perceptive observations about the practice of peacebuilding.

Of particular interest are the author’s insights concerning the importance of developing and maintaining productive relations with other actors in one’s area of responsibility, and beyond. And not just local interlocutors, whose support of international peacebuilding goals may be mixed, but also other international officials—both civilian and military.

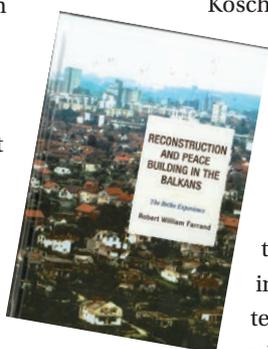
Indeed, a key lesson from Farrand’s tenure, and that of his successors, is that personality and policy-driven conflicts within the international community are often far more debilitating than local spoilers. This is especially the case with missions located far from central offices.

Farrand says that his purpose in writing the book was to offer a “useful reference” for those who may be faced with the difficult, and professionally risky, challenge of international peacebuilding administration in the future. Overall, he achieves this goal, despite the sui generis nature of both the supervisory regime and the Brčko District it established.

But what makes the book essential reading for those interested in postwar reconstruction and governance—and what sets it apart from most books devoted to these topics—is its detailed and practical advice on how to identify and best navigate the various tensions inherent in these efforts.

The critical insight that *Reconstruction and Peacebuilding in the Balkans* offers, in other words, is that *how* peacebuilding is done (practices) is as fundamental for the achievement of successful outcomes as *what* is to be done (policies).

Adam Moore is an assistant professor of geography at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research focuses on ethnic conflict, civil wars and postwar reconstruc-



tion. Later this year, Cornell University Press plans to publish his book, *Peacebuilding in Practice: Local Experience in Two Bosnian Towns*.

Opening Our Doors

The Immigrant Exodus: Why America Is Losing the Global Race to Capture Entrepreneurial Talent

Vivek Wadhwa, Wharton Digital Press, 2012, \$15.99/paperback, \$5.38/Kindle Edition, 106 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOSH GLAZEROFF

What is the American dream today? And whence comes our success? Many would say it all comes back to our being a nation of immigrants. But does it matter who those immigrants are?

In *The Immigrant Exodus*, Vivek Wadhwa—who teaches at Stanford, Duke and Emory, among other universities—urges Americans to overhaul our immigration policies to keep our country great. As competitors in a global marketplace, we need to stack up the talent on our side, or we are going to lose.

This short but thoughtful book is packed with insights into the impact of people flowing across our nation's borders. Given the fact the world is becoming ever "smaller" (or "flatter," if you prefer), it is in our national interest to entice the world's best and brightest to come here, then stay and contribute to the U.S. economy.

But is our country still an attractive destination? Wadhwa spells out the challenges prospective immigrants face to attain status as permanent residents. These are especially daunting for those who would like to build startups here, a process for which U.S. law offers almost

Wadhwa makes a strong case that our visa policy could mean as much to us as our global defense deterrent.

no way to acquire a green card.

What will those individuals do instead? Take advantage of opportunities elsewhere, of course. China and India are home to many of these entrepreneurs, but now Chile also offers them funding and an easy path to an immigrant visa.

The numerical limits on most visa categories, particularly for those who are skilled workers, are hobbling our economy. This is despite the fact that importing well-educated foreigners immediately produces taxpayers who shop,

buy homes and invest—not to mention the economic benefits their businesses confer.

As Wadhwa comments, U.S. immigration policy looks back to a different era, when we focused on family reunification. It is high time to revisit that approach.

Historically, Americans have encouraged anyone with new ideas to bring them to fruition in the U.S. marketplace. Such innovation turned companies like Apple, Google and Facebook into global powerhouses. Conversely, if U.S.-based companies are prevented from hiring great foreign employees, or their founders cannot come in and stay here, then we are destroying our own base of future growth.

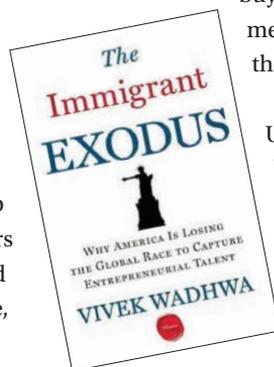
Wadhwa makes a strong case that our visa policy could mean as much to us as our global defense deterrent. By encouraging every nation's brightest scholars and scientists to come study, work or do exchanges in the United States, we build

a base of understanding and good will for the future.

Such interactions with future leaders are a big part of U.S. soft power. If we can attract some who wish to stay and eventually become part of our citizenry, even better. Besides, if we don't have a growing economy that generates jobs, how are we going to pay for our defense?

Whatever one thinks of his specific fixes, Wadhwa argues forcefully that issuing more visas to talented foreign professionals will add badly needed skills to our work force. And that will leave space for innovators to build the American companies of the future. ■

Josh Glazeroff, an FSO since 1997, is consul general in New Delhi.



A screenshot of a Facebook post from the 'Foreign Service Journal' page. The post asks, 'Do you "Like" the Foreign Service Journal?' and features a large 'Like' button. Below the button, there are several images of the journal's cover, including one with the headline 'Going Solo: Single in the Foreign Service by Shaw'. The post also includes a text block that says: 'Join the hundreds of people who have already found us. Read excerpts from the Journal and receive updates on our latest events.' At the bottom of the post is the URL 'www.facebook.com/fsjournal'.

FSJ's Guide to Property Management

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Remembering Bill Bacchus: Key Drafter of the 1980 Foreign Service Act

William I. Bacchus, 72, a civil servant who played a key role in drafting the Foreign Service Act of 1980, died on Jan. 23 at the Capital Caring hospice in Arlington, Va. He had esophageal cancer and liver cancer.

Mr. Bacchus, who was a nephew of the science fiction writer Robert A. Heinlein, was born in Oklahoma City, Okla., and raised in Albuquerque, N.M. He was a 1962 graduate of Princeton University. After service in the U.S. Navy, he received a doctorate in political science from Yale University in 1970.

Early in his career, Mr. Bacchus was an assistant professor of government and foreign affairs at the University of Virginia and a senior staff member of the Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy.

Starting in 1975, Mr. Bacchus spent more than 15 years working in personnel management at the State Department. He played a key role in drafting the Foreign Service Act of 1980, which covered employment, career advancement and grievance procedures, among other major administrative procedures for members of the Foreign Service.

Mr. Bacchus helped oversee a management study used in the transition from the George H.W. Bush administration to the Clinton White House in 1993. He then joined USAID as executive director of the Quality Council and later was executive director of the agency's Management Council before retiring. He worked as a consultant in foreign affairs until his death.

His honors included the State Department's Distinguished Service Award.

He is the author of four books: *Foreign Policy & the Bureaucratic Process: The State Department's Country Director System* (Princeton University Press, 1974), *Staffing for Foreign Affairs: Personnel Systems for the 1980s and 1990s* (Princeton University Press, 1983), *Inside the Legislative Process: The Passage of the Foreign Service Act of 1980* (Westview Press, 1984) and *The Price of American Foreign Policy: Congress, the Executive and International Affairs Funding* (Pennsylvania University Press, 1993).

Mr. Bacchus is survived by his wife of 47 years, Mary Dreiling Bacchus of Arlington, Va., and a brother.

■ **Robert Kerin Baron**, 79, a retired U.S. Information Agency officer who later taught English at Howard University and the University of Maryland, died on Dec. 14 at his home in McLean, Va., of cancer.

Mr. Baron was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pa. He received a bachelor's degree in radio and television

communications in 1954 and a master's degree in English literature in 1959, both from Temple University in Philadelphia. In the late 1950s, he served in the Army Transportation Corps.

Mr. Baron joined USIA in 1963 and was a cultural affairs officer in Venezuela, Colombia, Serbia and the former Yugoslavia. He also served as program

coordinator for Eastern Europe and chief of the old Yugoslavia branch of the Voice of America. Finally, he served as a director of USIA's Arts America program, which sponsored tours of popular U.S. artists abroad, before retiring from the agency in 1988.

Mr. Baron settled in the Washington, D.C., area in 1977, and taught English part-time at Prince George's Community College from 1978 to 1987. After his USIA retirement, he became a professor of English at Howard University.

He taught technical writing and advanced composition at the University of Maryland from 1996 until his retirement in 1999. He then worked part-time as an English composition, writing and language tutor. He also appeared in a number of plays at the McLean Community Center.

Survivors include his wife of 50 years, Barbara Weglicki Baron of McLean, Va.; two daughters, Victoria Baron of Fairfax, Va., and Elizabeth Baron of Kernersville, N.C.; a brother; and one granddaughter.

■ **Richard Holden Curtiss**, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on Jan. 31 in Silver Springs, Md.

Mr. Curtiss was born in 1927 and earned a degree in journalism at the University of Southern California, where he also received the Sigma Delta Chi award from the Society of Professional Journalists. After Army service in Berlin, he worked with United Press International.

In 1951, Mr. Curtiss joined the Foreign Service. During a 31-year diplomatic career, he served in Indonesia, Germany, Turkey, Lebanon (on three separate assignments), Iraq, Syria and Greece. He was particularly proud of his work with the Voice of America's Arabic Service

from 1970 to 1973. He retired in 1980 as the chief inspector of USIA.

Mr. Curtiss received the USIA's Superior Honor Award for his service as Embassy Beirut's public affairs officer during Lebanon's civil war. He also received the Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence in Public Diplomacy, USIA's highest professional recognition, in 1974.

In 1982, Mr. Curtiss, Ambassador Andrew Killgore and Ambassador Edward Henderson co-founded the American Educational Trust, a nonpartisan, nonprofit foundation, which publishes the award-winning *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* magazine.

Richard Curtiss is survived by his beloved wife of 62 years, Donna B. Curtiss of Kensington, Md.; a daughter, Darcy Sreebny (and her husband, Dan) of Herndon, Va.; a son, Andrew Curtiss (and his wife, Krista) also of Herndon; a daughter, Delinda Hanley of Kensington, Md.; and six grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son Denny.

■ **Jean O'Mara Ernst**, 87, the spouse of retired FSO Roger Ernst, passed away in Tampa, Fla., surrounded by her family.

Mrs. Ernst was born in New York City, where she attended St. Agatha's and Riverdale Country Day schools. After graduating from Smith College in 1947, she worked in investment management as a vice president with Fidelity Trust in New York City.

Her father was Col. John A. O'Mara, a pilot with the U.S. Army Air Force who played a key role in "Operation Paperclip," debriefing rocket scientists such as Werner von Braun and bringing them out of Germany in the immediate post-World War II period. Her mother, Margaret Fezandie O'Mara, was one of

the first women to gain a pilot's license, and often took Jeannie and her brother Johnny up flying.

Mrs. Ernst's husband of 60 years, Roger, proposed to her on first sight while flying from Nantucket to New York. They enjoyed a marriage of adventure, service and travel. During their postings to India, Taiwan, Korea, Ethiopia and Thailand, Mrs. Ernst hosted or met President Lyndon Baines Johnson, Jacqueline Kennedy, Sargent Schriver, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, President Park Chung Hee of Korea, Premier Chiang Kai-Shek of Taiwan, Mother Teresa and other global leaders.

In the United States, Mr. and Mrs. Ernst lived in Washington, D.C.; Bethesda, Md; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Tampa, Fla., and spent summers in Nantucket, Mass. Mrs. Ernst helped establish a preschool in Bethesda, Md., and an elementary school in New Delhi, India, and worked in a hospital in Taipei, Taiwan.

She was an avid tennis player, playing until the age of 86 and winning many singles and doubles championships, including the men's doubles title in Ethiopia (there wasn't a women's competition). She also enjoyed dancing, travel, gourmet cooking and entertaining. Mrs. Ernst is remembered for her beauty, style, caring thoughtfulness, upbeat attitude and quiet courage.

She is survived by her husband, Roger; her son, David (and his wife, Jennifer) of McLean, Va.; her daughter, Debbe (and her husband, Jeff Nicholson) of Nantucket, Mass.; four grandchildren, Benjamin, Julia, and Daniel Ernst, and Sam Nicholson; and many cousins.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in Jean Ernst's honor to the Alzheimer's Foundation at www.alz.org.

■ **Robert S. Gershenson**, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Dec. 23 at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Md. He had pneumonia and Parkinson's disease.

Robert Saul Gershenson was born in Philadelphia, Pa., where he graduated from Temple University in 1956. He joined the Foreign Service in 1957 and retired in 1981, having served in Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay.

Mr. Gershenson's Foreign Service career included consular, administrative and managerial positions. He was executive director of the State Department's Bureau of Inter-American Affairs from 1978 to 1980. In 1980 he served as deputy assistant secretary for personnel.

In 1980 President Jimmy Carter nominated him to be ambassador to Uruguay. But the nomination was one of several the Senate put on hold until the 1981 inauguration of Ronald Reagan, at which point Mr. Gershenson elected to retire.

On retiring, he received the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award.

Later Mr. Gershenson held consulting positions and executive jobs with office equipment companies in the Netherlands and California.

For three years he was executive director of Meridian House in Washington, D.C., which promotes international understanding.

In the early 1990s he returned to the State Department to work on various assignments for the Office of the Inspector General. He was a Silver Spring resident.

Survivors include his wife of 56 years, Linda Rosenthal Gershenson of Silver Spring, Md.; three children, Glenn Gershenson of Hershey, Pa., Geoffrey Gershenson of Oakland, Calif., and Ceci-

lia Haley of Elkridge, Md.; a brother; and five grandchildren.

■ **Lucian Heichler**, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Feb. 13 in Stamford, Conn., where he had been visiting family.

Born in Vienna, Austria, Mr. Heichler and his parents immigrated to the United States in 1940. Being Jewish, the family had spent two increasingly difficult years living under the Nazi regime, but managed to obtain visas when a diligent U.S. consular official retrieved a years-old application that allowed the Heichlers a spot near the head of the line for the small immigration quota. They travelled via the Netherlands weeks before that country fell to Hitler, and settled in New York City.

Mr. Heichler became a U.S. citizen in 1944 and served two years in the Army. He attended New York University, receiving a bachelor's degree in 1947 and a master's degree in history in 1951. His first job in government service was in the Army Office of the Chief of Military History, where he reviewed captured German documents and wrote parts of the official history of World War II.

In 1954 Heichler joined the State Department as an intelligence analyst, and also received a Foreign Service reserve officer commission; he gained regular FSO status in 1963, about three years into his first posting as a political officer in the U.S. Mission in Berlin.

In his role as liaison with the Berlin city government during the early 1960s, Mr. Heichler was closely involved with visits to Berlin by John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Adlai Stevenson. During the Berlin Wall crisis, he was tasked with showing Willy Brandt, then mayor of Berlin, the Americans' note of protest. The future cancel-

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lor left no doubt that he considered that response inadequate.

“The relationship with the Berlin city government was fraught,” recalls William Ryerson, a retired FSO and former ambassador to Albania who served with Mr. Heichler in Berlin. “Keeping everybody on both sides well informed was no small feat, and he did it consummately.”

In 1965 Mr. Heichler was dispatched to Yaoundé as an economic officer, after which he served two years in Kinshasa as head of the embassy’s economic section and deputy director of USAID. He then returned to Europe to attend the NATO Defense College program in Rome, before taking up the role of political officer at Embassy Bern. In 1973 Mr. Heichler returned to the Central European Affairs office at the State Department, where he occasionally employed his German accent to prank colleagues over the phone while Henry Kissinger was Secretary of State.

Mr. Heichler was seconded to NATO headquarters in Brussels in 1977, where he was on the international staff as deputy assistant secretary general for political affairs and head of the political directorate. During his last year at NATO, that group grappled with the difficult decision to station Pershing II and cruise missiles in Germany as a response to the Soviet SS-20 threat.

In 1980 Mr. Heichler took up what was to be his last overseas post, as counselor for mutual security affairs in Ankara. One month into this new posting, Mr. Heichler was promoted to the rank of FS-1, achieving a lifelong career goal.

Shortly before his arrival, a new defense and economic cooperation agreement had been reached between Turkey and the United States, and he was responsible for making sure that it

was implemented properly. “He also had the delicate task of being the interface between the embassy and the major general who headed the large military logistical operation in Turkey, a task he carried out with his typical diplomatic skill,” says retired FSO Michael Cotter, a colleague at the embassy.

Upon his return to Washington in 1983, Mr. Heichler was appointed to a position in the same division of the State Department where he had begun his career, the Bureau of Research and Intelligence. He served as director of intelligence coordination until leaving government service in 1986.

Mr. Heichler retired to Frederick, Md., where his wife, the Rev. Muriel N. Heichler, had been called as pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church (she had attended seminary in Gettysburg, Pa., after the couple’s return from Ankara). He volunteered as a translator of monographs for the Smithsonian Institution, and helped write grant proposals and newsletters for the nonprofit Family Life Center in Frederick.

Survivors include Muriel, his wife of 62 years, of Frederick; a son, Peter Heichler of Winchester, Va.; daughters Katherine Heichler of Stamford, Conn., and Elizabeth Heichler of Arlington, Mass.; grandsons Christopher and Nicholas, and great-granddaughter Olivia. His eldest daughter, Paula, predeceased him.

■ **Sanford “Sandy” Menter**, 92, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Feb. 2 in Laguna Hills, Calif. A resident of Lake Forest, Calif., he had earlier lived in McLean, Va., for 32 years.

Mr. Menter was born in Middletown, N.Y. He was a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and held a master of science degree in public administration from Syracuse University’s Maxwell

School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. He met his future wife, Jeannette, at Syracuse University in 1943, when they were both graduate students there. The couple married in Dublin, Ireland, in 1946.

In 1944 Mr. Menter joined the Department of State as an auxiliary, and was sent as a vice consul to Dublin, where he headed the visa office at the consulate general. He later held a variety of assignments in the management field, both in Washington, D.C., and in Australia, Yugoslavia, Ghana, West Germany, the USSR and Great Britain.

Over the years his responsibilities took him to 35 other countries for varying periods. In 1970 he was a Foreign Service inspector, but that assignment was cut short when he was seconded to the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency to serve as its executive director. Subsequently, he was appointed executive director of the Department of State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs.

During his time with ACDA, Mr. Menter was responsible for providing management support for the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, which alternated between Helsinki and Vienna, and ultimately for establishing Geneva as a permanent venue acceptable to both the American and Soviet negotiating teams.

When he retired in 1980, Mr. Menter had been serving for some three years as a deputy inspector general of the Department of State, including the Foreign Service. In 1977 and 1980 he received Superior Honor Awards.

Mr. Menter remained a member of the American Foreign Service Association ever since joining the Foreign Service. He was also a member, for some 30 years, of the International Country Club of Fairfax, Va., and a life member of the National Rifle Association. His hobbies

included collecting an eclectic variety of items of personal appeal, golf, single-malt scotch and hunting.

Mr. Menter's wife of 56 years, Jeannette, predeceased him in 2002. Survivors include a son, Timothy, of Newport Coast, Calif., and a sister, Joyce Wallace of Shaker Heights, Ohio.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Sanford and Jeannette C. Menter Endowed Graduate Scholarship Fund at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University, 200 Eggers Hall, Syracuse NY 13244. That fund was established by Mr. Menter in 2004 in memory of his wife.

■ **Louis John Nigro Jr.**, 65, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on Jan. 1 in Washington, D.C., after a struggle with cancer.

Mr. Nigro was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1947. He grew up in the Long Island town of Lynbrook and graduated from Malvern High School, where he was an Eagle Scout. He graduated with a B.A. in history from the University of Virginia in 1969 and earned a Ph.D. in history from Vanderbilt University in 1979.

From 1973 to 1974, Mr. Nigro was a Fulbright Scholar in Rome. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he served in the California Army National Guard, taught modern European history at Stanford University, and was a training and operations planner for the Department of Defense.

Mr. Nigro had a distinguished 30-year career in the Foreign Service beginning in 1980. He served twice in Chad, the second time as ambassador from 2007 to 2010. Other assignments included stints as a deputy chief of mission in Havana, Conakry and Vatican City, and an earlier posting to Port-au-Prince. He also served as Diplomat in Residence at the Uni-

versity of Houston and a professor of international affairs at the U.S. Army War College. After retirement he continued his work in the State Department for the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

Ambassador Nigro is the author of *The New Diplomacy in Italy: American Propaganda and U.S.-Italian Relations, 1917-1919* (Peter Lang Publishing, 1999), and also contributed numerous scholarly articles to various publications.

Amb. Nigro is survived by his wife of 19 years, Tarja, of Washington, D.C.

■ **Mark Palmer**, 71, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on Jan. 28 of melanoma at his home in Washington, D.C.

Robie Marcus Hooker Palmer was born on July 14, 1941, in Ann Arbor, Mich. His father was a naval officer and the family moved often during his youth. After graduating from a private high school in Vermont, Mr. Palmer went to Yale University, where he majored in Russian studies and took courses in the Soviet Union. He was a Freedom Rider in the South during the civil rights movement of the early 1960s, and organized demonstrations in Baltimore, Atlanta and Alabama.

Upon graduation from Yale in 1963, Mr. Palmer worked as a newspaper and television journalist in New York. He joined the Foreign Service in 1964.

During a 26-year diplomatic career, Mr. Palmer served overseas in New Delhi, Moscow and the former Yugoslavia, becoming an expert on Soviet affairs during the 1980s.

Mr. Palmer wrote speeches for three presidents and six Secretaries of State, serving as the sole speechwriter for Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger from 1973 to 1975. He was also the author of widely used State Department hand-

books for diplomats and military officers.

In his obituary in the *Washington Post*, Matt Schudel notes that Mr. Palmer was known for his advocacy of democratic principles of government throughout his career—at a time, in the 1970s, when U.S. policy was more focused on containing the Soviet threat and monitoring human rights abuses.

He was one of the primary authors of President Ronald Reagan's 1982 speech to the British Parliament outlining a goal of spreading democracy throughout the old Soviet bloc. "What I am describing now is a plan and a hope for the long term—the march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history," Reagan memorably declared.

Mr. Palmer also organized the 1985 Geneva summit between Pres. Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, a diplomatic breakthrough that led to a thawing of relations between the two superpowers.

In 1986, Reagan named Mr. Palmer U.S. ambassador to Hungary. There, Ambassador Palmer carried his campaign for democracy to the streets of Budapest, sometimes marching with forces opposing the communist regime. His support of the Hungarian opposition movement lent credibility to its cause; but, as the *Post's* Schudel points out, it also caused discomfort on the State Department's seventh floor.

Amb. Palmer received three presidential awards, but left the Foreign Service in 1990 in a controversy over his involvement in what some legislators and State Department officials considered a conflict of interest.

After leaving the Foreign Service, Amb. Palmer was based in Berlin as president of the Central European Development Corp. From there, he pioneered

business enterprises throughout the old Soviet empire and established the first independent television stations in six East European countries. He also owned a company involved in building housing in Anacostia and other areas of the Washington region undergoing revitalization.

Amb. Palmer is the author of *Breaking the Real Axis of Evil: How to Oust the World's Last Dictators by 2025* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003). He held leadership positions in Freedom House and other groups devoted to promoting democracy.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Sushma Mahyera Palmer of Washington, D.C., and a sister.

■ **Richard Undeland**, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer with USIA, died on Dec. 21 at Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington County, Va., after a long illness.

A native of Omaha, Neb., Mr. Undeland was a 1952 graduate of Harvard University. He received a master's degree in business administration from Stanford University in 1954, and then went to Cairo University to study Arabic.

Mr. Undeland joined USIA in 1957. During a 35-year diplomatic career, he and his wife, Joan, served in 11 Arab countries, with additional assignments to Vietnam and Washington, D.C. Mr. Undeland's overseas postings included Alexandria, Algiers, Amman, Bahrain, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Kuwait, Doha, Rabat, Saigon and Tunis. He served variously as an information officer, field operations officer and public affairs officer.

In the late 1970s, Mr. Undeland was a State Department deputy spokesman during the peace talks between Egypt and Israel held at Camp David, Md. He retired in 1992 with the rank of minister-counselor and received USIA's Career

Achievement Award.

The Undelands then settled in Arlington, Va., where Mr. Undeland served as founder, president and chairman emeritus of the Foreign Affairs Retirees of Northern Virginia, or FARNOVA. He was a volunteer with Arlington's elections office and served as a polling chief. In addition, he was on the board of the Northern Virginia Hiking Club and participated in other hiking groups.

Survivors include his wife of 58 years, Joan Marvin Undeland of Arlington, Va.; four children, David Undeland of Suffolk, Va., John Undeland of Arlington, Anne Undeland of Richmond, Mass., and Charles Undeland of Colombo, Sri Lanka; a brother; and six grandchildren.

■ **Frank Dixon "Dick" Underwood**, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Dec. 29 at the Wilkes Regional Medical Center in North Wilkesboro, N.C.

Mr. Underwood was born in Wilkes County, N.C., on Oct. 19, 1927, to B.R. and Frances Hendren Underwood. A lifelong member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, he graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1950 after studying journalism. After a job as the news editor for *The Rocky Mount Evening Telegram*, he joined the U.S. Navy, serving as editor of the Navy's magazine in Washington, D.C., from 1952 until 1955.

In 1955, Mr. Underwood joined the Foreign Service of the U.S. Information Agency. His first posting was Jakarta, where he was in charge of publications from 1955 until 1958.

From 1958 until 1960, he trained in Japanese language studies before serving as director of the American Cultural Center in Kanazawa.

In 1963, Mr. Underwood was trans-

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Secretary of State John F. Kerry with the President of Liberia, H.E. Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

ferred to Tokyo as assistant cultural affairs officer. He returned to Indonesia in 1968 as cultural attaché to work with faculty and staff of all 30 universities in the country.

In 1973, Mr. Underwood became the cultural affairs officer in Japan. He worked with visiting U.S. diplomats and such prominent Americans as Zbigniew Brzezinski, James Michener and Walter Cronkite. In 1978, he was posted to the South Pacific to evaluate the status of Papua, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and other developing nations. Mr. Underwood later served as acting U.S. ambassador to several countries in the South Pacific.

He retired from the Foreign Service in 1981 and returned with his wife, Jean, to North Wilkesboro. There he assumed the position of editor of *The Journal-Patriot* newspaper, serving until 1991.

In 1995, Mr. Underwood began writing the history of Wilkesboro. It is a detailed account, covering the arrival of settlers through the present day. Numerous residents and former residents assisted with the project, which is near completion and will be published post-humously.

Friends and family members remember Mr. Underwood for his many positive qualities. He was a very concerned and effective public citizen, giving time and energy to a variety of causes, including the library, Kiwanis, the town of Wilkesboro and the Wilkes Art Gallery. He was an accomplished photographer, a talented painter, a good cook and a lover of fine art, music and drama. His intellect, sense of humor and social consciousness will be missed.

Mr. Underwood is survived by his wife, Jean Craig Ohlund Underwood, of North Wilkesboro.

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■ **Christopher Van Hollen**, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on Jan. 30 at the Washington Home hospice in Washington, D.C., of complications from Alzheimer's disease.

Mr. Van Hollen was born in Baltimore, Md., on Sept 23, 1922. Following service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he graduated from Haverford College in 1947. He went to graduate school on the G.I. Bill, receiving a doctorate in political science from Johns Hopkins University in 1951, and joined the State Department as a foreign affairs analyst that same year. In 1953 he married Edith Eliza Farnsworth,

who became an analyst on Afghanistan and south Asia in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

In 1954, Mr. Van Hollen was posted to New Delhi as a political officer. He spent the next six years in South Asia, first in New Delhi, with additional accreditation to Kathmandu; then in Karachi and Murree-Rawalpindi. In 1961, he returned to the department where, in 1963, he was made officer-in-charge of NATO political affairs before being detailed to the National War College a year later.

Mr. Van Hollen was assigned to Ankara as counselor for political affairs in 1965, returning to the department as country director for India, Ceylon and Nepal-Maldives in 1968. He became deputy assistant secretary for Near East-

ern and South Asian affairs in 1969, serving until 1972. During this period, East Pakistan's 1971 secession from Pakistan to form Bangladesh in 1971 presented a dilemma for Washington, which had strong Cold War ties with Pakistan's military government, through which it was maneuvering secretly to reopen relations with China.

In the *Washington Post* obituary, Adam Bernstein cites Mr. Van Hollen's account of this dilemma from his 1990 oral history: "Because Pakistan was seen as a key intermediary in this process, Nixon and Kissinger were very reluctant to take any action that might upset the evolution of the U.S.-Chinese relationship through the good offices of Pakistan, which had at that time a good relationship with China."

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The Nixon White House moved carefully toward diplomatic recognition of Bangladesh, finally making it official in 1972, the year Mr. Van Hollen was named U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Ambassador Van Hollen served in Colombo for four years, during which he enjoyed a cordial relationship with Sri Lankan President Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

Amb. Van Hollen returned to Washington, D.C., to run the State Department's senior seminar before retiring in 1979.

Following retirement, he was a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and director of the old American Institute for Islamic Affairs.

Amb. Van Hollen was predeceased by his wife, Edith, in 2007. He is survived by his son, U.S. Representative Chris Van Hollen Jr., D-Md., of Kensington, Md.; two daughters, Caroline Van Hollen of Washington, D.C., and Cecilia Van Hollen of Fayetteville, N.Y.; two sisters; and five grandchildren.

■ **Alice Marie Weaver**, 70, a retired Foreign Service officer, died of natural causes in Phoenix, Ariz., the city of her birth, on Feb. 21.

The youngest child of Elva Delton Weaver and Laura Mitchell Weaver, Ms. Weaver was born on Feb. 25, 1942. She and her older sister Teresa Ann (1939-1997) grew up in northeast Phoenix as part of a close-knit extended family. She graduated from Camelback High School in 1960, where she sang in the chorus and was renowned for her roles as lead contralto and frequent soloist. She went on to business college and then to work briefly in Phoenix.

Ms. Weaver had a thirst for adventure and travel, and joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1969. She served as executive assistant/office management special-

ist to chiefs of section, consuls general, deputy chiefs of mission and ambassadors around the globe. She served in the Dominican Republic, Thailand, Pakistan, Guatemala (her favorite post), Mexico, Nigeria, Korea, the Congo, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia and Paraguay, in addition to Washington, D.C.

Her family benefited greatly from Ms. Weaver's commitment to the Foreign Service and her love of adventure. Her sister and other family members took advantage of her postings to visit foreign parts themselves, always finding a great host. Those at home benefited from creative gifts that brought the world to them: a Dominican rocking chair for a wedding; a child's kimono to celebrate a birth; wooden carvings and a quilt from Africa;

and Christmas delights galore, including dolls from Thailand that now entrance a second generation of children.

Returning home to Phoenix as often as possible, Ms. Weaver maintained close contact with her family and retired there in 1997. She took on part-time work and became active in the community, volunteering at the Arizona Humane Society and the Area Center for Aging.

Ms. Weaver is remembered for her dry wit, large laugh and generosity of spirit. All who knew her are richer from her time on earth.

She is survived by her nephews, Frank and Dan Rich; her nieces, Kathi Woodley and Kristi Udell; her cousins, Pam Fishman, Judy Mitchell and Jan Brady; and her grandnieces and grandnephews,

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Rae, Bailey and Olivia Rich; and Morgan, Garrett and Samantha Udell.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Arizona Humane Society at <http://www.azhumane.org/how-you-can-help/give/memorial-tribute-gifts/>.

■ **Norbert Joseph Yasharoff**, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on Jan. 19 at his home in Arlington, Va., of complications from a staph infection.

Mr. Yasharoff was born to a Jewish family in Sofia. He recounted his childhood in a book he co-authored with Gabriel Mermall, *By the Grace of Strangers: Two Boys' Rescue During the Holocaust* (Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project, 2006).

In the years after World War II, Mr. Yasharoff immigrated to what became Israel. He later served for two years in the Israeli air force, and received a bachelor's degree in political science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the 1950s.

After settling in the Washington area in the early 1970s, Mr. Yasharoff received a master's degree in public relations from American University and became a U.S. citizen in 1976.

Mr. Yasharoff worked over the years as a senior editorial writer, commentator and policy officer for the Voice of America. A Bulgarian native, he spoke nine languages and had a special expertise in the Balkans. In the 1970s and early 1980s, he held positions as public affairs officer and director of USIA's cultural

center in Sarajevo, in the former Yugoslavia. He retired in 1989 after working for USIA for about two decades.

Following retirement, Mr. Yasharoff did freelance writing for Bulgarian publications. He translated and edited several books, including two novels and a history of the early years of the Israeli state. He helped found an organization of retired Foreign Service officers and did volunteer work at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

His marriages to the former Halina J. Litman and the former Alvina Murphy ended in divorce. Survivors include two sons from his first marriage, Joe Yasharoff of Potomac, Md., and Dov Yasharoff of Reading, England; and two grandchildren. ■



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Bhaktapur is one of seven UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Kathmandu Valley, renowned for its stunning, ancient Hindu and Buddhist architecture. ■

Jed Meline is a 14-year veteran with the USAID Foreign Service currently serving in the Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau in Washington. His previous posting was as deputy mission director in Nepal. He is a member of the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board. He took this photo with a Canon EOS T2i with a 75-300 zoom lens.

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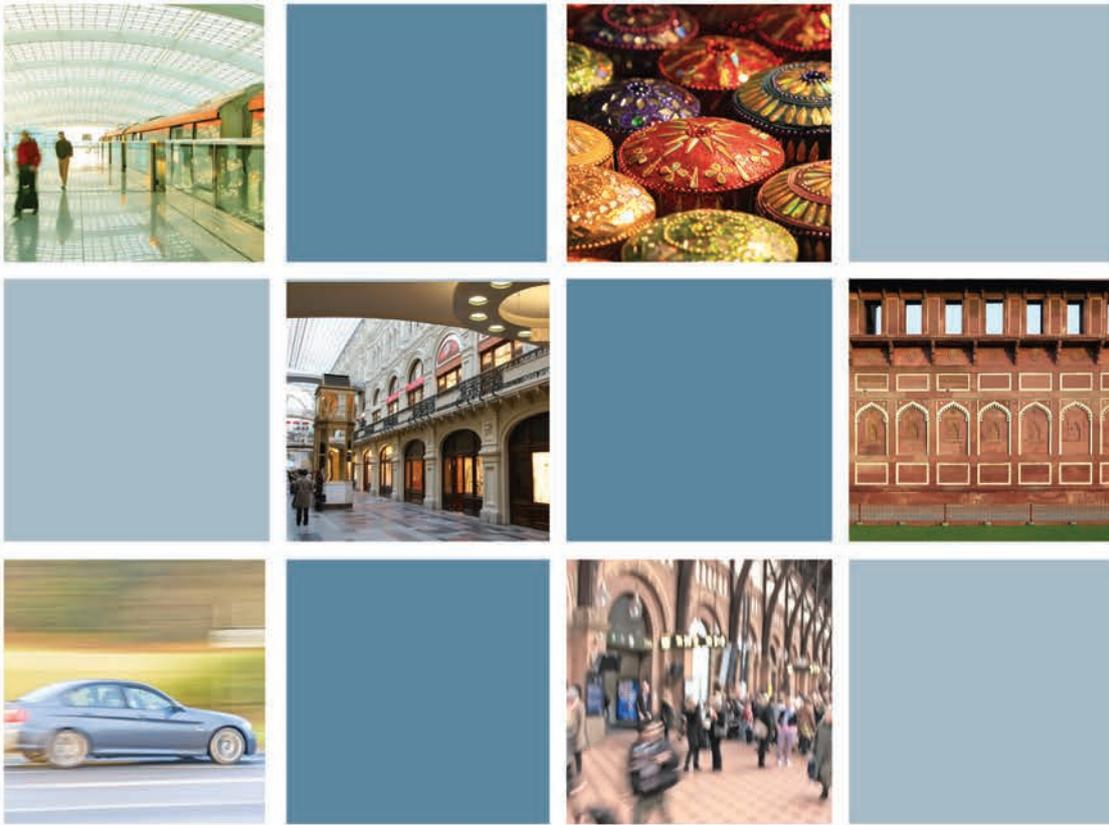
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