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Inside—Works of Ukrainian artist Maria Primachenko (1909-1997) accompany the Focus articles.

More Diplomacy, Now

BY ERIC RUBIN

(a)The Congress finds that—
(1) a career foreign service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest to assist the President and the Secretary of State in conducting the foreign affairs of the United States; ...

That is the opening statement of the U.S. Foreign Service Act of 1980, our foundational legislation, and a testament to the power of bipartisan action to advance our national interest—something we see all too rarely these days.

The challenges that our country and the world are now up against are the most dramatic and consequential since the end of the Cold War. As diplomats and development professionals, we have the opportunity and, when we can, the obligation to contribute to efforts to respond to these challenges and to help shape the future direction of our world.

This issue of the *FSJ* includes a collection of superb essays on the new realities we face in 2022 in the wake of Russia's renewed invasion of Ukraine and the related horrors and war crimes. The authors—Bill Taylor, Rose Gottemoeller, Michael Lally, and Ken Moskowitz—highlight the factors that led to the current crisis and the stark choices facing the United States



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

and the world. Thankfully, support for Ukraine has, so far, been bipartisan.

The return of war to the heart of Europe is occurring at the same time we are met with an increasingly aggressive China and ongoing global crises in energy, climate, health, and food security.

Our country needs the wisdom, experience, and judgment that only a career, professional diplomatic service can provide. AFSA will continue pushing hard for action to fill all remaining Senate-confirmed diplomatic and policy positions (a shocking number are still vacant), for the Senate to confirm all pending career and political nominations to diplomatic positions before the end of the current session, and for Congress and the administration to commit to increased funding and overseas staffing for every foreign affairs agency.

We applaud the Biden administration's decision to reverse the shortsighted actions of previous administrations to close embassies in "small countries" and believe that reinvestigating President John F. Kennedy's vision of universal representation, with a U.S. embassy in nearly every national capital, is both essential and affordable.

Those of us who have devoted much of our careers to building a positive and constructive relationship with Russia can only find this time to be wrenching and dismaying. An era has ended with the passing of Mikhail Gorbachev. As the authors in this issue of the *Journal* emphasize, we as a service and a profession have an indispensable role to play

in navigating this difficult time.

Our colleagues across the globe are doing just that. In Kyiv, the core team that returned to reopen our embassy is living under the daily threat of missile and rocket attacks, working day by day to reestablish our presence and support Ukraine in its hour of need.

In Moscow, our colleagues are living and working under the most hostile and difficult conditions since the end of the Cold War. They are keeping the American flag flying while working to help imprisoned Americans, prevent further escalation, and keep diplomatic channels open at a time when those channels are more constricted and restricted than they have been since the days of Stalin.

America needs diplomacy now. And diplomacy needs a strong, healthy, motivated, and respected corps of professionals. May we be worthy of this moment, and may we get the support and resources we need to do the job we want to do for our country and the American people.



As I write this column, I have just learned the terrible news of the death of our friend and colleague Sarah Langenkamp in a bicycle accident in Bethesda, Maryland. Only a few weeks before, our colleagues Shawn O'Donnell and Timothy Fingerson also died in heartbreaking, tragic traffic accidents, in Foggy Bottom. Our thoughts and heartfelt sympathy are with their families and with all of those who knew and loved them. ■

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Ukraine in Context

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Thinking about how to frame this edition's focus on Ukraine, I kept coming back to Maria Primachenko (1909-1997), the folk-art painter whose works illustrate those articles. Admired around the world, she inspired such artists as Marc Chagall and Pablo Picasso, who said of her in 1937: "I bow down before the artistic miracle of this brilliant Ukrainian."

Beloved symbols of Ukraine's cultural heritage and identity, Primachenko's work is under attack. In February, with Russia's invasion, the museum holding some 25 paintings in her hometown—the tiny Ivankin—was set ablaze. A local man is said to have braved the burning building to save many of them.

Her fantastical creatures—like the one in "May That Nuclear War Be Cursed!" or like the peace dove that is now an anti-war emblem—are vivid, whimsical, and full of hope. They reflect an insistence on life, a stirring resilience that has been much in evidence since Ukraine and its people were plunged into the crucible of war.

As the conflict entered its sixth month, we asked four experienced diplomats for their perspectives on this international crisis. Bill Taylor, a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine (2006-2009) and later chargé (2019), answers our ques-



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

tions in "Understanding Ukraine," offering his view on why U.S. political, military, and financial support for Ukraine is critical.

Ken Moskowitz, a retired FSO with years of experience in Ukraine and the region, looks back at NATO's 50th anniversary conference in Kyiv and asks: "Did NATO Expansion Really Cause Putin's Invasion?"

Rose Gottemoeller, a lead U.S. negotiator for the 1994 Budapest Memorandum that led to Ukraine giving up its nuclear weapons in exchange for assurances it would be secure from attack, asks: "Should Ukraine Have Kept Nuclear Weapons?" Michael Lally, who has served as senior commercial officer in Moscow and Kyiv, looks to the future in "Ukraine Reconstruction: Priorities, Institutions, and the Private Sector."

In President's Views, Ambassador Eric Rubin urges "More Diplomacy, Now." And in Speaking Out, Ambassador (ret.) Niels Marquardt calls for U.S. government attention to those harmed by WikiLeaks, particularly Marafa Hamidou Yaya, a political prisoner in Cameroon.

In the Appreciation, former AFSA president Susan Johnson fondly remembers Ann Delavan Harrop, who led a truly inspiring Foreign Service life.

This month, we introduce a new *FSJ* department, Straight from the Source—a space for officials to tell the community what the foreign affairs agencies are doing, what new policies are being

put in place, and why. These articles can serve as a starting point for further discussion. Agree or disagree with such and such policy, it's important to know what it is.

Changes in how the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) is used in the hiring process have produced much hand-wringing of late, and AFSA was not consulted on the moves. So, we went straight to the source to bring you: "FSO Selection: Changing the Path to the Oral Assessment" by BEX Senior Adviser Deidi Delahanty.

A second article in this new department describes the first major changes to diplomatic language testing in 50 years: "Language Testing Reforms: What You Need to Know" by Director of the Foreign Service Institute's Language Testing Unit David Sawyer.

And speaking of introductions, I call your attention to our "*FSJ Insider*" weekly email bulletin featuring current *FSJ* content along with other items of FS interest. A relatively new offering, the "*Insider*" has more than 1,200 subscribers and is growing weekly. It's free for AFSA members and nonmembers alike, so tell your friends and help us get Foreign Service content out to a wider audience. Sign up on our homepage, www.afsa.org/fsj.

As always, we want to hear from you. Write to journal@afsa.org. ■



Balkan Challenges

I agree there's a Balkan storm brewing, and Serbia is instigating it (along with the Serbia-affiliated province of Bosnia), as Denis Rajic and Marko Attila Hoare write in the July-August *FSJ* (Speaking Out).

And, yes, Russia provides funds, inspiration, and more to these extremists. Kosovo is the flashpoint du jour, yet Bosnia and Montenegro are also causes for concern.

But I differ with authors Rajic and Hoare on a couple key points. First, the lead international response belongs not to NATO, but to the European Union and Serbia's Balkan neighbors, with vigorous U.S. support.

NATO's role is essentially peace-keeping, within a framework of United Nations Security Council resolutions. Those are more hands-off politically (as they should be). They are also subject to Russia's veto, limiting NATO's scope of action.

We in Washington don't like to acknowledge limits on NATO, but the reality is that most NATO governments crave some U.N. blessing for their decisions. That's okay, however, since E.U. members, aspirants, and partners are the right locus to determine carrots and sticks for Serbia; its chauvinism is rooted in the economics of corruption and trade rather than security issues.

My other disagreement is about Russia's role. We have seen in the past that Belgrade has little compunction about throwing Moscow overboard when it suits. Tee up the right decision-making for Serbia, and its brotherhood with Russia will not pose an obstacle. If this was true in the recent past, it is more the case now, when Russia shows weakness militarily and economically and earns scorn for invasion abroad and rot at home.

True, some people in Serbia and ethnic Serbs in neighboring countries may choose to invoke Russia to advance their agenda, but centuries of cynical politics have taught them not to rely on foreign saviors. (In fact, I would argue that Western Balkan peoples have become expert at playing foreign forces off against one another, but that's a discussion for another time.)

By all means, let's rise to the challenge in the Balkans and uphold our values, as the authors urge. But let's keep our focus on the attitudes and actions of people in the region, especially the troublemakers leading Serbia astray, if we want to make a real difference.

Christopher J. Hoh

FSO, retired

Arlington, Virginia

No Easy Decisions

Transitions! What a timely topic for the focus of the July-August *Journal*. Here is one memory to help those coping with evacuations and other abrupt transitions recall how tough these issues have always been.

Years ago, while working the Congress for then-Under Secretary of State for Management Richard Moose, I can still recall a series of special "M" staff meetings trying to figure out how to respond to severe (really severe!) air pollution in Southeast Asia due to forest fires, a heat wave, volcanic residue, etc.

Some of the issues I can recall being considered were: What could—and would—MED predict about health risks? Should evacuations be mandatory or

voluntary? Who is "essential"? What should be done with and for non-State, non-U.S. government employee American citizens? And of course, what would be the budgetary impact? Plus, what precedents were we setting?

The main and most useful precedent was probably trying to deal with such crises systematically. In a social media world, these considerations must be even further time-compressed and difficult. Thanks again to the *Journal* for raising them.

Bob Hopper

FSO and CS employee, retired

Falls Church, Virginia

Supporting Evacuees

Congratulations on the July-August edition of *The Foreign Service Journal* and the many articles concerning family issues.

I read with interest Donna Scaramastra Gorman and Jessica Hayden's excellent article on evacuation. However, I would like to highlight the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) Evacuation Support Network, which has helped Foreign Service families when they are evacuated since the early 1980s. It began with telephone trees shortly after the Iran hostage crisis when it became clear how little support families were given by State during that crisis.

Today, we have more than 100 volunteers ready and willing to support these families, and we communicate by email, Facebook, and other social media. Since the Arab Spring in 2010, we have helped more than 1,500 families.

Following the 2010 Haiti earthquake,



one of our volunteers took a single woman who had escaped in only a T-shirt and shorts shopping.

We have found preschools and nannies for families. We have donated toys, clothing, and kitchen supplies for those stuck in poorly furnished apartments. We have shared Passover Seders and Thanksgiving feasts with families.

During the COVID-19-related evacuations, we were able to coordinate with the Junior League of Washington, which opened its mega “Tossed and Found Sale” to evacuee families. The sale had been canceled because of the pandemic, but evacuees shopped free in their warehouse. Exercise equipment flew off the shelves. This year the sale was on, and evacuee families were given generous discounts.

Before State and the Global Community Liaison Office went virtual, AAFSW was included in their town halls to get the word out. Now we depend on social media announcements to advertise our services. We are here and ready to help. You can contact us through AAFSW.org.

I would also like to applaud AFSA President Eric Rubin for his and AFSA’s stance on women’s reproductive health issues. Treatment by the Bureau of Medical Services (MED) of some employees and family members while stationed abroad has been egregious. Hopefully bringing this into the light will also bring improvement.

AAFSW supports the efforts of AFSA and the more than 200 signatories of a letter to MED demanding it change its protocols so that women overseas will have access to the same treatment as they would in the United States, at least in some states.

*Ann La Porta
Chair, AAFSW Evacuee Support
Washington, D.C.*

Remembering Tet

In her review of Philip Seib’s *Information at War* in the July-August *FSJ*, Vivian S. Walker refers to “the 1967 Tet Offensive.”

In fact, the Tet Offensive took place beginning on Jan. 31, 1968, with an attack by a Vietcong sapper squad on the American embassy in downtown Saigon. I know this because I was the duty officer inside the embassy at the time of the attack.

My account of the attack, in the form of a Memorandum for the Record written right after, was published in two parts by *The Wall Street Journal* on Nov. 3 and 4, 1981.

*E. Allan Wendt
Ambassador, retired
Washington, D.C.*

Abandoning an Objective Examination System

I was astonished by indications in the June *Foreign Service Journal* that the weight of the Foreign Service Examination (FSOT) has been considerably diminished.

First, Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley stated that the exam has “zero correlation to being a successful diplomat. Zero.” Next, an AFSA News article, “Concerns on New FSOT Process,” expressed concern that neither AFSA nor other stakeholders were consulted on the “fundamental changes” in the FSO selection process announced by the State Department in April.

It appears that an objective and merit-based examination system, one with ancient roots, one credited to the Confucians for ensuring equality for all irrespective of class, color, or point of view, is being abandoned in favor of a selection system designed for racial and gender promotion.

If the present exam has no correlation to being a successful diplomat, why not, in the interests of preserving equal opportunity, come up with an improved exam that has that correlation?

I really don’t care about physical and mental diversities at State. I do care that U.S. taxpayers get a bang for their bucks. That means setting objective performance standards to maintain a selection process based on merit, not one based on giving advantage to skin color, gender, or sexual orientation(s).

Such a selection process does not “level the playing field for everyone,” as the ambassador claims. It does the opposite.

I hope the *Journal* has the interest and courage to examine the revised FSO selection system, due to begin this June. I hope it can explain how the new procedures work (current explanations seem murky), the results they bring, and whether they are based on merit or on some directive aimed at making State employees “look like America.” (Again, I really do not care what they look like.)

*Richard W. Hoover
FSO, retired
Front Royal, Virginia*

Discrimination’s Long History

Roy Glover’s article “A Foreign Service Career—Blindness Didn’t Stop Me” (June *FSJ*) reminded me of my experience passing the Foreign Service entrance test and the oral assessment in January 1971.

As preparation for the oral interview, I obtained a copy of the State Department’s newly published Macomber Report and focused intently on the part that discussed the problem of qualified officers leaving the Foreign Service early in their careers. Turnover was affecting the esprit de corps and effectiveness of



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the Foreign Service. At that time, it was almost completely a white male bastion.

I also read about the discrimination against women officers, who were forced to resign their commissions when they married. Later, I read about Alison Palmer's lawsuit against the department for sex discrimination, especially in assignments and promotions. It took the State Department 14 years to settle the case. Meanwhile, dozens of women left the service.

As an AFSA vice president for USIA (1995-1996) with AFSA President Tex Harris, I became well informed about several discrimination cases involving women officers.

Glover makes a crucial point about discriminatory practices. In the case of women officers, a protracted lawsuit ended in a victory for women—but at a price. Many of the plaintiffs lost out on better assignments and promotions despite their qualifications. Glover, himself, may have been shorted on a promotion despite his service in Kabul under harrowing circumstances.

His experience and his description of Avraham Rabby's experience underlines continued discriminatory practices and personal struggles to overcome them. The Foreign Service has lost many superlative officers due to different forms of discrimination.

Glover's experience also reflects the sad history of prejudice among some FSOs and senior managers, who apparently believe that only certain kinds of people are entitled to be in the Foreign Service; and, among them, certain types are favored for promotion.

I believe that significant steps have been taken since my retirement in 2000 to lessen discrimination and improve diversity, but I also recognize that there are networks of officers who tend to

favor and advance one another's careers through the assignments process and while sitting on promotion panels.

Bruce K. Byers
FSO, retired
Reston, Virginia

AI and the FS Selection Process

I write this letter to the editor of the *FSJ* after reading an article by Charlie Keohan and Nicholas Kralev on the Diplomatic Diary blog of the Washington International Diplomatic Academy, headed by Kralev.

They write that in April the State Department announced what it described as “the most significant change in Foreign Service entrance procedures since 1930.” State made an artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm test, including textual analysis of six essays by an applicant, the co-dominant if not dominant factor along with the traditional Foreign Service Exam (FSOT) in determining who would move on to an oral exam. Previously, the FSOT had been the determining factor in screening at the first stage.

This change was announced without prior consultation with AFSA, which appears to have been a deliberate evasion since the importance of the change (and thus the consultation requirement) could not have been unknown to those who implemented it.

Beyond that exercise in bad faith, the new procedure raises several troubling questions for the future of recruitment and thus of the Foreign Service itself. This is particularly the case because

there has been no transparency by the department regarding how those algorithms work and, above all, what factors are favored and how they are rated.

1. The test score will be based, in part, on the applicant's “personal qualifications.” What does that mean? Could this be a device for introducing racial or ethnic quotas or biases into recruitment? Note that Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Brian McKeon in May testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the changes were aimed at enhancing “diversity” in the Service. That code word suggests possible racialism in recruitment abetted by a supposedly neutral algorithm.

2. The algorithm will also analyze six essays written by applicants to evaluate their qualities. Accurately evaluating a human's qualities by a computer's statistical algorithm of their writings strikes me as fanciful. And all the more so because those six essays will have been written by applicants with ample time to try to “write to the test.”

In the “old days,” the applicant was given a choice of three topics and chose one on the spot on which to write an essay within 30 minutes. The panel then evaluated it. I acknowledge that this may not have revealed the inner personality or many qualities of the applicant, but at least it honestly tested their mental quickness on their feet and ability to write, which are essential qualities for the Foreign Service.

So why do we now need six essays instead of one from an individual? That number six is apparently an excuse for use of AI computers instead of analysis

by human panels who, it is said, would be inundated by essays. But if a person cannot express and reveal themselves adequately in one essay, why six?

Foreign Service officers have for decades lamented the lack of transparency in promotions and assignments. These latest changes add to that a lack of transparency in recruitment, on which the future of the Service depends. It strikes me as either the fruit of technocratic foolishness or an attempt at racial and ethnic bias in recruitment.

Marc E. Nicholson
FSO, retired
Washington, D.C. ■



CORRECTIONS

The September *FSJ* letter from the editor incorrectly pointed to Secretary Blinken's August visit to Africa as his first visit there as Secretary. He has in fact visited Africa more than once, his first time as Secretary in November 2021.

In Gregory Garland's September *FSJ* article, on page 47, the last reference to Sékou Touré should read Guinea's leader, not Ghana's.

We regret the errors.



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New Fellowships at State

In support of efforts to build a workforce representative of all segments of society, the State Department has created two new fellowship programs to feed into its Civil Service and Diplomatic Security Service, respectively.

On Aug. 17, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the launch of the Colin Powell Leadership Program, which will provide paid fellowships to recent college graduates and paid internships to students who are enrolled at accredited higher learning institutions. Both paths may lead to full-time Civil Service employment at the department.

The Powell program is aimed at “developing future leaders through training, mentoring, and on-the-job experience to prepare them for the world of diplomacy,” the Secretary said.

The second new program offers scholarships, professional training, and mentoring to graduate students from underrepresented communities. On completing the program, they will enter the Foreign Service as Diplomatic Security special agents. This fellowship will be named after William D. Clark Sr., the first member of Diplomatic Security to achieve the rank of ambassador, which he did in 1998.

Secretary Blinken announced the new programs at an event at the State Department celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship, the 20th anniversary of the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs

Program, the 10th anniversary of the Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship, and the 5th anniversary of the Foreign Affairs IT (FAIT) Fellowship Program. Also speaking at the event were Director General Marcia Bernicat, Ambassador (ret.) Tom Pickering, and USAID Administrator Samantha Power.

In his remarks, the Secretary emphasized the value of fellowship programs as a vehicle for strengthening U.S. foreign



Secretary of State Antony Blinken announces two new fellowships at an Aug. 17 event celebrating the anniversary of four State Department fellowship programs.

policy through a diverse and innovative workforce. “One in nine active Foreign Service officers participated in Rangel or Pickering. Thanks to them, the number of generalists from underrepresented backgrounds has increased by 33 percent,” he said.

U.S.-Russia Prisoner Swap?

In a July 29 phone call, Secretary of State Antony Blinken pressed Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to accept a proposal Washington has put forward to secure the release of two Americans the State Department considers “wrongfully detained” in Russia.

The call marked the first conversation between the two diplomats since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24.

On the table is a proposed swap in which American basketball star Brittney Griner, detained since February 2022, and former U.S. Marine Paul Whelan, detained since December 2018, would be released in exchange for Viktor Bout, a Russian arms dealer imprisoned in the U.S. since 2008. He is currently serving a 25-year sentence for conspiring to kill Americans and providing aid to terrorists.

On Aug. 4, a Russian court sentenced Griner to nine years in prison in one of the country’s penal colonies. These remote facilities are notorious for their poor treatment of prisoners and hard labor requirements.

It remains unclear how prisoner swap negotiations will be affected by U.S. pledges to provide Ukraine with long-term security aid. In an unannounced visit to Kyiv on Sept. 8, Secretary Blinken promised almost \$3 billion more in aid and weapons, bringing the total security assistance to Ukraine to \$13.5 billion since Russia’s invasion began, NPR reported.

Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs Ambassador Roger Carstens told NPR in July: “Throughout history you’ll find [instances] where hostages can be detached from the broader issues of policy. ... But I would say that it’s a little harder when the countries are actually picking up a human being and using them as a bargaining chip.”

Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy Announced

During a visit to Pretoria, South Africa, in early August, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the Biden administration’s new five-year strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa.

The plan, Blinken said, “is rooted in the recognition that sub-Saharan Africa is a major geopolitical force, one that shaped our past, is shaping our present,

Contemporary Quote

“Diplomacy remains a contact sport, so there are things that can’t be done or cannot be done effectively remotely. How do we mix those two imperatives, being able to work remotely, but then also being present—not only in the moment, but to build the kind of rapport that allows us to then go to our interlocutors, whether they’re here in the U.S. or overseas, when it’s time for the hard asks, or the need to really collaborate in a creative way?”

—Director General of the Foreign Service Marcia Bernicat in an Aug. 18 interview with *Federal News Network*.

and will shape our future.” The strategy has four objectives.

First, U.S. policy will seek to foster open societies by working with African governments, civil society, and publics to increase transparency and accountability, expose corruption, and support reforms. The U.S. also pledged to assist African countries in more transparently leveraging their natural resources for sustainable development while helping to strengthen supply chains.

Second, the U.S. will work with African partners to deliver democratic and security dividends. According to the polling organization Afrobarometer, more than 70 percent reject military rule and more than 80 percent reject one-man rule.

By working with regional partners to respond to democratic backsliding and human rights abuses, the U.S. will seek to stem the recent tide of authoritarianism and military takeovers, and will leverage its development programs to enable partners to respond to the drivers of conflict across the region.

Third, Blinken said the U.S. and sub-Saharan nations will “work together to recover from the devastation wrought by COVID-19 and lay the foundation for sustainable economic opportunity.”

The U.S. will further pursue programs to bolster global health security. At the same time, the U.S. will partner with

African countries to rebuild the human capital and food systems that were weakened by the pandemic and fallout from Russia’s war against Ukraine.

Fourth, the U.S. pledged to support Africa’s efforts to conserve and restore the continent’s ecosystems, rich natural resources, and biodiversity. Although the

region is responsible for extremely low emissions per capita, it stands to suffer from some of the worst effects of climate change, the strategy paper notes.

“We recognize this imbalance places a greater responsibility on countries like the United States to reduce our own emissions but also to help other countries make the transition to clean energy and adapt to a changing climate,” the Secretary said.

As home to 17 of the world’s 20 most climate-vulnerable countries, a significant amount of the U.S. aid discussed by President Joe Biden at the U.N. Climate Change Conference last year, or COP26, will go to sub-Saharan Africa.

In closing, Blinken said that every one of the priorities he has laid out “was championed by Africans first. ... And today, to the

50 Years Ago

History and the Diplomat

The practicing diplomat must have a profound knowledge of history, not just of diplomatic history but history in the broadest sense, of his own country and of the world. ... Only out of the past can you have a full understanding of the present.

The most striking example in my own experience was Russia, because no one can hope to understand Russia who doesn’t appreciate the fact that the beginning of constitutional government in the West, with the granting of the Magna Carta in the early 13th century, roughly coincided with the Mongol-Tatar conquest of the fledgling Russian state and the occupation and the despoliation of the Russian lands by these invaders over the next three centuries. The isolation of the Russians from the world thereafter under these Tatar Khans and a succession of Tatar-influenced tsars ... goes far to explain to the Foreign Service officer Russian mentality and prejudices, and the difference in views between the Russian and himself.

The greatest mistake you can make is to think that this civilization or this country started 50 years ago.

—Career Ambassador (ret.) Foy D. Kohler, who served as ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1962 to 1966, in an article of the same name in the October 1972 FSJ.



Public Diplomacy's Domestic Dimension

By Vivian S. Walker

Should externally focused public diplomacy activities have a domestic dimension?

Many Americans are generally aware of and interested in public and private sector engagement in the international arena, but far fewer make the connection between global actions and local consequences. A recent special report by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy explores the use of U.S. government public diplomacy programs and resources to engage domestic audiences.

The April 2022 report, "Exploring U.S. Public Diplomacy's Domestic Dimension," is based on the presumption that in an increasingly globalized world, international events have local impacts. As several senior government officials have noted, foreign policy is domestic policy and domestic policy is foreign policy—and there is a corresponding requirement for Americans to understand why and how U.S. foreign policy affects their day-to-day lives.

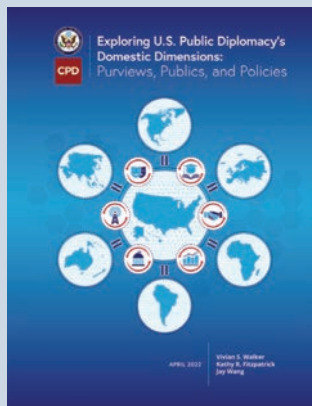
Featuring essays by three thought leaders in public diplomacy on practitioner, historical, and social research perspectives, the report also offers insights into the scope and authorities of public diplomacy's domestic dimension; the identification of domestic audiences, stakeholders, and potential partners; and the policy and resource implications of a focus on domestic public diplomacy.

Here are some takeaways from different perspectives.

Jennifer Hall Godfrey, Department of State, from the practitioner's perspective: *We must show the same honesty and integrity as we engage the domestic public to build trust, just as we do overseas. It is only through trust that we can effectively communicate to the American people how foreign policy affects their lives and solicit meaningful input that can help us shape a foreign policy that is reflective of their needs and interests.*

Nicholas J. Cull, University of Southern California, from the academic perspective: *The time has come to rethink the rigid division of the foreign and domestic operation of U.S. public diplomacy. The old firewall is out of step with the transnational nature of today's media and the transnational lives lived by so many people. We know that a word spoken in Kansas can be heard in Kandahar and vice versa.*

Richard Wike, Pew Research Center, from a policy perspective: *On balance, the American public tends to embrace the basic principles of international cooperation. Still, many have reservations about engaging with other countries, and they are distrustful of multilateral organizations. And like so many issues in American public opinion, there are sharp divisions along partisan lines on questions about international engagement.*



benefit of people in the United States and all nations, these are the world's priorities."

Realignments in the Middle East

Israel and Turkey will restore full diplomatic relations and re-appoint respective ambassadors and consuls general, officials from both countries said on Aug. 17 following a conversation between Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The announcement comes four years after the two countries expelled ambassadors over the killing of 60 Palestinians by Israeli forces during protests on the Gaza border against the opening of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem.

Despite the thaw in ties, Al Jazeera wrote, the Palestinian issue is likely to remain contentious. Shortly after the announcement, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told reporters: "We are not giving up on the Palestinian cause."

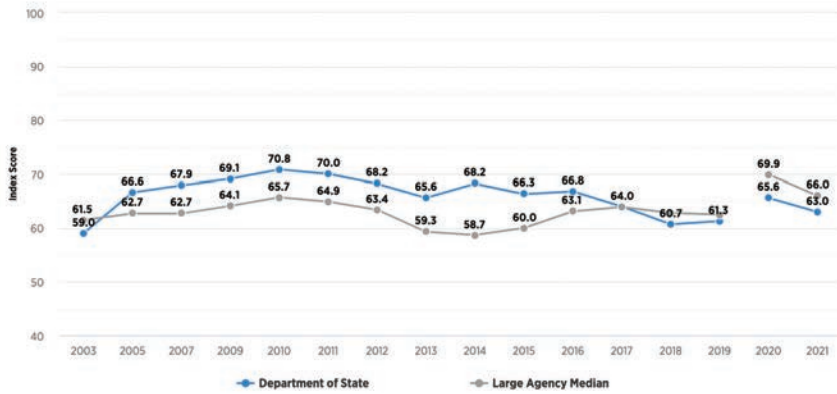
Meanwhile, on Aug. 21, the United Arab Emirates announced that its ambassador to Iran would return to Tehran "in coming days," more than six years after the country downgraded ties with the Islamic Republic.

The UAE's move came in 2016 after Saudi Arabia severed its own relations with Tehran in response to Iranian protesters storming the Saudi embassy after Riyadh executed a prominent Shiite cleric, according to Reuters.

State: Not the Absolute Worst Place to Work

In their recently released annual report on the best places to work in the federal government, the Partnership for Public Service and the Boston Consulting Group found that the State Department ranks 13th out of the 17

Engagement and Satisfaction Score Trend



largest agencies. In 2012, State ranked 3rd on the list.

Based on employee engagement and satisfaction rankings governmentwide and at individual departments and agencies, the 2021 data found NASA holds the number one position, while the intelligence community ranks 4th. Of the 24 midsize agencies, USAID ranks 19th.

The Agency for Global Media, home of Voice of America—characterized by *The Washington Post* as a punching bag during the Trump years—saw the most improved score among midsize agencies. It jumped 11.7 points from 2020 to a score of 64.7, taking it slightly above the overall federal government satisfaction score of 64.5.

Site of the Month: <https://liveuamap.com>

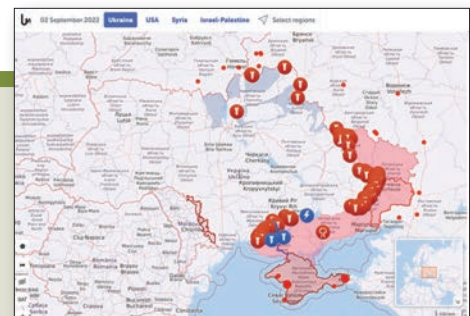
Live Universal Awareness Map, or Liveuamap, is an independent nongovernment global news website that stands out due to its innovative map-centric presentation that tracks conflict around the world. Created by a group of engineers and journalists during the Maidan protests in Kyiv in 2014, the initial goal of the project was to inform the public of real-time events taking place in Ukraine.

While Ukraine is, once again, a primary focus for the website, it has expanded in an effort “to predict and prevent future conflicts, minimize the impact of disasters, and assist travelers around the world,” the website says. It now covers more than 30 regions and topics, offers translation into several languages, and can be accessed via its own app.

The map is an interactive software based on Google Maps and open-source data. It identifies events related to protests, violent conflict, and military operations, relying primarily on social media geotags to determine the loca-

tion. This is achieved with the help of an artificial intelligence web crawler, which filters relevant stories and transmits them to a group of analysts for fact-checking. Editors then determine which events should be displayed on the map in almost real time.

Liveuamap is used by the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) to monitor ground incidents. For example, when HD was working on cease-fire agreements in Syria, it used Liveuamap to monitor the implementation of the cease-fire and to assess the feasibility of humanitarian corridors.



The Foreign Service Institute achieved a score of 79.7, up from 74.7 in 2020.

Scores are based on responses to a series of prompts: “I recommend my organization as a good place to work”; “Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?”; and “Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization?”

The Partnership for Public Service began compiling the rankings in 2003.

Support for Veterans at State

In response to a survey of veterans conducted by the State Department’s TalentCare department and veterans assistance working group, State has announced the launch of an internal program to assist the veterans it employs in navigating their post-military careers.

The appearance of a particular site or podcast is for information only and does not constitute an endorsement.

New Work Agreement with Oman

On June 1, a new bilateral work agreement entered into force between the U.S. and the Sultanate of Oman. The agreement authorizes spouses of official employees serving at diplomatic missions in the host country to work in nongovernment institutions there.

Signed in Muscat by U.S. Ambassador Leslie M. Tsou and Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs Mohammed Alwahaibi in April, this

agreement is the latest on the list of more than 100 bilateral work agreements between the U.S. and foreign countries.

To learn more about legal employment for accredited FS family members on the local economy overseas, please consult the Global Community Liaison Office at GCLOAskEmployment@state.gov or visit <https://bit.ly/GCLO-work-agreements>.

State Department List of Bilateral Work Agreements with the U.S.

ALBANIA ⁴	CROATIA	HUNGARY	MONTENEGRO	SAN MARINO
ANDORRA	CYPRUS	ICELAND	MOROCCO	SENEGAL
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	CZECH REPUBLIC	INDIA ²	NAMIBIA	SERBIA
ARGENTINA	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	IRELAND	NAURU	SIERRA LEONE
ARMENIA	OF THE CONGO	ISRAEL	NEPAL	SLOVAK REPUBLIC
AUSTRIA	(Kinshasa)	ITALY (includes The Holy	NETHERLANDS ⁴	SLOVENIA
AUSTRALIA	DENMARK ⁴	See) ²	NEW ZEALAND	SOMALIA
AZERBAIJAN	DJIBOUTI	JAMAICA ²	NICARAGUA	SPAIN ⁵
BAHAMAS ¹	ECUADOR	KAZAKHSTAN	NIGERIA	SRI LANKA
BAHRAIN	EL SALVADOR	KENYA ⁶	NORTH MACEDONIA ²	SWEDEN
BARBADOS ¹	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	KOSOVO	NORWAY ⁴	SWITZERLAND
BELARUS	ESTONIA ⁴	KUWAIT	OMAN	TAJIKISTAN
BELGIUM ⁵	ETHIOPIA	KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	PAKISTAN	TANZANIA
BENIN	FIJI	LATVIA	PANAMA	TIMOR-LESTE
BHUTAN	FINLAND	LIBERIA	PERU	TRINIDAD/TOBAGO
BOLIVIA	FRANCE ⁴	LIECHTENSTEIN	PHILIPPINES	TURKEY ^{2,3}
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA	GABON	LITHUANIA ⁴	POLAND	TURKMENISTAN
BOTSWANA	THE GAMBIA	LUXEMBOURG	PORTUGAL	UGANDA
BRAZIL	GEORGIA	MADAGASCAR	REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	UKRAINE
BULGARIA	GERMANY ⁵	MALAWI	(Brazzaville)	UNITED KINGDOM ⁴
CAMEROON	GHANA	MALAYSIA	ROMANIA	URUGUAY
CANADA ⁴	GREECE ¹	MALI ³	RWANDA	VENEZUELA
CABO VERDE	GRENADA	MALTA	SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS	YEMEN
CHAD	GUATEMALA	MAURITIUS	SAINT VINCENT AND	ZAMBIA
COLOMBIA ²	GUINEA BISSAU	MOLDOVA	THE GRENADINES	ZIMBABWE
COMOROS	GUYANA	MONACO	SAINT LUCIA	
COSTA RICA	HONDURAS	MONGOLIA	SAMOA	

¹Limited number of family members permitted to work

²Offer of employment required

³Restricted employment fields

⁴NATO dependents also included

⁵NATO dependents included by de facto arrangement

⁶Only valid 5 years (8/2/2021-8/1/2026)

In an Aug. 18 interview with Federal News Network, the Bureau of Global Talent Management's Work Life Division Chief Margery Gehan said that the Veterans Support Program (VSP) will serve as a one-stop shop where all former active military or current reservists and guard employees can access service-related resources and raise questions.

Gehan noted that the VSP is just the second unit of its kind in the federal government.

The VSP is currently running a pilot program in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, which has the largest percentage of veterans. After the pilot is completed and best practices are compiled, it will be rolled out departmentwide.

The program has three components: guidance and support, advocacy and policy, and partnership and collaboration. In the past, veterans had to scour the State Department's intranet or reach out to the Department of Veterans

Affairs for help; the VSP will streamline access to information and support.

Veterans make up about 20 percent of the State Department's workforce, according to Federal News Network. That includes some 13,000 members of the Foreign Service and more than 11,000 Civil Service employees. ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Julia Wohlers.

WikiLeaks Damage Lives On: The Case of Marafa Hamidou Yaya

BY NIELS MARQUARDT

The U.K. government decision in June to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to the United States to face prosecution for crimes related to the release in 2010 of hundreds of thousands of stolen confidential U.S. government documents brings him one step closer to justice. No doubt he will appeal that decision, but I deeply hope that he will lose again and soon find himself facing justice before an American court.

Only then will the world see and, perhaps, fully understand the enormous damage his crimes inflicted on innocent friends and allies around the globe. This may also give the lie to the remarkably widely held fiction that Assange's crimes had no victims and that his actions were somehow brave, harmless, or even worthy of admiration.

It is high time to start pushing back forcefully on the deeply mistaken notion that actions by Assange, perceived by many to be a sort of modern-day Robin Hood, advanced press freedom or brought welcome transparency to the workings of government. They did not. Instead, they illegally undermined the necessarily confidential basis of infor-

mation sharing that makes diplomacy possible and advances America's global interests in the process.

I write this column as a retired American diplomat whose normal embassy reporting, like that of many colleagues, was compromised by Assange's indiscriminate release of that infamous cache of stolen documents more than a decade ago. No one seems able to say how many people, including many of America's close friends, were damaged worldwide by the WikiLeaks release.

But I know well of at least one case, where a good man has now spent more than a decade in prison for alleged crimes never proven in court. This happened in Cameroon, where I served as U.S. ambassador from 2004 to 2007.

There, shortly after the WikiLeaks release, Kansas University graduate Marafa Hamidou Yaya was jailed and subjected to a short "kangaroo court" proceeding that resulted in a 25-year prison sentence on entirely unproven corruption charges.

Arbitrary Detention

Before his arrest, Mr. Marafa had served in various high-level ministe-

rial positions in Cameroon, including as secretary-general of the presidency, arguably the nation's second-most powerful post. Our embassy, then led by Ambassador Robert Jackson, witnessed his trial and denounced it as the farce it was; no evidence was presented, yet he was found guilty on all charges.

Since then, the State Department's annual Human Rights Report to Congress has listed Mr. Marafa as a political prisoner in Cameroon. He is jailed in a military prison in a damp cell with no daylight. After his arrest, his loyal secretary of 20 years was savagely assassinated in her home, and his wife died without having a chance to visit her husband even once.

The United Nations has formally declared Mr. Marafa's detention arbitrary and demanded his immediate release and compensation for the damages he has suffered. He has petitioned repeatedly for his own release on health-related grounds, and many outsiders have also weighed in on his behalf.

I and seven other former U.S. ambassadors to Cameroon have written to successive U.S. administrations for assistance in seeking Mr. Marafa's release, so far without effect. Ambassadors (ret.) Frances Cook, Harriet Isom, Charles Twining, John Yates, George Staples, Janet Garvey, and Robert Jackson all know and respect him and have joined me in formally demanding his release. The Biden administration is fully aware of this situation but, to my knowledge, has



Niels Marquardt was a Foreign Service officer from 1980 to 2013. He led Secretary of State Colin Powell's Diplomatic Readiness Initiative from 2001 to 2004, then served as ambassador to Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, and the Comoros. His final assignment was as consul general in Sydney, where he stayed until 2017 as CEO of the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia. Ambassador (ret.) Marquardt currently volunteers as diplomat in residence at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon.



Marafa Hamidou Yaya.

not taken any strong action to secure Mr. Marafa's release.

Because Mr. Marafa's health has deteriorated significantly during his decade-plus in prison, the case for his release is ever more urgent. Now in old age, he survived COVID-19 (unvaccinated) while in detention last year. He has gone almost completely blind, suffers from a serious heart condition, and desperately needs medical treatment unavailable in Cameroon.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee has written many times lately, requesting the government of Cameroon "to provide Mr. Marafa with immediate access to the adequate and specialised medical care that may be required to preserve his sight." So far, this call has not been heeded. Mr. Marafa has repeatedly said that he would be willing to go into exile abroad to obtain that treatment, implicitly abandoning any future political role at home.

Power Politics

While Mr. Marafa was accused of corruption, his only real crime was having told me, in confidence in 2006, that he "might be interested" in seeking Cameroon's presidency one day, if ever the incumbent president, Paul Biya, were to leave office. My political section, then ably headed by current Ottawa Deputy Chief of Mission Katherine Brucker, naturally reported his comment in a periodic piece speculating on succession scenarios in a post-Biya era.

Once that cable to Washington was released by WikiLeaks in 2010, Mr. Marafa's revelation immediately became front-page news in Cameroon. This led directly to his arrest, and then to a classic "show trial" the following year. In Cameroon, where the near-nonagenarian Biya just marked 40 years in power, the whole succession question is sensitive enough that Mr. Marafa's otherwise unremarkable comment about possible higher political ambition deeply rattled the country's delicate tribal and political balance.

Evidently, Biya's coterie of mostly southern, Christian supporters from the Beti tribe felt sufficiently threatened by the prospect of Mr. Marafa becoming president that they decided to sideline him permanently, and manipulated the country's judicial system to do just that.

Mr. Marafa is a northern Muslim, like the country's only other president since independence, Ahmadou Ahidjo. After 40 years of political advantage under Biya, little bothers privileged southerners more than the thought of a northerner regaining power.

WikiLeaks happened on the Obama-Biden administration's watch. Many officials in the current administration were serving in senior government positions at the time and remain well aware of Mr. Marafa's unjust incarceration.

Thus, they should not need reminding of our government's enduring responsibility to protect those harmed by this massive failure to protect confidences shared with us in good faith.

Nonetheless, they have not taken action; nor have they even shown the intellectual curiosity to seek to find out how many other "Marafas" are out there, across the globe. Indeed, when I invited the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) to help gather the facts around this issue, they declined on the basis that WikiLeaks was "not an intel issue."

Basic Decency at Stake

I continue to believe that basic American decency and a sense of loyalty and fair play compel us to pursue his case, and all others like it, until justice is truly served. Not only is it the right thing to do; it also would demonstrate to our friends and collaborators around the world—including many who were sufficiently shaken by WikiLeaks that they pointedly ceased even speaking to American diplomats—that, even after something as stupidly tragic as WikiLeaks is allowed to occur, America will live up to our responsibilities to friends affected by our mistakes.

Additionally, I fear that the United States is losing the global public opinion battle around WikiLeaks. With Assange's impending extradition and prosecution, now is the time to launch a far stronger effort to explain why this case matters, and why we are taking it so seriously. Specious arguments positing that he is a legitimate journalist standing up for press freedom and transparency sadly resonate with far too many global citizens, few of whom have an inkling of the harm done to Marafa and others like him.

No doubt other friends who confided in the U.S. have met similar or worse

fates; who is telling their stories? Absent an enhanced effort to explain why WikiLeaks matters, the U.S. will again appear in global public opinion to be nothing more than an overreaching bully.

But let me also ask: If the WikiLeaks theft and release of government secrets is worth extraditing Assange and pursuing in court over a decade later, shouldn't we demonstrate some real concern for the actual victims of that crime, by taking action to address circumstances like Mr. Marafa's?

Meanwhile, Paul Biya rules a wobbly Cameroon in senescence, incompetently repressing a bloody Anglophone secession campaign, watching Boko Haram stream largely unchecked across its borders, and continuing to preside over a well-endowed country that has performed far short of its extraordinary potential under his rule. No one knows what will happen when he finally leaves the scene, but widespread violence is considered by many of us to be a likely element of the coming transition.

What a missed opportunity that the competent, U.S.-educated Mr. Marafa is no longer among the possible solutions to Cameroon's coming political drama. However, there is still the possibility of his being released for medical treatment in exile, and thus for him to live out his remaining days in dignity and freedom. We must press for this outcome, making clear that the American government stands by him and recognizes our direct responsibility for his current circumstances.

What You Can Do

Here are two things *FSJ* readers can do to help.

First, please write to your congressional representatives, especially if they sit on the Senate Foreign Relations

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

Committee or House Foreign Affairs Committee, to demand action by the State Department and White House to secure Mr. Marafa's release. A strong expression of congressional interest may help the State Department find the missing courage to take this on. (And please free to email me at nielsm@lclark.edu for a template message that can easily be pasted into an email to your senator.)

Second, if any reader has knowledge of other friends of the United States who were negatively affected by WikiLeaks and need our government's attention, please email me that information. I will then share it with State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), which I believe is the appropriate place in our government to compile comprehensive information on the full impact of WikiLeaks. I would hope that this information may then be used by others to strengthen a public affairs strategy to explain why prosecuting Assange is so important.

In my opinion, our government's approach to WikiLeaks over successive administrations has been myopic and inadequate, and our failure to vigorously stand up for its victims for the past decade has bordered on shameful.

It is not too late, however, for us to do far better. For that to happen, more of us need to speak up and demand better. Please help do so. ■



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Understanding Ukraine

Ukraine captured world attention when Russia invaded in February. Here, an FSJ Q&A with a former ambassador to Ukraine sheds light on this vexing international crisis.

BY WILLIAM B. TAYLOR

What led to Putin's invasion?

Vladimir Putin insists that Ukraine is not really sovereign nor even a nation but is actually just a wayward part of Russia that he is determined to reabsorb. Ukraine's resolute march toward Europe terrifies Putin. When, in 2014, the Russia-leaning then-Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovich, was driven from office, leaving Ukraine free to sign an association agreement with the European Union, Putin invaded Ukraine, first in Crimea, then in Donbas. With Russian troops poised to massacre surrounded Ukrainian army units, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko

signed agreements in 2015 that the Russians thought would give the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts the ability to block Ukraine's integration into Europe. The Ukrainians frustrated this plan, and on Feb. 24, 2022, Putin invaded. One way or another, he is determined to dominate Ukraine. Ukrainians are determined—and willing to fight and die to ensure—that it won't happen. We'll see who cares more about Ukraine: Russians or Ukrainians. I know which I'll bet on.



William B. Taylor is vice president for Russia and Europe at the United States Institute of Peace. He served as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine (2006-2009) and as chargé d'affaires at Embassy Kyiv in 2019. He also served in Kabul, Baghdad, Jerusalem, USNATO, and in the U.S. Army in Vietnam and Germany.

What's the historical perspective on Ukraine's national identity?

Contrary to Putin's distorted view of history, Ukraine's origins predate Russia's. Slavic people established Kyivan Rus in the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries. In the center of Kyiv, the golden-domed St. Sophia Cathedral dates back to 1057. At that time, Moscow was a forest. Ukrainians are proud of their history, language, culture, literature, and heroes. At the hands of Russians, they have

suffered brutal oppression, discrimination, manmade famine, genocide, political purge, nuclear disaster, and now armed invasion with its atrocities and war crimes. They have been independent for 30 years and are fighting and dying to remain free. The first line of independent Ukraine's national anthem includes this: "Ukraine is not dead yet." They all know the words and sing them with fervor.

Why is U.S. support so important?

The U.S. interest is clear: Ukraine must win this war. First, Ukraine is fighting for its freedom and independence, indeed its very existence. It is fighting an autocratic, oppressive, expansionist Russia, a nation with centuries of history of imperialist wars against its neighbors. Should Russia win, European nations—NATO allies—would be directly threatened.

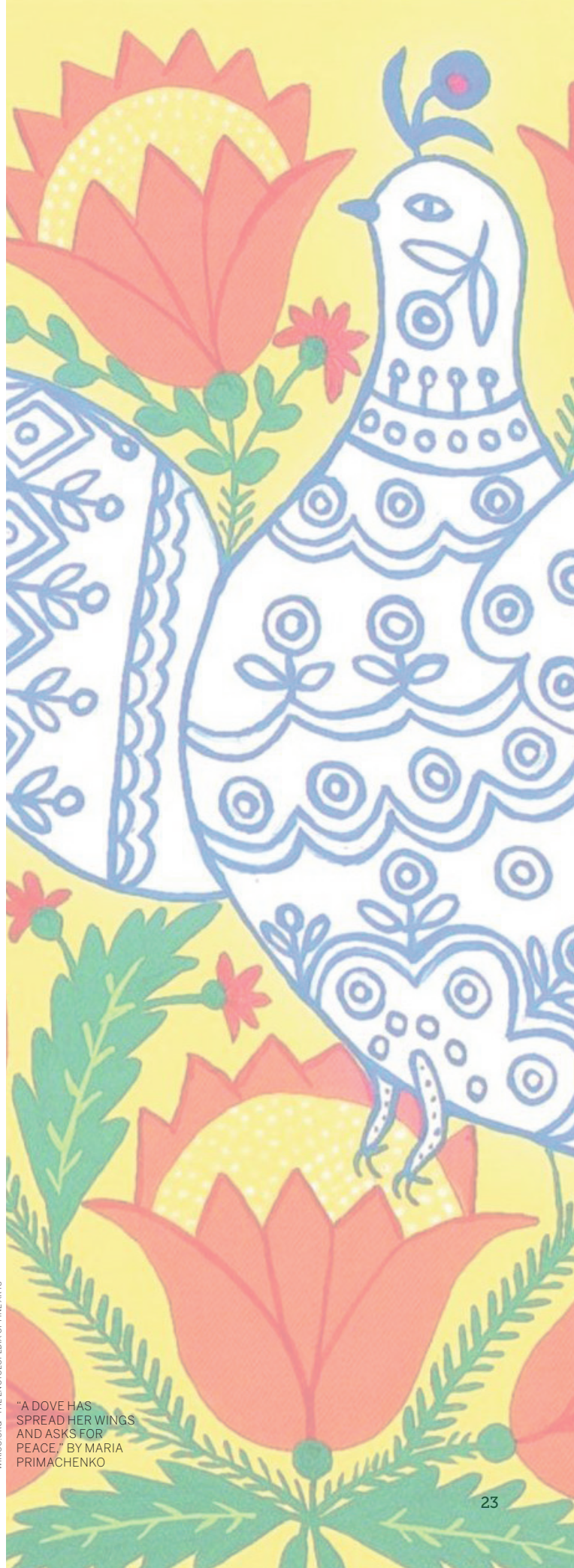
Second, respect for rules of international relations—sovereignty, sanctity of borders, peaceful resolution of disputes—largely kept the peace among major powers in Europe for 69 years after World War II. Russia grossly violated those principles, treaties, norms, and commitments when it invaded Ukraine in 2014. To reestablish that international order, Russia must withdraw from internationally recognized Ukrainian territory. All nations, big or small, are sovereign. No nation is more sovereign due to its size. Nations should not have to live in fear of invasion from their neighbors. Enforcing that principle, as an international coalition did when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, will make the world more secure.

We Americans support our diplomats and our armed forces—the soldiers, sailors, marines, and pilots—who defend our nation and protect our security overseas. They are on the front lines. In the same way, Americans should support Ukraine; it is on the front line for democracy and the West.

Is there a diplomatic solution to the war?

When the time is right, there might be—although if the Russians stage sham referenda in an attempt to annex Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, no negotiations will be possible. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said that he'd be willing to sit down with President Putin when Russian forces have pulled back at least to their positions on Feb. 23. Any decision to negotiate will have to be made by Ukrainians and President Zelenskyy, not by Americans or Europeans. Some Europeans and Americans are pushing Ukraine to agree to a cease-fire to end the fighting. Some go further and urge the Ukrainians to concede some territory to Russia to facilitate a peace treaty. I think this is wrong.

A cease-fire now would reward the Russians for their illegal



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"A DOVE HAS SPREAD HER WINGS AND ASKS FOR PEACE," BY MARIA PRIMACHENKO

the United States and Great Britain) that their security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity would be respected. In 2014 and further in 2022, the Russians totally violated that commitment. Ukrainian security could be assured by NATO membership—indeed, NATO leaders promised in 2008 that Ukraine would someday be a member—but that probably won't happen soon.

President Biden said that the U.S. goal was for “a democratic, independent, sovereign, and prosperous Ukraine *with the means to deter and defend itself from further aggression*” (emphasis added). He could accomplish that by committing to provide Ukraine with state-of-the-art weapons, now and in the future, that would deter Russia from further invasion. This is how the United States assures Israeli security—not through a mutual defense treaty, but in the form of a bilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) that commits steady funding for advanced weapons over time. The current version of that MOU commits the United States to provide Israel \$38 billion for weapons over 10 years.

Another lesson from the U.S.-Israel relationship is the value of Israel's status as a major U.S. ally. The United States should designate Ukraine as a major ally, even as Ukraine continues to apply and work toward NATO membership. For now, being a major non-NATO ally would confer political status that would send a message to Moscow.

Second, the United States should continue to lead the international coalition it has assembled to support Ukrainian sovereignty and oppose Russian aggression. This coalition—consisting of North American, European, and Far Eastern democracies that account for half of the world's economic output—has united to impose sanctions on Russia, provide financial and military assistance to Ukraine, and hold Russia accountable for its crimes.

On negotiations, the United States needs to reaffirm our view that Ukraine should enter negotiations only when Ukrainians decide the time is right. The timing, venue, and substance of any negotiations are up to Ukraine, not anyone else. That said, the United States should be willing to negotiate with Russia—separate from, but possibly in parallel with, Ukrainian-Russian talks—on reciprocal steps that would improve the security of both the United States and Russia. This could include discussions on the placement of nuclear weapons, for example, or with NATO on transparency of military exercises in Europe and European Russia.

Finally, the United States should reinforce Ukrainians politically as they consider negotiations by stating the U.S. intention to keep economic sanctions and export controls on Russia in place, at least until Moscow withdraws completely from Ukraine's internationally recognized territory, including Crimea and Donbas.

The United States should designate Ukraine as a major ally, even as Ukraine continues to apply and work toward NATO membership.

What could a peace look like?

The Ukrainians have made clear that a sustainable, enduring peace is not possible until Russia withdraws from sovereign, internationally recognized Ukrainian territory. If Putin tries to occupy parts of Ukraine before an agreement, his occupation forces will suffer grievously. Russian forces and proxies are already getting a taste of partisan warfare in currently occupied Kherson.

Peace could come in stages. Once Russian forces are pushed back to dispositions of Feb. 23, negotiations can begin. President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people will decide what to agree on with the Russians. If those negotiations do not yield a final peace treaty—and the Ukrainians would be justified in not putting much faith in any document signed with the Russians, as discussed above—there are precedents for how free Ukraine could develop: West Germany and South Korea. Yes, the analogies are inexact; U.S. forces guaranteed West German and South Korean security while they developed strong economies and democracies. But free Ukraine, with some form of security guarantee from the United States and the West, could develop economically and democratically, even while it worked over time to regain its territories. Ukrainians will not cede their territory to Russia and will work to regain it, no matter how long that takes.

What about NATO expansion?

Let me say four things about NATO expansion. First, if NATO had not admitted Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in the 1990s and Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania after that, Russia would be invading them today instead of Ukraine.

Second, if NATO had accepted Ukraine and Georgia's applications for membership action plans in 2008, Russia would not have invaded Georgia four months later, or Ukraine six years later and today.

Third, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has finally made clear to the world, especially formerly neutral Finland and

Ukrainians will not cede their territory to Russia and will work to regain it, no matter how long that takes.

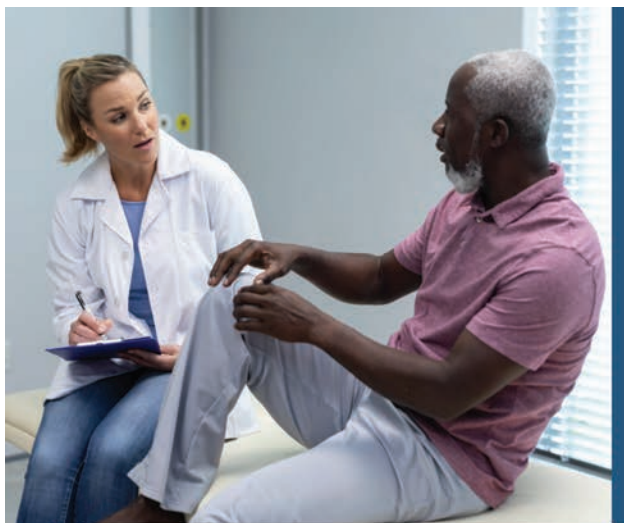
Sweden, the nature of Russian tendencies over the centuries—autocratic, oppressive, aggressive, expansionist, sometimes cruel, and often criminal. Nations that live next to such a country need collective security.

Fourth, after the current war ends—or, as the Ukrainians say, after the victory—Ukraine will need some way to deter another Russian invasion, some way to frustrate Putin’s obsession with Ukraine. The best way would be NATO membership. In the meantime, the commitment to give Ukraine the means to defend itself, to deter another invasion, perhaps along the lines I outline above, will be necessary.

What is the value added of having U.S. diplomats on the ground in Ukraine?

As all readers of *The Foreign Service Journal* know well, there is no substitute for face-to-face dialogue and representation, especially during a war. While everyone understands that the security and safety of U.S. diplomats are important, everyone was pleased with the decision to return the U.S. embassy to Kyiv.

Ambassador Bridget A. Brink and her (still small but growing) team of Americans, supported by the superb and crucial Ukrainian embassy staff, can now coordinate directly with the Ukrainian government on all aspects of U.S. support for Ukraine’s fight against the Russians. Ukrainian government officials can now discuss directly with U.S. officials how that support can be more effective. The interagency policy process in Washington can now be better informed about Ukrainian policies, actions, attitudes, and recommendations. Ambassador Brink, as the most senior official in the U.S. government whose full-time responsibility is U.S. policy toward Ukraine, can now make her recommendations based on daily, firsthand information. ■



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Did NATO Expansion Really Cause Putin's Invasion?

A seasoned diplomat considers this question in light of his own experience.

BY KEN MOSKOWITZ

In March 1999, while serving as the press attaché at the U.S. Embassy Kyiv, I hosted a full-day international conference to mark the 50 years since NATO was established. Speakers included Secretary of the Ukrainian National Security Council Volodymyr Horbulin, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Steven Pifer, U.S. Principal Deputy to the Ambassador-at-Large for the New Independent States Ross Wilson, the chairman of the British parliamentary committee on national security, and Sergei Karaganov, a leading Russian expert on foreign policy who is now a close adviser to Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

One could argue that the goal of such a conference sponsored by the American embassy was to promote NATO expansion, particularly to urge Ukraine to join the Western alliance. But that is not how I remember it. Typically, U.S. government public

diplomacy like this does not bluntly advocate, but rather presents information or views that would be new to our local audiences. A more forceful NATO appeal for membership for Eastern European countries, including Ukraine, emerged from the NATO summit in Bucharest in April 2008.

At our conference on NATO in 1999, divergent views were expressed, but there was no outright opposition. The Western speakers tended to celebrate NATO's notable success at keeping Europe at peace since the end of World War II. Even Karaganov, with close ties to the then- leadership, President Boris Yeltsin, did not raise a red flag. The Russian leadership did, however, object strongly to encroachments on Russia's sphere of influence. This was also the decade in which NATO was promoting the "Partnership for Peace" for coordination with NATO programs and possible eventual membership. At the time of the conference, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were all on the verge of becoming NATO members, the first of 14 former Soviet-dominated countries that would eventually join the alliance.



Ken Moskowitz served in the Foreign Service for 30 years. He holds a Ph.D. in theatre arts from the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria, and is a former director of the Tokyo American Center. He is an adjunct professor of political sci-

ence at Temple University's Japan campus. This is an expanded and revised version of an article that appeared in the May 2022 edition of the American Diplomacy online journal.

The Issue of NATO Expansion

Twenty-three years later, President Putin has made Ukraine's preliminary steps to joining NATO the principal grounds for the Russian invasion of Feb. 24, 2022. The alliance's leaders have



Putin believes that Russia rightfully deserves a sphere of influence in its “near abroad.”

always made clear that it is up to each European country to make its own decision about membership. But the eastward expansion of NATO particularly inflamed Putin, who has claimed that Secretary of State James Baker and other Western leaders assured Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990, at the time a unified Germany joined NATO, that the alliance would expand “not one inch eastward.”

George Kennan would surely have understood Putin’s reaction. The architect of the “containment” policy toward the Soviet Union wrote in 1997 that “expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era.” Kennan continued: “Such a decision may be expected to inflame the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion; to have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy; to restore the atmosphere of the Cold War to East-West relations; and to impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking.”

Kennan never convinced President Bill Clinton or his Russia adviser, Strobe Talbott. And the remarks of Secretary Baker or NATO leaders could be discounted because they were never part of a treaty or formal agreement. But Putin nevertheless claims that the West betrayed Russia in the post-Soviet period because much of Eastern Europe, in fact, joined NATO. And this is at least part of what motivates his aggression now.

In any case, this putative betrayal does not carry the weight of a violation of a formal agreement, a violation of which Putin himself is guilty. By signing the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances in 1994, the Russian Federation promised not to threaten or use military force or economic coercion against Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. As a result of this and other agreements, Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons and acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear state. It is now paying the price for trusting Russia to honor its international commitments.

Shift in Ukrainian Public Opinion

During my tenure in Kyiv, State Department-sponsored public opinion polling never showed a majority of Ukrainian public

“MENAGERIE,” BY MARIA PRIMACHENKO

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support for NATO membership. Private sector polling showed that as late as 2012, only 28 percent of Ukrainians wished to join NATO. Not surprisingly, pro-Russian sentiment was stronger in the east, but the largest plurality was for neutrality. The 2014 Russian seizure of Crimea and the fomenting of a violent separatist movement in eastern Ukraine sharply shifted Ukrainian public opinion. A poll by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in June 2017 found 69 percent supported joining the alliance.

Putin has promoted a narrative that the Western alliance took advantage of the chaos and weakness of Russia in the 1990s, and somehow pressured its former Warsaw Pact allies into joining NATO. But this was not the case at all. Having served in U.S. embassies for many years in communist Hungary (1986-1989) and later in post-Soviet bloc Ukraine (1997-1999) and Bulgaria (2009-2012), it is clear to me that Russia has mostly itself to blame for the alienation of its former allies.

As in the Kyiv NATO conference cited above, Western officials hardly took the initiative to strong-arm Eastern European countries into joining. On the contrary, starting with Hungary and Czechoslovakia, these former Soviet satellites whose aspirations for autonomy had been crushed by Soviet tanks (Budapest 1956, Prague Spring 1968) saw NATO membership as a shield from a future round of attacks from Russia. A wise post-Soviet Russian government policy would have been to issue swift and credible assurances that the era of Soviet-style suppression of true independence was past forever, and to implement that with concrete measures to reduce the threat perception.

Russia for its part would have benefited by reducing its burden of military expenditures. But Russian policy in the Putin years turned increasingly aggressive, beginning with the attack on Georgia in 2008, and then the annexation of Crimea, instigation of separatism in the eastern Donbas region, and the start of a troop buildup on the Ukrainian border in early 2021.

Even as Russia failed to take actions that would have eased tension in the region, NATO leaders emphasized that, based on the United Nations charter and international law, each sovereign European country has the right to choose its own alliance partners. Although correct in law, this policy may not have been prudent.

As China's President Xi Jinping told President Biden on March 18, quoting a Chinese proverb: "He who tied the bell to the tiger must take it off." His point was that legalistic arguments may not be as wise as respect for and careful attention to powerful countries. Implicit also is a traditional conception of international relations, which is that major powers control spheres of influence and that smaller powers must accept them.



Principal Deputy to the Ambassador-at-Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union Ross Wilson addresses a conference marking the 50th anniversary of NATO in Kyiv, 1999.

A Russian Sphere of Influence

According to Stephen Kotkin, a professor of Russian history at Princeton University, Putin believes that Russia rightfully deserves a sphere of influence in its "near abroad." To Putin, Ukraine is not a state because it is not sovereign. Small or weak states are only instruments in the hands of the great powers. Where we see Moscow's aggression, Putin sees defense. If Russia cannot control Ukraine, then the West will. Thus, countries like Ukraine become platforms for invasion. And then the West will dismember Russia as the USSR was dismembered.

This way of thinking in Russia goes back to the tsars. Russia has no natural borders on its periphery. Stalin believed that without hegemony in Eastern Europe he would be subject to infiltration and subversion. But the peoples of Eastern Europe did not want to be forced to live under communism, and thus arose the very hostility Stalin feared.

In a similar vein and updating this explanation of Soviet aggression, my Ukrainian friends offer another rationale for Putin's attack. As an autocratic leader who has denied his people the human rights we in the West enjoy, such as a free press, an honest judiciary, and especially genuinely contested elections, he is threatened by a liberalizing Ukraine right on his border. After all, Putin's 22-year tenure rests on banning free and fair elections, stifling dissent, and controlling domestic media, along with official propaganda that excoriates Western institutions and values.

A Basis for Peace?

I believe that any lasting peace settlement in Ukraine will have

Legalistic arguments may not be as wise as respect for and careful attention to powerful countries.

to address these two apparent causes of Russian aggression. There is the historically rooted sense of a threat from the border regions and the more recent threat of new and insidious ideas of an open and democratic society. A settlement may have to include a Ukrainian promise of neutrality, at least over a period of years, and the commitment not to host joint military exercises with NATO. But I don't believe that Ukrainians will accept any change in their liberal, Western-oriented society.

In the end, events on the battlefield will determine whether Putin achieves such political concessions. There is evidence that

he understands the potent Ukrainian nationalist sentiments in the west of the country, and he seems to be learning that pro-West, pro-Europe views are strong in the central and eastern regions too. This may explain Russia's abandonment of the attack on Kyiv and concentration on the Donbas and the region between there and Crimea.

With military success, Putin could annex more of Ukraine, but this would gain him a forcefully incorporated, long-term insurgent region. For example, the series of explosions in August of a Russian military base in occupied Crimea that destroyed eight Russian warplanes is early evidence of a possible Ukrainian strategic shift from reliance on a conventional army to more guerrilla tactics by local partisans. A military stalemate and eventual withdrawal of his forces now seem more likely, which would give Putin his minimal objective of a neutral Ukraine. Less likely, I would guess, would be a decisive Ukrainian victory, probably achieved over a protracted period of conflict, which would preserve the clearly West-oriented Ukrainian state and remove the threat of another Russian invasion. ■

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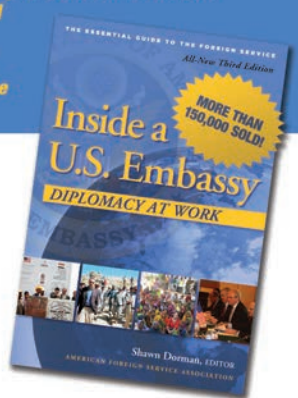
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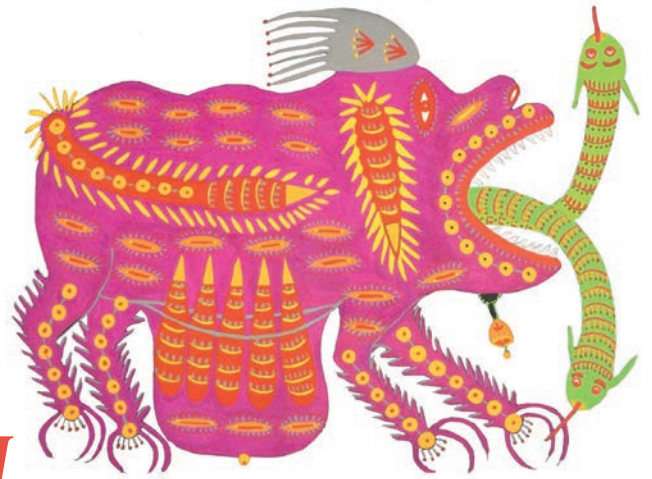
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Should Ukraine Have Kept

Nuclear Weapons?

The Russian invasion threw the Budapest Memorandum’s efficacy into question. Here are thoughts from a lead negotiator for that important arms control milestone.

BY ROSE GOTTEMOELLER

As one does at this time of life, late in a career, I have been cleaning out closets. Recently I found a letter that I received from President Bill Clinton on Dec. 9, 1994. He signed it on the day that I was leaving his National Security Council staff to take up a post at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

The president wrote: “Two of your accomplishments ... deserve special praise. The first was your tireless work in conceiving and helping to negotiate the Trilateral Statement among Russia, Ukraine, and the United States that will lead to the removal of all nuclear weapons from Ukraine. The second ... was your leadership ... in securing the adherence

of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.... These are the achievements of a lifetime.”

Reading this letter now, I have to examine my conscience: Were these really achievements worth celebrating? Or should my colleagues and I in the Clinton administration have foreseen the evil that would befall Ukraine 30 years later? Impossible for me to know, but at least I can say how I thought about it at the time.

The Budapest Memorandum

Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus each received assurances in Budapest on Dec. 5, 1994, that once they handed over their nuclear weapons, they would be secure from attack. The Russian Federation, the United States, and the United Kingdom “reaffirmed their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force



Rose Gottemoeller is the Steven C. Hazy Lecturer at the Stanford University’s Freeman Spogli Institute’s Center for International Security and Cooperation. Before joining Stanford, she was the deputy secretary general of NATO from 2016 to 2019. Prior to NATO, she served for nearly five years as the under secretary for arms control and international security at the U.S. Department of State. While assistant secretary of State for arms control, verification and compliance in 2009 and 2010, she was the chief U.S. negotiator of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) with the Russian Federation.

Prior to government service, she was a senior associate with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. She served as the director of the Carnegie Moscow Center from 2006 to 2008, and is currently a nonresident fellow in Carnegie’s Nuclear Policy Program. She is also a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. Her previous article for the FSJ was a look at U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Negotiations, May 2020.



"MAY THAT NUCLEAR WAR
BE CURSED!" BY MARIA
PRIMACHENKO

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against the territorial integrity or political independence" of each of the three countries.

Famously, these assurances were not present in a legally binding way in the documents they received, the Budapest Memorandums, but the countries providing them were reaffirming a legal obligation housed in the United Nations Charter. And they were doing so at the highest level: Russian President Boris Yeltsin, U.S. President Bill Clinton, and U.K. Prime Minister John Major signed the individual memorandums.

Thus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus became Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) non-nuclear weapons states, since they agreed to give up the nuclear weapons on their territory. In terms of warheads for strategic delivery vehicles (missiles and bombers), there were 1,900 in Ukraine, 1,410 in Kazakhstan, and 100 in Belarus.

The delivery vehicles could be destroyed in situ, but the warheads would be handed off to Russia, which would become the single NPT nuclear weapon state to emerge from the breakup of the Soviet Union. Russia would have to eliminate most of the warheads, although a few from Belarus would be redeployed on missiles in Russia.

Critics Gather Force

Ukraine's Budapest Memorandum has been under assault by critics ever since the Russians seized Crimea and went to war in the Donbas in 2014. However, the attacks against it have risen to new heights since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. Among Ukrainians, no less than President Volodymyr Zelenskyy blasted the agreement at the Munich Security Conference in 2022, just days before the invasion. His foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, told Lesley Stahl on CBS' "60 Minutes" on Feb. 20, 2022, that it was a mistake for Ukraine to give up its nuclear weapons; on that account, the United States "owed" Ukraine. And Leonid Kuchma, who was president of Ukraine when the Budapest Memorandum was signed, stated to the BBC: "Without nuclear weapons, Ukraine is not in a condition to respond adequately to Russia."

Experts outside Ukraine are questioning the original rationale for the Budapest Memorandum and raising the alarm that its failure could spur nuclear proliferation. (See, for instance, "The Russia-Ukraine war may be bad news for nuclear nonproliferation," by Michael O'Hanlon and Bruce Riedel of the Brookings Institution.) They mostly agree that the outcome of the war will determine how much damage there will be to the nuclear nonproliferation regime, as Toby Dalton argues in "Nuclear Nonproliferation After the Russia-Ukraine War" (*Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, April 2022).

A bad outcome for Ukraine would bring pressure on coun-

tries with big and dangerous neighbors. Such countries may see acquiring nuclear weapons as the only answer for their security. By contrast, a good outcome for Ukraine, with U.S. and allied support, would bolster the case for these countries to refuse nuclear weapons and continue to depend on conventional defense. Among U.S. allies, faith in the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent would also strengthen.

In truth, most outside experts do not give full-throated support to the notion that Ukraine should have held on to its nuclear weapons in 1994. They mostly reflect the idea that the Budapest Memorandum was worth a shot. As Marjana Budjeryn maintains in “Was Ukraine Wrong to Give Up Its Nukes?” (*Foreign Affairs*, April 2022), the memorandum failed because Russia did not respect it and the U.S. was not paying enough attention. Even Ukrainian commentators stress that Kyiv would have found it difficult and expensive to sustain a nuclear arsenal over time. Ukraine’s lack of enrichment facilities for fissile material would have been a particularly expensive problem.

What We Saw and Thought ...

This rush of criticism has been difficult to withstand. Over and over, I and others who were among the U.S. negotiators have had to answer the question: “What were you thinking? Did you not know that Ukraine would have to deter Russia, and nuclear weapons would enable it to do so?”

The answer is no. At the time we were conducting the negotiations over the breakup of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, all of the former Soviet republics had agreed to respect the borders within which they existed when the USSR dissolved. Russia agreed that Crimea was within Ukraine’s borders, a position it reiterated in 1997 when the two countries signed several legally binding treaties to govern the relationship between Russia and Ukraine and the basing rights for the Russian navy at Sevastopol.

The trilateral negotiations that we conducted with the Ukrainians and Russians were tough but amicable. Indeed, Moscow and Kyiv worked out some of the most sensitive issues themselves, such as access for Ukrainian inspectors to ensure that the warheads leaving Ukraine to return to Russia were indeed being dismantled rather than redeployed. This is one of the only examples, as far as I know, of foreign inspectors being allowed inside sensitive warhead facilities—but of course, the Ukrainians weren’t really “foreigners,” having served in the Soviet nuclear forces. They already knew the warhead facilities inside and out.

It was because so many former nuclear officers ended up in Ukraine that I believe some in Kyiv thought that they might be able to hold on to the warheads and create an independent nuclear arsenal. Colonel General Volodymyr Tolubko, for example, had

been a senior commander in the Strategic Rocket Forces, the land-based intercontinental missiles so important to Soviet nuclear deterrence strategy. He argued publicly throughout the negotiating period that Ukraine could constitute a national nuclear force.

We Americans argued, in return, that it would not be so easy from a technical standpoint. Command and control of the nuclear missiles located in Ukraine were based in Moscow. To create an independent force, those command-and-control lines would have to be guillotined and a new system put in place, linked to the leadership in Kyiv. In my opinion, such an action would have led to early conflict between Russia and Ukraine, perhaps even of a nuclear nature.

Moreover, the political and economic costs for Ukraine would have been high. On this score, we argued that Ukraine would be isolating itself just at a time when it needed help to establish its independence and sovereignty, including a healthy economy able to stand on its own feet. The high-technology industries based in Ukraine, such as the space and aircraft industries, would only prosper if they had access to the global marketplace.

If Ukraine insisted on hanging on to its nuclear weapons, we argued, such access would be denied it. Instead, it would be isolated, unable to do business. We emphasized the willingness of the United States to help Ukraine to prosper, but not if it insisted on becoming a nuclear power. In short, we saw Ukraine’s path to becoming a viable nation-state as one requiring economic and political development and emergence onto the global stage as quickly as possible. Insisting on nuclear status would isolate Ukraine and, in the end, destroy that process.

Ukraine’s Fighting Spirit

Despite my pain at the Russian invasion of Ukraine and all that has gone with it—the atrocities, the death, the damage both human and material—I continue to believe that Ukraine’s formation as a nation would have been stunted from the start if it had insisted on hanging on to nuclear weapons. Instead, Ukraine bought itself three decades to become a sovereign state with a strong national identity and commitment to independence and democratic principles. The road has been rocky—Ukraine has been plagued by corruption, messy politics, poor economic performance, meddling from Moscow—but it has persevered.

I would go so far as to say that Ukraine’s strong sense of national self, born of these 30 years, has given it the spirit to fight this war so successfully with Russia. In doing so, it has gained the respect and, indeed, the awe of its friends around the world. Seen in that way, its decision to become a non-nuclear weapon state in 1994 was the right one. ■



Ukraine *Reconstruction:* Priorities, Institutions, and the Private Sector

Though the war remains far from over, the scale and complexity of the Ukraine reconstruction effort require stakeholders to plan now, this commercial diplomat explains.

BY MICHAEL A. LALLY

Russia's further, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has upended global geopolitics and European security, and has devastated Europe's second-largest country by territory. While the war rages in Ukraine's south and east, another campaign has begun, far from the battlefield. It has existential, long-term consequences for the Ukrainian state, Europe, and democratic governance everywhere: the reconstruction of Ukraine.



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He thanks public and private sector colleagues for their contributions to this article. The views expressed within are solely his own. Comments are welcome to malallyjr@gmail.com.

Though the war remains far from over, the scale and complexity of the Ukraine reconstruction effort require stakeholders to plan now. While piecemeal efforts continue to provide short-term fixes to critical infrastructure, larger-scale reconstruction should be planned for now but only executed once a lasting peace is assured. Using today's dollars, the oft-quoted \$750 billion price tag to rebuild Ukraine will dwarf the reconstruction budgets of the Marshall Plan, Iraq, and Afghanistan *combined*.

Although analysts will likely draw parallels with previous reconstruction efforts in the Middle East and South Asia, Ukraine presents a completely different scenario. Ukraine's geographical proximity to Europe and Eurasia, European Union candidate status, highly skilled work force, and still functioning, export-driven economy all increase the possibility of success, strengthening a key trans-Atlantic ally to counter Russia's continued aggression in Europe. As President Joe Biden remarked in his March 2022 speech in Warsaw: "Let us resolve to put the strength of democracies into action to thwart the designs of autocracy. Let us remember that the test of this moment is the test of all time."

Kyiv has sensibly divided its reconstruction effort into three phases: emergency aid to address urgent needs; deeper, broader efforts to rebuild affected infrastructure; and long-term sustainability to integrate Ukraine into European institutions and one day become a member of the European Union. Many critical elements of Ukraine's reconstruction scheme will be decided later, including governance, assistance coordination, loans vs. grants, monitoring, asset seizure, and a slew of other issues.

While those important and thorny considerations continue to get sorted, the American private sector, working with Ukraine and the international financial institutions, should be deliberating now on approaches to a reconstruction effort that could ultimately top \$1 trillion.

Priorities for Reconstruction: The Economy

The July 2022 Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano, Switzerland, laid out the broad contours of the reconstruction challenge. The Ukrainian government estimates that 11 airports, more than 300 bridges, and 6,500 kilometers of railways have either been damaged or destroyed. Four major seaports are under occupation. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's recent campaign to repair Ukraine's dilapidated roads was set back several years by Russia's bombings, with 25,000 kilometers of road now needing repair or a complete rebuild. Damage to infrastructure alone is estimated by the Ukrainian government at \$100 billion, with more destruction every day. Business confidence, while resilient, has also suffered. A recent survey of members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine (AmCham Ukraine) highlighted continued safety and security concerns in the country.

All reconstruction efforts hinge on a durable peace that will allow for a return of migrants, a reconstruction mobilization effort, and workers to fuel the economy. At this writing, both sides are far apart, and any cease-fire or peace agreement seems remote. While the reconstruction task list will be long, **five areas** should be prioritized both for emergency support and long-term development:

Housing for the population is a "now" goal for Ukraine reconstruction. More than 120,000 residential structures have been destroyed or severely damaged during the war, with almost total destruction in the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. Temporary housing for internally displaced persons (including all aspects of social infrastructure such as clinics, schools, and community centers) must be priority number one. Construction of permanent housing will take one to three years, with the opportunity to "build back better" by incorporating modern,

energy-efficient materials and technologies, thereby reducing energy consumption.

Ukraine's archaic **infrastructure** has been and continues to be badly damaged by the war, including its roads, bridges, airports, railway system, and ports. On Sept. 6, the International Atomic Energy Agency called for the urgent establishment of a demilitarized zone around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant to prevent a nuclear accident. Now occupied by Russian troops, Zaporizhzhia is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe. Before the war it supplied more than a fifth of total electricity generated in Ukraine.

A Kyiv School of Economics survey conducted earlier this year found that the country's only major oil refinery, seven power generation facilities, eight civilian airports, 145 factories, and more than 600 educational institutions required significant if not complete reconstruction. These figures represent a conservative estimate and are likely much higher. The knock-on economic effects, including unemployment and energy shortages, are staggering.

Importantly, AmCham Ukraine cited damaged or destroyed transportation and logistical infrastructure as a top issue for rebuilding Ukraine's economy. Roads, seaports, river transportation hubs, major airports, and high-speed rail between Kyiv, L'viv, Odesa, and Kharkiv should be part of the long-term reconstruction effort. To jump-start the campaign, industrial parks with additional legal protections and basic support infrastructure should be considered, borrowing from Turkey's successful experience.

In **agriculture**, Ukraine's world famous *chernozem* (black earth) allows the country to feed 10 times its own population through exports. Agriculture accounted for 11 percent of the country's prewar GDP and 40 percent of total exports. Ukraine produces more than 30 percent of the world's sunflower oil and is a leading exporter of wheat, barley, potatoes, and corn. Due to the war, 10 million hectares have been knocked out of production, much covered with mines placed by Russian armed forces. The U.S. Department of Agriculture forecasts that Ukraine's wheat production alone will fall by two-thirds to 22 million metric tons, and this will be compounded further by port blockages and Russia's continued terror on the Black Sea.

To rebuild this essential sector, a decade-long, intense effort will require demining agricultural land, replacing agricultural machinery, silos, warehousing, and trucking, and updating road and river connections to seaports for onward export. Further reforms in land property rights and land registration should also be part of the reconstruction effort.

Using its Syrian playbook, the Kremlin has systematically targeted **water** and **wastewater** infrastructure to demoralize the

Kyiv has sensibly divided its reconstruction effort into three phases: emergency aid to address urgent needs; deeper, broader efforts to rebuild affected infrastructure; and long-term sustainability.

population. Only three days after the expansion of hostilities, Russian armed forces bombed a critical dam that blocked water access to Russian-occupied Crimea. That negatively affected water supply in Ukraine's agriculturally rich Kherson region. Clean water for the population and expanded agricultural irrigation will also be essential for rebuilding Ukraine's food sector. Pipes, pumping stations, water conservation technology, potable water infrastructure, and wastewater treatment centers will be needed in all affected areas.

More than 600 **health care** facilities have been intentionally damaged or destroyed, a practice widely used by Russian armed forces in Chechnya and Syria. All of Ukraine's health care system is by necessity on a war footing, responding to battlefield injuries and limited rehabilitation. This has often displaced the health care needs of the general population, which suffers from high rates of tuberculosis and low rates of immunization for infectious disease, including COVID-19. In the short term, surgical supplies, anesthetics, intensive care unit equipment, and essential medicines will be needed to sustain wartime care. In the longer term, hospitals and clinics, including specialized care for burn treatments, amputees, veterans, and mental health disorders, will be in critical need. Reforms to decentralize health care budget resources and accountability to the regions should also continue.

Rebuilding Strong European-Standard Institutions

Ukraine reconstruction will require not just brick-and-mortar investment, but hard work on rebuilding and strengthening institutions that will once and for all break with the country's oligarchic Soviet past. Ukraine began intensified economic reforms in 2014, with clear successes in banking, public procurement, and taxation. But more will need to be done to regain the confidence of international donors and investors, including further deregula-

tion, limitation of the state's role in the economy, reducing the role of oligarchs, and digitalization of public services.

The 2021 report of the European Court of Auditors on corruption in Ukraine noted some progress and considerable remaining challenges. Ukraine's Anti-Corruption Strategy, adopted in June 2022, properly focuses on customs and taxation; the courts and law enforcement; regulation; and construction and land management—all areas that have been sources of corruption since Ukraine's modern independence in 1991. Importantly, Kyiv has laid out a plan to manage such risk through the establishment of a separate agency to review reconstruction efforts and provide public oversight to planning, procurement, and implementation.

The E.U.'s cumulative body of community law can also provide important leverage to ensure Kyiv takes the right, painful steps to enforce the rule of law and root out corruption. As E.U. President Ursula von der Leyen said earlier this year, "Reconstruction should combine investment with reforms. In time it will help Ukraine on its European path." The detailed legislative and implementation road map presented by the Ukrainian government at the Lugano conference shows seriousness of intent, but the proof will be in the pudding. Private investment will form a large part of the capital pool in Ukraine reconstruction, but only if the business environment improves significantly.

The U.S., Ukraine, and their partners and allies have a key weapon in their arsenals: the resources and ingenuity of their private sector. Within weeks of the war's expansion, thousands of American, European, and other firms closed their operations permanently in Russia, reacting to strong public opinion against doing business there. Per Yale's Chief Executive Leadership Institute, more than 250,000 Russians lost their jobs from this Western corporate exodus. For the first time since the Cold War, the U.S., E.U., and nearly 40 partners have put in place export controls on critical technologies to Russia, working closely with the private sector.

Sanctions implemented by private financial institutions have crippled the Russian economy; its GDP is expected to drop by 5–10 percent this year alone. American, Ukrainian, and international firms in Ukraine continue to contribute directly and indirectly to the war effort, through support of the Territorial Defense Forces; provision of key IT, logistics, and transportation products and services; and provision of jobs to Ukrainians. And the private sector in Ukraine remains resilient: 60 percent of AmCham Ukraine members noted they plan to continue to operate despite the war, and 96 percent plan to do so in 2023. In any reconstruction effort, it will be the private sector that will bear the brunt of implementation, from initial planning to "last mile" completion.

The Critical Role of the Private Sector

American companies and international partners can play a critical role by bringing global expertise to Ukraine reconstruction, but will need significant clarity and advance consultation. First, strong partnerships should be established with the many qualified Ukrainian firms. While many of these local firms might not have the scale and financial capacity for larger projects, the deep talent pool of qualified engineers, IT professionals, agricultural specialists, and logisticians should be fully deployed.

Second, prequalification of bidders for primary and sub-contracts will need to be carefully thought through to ensure transparency, competition, and public confidence in the process. Third, the debate on sole source and open competition procurement strategies will have supporters and detractors. However, especially in the emergency phase of the rebuild, a firm's capability, experience, and speed to mobilize should be strongly considered to ensure quick wins early in the process. Ukraine's globally recognized ProZorro procurement system should be leveraged to ensure Ukrainian companies can access tenders and provide transparency for all stakeholders.

Finally, private sector entities should ensure that the spending stays in Ukraine as much as feasible, with incentives for local sourcing (which is often cheaper, faster, and even better than many offshore options). Key financial institutions such as the Development Finance Corporation, the Export-Import Bank of the U.S., and their international counterparts should consider Ukraine-dedicated funds and programming with authorities that allow creativity and fewer restrictions that govern traditional portfolio. Our embassy in Kyiv should retain and, when possible, surge resources to assist private sector-led reconstruction efforts.

Ukraine is fighting not just for herself, but for Europe, trans-Atlantic values, and the ideals of democratic governance. "Reconstruction of Ukraine is not a local task of a single nation," President Zelenskyy noted. "It is a common task of the whole democratic world." Unfortunately, no one can accurately predict when the war in Ukraine will end. The daily carnage from Russian bombardment of Ukraine can often make a reconstruction effort hard to ponder. But we know now that a well-coordinated, long-term, international effort—done in partnership with the vast resources of the private sector—will be essential for success. The same decisiveness, cohesion, and determination of U.S., E.U., and NATO efforts to respond to Kremlin perfidy will be required for Ukraine reconstruction over the long haul. The world has much at stake in Ukraine's ultimate victory. ■



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"TWO KITES," BY MARIA PRIMACHENKO

FSO SELECTION

Changing the Path to the Oral Assessment

No longer a pass/fail gateway to the Foreign Service, written test scores will be considered with other factors evaluated by means of a complex algorithm at the Qualification Evaluation Panel stage.

BY DEIDI DELAHANTY

How do we ensure that the State Department attracts and hires the most competitive, qualified candidates for the Foreign Service? For the Foreign Service Board of Examiners (BEX), the focus is on assessment. In coordination with testing industry experts, BEX continuously reviews its various test components and materials, making data-driven adjustments and improvements



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as warranted. The most recent change, announced on April 26—factoring a candidate's Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) score at the Qualification Evaluation Panel (QEP) step—is the result of in-depth analysis to improve the selection of candidates most likely to succeed in the Foreign Service. The change is designed to ensure BEX assessors receive a holistic view of each candidate's qualifications.

Why this change?

To answer this, we need some historical context. The QEP was introduced in 2007 as an intermediate step between the FSOT and the time- and labor-intensive Foreign Service Oral Assessment (FSOA). At the QEP, BEX assessors review a candidate's résumé, as well as answers to six personal narrative questions. Using a series of detailed rubrics tied to the 13 Dimensions (see box on page 40), candidate files are scored; and the strongest candidates in each career track from that testing cohort advance to the oral assessment. Considering a candidate's experience as part of the threshold to the FSOA is in line with best practices in the private sector and makes sense for the Foreign Service, as well.

Prior to 2007, any candidate who achieved a passing score on the FSOT received an invitation to the FSOA. Under that process, the historical pass rate at the FSOA hovered at around 22

percent, hardly an efficient use of resources when you consider the time and effort involved in the administration of the FSOA. (The pass rate for the written exam between 1980 and 2006 averaged 23.6 percent, and only 25 percent of those candidates [5.9 percent] passed the FSOA.) Since the introduction of the QEP, the success rate at the FSOA has gone up to nearly 60 percent, while the FSOA itself and the scoring rubrics used at the FSOA remain essentially the same. In short, the introduction of the QEP achieved its intended effect of identifying better qualified candidates, who were then more successful at the FSOA.

The QEP, however, was also labor intensive. In 2015, on the advice of the Board of Examiners and industrial and organizational psychologists, BEX introduced a computer-based, deep textual analysis of candidate files at the QEP stage, referred to as the computer-QEP. It drew on roughly 42,000 candidate files that had been manually scored by BEX assessors between 2007 and 2015, with each file representing six scores as determined by three separate assessors. This amounted to roughly 756,000 individual data points reflecting the scoring efforts of more than 150 BEX assessors over a period of eight years. (The assessors reflect the diversity of the Foreign Service in terms of career track, gender, race, and ethnicity.) Using this data, the computer-QEP was trained to identify candidates with relatively strong or weak chances of proceeding to the FSOA.

The computer-QEP ranks candidates, and based on the number of candidates who signed up for a particular career track, the strongest candidates in each track from that cohort advance to the assessor-QEP. Assessors are not told the candidate's ranking. In recent years, roughly 250 people from each career track advanced to the assessor-QEP. Where fewer than 250 candidates selected a particular career track, all candidates advanced to the assessor-QEP. BEX assessors then manually score those files, and depending on the anticipated hiring needs of the department, the top candidates by career track receive an invitation to the FSOA.

The computer-QEP only reviews text associated with a unique number assigned to each candidate. Neither the computer-QEP nor the assessor-QEP has any other identifying information about a candidate. As with all other aspects of the Foreign Service selection process, BEX assessors regularly test the program's reliability and validity to ensure its accuracy, further improving its effectiveness by adding more scoring data with each cohort. BEX assessors also verify the computer-QEPs to ensure the score



is valid. Feedback is given to the QEP assessors after each QEP. QEP panels consists of three assessors who are required to deliberate outlying scores. The scoring rubrics are continuously updated.

Let's see the numbers.

In 2021, BEX ran the personal narrative files of all 6,514 FSOT takers through the computer-QEP and discovered that there were a fair number of candidates who did not “pass” the FSOT but, based on their background and experience as described in their QEP files, would have moved successfully through the computer-QEP to the assessor-QEP had they done so. (Note: We put “pass” in quotation marks, because since 2007 the “passing” score was not set at a specific qualifying score but rather at a score so that roughly half the test takers in each cohort advanced to the QEP.)

All FSOT Candidates Calendar Year 2021

Test Result	Computer-QEP only	FSOT only
Fail	2,903	2,943
Pass	3,611	3,571
Grand Total	6,514	6,514

In the chart above, the first column shows the theoretical result if we had let the computer-QEP look at the entire cohort and decide who we should have advanced to the assessor-QEP. The computer selected 3,611 candidates. The second column shows what happened in practice: 3,571 candidates “passed” the FSOT and were moved to the QEP phase.

Then we dug deeper to see who these 3,611 computer-QEP candidates were compared to the FSOT-generated 3,571. We found that roughly two-thirds of the population remained the same, but we would have lost 1,007 “real” candidates (that is, those who “passed” the FSOT) and gained 1,047 “theoretical” candidates (as selected by the computer) at the assessor-QEP under the revised system.

Because we could, in fact, track the progress of the 1,007 candidates who “passed” the FSOT and went on to the QEP, we dug even deeper to see how this group of candidates ultimately fared. Of the 1,007, only 11 advanced to the FSOA after the computer and assessor QEPs. Of those, only four achieved the minimum

THE 13 DIMENSIONS

What qualities do we seek in a Foreign Service Officer (FSO) candidate? The successful candidate will demonstrate the following dimensions that reflect the skills, abilities, and personal qualities deemed essential to the work of the Foreign Service at the United States Department of State.

1. Composure. To stay calm, poised, and effective in stressful or difficult situations; to think on one's feet, adjusting quickly to changing situations; to maintain self-control.

2. Cultural Adaptability. To work and communicate effectively and harmoniously with persons of other cultures, value systems, political beliefs, and economic circumstances; to recognize and respect differences in new and different cultural environments.

3. Experience & Motivation. To demonstrate knowledge, skills, or other attributes gained from previous experience of relevance to the Foreign Service; to articulate appropriate motivation for joining the Foreign Service.

4. Information Integration & Analysis. By absorbing and retaining complex information drawn from a variety of sources; to draw reasoned conclusions from analysis and synthesis of available information; to evaluate the importance, reliability, and usefulness of information; to remember details of a meeting or event without the benefit of notes.

5. Initiative & Leadership. To recognize and assume responsibility for work that needs to be done; to persist in the completion of a task; to influence significantly a group's activity, direction, or opinion; to motivate others to participate in the activity one is leading.

6. Judgment. To discern what is appropriate, practical, and realistic in a given situation; to weigh relative merits of competing demands.



7. Objectivity/Integrity. To be fair and honest; to avoid deceit, favoritism, and discrimination; to present issues frankly and fully, without injecting subjective bias; to work without letting personal bias prejudice actions.

8. Oral Communication. By speaking fluently in a concise, grammatically correct, organized, precise, and persuasive manner; to convey nuances of meaning accurately; to use appropriate styles of communication to fit the audience and purpose.

9. Planning & Organizing. As prioritizing and ordering tasks effectively, to employ a systematic approach to achieving objectives, to make appropriate use of limited resources.

10. Resourcefulness. To formulate creative alternatives or solutions to resolve problems; to show flexibility in response to unanticipated circumstances.

11. Working with Others. To interact in a constructive, cooperative, and harmonious manner; to work effectively as a team player; to establish positive relationships and gain the confidence of others; to use humor as appropriate.

12. Written Communication. To write concise, well-organized, grammatically correct, effective, and persuasive English in a limited amount of time.

13. Quantitative Analysis. To identify, compile, analyze, and draw correct conclusions from pertinent data; to recognize patterns or trends in numerical data; to perform simple mathematical operations.

—U.S. Department of State

score of 5.25 on the oral assessment. Given their relatively weak scores, it is not clear that any of them will be hired.

But what about the 1,047 candidates we would have seen instead? On further analysis, including examining the FSOT scores of these candidates, we found that we would likely have advanced strong candidates to the assessor-QEP who were also more diverse ethnically and racially, and included more women.

Why not get rid of the FSOT entirely and just use the computer-QEP?

The FSOT provides insight into elements and skills the State Department seeks for future diplomats, characteristics that themselves are determined through extensive job analysis and surveys. But on its own, the FSOT was a poor predictor of success as a Foreign Service officer, as evidenced by the abysmal FSOA pass rate before 2007. Far from “lowering standards” or “dumbing down the FS,” as some have claimed, the new process still factors a candidate’s performance on the FSOT into the decision to advance them to the FSOA, but adds consideration

of additional qualifying factors through the QEP, including work, volunteering, language knowledge, and experience.

In fact, while under the previous system a candidate’s FSOT score played no further role in the assessment process beyond pass/fail, now a candidate’s numerical FSOT score is combined with the computer-QEP score to create one overall score. Based on that combined score, top candidates advance to the assessor-QEP, where assessors determine who will be invited to the FSOA. The FSOA itself remains unchanged and is the final, rigorous stage of the assessment process.

There are many reasons why a candidate might not do well on the FSOT that do not reflect their potential to serve effectively in the Foreign Service. Continuing to rely on it as a pass/fail gateway to Foreign Service hiring erected an unnecessary barrier to entry when the QEP process has proven over the past 15 years to be highly effective at identifying strong candidates for the FSOA. Combining these two processes, rather than running them consecutively, will give us the most holistic look possible at candidates.



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Our goal, as always, is to advance the most qualified candidates into the Foreign Service and to remove as many unnecessary barriers to entry as possible.

Why now?

We didn't have the data before. Before 2020, QEP files were only collected for those who "passed" the FSOT. A procedural change requiring all applicants to provide QEP materials at the same time they signed up for the FSOT meant that we now had files for both "passers" and "non-passers" to analyze. As soon as we had amassed sufficient data and discovered that this tweak in our process would move forward stronger candidates, we moved to implement this change. The time from discovery to implementation was six months.

How do you protect the process from partisan influence and future politicization?

Multiple safeguards are in place that make politicization or improper influence extremely unlikely, if not impossible. First, the assessment process is provided a safeguard against improper influence through regular review by the Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service, "the Board," which comprises representatives of the foreign affairs agencies and qualified experts as outlined in the Foreign Service Act of 1980. The process itself is designed, reviewed, and continually tested by external industrial and organizational psychologists. And changes, like this most recent change, are approved by the Board.

"BEX," which constitutes the staff of "the Board," invests in extensive training of its assessors to mitigate bias and to apply well-defined and objective rubrics to each assessment. Assessor scores are monitored and evaluated for unusual tendencies, such as scoring too easy or too hard, or identifying differences in how an assessor may score certain groups; and assessors receive regular quantitative feedback.

The State Department makes public detailed information on the assessment process, including information on all required steps; the 13 Dimensions, which underpin all evaluations; and practice tests. We update our assessment materials to ensure they remain targeted to Foreign Service work based on the evaluation of external experts who review the assessment process in light of actual job requirements. In this way, "validation," as it is called, ensures that the hiring process is fair, objective, and accurate based on the job requirements.

In the new process, the use of the FSOT score and a computer-QEP rank should further safeguard against politicization or undue influence on choosing the candidates who advance to the next stages of selection. The FSOT is a proctored standardized test. The use of the computer-QEP program, based on the raw data of thousands of applicants reflecting the judgments of a wide array of BEX assessors, is yet another safeguard.

How does this affect aspiring FSOs?

BEX recognizes that our decisions and processes affect people's career opportunities, and we take that responsibility seriously. These changes were proposed and crafted by experienced career Foreign Service officers and fully vetted by the Board and academic and private sector experts. This change is data-driven and will allow us to better identify and hire the best possible Foreign Service officer candidates. BEX will continue to track closely and validate the performance of the automated deep textual analytics tool and the revised assessment process.

A virtual oral assessment?

Our goal, as always, is to advance the most qualified candidates into the Foreign Service and to remove as many unnecessary barriers to entry as possible. One major barrier to entry is the cost to the applicant to attend the oral assessments, be they specialists or generalists. To address this issue, in February 2022 all Foreign Service specialist oral assessments were permanently moved to virtual platforms. Now, applicants interested in more than 15 specialties can apply from anywhere in the United States and from most parts of the world. As of July 2022, BEX has assessed 685 specialists across 15 specialties and customer satisfaction survey respondents have lauded this move.

Moving forward, BEX is making plans to transition the generalist FSOA to a virtual platform, as well, with the first of several proposed changes anticipated in 2023.

Together, we are modernizing the Foreign Service assessment process to better serve the State Department's needs and mission. ■

LANGUAGE TESTING REFORMS

What You Need to Know

The first major changes to language testing in a half-century are underway. Here's the story.

BY DAVID B. SAWYER



The Foreign Service Institute's School of Language Studies (FSI/SLS) is undertaking the most substantial reforms to State Department language testing in nearly 50 years. The goal of these changes is to ensure that language test scores are relevant, fair, and best serve the needs of both students and the department.

The U.S. State Department requires proficiency in foreign languages for many Foreign Service professionals. This requirement is established in law—Section 702(a) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 states: “Foreign Service posts abroad will be staffed by individuals having a useful knowledge of the language or dialect common to the country in which the post is located.” Knowledge of foreign languages strengthens cultural adaptability, one of 13 essential Foreign Service attributes (“dimensions”) that include the ability to work and communicate effectively and harmoniously with persons of other cultures and value systems, and to recognize and respect differences in new and different cultural environments.

The State Department's language proficiency tests are highly consequential for the careers of nearly every Foreign Service employee. The department uses test scores to make decisions



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fields, has served on the faculty at three universities, and publishes widely on related topics. He joined the State Department's Office of Language Services in 2003 as the principal interpreter for German and supported the most senior levels of the U.S. government in that capacity for more than a decade.

FSI's goal is to ensure that language testing reflects the real-world requirements of Foreign Service work.

regarding retention, tenure, assignments, promotion at all levels, and language incentive pay. Given its outsized impact on employees and their families, the Foreign Service Institute is cognizant of the importance of language testing to Foreign Service personnel—including assignment and transfer. That is why it is imperative that FSI maintain a language testing program that is fair, transparent, and relevant to the vital mission of America's diplomats.

Changes Overdue

Changes to language testing were overdue. While FSI's language test was groundbreaking when introduced in the 1950s and has been incrementally updated since then, FSI leadership acknowledged that the test had not kept pace with current developments in language assessment and that significant innovations in the field went well beyond any previous revisions.

Separately, questions and concerns had arisen about limitations or potential biases associated with the testing program, particularly against individuals who identify as native or heritage speakers—terms for which there is no single, set definition—and perceptions that the department was not fully valuing their contributions to the workforce. Other concerns were raised about potential bias in testing based on accents, language variety, or educational or demographic background. (Please go to the LTU intranet site—<http://fsi.state.gov/SLS/6951>—for detailed information.)

Finally, the nature of diplomacy and the work of Foreign Service professionals have changed significantly over the decades through the use of email, text, social media, and the internet,

resulting in shifts in the language skills required in overseas postings.

To address these concerns, FSI in 2018 commissioned a major study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS). Following receipt of the report, FSI conducted outreach to stakeholders throughout the State Department and convened a 20-person Task Force on the Future of Language Testing. Based on its review of the report, the task force proposed changes to language testing structure, content, administration, and scoring.

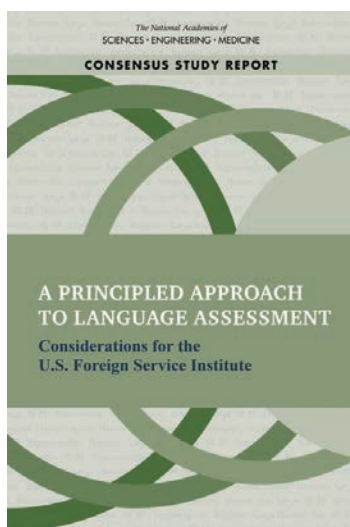
The task force also discussed concerns about bias and made recommendations to address them, while FSI undertook a parallel yearlong effort to examine training and testing of heritage speakers to ensure that they are tested fairly and their skills are recognized, including addressing concerns about unconscious bias.

The task force produced a new Statement of Test Purpose, Use, and Impact, to serve as a guide for the test redesign process.

The Changes, in Detail

In July 2022, FSI's Language Testing Unit (LTU) began implementing the changes recommended by the task force and will continue with substantial revisions through 2023. For test takers, changes are both to scoring and the format and content of the test. Changes to scoring include updates to the assessment criteria and greater transparency through score reports.

Scoring. Tests will be scored with a new, updated version of the 0-5 Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR), often referred to as the ILR Skill Level Descriptions (SLDs). The new SLDs no longer refer to the "native speaker," as definitions vary, and native speakers show a range of language proficiency across ILR skill levels. FSI now caps scores at 4, with 4, 4+, and 5 collapsed into one category, because the department's highest requirement is also ILR 4 and the distinctions between these levels are challenging to identify in testing. These scores now appear as "AP" for Advanced Proficiency in the language skills inventory and the employee's profile. The LTU is developing Foreign Service-specific rubrics and scoring procedures that will be implemented in early 2023 to tailor the assessment more closely to Foreign Service work and capture more information about the test. These new scoring criteria give greater weight to listening comprehension on the speaking test and reweight



scores to stress communicative effectiveness and fluency more than grammatical and lexical precision. The result is a combined speaking/listening score that emphasizes communicative ability.

Score reports. The Language Testing Unit now provides a tailored score report, something long sought by examinees seeking feedback on their performance. Changes to scoring procedures are capturing more information about each test, which is reflected in the score report. The score report format will evolve when the new Foreign Service-specific rubrics and scoring procedures are introduced.

Changes to the format and content of the test include changes to tasks on the speaking test and texts on the reading test.

Introductions during the speaking test. The introduction at the start of the test focuses on a professional, rather than personal, context to address concerns that personal biographical information may be a source of unconscious bias. It is up to examinees to decide how to introduce themselves and share information about their professional background as they would when interacting with a foreign counterpart.

Presentation during the speaking test. The second part of the speaking test previously began with the examinee providing a 3- to 5-minute explanation or introduction to a chosen topic. This task has been eliminated, because many Foreign Service employees indicated that they had never given such a presentation or had done so only with the assistance of locally employed staff.

Flow of the speaking test. Most of the speaking test occurs in a scenario-based, topical conversation that flows through a series of listening and speaking tasks. The scenario is a meeting or conference that is typical of the types of meetings that Foreign Service employees attend. The examinee will select the meeting topic from a list of options that reflect all career tracks. A program or agenda—in English—will be provided to the examinee during the test and serve as material for the conversation.

Listening on the speaking test. Roughly half of the speaking test will be devoted to measuring listening comprehension. Tasks will include the examinee responding to questions and answers about the conference program or meeting agenda and meeting sessions. The last section of the speaking test will follow a format very similar to the interview previously on the third part of the speaking test, where the examinee asks questions, gathers information, and reports it back in English. While there is not a separate score for listening, these changes give equal weight to speaking and listening and result in a



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- Financial planning
- Practiced before the IRS
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FSI undertook a parallel yearlong effort to examine training and testing of heritage speakers.

combined speaking/listening score, reflecting the integrated nature of speaking and listening.

Texts on the reading test. While literary and cultural references may appear in texts that are representative of the type of materials Foreign Service employees may read for work-related tasks, reading materials will not include poetry as a text genre.

These changes are in various stages of implementation. For information on the latest status and to prepare for a test, please visit the LTU's testing reforms website on State Department SharePoint and attend one of the LTU's monthly online information sessions.

Testing Operations

The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to permanent changes in testing. Prior to March 2020, most testing occurred in-person in the LTU or in more than 20 percent of cases by digital video

FSI's Language Testing Unit

Since the announcement of mandatory language testing for Foreign Service officers in 1958, the FSI Language Proficiency Test has been the sole means of determining speaking and reading scores for the language skills inventory. The test is conducted by FSI's Language Testing Unit (FSI/SLS/LTU), which supports the conduct of U.S. foreign policy by providing oversight of language tests administered for foreign affairs professionals; scores used to determine assignments, tenure, and promotion; testing records maintenance; and quality control. For more on the structure and work of the LTU, please see "Lingua Franca" in *State Magazine*, March 2022.

conference (DVC). The move to remote work necessitated a change to telephone testing; and as soon as bandwidth made it feasible, the Language Testing Unit moved to the government-approved WebEx platform. Since January 2021, the LTU has conducted all remote testing on this platform and, with the return to in-person testing post-pandemic, will retain this platform for all remote testing into the foreseeable future. For speaking-only tests, examinees can be at any location. For tests that involve reading, however, examinees must be in a department facility to maintain the security of the testing materials.

Quality Assurance

Since 2017, the Language Testing Unit's Quality Assurance program has ensured the reliability of test scoring and provides an established baseline against which to measure the impact of impending changes to the test. Test review requests from students typically average about 8 percent of tests per year. Beyond that, the LTU has routinely reviewed more than 20 percent of tests, and that will expand to 50 percent this fall following the recommendations of the NAS report. The LTU has a strong track record, with the consistency of scoring meeting or exceeding testing industry standards. The Language Testing Unit also routinely conducts benchmarking activities with other federal agencies and its counterpart office in the Canadian Foreign Service Institute, with excellent results.

The LTU's tester and examiner training and certification program is one of the most extensive in language testing and includes mandatory training in mitigating unconscious bias for all testing staff. On the test exit survey administered to all examinees from January through June 2022, 96 percent of examinees said they were satisfied with their testing experience. When answering a new question introduced in April 2022, 86 percent of respondents stated that the test reflects their future language proficiency needs. More than 70 percent of examinees who had received their test scores thought that their performance on the exam was an accurate reflection of their ability, and an even greater proportion agreed with their scores (79 percent). The Language Testing Unit is confident that the testing reforms will result in even stronger numbers.

FSI's goal is to ensure that language testing reflects the real-world requirements of Foreign Service work and keeps pace with modern developments in applied linguistics and measurement. These are evidence-based, data-driven efforts that include incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion, and accountability principles and addressing the concerns of the workforce. ■

AN *Inspiring* FOREIGN SERVICE LIFE

Ann Delavan Harrop 1928-2022

BY SUSAN ROCKWELL JOHNSON



COURTESY OF BILL HARROP

Ann Delavan Harrop and her family at the 2015 AFSA awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., where William C. Harrop received the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award. From left: Caldwell Harrop, George H. Harrop, William C. Harrop, Ann Delavan Harrop, Mark D. Harrop, and Scott N. Harrop.

Many in the Foreign Service will know Ann Delavan Harrop's name well, testimony to the accomplished diplomatic career of her Foreign Service officer and Career Ambassador husband, William C. "Bill" Harrop. Her long and rich life was inextricably intertwined with Bill Harrop, their family, the Foreign Service, and her beloved dogs—devoted companions from childhood on, including in the Foreign Service. Many recognize her as the professional she was, a Foreign Service spouse who served alongside Bill—from the United States to Europe, Africa, Australia, and the



Susan Rockwell Johnson is president of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and a former AFSA president. She retired in 2015 after a lifetime in the Foreign Service as the daughter of a career FSO and then her own 35-year career.



COURTESY OF BILL HARROP

The family teams up to demonstrate a time-lapse golf swing in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, during the 1960s.

Service organizations over many decades supported numerous initiatives aimed at preserving, presenting, and sharing the legacy of the U.S. Foreign Service and American diplomacy.

In 1993, after Ann and Bill retired from active duty, they continued their “partnership in service” to the Foreign Service by applying their combined diplomatic experience, knowl-

edge, and perspectives to the thoughtful selection of recipients of Nelson B. Delavan family foundation grants. This small nonprofit trust, established that year by Ann’s mother in honor of her father after the manufacturing company he founded was sold, provided a means to contribute to causes that Ann and Bill agreed were worthy.

Middle East, including five ambassadorial appointments, from the 1950s through the 1990s.

Some have a closer and more personal connection with Ann. They know how she raised their four sons, Mark, Caldwell, Scott, and George, in difficult and often dangerous environments. They know how unfailingly kind and welcoming a hostess she was, and how impressively she dealt with her gradual but inexorable loss of vision, starting in her forties, over a long and productive Foreign Service career, with never a word of complaint and in a manner that left many unaware. Loss of vision did not lead her to abandon the piano and her years of lessons; instead, she memorized and played quite a repertoire of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Schumann.

When I was a teenager, the daughter of an FSO, I recall “babysitting” for two Harrop boys when our parents lived on the same street in Brussels in the early 1960s. But then, as happens in the Foreign Service, I did not reconnect with the Harrop family until decades later in Washington, by which time the two boys had become four and the grandchildren six.

Many also know and appreciate Ann Delavan Harrop through the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation. Her grants to Foreign



COURTESY OF BILL HARROP

Ann and Bill Harrop in Kenya in the 1980s.

Through the Delavan Foundation, they made generous annual contributions to the American Foreign Service Association, the American Academy of Diplomacy, DACOR, the Senior Living Foundation, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, the online publication *American Diplomacy* (www.AmericanDiplomacy.org), and the National Museum of American Diplomacy. The Delavan Foundation became a well-known and respected patron and force multiplier for the Foreign Service as a professional diplomatic service and as an institution, making a real difference.

Among grant recipients have been AFSA’s history book, *The Voice of the Foreign Service*, and its 75th anniversary dinner celebration; two annual AFSA awards—the Nelson B. Delavan Award for an office management specialist and the Tex Harris Award for constructive



Ann with her dog, Ben, in Israel in the early 1990s.

dissent by a Foreign Service specialist; the American Academy of Diplomacy's books *First Line of Defense* and *Commercial Diplomacy and the National Interest*; several reports with the Henry Stimson Center on the professional education of diplomats and on the challenge of balancing the security of personnel with effective diplomacy; several Una Chapman Cox Foundation studies of the conduct of American diplomacy, with specific recommendations; DACOR Bacon House's accessible entrance; ADST's Foreign Affairs Oral History program, including oral histories of AFSA presidents; and a significant donation to the ongoing National Museum of American Diplomacy project. We all owe the Harrops so much.

The Foreign Service did not interrupt Ann's lifelong love of, devotion to, and dependence on her dogs to cheer, comfort, and inspire her. She appreciated and benefited from their loyal companionship and the endless, fresh joy they contributed to home and family. They include: Thunder, who escorted her to elementary school; Jeannette, the basset hound; Lady and Sheena, the Irish setters in Australia; sweet Barney in Kenya; Shaba and Kivu, the ridgebacks in Zaire; Sophie in Israel; and Ben and Charles, who helped raise her grandchildren. Her bond with dogs and their contribution to her own happiness is beautifully representative of the enduring tradition of Foreign Service dogs.

Nor did the Foreign Service inhibit Ann's talent for poetry, instead apparently nourishing and inspiring it. I couldn't possibly do justice to it, so instead will just say that her verses are gems. Please discover them for yourself if you have not already. Ann's death was not sudden, and the poems she wrote in anticipation of it revealed her inner peace, as well as her wry sense of humor and quick wit.

Ann lived her long and rich life well in the best sense of that word—with jest, curiosity, intelligence, generosity, persistence, humility, a love of dogs and all animals, unassuming courage, and quiet poise. She met life's setbacks, changes, and challenges with equanimity, persistence, humor, and grace. Her remarkable individuality shone through it all.

Ann and Bill's lifelong direct and creative engagement with

ROCK CREEK CEMETERY

Today we chose our tombstone
Though not ready to move in
Selecting plot and marker
Seems a good way to begin

A pleasant place is Rock Creek
We'll settle in quite well there
A grassy slope and lovely trees
Nothing of death or despair

Instead the names of old friends
A Foreign Service nest
Ones who once were lively
Have now found peaceful rest

The stone's design is simple
Rough sides and a smooth face
Our names are there and date of birth
For the last death there's a space

Hope I'll be the first to go
Bill will be all right alone
I couldn't bear his absence
So dependent I have grown

I'll have a small dog statue
To keep me company
I'll need him if I'm the first
To meet eternity

Let us live atop this ground
As long as we are sane
And when we do depart
The memory will here remain

—Ann Delavan Harrop

the Foreign Service encompassed many aspects of Foreign Service work and life, from foreign policy formulation and the conduct of diplomacy to stewardship of the Department of State and the Foreign Service as a distinct institution and ethos, to the encouragement and empowerment of others working in these fields inside and outside the State Department.

Ann Delavan Harrop was a quintessential Foreign Service spouse, mother, and partner. She served her country and the Foreign Service along with her husband, William C. Harrop, with intelligence and generosity for seven decades in a remarkable number of ways, without fanfare but with great impact. Ann and Bill are stellar exemplars of the "once Foreign Service, always Foreign Service" mindset and life. As we approach the 2024 centenary of the Foreign Service, may its spirit be rekindled and strengthened. ■

Visiting the Fergana Valley

BY JAMES TALALAY



Advertising signs on the Kuraminskiy Khrebet mountain range.

The Fergana Valley is about 250 kilometers southeast of the capital, Tashkent, and is the economic engine and most densely populated area of Uzbekistan. The journey to the valley is a four-hour drive through a pass in the Kuraminskiy Khrebet mountain range. Once in the desolate, mostly bare mountains, the view is unadulterated nature—except at a certain section. Though billboards are banned there, this giant “Hollywood” signage is okay.

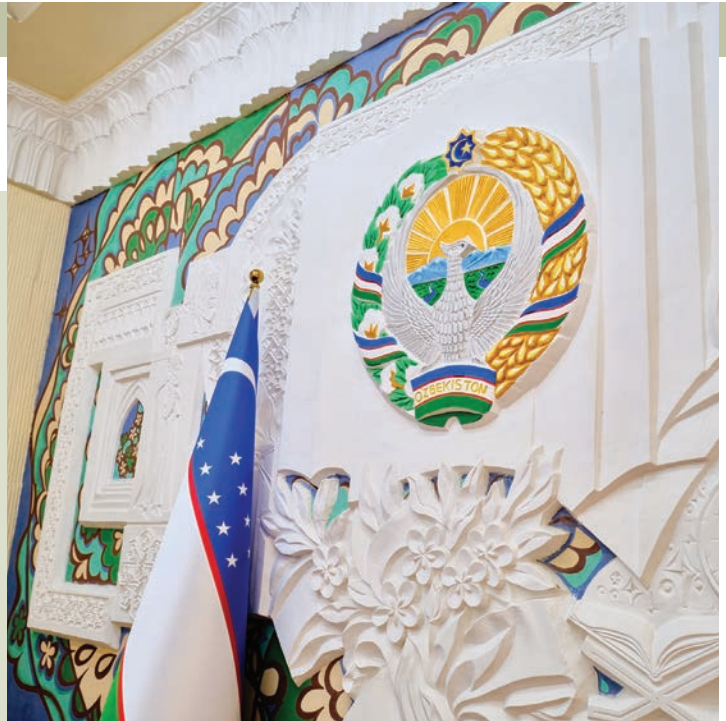


James Talalay is a photographer and Foreign Service family member currently based in Tashkent. He had a chance to tag along with his

wife, FSO Sarah Talalay, on an outreach trip to some of the cities of the Fergana Valley. See more of James Talalay’s work at jamestalalay.com.

A school meeting room in the city of Fergana.

Outreach meant a lot of meetings at schools and universities, with big welcomes, marches to a fancy meeting room, and many people in attendance. A bit of chatter, a lot of untouched food. Then, the finale: the grand exchange of gifts, including vases and plates, spices, textiles, and heavy books. The background in these rooms is impressive; it is typically an elaborate, heavily carved frieze depicting triumphant work and Uzbekistan's official seal.



Butchers in their shop in Namangan.

Western-style groceries are making inroads throughout the country, at least in the bigger cities and new developments. But in many old neighborhoods, it's still local, open markets, bazaars, and back-alley affairs for buying food. A quick pop into a house reveals a butcher shop.



Diorama of a cotton crop, Fergana Regional Museum of Local Lore in Namangan.

A major agricultural crop developed during Soviet times, cotton is king in Uzbekistan. School kids can learn about this important export at the museum, right next to dioramas of local animals. Until recently, children helped harvest the cotton.





A “love” apartment in Fergana.

We toured a few prospective apartments for incoming Fulbright grantees. One apartment was curious with a small, empty kitchen. Snacks and drinks had been left on the table. The local realtor casually mentioned the apartment was also available on a shorter-term basis. We understood. The artwork in the bedroom set the theme.



Makeshift prayer area in an empty shopping stall.

And then it was time to head back to Tashkent. In the Kuraminskiy Khrebet mountain range we made a quick stop for a drink and a stretch at a rest area, which revealed this humble makeshift prayer space.



Amusement park ride in Babur Park in Namangan.

Uzbekistan is a young country, full of kids. Every green space seems to feature an amusement park. The Silk Road fantasy comes alive in this car-ride attraction. The tree trunks are painted white for insect control. ■

AFSA Welcomes New Foreign Service Hires

AFSA was pleased to welcome new members of the Foreign Service in a series of meetings in July. This included a new class of USAID officers, who met with AFSA virtually, and the State Department Foreign Service Orientation 165-211 class, a very large group that was divided into two lunch events at AFSA headquarters.

AFSA's State Vice President Tom Yazdgerdi welcomed all groups and outlined the association's current work and priorities in support of members.

Meeting with the USAID C3-30 class on Google Meet on July 19, AFSA USAID Vice President Jason Singer spoke about his role and the work of AFSA's Labor Management Office, and AFSA staff members gave an overview of how to join the association.

The USAID class is made up of 34 officers across 11 different specialties, or backstops. Twelve have previous USAID experience, and 25 join the agency with a professional background in nonprofit and humanitarian organizations.

In total, they speak 27 languages and have worked and studied in 55 different countries. One participant is a former Sesame Street star, while another has a group of Maasai warriors to thank for being saved from a black mamba in East Africa.

On July 21 and 22, AFSA hosted two lunches for the 191 members of the FS Orientation 165-211 class, seating new hires with table hosts, including active-duty

Continued on page 58

CALENDAR

Please check www.afsa.org for the most up-to-date information.

October 10
Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day:
AFSA offices closed

October 12
12:15-1 p.m.
Job Search Transition Program Virtual Event

October 19
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

October 19
4-6 p.m.
AFSA Awards Ceremony

November 9
Time TBD
Webinar: 2023 FEHB Insurance and Benefits, including Medicare coordination

November 14-December 12
Federal Health Benefits Open Season

November 11
Veterans Day:
AFSA offices closed

November 16
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

November 24-25
Thanksgiving Holiday:
AFSA offices closed

January 18
Governing Board Election Cycle for 2023-2025 Board Begins

ANNOUNCING THE 2022 AFSA AWARD RECIPIENTS

LIFETIME CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

Ambassador Anne W. Patterson

FOREIGN SERVICE CHAMPIONS

Representative Joaquin Castro (D-Texas)
Senator Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska)

CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT

Steven May

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

Michael White

W. Averell Harriman Award for an Entry-Level Officer

Benjamin Dille

Christian A. Herter Award for a Senior Foreign Service Officer

Anton Cooper

William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer

Jennifer Davis

William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer

Elisabeth Zentos

William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer

EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

Virginia Carlson

Avis Bohlen Award for an Eligible Family Member

Christine Peterson

M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Officer

Denis Rajic

Nelson B. Delavan Award for an Office Management Specialist

Runner-Up: Judit Kaczor

Jacob Surface

Mark Palmer Award for Advancement of Democracy

RaeJean Stokes

Mark Palmer Award for Advancement of Democracy

Jeff Osweiler

Post Representative of the Year Award

Susan Johnson

AFSA Achievement and Contributions to the Association Award

Sharon Papp

AFSA Special Achievements Award

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



Progress on Equity for Local FS Hires

In May 2022, I wrote that AFSA was intent on changing the long-standing State Department policy that in practice discriminates against those joining the Foreign Service as local hires. AFSA wants to see the policy changed so that both local (D.C. area) and nonlocal hires are treated equitably. We had considered filing a cohort grievance or taking other actions, including using alternative dispute resolution mechanisms or seeking legislative changes.

I am happy to report that there has been significant progress on righting this inequity. At our regular monthly meeting in April with Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources (D-MR) Brian McKeon, AFSA President Eric Rubin and I briefed him on the issue and followed up with a letter explaining in detail what we think would be needed to resolve the inequity. We were very grateful to learn shortly thereafter that McKeon supported making this right and the department is now in favor of pushing for legislative action.

Help from Congress.

In May, the staff of Representative Joaquin Castro (D-Texas), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Development, reached out to AFSA with proposed legislative language to resolve this problem.

For training lasting less than six months (including FS orientation), lodging and per diem would be provided for all new FS employees, regardless of the location of their residence at the time of hire. For training longer than six months, locality pay would be codified for all new hires. AFSA has provided comments and is strongly in favor of this formulation.

While prospects on the Senate side are less clear, we have heard that at least one senator is interested in helping right this inequity. AFSA will follow up with individual senators and representatives, including those who serve on the House Diplomacy Caucus and the Senate Foreign Service Caucus.

Prospects for passage.

Most likely, this legislative language would be attached as an amendment to a larger bill, such as the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

As of mid-August, the prospects are unclear. Only the House has gone through the floor passage process for its version of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2023; the Senate still needs to act. Then the final FY2023 NDAA will be negotiated and likely will not become law until near the end of 2022. Further clouding prospects is that 2022 is a mid-term election year, with representatives and senators focused on their races.

AFSA wants to see the policy changed so that both local (D.C. area) and nonlocal hires are treated equitably.

That said, AFSA remains hopeful that with the department's support for making things right for local hires and the existing legislative language, this can still get done—if not in this Congress, then in the next one, which will convene on Jan. 3, 2023.

Health insurance lag.

During recent meetings with new FS orientation classes to encourage them to join AFSA (which can once again be held at AFSA HQ—with lunch!), we have heard complaints about the time it takes for federal health insurance to kick in.

One new FS member told me that she would have to wait five to six weeks before her insurance started and was currently unable to afford stop-gap insurance. "I hope I don't get hit by a bus crossing the street," she said.

Another, who had a family of four and was also waiting and unable to afford temporary insurance, told me that his newborn baby recently had a very high fever. He was about to take his infant to the emergency room when, thankfully, the fever broke. Had he gone to the emergency room, he would have

been completely responsible for the bill, without hope of repayment, as health insurance is not retroactive to the day an employee joins the department.

We immediately raised this issue with department leaders, who told us they agree that this wait is far too long, but that this governmentwide policy is controlled by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). We urged the Bureau of Global Talent Management to raise it with their OPM counterparts. As of this writing, there is an ongoing dialogue with the aim of changing this policy so that the day you sign on with the department (and throughout the U.S. government) is the day your health insurance starts, full stop. We will definitely follow up.

Please let us know what you think at member@afsa.org or afsa@state.gov. ■



Promoting an Improved Process

Most institutions have some form of employee evaluation, and some may argue that our promotion system, with all the anxiety, reflection, and confusion it sometimes causes, is simply one “cost” of a Foreign Service career. But this doesn’t mean that it should not be improved, made more transparent, and implemented with a focus on FSOs both as people who grow and change and as agency “human capital.”

While promotion boards are an annual event, USAID *must* work toward centering the overall promotion process around an FSO’s more than 20-year career pathway and broader agency strategic workforce planning.

The process in a nutshell. Each year promotion boards review the performance files for promotion-eligible FSOs to assess which are ready for immediate promotion (A rating), which are meeting the standards of performance of their class but are not competitive for promotion (B rating), and which are failing to meet the standards of performance of their class (C rating), in accordance with ADS 463 and ADS 463mai, Precepts for Foreign Service Promotion Boards.

The boards are not limited in how many As, Bs, or Cs they award, nor do they know how many promotion slots are available for each rank.

They take their roles seri-

ously, digesting huge amounts of current and prior-year information such as annual accomplishment records (AARs) and associated operating unit context statements, annual performance evaluations (APEs), and multisource ratings (MSRs).

Five-year performance evaluation files also include: an employee’s training record, awards, assignment history, disciplinary actions (decision letters), and language scores.

Challenging scores and board results. As AFSA’s Labor Management site notes: “Probably the most frequent cause of complaints in the grievance system is the unfairness which Foreign Service employees often perceive in the evaluations periodically written on their performance.”

Understanding the reasons for a board’s rating of a given employee can be challenging. Promotion board members rightly do not discuss specifics; and since both board members and the cohort of promotion-eligible FSOs change each year, it can be difficult to determine individual trends and identify recurring strengths and weaknesses.

A successful challenge of promotion results is both rare and difficult. The Foreign Affairs Manual (3 FAM 4412) clearly states that simply disagreeing with a board’s finding is not grounds for a grievance. But a procedural violation may well be. Errors

of both process and substance do happen, and the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM), AFSA, and the boards themselves are committed to addressing these.

What’s next? The agency strives to manage a fair, efficient process, and promotion board members—most of whom are senior USAID FSOs—take their roles extremely seriously. HCTM has bolstered its support for the process, including creation of an ad hoc task team dedicated to improving policies, procedures, and practices.

Unfortunately, the task team is not yet permanent; its operational status is unclear, and it is under-resourced, overstretched, and subject to short-term influences and external pressures.

The agency has taken some positive steps: HCTM introduced individualized report cards, conducts a growing number of webinars, and produces ample supplemental guidance and materials. A highly anticipated report on historical promotion data should be released soon, clarifying some macro-level promotion trends. And the agency has enhanced—though not enough—the roles and authorities of assignments and career counselors (ACCs) and backstop coordinators (BCs).

The agency should do more to clarify and refine

the report card process and findings; increase the numbers and empowerment of ACCs and BCs to provide deeper, more individualized support for FSOs in career management and planning; provide more robust training for supervisors, particularly non-FSOs; and structure the performance and promotion processes within a strategic workforce plan, based on the concept that the Foreign Service is a career—not simply one of USAID’s many (many!) hiring mechanisms.

Under the previous administration, USAID committed to conducting a third-party assessment of the promotion system. This commitment has disappeared. Too often, the agency speaks of being a “learning organization,” yet does not dedicate resources to assessing its own systems. *AFSA urges USAID to undertake the third-party assessment, drawing upon its findings and AFSA consultations to make adjustments and improvements to the system.*

The promotion process is critical to the careers and lives of FSOs and their families. It requires us all to learn and improve. AFSA seeks to collaborate on refining processes and policies based on objective analysis, data, and evidence. We owe this to FSOs, the Foreign Service as an institution, and the American people. ■



The Remarkable History of the FS Grievance System

The Foreign Service grievance system originated in a tragedy: Its creation was prompted by the suicide of Foreign Service Officer Charles William Thomas in April 1971. Thomas had been separated from the Foreign Service in 1969 after being passed over for promotion. Only 47 years old, with just 18 years of service, he did not qualify for a pension. After nearly two years of unsuccessful job searching, he took his life in despair.

Problems were belatedly discovered with his file that the promotion boards reviewed. A highly laudatory Inspector's Evaluation Report had been temporarily misfiled in another officer's file. Thomas had not been allowed to see and rebut the single negative evaluation report in his file. Because decisions on promotions and selection-out were not reviewable, he had no mechanism to seek redress.

His suicide sent shock waves across official Washington. Prompted by his widow, Cynthia Thomas, their home state U.S. Senator Birch Bayh Jr. (D-Ind.) introduced legislation in June 1971 to create a Foreign Service grievance system. That legislation was based on a draft by AFSA's Tex Harris and Civil Service employee Marian Nash. Seeking to head off congressional action, the State Department agreed to include a provision directing

the creation of a grievance process in a December 1971 executive order signed by President Richard Nixon.

But negotiations between AFSA and State to implement the grievance process stalled. State refused to give the grievance board the ability to order the suspension of agency actions pending the board's decision. Also, State wanted the heads of the foreign affairs agencies to be able to reject board decisions. So AFSA and Cynthia Thomas continued to press for legislation.

Cynthia Thomas also coordinated the filing of a suit against the State Department citing the cases of several FSOs who had been denied due process. Although AFSA did not join her suit, which was supported by the Civil Service union, the American Federation of Government Employees, the association did eventually file a supportive amicus brief. In 1973 a federal court found State's selection-out procedures to be "constitutionally defective" and ordered additional procedural safeguards in the Foreign Service personnel system.

That ruling gave a boost to AFSA's efforts to secure legislation mandating a grievance process. After four years of advocacy in the face of State Department opposition, legislation passed in 1975 and was implemented in 1976. With modifications,

AFSA worked to secure legislation mandating a grievance process.

it was incorporated in the Foreign Service Act of 1980, creating the Foreign Service Grievance Board as we know it today.

Recent history. Forty years later, a flaw in the law became apparent. While it charges the Secretary of State with making FSGB member appointments, Congress did not anticipate that a head of our nation's senior Cabinet department would refuse to fulfill that responsibility. But Secretary of State Mike Pompeo did exactly that. During his final four months in office, he failed to act on the nominations of eight FSGB members to start two-year terms on Oct. 1, 2020. Thus, the seats of the "Pompeo Eight"—nearly half the FSGB—became vacant. Pending caseloads rose, and justice was delayed for employees who had appealed to the FSGB.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken made those appointments shortly after taking office, but the five-month delay created a problem. Now, instead of half the FSGB starting two-year terms on Oct. 1 in successive years, there were multiple starting dates: the Pompeo Eight with one date, two replacement members with another date, and the other half of the

FSGB with a third date.

To get back on track, an innovative solution was found. The Pompeo Eight voluntarily resigned short of the February 2023 end of their terms, and Secretary Blinken reappointed the seven who agreed to continue, plus two replacement members, to new two-year terms effective October 2022. Thus, the traditional appointment cycle was restored.

A postscript. Decades after Charles Thomas' death, declassified documents revealed that, during his 1964-1967 tour at Embassy Mexico City, he learned details of Lee Harvey Oswald's trip to Mexico seven weeks before the November 1963 Kennedy assassination; during this trip, Oswald visited the Cuban and Soviet embassies. Thomas tried unsuccessfully to get U.S. government agencies to further investigate these visits. His efforts were resisted by the Central Intelligence Agency, which did not want scrutiny of whether its Mexico City station paid enough attention to Oswald's interactions with Cuban officials.

Did this effort to silence Charles Thomas factor into his being passed over for promotion? If it did, no evidence has yet emerged. ■

FSJ Channels: Join the Conversation

There's more than one way to keep up with the *FSJ*, AFSA's flagship publication for the past century.

We're constantly pursuing new ways to bring to the fore the magazine's vital mix of foreign affairs coverage and discussion of Foreign Service work and life.

Our LinkedIn page, found at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-foreign-service-journal>, highlights our material on a profession-focused platform and enjoys a rate of growth that surpasses the industry average. We have more than 1,000 followers now, just one year after creating the page.

On Twitter, the preeminent social media channel for international affairs news, *Journal* content is shared through AFSA's handle, <https://twitter.com/>

afsatweets, with the hashtag #FSJ.

If you haven't done so already, consider signing up for (or spreading the word about) our email newsletter, "FSJ Insider," where we share our newest content plus more. The newsletter has garnered more than 1,120 subscribers since it was launched in August 2021. Learn more at <https://afsa.org/fsj>.

We also welcome submissions for our Speaking Out and Local Lens sections, as well as articles on current topics of concern or interest to the Foreign Service and American foreign affairs community. Author guidelines for all content categories can be found at <https://afsa.org/fsj-author-guidelines>.

AFSA works to keep its retired constituents informed through the



The *FSJ*'s LinkedIn page highlights magazine content on a profession-focused platform. Inset: Subscribe to the "FSJ Insider" newsletter at afsa.org/fsj.

FSJ Insider

monthly retiree newsletter, found at <https://afsa.org/retirement-newsletter>, and maximizes a suite of outreach tools to bring the work of the Foreign Service to

new and growing audiences around the world. Find new ways to follow and connect at <https://afsa.org/social-media>. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meetings

July 20, 2022

The board met in person at AFSA headquarters in both July and August.

Awards: Continuing its review of nominations for AFSA's annual awards, the board adopted the Awards and Plaques Committee's recommendations for additional award recipients.

Governance: The board voted in favor of proposing seven amendments to its bylaws, as recommended by the Governance Committee, to AFSA voters during the 2023 Governing Board election cycle. ■

August 17, 2022

AFSA Audit: The board voted to accept the independent auditor's report on AFSA's consolidated financial statements for Fiscal Year 2021.

Governance: The board voted in favor of proposing two amendments to its bylaws, as recommended by the Governance Committee, to AFSA voters during the 2023 Governing Board election cycle.

Committee Chair Assignments: The Governing Board approved the following committee chair assignments—Committee on Elections Chair: Dao Le (FCS); and Legal Defense Fund Committee Chair: Lisa Ahramjian (FAS).

Awards: The board adopted the Awards and Plaques Committee's final round of recommendations for award recipients. ■

AFSA Connects with Job Search/Transition Program

On Aug. 8, AFSA President Eric Rubin and Retiree Vice President John Naland joined FSI's Job Search/Transition Program participants virtually to discuss what the association offers Foreign Service members as they transition into the next phase of their professional and personal lives.

Naland reminded the class that a wealth of retirement-related resources can be found on the Retirement Services page of the AFSA website at <https://afsa.org/retirement-services>.

Philip Shull, a retired FSO with the Foreign Agricultural

Service and a retiree representative on AFSA's Governing Board, highlighted the value of AFSA membership in retirement.

"AFSA becomes like your GSO when you leave the Foreign Service," Shull said. "It's the place where you can go for assistance and to get questions answered. Your voice still matters, and you can be influential as you remain a part of this community that has been central to many decades of your life."

In his closing remarks, Ambassador Rubin highlighted AFSA's ongoing work

AFSA becomes like your GSO when you leave the Foreign Service. It's the place where you can go for assistance.

—Retired FSO Philip Shull

to advocate for current and retired FSOs and reminded the class that they must take action to remain a member. Those approaching retirement should contact Member Services (member@afsa.org) to let AFSA know and to secure all the benefits of AFSA membership.

The August 2022 JSTP

class consisted of just over 150 participants: 92 percent from the State Department, 6 percent from USAID, and 2 percent from the Foreign Commercial Service.

The majority of those enrolled hail from the Foreign Service, with 9 percent from the Civil Service. ■

*New Foreign Service Hires
Continued from page 53*

ambassadors and AFSA Governing Board members, ready to answer questions about AFSA's role in a Foreign Service career.

The State Department class consists of 88 Foreign Service generalists and 105 specialists. It includes one Pickering Fellow, 22 Rangel Fellows, four former Consular Fellows, one Presidential Management Fellow, and one former Navy Seabee.

There are 104 class members with prior State Department experience, 47 who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and attorneys, educators, nurses, scientists, and small business owners.



AFSA State VP Tom Yazdgerdi addresses the FS Orientation 165-211 class on July 21.

Education levels range from high school to post-graduate degrees.

Some class members served on Operation Warp Speed ensuring the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines. One is a professional cricket player,

while another is a former professional *Jai-Alai* player. Many are musicians, and at least four have newborn babies at home.

Class members speak the "big six" languages of the United Nations as well as

Armenian, Bulgarian, German, Hindi, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Igbo, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

AFSA is continuing to welcome incoming classes both virtually and at in-person lunches in Washington, D.C. ■

AFSA Achieves Highest Possible Result in Audit

For the 13th straight year, the American Foreign Service Association received the highest possible commendation in its annual audit: a clean, unmodified opinion.

The accounting firm CliftonLarsonAllen LLP found no deficiencies in AFSA's 2021 financial reporting and financial operations. The AFSA Governing Board received the official report at its August board meeting.

Special attention to financial management and related governance procedures began more than a decade ago and has yielded genuine progress, which was recog-

nized by the auditing firm in their report. AFSA's good resource stewardship has provided an opportunity to deepen services, professionalize operations, and better advance strategic goals.

Said AFSA Executive Director Ásgeir Sigfússon: "Our members can look to 13 years of 'clean' audit opinions as evidence that AFSA is a good steward of their member dues. Internal governance and the highest accounting standards are important to us, and receiving a stamp of approval from our auditors shows that we are succeeding." ■

2023 AFSA Directory of Retired Members: Update Your Information

It's that time of the year when we ask retiree members to make sure AFSA has your most up-to-date contact information—including address, telephone number, and email address—for inclusion in the 2023 AFSA Retiree Directory.

If you have moved or changed any of your contact information in the last year, please email us at member@afsa.org. If we have your current contact information, there is no need to act.

The deadline for all changes for the 2023 Retiree Directory is Nov. 4, 2022.

Please note that if you have previously requested your name *not* be included in the directory, we have that information recorded and will ensure that it is not.

Further, if you have previously told us that you do *not* wish to receive a copy of the directory, we have that directive recorded, as well.

For new requests, please email member@afsa.org. ■

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Changes to Public Servant Loan Forgiveness

In an Aug. 10 message to State Department employees, Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Brian McKeon highlighted important changes to the Public Servant Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, available to all federal employees, that may affect many AFSA members.

Good news for those with

federal student loans: The Department of Education recently made changes to the PSLF program, called the “Limited PSLF Waiver,” to help federal borrowers get their loans forgiven and pay off their loans faster.

This waiver allows borrowers access to additional PSLF credit, even if they had been told previously that

they had the wrong loan type or the wrong repayment plan.

The Limited PSLF Waiver is only available until Oct. 31, 2022; learn more about it at <https://bit.ly/PSLF-waiver>.

Once you submit a PSLF form and qualify, you will start accruing credit toward PSLF. If you previously applied for PSLF, it’s a good

idea to update your employment certification.

Those who applied and were subsequently denied because of the loan type are encouraged to apply again.

Remember, you must take advantage of this Limited PSLF Waiver before Oct. 31, so please take immediate action to secure this temporary benefit. ■

Congratulations to the AAFSW & SOSA Award Winners

In early August, winners were announced for the 2022 Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA) and the Champions of Career Enhancement for Eligible Family Members (CCE-EFM) Award, both sponsored by Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW), as well as DACOR’s Eleanor Dodson Tragen Award.

Created in 1990 at the suggestion of Secretary of State James Baker and Mrs. Susan Baker, the SOSA Award recognizes remarkable volunteer efforts and is given for activities performed while posted to a U.S. mission.

This year’s winners, hailing from five different geographic regions, are as follows:

Justin Wimpey (EFM in Antananarivo, Madagascar) for his creation of a pressure cooker that reduces charcoal dependency for cooking, and his role in helping to establish a women-led business to distribute the pots across Madagascar.

Denis Rajic (FSO), **Michele Rajic Tang** (EFM), **Vicki Daniel** (HRO), and **Ellin R. Lobb** (CLO) in Shanghai, China, for their work organizing wholesale food deliveries for U.S. direct-hire staff and families and local employees of Consulate General Shanghai during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Meredith Wiedemer (EFM in Chisinau, Moldova) who opened the Sunflower Center to provide children’s programming, psychosocial support for mothers, and employment to Ukrainian women refugees.

Debra Stock (EFM in Doha, Qatar) for her work fundraising and organizing volunteers to receive nearly 60,000 Afghan evacuees at the Al Udeid Air Base.

Jesus Carlos Valles (EFM in Port-au-Prince, Haiti) for his

more than 1,000 volunteer hours at the Carpenter Training Center of the St. Luke Foundation for Haiti, where he taught at-risk young men to earn a living using machinery and carpentry tools.

Honorable mentions: **Sonia Carolina Torres López** (EFM in Conakry, Guinea); **Ling L.C. Conley** (EFM in Beijing, China); **Ondrej Hindl** (EFM in Tbilisi, Georgia); **John Wesley Kane** (EFM in Tel Aviv, Israel); and **Wiley W. Skaret** (EFM in Bogotá, Colombia).

The CCE-EFM Award was developed to recognize those who go above and beyond their job descriptions to expand and elevate job opportunities and long-term career enhancement for Foreign Service family members.

Stephanie Anderson (EFM in Berlin, Germany) and **Lauren Steed** (EFM in Guangzhou, China) are this year’s joint winners for their work as creators and co-hosts of the podcast “Available Worldwide” and their virtual “FS Education and Lifelong Learning Expo” showcasing professional services offered by 35 EFM small businesses.

The Eleanor Dodson Tragen Award, sponsored and administered by the DACOR Bacon House Foundation, honors a spouse or family member who has promoted rights, programs, and benefits for Foreign Service families, as did the late Mrs. Tragen.

This year, DACOR selected **Alison W. Davis** (EFM in Cotonou, Benin) to receive this award in recognition of her tireless advocacy work as chair of post’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

All awards will be presented to recipients at the annual AAFSW awards ceremony on Nov. 17, 2022. ■

The Long Arc of U.S. Global Influence

The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy: Weak Power, Great Power, Superpower, Hyperpower

Michael Mandelbaum, Oxford University Press, 2022, \$34.95/hardcover, e-book available, 624 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOSEPH L. NOVAK

Michael Mandelbaum's *The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy* paints a portrait of U.S. international relations on an expansive canvas. Deftly presenting an innovative analytical framework, it divides American diplomatic history into well-defined eras marked by ascending degrees of global power. Although the subject matter is often intricate, Mandelbaum is consistently incisive and keeps the narrative moving.

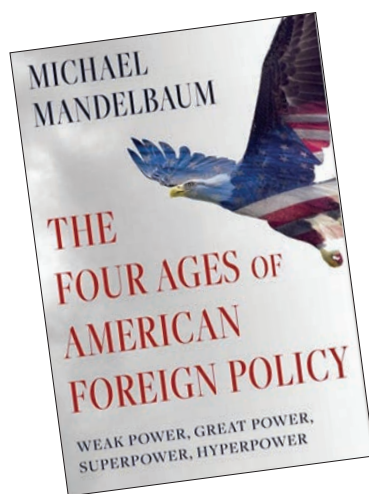
A longtime commentator on international affairs, Mandelbaum is a professor emeritus of American foreign policy at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He has written numerous books, including *The Rise and Fall of Peace on Earth* (2019), and co-authored *That Used to Be Us* (2011) with Thomas L. Friedman, a columnist for *The New York Times*.

The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy calls to mind classic works focused on U.S. foreign affairs, such as Samuel Flagg Bemis' *A Diplomatic History of the United States* (1936) and Thomas A. Bailey's *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (1940).

Mandelbaum's book is distinguishable from its seminal predecessors by its carefully crafted "four ages" structure and the fact that it updates the story of American diplomacy. Like texts by Hans Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger, it also

examines the role of "realist" versus "idealist" perspectives on global affairs.

The author begins his chronicle by delving into American colonial history. He labels the 13 original colonies a "weak power" with "no effective military forces of their own and no political mechanism to coordinate their policies." In the wake of the Revolutionary War, partisan squabbling and sectional strife plagued the new nation.



Despite its internal strains, the United States vastly expanded its geographical scope via the Louisiana Purchase (1803) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). "Great power" status was finally attained in 1865 via the sweeping Union victory in the Civil War. With the consolidation of its national authority, Washington joined the major European powers as a political and economic force on the global stage.

The narrative flows into the 20th century with the United States fighting in two world wars and becoming a "superpower" in 1945. In this role, the United States competed against the Soviet Union, the rival superpower, until the latter imploded because of its own contradictions circa 1990.

According to the author, the abrupt end of the Cold War inaugurated the "hyperpower" stage of U.S. foreign policy. This neologism was memorably deployed in 1998 by a French Foreign Minister who was frustrated by American dominance. During this time frame, Mandelbaum contends, "The United States not only had no powerful rivals, but also effectively had no rivals at all."

According to the author, the abrupt end of the Cold War inaugurated the "hyperpower" stage of U.S. foreign policy.

While setting out its framework, *The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy* dexterously interweaves examples of policy continuity that lace the respective eras together. Alexander Hamilton's clash with Thomas Jefferson, for instance, over the extent of federal power spilled into foreign policy with long-lasting ramifications.

As Mandelbaum convincingly argues, Hamilton's championing of a "powerful state apparatus" dedicated to ensuring the national interest played a key role in shaping U.S. foreign affairs. Theodore Roosevelt and Richard Nixon were two of several presidents whose international policies bore the distinct imprint of Hamiltonian-aligned realist thinking.

At the same time, Jefferson's anti-autocratic values served as a founda-

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November issue.

- “In Their Own Write” highlights books by FS authors. This year your colleagues wrote novels, academic tomes, children’s books and more.
- “Of Related Interest” surveys recent books related to diplomacy.
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Wilsonian liberal internationalism, however, went on to influence presidents Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush.

tion for future U.S. policies promoting representative government and human rights. Jeffersonian idealism, for example, had a far-reaching impact on President Woodrow Wilson who urged that the United States enter World War I to make the world “safe for democracy.”

Citing Margaret MacMillan’s evocative *Paris 1919* (2002), the author relates how Wilson’s ideals largely failed to sway European leaders during the rancorous debates on the postwar terms of peace. Moreover, the U.S. Senate subsequently rejected the Treaty of Versailles and its collective security provisions despite Wilson’s impassioned advocacy. Wilsonian liberal internationalism, however, went on to influence presidents Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush.

Fyodor Dostoevsky once wrote: “If everything on earth were rational, nothing would happen.” Like the novelist, Mandelbaum highlights the dangers of complacency. He perceptively observes how “the unpredictable contingencies of human history” have sparked pronounced shifts in U.S. national security policy.

Disparate events such as the shocking raid on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the unexpected invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 are stark reminders of the immense consequences of failures in intelligence and risk analysis.

The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy also contains a cogent account of the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. The Kennedy administration, though surprised by the Soviet installation of nuclear-capable missiles in Cuba, didn’t panic. Instead, the administration metic-

ulously calibrated its response, deciding on the “middle course” of imposing a naval blockade on Cuba.

Working all diplomatic angles and inventing new ones, the administration was ultimately able to convince the Kremlin to withdraw the missiles. Six decades later, the firm, clear-eyed U.S. response still serves as a model of how to manage a national security challenge.

The author indicates that the age of American “hyperpower” ended in roughly 2015. He does not entirely show his cards as to what era he thinks the United States has entered into. That said, storm clouds are on the horizon. He places the spotlight on China’s and Russia’s attempts to subvert the rules-based international order as the main source of the turbulence. Iran and North Korea are also flagged as disruptive forces.

The book, as it happens, was published just after Vladimir Putin launched his assault on Ukraine in February 2022. In detailing the many crises faced by U.S. policymakers in past decades, *The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy* helps place the ongoing conflict in a broader context. Given its extensive detail and expert framing, it’s sure to remain relevant in the years to come, and foreign affairs professionals would be wise to use it as an essential reference. ■

Joseph L. Novak is a writer based in Washington, D.C. He is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in London and a retiree member of the American Foreign Service Association. A former lawyer, he served as a U.S. Foreign Service officer for 30 years.

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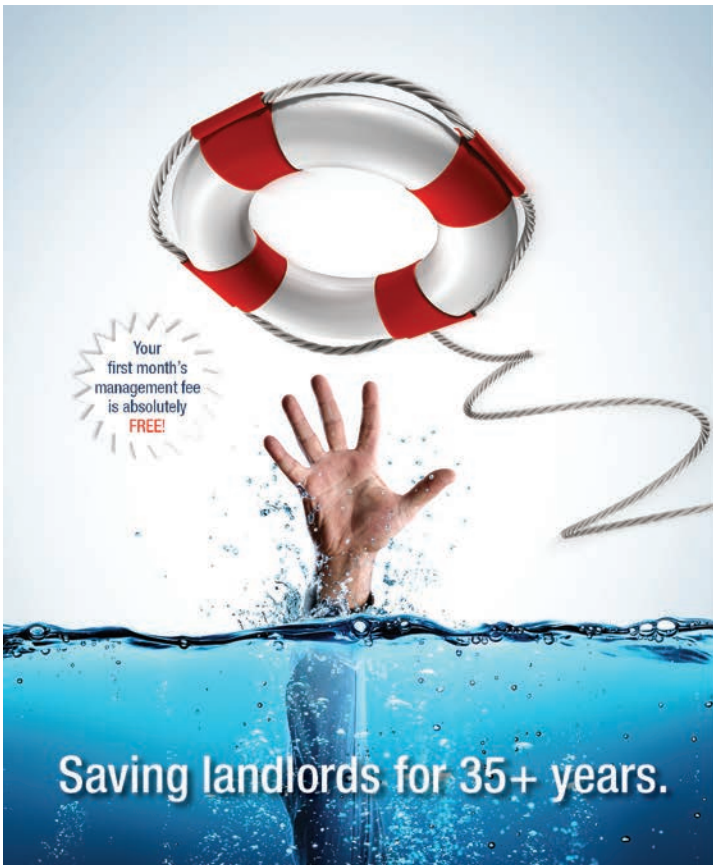
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The Swedish Cannonball

BY JONATHAN B. RICKERT

In June 1995, while I was still serving in Bucharest before taking over as director in the State Department's Office of North Central European Affairs, I made a brief familiarization visit to Warsaw. Though Poland was by far the most populous and, in some ways, most important country in what was to be my new portfolio, I had never been there before.

Among those whom I encountered at the embassy during my orientation meetings was my old friend, U.S. Defense Attaché Col. Branko Marinovich. It was a pleasure to see the Montenegro-born Branko again—he had been our next-door neighbor in Bucharest for about two years and was an enthusiastic antiquer. He kindly offered to show me around town a bit after I had finished my program for the day.

While perambulating, Branko took me to an antique store in the completely and beautifully rebuilt old town area of



JONATHAN RICKERT

Warsaw. He wanted to show me something special there, he said, with a twinkle in his eye. On the floor of the store was a large carton filled with baseball-sized, old-looking iron spheres: cannonballs.

Branko pointed to the English-language, photocopied “certificate of authenticity” accompanying each projectile. It read: “Authentic XVII c. cannonball used by Swedish artillery during the siege of Czestochowa [1654, sic].” The price of each was the equivalent of about \$5. Knowing of my Swedish connections (my wife, Gerd, hails from there), Branko urged me to buy one.

As I learned subsequently through some online research, the Swedish siege of Czestochowa (more accurately, the siege of the Jasna Gora Monastery), which took place in late 1655 during the Second

Northern War or Deluge (1655-1660), was an important event in Polish history. It pitted the Protestant Swedes and their allies against the Roman Catholic Poles and theirs. The fortified monastery and home to the famous Black Madonna icon was stoutly defended by a small band of monks and volunteers.

This band successfully held off a much more numerous Swedish-led force, largely comprising German and other mercenaries. Both sides used cannons, mainly four- and six-pounders on the Swedish side (the cannonball I obtained weighs just over four pounds). The Protestant forces withdrew after five weeks or so without having achieved their objective, proving a significant victory for the Poles.

Though intrigued, I told Branko that I thought cannonballs available in that



Retired Senior Foreign Service Officer Jonathan B. Rickert spent the majority of his 35-year career in or dealing with Central and

Eastern Europe. His final two overseas posts were as deputy chief of mission in Sofia and then Bucharest.

quantity and at that price had to be fakes. Someone with a small forge on the outskirts of Warsaw must be turning out the authentic-looking projectiles for the Scandinavian tourist trade, I speculated. Au contraire, exclaimed Branko.

His Danish military attaché colleague had taken one of the cannonballs back to Copenhagen to a government ordnance lab for evaluation. Its analysts told him that while there was no definitive way to establish the age of such metal objects, they had examined the interior structure of the projectile and found it to be the same as that of known Swedish cannonballs from the 17th century. If someone were producing fakes, they were going to a great deal of trouble to do so.

Branko's explanation was good enough

Someone with a small forge on the outskirts of Warsaw must be turning out the authentic-looking projectiles for the Scandinavian tourist trade, I speculated.

for me, so I bought one, which now sits on my desk at our summer home in Sweden (a homecoming of sorts?). On a subsequent trip to Warsaw, I purchased one for each of our two children. Though Gerd remains skeptical about the authenticity of my cannonball, I like to think that I own a small bit of Swedish (and Polish) history, as well as a happy memory of my friend Branko.

Afterword: In June 2019, Gerd and I visited Huseby Bruk, an ancient estate and

museum located in south-central Sweden (Småland). We learned there that the bruk, or “works,” had begun smelting iron in 1629 and was a major manufacturer of canons and cannonballs for the Swedish military by the 1630s.

Thus, it is entirely possible, but in no way provable, that my cannonball, if authentic, was produced at Huseby, about an hour's drive from Gerd's hometown. Yet another twist in the saga of the Swedish cannonball. ■

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(signed) Kathryn Owens, Managing Editor

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With COVID-19 restrictions slowly being lifted around Southeast

Asia, we were excited to visit Vietnam in June 2022. There, in Hoi An, we had the opportunity to indulge in an evening of tasting Vietnamese delicacies. Our first stop was a particular family's shop to try their "white rose" dumpling. But because it was a local holiday, the shop was not open. Instead, the family graciously invited us into their home, where they made the treat especially for us. As we stepped over the threshold, I saw our hostess at a distance, quietly preparing the dumplings. Time seemed to slow as she focused on her task. I felt I had entered into a painting and experienced a true Vietnamese moment. And the dumplings were delicious! ■

Carole Fenton, a Foreign Service family member, is posted with her husband, FSO Tom Fenton, in Bangkok. The couple has previously served in Budapest and Khartoum. This photo was taken with an iPhone 13Pro.

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