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Building Afghanistan Drop by Drop

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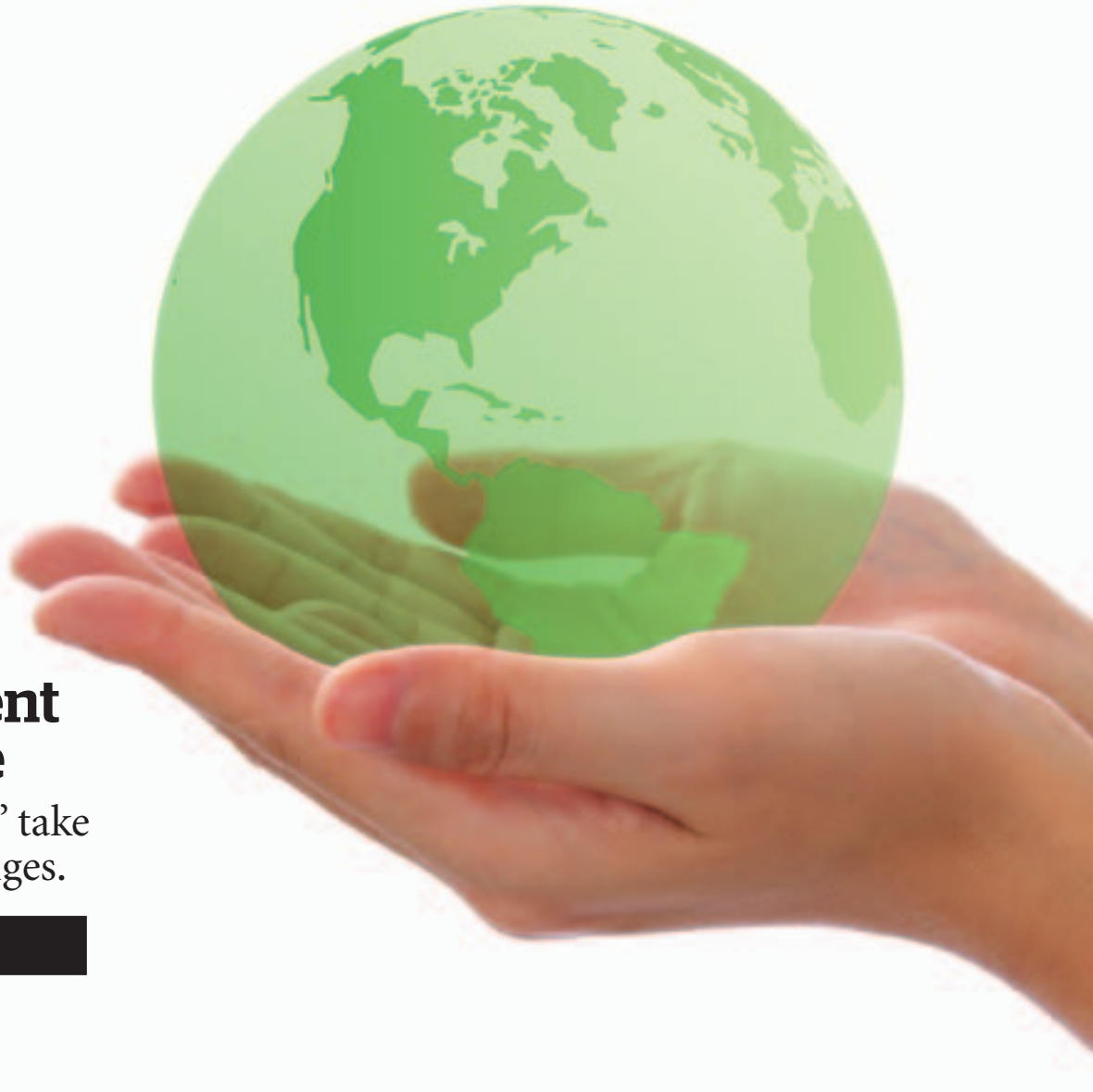

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A lone sunflower blooms in front of a mosque in Kabul.
Photo by Daniel Wilkinson

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The Value of Serving in Challenging Posts

This month marks the beginning of the 2011 Afghanistan/Iraq/Pakistan assignments season. As we look for talented volunteers for these positions in the Department's highest priority posts, I encourage you to consider what you can do.

Though hardship tours, particularly at unaccompanied posts, can be demanding, I have found such service to be among my most personally and professionally rewarding experiences. I have generally encountered a much stronger sense of community in hardship posts and have had the opportunity to do interesting, meaningful and challenging work.

Hardship posts such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan force you to rely on Department colleagues, local staff, military and others. That can create lifelong bonds. Unaccompanied posts require you to draw on your ingenuity, originality and fortitude as well as those same capabilities in others. You will have the opportunity to use your considerable skills and talents to make a positive difference in ensuring our national security.

Our surveys continue to show that the main incentive for, and rewards from, service in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan continue to be the opportunity to make a difference. We do, however, provide a package of more tangible incentives, including special differentials and additional R&Rs, that reflect the unusual working and living conditions at these posts.

We also have numerous positions that are available to employee spouses at post. In fact, 40 percent of all family members overseas work at post or on the local economy, according to the Family Liaison Office. The U.S. Missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan permit adult Eligible Family Members to accompany the employee if the EFM is employed and receives permission from the Bureau of Management, and this is an important incentive. More information on overseas family member employment is at http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1959.htm.

While these tours present some unique demands for our employees and their families, we do have resources to help you. For example, we now have dedicated positions for an Unaccompanied Tours Support Officer and an Unaccompanied Tours Program Specialist to work with our families while employees are serving in unaccompanied tours. We have also contracted with MHN (formerly the Managed Health Network) to provide around-the-clock Web and telephone-based support services, as well as face-to-face counseling sessions with a clinician for family members residing outside the Washington, D.C., area.

We value service at hardship posts, and I am proud to say that our dedicated employees and retirees continue to step forward. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has recognized the sacrifices of those serving in hardship and danger posts.

"I have asked for your support many times as Secretary, and you have always provided it," she said in a recent speech. In that talk, she noted the challenges for the Department in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and said, "We need dedicated members of both the Foreign and Civil Services to step forward and take on these challenges, with the courage, experience and dedication for which State Department employees are known around the world."

You deserve our best support, and we are determined to provide that for you.

If you have any general comments or suggestions about what we can do to further support our employees serving in unaccompanied posts, you can send them to me via unclassified e-mail at dgdirect@state.gov. ■

Nancy J. Powell
Director General

News

Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration Steven Rodriguez watches Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton cut the ribbon opening the showers.

Employee Showers Encourage Exercise

A handful of employees, including cyclists, joggers and other exercisers, gathered in the Main State parking garage in March to see Secretary of State Hillary Clinton inaugurate the Department's new employee showers.

The shower project started as a gleam in several eyes. First, Emilie Kao from the Office of International Religious Freedom asked Secretary Clinton at her June 2009 Town Hall meeting for showers, seeing them as a way to encourage biking to work or jogging.

Suggestions also appeared on The Sounding Board. Foreign Affairs officers Ed Fendley and Ivan Weinstein, who bike to work, suggested that free showers be available to all employees.

Meantime, the Office of Facilities Management began a complimentary Bicycle Loaner Program, the Greening Diplomacy Initiative supported the showers project and the Administration said it hoped 75 percent of federal employees would participate in health and wellness initiatives this year.

"This is such a great improvement," said Budget Officer Tim Carpenter via The Sounding Board. "Small things the Department can do to encourage employee exercise and alternate forms of commuting really go a long way."

STUDENTS LEARN FROM IRAQI VOTING IN U.S.

The Department's Diplomats in Residence and student campus coordinators assisted with the voting of U.S.-based Iraqis in Iraq's national elections in March. The DIRs organized teams of students as election observers, part of the Department's broader effort to monitor voting in the 16 countries where it was held outside Iraq.

The team's reports were included in election assessments that the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs provided to Department principals, including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

DIRs are Senior Foreign Service officers posted at 16 U.S. universities who identify and recruit students for Department of State careers. The DIRs in Phoenix, Chicago, Los Angeles and Austin used the Iraqi elections to instruct students they mentor and work with daily, and used students' reports on the event for discussions about what they might expect from a Department career. DIRs Amy Hyatt, Bill Stewart and Ambassador Maurice Parker accompanied students to the polls in Phoenix, Dallas and Chicago.

Campus coordinators are students and former Department interns who serve as liaisons to the Department at universities lacking DIRs. In California, campus coordinators Ryan Wu and David Diaz served as election observers.

The initiative allowed college students to witness the Iraqi election in real time, including verifying voters' citizenship and monitoring the voting process. The students said they were moved by how important it was for the thousands of Iraqis in the United States to vote to help shape their nation's next government.

Like voters, Iraqi youths display ink-stained fingers.

New Embassy Shows U.S. Commitment to Burundi

Breaking ground for the embassy compound are, from left, Ambassador Pamela J.H. Slutz, Mayor Evrard Giswaswa and John J. Finnegan, Jr. of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations.

In the Kigobe section of Bujumbura, the largest foreign construction project in Burundi since the 2005 end of its 12-year civil war got under way in March as ground was broken for a new U.S. embassy compound.

U.S. Ambassador to Burundi Pamela J. H. Slutz joined Bujumbura Mayor Evrard Giswaswa and John J. Finnegan Jr., acting managing director for Operations of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in a ceremony where traditional Burundian drummers introduced each speaker. She said the new compound symbolizes the U.S. commitment to engage with Burundians and said the U.S. would be a good neighbor that is concerned with economic growth and the neighborhood's development.

The facility will have several environmentally friendly features, including the ability to capture and recycle water. It will use photovoltaic cells to reduce dependence on locally generated electricity and have low-reflective surfaces and strategic shading to remain naturally cool.

Consulate's Facebook Page Gains Many Fans

To launch the Facebook page of the U.S. Consulate General in Chennai, the public affairs section's staff spent a day at one of Chennai's biggest malls, getting people to become Facebook fans of the post.

Acting Public Affairs Officer Ragini Gupta said she was impressed with the teamwork, motivation, energy and coordination exhibited by the staff, who had about a month to plan and execute the launch. The post's audiovisual team stayed up all night twice to make sure that the booth at the mall looked its best and its computers functioned flawlessly.

At the booth, banners featuring photos of film directors, musicians and journalists asked: "I'm a fan, are you?" There was a blog contest, a quiz on the United States organized by the staff of the American Library and prize drawings for iPods. Student volunteers helped pass out the quiz forms, explain the consulate's goals and drum up excitement. The consul general and several celebrities logged in at the booth to become fans of the post.

At the end of a 12-hour day, more than 500 people had become fans of the Facebook page. Many visitors to the booth were having their first contact with the post.

"The fact that we reached out to Chennaiites on their turf to explain what we do and how they can get involved impressed a lot of people," Gupta said. "We would have signed up more fans but we had only four computers. We turned the curiosity of mall patrons into enthusiasm for becoming a part of our network."

Shortly afterward, the consulate general's Facebook page had 852 fans—and the number was growing. To become a fan, visit www.facebook.com/chennai.usconsulate.

The consulate general's other technology outreach efforts to South Indians include Web chats and webinars, and a Short Message Service that lets Indians text questions to the consulate directly, vote in its polls and provide feedback on events.

Shoppers at a mall in Chennai take time out to become fans of the consulate's Facebook page.

Web Site Keeps Interns Focused on the Department

Though many have returned to college, the Department's interns, including those overseas, have been keeping in touch with those they met during their internships via a Department-created, Web-based career/social networking site called INTERNational Connections.

The site, http://careers.state.gov/intern-connect, was launched last year. It initially came from a decision of the Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment to use networking technology to maintain a connection with Department interns, since most organizations use internship programs as a primary means to hire future talent.

The office used survey data and the positive comments of more than 750 former interns to develop INTERNational Connections, which allows interns and employees to create profiles that can include academic and employment histories, resumes, interests, photos and their regions of residence and employment. The community has grown in roughly one year to have more than 900 members, most of them interns.

The site provides a professional setting for networking and recruiting. Unlike the social networking site Facebook, INTERNational Connections is available only to past and present Department interns. The site allows the Department's Diplomats in Residence, outreach specialists, bureau-level intern coordinators and executive directors to develop and maintain relationships with those interested in and qualified for Foreign Service and Civil Service careers.

INTERNational Connections' potential is significant, provided Department employees and interns are aware of its benefits and actively participate in the conversations. By the end of the year, the Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment hopes departing interns will have bookmarked careers.state.gov./internconnect so that their conversations can continue.

Consul General Donna Blair, to the right of the sign, and other employees commemorate their virtual journey.

Consulate General Lagos Circumnavigates the Globe

In September of last year, the American staff of the U.S. Consulate General in Lagos, Nigeria, began a virtual journey in which they would collectively do enough exercise to carry them 24,901.55 miles—the exact circumference of the earth.

Christine Twining, co-coordinator of the community liaison office, said she launched the project because employees said they were having a hard time finding the motivation to exercise regularly. She tracked the weekly distances achieved by each employee in a wide variety of physical activities. For activities that did not propel them forward over a measurable distance, such as martial arts and weight lifting, she obtained the equivalent distance travelled by comparing the calories burned with the calories that would be burned by running one mile.

She then placed a world map outside her office that displayed the consulate's progress each week and highlighted male and female mile leaders. As the program progressed, nearly all staff members participated and some began doing other exercises, such as skipping the elevators and using the stairs. A group of women who participated in a charity dance event even had their rehearsals converted into miles.

The consulate reached its goal April 11 and celebrated with a barbeque featuring dishes from around the world. All participants received awards, and special awards were given to the mile leaders.

"The journey around the world definitely motivated me to get off the couch more," said Consular Officer Wesley Mathews, who noted that high walls and steel gates at post can provide excuses not to get out and be active.

The project "got many of us together weekly for basketball, tennis matches, gym workouts and runs around our residential neighborhood," he said. "It brought together the community in a way that will last far beyond the day we circle the globe."

Corps' Full-Time Responders Reach 100 Mark

Membership in the active component of the Civilian Response Corps has reached the 100 mark. The Civilian Response Corps brings together civilian federal employees who are specially trained and equipped to deploy rapidly to provide reconstruction and stabilization assistance to countries in crisis or emerging from conflict.

The corps leverages expertise and experience from eight federal departments and agencies, including the departments of State, Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Justice, and the Treasury and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The active members are full-time employees who train for, prepare and staff reconstruction, stabilization and conflict-prevention efforts. They deploy within 48 hours and focus on critical initial interagency functions such as assessment, planning, management, administration, logistics and resource mobilization.

Supplementing the active members are standby members employed by federal departments and having expertise that can be used in reconstruction and stabilization operations. The standby component, whose members volunteer to deploy on an as-needed basis within 30 days of call-up, now has more than 700 members.

Corps members come from such specialties as planning, operations, management, rule of law, diplomacy and governance, essential services, economic recovery and security. They prepare for deployment months before departure in a program that lasts at least two weeks per year for standby members and eight weeks annually for active members.

More information on the Civilian Response Corps is at www.CivilianResponseCorps.gov.

At the kick-off event, Ambassador Vilma Martinez urges the embassy to reduce its energy use.

Buenos Aires Commits to 10 Percent Energy Savings

The U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires aims to reduce energy use in the embassy and staff residences by 10 percent this year. Its Ten in Ten campaign calls on employees to make small daily efforts to reduce energy consumption, such as turning off lights and moderating office temperatures.

The campaign began with a celebration featuring local organic product vendors and information on environment-friendly steps for the home and office. Ambassador Vilma Martinez and Deputy Chief of Mission Tom Kelly each pledged to reduce energy use in the front office and at their homes.

The embassy's "green team," which includes Argentine and U.S. staff volunteers, developed the campaign because the embassy building represents most of the embassy's carbon footprint. The team consulted with a Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations energy audit team to develop the campaign. The management section is working with OBO to replace the embassy's chillers with more energy-efficient models. A white roof that would reflect heat and lower air conditioning needs is also being considered, as are motion-sensor lights.

In the first three months of 2010, electricity use in the embassy and staff residences was down 3.8 percent from the same period in 2009. The green team will publish the campaign's results every three months, recognize "green MVPs" and post the top five residences in terms of energy reduction. Green wardens from each section are now educating their colleagues and ensuring lights and printers in their areas are turned off.

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Deadlines

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Environmental Notes

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SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

Please Recycle This Magazine

Employees Can't Fix Stupid Managers

You may have a boss who you think is stupid, but you should know that being stupid is not necessarily illegal. Most supervisors, managers, senior executives, senior Foreign Service officers and Ambassadors are competent and approachable. The Department is consistently a very highly rated workplace.

Yet in the Office Civil Rights, we receive complaints that indicate that some of the Department's leaders fall quite short.

What can you do if you believe that your particular boss is routinely stupid, inept, impolite, rude, distant, humorless, unfunny, silly, arrogant, stubborn, mean, insensitive, narrow-minded or pompous?

Bad character and personality flaws may well be irksome, but they do not qualify as violations of one's civil rights. To be a valid Equal Employment Opportunity or civil rights complaint, the problem must involve impermissible behavior or decision-making, not just character traits.

Here is what qualifies: discriminatory behavior or actions based on race, color, age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, marital or parental status, or disability that also result in negative consequences for your career, conditions of employment or ability to work effectively.

Unfairness does not necessarily equate to an EEO issue. For example, you might disagree with how your supervisor assigns work and consider this practice unfair and unwise. However, this is not illegal unless you believe that it is being done for discriminatory reasons. You can't simply say your supervisor is being unfair or unwise. Your supervisor is responsible for managing the work and will in some cases make decisions that you will not like. In these kinds of cases, it is best to have a conversation with your supervisor to discuss your concerns and offer suggestions.

As for being stupid, there are actions you can take if you feel your supervisor is making your worklife difficult, actions that don't involve an EEO complaint. You should consider pushing back, mediating, having a critical conversation or leaving the job.

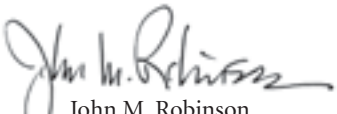
Pushing back—Because someone is your boss or colleague doesn't mean you have be the victim of teasing, rudeness or other offensive actions. Assertiveness training and using assertiveness techniques can help you take charge. You can also take a complaint up the chain of command. Don't be a pushover. The books *Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office* and *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*, by Lois P. Frankel and Manuel J. Smith, respectively, may prove helpful.

Mediating—Often an objective third party such as a trained mediator, colleague or friend held in common can help you speak truth to someone in power and gain a change of behavior. The Office of Civil Rights can help you find a resource or provide a mediator outside the EEO process.

Having a Critical Conversation—The Foreign Service Institute offers a course on this topic, and there is a book by the same name.

Leaving—There is nothing noble about suffering silently for weeks, months or years, or suffering loudly by whining endlessly about your boss. The problem in federal service is not that employees who become disgruntled with their boss get disgusted and leave. It is that they stay on the job but are disengaged, resentful and bitter. So if none of the above works, leave. Get another job with a boss who deserves your best efforts. Life is too short, and if you have talent, there will be a good place for you somewhere.

You may not be able to "fix" stupid managers, but you can take steps to improve your situation. ■



John M. Robinson
Office of Civil Rights

The author and his motorcycle traveled 4,562 miles to his next post.

The motorcycle trip I took to my current posting, the U.S. Embassy in Panama City, began in Fairfax Station, Va., amid a 32-degree temperature and 30 inches of snow. Fourteen days and 4,562 miles later, I reached my destination.

In all, my trip aboard my venerable BMW traversed five states, eight countries and seven borders through temperatures as high as 104 degrees. I largely followed the Pan-American Highway, which runs from the United States to South America, and includes the Inter-American Highway, which passes through all the countries of Central America except Belize.

My journey began three days after Spanish language training at the Foreign Service Institute ended. I reached the Mexican border after three straight 500-mile-plus days and found myself worried about what lay ahead. Was my Spanish sufficient? Was I prepared mentally and physically for a trip that I would have to complete in 14 days, the time I'd allotted? Would the border crossings be as frustrating as I had heard, and what dangers might lie ahead?

Easy Rider

DS agent motors to next post

/// Story and photos by Erik Antons

The man-sized gaps between the boards gave me a clear view of the rushing stream 20 feet below.

Useful Spanish

An answer to my language concern came near Tampico, Mexico, at a small farming community. The quiet, curious people were a refreshing change from the windy road, and when I asked the gas station attendant for directions to the nearest bank, I was delighted to see that he understood my Spanish and I understood his. I rode to the bank without missing a turn. A day later, at a military checkpoint on my way to Veracruz, I found myself chatting about my motorcycle with a squad of Mexican soldiers. There would be several military checkpoints along the way, but the soldiers were usually just bored and curious about the Norteamericano who was riding his bike across Central America.

As my confidence grew, I regularly chatted up truck drivers to learn of road conditions, speed traps, border-crossing techniques and good lunch spots. I learned that many of them made the entire grueling Inter-American drive as often as twice a week.

My preconceptions that the road would be

Left: The author crossed this dilapidated bridge while traveling to Golfito, Costa Rica. **Above:** The Santa Catalina Arch in Antigua, Guatemala.

Driving—or Riding—to Your Next Post?

Do research. Identify travel warnings and restrictions, such as whether you'll pass through states requiring a helmet, and assess the risks posed by weather. Determine your route and alternate route, options for and costs of lodging, and how to make your vehicle and your body trip-ready. Identify your make of vehicle's dealerships en route, the cost and availability of fuel, and whether you'll need special equipment or documentation. Find out about the quality of emergency health care, needed languages and how best to communicate with those back home.

Make a plan. Include details about the size and composition of the traveling party and the details of the area of travel, including security concerns and weather. Specify each day's route, lodging plans and considerations about equipment and documentation. Establish contingencies for political violence, natural disasters, medical emergencies, kidnappings, theft and crime. Consider taking out evacuation insurance (http://www.medjetassistance.com/) and learn how your medical insurance provider wants payment handled. Place all personal information—including prescriptions, medical conditions and emergency contacts—on at least two laminated cards that you can carry with you at all times, one in your vehicle and one in a pocket of your clothes. Learn about your vehicle and find a place on it to hide cash and spare keys. Attach color copies of your passport, vehicle title, vehicle insurance and health insurance policies, driver's license and vehicle registration to your plan, then scan it and send it to three or four trustworthy people, telling them who does what in an emergency. Also send a copy to your e-mail account so that you can access it while on the road.

Expect complications but don't give up. The hard part is planning. One it's done, stick to your plan and drive forward.

badly maintained were sometimes challenged. In Guatemala, the poor road conditions made me think I'd never make the next town, the colonial city of Antigua, by nightfall—and it's not a good idea to be on some of these roads after dark. But just as I began considering an alternate plan, the road widened into a beautiful new four-lane highway that snaked through the mountains and, at altitudes of more than 3,300 meters, took me over the highest point of the Inter-American Highway. The low-traffic road kept climbing until I was above the clouds and gave me one of the best days of riding in my life.

Another good ride had come on a cool morning a few days earlier on a narrow mountain road near San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico. There, I jockeyed for position with double-trailered semis, dodged potholes and bounced over speedbumps in an Alpine setting so lovely my neck grew stiff from stealing quick glances at the neat little houses, people along the road and expansive valleys below me.

Risks Ahead

However, there were also downsides to the trip. After my layover in Antigua, I found myself the next day in downtown San Salvador, El Salvador. I was stuck in traffic on a one-lane street and my greatest defense, mobility, was limited to inches. A young guy with tattoos on his neck and a predator's stare walked in front of me, stopped and stared me down while another one circled and ran his hands over the bike.

Just as another guy approached, traffic began moving and I gunned the engine and wove my way out of the jam. It was my closest call on what was otherwise a trip where I faced few risks.

The other risk came four days later as I was exploring a back road in Costa Rica. The rocky one-lane road was littered with potholes and led to a narrow bridge that seemed unable to support my motorcycle. There were no guardrails, and I was limited to a narrow two-foot-wide section of loose lumber on one side. The man-sized gaps between the boards gave me a clear view of the rushing stream 20 feet below. I throttled the engine and quickly rode across and parked. I then walked back and noticed that only half of the boards that I'd ridden over were even nailed down.

My journey ended on March 6. Having passed through eight countries, my wallet looked like something that belonged to the World Bank. The sights, smells, sounds and people that I met along the way made the journey one of the most memorable in my life. I realized that a great benefit of Department of State life is moving to new places and seeing new cultures firsthand.

Now, I'm planning my next motorcycle trip, to Argentina. Who wants to join me? ■

The author is a Diplomatic Security special agent at the U.S. Embassy in Panama City.

Trouble-Ready

OBO completes new facilities despite challenging conditions /// *By Jonathan Blyth*

A key philosophy of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations is that "We don't pick the places where we build, we go everywhere." During the past 12 months, that has meant the bureau has completed projects in some of the most difficult locations and under the most challenging circumstances. Whether hampered by military coups, drug cartel violence, impounded shipping containers, denied visas or the threat of terrorist attack, OBO has pushed these projects to completion.

For instance, in March, a new embassy compound opened in Khartoum, Sudan. Construction had begun in early 2006 and was scheduled to end in 2008. However, the contractor's ability to execute the project was severely hindered from the outset due to the detaining of shipping containers and protracted visa approvals by the government of Sudan. As a result, construction was interrupted twice in 2007, and the contract was terminated in January 2008.

However, in June 2008, thanks to an improvement in bilateral relations and the involvement of Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy, construction resumed. The contractor, working with Project Director Roger Revereza, expedited ordering and shipping materials in a race against the clock, should diplomatic relations deteriorate. Everyone breathed a collective sigh of relief when the last shipping container arrived and the project was completed.

Preparing for Crisis

Meanwhile in Madagascar, a new embassy compound was rising in Antananarivo when political unrest in 2008 caused the embassy's intermittent closure. Concerned about rioters overrunning the site, Project Director Eric Rumpf and Site Security Manager Vance Witmer developed a rapid shutdown plan.

The compound was 52 percent complete when the government was overthrown in March 2009 and an ordered departure was issued for most embassy personnel. However, OBO's core management team remained on site, and the contractor, OBO and the post worked together to complete the project four and half months ahead of schedule.

Perhaps no foreign capital sounds more exotic than Ouagadougou, in the landlocked West Africa country of Burkina Faso. When ground was broken for a new chancery there in 2008, the country's prime minister said the building's façade did not reflect his country's distinct architecture. Therefore, Ambassador Jeanine Jackson and the OBO team worked with the architectural firm and contractor to redesign the façade. That done, Project Director Dave Cates and the OBO team experienced a relatively easy construction project.

Earlier this year, an embassy employee, her husband and the family member of a Locally Employed Staff member were killed in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, and an explosive device was thrown onto the U.S. Consulate in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Both attacks have been blamed on the drug cartel violence surging along the U.S.-Mexico border.

In Tijuana, the violence directly affected construction of new secure U.S. consulate when the contractor's payroll was stolen. Nonetheless, Project Director Robert Dyer got the project finished. A new consulate was also built in Ciudad Juarez in 2008, and ground will be broken for one in Monterrey later this year.

Providing Security

Since the 1980s, the U.S. consulate in Karachi, Pakistan, has been the target of several terrorist attacks, resulting in significant damage. Mission staff worked in overcrowded offices, lived in outdated quarters and faced dangerous commutes. In March 2006, OBO Facilities Manager David Foy and his driver were killed by a suicide bomber while traveling to the consulate, and 50 Pakistanis were injured. In the aftermath, the government of Pakistan made good on its promise to provide a site for a new consulate.

But construction faced challenges. Project Directors Mohammed Khan and Najib Mahmood confronted visa denials and material containers detained at port. They worked through these obstacles to complete the new consulate compound, which includes a new office building and secure living quarters for employees.

Unique challenges face any construction project in Jerusalem. In 2003, the United States planned to move its Jerusalem consular offices, and over the last seven years, Project Director Jerry Jay and his OBO staff worked diligently to address the daily construction issues to complete the project. The new facility offers 1,000 square meters of consular office space, a public area and a parking garage for 200 vehicles. In addition, the consular office building includes a roof garden which serves as an energy conservation feature.

These six projects show once again that there is nothing easy about diplomatic construction projects. While these project directors reflect on their accomplishments and pack their hardhats for their next assignments, OBO's headquarters continues to monitor the other 34 capital security projects currently in design and construction, never quite sure where and when the next challenge will arise. ■

The author is director of external affairs at the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations.

The new compound of the U.S. consulate in Karachi was completed in the last 12 months.

PHOTOGRAPHS: OVERSEAS BUILDINGS OPERATIONS

Above: New consular offices were built in Jerusalem. **Below:** Construction has since finished on a new chancery in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

At a two-day offsite in West Virginia, members of the 147th A-100 class are guided by nonverbal and nonvisual cues while traversing a field.

A-Plus Growth

Intro FSI course responds to hiring boom + *By Maeve Dwyer*

How do you give 700 new generalists a year the best possible start in the Foreign Service?

The Orientation Division of the Foreign Service Institute confronted that challenge in early 2009 when the Diplomacy 3.0 initiative dramatically increased the Department's hiring of new Foreign Service personnel. The Orientation Division provides all new Foreign Service generalists and specialists and Civil Service employees with an introduction to the State Department and the profession of diplomacy. The hiring surge has more than doubled the number of new entry-level officers beginning their careers with the Orientation for Foreign Service Generalists course, better known simply as "A-100."

About 325 new ELOs attended A-100 in 2007. In 2009, increased congressional funding allowed the Department to hire nearly 700 ELOs, and the Department's goal for 2010 is even greater. Hiring of Foreign Service specialists also grew significantly, but the regular schedule of orientation courses could absorb those increases.

Making Room

Accommodating twice as many students in A-100 required adding three more classes a year, which, in turn, necessitated shortening the course from seven weeks to five. Eight A-100 classes are scheduled in 2010. Class size has grown from an average of 65 to the maximum classroom capacity of 98. To ensure students receive the same high-quality orientation, the Orientation Division revamped the curriculum to focus on essential information presented more efficiently.

FSI also put technology to work. The A-100 classroom hosts the Department's first wireless network. Students use laptop computers to access the Intranet, Internet and class assignments. Students can connect to the Intranet from home using telework "fobs" and can do assignments and readings at home through an Internet-based e-learning Web site.

As a result, A-100 is more intense than ever. Students complete more assignments outside regular class hours and receive less administrative time during their orientation. The five-week course covers virtually every element that was in the seven-week version, including a leadership and team-building offsite gathering, practice in public speaking and answering tough questions before a foreign audience, and Foreign Service-style writing. They also receive guidance from an ambassador-level class mentor and exposure to the interagency community.

Guest Presenters

As with the seven-week course, the students hear presentations from some of the most senior officials in the Department, including the under secretaries for Political Affairs and Management. Perhaps most important, they still forge lifelong bonds that make their A-100 classmates

PHOTOGRAPHS: TEAM RESULTS USA; (OPPOSITE PAGE): MICHAEL MORRISON

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton presides at the swearing-in of the 145th A-100 class. **Bottom:** Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy administers the oath of office to the 151st A-100 class.

their first and often strongest network in the Foreign Service.

The A-100 course is just the beginning of a long training continuum that prepares officers to represent the United States abroad. Most new ELOs will spend from three to twelve months at FSI honing assignment-specific skills before going overseas, and this has required FSI to gear up to meet new training demands.

"FSI is bursting at the seams with new Foreign Service generalists and specialists and Civil Service employees, as well as new U.S. Agency for International Development colleagues and full-time language students," said FSI Director Ruth Whiteside. "I am delighted to have this 'problem' because it means the Department is able to hire enough people to begin to build a real training 'float' for the first time in recent memory. When a fully funded training float is in place, the Department will be able to ensure that all employees get the training they need."

The A-100 course has evolved to better serve today's ELO. The Orientation Division finds that more ELOs than ever have lived or worked overseas or have previous experience with the Department as interns, eligible family members, Civil Service employees or Foreign Service specialists. They've mastered a wider range of languages at higher levels of proficiency, including such critical languages as Arabic, Chinese and Hindi. While many new hires enter the Foreign Service directly from college or graduate school, many others are on their second or third careers.

More than ever, A-100 students learn from each other as well as from their instructors.

Idealistic Motivation

But some things remain the same. Informal polls of 1980 and 2010 A-100 classes found that the classes had similar motives for joining the Foreign Service. The 1980 class said it wanted to serve; have fun; live, work and travel abroad; and make a difference to America's well-being and security.

The 2010 class also cited its passion for national service and a desire for interesting and fun work that promotes understanding between the United States and other countries.

That sounds like a recipe for a good Foreign Service employee in any era. ■

The author is deputy director of the Orientation Division and the A-100 coordinator.

PMFs from several agencies gathered at DC Central Kitchen in April to prepare meals for distribution throughout the Washington, D.C., area.

PMF Advantage

Fellowship program proves rich source of future leaders /// *By Carlyn Reichel*

The State Department has hired Presidential Management Fellows, formerly known as Presidential Management Interns, for more than 30 years. Each year, the Department hires 50 to 60 new Civil Service employees through this program. Many remain in the Civil Service at the Department or join the Foreign Service, though PMFs have also left the Department for careers elsewhere in government or the private sector.

Each year, thousands of graduate students interested in careers in public service apply to the Office of Personnel Management to become PMFs. Applicants must be nominated by their graduate or law school and sit for an exam that gauges leadership potential. For the 2010 cycle, OPM received 8,700 nominations and selected 882 finalists, who competed for a limited number of openings at participating federal agencies. State Department positions are in high demand.

"The Department is the most sought-after agency among PMF finalists," said Alison Barg, PMF program manager in the Office of Civil Service Human Resource Management. Barg said more than 65 percent of PMF finalists apply to the Department, often for multiple positions. In 2009, the Department received more than 1,500 applications for 39 positions.

Two-year Program

The Department's PMFs participate in a two-year developmental program that requires 160 hours of training and two rotational assignments outside of the office where they serve their fellowship. Rotations may be to other Department offices or embassies, or to other agencies or judicial- or legislative-branch offices. PMFs on rotation often fill staffing gaps at no expense to the hosting office other than the travel or training required.

"My Presidential Management Internship prepared me to seek the opportunities that the Department offers by moving around and working in different bureaus," said Marguerite Coffey. "I gained a wealth of experience

PHOTOGRAPHS: (ABOVE): ASHLEY ALLEN; (OPPOSITE PAGE): JOHNA OHTAGAKI

Above: The PMF Advisory Council's Executive Board meets with its leadership liaison, Executive Secretary Dan Smith. From left are Johna Ohtagaki, Melissa Kopolow, Dan Smith, Rob Lalka, Tamara Rivera, Michelle Warren and Colleen Ayers. **Right:** Alumna Marguerite Coffey, left, meets with PMF Advisory Council Alumni Representative Melissa Kopolow.

by the time I became a midlevel manager and supervisor, which enabled me to progress to more challenging and rewarding work."

Coffey is the Department's longest-serving PMI alumnus. She began her career with the Department in 1979 and is currently director of Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation.

The Department's current PMFs say they are keenly aware of the opportunities their fellowships provide.

"We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to serve the State Department as PMFs and civil servants," said Johna Ohtagaki, a 2007 PMF who is now special assistant in the Office of Special Representative for North Korea Policy. "The Department invests in us through training and rotations and by just giving us the opportunity to watch and learn from masters of diplomatic and bureaucratic tradecraft. It is a privilege and an education just to be able to sit in front of our computers every day."

Fellows Contribute

Ohtagaki chairs the Presidential Management Fellowship Advisory Council, a Department-recognized affinity group that promotes opportunities for current and former fellows within the Department and U.S. Agency for International Development. The group also supports fellows' ability to contribute to the Department and community. Council committees facilitate interagency cooperation; promote diversity, university outreach and the use of best practices; and coordinate community service.

"PMFs already engage in volunteer activities, such as recycling initiatives, preparing and distributing food for the hungry and mentoring at-risk high school students," said 2009 PMF Luis Toledo, a Bureau of Diplomatic Security management analyst who chairs the PMF Council's Community Service Committee. "This year, our goal is to establish a solid foundation for current, former and future Department of State PMFs to come together and do even more."

PMFs work in a variety of Department offices. "PMFs bring to the job richly diverse backgrounds and experience, and have found prominent positions throughout the Department," said Dan Smith, executive secretary and leadership liaison for the council. "They share a strong commitment to public service and to the mission of our Department."

According to Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy, the PMF program "is a critical recruitment tool to help ensure we continue to attract the highest-quality public servants to carry out our nation's foreign policy." ■

The author received a Presidential Management Fellowship in 2009 and joined the Bureau of International Information Programs.

East Meets West

Center facilitates U.S.-Pacific understanding /// *By Leslie Tsou*

When Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton early this year chose the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, as the venue for her policy speech on U.S. multilateral engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, her visit coincided with the start of the Center's 50th anniversary year as a national public diplomacy institution.

"During the five decades since the Center opened, no region has undergone a more dramatic transformation," the Secretary said. "The East-West Center has been part of this sea change, helping to shape ideas and train experts. I thank all of you for bringing greater awareness and understanding to the economic, political and security issues that dominate the region and the world today."

Fostering Understanding

Founded by Congress in 1960, the EWC has a 21-acre campus in Honolulu and recently established an office in Washington, D.C. The Center aims to foster better U.S.-Asian/Pacific understanding and focuses on cooperative study, research and dialogue—with the key word being cooperative. Americans do not teach Asians and Pacific Islanders. Instead, colleagues from throughout the region work as partners with Americans to address critical issues of mutual concern.

At the Center's 1961 groundbreaking, then-Vice President Lyndon Johnson, one of the main advocates of the Center's creation, said, "We shall hope that many generations of young scholars will learn the wisdom of the two worlds united here and use that wisdom for the purposes and the ends of mankind's highest aspirations for peace and justice and freedom."

The Center enjoys a close and complementary relationship with the State Department. The Secretary of State selects a third of the EWC's 18-member Board of Governors, and the assistant secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs is an ex-officio member of the board.

Over the past half-century, nearly 60,000 people have participated in EWC educational, research and exchange programs, including President Barack Obama's mother and stepfather, who both pursued graduate degrees on Center scholarships. Former participants maintain close to 50 alumni chapters throughout the region.

Multilateral Focus

The Center is decidedly multilateral, with an international governing board and a multinational research staff. Of the roughly 500 students who reside at the EWC each year, around one-third are from the United States and two-thirds from abroad.

Most of the Center's fellows are graduate students, who receive their advanced degrees from the adjacent University of Hawaii at

A small pond meanders through the center's grounds.

PHOTOGRAPHS: EAST-WEST CENTER

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks in January at the Center in honor of its 50th anniversary. **Below:** East-West Center Fellow Jeff Fox conducts a site visit.

Manoa. Shorter-term Center programs focus on leaders and communicators, including journalists, teachers and political and civil leaders. In all, about 4,000 people participate in EWC programs each year.

Each year, the Center partners with about 700 other institutions to address issues as diverse as infectious diseases, human rights law, resource conservation, climate change policies, economic growth strategies, election monitoring and demographic change.

The EWC is one of the few U.S. institutions with a Pacific Islands focus, which includes organizing the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders that brings together heads of governments from the Pacific Island countries. U.S. presidents attended two of these meetings.

Among the variety of university scholarships that the EWC administers are two directly funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: the U.S.-South Pacific Scholarship Program and the U.S.-Timor Leste Scholarship Program. The Center also hosts a yearlong Diplomat in Residence through the Department's Senior Training Program, and U.S. diplomats headed for posts in the Asia-Pacific region regularly visit the Center for briefings.

Ambassador Ray Burghardt directs the Center's seminar programs. He said the EWC has the flexibility to conduct public diplomacy activities that strongly support the Department's goals but are better pursued outside the formal diplomatic process.

"The Center brings together Americans and their foreign counterparts around sensitive issues in a cooperative research and educational context, rather than a negotiating context," said Burghardt, who is also chair of the American Institute in Taiwan. "As a result, we are able to conduct activities that are very difficult for governmental organizations to do effectively, such as involving Chinese and Taiwan officials in the same program."

Conference Planned

Finally, the Center facilitated Hawaii's successful bid to host the 2011 meeting of the leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group, which promotes economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region. The Center will be the site for the conference's agenda-setting meeting, which will launch the U.S. year of hosting APEC.

"In many ways, the U.S. year of APEC will reflect what our Center has always been about—the peoples of the vast Asia-Pacific region working together on important public policy issues," said EWC President Dr. Charles E. Morrison. "It's a wonderful opportunity to embrace America's role as a Pacific nation and an engaged partner in the region's struggles and successes." ■

The author is the Diplomat in Residence at the East-West Center.

A Thousand Words

Photos connect history to diplomacy /// *By Julia McKay*

Although President Lyndon Johnson and Vice President Dan Quayle both slept at the U.S. ambassador's residence in San Salvador, El Salvador, no plaques or photographs commemorated it. When Chargé d'Affaires Robert Blau learned of this situation shortly after his arrival in 2008 as deputy chief of mission, he urged that action be taken to show the post's illustrious history.

The resulting exhibit, "The United States and El Salvador—An Enduring Relationship," consists of 40 photographs of high-level bilateral meetings from 1928 to the present and is being used as a public diplomacy tool throughout the country.

The exhibit, which debuted at a time of great change in El Salvador with the election of its first leftist president since the end of the civil war in 1992, provided the embassy with the perfect way to demonstrate the long-term U.S. commitment to close bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation.

Reunited Leaders

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton inaugurated the exhibit during her visit to El Salvador for President Mauricio Funes' inauguration in June 2009. The embassy used the occasion to reunite the subjects of one of the exhibit photos, Secretary Clinton and former Salvadoran First Lady Elizabeth de Calderón Sol, who were photographed together in 1998 when they met as first ladies.

The embassy also organized an event to honor the four living former presidents of El Salvador, all pictured in the exhibit.

"In contemplating the historic moments reflected in these photos, I cannot but express my sincere desire that someday soon we will have images to add to this exhibition that show the leadership of President Obama and President Funes … as they work to strengthen the historical relationship between our peoples," said the nation's new foreign minister, Hugo Martinez.

In March, photos of presidents Obama and Funes at the White House were added to the collection.

The exhibit was the centerpiece of the embassy's 2009 July Fourth celebration. It then went on display at a national museum in San Salvador and is currently travelling to universities and cultural centers throughout the country. To make it accessible to the widest possible audience, the embassy put the exhibition on its Web site, http://sansalvador.usembassy.gov.

Esperan Anulen Protocolo de San José

El Diario de Hoy

JOHNSON APOYA MERCADO COMUN

News of President Lyndon Johnson's 1968 visit to El Salvador ran on the front page of a Salvadoran newspaper.

Local government officials have requested copies of the photos. The mayor of the port city of La Union, for example, now has a copy of the photo of President-elect Herbert Hoover's 1928 arrival to his city hanging in his office.

Exhibit Tips

Posts interested in mounting a similar exhibition can take several steps to find material:

- Contact the Department's Office of the Historian, history@state.gov, and approach presidential libraries and the White House, which is where the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador got the photos of presidential visits. Such photos are often free.
- Ask local newspapers. Three Salvadoran newspapers provided Embassy San Salvador with scanned front pages, articles and photos from historic visits and meetings. The material was free, and the publications were credited in all copies of the exhibition, publications and speeches.
- Turn to the Associated Press. The Department's agreement with AP lets it use AP photos free of charge, provided the copyright is acknowledged. Working with AP, Embassy San Salvador found photos of bilateral meetings in Washington, D.C., and of regional summits.
- Ask local historians, who often eagerly provide additional information and photos. This is how Embassy San Salvador obtained photos of Charles Lindbergh's visit to El Salvador in 1928 in the *Spirit of St. Louis*.
- Approach former senior officials, who often donate copies of photos from their private collections.

"The historical exhibit and the use we have made of it through so many high-profile events has been a key element in our public diplomacy strategy to emphasize the continuity of good relations with El Salvador," said Chargé d' Affaires Robert Blau.

Because new photos can always be added, such an exhibit becomes an effective, low-cost public diplomacy program that can be refreshed continuously.

Every embassy has a story to tell. The next time someone asks if anyone famous stayed at your post, why not have the answer and the photos to prove it? ■

The author, who curated the photo exhibition, is an entry-level public diplomacy officer working as a consular officer and staff assistant at the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT): *LA UNIÓN*; (OPPOSITE PAGE): U.S. EMBASSY IN SAN SALVADOR; (TOP): *EL DIARIO DE HOY*

Top: President-elect Herbert Hoover meets with Salvadoran officials in 1928. **Center:** Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton opens the photo exhibition with Chargé d' Affaires Robert Blau. **Bottom:** President George W. Bush and Salvadoran President Francisco Flores review the troops during Bush's 2002 visit to El Salvador.

Overseas Briefing Center client Matt Jennings, left, meets with client Krista Fay.

One-Stop Shop

Transition Center offers range of services /// *By Susan Browning*

For everyone from new hires to retirees, the Transition Center at the Foreign Service Institute has courses, seminars and resources for all phases of life in the Foreign Service.

Responding to Diplomacy 3.0's increase in hiring, the Transition Center has increased its offerings of orientation courses. In response to the growing number of tours at unaccompanied posts, the center also sponsors and conducts the mandatory High Stress Assignment Outbrief program.

For those new to the Foreign Service and needing post and country information, shipping a pet or returning to Washington, D.C., the Transition Center's Overseas Briefing Center is a one-stop source for unique and comprehensive information on U.S. posts overseas and the foreign affairs lifestyle.

For instance, the OBC has country briefing boxes with post-specific information. Information is also online on the Post Info To Go page at http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/epb/epb.asp. The center also has information on reentry to Washington, D.C., and publications such as the *Foreign Service Assignment Notebook: What Do I Do Now?* and *Protocol for the Modern Diplomat*.

A drop-in facility, the OBC is open Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on select Saturdays and Wednesday evenings.

Training Division

The Transition Center's Training Division offers programs and special events for the diverse needs of employees and family members preparing for an overseas assignment or returning to the United States. The security awareness programs include the mandatory two-day Security Overseas Seminar, the online Advanced Security Overseas Seminar and the Youth Security Overseas Seminar, which consists of age-appropriate, one-day workshops for children in grades 2 through 12 and is offered during the summer months.

The Transition Center also hosts special versions of the SOS programs for the private sector, such as for executives from Microsoft, Intel and other companies. That security-oriented training serves more than 3,400 people annually from more than 20 foreign affairs agencies.

The High Stress Assignment Outbrief program is mandatory for anyone returning from

PHOTOGRAPHS: MIKE MORRISON

Transition Center trainer Kathe Conrad teaches the Security Overseas Seminar.

Iraq, Afghanistan or other high-stress posts and helps with understanding the challenges of returning from such an environment.

New Training

One of the Transition Center's new offerings is a one-day course for parents who are or will be assigned to a U.S. mission abroad and have children with special educational needs. The Family Liaison Office, Office of Medical Services, Office of Overseas Schools and Office of Allowances participate, presenting a comprehensive picture of the Department's support system and helping these families navigate the system and plan for their children's needs.

All five of the presentations in this Special Education Needs Overseas Seminar 2009 are available on BNet and the Transition Center's internet Web site at http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/fslstraining/135386.htm.

Last year, the Transition Center hosted the first training and information session for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community in foreign affairs agencies. The event highlighted the unique situations affecting such employees and their families overseas and helped them understand U.S. government policies concerning same-sex partners. The organization Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies was closely involved with the event, where experts from the Family Liaison Office and the bureaus of Diplomatic Security and Human Resources made presentations and answered questions. New policies affecting federal employees will be covered in the 2010 session, to be held early this month.

Another aspect of the Transition Center is the Career Transition Center, which provides training, counseling, job leads and other assistance to Civil Service and Foreign Service employees of any federal foreign affairs agency as they prepare to leave government service. The center's three programs are the Job Search Program, the four-day Retirement Planning Workshop and two-day Mid-Career Retirement Planning Course, which can be taken by anyone who is within 10 to 15 years of retirement. Two parts of the four-part Retirement Planning Workshop can be taken separately: the one-day Financial Management and Estate Planning Workshop and the one-day Annuities, Benefits and Social Security Workshop.

Foreign affairs community members from throughout the government rely on the Transition Center for the personal and professional assistance that helps them better enjoy their lives and work on the front lines of overseas service.

The center's users seem to agree. Facility Manager Michael McMahon recently wrote the center to say, "A few years ago I gathered all the information I could from you about transferring with pets, and it has been invaluable. Safely shipping my dog Koko is more stressful and more important to me and my family than my 7,000 pounds of household effects."

More information on the Transition Center is on its Web site, http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc, which has links to several Department resources for Foreign Service families. ■

The author is deputy director of the Transition Center.

* Post of the Month

A man rides his bicycle in Kabul.

Kabul

Signs of progress reward long days

/// By Anne Benjaminson, John Groch and Vin Traverso

Afghanistan is known for its rugged, mountainous landscape.

There is no shortage of information about what is happening in Kabul and Afghanistan. Almost nine years after 9/11, the terrorist attacks are still being chronicled in the media and an ever-expanding body of literature. Keeping up with the ongoing story is almost impossible.

Likewise, attempting to describe this crucial moment in Afghanistan is like trying to paint the rapids of a river in a single stroke—it just can't be done. But there's an old saying in Dari: "Drop by drop, a river is formed." So it is, too, that the U.S. Mission in Afghanistan advances and its story is told—drop by drop, day by day.

Typical Day

As the morning sun crests over the snow-capped, smog-ringed peaks surrounding Kabul, a midlevel press officer walks across the embassy compound, navigating rows of housing trailers, to the public affairs section. She's up earlier than usual—though not by much—because another congressional delegation is in town, and its members need press clips at 6 a.m. before winging south to Kandahar with the Afghan press. It's the third CODEL the mission has hosted this month. They average one a week, down from the 2009 level but still enough to be a constant feature of embassy life.

Once she drops off the clips, the press officer walks back across the compound, dodging several dusty stray cats, for a quick breakfast at the embassy dining facility. The fresh pineapple and melon seem the more sensible choice, but the sausage and biscuits are tempting, especially since later today she might be able to hit one of the compound's three gyms and spend some time on the elliptical trainer.

By 8:30 a.m., the embassy's day is in full swing. An officer climbs into an armored vehicle to visit a clinic for child drug addicts that's funded by the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. More than one million Afghans are drug abusers, an overlooked fact in a country that supplies nearly all the world's opium. Because of a lack of medicine and few child care options, mothers blow opium smoke in children's faces to calm them or ease their pain. The children at the clinic are now drug-free and have rediscovered their lively, boisterous selves.

Morning out in the provinces finds 26 Provincial Reconstruction Teams and 32 District Support Teams gearing up. Staffed by Department of State officers, U.S. Agency for International Development specialists, U.S. Department of Agriculture advisors and a variety of other agency representatives, the PRTs are far-flung outposts of U.S. defense, diplomacy and development initiatives.

PHOTOGRAPHS: DANIEL WILKINSON; (FAR RIGHT): U.S. EMBASSY IN KABUL

Clockwise from above: Department of State officer Marlin Hardinger briefs the governor of Helmand and other officials in the town of Marjah; Foreground from left, embassy staffers Kelly Carrillo, Caitlin Hayden and Karen Smith enjoy a Buzkashi match in the outskirts of Kabul as two teams of horsemen battle to control a goat's carcass; Anne Benjaminson, left, and Caitlin Hayden relax in one of the embassy apartments.

Schoolhouse Project

This morning, a PRT civilian representative rises from his cot, throws on his flak jacket and hops into a combat vehicle to head to an isolated village to check on the progress of a USAID-funded schoolhouse, the village's first ever. Local Afghans provided the subsidized brick and mortar and their labor—the raw materials with which the U.S. government hopes to improve Afghanistan's appalling 30 percent literacy rate. After stripping off his military gear to look more like the civilian development expert he is, the PRT rep has tea with school officials, supplies additional USAID funding and even lends a hand with the work.

Back in Kabul, the press section is jumping by midmorning: With one officer traveling with the CODEL and another sitting in as the *New York Times* interviews the political counselor on Taliban reconciliation, the assistant information officer must oversee the ambassador's appearance at the opening of an anticorruption workshop. The embassy's rule of law, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Agency, Treasury and consular offices have been focusing for months with their Afghan counterparts on the consequences of corruption. The front office has decided to use this occasion to get its own message out, and the AIO and his expert Afghan staff must try to ensure that the local media distinguishes U.S. support for Afghan government offices from U.S. disdain for the corrupt officials who may occupy them. It's a delicate balance. The news that evening focuses on U.S. support for good governance—a small victory.

As lunchtime nears, the officer heads to one of Kabul's restaurants to meet with Afghan businesspeople—and take advantage of a rare opportunity for an off-compound meal. Her contacts are some of the millions of Afghans who returned from exile in Pakistan after the American-led invasion in 2001 and have created new lives for themselves and employment for their countrymen. The officer asks about their reaction to August's election, in which President Hamid Karzai was elected to a second term. While concerned about corruption, the businesspeople are optimistic about their government's liberal regulatory policy and increased opportunities for trade with neighboring countries.

After his lunch in the schoolhouse with the village elders, the PRT civilian rep is off to meet with the development specialist and agriculture advisor who have been working to improve irrigation in a key district. Agriculture accounts for less than a third of Afghanistan's gross domestic product but occupies more than three-quarters of its labor force. Aside from the importance of weaning the country from its

At a "ramp ceremony" at Bagram Air Field, senior officials from the embassy and the International Security Assistance Forces pay their respects at the caskets of nine U.S. soldiers killed in Nuristan province.

PHOTOGRAPHS: DANIEL WILKINSON

People gather at the famous Blue Mosque in Mazar-e Sharif.

Clockwise from left: Children color books at a Kabul drug-treatment facility; Afghan men attend a traditional shura; Poppy grows in the town of Marjah, in the restive Helmand Province.

poppy-based narco-economy, the development of smart, sustainable agriculture holds the promise of drawing in and pulling up the 36 percent of the population living in poverty.

Meeting the Generals

In the afternoon, an embassy officer walks to the International Security Assistance Forces headquarters located next to the embassy compound for the weekly meeting between ISAF Commander General Stanley McChrystal and Ambassador Karl Eikenberry. The room is packed with generals and high-ranking embassy officials, but many of the briefers are junior- and midlevel officers. The officer provides an update on the cabinet selection process. Other attendees raise items discussed in the embassy's 14 civil-military working groups, which coordinate a wide range of issues, from infrastructure projects to rule-of-law initiatives. After the briefing, the officer hurries to a digital videoconference with Washington colleagues on donor coordination. The United States is the single largest donor to Afghanistan, but other nations and multilateral agencies contribute hundreds of millions of dollars each year toward rebuilding infrastructure and enhancing human capacity.

At the end of the day, after producing a press release on the ambassador's visit and getting it out to media, up on the Web, on Twitter and to the 2,000-plus fans on the embassy's Facebook page, the AIO skips the gym and heads straight to her apartment. Embassy apartments, available to senior-level officers, couples and some singles willing to share, have small but fully functional kitchens. It's there that she finds her husband, one of more than 30 Eligible Family Members working at the embassy. The compound's new grocery store had fresh green onions and chicken today, so a quick stir-fry is in order—especially since the embassy's resident blues-rock band, Danger Pay, is playing at The Duck and Cover and she doesn't want to miss it. It'll be a rare treat for those who would otherwise spend their evening entertained by the glow of their computer screens.

The end of the day in Afghanistan means another day is beginning. As some concerns are laid to rest, new hydra-headed challenges arise. It is hard but often satisfying work. Like the snowmelt streaming down the mountains, signs of progress are beginning to flow steadily through the countryside. The mission's work, too, continues in disparate streams drop by drop, day by day. ■

Anne Benjaminson, John Groch and Vin Traverso work in the economic, information and consular sections, respectively, at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

PHOTOGRAPHS: DANIEL WILKINSON

A landscaped plaza fronts the embassy's new chancery building.

At a Glance >>> Afghanistan

Capital: Kabul

Government type: Islamic republic

Area: 652,230 sq. km.

Comparative area: Slightly smaller than Texas

Population: 28.4 million

Official languages: Dari (Afghan Farsi) and Pashto

GDP – per capita: $800

Export commodities: Fruit, nuts, carpets, wool, cotton and hides

Export partners: India, Pakistan and United States

Import commodities: Food, petroleum products and textiles

Import partners: Pakistan, United States and Germany

Currency (code): Afghani (AFA)

Internet country code: .af

Source: Country Background Notes

Exciting Mission

USAU represents U.S. priorities /// *By Lauren Ladenson*

In April, Illinois Senator Roland Burris became the first U.S. member of Congress to visit the African Union. Later in the month, a high-level delegation traveled from AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to Washington, D.C., to discuss partnership opportunities with U.S. government officials. The U.S. Mission to the African Union helped facilitate both events.

USAU was established in 2006, making the United States the first non-African country with a dedicated ambassador to the AU. Ambassador Michael A. Battle, USAU's third chief of mission, began his assignment in September 2009. He has a small, dedicated staff that includes six Americans from the departments of State and Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as four Locally Employed Staff members.

There is also a U.S. peace and security advisor at the AU's Strategic Planning and Management Unit and a USAID-contracted democracy advisor at the AU's Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit.

Shared Compound

USAU shares a compound with the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, and both missions will move into a new embassy compound in September. The mission relies on the embassy for such services as motor pool, human resources and housing. The desk officer for the AU in the Africa Bureau's Office of Regional and Security Affairs helps USAU in its liaison role with sources in Washington, D.C.

Assignments to USAU provide the opportunity to work with a unique multilateral organization that addresses a range of transnational issues affecting U.S. national and economic security.

"USAU gives you the chance to work issues that touch every corner of the continent, and that's fascinating," said the military liaison, Navy Captain Jeff Landsman.

Founded in 1963 as the Organization of African Unity and now consisting of 53 member states, the AU focuses on conflict prevention and resolution, setting economic and political standards for African governments and promoting African unity. U.S. priorities include strengthening democratic institutions; promoting sustained economic development and growth; improving access to health services; preventing, mitigating and resolving conflicts; and deepening cooperation on transnational challenges.

USAU manages the U.S. relationship with the AU secretariat, composed of a chairperson, deputy chairperson and eight commissioners. The AU's commissions—Peace and Security, Political Affairs, Social Affairs and five others—address issues ranging from economic integration to health care and women's empowerment.

USAU reports on these issues and on the AU-sponsored continental meetings. The mission also provides essential support to the large U.S. delegations that traditionally attend the AU's twice-yearly summits, which draw thousands of observers and dozens of African heads of state.

Evolving Organization

"As a relatively new mission, USAU has a unique opportunity to shape its identity as it defines its engagement with the AU, which is itself an evolving organization," said Joel Maybury, USAU deputy chief of mission. Since USAU's creation, the mission has concentrated on peace and security affairs in response to crises in Somalia and Sudan, and on the unconstitutional changes of government in such nations as Guinea, Niger and Madagascar.

"We look forward to the day when we can spend less time on peace and security issues and more on areas that contribute positively to Africa's growth and development," said Ambassador Battle.

The newly elected chairperson of the AU, Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika, has made food security a top priority in the

At a AU Partners Group meeting are, from left, Ambassador Battle, AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, newly elected AU President Bingu wa Mutharika and Denmark's Ambassador to Ethiopia and the AU Pernille Dahler-Kardel.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT): ENGEDA WASSIE; (OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP): TEKLE-GIORGIS SAHLU; LINA MOHAMMED; AND LAUREN LADENSON

Above: USAU staff members, from left, Katre Nicholson, Duke Ellington, Joel Maybury, Ambassador Michael Battle, Lauren Ladenson, Jennifer Little, Steve Smith and Jeff Landsman gather around the mission's sign. **Right:** From left, Ambassador Battle, Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero, USAU Deputy Chief of Mission Joel Maybury, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson and Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Howard Wolpe discuss the coming AU summit. **Below:** Construction continues on the new AU facility.

coming year. The AU is also committed to promoting peaceful and democratic transitions of power throughout Africa.

President Barack Obama has demonstrated strong U.S. support for such African priorities. "We believe in Africa's potential and promise," the President said in his July 2009 speech in Ghana. "We remain committed to Africa's future. We will be strong partners with the African people."

As a young, dynamic mission, USAU embraces the challenges and opportunities of building a productive partnership with the AU that benefits Africa and the global community. ■

The author is the political/public diplomacy officer at USAU.

Unaccompanied Support

Department provides tangible, intangible benefits /// *By Ed Warner*

The Department's support for employees on unaccompanied tours is both concrete—certain pay and tour-length incentives apply—and responsive to uncertainty; that is, to how the employee may be affected by serving in a potentially hazardous situation while away from family members.

The concrete aspects are spelled out in the Service Recognition Package for Afghanistan,Iraq and Pakistan, the "AIP posts" that comprise most unaccompanied tours. For instance, tours at the U.S. embassies in Baghdad and Kabul are generally one year and include two rest and recuperation breaks for every year of service. The differential and danger pay combined mean an employee receives up to a 70 percent pay increase while at either post. Employees may also benefit afterward when bidding for onward postings.

The Department's pay at unaccompanied posts is among the best of any federal agency. The Department is working to gain congressional passage of legislation to ensure that other agencies that send employees to designated zones of armed conflict have similar authority to offer pay incentives. Pay uniformity "increases morale—it's a basic fairness issue—and federal employees doing similar work under similar conditions should be similarly compensated," said Karen Krueger, the Bureau of Human Resources official heading the Department's role with the initiative.

Incentives Attract

The Department recently surveyed the entire Foreign Service on its monetary and nonmonetary incentives for the AIP posts. The nearly 3,500 officers who responded widely support the current incentives, and many who had served at AIP posts also said they were motivated by public service or the value of the work, reported Steve Blake, acting deputy director of HR's Office of Career Development and Assignments. Blake said his

Dr. David Panakkal, acting director of MED's Deployment Stress Management Program, contemplates the worldwide locations of unaccompanied tours.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ED WARNER

Michele Siders, left, a senior advisor in HR's Office of Career Development and Assignments, discusses a report with Steve Blake, the office's acting deputy director.

office's survey found the chief impediment to serving on an unaccompanied tour was separation from family.

The Department has at least 13 unaccompanied posts, including several where no children are allowed and, with exceptions, eligible family members can come along only if the Bureau of Management agrees (see table). However, the six AIP posts are among the Department's busiest, and one AIP post, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, is one of the Department's largest embassies. These factors increase the likelihood that Foreign Service officers will serve at an unaccompanied post during their careers. HR estimates there are between 900 and 1,000 employees at unaccompanied posts, roughly five times the 2001 level.

Protecting Employees

Beyond the monetary benefits, there are a host of services to prevent unaccompanied tours from causing long-term emotional harm. The chief Department units involved are the Family Liaison Office, Office of Medical Services and Foreign Service Institute, which hosts the predeparture and returnee briefings (see related story).

FLO emphasizes information on what to expect, such as a decision tree questionnaire for prospective bidders to assess whether such a tour is right for them. FLO keeps in touch with both employees and families once the employee arrives at post.

Bridget Roddy, FLO's former unaccompanied tours officer, said the office covers all agencies' employees and all members of a family, not just the employee's spouse and children. For singles with and without children, FLO gets their parents and siblings involved, she said. FLO also has contracted with a mental health services company that provides a Web portal and hotline and offers telephone-based and face-to-face counseling sessions, even for family members outside the Washington, D.C., area. MED's Employee Consultation Services also provides counseling services.

FLO's "virtual orientations" for those headed to unaccompanied tours occur at Main State but are simulcast online to let family members participate. FLO also does general morale-boosting, said Office Director Leslie Teixeira, noting that it recently arranged for "well-wisher" banners at Main State for employees to sign and send greetings to colleagues serving at AIP posts.

MED's services focus on addressing potential emotional problems. One of its strategies is placing significant medical staff at AIP posts, said MED Director Dr. Thomas Yun. Baghdad and Kabul each have a regional medical officer and two Foreign Service health practitioners. There is a FSHP in Peshawar and one will soon be in place in Karachi. Mission Iraq also has a mental health social worker and psychologist, and the U.S. Embassy in Kabul has a social worker.

UNACCOMPANIED POSTS

AFGHANISTAN: Kabul*
IRAQ: Baghdad*
PAKISTAN: Islamabad*, Karachi, Lahore*, Peshawar*
SUDAN: Juba

Adult EFMs Only

CHAD: N'Djamena**
KOSOVO: Pristina
LEBANON: Beirut
SUDAN: Khartoum
YEMEN: Sanaa

Adult EFMs & Minors Under Age 5

ALGERIA: Algiers

*Adult EFM accompaniment authorized pending Management Bureau approval on a case-by-case basis

**EFMs 21 and older permitted

Source: Bureau of Human Resources

PTSD Uncommon

The buzzword associated with some tours at unaccompanied posts is post-traumatic stress disorder, but Yun said its incidence is low. That's because PTSD is associated with being in life-threatening danger or witnessing someone in such danger, explained David Panakkal, acting director of MED's Deployment Stress Management Program.

A more common concern, Panakkal said, is "garden-variety depression." To combat stress-related problems, Panakkal advised employees to take the predeparture resiliency training offered jointly by MED and FSI, and urged those headed for high-stress tours to be in good shape physically and have hobbies and connections with friends.

Panakkal said health units at AIP posts monitor for stress-related ailments on arrival, during and at the conclusion of the employee's tour. While an employee can be medically evacuated if the emotional problem is big enough, he said problems can arise long after the employee returns home.

MED's Deployment Stress Management Program offers a support group for employees returning from or headed to unaccompanied or high-threat posts (*State Magazine*, June 2008). MED's Web site, http://med.state.gov/mentalhealth_disaster.htm, also offers extensive information for those dealing with stress. ■

The author is deputy editor of State Magazine.

Green Defenders

Environment Directorate Takes on Global Challenges /// *By Environmental Directorate Team*

Trekking through the Borneo rainforest to monitor logging operations, tracking coral reef damage in Southeast Asia or creating programs to tackle climate change are just some of the varied and challenging tasks of the three offices in the Environment Directorate of the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

OES Assistant Secretary Kerri-Ann Jones, center, tours the site of the future International Renewable Energy Agency headquarters in Masdar City, United Arab Emirates.

The directorate includes the Office of Global Change, which works with the Office of the Special Envoy for Climate Change on international negotiations and discussions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate and other negotiations. It also includes the Office of Environmental Policy, which focuses on air pollution, toxic chemicals, hazardous waste, water resources, trade/environment linkages, sustainable development and the environmental work of multilateral organizations. The third component is the Office of Ecology and Natural Resource Conservation, which addresses biodiversity, ecology and trade and forest issues.

According to OES Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Dan Clune, the Environment Directorate's officers are experienced diplomats, scientists and specialized experts, and many return to serve a second or third tour.

"People have a personal avocation toward the issues we cover and feel that they can make a real difference," said Christine Dawson, director of OES/ENRC, who has returned to the bureau several times after forays outside the Department.

Veteran Leader

Leading this group of 65 employees is OES veteran Deputy Assistant Secretary Daniel Reifsnyder, who has served in all three OES directorates in his 20-plus-year Department career.

"Serving in this directorate and the bureau in general changes how you view the environment and its integral role in world peace and prosperity, which is true today more than ever before," he said.

Through DAS Reifsnyder's leadership on a number of negotiations, including the Montreal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances, the directorate's officers have succeeded in finding workable solutions that balance and advance U.S. interests on social, environmental and economic issues.

The Environment Directorate is actively engaged in a number of negotiations. Some are well known, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Others are less familiar, such as the Rotterdam, Basil and Stockholm conventions on the international trade of hazardous chemicals and pesticides, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

A newer organization is the International Renewable Energy Agency, consisting of 140 countries. OES/EGC is actively engaged in ensuring the agency's success in increasing the diffusion of renewable energy technologies around the world.

Teamwork's Role

During last December's two-week session of the UNFCCC 15th Conference of the Parties, where numerous parallel negotiations occurred, OES/EGC's Amanda Vockerodt was one of the U.S. negotiators and found the experience fascinating, challenging and exhausting.

"Many times, parties arrive at a compromise during the high-level segment at the end of the negotiations, which is what happened in Copenhagen," she said. "What the public doesn't always realize, however, is that these compromises were only possible after extensive, complex negotiations undertaken over many hours in the months before the heads of state arrived and agreed to the Copenhagen Accord."

Since April, OES/EGC and the Special Envoy's office have attended preparatory negotiating sessions for the next UNFCCC ministerial meeting in Mexico in November. These negotiations will help shape the development and implementation of consensus measures to address global climate change and clean-energy solutions, as well as efforts on adaptation and land-use cooperation.

The Environment Directorate's forte is developing programs that build strong, long-lasting partnerships between disparate

PHOTOGRAPHS: ED WARNER

stakeholders. This requires a hands-on, person-to-person approach. For instance, Aaron Spencer in OES/ENV's Environment and Trade Division traveled four hours in the back of a truck over unpaved roads to a remote Nicaraguan village to supervise an organic cacao certification program. He saw how environmental good governance can translate into economic prosperity through higher market prices for organically grown products, while helping preserve the biodiversity of endangered ecosystems.

"Partnerships between corporations and nongovernmental organizations, which have the subject-matter knowledge, leverage key resources, create buy-in and reinforce the successes of environmentally and economically sound business practices," said Rob Wing, director of the Environment and Trade Division.

Local Encouragement

Many of the Directorate's programs encourage local communities to take responsibility for their environment and develop a sense of ownership for projects. OES/ENRC leads U.S. participation in the International Coral Reef Initiative, whose members work together to conserve coral reefs globally. Through the initiative, OES/ENRC helped organize the Coral Reef

Clockwise from above: Trigg Talley, director of the Office of Global Change, meets with Office Management Specialist Denise Goode; Willem Brakel, director of the Office of Environmental Policy, points out the development of a hole in the ozone layer; Office of Environmental Policy staffers Abby Lindsay, left, and Jacob Palley mount a poster in their office.

Clockwise from above: OES Deputy Assistant Secretary Daniel Reifsnyder leads the Environmental Directorate; Susan Gardner, senior foreign affairs officer in the Office of Environmental Policy, takes a break from memo-writing; Christine Dawson, director of the Office of Ecology and Natural Resource Conservation, and her deputy, Phillip Antweiler, have the whole world in their hands.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ED WARNER

Crime Scene Investigation Program to train local coral reef managers, ecologists and law enforcement officials on investigating, monitoring and prosecuting coral reef damage. While attending a workshop, OES/ENRC officer Kelly Milton witnessed how knowledge transfer gives local citizens and officials the tools to assume greater stewardship of their environment.

Office of Global Change staff members Amanda Vockerodt, left, and Elizabeth Murphy discuss a draft report.

OES/ENRC is leading similar environmental partnerships on forest conservation through the Heart of Borneo Initiative in Southeast Asia and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership in Central Africa, which has more than 50 stakeholders. One of the office's biggest successes has been its work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network, which cooperatively investigates, prosecutes and penalizes those engaged in illegally trafficking in wildlife.

The Directorate works closely with other Department offices and U.S. agencies, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as such international organizations as the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility, World Wildlife Fund and Conservation International.

Pointing to the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement as an example of the crucial role partnerships play in an initiative, Spencer said, "Acting alone, the United States is one link in a long chain of stakeholders. But when we partner with others, we extend and strengthen the connections. As a result, we scale up our programs and the impact they have to inspire real change."

"These issues have always been important, but have tended to be seen as niche concerns best left to specialists," said Willem Brakel, Director of OES/ENV. "Now, we see a new focus and emphasis on environment and sustainable development as central to achieving our foreign policy objectives."

Water Concerns

One environmental issue that has remained largely under the radar is water. However, in remarks made on World Water Day in March, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton emphasized that water is a key foreign policy and national security issue. Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero also has made water one of her signature issues, traveling widely to address water-related tensions and needs, including to the Middle East this past April.

According to OES Assistant Secretary Kerri-Ann Jones, the Environment Directorate's mission is "being at the heart of some of the most pressing issues of the day as America retakes its leadership on environment and health, and marshalling science to meet these challenges and expand human potential."

Be it air, water, plant or animal, Environment Directorate officers are dedicated to protecting the earth's natural resources daily. To achieve that mission, the directorate has a diverse team with a unique mix of skills and expertise, from political science to natural science, from diplomacy to data, and from economics to ecosystems. ■

This article was a team effort of the Environment Directorate.

U.S. Center Reaches Audiences Worldwide

By Elizabeth Murphy

During December's global climate change conference in Copenhagen, the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and the Office of the Special Envoy for Climate Change organized the U.S. Center, an outreach initiative that provided a platform for 35,000 conference attendees to learn about U.S. climate actions through more than 70 sessions on critical initiatives, policies and scientific research.

The sessions featured U.S. and international leaders in the fight against climate change, including five Cabinet secretaries, senior White House and State Department officials and representatives from U.S. agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations and private-sector entities. Topics highlighted the variety of U.S. climate programs and scientific research and underscored strong U.S. actions to combat climate change.

"I can't tell you how excited everyone was when [the master of ceremonies] said there was a question from San Salvador, El Salvador," said a webchat participant about a U.S. Center session at the conference on improved air pollution control. "I really liked this a lot!"

To broaden the U.S. Center's reach beyond the conference, OES worked with the Bureau of International Information Programs and embassies and consulates to ensure that live webcasts and digital video conferences of selected programming reached audiences in more than 80 countries worldwide, including countries from lower-bandwidth environments. Thousands of virtual participants reacted positively to center programming, resulting in numerous articles and blog postings as well as countless conversations among leading scientists, policymakers and other key climate contacts.

The author is an outreach officer in ECA's Cultural Programs Division.

Oral History

Former Department officials talk history /// *By Charles Stuart Kennedy*

PHOTOGRAPH: ELIZABETH JAMISON

In one of its most important activities, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, an independent nonprofit organization located at the Foreign Service Institute, records and preserves the insights and experiences of U.S. diplomats through its Diplomatic Oral History Program.

The program, which I created and direct, involves interviewing former Department officials, including Foreign Service officers, Civil Service employees and political appointees. The interviewees' experiences range from the 1920s to the present, and the interviews cover all aspects of their subjects' career and background.

ADST, which supports FSI's training and advances knowledge of American diplomacy, disseminates transcripts of the interviews through the Library of Congress Web site, which has 1,500 interviews already and another 162 being prepared for posting. A sister collection, the British Diplomatic Oral History Programme, is on the Web site of Churchill College at Cambridge University.

Firsthand Accounts

These collections aid active-duty Department personnel and others in the field of foreign affairs, since they contain firsthand accounts by professionals of their work and the issues and conditions they confronted. The interviews also include stories of the Department's conflicts, internally and with other departments such as the Department of Defense.

The interviews show how personalities often play important roles in how policies are made and implemented and give readers an unvarnished, though not always impartial, look at such roles and the sometimes messy business of diplomacy.

The unclassified transcripts help the Department document lessons learned in the conduct of foreign affairs and are increasingly used by scholars and journalists. Information from the collection features prominently in such books as *Nixon and Mao* by Margaret MacMillan, *China Confidential* by Nancy Tucker, *The Legacy of Ashes* by Tim Weiner and *The Atlantic Century* by Kenneth Weisbrode.

Transcript readers can learn about former Ambassador James Lilley's childhood in China, Douglas Macarthur III's negotiating of a landmark treaty with Japan and the effects of the Mariel boatlift, the latter told by David D. Newsom. They can reflect on the

Charles Stuart Kennedy, director of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program, interviews Ambassador Mattie Sharpless, a retired senior Foreign Agricultural Service officer who was ambassador to the Central African Republic from 2001 to 2002.

Talk, Talk, Talk—The Interviewer Tells All

By Charles Stuart Kennedy

It has now been a quarter-century since I started interviewing for the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program. I started when I retired in 1985 and have since been cornering my fellow Department retirees, quizzing them about their early lives and careers sometimes in a series of sessions running for more than 10 hours.

The resulting Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of ADST can be found by running a Web search on the phrase "frontline diplomacy."

Recently, I switched from using a $35 recorder to a $130 digital one that has better tone and lets the recorded speech be transferred to a CD.

In my 30 years as an FSO, I was a consular officer in such cities as Frankfurt and Dhahran, but I had little to do with other parts of the Department. My interviews opened a whole new world. A theme I saw was the changes in the structure of the Foreign Service and the openings made for minorities, women and spouses. The transcripts tell of growing up African American in the South, Jewish in New York and of life in a small town. I found that a significant number of prominent FSOs studied in one-room schoolhouses.

The interviews reflect the panorama of American diplomacy, from World War II, the Marshall Plan and the Cold War to Central American unrest, U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the decolonization of Africa and the terrorist bombings of U.S. embassies in Lebanon, Kenya and Tanzania and much more.

plight of Richard Dwyer, American deputy chief of mission in Guyana, as gunmen who carried out the Jonestown massacre hovered over him, and learn from General Anthony Zinni the perspective of the U.S. Central Command before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

There are also accounts of serving under Henry Kissinger, helping open the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, suffering as hostages in Tehran, surviving the burning of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and arriving in Iraq in the chaos after the fall of Baghdad.

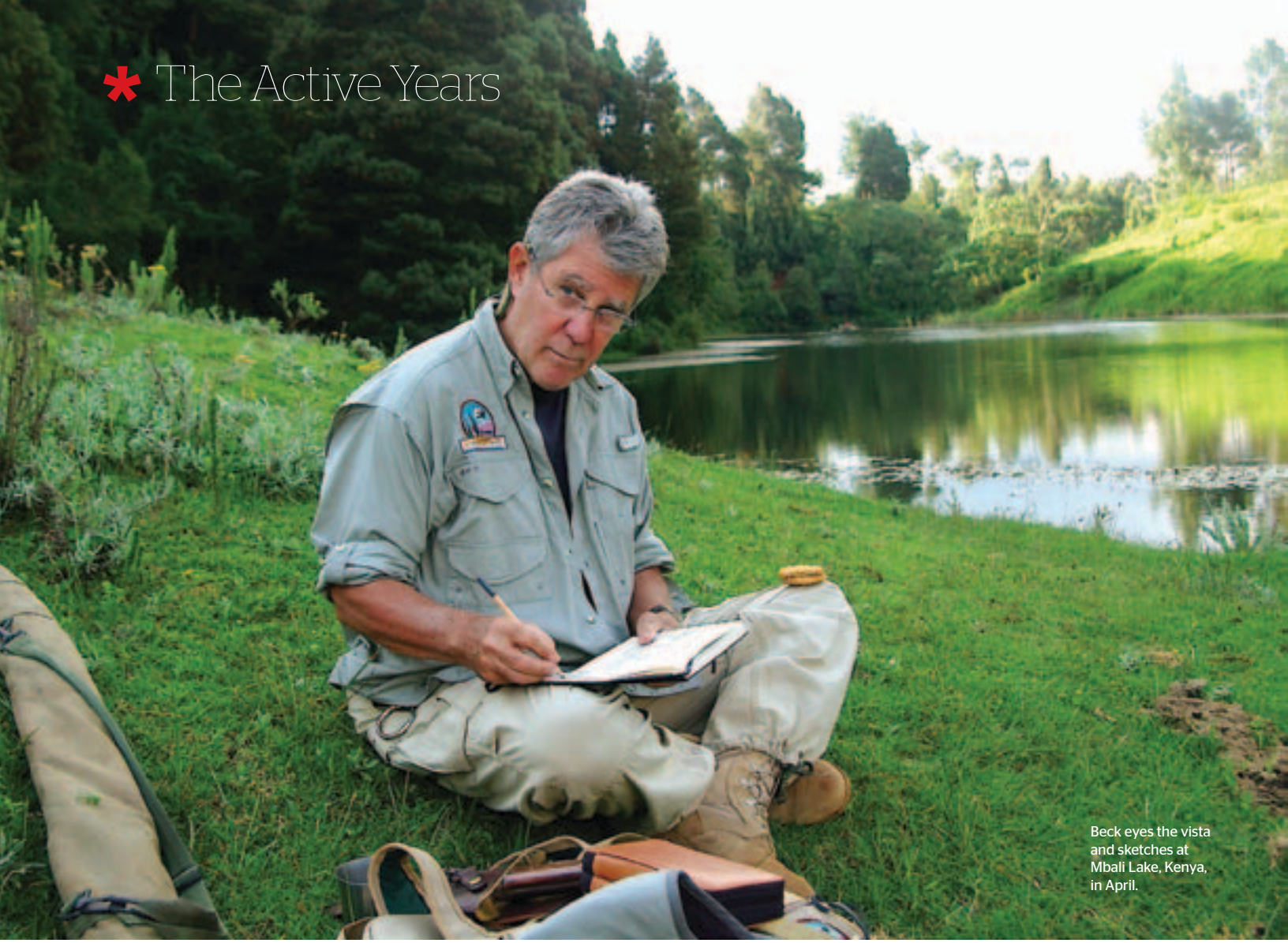
Interviews Underway

New interviews are conducted daily, and coming interviewees include Tom Pickering, former under secretary for Political Affairs and six-time ambassador; Jerry Bremer, head of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad; Chet Crocker, the assistant secretary for Africa who spurred the process toward Namibian independence; diplomatic activist John Gunther Dean, survivor of an assassination attempt in Lebanon; Prudence Bushnell, U.S. ambassador in Nairobi when the embassy was bombed; and Under Secretary Nicholas Burns, who strived for a nuclear agreement with India.

Anyone interested in being interviewed or conducting interviews should contact ADST.

Founded in 1986, ADST is funded through membership dues and contributions from the private sector and facilitates the publication of books, memoirs and papers. Its Web site, www.usdiplomacy.org, provides information about American diplomacy. More on ADST is at www.adst.org. ■

The author is director of the Diplomatic Oral History Program.



Beck eyes the vista and sketches at Mbali Lake, Kenya, in April.

Off to Africa

Retiree pursues 'seize the day' adventure /// *By Chip Beck*

I believe retirement is not about winding down or dying in place; it is an opportunity to explore new vistas, seize life anew and squeeze every ounce of adventure out of the future. Only this time, you decide the terms, itinerary and schedules, not some bureaucratic cog.

If you are the type of retiree who is tempted to sit in the proverbial rocking chair on the front porch, I suggest you arise before dawn, boil a cup of Rwandan java and watch the sun climb over the horizon. Then launch off your duff and follow that sun tracking across some exotic landscape. If you are still roaming after nightfall, scan the heavens and contemplate the riddles of existence while soaking in the beauty of the moment. Live every day as though it may be your last—one day, it surely will be.

For now, I'm taking my own advice—in Africa—as I follow my lifelong passions for art and adventure. Later this year, my wife will retire and follow suit with her own twists.

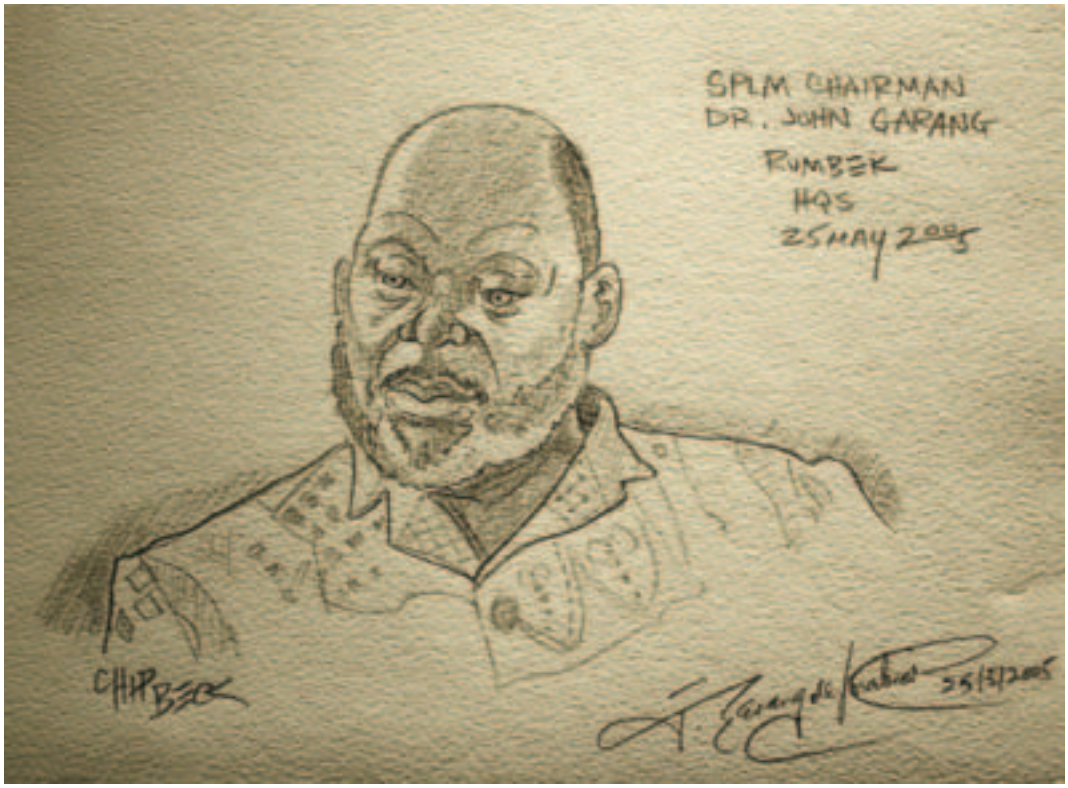
New Retiree

After five years of directing the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, I retired from the Department of State on New Year's Day. The very next day, I packed for a post-retirement stint as security division director with the Nairobi-based organization Africa Expeditions. For a year, perhaps longer, I will kick around less-traveled parts of Africa, helping to provide nongovernmental organizations, international organizations, contractors, peacekeepers, governments, oil and mining companies, and others with "life support systems" in remote areas of southern Sudan, the Congo River basin, the Nuba Mountains, Darfur, the Rift Valley, the Horn of Africa's deserts, West Africa's tropical forests and other distant horizons.

Along the way, under decidedly genteel conditions, I have sampled fine Cape wines, dined elegantly in several countries and punched hearty drives along Africa's many golf links while walking the courses—no carts for this retiree.

Africa's beauty, geography, people, wildlife, flora, cultures and historical sites are too compelling for me not to photograph, write about or (my preference) record on paper and canvas as field sketches and paintings. Department veterans may remember me as the creator of "Supercrat, The Super Bureaucrat" (1979–1993), *State Magazine's* first serialized comic strip, which tweaked the Foreign Service and not-always-so-Civil Service. More info on my work is at www.combatartist.com.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



Above: Beck's 2005 sketch of Sudan People's Liberation Army leader John Garang, signed by Garang two months before his death. **Below:** A Beck painting of African peacekeeping troops on maneuvers. **Bottom right:** Beck sketching in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Combat Artist

What many don't know is that I was the Navy's official combat artist for Operation Desert Storm. A combat artist witnesses and records history from direct experience, whereas a military illustrator uses reference materials and recollections of others to depict historical events. *Soldier of Fortune* magazine in 1999 called me America's only genuine "Cold War combat artist."

I've also used my artistic talents to depict some 20 wars, revolutions, coups, conflicts and other forms of chaos from Indochina in the 1960s through 21st-century conflicts in Iraq and Darfur.

Since I was four years old, I could draw well. Almost as early, I was captivated by stories, biographies, films and tall tales of soldiers, sailors, explorers and other rascals who ventured to earth's remote way stations. My dream was to follow in their footsteps and see the world.

Over the course of six decades, I turned that long-distant dream into reality. I have lived in, worked in or traveled to some 109 countries on six continents. (Antarctica has eluded me.) En route, I encountered heroes, villains, historic figures of questionable merit and ordinary people of extraordinary character. I saw life at its finest and death at its ugliest.

Initially, my childhood adventures took me from the dense woods near my Maryland home to alligator-laden canals skirting my cousins' home in rural Florida to the mountains, deserts and coasts of California, where I moved at age 13. A decade later, my travels took me to the battlegrounds of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. More places in turmoil followed Angola, Western Sahara, Sudan, Chad, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Beirut, Panama (Operation Just Cause), Colombia, Kuwait, Iraq and, since 2005, many festering conflicts in Africa. In retirement, the adventures continue.

While searching out new vistas and quests until that fateful last day on earth arrives, I dream of writing about and painting the people, places and amazing events I have witnessed in life's journey so far.

Field Work

Then the idea hit me: Why not write and paint in the so-called "field," from where those stories originated? That's what I'm now doing. I began writing this article while sitting next to the Nile River town of Juba, Sudan, and completed it in a vine-covered cottage within striking distance of the 11th hole of Nairobi's Karen Country Club.

Neither spot is a bad place for an active, adventurous retiree. ■

The author is director of the security division of Africa Expeditions.

PHOTOGRAPH: FOTOLIA

Cleared for Departure?

Medical Clearances Are Part of Transfer Season Checklist /// *By Ty Flewelling*

The summer transfer season can stimulate a number of strong emotions. There is the thrill of embarking on a new adventure in some far-flung corner of the globe and the dread of all the details associated with relocating from one post to another. While dealing with the Medical Clearances office may not be the most thrilling part of the move, the clearance renewal process can be a positive opportunity for employees to review their health and obtain routine follow-up care for chronic medical conditions.

For many, the medical clearance physical examination or update is a straightforward process. But confusion often arises over the questions "When do I need to renew a medical clearance?" and "What does my clearance mean once I have it?"

Some believe that anything other than a worldwide-available (Class 1) clearance is a heavy burden that slows them down or prevents them from going to places on which they want to bid. Others believe their non-worldwide-available clearance status shields them from assignments to remote or austere locations where they do not want to serve.

In reality, a medical clearance is nothing more than a tool to identify specific health or educational needs and medical conditions that may require specialty management, follow-up or monitoring. There is no list of Class 2 posts, nor is any post flat-out off limits to individuals with a specific medical condition. Each case is evaluated individually.

But let's first answer the key questions:

When do I need to renew a medical clearance?

According to 16 FAM 214.b, "A medical clearance is valid for the length of the tour or upon eligibility for home leave, whichever is shorter, unless there is a change in the individual's medical condition that could affect his or her medical clearance."

To clarify,

1. Officers on one-year or multiyear postings must renew their clearance at the end of their tour and before moving on to their next assignment.
2. Officers who plan to extend at post past their regularly scheduled tour length and take their home leave must renew their clearance before they return to post.
3. Officers planning a post-to-post direct transfer must renew their clearance before transferring to their new assignment.

Typically, individuals will complete their clearance work before they leave their current assignment. This is especially true for individuals with a Class 2 condition that required post approval for their onward assignment.

What does my clearance really mean?

The 16 FAM 211.2 Clearance Classifications are:

a. Worldwide Available (Class 1): Issued to applicants, employees and eligible family members who have no identifiable medical conditions that would limit assignment abroad.

b. Post-Specific (Class 2): Issued to an individual with a medical condition that would pose a significant risk to the health or safety of the individual or others if the individual were assigned to work at one or more posts abroad, or would create an undue burden for a post. The Office of Medical Services determines approval for assignment to a specific post based on these considerations. Individuals with a Class 2 clearance must be approved to reside at the post of assignment. Individuals who are not cleared for a specific posting but choose to accompany their family to post will not be on orders, will not have medical unit access, will not have medevac coverage and will not be considered as eligible family members for housing, employment or education at post.

c. Domestic Only (Class 5): Issued to all who have a medical condition which is incapacitating or for which specialized medical care is best obtained in the United States. Employees or eligible family members with a Class 5 medical clearance may not be assigned outside the United States.

d. Temporary Travel (Class 6): Issued only to an eligible family member who is not medically cleared to reside at the employee's assigned post but is authorized to travel to or visit that post for a limited period of time.

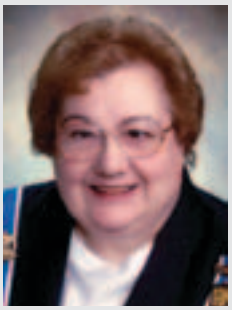
Class 6 clearances are issued to family members who are living in the United States due to medical or educational restrictions but are cleared to visit the post where the employee is assigned. While they are not cleared to live at post, there are no all-encompassing time limits for the length of each visit. Typically, a visit is considered to be less than 90 days, but their stay would be determined by the educational and/or specific medical needs of the family member.

Individuals with a Class 6 clearance may do a Permanent Change of Station transfer from post to post. They are listed as permanent members of the family stationed abroad but may stay at post only temporarily.

When a Class 6 clearance is issued, the post where the employee is assigned must be indicated. While this is not a post approval per se, the temporary clearance is tied to an overseas assignment where resources needed by the family member are not available.

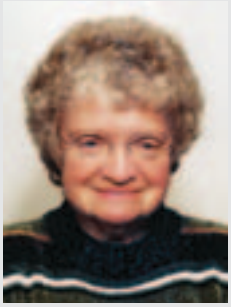
Additional information on medical clearances can be found at on the Web at http://med.m.state.sbu/clinicalservices/medicalclearances/Pages/WhatDoesMyMedicalClearanceMean.aspx. ■

The author, a Foreign Service health practitioner, is deputy chief of Medical Clearances.



Mary E. Andrews, 70, a Foreign Service retiree, died Nov. 26 in Boston, Mass. Her postings included Japan, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, El Salvador, the Soviet Union, Sweden and Canada. In 1989, she retired to Berkley, Mass., where she served in leadership roles with the Council of Aging, Berkley Historical Society and Daughters of the American Revolution. She was a descendent of several *Mayflower* passengers and enjoyed genealogical research, reading, quilting and knitting.

Wat T. Cluverius IV, 75, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 14 in Cleveland, Ohio, from cancer. As deputy assistant secretary of state, he was instrumental in brokering peace between Israel and neighboring Egypt and Jordan. He served as ambassador to Bahrain and consul general in Jerusalem. He retired in 1988 to head the Multinational Force and Observers peacekeeping organization and later led the Cleveland Council on World Affairs. A former Navy officer, he loved sailing.



Ann Glanville, 72, a retired Foreign Service secretary, died Jan. 27 of a heart attack. Her postings included Rome, Paris, Moscow, Vienna, Beirut, Santo Domingo, Morocco, Mauritania and Spanish Sahara. After 22 years of service, she retired to Philadelphia, Pa., and served as an outreach worker for an organization serving the elderly. She was also a Eucharistic minister for her church and a prison ministry.

Stuart Halpine, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 22 at his home in New Milford, Conn. He was in the Navy's V-12 program during World War II. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1962 and served in Asunción, Cali, Bogotá, San Salvador, Saigon, Brussels, Conakry and Khartoum. After retirement, he was active in Democratic politics and served as mayor of New Milford. He wrote a historical novel and was active in the American Cancer Society. He was a *Mayflower* descendant.

James A. Klemstine, 79, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 28 in Raleigh, N.C., after a long illness. He served in the Army and joined the Department in 1956. His postings included Hamburg, Moscow, Taipei and Seoul. After retiring in 1982, he earned his doctorate in international relations from Duke University and subsequently taught political science at North Carolina State University.

Wanda E. Kurland, 80, wife of retired Foreign Service officer Bert Kurland, died Jan. 5 in Fort Myers, Fla., of acute renal failure. She worked for the Department of the Navy in Washington and accompanied her husband on Army and Foreign Service postings to the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Ghana, the Sinai and Germany. She was an avid bridge player and accomplished crafts designer with interests in seashells and crochet works.

Raija-Leena Nyborg, 75, wife of former ambassador Keith Nyborg, died Feb. 9 at her home in Sugar City, Idaho. A native of Finland, she met and married her husband during a visit to the United States in 1953. He served as ambassador to Finland from 1981 to 1986, after which they returned to their ranch in Idaho. She was active in her church and community affairs.

Russell E. Olson, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 8 in Pinehurst, N.C. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He had assignments in every region of the world except Africa. He retired to North Carolina in 1982. He wrote for newspapers and journals, taught at Sandhills Community College, volunteered for a hospice and was a juvenile court guardian. He was active in civic, political and arts organizations.

Robert Fleming Slutz Jr., 88, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 29 in Manassas, Va. He lived in Vero Beach, Fla., and Alexandria, Va. He served with the Army Air Force in World War II. His Department postings included Italy, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Ethiopia. He earned a doctorate in history from the University of Chicago. After retiring in 1978, he researched his family genealogy, producing an 18-volume work. His daughter Pamela Slutz is ambassador to Burundi.

James C. Suma, 79, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 30 of heart failure at his home in McLean, Va. He joined the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1958 and served in Greece, Indonesia, Jordan, Afghanistan, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Nicaragua, Egypt and Panama. After retiring in 1989, he worked as a consultant with various companies. He collected cars and enjoyed gardening, investing, participating in Virginia politics and boating on the Chesapeake.

Alfreida Green Walker, 52, died Feb. 16. She lived in Waldorf, Md. She joined the Department after graduating from business school in 1989. She received numerous awards. Most recently, she worked in the Office of Multilateral Trade Affairs in the Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs. She was active in her church.

Jim Wilkinson, 72, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 1 at his home in Santa Rosa, Calif. His postings included Thailand, Australia, Germany, Russia and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. He was a community activist who co-founded Santa Rosa's Neighborhood Alliance. He wrote a book and blog about the city and won its award for community service. His wife Ellen Boneparth was also a Foreign Service officer.

Retirements

Foreign Service

Carlino, John R.
Carper, Sharon Lee
Hollander, Sharon C.
Murphy, Lois E.

Civil Service

Brockenborough, Janette
Dowell, Richard F.
Dubke, Barbara Ann
Evely, Virginia L.
Helal, Gamal R.
Hewett, Nancy Maisto
Macon, Warren S.
Sandonato, Ronald P.
Sweeney, Mary F.
Veney, Charlotte A.

Drop by Drop

In some ways, professional life at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul is similar to other embassies—preparing for visiting congressional delegations, arranging interviews with U.S. media, visiting local clinics for child drug addicts, checking on the progress of a USAID-funded school house in a remote village. Afghanistan, however, magnifies the differences.

CODEL visits average one a week; media interviews likely focus on controversial issues such as the national government's possible reconciliation with the Taliban; the FSO jumps into an armored vehicle to visit the local clinic; and the civilian development expert wears a military flak jacket to the remote school. That's all part of an average day for colleagues at Embassy Kabul, where progress is measured day by day and drop by drop.

Afghanistan is one of the "AIP" posts—Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan—that account for most unaccompanied tours. The Department has developed a Service Recognition Package as part of its support for employees serving unaccompanied tours. Support ranges from pay and tour-length incentives to a host of services designed to alleviate or prevent potential long-term emotional harm stemming from the unaccompanied tours.

With at least 13 unaccompanied posts, odds are high that Foreign Service officers will serve at least one unaccompanied tour during their careers. HR estimates show between 900 and 1,000 employees currently serving such tours, about five times the 2001 level. Many are motivated by public service and the value of the work, but the incentives recognize the extra stress.

Diplomacy 3.0, the descriptive term coined in 2009 for the hiring surge to increase the Department workforce by 25 percent, doubled the new entry-level officers beginning their careers in the traditional A-100 class, the Orientation for Foreign Service Generalists course. Demands in 2010 on FSI's Orientation Division, which introduces all new Foreign Service generalists and Civil Service employees to the Department and to diplomacy, will be even greater.

To accommodate the huge influx of newcomers, FSI added three more classes a year and shortened the course from seven weeks to five. Class size grew from an average of 65 students to 98—maximum classroom capacity. To maintain high-quality orientation and to present the information more efficiently, FSI installed the Department's first wireless network in the A-100 classroom.

Despite the challenges, says FSI Director Dr. Ruth Whiteside, "When a fully-funded training float is in place, the Department will be able to ensure that all employees get the training they need."

Last but never least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *Mary E. Andrews; Wat T. Cluverius IV; Ann Glanville; Stuart Halpine; James A. Klemstine; Wanda E. Kurland; Raija-Leena Nyborg; Russell E. Olson; Robert Fleming Slutz Jr.; James C. Suma; Alfreida Green Walker; and Jim Wilkinson.* ■

Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

COMING IN JULY/AUGUST

>>> Ambassador Runs Post with ICASS Precision

>>> Department Vets Gather for Foreign Affairs Day

>>> DOS Children Taste Diversity of Parents' Work >>>

... and much more!

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Feds Feed Families

This summer, the Department will set aside five weeks to help Feds Feed Families.

Starting in June.

Watch for the notices.