

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATE

M A G A Z I N E

Make Your Move

Introducing the Mid-Level
Civil Service Rotation Program

HELLO
my name is

JUNE 2007

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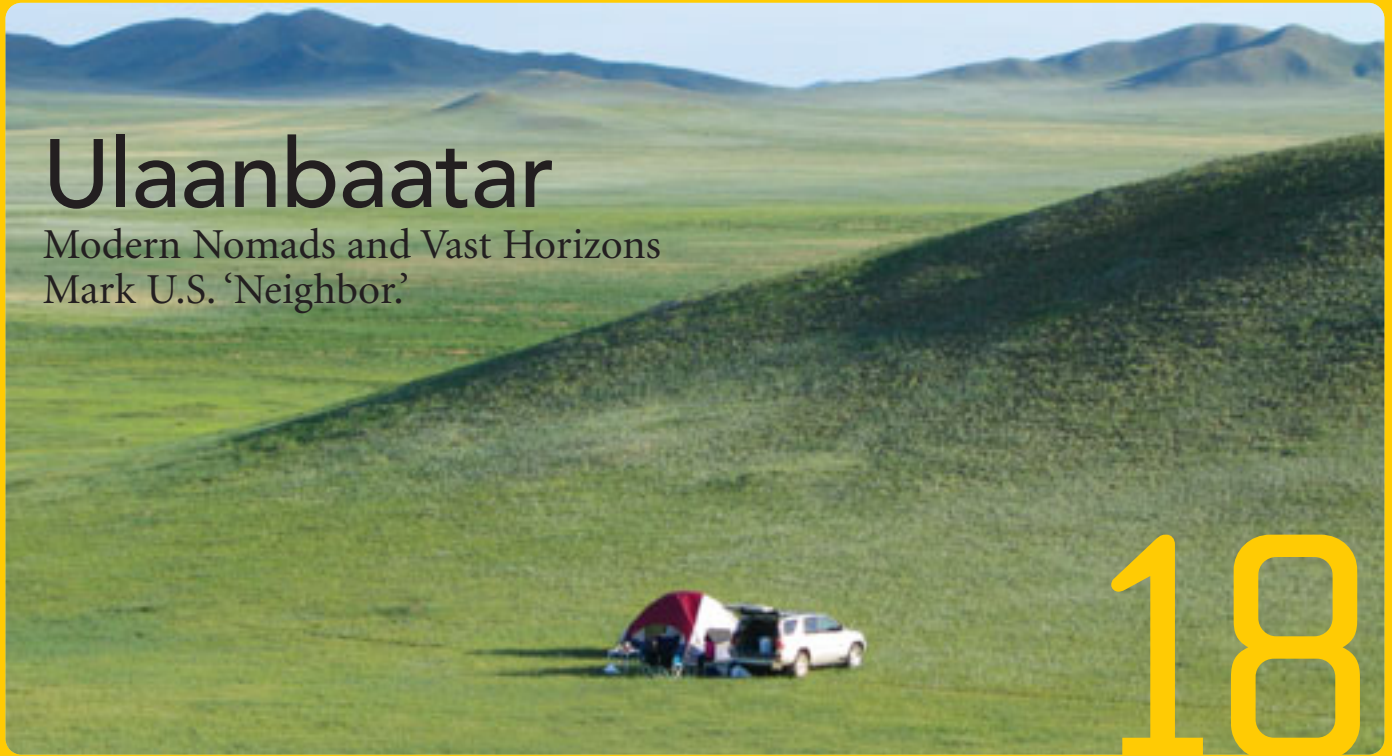
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Photograph by Corbis

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IRM Begins Deployment of SMART with Instant Messaging

In November 1866, Secretary of State William Seward sent an encrypted message through Atlantic Cable to U.S. minister to France, John Bigelow. The cost: \$19,540.50.

On March 21, 2007, Under Secretary Henrietta H. Fore conducted an instant message exchange with the ambassadors to Athens and Belgrade. The cost: a few cents.

Resistance to the introduction of the telegram was fierce in the 19th century, ambassadors saw as a loss of autonomy. When e-mail was introduced to the Department 120 years later, passive resistance initially relegated its use to a small coterie of adventurous and restless employees. But after a few years, e-mail surpassed cables as the preferred mode of communication. Its volume in the State Department now exceeds cables by a ratio of more than sixty to one.

Three months ago, the Department introduced instant messaging as the first application of SMART—State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset. I am pleased that it has been greeted with such enthusiasm as well as a healthy skepticism. It is not a substitute for cables, e-mails or phone calls—but is an additional tool to ensure rapid worldwide communication.

What will instant messaging give our workplace?

- IM allows real-time communication; unlike e-mail or cables, you can have a quick question answered immediately by a colleague.
- IM is secure on ClassNet; you can have a classified conversation between continents without a secure telephone.
- It is quiet; you can have a privileged conversation with someone in the next office without being overheard by colleagues.

- Several people can join in a single conversation; you can efficiently clear a cable or memo.
- You can decide with whom you will communicate; you can avoid being



pestered by a flood of incoming messages.

- It is a real-time medium; you can be assured that you will not find a queue of unread messages when you sign on in the morning because they arrive only when you are signed on.

My staff thought that my first IM experience—with Ambassadors Charles Ries and Michael Polt—might require a rehearsal or hands-on training. I took the plunge with neither, while my staff held their breath in front of the 20 members of the SMART steering committee. It worked exactly as promised. So, if it takes you more than a few minutes to adopt IM, call home for help.

I am delighted that we have introduced this technology to the Department—and look forward to other collaboration tools being introduced by SMART. The center-

piece will be SMART messaging, designed to integrate cables, e-mails and memos on a common user-friendly platform.

While IM is making its way around the globe (deployed to 38,000 desktops and soon to be everywhere), the SMART team has been hard at work on the next elements of SMART. Gartner Consulting recognized the internal progress by giving high marks to the team's completion of its Critical Design Review, the blueprint that will be used to build the messaging portion. And the Office of Management and Budget also expressed support for Information Resource Management's management of SMART.

The next application to be offered will be a collaboration tool called SharePoint, scheduled to be piloted from June to August. In September, SMART messaging will be piloted in Belgrade, Stockholm and Muscat. At the same time, SMART will be piloting additional collaboration applications as well as a search and interest profiling service. By January 2008, nine more overseas posts will be added for the second pilot iteration of SMART messaging. Worldwide deployment is scheduled to begin in September 2008.

I have urged the SMART office to advance the piloting of SMART messaging, but integrating cables, e-mail and memos on a common platform tied to a search capability, with connectivity between ClassNet and OpenNet, is not easy. I am assured, however, that it can and will be done—and deployed worldwide after we have thoroughly tested it for usability, security and stability. These tools will transform how we do our work.

Transformational diplomacy requires state-of-the-art messaging systems that are simple, secure and user-friendly. When fully deployed by 2009, SMART will set a new standard for the digital support of America's diplomacy. It remains the Department's highest IT priority.

Stay tuned, as overseas piloting of SMART messaging begins in a few months. ■

Belize's Boston Whaler

I enjoyed reading about the wooden Belize consulate general/embassy building (March issue). In 1972, our concern there was not hurricanes, but the real danger of fire. Several rope ladders were installed to allow escape. They might even still be there.

Also, we bought ConGen Belize a Boston whaler for possible evacuation needs. As with the motor launch "Hiawatha" in Istanbul, which you also featured in March, it was carried as part of the motor pool.

Either there was a regulation at the time against boat ownership by the State Department or we thought Congress might object—or both. Post was told not to requisition propellers, and the staff was encouraged to take the boat out to the cays on week-ends "to make sure everything worked."

Stuart Lippe
Retired FSO

Haiku Contests

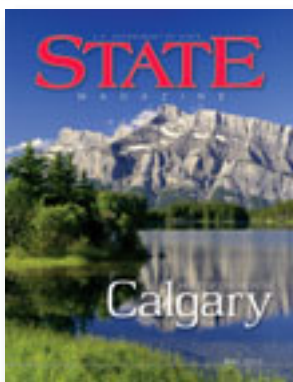
Reading the cartoon on the inside back cover of the April issue—The Poetic Diplomacy Initiative—inspired me to share with you something with which any site officer for a VIP visit can relate.

On a previous assignment in Tokyo, I often served as control officer for VIP visits. To keep spirits bright among all involved, I would hold haiku contests through which site officers and others could vent frustrations and share funny anecdotes related to the visit. I would collect them as we went along, and we would hold a live reading at the wheels-up party. One memorable haiku from such a contest:

*The map says turn left
But the driver just turned right
Again we'll be late*

I would not be surprised if other posts are in cultures that have some form of expression suitable for this sort of diversion. Keep your eyes out.

Aaron Held
*American Consulate General
Monterrey, Mexico*



Good Work

During my 27 years of active duty in the Foreign Service, I always enjoyed the fine writing, reporting and organizational outreach *State Magazine* provided to all employees, no matter their status, rank or post of assignment. There was always something for everyone.

These excellent qualities continue. Moreover, the magazine has even improved, showcasing stronger reporting, more stylistic formats and richer articles about the people and organizations making up the State

Department and the many challenges American diplomacy faces in the future. Superb job!

Living in rural Thailand, with perhaps only one other American in the general area and possibly two or three English-speaking individuals residing within a 20-mile radius, I expect that *State Magazine* will become one of my closest friends.

Tim Lawson
Senior Foreign Service (Retired)



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NEWS

FSOs Donate Equipment to Haitian Volleyball Team

As a community service project in Port-au-Prince, 15 Foreign Service officers in the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy donated equipment valued at more than \$300 to a local girls' volleyball team.

Sports are a preferred pastime for the disadvantaged children of Haiti, yet there are few public teams with sufficient funding and equipment. The team's assistant trainer, who works as a security guard at the Consular Section, alerted Consul General Jay Smith to the need for equipment, and the American officers responded.

"The spirit of competition the girls enjoy during the matches will serve them well for the rest of their lives," said Consul General Smith during the presentation of the equipment on February 7. "Learning to apply yourself fully and work cooperatively in a sports setting will also help you excel in all aspects of life, whether as a student or as an involved citizen," he told the girls.

The team was given a tour of the Consular Section and introduced to Dominique Gerdes, a senior local staff member in the Immigrant Visa Unit who once played on the Haitian national volleyball team.

The volleyball players all reside in Carrefour, an area of the capital marked by high crime and extreme poverty. It is so dangerous that the regional security officer has declared the



The volleyball team and its trainers pose with Embassy officials.

neighborhood off-limits to American officers unless they are traveling in lightly armored vehicles or have special permission to cross the area in caravans.

To permit officers to watch the girls play, the team's trainers have scheduled a match at a school in an area not off limits to U.S. personnel.

BULGARIA NAMES LAB FOR U.S. DIPLOMAT

A new diagnostic laboratory on the Black Sea coast has been named for Brian Goggin, former agricultural attaché in Bulgaria.

The Foreign Agricultural Service/Sofia was honored by the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture for its important contributions to the prevention and control of avian influenza in Bulgaria. FAS/Sofia provided significant resources to create the new facility and train laboratory staff. This year, FAS is training 11 local experts in the United States.



At the opening ceremony, current Agricultural Attaché Susan Reid extolled Goggin's work. A marble plaque with his name in gold letters is mounted at the entrance to the lab.

The U.S. Agency for International Development has also provided support for the laboratory and Bulgaria's effort to prevent avian flu.

FAS specialist Brian Goggin



Under Secretary for Management Henrietta Fore demonstrates the new Instant Messaging technology in front of 20 members of the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset steering committee. The new technology allows real-time, secure communication within the same office or with colleagues on another continent.

Embassy Auction Helps Mexican Children

What can you do with a velvet portrait of Elvis and a foosball table?

Junior officers at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City recently used these items and more to raise money for the Asociación Mexicana de Ayuda a Niños con Cáncer—AMANC, the Mexican Association for Assistance to Children with Cancer. AMANC provides care, lodging and educa-

tion for ill children and their families in 20 states throughout Mexico.

In 2005, while donating hundreds of Christmas toys to various children's charities in the Mexico City area, the embassy staff became aware of AMANC's work and learned that the association was in great need of an industrial-sized washer and dryer for its center for sick children.

To respond to this need, embassy junior officers and specialists organized the "Give Your Heart to a Child with Cancer" campaign, which culminated an auction that raised more than \$15,000 from embassy employees and their families.

Items to be auctioned were solicited from the embassy community and American corporations in Mexico. Donations ranged from handmade quilts to dog-training lessons to a dinner with the ambassador, and the bidding was fierce. U.S. companies Church and Dwight, Coca-Cola, Continental Airlines, Marriott and Maytag also donated to the cause.

The campaign resulted not only in a new washer and dryer for AMANC, but also a year's supply of laundry detergent and an additional \$10,000 for medication and other items the charity might need. On Valentine's Day, Ambassador Garza, junior officers and public affairs officials from the embassy delivered the donation, along with clothes and toys for the children, to Señora Guadalupe Alejandre, founder and president of AMANC.



Embassy staff and families participate in the "silent auction" held at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.



Mission staff wore Tech colors orange and maroon to show their support.

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State Magazine (ISSN 1099-4165) is published monthly, except bimonthly in July and August, by the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C St., N.W., Washington, DC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing locations.

Mission to NATO Honors Hokie Hope Day

The U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization participated in Hokie Hope Day on April 20 to honor the lives lost during the April 16 shooting on the Virginia Tech University campus in Blacksburg, Va. Tech alumnus Lt. Colonel Patience Larkin, a member of the mission's Office of the Defense Advisor, organized the event.

"It is difficult being so far away from the U.S. when tragic events occur at home," said Lt. Col. Larkin. "I wanted to show our support to the Virginia Tech community and was very proud and grateful to the mission for participating and wearing the Hokie colors."

Fair Teaches Thais about Consular Work

In celebration of Consular Leadership Day, Jan. 26, staff from the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok and the consulate general in Chiang Mai organized an open house and fair in Bangkok to give contacts and colleagues a behind-the-scenes look at their consular sections.

Employing the Thai concept of "edutainment" to make learning fun, teams of local staff and officers from Bangkok and Chiang Mai's consular units manned booths with names such as "The Wacky World of Biometrics," "ACS: Cradle to Grave" and "Famous Immigrants in the U.S."

Interactive tools and games were used to teach guests about consular work. The fraud unit had by far the most popular booth, where players competed to "spot the imposter." Patriotic decorations, balloons, prizes, costumes, music and refreshments all added to a fun, laid-back environment for the 600 attendees.

Since consular sections in Thailand rely heavily on support from other government

agencies and the private sector, colleagues from the public affairs section, the Foreign Commercial Service and Citizenship and Immigration Services were invited to join in the festivities, along with corporate partners such as Citibank, CSC and Teletech



Embassy employees employed the Thai concept of "edutainment" to make learning about the embassy's consular sections a fun outing.

and Thailand Post. And because a fair is not complete without souvenirs, the American Community Service Association sold pens, mugs, key chains and other items emblazoned with the embassy logo.

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Send changes of address to *State Magazine*, 2401 E Street, N.W., SA-1, Room H-236, Washington, DC 20522-0108. You may also e-mail address changes to statemagazine@state.gov.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

State Magazine is available by subscription through the U.S. Government Printing Office by telephone at (202) 512-1800 or on the web at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

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For details on submitting articles to *State Magazine*, request our guidelines, "Getting Your Story Told," by e-mail at statemagazine@state.gov; download them from our Web site at www.state.gov; or send your request in writing to *State Magazine*, 2401 E Street, N.W., HR/ER/SMG, SA-1, Room H-236, Washington, DC 20522-0108.

The submission deadline for the September 2007 issue is July 15. The deadline for the October issue is August 15.



These teachers were part of a group from Bangladesh, Tajikistan and the Palestinian territories who were visiting the United States on an exchange through the Global Connections program.

Virtual Connections

TECHNOLOGY CREATES A UNIQUE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOL **BY ANNA MUSSMAN**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has unleashed the power of technology through the Global Connections and Exchange program to create a unique and unprecedented public diplomacy tool. Through virtual linkages with teens and educators in the United States, this tool enhances America's presence in more than 1,000 schools worldwide. Using state-of-the-art technology, GCE not only conveys America's values and traditions to the most remote areas of the world, but also empowers American and foreign youth by giving them a voice in their communities and channeling their energy to help their home communities.

GCE trained 1,500 teachers to use interactive approaches and project-based

methodology in their classrooms. In Tajikistan, Ibrahim Rustamov helped create for Tajik students an online English Club that includes lesson plans, resources and educational games. In Bangladesh, four GCE schools are participating in NASA's "Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment" program in which they collaborate with scientists and students around the world to analyze and compare data about forestry, conservation, weather prediction, disaster mitigation, global warming and ecotourism.

Teachers throughout the GCE network have reported that the program has significantly affected retention rates, encouraged young girls and increased motivation for youth at risk. Many students willingly and

enthusiastically remain at the centers for long hours with the hope that they will be able to use newly found skills in their future careers.

Across Borders

Students visiting Internet Learning Centers expand their immediate environment as geography melts away and notions of borders become secondary.

In Central Asia, programs such as the award-winning "Tech Age Girls" give young girls self-confidence as they learn advanced Web design techniques such as CSS, PHP and Javascript, then begin internships at high-tech companies. One Tech Age Girl said the program helped her become a more serious person.



Top: Bangladeshi students and teachers rally in Chittagong in favor of universal education. Bottom: Young Bangladeshi women from Joydebpur Govt. Girls High School gathered at Rani Bilashmoni Govt. Boys High School in Gazipur to celebrate International Women's Day 2007.

“I now realize that I shouldn’t question my ability to do something, but should simply do it with confidence,” she said.

Teachers and students no longer need to travel to the United States to collaborate with Americans on virtual projects that bring their worlds closer. In Afghanistan, students created a blog project focused on human rights, while on the West Bank, Dina, a student at the Al Naja Secondary School in Ramallah, posted an essay about the challenges of universal education. She noted that “students can start acting internationally by establishing networks and lobbies to influence government policies.”

Global Connections projects steer overseas students to discuss environmental issues with Americans, children’s rights with students in another village and civil obligations with adults and children in yet another country. In Pakistan, teachers and students traveled long distances to



play with children at earthquake relief camps in Jaba, Basiaan and Kushtra, while girls at Chowara High School in Bangladesh applied online and then received a grant to print leaflets about the adverse impacts of early marriages.

Empowered by technology, Global Connections youth produce innovative digital stories, Web logs and multimedia presentations to gain a dynamic voice in their communities as they convey their aspirations for a better future and expose others to the benefits of an open, civil society.

Virtual Linkages

Linkages with U.S. schools involve interactive discussions, debates, research and information sharing. Students explore themes that range from international arts and music to ethnic foods, fashion, world religions, youth service and more.

Using video technology to produce their “Symbols of

Democracy” project, an eighth grade class at the Maryland School for the Deaf filmed monuments in the Washington, D.C., area and explained their significance through sign language and subtitles. After their Armenian partner school watched the video, student discussions jumped from the meaning of democracy to a comparison of U.S. and Armenian policies regarding the rights of people with disabilities.

In the “Two Rivers One World Project,” New York City and Egyptian students tested water content of the Hudson and Nile rivers, visited water treatment plants and discussed water supply and pollution with scientists and teachers. Six American students then traveled to Cairo to join their Egyptian peers to present their findings to Egyptian and American scientists.

Teenagers also talk about matters that are important to



them personally. Discussing conflicts in their daily lives with Tajikistani students, an American student wrote, "I would have to agree that some conflict is good in our lives. I agree that it isn't good to fight with your family and friends, but you can't learn about someone if you don't argue sometimes."

A recent project merged virtual discussions with Digital Video Conference technology that allowed students at Wilson High School in Washington to collaborate with students in Azerbaijan on a Model United Nations project that focused on HIV/AIDS in Botswana.

Communicating in English with Americans has helped thousands of international students and teachers improve their English language skills. Many have attributed their participation in the program to their qualifying for exchange programs to the U.S. and other countries. American teachers and students have been exposed

to different cultures and have expressed an increased interest in foreign travel and languages.

Transformational Diplomacy

Born with computers at their fingertips, America's teenagers increasingly rely on e-mail, Web chats, instant messages and social networking sites for their communication. Comfortable in a virtual environment, they enthusiastically discuss their lives and values with foreign peers. It is no longer surprising to hear students living in rural villages discussing U.S. presidential candidates, freedom of speech and volunteerism.

The program not only helps narrow the digital divide, but also places overseas youth on equal footing with their American partners. The two groups come together as collaborators, discussing similar concerns and working together on the same project.

In harmony with transformational diplomacy principles,

GCE merges virtual and physical exchanges to offer foreign partners the 21st century skills needed to improve their societies. Similarly, it extends opportunities for Americans to learn about other cultures, religions and ways of life. As the only program of its kind, GCE has evolved into an effective public diplomacy program that reaches thousands of hearts and minds virtually to give mutual understanding a new meaning and infinite dimension.

Additional information about GCE can be found at: <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/worldwide/connections.htm>.

You can also contact the program officer directly via e-mail at MussmanAP@state.gov for details. ■

The author is a program specialist in ECA's Youth Programs Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges.

Above left: Egyptian students participate in the Art Miles Project as part of the Global Connections program administered by the International Education and Resource Network. Right: Through technology and the Global Connections and Exchange program, these young Tajikistani women can hold open and frank discussions about their daily lives with American counterparts.

Soldiers from Minni Minawi's Sudan Liberation Army faction board one of their "technicals" in Umm Baru, North Darfur.



FIRST RESPONSE

"I would define the objective of transformational diplomacy this way: To work with our many partners around the world to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people—and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system."

—Secretary Rice, January 18, 2006

There are few better places in the world to see the potential for transformational diplomacy than in El Fasher, a dusty frontier garrison town with only a few paved roads and scant amenities that serves as the capital of Sudan's North Darfur state. For the past year, a team of diplomats from the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum and the Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization has been working along with US Agency for International Development field staff to stabilize the political, security and humanitarian crisis and its impact on the people of Darfur.

CRS is represented by members of its Active Response Corps and Standby

Response Corps, composed of first responders who support stabilization and reconstruction efforts in conflict-affected regions. Corps members are Foreign Service and Civil Service personnel who specialize in unconventional field missions, often in remote and hostile regions, to support embassy and Department initiatives.

The need for a diplomatic presence in North Darfur arose in the aftermath of the Darfur Peace Agreement signed in Abuja, Nigeria, on May 5, 2006. The agreement sought to end Darfur's political and economic marginalization by the authorities in Khartoum and was initially signed by the government of Sudan and one of three rebel

TRANSFORMATIONAL DIPLOMACY IN DARFUR | BY EYTHAN SONTAG AND KEITH MINES



Left: School tents at the Oure Cassoni refugee camp in eastern Chad wear out in three to four months because of the constant sand and wind. Below: Author Eythan Sontag, front left, sits with African Union peacekeepers and Justice and Equality Movement rebels in Jebel Moon to discuss the peace process.



factions. Persuading the outlying rebel groups, which have proliferated since the agreement was signed, to join the peace process remains a key diplomatic priority. U.S. efforts have also focused on improving political conditions to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Darfur and facilitate the return of more than 2 million internally displaced persons.

To help achieve these objectives, the Department's Bureau of African Affairs and USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives provided funds for Peace Secretariats—in Khartoum and El Fasher. A small ARC team developed these secretariats into centers for dispensing information about the peace agreement and for coordinating, hosting and encouraging activities related to the peace process. The Peace Secretariats also provide office space, logistical support and communications assistance to those

rebel factions that signed the peace agreement or the Declaration of Commitment, an agreement to commit to the Darfur Peace Agreement, to help those groups transition from military organizations to political entities.

In addition to establishing the Peace Secretariats, the ARC was tasked with creating a forward platform in Darfur where U.S. government officials could live and work. CRS worked with the Bureau of African Affairs and the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum to establish two residences/work facilities on the outskirts of El Fasher. The houses were refurbished, fortified to meet security standards, furnished and equipped with very small amateur terminal (VSAT) technology to provide Internet connectivity. The outpost is supported by a seven-person field staff of local drivers, custodians and interpreters who were recruited and hired by ARC and embassy officers.

FLUID SITUATIONS

ARC members adapted to the fluid circumstances as the mission and security conditions in Darfur evolved. To help facilitate the peace process and ensure the protection of millions of displaced Darfurians, ARC officers served as U.S. observers to the African Union Mission in Sudan Cease-fire Commission, which monitors, reviews and reports on violations of the peace agreement. In this capacity, they conduct outreach to rebel signatory and nonsignatory factions alike, looking for common ground that will reinforce the cessation of hostilities.

ARC officers have participated in hands-on missions to such places as the mountainous Jebel Marra and Jebel Moon areas to engage rebel movements, gain first-hand information about armed confrontations and, where appropriate, participate in African Union or UN mediation efforts.



Children from one of the local internally displaced persons camps collecting firewood and fodder pass in front of an African Union Mission in Sudan camp.

In addition to cultivating a wide network of contacts within the UN, humanitarian communities, AMIS, civil society and local government, ARC and embassy officers continue to assess the progress of UN support to AMIS. The ARC presence in Darfur has provided ground-level visibility and reporting of policy implementation, including progress on the peace agreement, for decisionmakers in Khartoum, Washington, New York and other diplomatic centers.

As one of the U.S. government's highest foreign policy priorities and the subject of intense public and media focus, the situation in Darfur has attracted numerous high-level delegations, ranging from presidential special envoys to movie stars to congressional delegations. ARC officers have played a key role in coordinating and receiving these visitors to the field, providing briefings, arranging meetings and organizing security measures.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Department's El Fasher presence has also provided enhanced outreach opportunities for the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum. The embassy public affairs officer recently made the first public diplomacy trip to El Fasher in many years, visiting the University of El Fasher, the local radio station and the town's only museum.

For six months, the ARC and SRC also deployed officers to Chad, serving primarily in the eastern part of the country bordering Sudan. These officers met regularly with the UN High Commission for Refugees and nongovernmental organization officials supporting Darfuri refugees and internally displaced persons, both at the hub of operations in Abeche and at the many refugee camps and displaced person sites in eastern Chad. ARC and SRC personnel also engaged Sudanese

rebels located in Chad to reinforce U.S. policy points and escorted delegations from Congress, USAID and the Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

CRS and the ARC, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, the Bureau of African Affairs, USAID and other partners, continue their work in Darfur as an example of innovative and flexible transformational diplomacy in action, where bringing the right assets and people together at the right time may help make a difference in this troubled region.

Eythan Sontag is a Foreign Affairs officer on detail to the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and a member of the Active Response Corps. Keith Mines is a political officer at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa and a member of the Standby Response Corps.



Left: Camps in eastern Chad fill quickly with young Darfur refugees. Below: Active Response Corps officer Eythan Sontag, second from left, and Standby Response Corps officer Keith Mines, far right, meet with the head of the Legislative Council in El Fasher, North Darfur.



ON SHORT NOTICE By AMBASSADOR JOHN E. HERBST

In my 10 months as coordinator for reconstruction and stabilization, S/CRS has experienced inevitable challenges, but also tremendous progress. The office was created to organize the U.S. government's reconstruction and stabilization efforts for countries that have fallen into chaos, and build the civilian planning and response tools to staff these operations.

An important part of what we are trying to do is create a civilian surge capability. To that end, the members of our Active and Standby Response Corps are truly on the cutting edge of transformational diplomacy. They can be deployed on short notice to unconventional, challenging environments. And they have begun to do so in Sudan's Darfur region, eastern Chad, Lebanon, Haiti, Kosovo, Iraq and Nepal.

We must also draw on the expertise of the American public, which is why the President called for the creation of a Civilian Reserve Corps in his most recent State of the Union address. Secretary Rice is leading this effort, and tasked my office with standing the CRC up. The CRC will expand the pool of civilian experts such as law enforcement specialists, public administrators and engineers who can support critical areas of reconstruction and stabilization work.

To get our civilians on the ground, our government must support them with proper planning, coordinated operations and training. We have agreed on an inter-agency management system that will be used to address future reconstruction and stabilization crises. As part of this, we have developed a planning process and an

interagency conflict assessment tool that are now in use for U.S. planning efforts for Kosovo. In Haiti, a team from multiple U.S. agencies in Washington and the field designed an innovative initiative to enhance security and economic opportunities in one of Port-au-Prince's most troubled neighborhoods.

Weak and failing states pose critical national security challenges. By better organizing how we respond and ensuring we have the necessary civilian resources to do so, we give ourselves the best chance for success in future crises. We owe it to our country and to those around the world struggling to emerge from conflict. ■

The author is the coordinator for reconstruction and stabilization.



Department “Inner View”

Q&A WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL GEORGE M. STAPLES **BY ROB WILEY**

To Director General George Staples, the key word in Foreign Service is the first one—Foreign. When he joined the Department in 1981, he understood the rewards—and the potential drawbacks—of a life dedicated to serving the interests of the United States and fulfilling the country’s diplomatic mission.

To the young ex Air Force officer, it meant a life full of professional commitment, personal sacrifice and unimaginable satisfaction in serving his country through good times and not-so-good times. His career spanned the end of the Cold War and the start of several hot ones, including the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan that are taxing his beloved Foreign Service.

During his 13 months as Director General, Ambassador Staples has made

many crucial and sometimes difficult decisions, but his guide throughout has been an unwavering focus on supporting Secretary Rice’s vision of today’s diplomacy and fulfilling the Department’s mission to help build and sustain a more democratic, secure and prosperous world.

Today’s world is more volatile than when the Foreign Service welcomed newcomer Staples 26 years ago. Transformational diplomacy asks diplomats to spend more time in that world and less time in their offices. The Director General’s office has been the eye of the storm for most of the changes that had to be made as the Department transitioned from an earlier, less dangerous era into the modern world.

Ambassador Staples began his Foreign Service career in El Salvador, and he made

his way through the FS ranks with posts in Bahrain, Zimbabwe, The Bahamas and Uruguay. He spent his Washington tours in the Department’s Operation center and in the Bureau of European Affairs. He reached the peak of Foreign Service as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda and to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea.

His last post before assuming duties as Director General was as Political Adviser to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe at North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters in Belgium.

To help explain the magnitude of the changes and the reasons they had to be made, Ambassador Staples met with State Magazine editors for an extensive overview of the modern Foreign Service and why it must adapt to a rapidly changing world.

SM: *We couldn't help but notice the just released "Best Place to Work" survey in which the Department did very well. Could you comment on those rankings?*

Director General Staples: I'm very pleased with the announcement that the Department was recognized within the Federal government as the No. 6 Best Place to Work. We're up from No. 10 in 2005.

In particular, we were ranked No. 1 by women. If you remember where we were 26 years ago when I came into the Foreign Service, this recognition is quite significant. It reflects very well on all of our employees and on what the Secretary and many others have done to make the State Department a good place to work.

SM: *State did well across many areas—No. 2 among males, No. 4 among African Americans, etc.*

Director General Staples: And we were ranked No. 3 in effective leadership. You can add to this latest survey the recognition we received in BusinessWeek magazine on the results of surveys of college undergraduate students, it speaks well of our efforts to not only serve the American people, but to also ensure that our efforts are recognized and appreciated among a broad cross section of observers. I believe BusinessWeek noted that the Department finished No. 3 behind Walt Disney and Google on the 2006 Most Desirable Undergraduate Employer ranking and No. 4 behind Google, Disney and Apple on the 2007 ranking.

SM: *Last August, you introduced changes to the assignments process, from the order in which assignments are made to changes to Fair Share rules and the elimination of fourth-year extensions at posts with less than 15 percent differential. What necessitated these changes?*

Director General Staples: As I've explained in town meetings and in numerous messages to the field, the changes were made because we had a serious problem: we didn't have the people that we needed to staff our most difficult positions. In the past, people just bid and went pretty much where they wanted, and extensions were granted liberally. I have made the point that no organization would allow itself to be in a position where its most difficult, critical positions were not filled first.

We changed the rules, if you will, in consultation with the American Foreign Service Association, recognizing that this was a marked departure from the way we had

done the assignment business in the past. I made numerous trips to the field and conducted town meetings abroad as well to explain the changes, and I'm pleased to say that the system has worked.

Looking at summer 2007 assignments, we are about 98 percent staffed in Iraq, 100 percent or close to it in Afghanistan and close to 100 percent staffed in our other hard-to-fill posts in South Asia and the Middle East.

The challenge will be how to sustain this in terms of 12-month tours. We have a huge turnover at these posts every year, and we do not have a large Foreign Service. Even people who are not currently Fair Share have to serve more often in hardship posts. We live in one of the most challenging periods that I can remember in the Foreign Service, but I'm pleased to see that the challenge is recognized and we have filled our positions with volunteers. Thus far, we have not had to do a single directed assignment.

SM: *To what do you attribute the success of the new assignments process?*

Director General Staples: I think the recognition on the part of our people that we are facing challenging times and that more service in hardship assignments is expected. Our people recognize that service in the world has changed. Our median hardship differential is 15 percent, and that's just extraordinary. I believe more than a fifth of our posts are 20 to 25 percent differential or higher today. And that's not just terrorism; that's crime, climate, health issues, schooling, cost of living, etc. All of those things go into the hardship differential.

SM: *Is it difficult to make changes to the assignments process?*

Director General Staples: It is difficult, because we are really dealing with a change in culture. When I came into the Foreign Service, many of us knew about the dangers in Beirut. I started my career in San Salvador, which was a danger-pay post and unaccompanied for most of my time there. But for the most part, everyone recognized that at some point in time, you would have

to serve in perhaps one of these hardship positions but there would not be too many requirements for family separations.

SM: *Some of the recent changes have been perceived by some as a step backward in the Department's on-going efforts to be as family friendly as possible. How would you respond to this particular perception?*

Director General Staples: I sometimes hear that when I've gone overseas and talked in town meetings. But when I explained the full range of the challenges we face, when I reemphasized that we are now in a Foreign Service in which the median hardship differential is 15 percent and every year we have to fill between 500 to 700 posi-



The Director General enjoys an informal lunch for embassy employees at the Deputy Chief of Mission's residence in Pretoria.

tions that are unaccompanied or limited accompanied, people understand.

The point we make is that we are meeting these staffing challenges and doing all we can to support families and to support our personnel. The Iraq service package alone should indicate how we have gone out of our way to take into account those who are serving in our most difficult foreign policy environments. Between three regional rest breaks and two R&Rs, we were able to add a home leave and to increase both the hardship and danger pay differential. Those serving in PRTs have been able to leave their families behind at the post from which they left. Their families do not have to move while the children finish school. On a voluntary basis, we expanded that by asking posts wherever possible to support those who would also like this benefit if they are going to Embassy Baghdad or another location.

The response has been extremely positive around the Foreign Service. If possible, posts have worked out arrangements in

which the family could stay while the member served anywhere in Iraq. These are just some of the things we have been able to do in this regard.

We also developed recognition awards for children of those serving at unaccompanied posts. Medals and certificates have been sent to the child's school for presentation as a thank you for the service of the parent, and that has been very beneficial for family morale. It also increases public awareness around the country about what our personnel are facing and where they are serving overseas.

SM: *So the Department is really one big family?*

Director General Staples: We are a family. And that's not just the Foreign Service; it's also the Civil Service, as well. We just instituted a pilot Civil Service rotation program which for the first time will allow Civil Service personnel of the same grade and doing the same type of work to switch between Bureaus for a year or two to gain some career-broadening experience. It's a pilot program, but I hope we can

this building and elsewhere have served on Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And let's not forget the largest number of our employees, our almost 37,000 Locally Employed staff, who are what Secretary Rice calls the Crown Jewels of the State Department. They often serve at very difficult positions and often risk their lives to perform their duties and, on occasion, keep us safe. They, too, are doing a marvelous job, and should be commended.

SM: *Do you anticipate any other changes to the assignments process?*

Director General Staples: We are negotiating with AFSA for a couple of other changes, and we'll have to see where that comes out.

One would strengthen the minimum standard for hardship service to recognize the 15 percent median in terms of positions around the world. And the other issue I am personally pushing is to change the 6-8 rule back to 5-8, with five years the maximum number of years any FSO can serve in Washington. This was the policy before

1997, and given the challenges overseas and the staffing requirements we have to meet, I think it's important that we go back to that standard.

The point I want to make is that this is the Foreign Service, and I strongly believe that the bulk of one's career should be spent overseas. It's very important to serve in Washington, to understand how we operate here in the interagency process and

how policy is made here at the senior levels in this building. But the bulk of one's career should be spent in overseas service.

SM: *What else has changed?*

Director General Staples: Another example of how things have changed today vs. 26 years ago—we have almost 600 tandem couples in the Foreign Service today. That's 1,200 people that we try to assign together. We used to tell our tandem couples that because of various reasons, when they reached more senior levels they might have to face a leave without pay situation or even serve at different posts.

Today, I'm telling the members of the A100 classes and our mid-level officers that these kinds of separations may be more common in a career. They may have to face it two, three or even four times, so plan accordingly. This is a huge and increasing number, and that's just another example of how the Foreign Service has changed. You add onto that the requirements for service in the hardship-danger pay posts, and it's a significant change.

We try to do our best to assign people together. We certainly take in consideration the requirements for adequate schooling. We're very strict on everyone meeting their Fair Share requirements, but we've gone out of our way with the bureaus to take care of those who have come out of posts like Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. We have succeeded because of the support we've had in this building from the Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, and others who value that service.

I would also like everyone to know that in these circumstances we still consider ourselves to be as family-friendly as possible. I have approved every single request that crosses my desk for a waiver based on medical condition or special needs for a child, 100 percent. Our Family Liaison Office has established a special position for a coordinator who does nothing but work with our unaccompanied families in the U.S. while the member is serving an unaccompanied tour. We have more than 200 such families in the U.S. today. Who could have imagined something like that years ago?

We also contracted for a service that provides 24-hour counseling, financial planning, and other guidance to our personnel. So we have any number of benefits and efforts underway to look after our people and their families as much as possible. You can add to that the wonderful work they've done in FSI to expand training opportunities and the huge increase in online courses that are available to family members and employees overseas. We're doing what we can in today's circumstances to really take care of our people, provide good training, watch out for families and at the same time meet our responsibilities to do the work of diplomacy.

SM: *How helpful has AFSA been?*


Director General Staples: We have a good relationship with AFSA. In accordance with the Foreign Service Act, they are the official bargaining unit of the Department. I am an AFSA member, as are many of the



The Director General poses with Peach Corps volunteers and staff members outside their offices in Maseru, Lesotho.

expand it. We in the Foreign Service get these rotations every two or three years, but our Civil Service colleagues often spend their entire careers in the same office at the same desk. Why not offer the opportunity to switch for those who don't want to stay at that same desk for 25 years? Why not give them the chance to do something else and gain exposure to the broader work of the Department?

Through our assignments procedures, we have also allowed close to 200 Civil Service personnel to serve overseas, where they are performing with distinction in hard-to-fill positions. Many Civil Service personnel in



“We are a family. And that’s not just the Foreign Service; it’s also the Civil Service, as well.”

personnel in the Bureau of Human Resources. We have frequent meetings with the members of the AFSA leadership, the president and the board to discuss issues and negotiate. While AFSA has not agreed with us on all of the new policies we have had to implement, I think there is an understanding within AFSA that times have changed and that all of us in the Department face extraordinary challenges.

SM: *Is there anything else you are working on with AFSA?*

Director General Staples: We will later this year begin regularly scheduled negotiations on precepts for 2008, but otherwise I don’t anticipate being involved with AFSA in any other groundbreaking initiatives. We have been keeping AFSA abreast of changes in the Foreign Service intake process, the new procedure to replace the Foreign Service examination, and we have briefed the president and senior AFSA officials on a regular basis and they have been fully supportive.

SM: *You say that when you personally explain the policy to FSOs, they understand, but you can’t go to every single post.*

Director General Staples: No, I can’t, but we use BNet, we use town meetings, we use

ALDAC messages to the field to get the word out. We have a deputy chief of mission collective email that my Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Heather Hodges uses to raise specific issues. I speak at all chief of mission meetings; I also speak at all ambassadorial and DCM seminars to encourage our senior leaders when they get to post to recognize that our people are serving in difficult times. I ask them to be especially aware of the need for outreach and to take the steps necessary to maintain good morale at post and to help all of the officers who are going to serve at these hardship posts develop strong leadership and management skills.

I think the word is out. The bottom line is simply this: these are the requirements that we must fulfill to carry out our nation’s foreign policy. We have done it successfully with these changes, and in the process done all that we can do to support our families and our personnel who are working under incredibly difficult circumstances.

If we were not able to do what we have done this year voluntarily, we would have done it through identification, or directed assignments. One way or the other, we are going to put people where they are needed to carry out our diplomatic requirements.

Anyone else who would be the DG right now would do the same thing.

If you explain the situation and ensure that the steps you take are fair and transparent, then you will have the support of the people who have come into this business to carry out public service. That is what we have seen here. It is a tribute to the men and women and the families of all of our people—Foreign Service, Civil Service, Local Staff—to work today on behalf of our government and to meet our diplomatic responsibilities. It is not easy to face separation, to see your children graduate without you. It is not easy to work overseas in embassies that face threats and in which our access and our openness to the general public overseas is more restricted because of the security requirements.

And yet our people do this every day, and I’m extremely proud of that. I’m extremely proud of their service and deeply appreciative of their sacrifices.

I say this on behalf of the Secretary and all of the senior leadership of this building and myself—a sincere “Thank You” to all of our personnel who work for the United States Department of State. You have our deepest respect and admiration. ■

The author is the editor of State Magazine.

Men and children ride along the Mongolian prairie during an annual festival.



PHOTOGRAPH: TRAVEL ALBERTA



Ulaanbaatar

Modern Nomads and Vast Horizons
Mark U.S. 'Neighbor.'

By Patrick J. Freeman and Alexei Kral



The Amarbayasgalant monastery, located in the Iven Gol River Valley on the foot of Burenkhan Mountain, is a landmark of Mongolia's cultural memory and rich Buddhist heritage.

**Imagine conducting diplomacy
in the homeland of Genghis Khan
and bolstering a developing
country's transition from social-
ism to free-market democracy,
while spending weekends enjoy-
ing stunning natural beauty.
That is Mongolia.**

In January, the United States and Mongolia marked the 20th anniversary of diplomatic ties. The landlocked country's only geographic neighbors are Russia and China, but during his November 2005 visit to Ulaanbaatar, President George W. Bush embraced Mongolia's characterization of the United States as its "third neighbor."

The United States established an embassy in Ulaanbaatar in 1988 and the first resident American ambassador arrived in July 1990. Just a few months earlier, Mongolians had peacefully discarded socialism and begun transforming their nation into a democracy with a market-oriented economy.

When it opened, the embassy had three local employees and three American officers. Today, 135 Locally Employed staff and 27 direct-hire Americans grapple with a wide and growing range of issues.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

Defense cooperation is especially strong. Nearly 900 Mongolian soldiers have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003, and 250 Mongolian soldiers guard the United Nations war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone—visible signs of progress toward establishing Mongolia as a major international peacekeeping troop contributor over the next few years. In August, for the second year in a row, Mongolia will host a major U.S.-supported multinational peacekeeping exercise for Asian nations.

A Millennium Challenge Account compact with Mongolia, expected to be concluded in 2007, will represent a major expansion of U.S. assistance and engagement. Vocational training,

health, property rights and railway projects are being considered for inclusion in the compact.

The U.S. Agency for International Development launched its first program in Mongolia in 1991 with a grant of \$10 million to provide emergency supplies for the country's failing power plants. The aid is gratefully remembered.

Today, USAID still provides technical assistance to strengthen the energy sector, but it pursues a much broader agenda. Under ongoing programs, every court in the country has been automated and every judge trained, an umbrella group of women's political groups swiftly won favorable changes in the parliamentary election law, protections are being enhanced for endangered wildlife species, and a popular television series promotes greater awareness of HIV/AIDS.

Most USAID programs encourage faster economic growth and support policy reforms like the major tax changes enacted by the State Great Hural (Mongolia's parliament) in 2006. Other programs support entrepreneurship and are helping to lower Mongolia's 35 percent poverty rate.

The embassy's economic and commercial focus is to encourage a business climate that fosters free enterprise and foreign investment and to promote U.S. trade and investment in a growing economy with world-class mineral deposits just beginning to be developed. More than 125 American businesses are active in Mongolia, with mining-related firms especially well represented.

VAST CONTRASTS

Nearly half of Mongolia's 2.8 million people live in the capital, but business trips take embassy employees to the Gobi Desert, mining towns, the ethnic Kazakh region in the far west and provincial trading centers. Many in the countryside continue to lead a nomadic existence, but even herders are connecting with the outside world. It is not unusual to see a *ger* (a round tent used as a portable home) on a broad, empty steppe with a satellite dish, outside the door, powered by a solar panel.

More than 100 Peace Corps volunteers work in communities across Mongolia. While most teach English,

AT A GLANCE: MONGOLIA



Capital

Ulaanbaatar

Per capita income

\$2,000

Total area

1,564,116 square kilometers

Population below poverty line

36.1 percent

Approximate size

Slightly smaller than Alaska

Import commodities

Machinery, fuel, automobiles, food products and industrial goods

Government

Mixed parliamentary/presidential

Import partners

Russia (34.5 percent), China (27.4 percent) and Japan (7.1 percent)

Independence

July 11, 1921 (from China)

Export commodities

Copper, apparel, livestock, cashmere and wool

Population

2.95 million

Export partners

China (48.1 percent), United States (14.2 percent) and Canada (11.6 percent)

Ethnic groups

Mongol (mostly Khalkha) and Turkic (mostly Kazakh)

Languages

Khalkha Mongol, Turkic and Russian

Internet country code

.mn

Currency

Togrog/tugrik (MNT)

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook 2007

others are engaged in health education and other areas, and are active on projects ranging from combating trafficking in persons to setting up a tourism Web site.

The Mongolian government declared English the second official language in 2004. The embassy's Public Affairs Section provides scholarships to high school students for after-school English classes. Until the schools graduate a generation of English speakers, most embassy employees find it helpful to learn some Mongolian through the Foreign Service Institute or the post language program to shop and get around town.

Until 2002, embassy staffers lived mainly in a Communist-era apartment block near the chancery affectionately known as "Faulty Towers." Today, almost all staff members live in Czech-designed townhouses or apartments in a modern, gated housing compound 15 minutes from the embassy.

In warmer months, children ride bicycles and use the compound's playground equipment. They play in the community room during the winter. The 200-student International School of Ulaanbaatar is building a new campus nearby that will open in September.

Ulaanbaatar has a surprising variety of restaurants—American, French, Italian, Indian, Chinese and Korean—as well as pizza delivery.



PHOTOGRAPHS: U.S. EMBASSY IN ULAANBAATAR



Opposite page top: Ambassador Mark C. Minton, left, participates in a 4-year-old child's first hair cutting ceremony with a Peace Corps volunteer's host family. Bottom: Ambassador Minton reviews an honor guard before his credentialing ceremony in September 2006. Above: About 80 kilometers northeast of Ulaanbaatar, Terelj National Park's 1.2 million acres are inhabited by a few nomads and farmers and several species of protected animals. Left: Recreational opportunities abound, like this rafting trip on the Tuul River.

Left: Following an awards ceremony, General Services Officer Dale Lawton, center, joins some of the Locally Employed staff, dressed in traditional clothing, to note the Lunar New Year. Below: USAID advisers to Zavhan Aimag visited sites for Gobi II and judicial reform projects. Opposite page top: One of the local voters in the September 2006 by-election in Khuvsgul Province parked his transportation just outside the polling station. Bottom: Convoy training exercises were intense during Exercise Khaan Quest in 2006.





The real attraction of Mongolia, though, is the scenery. The Tuul River is a short distance from the housing compound and convenient for picnics. On the weekends, SUVs are the vehicle of choice to navigate potholes and off-road segments of trips to the countryside. Landscapes range from rocky mountain ranges to broad plains and sand dunes.

An hour and a half from Ulaanbaatar, Terelj National Park is a popular outing. It features a rare prehistoric species of wild horse and Neolithic deer stones: 3,000-year-old carved stone plinths etched with pictures of deer.

Mongolians and foreign tourists alike throng Buddhist monasteries from the Tibetan tradition in scenic settings like the former Mongol Empire capital of Karakorum. Under an embassy cultural preservation grant, a nongovernmental organization is documenting monasteries that were destroyed during the socialist period.

There aren't many other posts in the world where you can see the sun rising on a vast, serene horizon as untended horses amble by, then load up the car for the trip back to another busy week at the office. ■

Patrick J. Freeman is chief of the Economic and Political Section and Alexei Kral is public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar.



By Any Other Name



PHOTOGRAPHS: (ABOVE); CORBIS; (OPPOSITE PAGE); U.S. EMBASSY IN GUANGZHOU

When newly arrived Consul General Robert Goldberg moved into his home in Guangzhou, China, last summer, he noticed that all the other houses in the area had plaques on the front gates with three-character Chinese names. Most of the names were of an auspicious nature that suggested that those who lived inside dwelt in tranquil harmony with nature or had achieved an exalted status.

While not certain that these qualities were necessarily appropriate for the consul general's residence, Goldberg thought employees could come up with a name befitting America's presence in Guangzhou. His "Name the CGR" contest turned out to be extremely popular with both Chinese and American employees.

Americans were often mystified by the names suggested by Locally Employed staff—and vice-versa. For instance, the Chinese Qu Yu Ju 去愚居—"a place of reducing stupidity"—was meant to convey humbleness and intelligence and to indicate that Americans and Chinese were intent on eliminating mutual misunderstanding.

Su Fang Yuan 溯芳源—"walking or floating in a fragrant pond area"—gave a sense of harmony, beauty and freshness and seemed to

Zhu Jin Ta 珠金塔, or "Pearl Gold Tower," which incorporated the "pearl" of the Pearl River and the "gold" of Goldberg, a Foreign Service National employee quickly pointed out that that name in Cantonese was a homonym for the urn where a deceased person's ashes are kept. He further suggested that any name incorporating the Chinese word for pearl should be avoided, since it was a homonym for pig and might be misinterpreted.

Some of the suggestions were intentionally humorous—the Chinese equivalent of "Bob's Place" or "McDonald's"—while others sounded nice in both Chinese and English. For instance, Ya Mei Ge 雅美阁 not only means "elegant beauty residence," but also sounds like the word "America."

RESIDENCE'S NEW NAME HONORS THE 'FLOWERY FLAG' BY KATHY GELNER

describe the environment of the island in the Pearl River where the residence is located. Even more important, the words have the same pronunciation as another phrase that would have resonance for those interested in rule-of-law matters. Another nomination—Ting Yue Ju 听月居, or "residence where you can hear the moon"—evoked a place so peaceful that the only "noise" is moonlight.

Americans found out that a name that sounds fine in Mandarin Chinese might not be acceptable when spoken in the local Cantonese dialect. For instance, when an American suggested the name

Some entries were appropriate to the consulate's location. "Hai Rui House" 海瑞居 honors famous local official Hai Rui of the Ming Dynasty, whose name has come to be synonymous with honesty and integrity in office.

After receiving about thirty entries, Consul General Goldberg narrowed the field to five and asked each employee to cast a single vote. (Some were better at "one person, one vote" than others.)

My entry, Hua Qi Yu 花旗寓, which means "Flowery Flag Residence," was the winner. This name is especially appropriate for the CG's residence in Guangzhou because "Flowery Flag Country" was the first name given to the newly independent United States by people in Canton (now known as Guangzhou). They came up with this name after seeing the Stars and Stripes flying on the *Empress of China*, the first American ship to sail into a Chinese port. With Captain John Green at the helm, the *Empress* arrived in Huangpu, 12 miles south of Canton, on August 28, 1784.

Many pieces of early Canton export-ware polychrome porcelain have pictures of ships or trading houses in the harbor in Canton flying the banners of the countries that traded there, including the "Flowery Flag." The State Department diplomatic reception rooms have several good examples of this type of Canton porcelain.

Come visit the "Flowery Flag Residence," which is the home of all Americans in Canton. ■



Consul General Robert Goldberg and the author stand next to the "Flowery Flag Residence" plaque.

The author is chief of the American Citizen Services and Adoption Units in Guangzhou.





Today, we celebrate the courage of 10 extraordinary women.... They're from nearly every region of the world, women who not only make their fellow citizens proud but who are the international defenders of what President Bush has called the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity.

—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, March 7, 2007

Of Human Dignity

In celebration of International Women's Day 2007, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice established the annual Award for International Women of Courage. The award program, administered by the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, recognizes women around the globe who have shown exceptional courage and leadership.

On March 7, 2007, the Secretary of State paid tribute to 10 Women of Courage in an awards ceremony at the State Depart-

ment. Representing Afghanistan, Argentina, Indonesia, Iraq, Latvia, Maldives, Saudi Arabia and Zimbabwe, the honorees are transforming their societies and serve as inspiration to the international community. They are among more than 90 exceptional women of courage who were nominated by U.S. embassies worldwide for their diverse contributions to freedom, justice, peace and equality.

"These women are true leaders in their respective communities," said Andrea

Bottner, senior coordinator for international women's issues. "Though their backgrounds are diverse, they share a common trait of courage and a willingness to demand more from society on behalf of women everywhere."

At the awards presentation, Secretary Rice congratulated the women for their "dedication, commitment and passion." She said their work is transforming societies and serving as an inspiration to the international community.

Secretary Rice Confers the First International Women of Courage Awards *By Orna Blum*



The 2007 International Women of Courage gather around Secretary Condoleezza Rice, center: from left, Jennifer Williams, Dr. Siti Musdah Mulia, Dr. Samia al-Amoudi, Mariya Ahmed Didi, Susana Trimarco de Verón, Mary Akrami, Aziza Siddiqui, Dr. Sundus Abbas and Shatha Abdul Razzak Abbousi. Not pictured is Ilze Jaunalksne.

2007 Women of Courage

Dr. Siti Musdah Mulia of Indonesia is the first woman to earn a Ph.D. in Islamic thought from the State Islamic University. A prominent Muslim feminist, Dr. Mulia has used her extensive knowledge of the Quran and hadiths to advocate for women's rights. She was part of a team of experts that produced a Counter Legal Draft of Indonesia's Islamic legal code. Team recommendations included prohibiting child marriage and allowing interfaith marriage. In the face of violent protests, the Minister of Religious Affairs canceled the project. Though faced with

death threats and condemnation, Dr. Mulia continues to educate Indonesian women about their rights.

Jennifer Williams is the founder and inspirational leader of WOZA—Women of Zimbabwe Arise—one of the most active civil society organizations in protesting government abuses in Zimbabwe. Ms. Williams has suffered arrest, harassment, physical abuse and death threats, but remains undeterred. By uniting women of all races and ethnic



backgrounds in Zimbabwe to advocate for issues directly affecting them, she has brought social, economic and political issues to national attention.

Ilze Jaunalksne

is a journalist and anchor of Latvia's top current affairs TV program, "DeFacto." She is a trailblazer in the fight against political corruption in Latvia. In March 2006, Ms. Jaunalksne broke the story of a vote-buying scandal involving prominent national political leaders from several parties. Her report led to the indictment of several high-ranking political figures. In the face of harassment by public figures attempting to discredit her and, by extension, her work, Ms. Jaunalksne took the government to court and sued for defamation of character. Her case was the first of its kind in Latvia.

Dr. Samia al-Amoudi

is an obstetrician-gynecologist and former vice dean of the College of Medicine and Allied Science at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She diagnosed her own breast cancer at a very advanced stage in March 2006 and struggled to get confirmation of the diagnosis and treatment options—despite her own medical position. Dr. Al-Amoudi was the first Saudi to share her personal battle with this disease, breaking the silence to speak out about its impact and raising public awareness for Saudi women and families across the kingdom and throughout the region.

Mariya Ahmed Didi

is one of six women in the 50-member parliament of Maldives, and one of only two elected women (the other four were appointed by the president). Ms. Didi organized the first-ever women's rights rally in Maldives in March 2006, in

response to plainclothes police arresting a female activist at her home late at night. Ms. Didi has faced physical harassment and arrest, yet remains tireless and tenacious in her efforts to promote democracy and women's rights in a political scene dominated by men.

Susana Trimarco de Verón

has faced danger in her efforts to combat human trafficking and to find her daughter, who was kidnapped by traffickers in Argentina. Desperate to find her missing daughter, Ms. Trimarco put herself in dangerous situations, disguised as a prostitute, trolling bars and alleys in search of anyone who might know her daughter's whereabouts. Despite false leads and death threats, she has uncovered evidence of trafficking networks throughout the country. Thanks to Ms. Trimarco's work, human trafficking is now gaining public and government attention in Argentina, and victims are being encouraged to report the crime.

Mary Akrami

is the director of the Afghan Women Skills Development Center, a women's shelter in Kabul, Afghanistan. Women come to the shelter to escape domestic violence or forced marriages. Shelter staff members provide legal advice, literacy classes, psychological counseling and basic skills training. Under Ms. Akrami's leadership, several women at the shelter have made the virtually unprecedented move of denouncing their abusers publicly and filing court cases against them. Notwithstanding threats she has received, Ms. Akrami refuses to be intimidated and remains dedicated to her work.

Aziza Siddiqui

is women's rights coordinator with Action Aid, an Afghan nongovernmental organi-

zation. She travels into Afghanistan's greatly underserved countryside to conduct firsthand research on the condition of rural women. Despite personal threats against her for her groundbreaking research on gender, Ms. Siddiqui forges ahead with her investigation into the lives of women around the country and uses that information as a platform to draw attention to the needs of women in Afghanistan.

Dr. Sundus Abbas

is the executive director of the Women's Leadership Institute in Baghdad and an activist for women's rights in Iraq. Despite several obstacles, she has worked tirelessly to improve the capacity of Iraqi women to become involved in the Iraqi political process; to play greater roles within their political parties; to take part in local and national politics, the constitutional drafting and amending process and in national reconciliation; and conflict resolution efforts.

Shatha Abdul Razzak Abbousi

is an Iraqi Islamic Party member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, where she also sits on the Human Rights Committee. Ms. Abbousi is a prominent Iraqi activist for reconciliation and for women's rights and a member of The Pledge for Iraq, a women's rights activist group. Through her work both within and outside parliament, she has courageously fought for women's rights and has set an example for young Iraqi women who are interested in taking an active role in their nation's political process. ■

The author is a Foreign Affairs officer in the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues.

Make Your Move

PILOT PROGRAM GIVES A TASTE OF CAREER DIVERSITY

BY PAUL N. LAWRENCE

The implementation of the pilot Civil Service Mid-Level Rotation Program represents an exciting new career development opportunity for Civil Service employees. While Foreign Service colleagues regularly rotate among assignments throughout their career, similar career mobility opportunities do not formally exist within the Civil Service.

The Bureau of Human Resource Management's deputy assistant secretary, Linda Tagliatela, and the Foggy Bottom Society recognized the need for such a program to expand individual job knowledge, increase networking relationships and enhance personal and professional growth.

The pilot Civil Service Mid-Level Rotational Program was designed to provide developmental assignments for employees at the GS-12 and GS-13 grade levels, specific to Foreign Affairs officers or their equivalents. The underlying philosophy was to develop a culturally diverse group of highly qualified visionary and strategically-thinking individuals as future Department leaders. Though a one-year developmental assignment, participants would gain a broader understanding of the State mission through assignments that cross Department organizational lines and gain additional knowledge and experience of major functions and the interrelatedness of the agency components.

SELECT GROUP

The program was designed to exchange positions within the pool of selected candidates. The process was facilitated through a bidding-type activity and final Review Board assignment. The resulting candidates represent a select group. In addition to impressive resumes and individual accomplishments, each of the candidates was recommended based on past performance and future potential. A senior-level board of executives competitively evaluated and selected those candidates who best fit the program criteria.

Getting the program up and running had its growing pains. A steep learning curve affected participants, managers, offices and bureaus. Portfolios and responsibilities had to be shifted. Computer access and logons had to be adjusted. Program managers had to consider individual and unit preferences, academic backgrounds and experiences, career aspirations and even current security clearances. It took a lot of communication, negotiation and accommodation to make it all come together.

As the program sponsor, Director General George Staples launched the program in February. He welcomed the Initial Seven—Tijen Aybar, Stuart Denyer, Catherine Kuchta-Heilbing, Barbara Quirk, Mary Ellen Sariti, Jonathan Thompson and Rachel Waldstein—as inaugural pilots for the ambitious program. Ambassador Staples stressed the need for the Department's future leaders to be able to adapt, lead change, manage a multi-cultural workforce and achieve results.

NEW GROUND

He noted that each participant was breaking new ground for the Department. Along with their managers, the group exchanged laughter over the "chessboard" nature of the transition. Conversations and logistics were under way to transfer portfolios and responsibilities. Participants were getting to know each other as well as their new supervisors. They studied new work requirements, new expectations and perhaps even a new commute or work schedule. Candidates experienced the full range of emotions inherent in starting a new job—from excitement, enthusiasm and an adrenaline rush to panic, apprehension and the proverbial white-knuckle "What have I got myself into?"

Ambassador Staples challenged the group to be proactive and entrepreneurial and to bring their past work experience and expertise to the new assignment. He acknowledged that change can be both exciting and scary, but also noted the unique opportunity the program provided to expand their professional network and create a whole new set of first impressions.

The Director General expressed confidence in their ability. He expressed hope that the success of the pilot program would lead to the establishment and expansion of similar programs.

The candidates also spent a day of training at the Foreign Service Institute. Dr. Ruth Whiteside, director of the Institute, welcomed the group to the center and expressed her support for the program and their individual career development. FSI's Leadership School, represented by Alyce Hill, Chris Powers and Joan Yen, partnered with the Bureau of Human Resources to provide a course of instruction preparatory to the new assignments.

The author is chief of career development in the Office of Civil Service Personnel.



HELLO
my name is

Outside the Comfort Zone

ROTATING FROM REFUGEES AND MIGRATION TO EAST ASIA BUSINESS AFFAIRS **BY JONATHAN THOMPSON**

I first considered a career at the State Department while pursuing an undergraduate degree in political science. I continued to entertain the idea in the years that followed. Then, as my graduate studies came to a close, the idea blossomed into a firm desire.

I was determined to land a job at State, and in the fall of 1999, I was hired by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. I didn't know much about refugees, but I was willing and eager to learn. I soon discovered how fascinating and challenging PRM issues were.

For the next seven-plus years, I helped manage PRM's relationship with its largest partner—the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. UNHCR has offices in approximately 120 countries, with a mandate to protect and provide solutions for the millions of refugees worldwide. Because of UNHCR's critical role in addressing refugee needs, the U.S. government's success in meeting its humanitarian objectives was closely tied to the UN agency's success. The United States provides the UN refugee agency with \$300 million or more a year to carry out its work. It was my responsibility, as well as that of many others in PRM, to ensure that UNHCR performed well.

The work was interesting, challenging and rewarding. Yet, after serving in the same position for several years, I started looking to broaden my experience. Since I enjoyed my job, I took a casual approach to hunting and was selective in the positions I considered. I pursued a couple of particularly interesting openings in PRM and, on occasion, considered positions outside the bureau.

Opportunity Knocks

Then, last fall, my interest was piqued by an advertisement for the pilot Civil Service

Mid-Level Rotational Program. The program would allow me to gain new experience, knowledge, contacts and maybe even new skills; it would also provide me the challenge of working on new U.S. foreign policy priorities without the risk of permanently severing ties with the bureau, colleagues and work I enjoyed.

I pursued the opportunity. Fortunately, my supervisor and bureau supported the idea. I was accepted into the program, but I still had to overcome one of the biggest hurdles—land a rotational assignment in which I was interested.

I had envisioned fairly broad participation in the program by the Department's bureaus and assumed that some 20 or 30 officers would be selected for the pilot. This would provide candidates with many interesting opportunities. However, far fewer bureaus and officers decided to participate.

While disappointed, I nonetheless pressed on with the thought that things would work out as long as a handful of the positions were interesting.

Fortunately, a number of the assignments did sound intriguing and continued to interest me after I spoke to the officers rotating out of the positions, as well as to their supervisors. Conversations with other

candidates led me to the realization that we each had our own reasons

for participating in the pilot program. My objective was to have an experience fairly different from my assignment in PRM, which would help broaden my understanding and experience in the foreign policy arena and within the Department.

After exploring the positions that interested me, I submitted my top three choices. Candidates were assured that every effort would be made to accommodate their preferences. I remained concerned but hopeful, and determined that I would need to be selected for one of my top choices if I was to continue.

Top Choice

I was excited—and relieved—when I was informed that I had been selected for my top choice, Advisor for East Asia in the Office of Commercial and Business Affairs in the Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs. I saw the assignment as an opportunity to expand my existing knowledge of Japan and U.S. economic interests overseas, especially since I had lived in Japan. I also expected to gain experience and understanding of U.S. business interests in the other East Asian countries.

I have not been disappointed. My first couple of months in CBA have been very interesting. I still face a steep learning curve, but I anticipated stepping out of my comfort zone when I decided to participate in the program. Fortunately, my new colleagues in EEB and especially in CBA have been great to work with. I am gradually getting up to speed on the issues of the office and hope by the end of the rotation to have contributed in a very significant way to the work of EEB.

The author is currently serving as a Foreign Affairs officer in the Office of Commercial Business Affairs.



The first class of the pilot Civil Service Mid-Level Rotation Program includes, from left, Catherine Kuchta-Helbling, Rachel Waldstein, Mary Ellen Sariti, Jonathan Thompson, Tijan Aybar and Stuart Denyer. Class member Barbara Quirk is not shown.

Connecting the Dots

ROTATING FROM CULTURAL AFFAIRS TO DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR **BY RACHEL WALDSTEIN**

After seven years and two jobs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, I was ready to broaden my horizons, learn about other aspects of the Department and either brush up on skills I hadn't used in a while or learn new ones. The pilot Civil Service Mid-Level Rotational Program offered a way to explore new areas, with the safety of knowing I would come back to ECA afterward. It was only one year—if I liked my rotation assignment, great, and if it turned out not to be a good fit, how much damage could I do in 12 months?

At ECA, we tend to interact only with the regional Public Diplomacy offices. And since ECA is located in SA-44, across town from the Harry S Truman building, we often feel physically isolated. My yearlong assignment in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor is about as close to the action as you can get—on the 7th floor of Main State. I haven't exactly bumped into the Secretary in the hallway, but the proximity to senior-level decision makers makes for a palpably more charged atmosphere than at SA-44.

After just a month in my new assignment, my experience at DRL has already helped me connect the dots between ECA's programs and the work of other bureaus. For example, the 2006 DRL publication *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy* cited numerous ECA exchanges, including a University Partnerships Program in Uzbekistan that promoted religious tolerance through development of a curriculum on comparative religious studies and a Fulbright conference in Turkmenistan that focused on the rule of law and criminal justice.

While the Rotational Program affords me the professional development opportunity I was seeking, it also gives me a chance to inform others about ECA, a bureau at times overlooked in the Department. Many State employees have never heard of EducationUSA, the program to which I devoted four years. Check out www.educationusa.state.gov to learn more about that program.

Although the Rotational Program is structured so that participants return to

their home offices at the end of the cycle, the networking opportunities could perhaps open doors later if I want to make a more permanent change. Plus, in addition to the on-the-job training of working in my new bureau, the program—and a supportive supervisor in DRL—encourages me to take courses at FSI in areas of professional interest, not just those pertaining to the work I am doing this year.

Concerns

Naturally, I had several concerns about participating in the program. My assignment for the year depended on who else applied. What if none of the positions in the pool appealed to me, or what if several applicants wanted the same position? However, the program coordinators did an excellent job of matching all of us to jobs in which we had at least some interest and background.

ECA's focus on exchange programs and grants is specialized, so I was also concerned about whether my knowledge and skills would be transferable to the work of other bureaus. Still, writing and critical thinking skills are needed in both jobs, and the bureau where I am doing my rotation also manages grants. My new DRL colleagues were eager to utilize my grants management expertise.

The rotational program would be a new adventure for me as a participant, but what would it mean for my supervisor and colleagues in both my home office and my new office? Would people be supportive? Would my ECA co-workers be annoyed at having to train my replacement? What if that person didn't do a good job—I might have to pick up the pieces when I returned to my home office. And how would people in my new office see me—as a “temp,” only there to observe, or as a functioning, contributing member of the team?

My last major concern goes to the heart of the program's purpose: I wanted to stretch myself intellectually, but worried about going back to rookie status in a new office. The interns in my new office are experts on human rights compared to me

at this moment. And I did make my share of mistakes during my first week. I took water from the “wrong” watercooler, and I sent a document for clearances in the wrong order. Fortunately, no diplomatic crises resulted, and I realized it was okay to make mistakes.

Initial Experiences

Starting at DRL as the annual Human Rights Report was about to be released was like being dropped into the lions' den just in time for dessert. Six months or more of hard work were about to culminate in a whirlwind period of printing deadlines, high-level announcements of publication, press briefings and Hill testimony.

On my second day, I observed a “murder board,” a goulish nickname for the meeting at which DRL staffers prepare the Assistant Secretary to answer questions about the report from the media and members of Congress. Out of that came assignments to write extra briefing papers on issues for which I had little or no background. I cobbled together information from existing documents, and in the clearance process other people made sure the papers were accurate and useful.

My new colleagues are incredibly collegial, always willing to help and assure me that they went through the same period of dazed confusion I am now experiencing. After one month, I can see that the pieces are beginning to fall into place, but there is definitely a steep learning curve to this job. Still, as a career counselor said to me the other day, if it were easy, this wouldn't be a learning experience.

As the first “class” of the Civil Service Mid-level Rotational Program, we seven knew we would be guinea pigs. There were definitely hitches and delays in getting the program up and running. We hope our positive experiences will encourage more people to apply next year. And we really hope more bureaus, especially regional bureaus, will encourage their staff to apply. It may be hard for managers to think about losing their employees for a year, but those employees will come back reenergized and with new knowledge that will surely benefit the rest of the team. ■

The author is currently serving as a Foreign Affairs officer in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.



From left, Training Officer Rob Hansgen, Executive Director Peggy Philbin, Chief of Management and Planning Ana Larkin and Acting Chief of Financial Management Amelia Sligh plan their work.

A/EX

BETTER DIPLOMACY THROUGH SHARED SERVICES

BY ANA V. LARKIN

“Transformational diplomacy” is Secretary Rice’s vision that is leading the Department into the 21st century. The Bureau of Administration Executive Office is making strides to meet this challenge through a new delivery model of administrative services—shared services. Shared services combine the best features of a centralized model—efficiency and standardization—with a strong commitment to customer service and continuous improvement. The result is a high-performing and -quality support organization focused on the customer’s needs.

A/EX began providing shared services in 2004 when it joined with the Bureau of Oceans and International Environment and Scientific Affairs and Democracy, Human Rights and Labor to provide human resources support. In 2005, the Office of the Inspector General cited these shared services as a best practice,

noting that they eliminated costly duplication and increased efficiency while improving service.

A/EX benchmarked with private sector companies and government agencies currently using the shared services model and added the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization to its list of customers in early 2006. In October 2006, A/EX assumed most of Information Resources Management’s executive office functions, doubling the number of customers it supports from 2,500 to 4,500. At the same time, IRM began its desktop consolidation by taking over control of much of the A Bureau’s information technology infrastructure and support.

Shared services falls in line with Under Secretary for Management Henrietta Fore’s goal of providing world-class services to the Department’s global customers. Bureau of Administration Execu-

tive Director Peggy Philbin sees a win-win situation for bureaus and their customers.

“By allowing each bureau to focus on our core competencies, we can leverage our expertise while eliminating areas which consume resources but do not enhance our respective missions,” says Philbin. “We continue to build a culture where both customer service and efficiency can coexist to provide valuable services. The array of services offered by A/EX is extensive and meeting the changing demands around us is challenging, but we are proud of our success stories.”

A/EX now offers several major services.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Division provides a comprehensive portfolio of services, including staffing and recruitment, retirement, employee benefits, awards and employee relations. HRD has been designated as one of five candidate Centers of Excellence by the Director General. The DG’s initiative will consolidate many HR functions within a smaller number of high-performing bureaus, and, for the first time, has established standardized metrics and benchmarks against which each COE must perform.

Full delegation of authority comes with the COE designation, which allowed A/EX to assume HR responsibility for four bureaus and two offices. HRD continues to help lead the Department COE initiative in developing a new approach to human resources management delivery.

INFORMATION RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

As you walk down the Harry S Truman building hallways, the handiwork of A/EX’s Information Resources Management Division is visible on every TV, through BNET’s “Diplomacy

At a Glance

Office name

Bureau of Administration Executive Office

Symbol

A/EX

Office Director

Peggy Philbin

Staff size

145

Office Location

SA-27, Arlington, VA

Web site(s)

<http://www.a.state.gov>

<http://ssc.a.state.gov>

<http://bnet.state.gov>

<http://pts.state.sgov.gov> (available only through a ClassNet account)

The Procurement and Administrative Services Division does a big job with a small staff: from left, Robert L. Morgan, Clarence Cunningham, Chief Tammy Journet, JoeAnne Myers, John S. Young, Lisa Rowe, Melvern Favors, Brian A. Robinson, Karen Smith-Morgan, Leia Mason, Jackie M. Jones and Margaret Baltimore.





Executive Director Peggy Philbin and Acting Chief of the Information Management Division Duke Kelly share a moment at Customer Appreciation Day.

Channel.” Reaching most domestic sites and 185 overseas posts, BNET keeps customers up to date on breaking news and Department events. With video on demand and a large library of productions, customers are plugged in at all times. During the past year, the division created two key Bureau Web sites: the A Bureau page at www.a.state.gov and a new Presidential travel Web site.

IRM also provides configuration management, technology studies, workflow and organizational analyses, project planning and management and document digitizing solutions. IRM successfully deployed more than 40 Web sites within the Department on OpenNet Plus, Classnet and Extranet.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Financial Management Division manages more than \$470 million in direct and reimbursement funds, the Department’s Working Capital Fund, budget execution services for IRM and financial management services for the A Bureau. Through its oversight of the Working Capital Fund, FMD supports the Department’s 22 cost centers, including mail and pouch service, printing services, transportation, warehousing, language services and fleet management.

The Working Capital Fund’s primary objective is to foster cost consciousness and efficiency for users and service providers. The

fund includes more than 200 authorized positions and an annual budget of more than \$300 million.

PROCUREMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In the complex world of procurement, it helps to have an expert at a manager’s side to guide and interpret the many requirements. The Procurement and Administrative Services Division provides just that, offering pre- and post-award procurement support to IRM program offices and working closely with the Office of Acquisitions Management. PAS assists offices in writing acquisition plans, statements of work and independent government cost estimates, and in developing source selection criteria for the procurement of supplies and services.

This division provides purchase card oversight for the A and IRM purchase card programs. Finally, it ensures cost-effective and efficient use of resources in support of facilities and space management, mail rooms, property management, general support services, vehicles and parking.

MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

The Management and Planning Division develops submissions for the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act and the Department’s Domestic Staffing Model for A and its customer bureaus. These bureaus and offices also count on the training staff to

ensure continuous career development and training to develop a highly skilled workforce.

The division coordinates the preparation of A's performance planning documents, performs liaison activities with the Office of the Inspector General and supports the A Bureau domestic emergency preparedness program. The travel staff supports A Bureau employee travel and IRM employees' travel associated with training.

"In addition to shared services, A/EX has the honor of counting the President of the United States, the Vice President and the First Lady as our customers," says Philbin.

The Presidential Travel Support Division plans, coordinates and executes all administrative and logistical aspects related to overseas missions and travel of the President and Vice President and their spouses. In the course of a single year, PTS supports more than 80 White House-directed missions. The Division recently took over logistical and administrative oversight of Public Diplomacy funds and White House press corps reimbursements associated with international travel by the President, Vice President and First Lady.

Within the next year, A/EX plans to move toward tiered service delivery, which will allow for quicker, more efficient and increasingly standardized levels of service.

"Our customers can look forward to many powerful tools being made available to assist them in getting the answers they need," says Deputy Executive Director Kathleen Zweig.

Whether filling mission critical positions, funding daily operations, serving the President in his travels around the world, broadcasting key programs to posts worldwide or supporting training, A/EX touches the Department of State family. Because of what we do behind the scenes, our people make a profound difference in what others accomplish on the world stage. ■

The author is the chief of the Management and Planning Division, A/EX.



Above: HR's Sharyn Jordan, left, and Renee Hunter check files in the secure file room. Below: Financial Management Division's Lynn Mims-Jones, left, and Debbie P. Jones consult on budget matters.



Walk on the Wild Side

RESCUED CHEETAH
BECOMES
ENVIRONMENTAL
AMBASSADOR

**BY KIMBERLY
FLOWERS**

Sheba suffered from a broken leg and severe nutritional problems, but is now in good health.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (ABOVE) DR. KEVIN RUSHING; (OPPOSITE PAGE) DEBORAH SINGISER

A young Ethiopian cheetah named Sheba is making a significant impact on his country, thanks to the commitment and compassion of a U.S. embassy couple.

The wild animal, found in poor condition in illegal captivity in a private home not far from Addis Ababa, was nursed back to health by Kevin A. Rushing, the U.S. Agency for International Development's deputy mission director, and his spouse, Deborah Singiser. Their efforts have renewed interest within Ethiopia to halt illegal trafficking of endangered animals.

Now in good health, Sheba is the country's first environmental education ambassador for Omo National Park, demonstrating that endangered animals are not a threat to local livestock but a national treasure to be protected.

When Ethiopian government officials rescued Sheba in July 2006, he suffered from a broken leg and nutritional problems due to neglect and abuse by his illegal owners. After hearing about the orphaned cheetah

cub, former U.S. Ambassador Vicki Huddleston offered to help with his rehabilitation. The cheetah was taken to the home of Dr. Rushing, a trained veterinarian, for proper care and treatment.

Donated Services

"My experience in zoological medicine has given me tremendous opportunities to help endangered animals across the world, while still serving as a Foreign Service officer," Dr. Rushing said. He has donated his veterinary services throughout his 27-year career with USAID.

While serving in the Philippines, Dr. Rushing helped raise three Siberian tiger cubs, a Bengal tiger cub and an African lion cub in his home. In Cambodia, he provided veterinary services to an international non-governmental organization, WILDAID, to help stop the illegal trafficking of endangered species such as elephants and tigers.

Dr. Rushing and Ms. Singiser, who also works for USAID, cared for Sheba in Addis Ababa for six months,

ensuring that he received a nutritious diet and appropriate medication. As a cub, the cheetah peacefully played with their two children, 18-month-old Robin and 3-year-old Evelyn Ann, and eventually became friends with local helpers.

As Sheba got stronger and his health improved, it became clear that a residential backyard was not the ideal space for a growing wild animal and that a long-term solution was needed. The Rushing-Singiser family organized an informal dinner at their home with interested stakeholders—including Ethiopian wildlife experts, international and local NGOs, and other concerned U.S. embassy personnel—to discuss Sheba's future and ways to address the broader issue of endangered animals in captivity.

That dinner conversation led to the first-ever consultative meeting on captive wild animals, sponsored primarily by USAID, held in Addis Ababa in December 2006, to discuss ways to halt the illegal practice of capturing, holding and selling wildlife in Ethiopia. U.S. Ambassador



Dr. Kevin Rushing uses his veterinary skills to care for a wild cheetah rescued from illegal captivity.



The Rushing-Singiser family: Dr. Kevin Rushing, spouse Deborah Singiser, son Robin and daughter Evelyn Ann—and Sheba.

Donald Yamamoto delivered opening remarks and continues to provide his personal and professional support to the issue.

The consultative meeting received local press coverage and brought attention to the increase in captive wild animals in Ethiopia and the desire of local NGOs to reverse this trend.

“I am confident that our joint effort will be a step forward in finding a solution to the captive animal problem in Ethiopia,” Ethiopian Wildlife Association President Dr. Assefa Mebrate said.

Ambassador Sheba

Meanwhile, Sheba gained attention from African Parks PLC, a Dutch-based wildlife foundation working throughout Africa. African Parks, which manages Omo National Park in southwestern Ethiopia, has a community partnership program to teach the various ethnic groups living around the park that wild animals can coexist with domesticated cattle, sheep and goats that use the same grazing lands and watering holes. When African Parks’ staff met Sheba, they saw the potential to use him to communicate their message to local communities.

Wildlife education using cheetahs has successfully changed attitudes toward the environment in other African countries, such as

Namibia and South Africa, but it is a new concept in Ethiopia. Vanessa Bouwer, a regional wildlife expert who works with De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Centre in South Africa, said Sheba, with his gentle and responsive temperament, would make a wonderful ambassador for his species.

After receiving support from the Ethiopian Wildlife Department, African Parks submitted a proposal to USAID to use Sheba as an environmental education ambassador. A USAID grant was awarded to African Parks to cover the cheetah’s transportation, shelter, medicine and food for the next year in his new home. Sheba joined Omo National Park on January 7.

The efforts of Dr. Rushing and Ms. Singiser not only saved Sheba’s life, but also sparked public interest, involvement and commitment to stopping illegal trafficking of endangered animals in Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, Ethiopians near Omo National Park are learning about Sheba and the importance of protecting the cheetah in the wild for future generations to enjoy. ■

The author is a development outreach and communications officer with USAID in Ethiopia.

STATE OF THE ARTS

BY JOHN BENTEL

Moscow Orchestra Commemorates U.S.-Russia Relations

The Foreign Affairs Recreation Association and the State of the Arts Cultural Series recently presented concerts featuring the vocal talents of the Department's own choral ensemble, The T-Tones, and the orchestral talents of The Moscow Chamber Orchestra.

The T-Tones originated in the mid 1990s to sing for Arms Control and Disarmament Agency holiday celebrations. The group has expanded to include Civil Service and Foreign Service personnel, both

active and retired, from bureaus throughout the Department.

Their concert "Billings, P.D.Q. Bach, Mozart, and a Bit o' the Irish" helped prepare the audience for St. Patrick's Day. Their fine harmony is a tribute to their leader, Kathryn Schultz.

State of the Arts joined forces with the Secretary's Open Forum to present the dynamic Moscow Chamber Orchestra in commemoration of 200 years of U.S.-Russia diplomatic relations and in memory of Harry Orbelian, founder and president of

the San Francisco Global Trade Council. His son, Constantine Orbelian, has held the position of music director and conductor of the orchestra since 1991 and has brought it into a new era of international activity and acclaim.

The orchestra began with a rousing selection of Edvard Grieg's *Holberg Suite, Prelude, Aria and Rigaudon*. Gifted 19-year-old Andre Gugin played Mozart's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra E-Flat KV 449, Allegro* with great sensitivity. American

soprano Marnie Breckenridge provided a moving rendition of Rachmaninoff's *Vocalise* and followed with *Can't Help Loving Dat Man of Mine* from *Porgy and Bess*. Sensational violinist Ripsime Airapetyants offered a dazzling *Tsigunerweisen (Gypsy Airs)* for *Violin and Orchestra* by Pablo de Sarasate. As a goodwill gesture, the concertmaster performed *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. ■

The author is a computer specialist in the Executive Secretariat.



JUNE 06

Spirituals—Sam Brock, piano, and Natalie Carter, voice

JUNE 20

Piano Prodigies

JULY 11

Antonio Adams, dramatic tenor

JULY 25

Winner of the Young Artists International Piano Competition

AUG. 08

Renaissance Baroque Music—Countertop Quartet

AUG. 22

Barbara Dahnman, classical pianist

SEPT. 05

Music in the Parlor—Carol Weiss Riches, mezzo soprano

SEPT. 19

Second Annual Talent Show

Performances are on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium.

Vision Quest

PROTECT YOUR SIGHT
AGAINST EYE INJURIES
BY KATE BRADFORD

Ever wondered what would happen if you lost your sight? So much of our existence depends upon our ability to see the world around us. Vision is the most important sense for navigating through life. While many blind people lead happy, successful lives, sight is a precious ability which, if lost, alters one's existence drastically.

Eye injury is the second-leading cause of visual impairment after cataracts. According to Unite for Sight, a nonprofit organization founded to improve eye health and eliminate preventable blindness, approximately two million people in the United States sustained eye injuries that required medical treatment in 2001. Approximately 100,000 of these occurred as a result of sports or recreational activities. Experts estimate that more than 90 percent of these eye injuries were completely preventable, and more than 55 percent of eye injuries happen to people under the age of 25.

In certain professions, especially trades and manufacturing, eye injury risks are well-known and documented. OSHA requires training, safe work practices and the use of safety equipment and protective eyewear to prevent eye injuries in the workplace.

But what can you do about the risk of eye injury in your home and during recreational activity? Can you identify the greatest risks to your sight outside of work?

Based on U.S. Eye Injury Registry data from 1988 to 2000, 40 percent of serious eye injuries occur in the home, with another 13 percent occurring during sports and recreational activities. Risks to the eyes around the home include household chemicals, yard maintenance, workshop and tool parts, battery acid, fireworks and the unsupervised use of toys and games.

How can you protect those baby blues (or browns) from injury? Prevention is the key, and this is particularly important if you already have lost vision in one eye or have a degenerative condition that impacts your sight.

As a start, parents can set a good example for children by wearing protective eyewear when using power tools or mowing the lawn. Eyewear is specialized and must meet very specific standards. Safety glasses that meet American National Standards Institute Z87.1 standards provide the best protection; they have plastic or polycarbonate lenses and are designed to protect against impact and chemical splash.

Use eyewear that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials standard F803 for selected sports—racquet sports, baseball, basketball, women's lacrosse and field hockey. Other sports require specialized eyewear such as paintball, ASTM standard 1776; youth baseball batters and base runners, ASTM standard 659; and ice hockey, ASTM standard F513. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Ophthalmology strongly recommend that children wear protective eyewear when playing sports if there is a risk of eye injury.

Prevent Blindness America recommends the following strategies to guard against eye injuries in your home.

Protect children against eye injury risks by avoiding toys with sharp or rigid points, shafts, spikes, rods and dangerous edges as well as flying toys, projectile-firing toys and BB guns. These pose a danger to all children, particularly to those under five years of age.

Keep toys intended for older children away from younger children. Beware of items in playgrounds and play areas that pose potential eye hazards. Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Leave personal-use items such as cosmetics and toiletry products, kitchen utensils and desk supplies where they are not easily accessible to children.

Provide lights and handrails to improve safety on stairs and pad or cushion sharp corners and edges of furnishings and home fixtures. Protect eyes from chemical injuries by wearing chemical splash goggles or face shields when using hazardous solvents, cleaning products, fertilizers and pesticides.

Read and follow all manufacturer instructions and warning labels. Do not mix cleaning agents. Keep paints, pesticides, fertilizers and similar products properly stored in a secure area.

When doing yard work, inspect and remove debris from lawns before mowing and wear safety glasses or dust goggles to protect against flying particles. If you work with power tools or equipment, wear safety glasses any time there is a risk of generating dusts or debris.

Wear chemical protective goggles or a face shield to protect against battery acid during battery maintenance or servicing. Keep your tools in good condition. Damaged tools should be repaired or replaced.

Eye injuries also result from motor vehicle accidents. Always use occupant restraints such as infant and child safety seats, booster seats, safety belts and shoulder harnesses in cars.

Avoid using fireworks and go to the professional displays instead. There is no safe way for nonprofessionals to use fireworks, including sparklers. Using any type of fireworks is strongly discouraged because of the high numbers of eye injuries caused by these devices.

If you spend significant time outdoors, invest in a good pair of sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays to prevent radiation injury from the sun's ultraviolet light. Significant exposure to these UV rays can damage your retina and cornea and can cause cataracts or macular degeneration. The highest levels can be reflected from snow, sand and water, and damage can occur at high altitudes and low latitudes. UV radiation is highest during the day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Always wear special goggles when using a tanning bed.

For more information on protecting your sight, visit the following Web sites:

Prevent Blindness America
www.preventblindness.org

American Academy of Ophthalmology
www.aao.org

Unite for Sight
www.uniteforsight.org

University of Michigan Kellogg Eye Center
www.kellogg.umich.edu/patientcare/conditions/eye.injuries.html#home ■

The author is an industrial hygienist with the Safety, Health and Environmental Management Division.

William Walton Duffy II, 64, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 7. He lived in Oxford, Pa. He served in the Army and worked for several federal agencies, including the U.S. Information Agency. His overseas postings included Poland, Argentina and Uruguay. At the time of his death, he worked for the Department of Social Services in Cecil County, Md. He was a dedicated patient advocate for persons diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia.



Beverly S. Gerstein, 77, a retired Foreign Service Reserve officer, died April 9 in Scottsdale, Ariz. As a cultural presentation exchange officer for the Department and the U.S. Information Agency, she arranged exchanges of renowned performing artists and groups, including Paul Taylor, Martha Graham, Alvin Ailey, the National Theatre of the Deaf and the Philadelphia Orchestra. After her retirement in 1994, she was actively involved in cultural activities and volunteered at the Kennedy Center.

Esther Rykken Holland, wife of retired Foreign Service officer Harrison Holland, died March 28 in Burlingame, Calif. She accompanied her husband on assignments abroad. Her hobby was painting portraits and landscapes.

Ihsan Leila Mogannam, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 23 of kidney disease in Takoma Park, Md. She lived in Falls Church, Va. She worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development and served as a training officer in Iran, France and Tunisia. After retirement, she worked for a con-

sulting company involved with USAID-sponsored training programs. She was an expert cook, an artist, collector and promoter of Palestinian needlework.



Reynold A. Riemer, 68, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 11 in Paris, France. An economic and financial officer, he served overseas in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Vietnam, Paris and Bogotá. After retiring in 1987, he lived in Paris, where he was vice chair of Democrats Abroad.

Elliott Percival Skinner, a former ambassador, died April 1 in Washington, D.C. He served with the Army during World War II. In 1966, he was named U.S. ambassador to Upper Volta. An anthropologist, he taught at New York University and Columbia University and authored many books and articles, mostly on Africa. He was a Fulbright distinguished fellow and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.



Ernest Guest Wiener, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 10 of liver cancer in Riverside, Calif. A native of Czechoslovakia, he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1948 and served overseas in Berlin, Frankfurt, Bonn, Vienna, Geneva, Moscow and Brasilia. After retirement, he worked in Rio de Janeiro. He retired again to Florida, where he was active in the Institute for Retired Professionals at the University of Miami.

* retirements

FOREIGN SERVICE >>>

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Ames, Stephen H. | Muller, Bruce T. |
| Brundage, Stephen G. | Nichols, Sharon D. |
| Bruno, Marilyn Joan | Oakley, Carol Virginia |
| Callahan, James Joseph | Ortega, Peggy Ann |
| Cavness Jr., William D. | Pascœ, B. Lynn |
| Hameed, Philomena S. | Ruff, Gale L. |
| Joria, Gerard J. | Stewart, Joseph M. |
| Knotts, Bruce Fred | Thomas, Mary Jane |
| Morton, Joe D. | |

CIVIL SERVICE >>>

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Alt, Maryann F. | Frymyer, Marianela G. | Moss, Frank E. |
| Bacon, Barbara Ann | Gross, Marjorie S. | Mulenex, Elana |
| Blumberg, Robert | Iszkowski, Marie-Charlotte | Ng, Betty |
| Clayton | Jackson, Aaron T. | Peterson, Steven Lee |
| Bolton, John R. | Jones, Mary Jacquelyn | Ritchie, Steven R. |
| Brooks, Kenneth G. | Joseph, Robert G. | Torrence, Carolyn R. |
| Chesman, Barbara M. | Lears, Michael F. | Walston, Alva A. |
| Ciaffa, Monica Janzer | Leiser, Elisabeth | Workman, Carol A. |
| Clarke, Jimmy Nolan | Montgomery, Faith Kendall | Young Jr., Watt Sylvester |
| Dudley III, John B. | | |
| Freeman, Patricia Fay | | |

M. Paul Claussen, History's Friend

OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN SUFFERS A BIG LOSS

Paul Claussen, chief of the Policy Studies and Outreach Division of the Office of the Historian, died unexpectedly on April 21, 2007. He was 65 years old. Dr. Claussen was known to many throughout the Department of State for his exuberant advocacy of the relevance of history to today's diplomacy, and for his warm personality. He was a salesman of history who believed in his product.

Dr. Claussen was born in the District of Columbia and raised in Northern Virginia. He studied Russian history and language at George Washington University, where he wrote a doctoral dissertation on Soviet-American relations and the Russian famine. He received his doctorate in history in 1976.

He joined the Department of State Historical Office in 1972 as a member of the division that prepared the official docu-

By 1980, Dr. Claussen had adopted an activist approach to the Office of the Historian's internal research program, reaching out to Department officers to better understand their needs for historical research. He then devised diverse and imaginative means of meeting those needs. He first sought funding for historical research from outside the Department in the mid-1980s, when he convinced the Defense Department to fund the publication of an update of Documents on Germany, a collection of public and previously classified documents of importance to the military and diplomatic authorities in Berlin.

He worked closely with the leadership of the Bureau of Public Affairs over the years, providing historical data to amplify the Bureau's message to the public. He always consid-

ered history to be supportive of policy and had the courage to take a position on sensitive political issues, as he did in 1985 when he and his staff politely supplied the White House with factual reasons indicating why it would not be a good idea for the President to visit Bitburg.

During these years, budget constraints and lack of bureaucratic support caused the Office's policy-supportive research program to be more reactive than proactive. Dr. Claussen's efforts to reinstate a dynamic historical research program responsive to the Department's needs came to fruition in the 21st century with the infusion of new human resources to the office. He understood how



mentary series, *Foreign Relations of the United States*. Working closely with former Historical Office Director William Franklin, Dr. Claussen did the final editorial work on the series' 1948 volume on U.S. diplomacy and the birth of Israel. He also contributed to the expansion of the scope of foreign relations coverage by locating a collection of National Intelligence Estimates in the Department's files and advocating their inclusion in the series.

Beginning in 1976, Dr. Claussen supervised historians organized along geographic lines and assigned to simultaneously prepare the Foreign Relations series and respond to Department and public requests for historical information. His responsibilities covered primarily the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

current and past bureaucracies operated and integrated that knowledge into his work.

Dr. Claussen's interest in the Department's history and the role of historical precedent in foreign policy developed into an expertise that he made readily available to those both inside and outside the Department. He taught about Department of State history at the Foreign Service Institute, represented the Department on interagency groups dealing with major historical questions, appeared on the Discovery Channel to speak about the Great Seal and, most recently, sought new ways to spread the historical word on the role of U.S. foreign policy through the Internet.

The Department of State has lost a unique asset. He shall be sorely missed. ■

Career Diversity, Hardship Posts and Courageous Women

The sage who wrote “There’s nothing new under the sun” obviously didn’t work for the State Department. The Department has seen plenty of change in these first years of the 21st century. This issue highlights some recent innovations designed to keep our colleagues and us in the vanguard of modern diplomacy.

Although he has been Director General for little more than a year, Ambassador George Staples has made many crucial and often difficult decisions on staffing hardship posts in an increasingly dangerous world. With the median hardship differential at a startling 15 percent, the Department has to fill each year between 500 to 700 unaccompanied or limited accompanied positions. In an exclusive State Magazine Inner-View, he explains the extensive changes the Department made to the Foreign Service assignments process and the reasons those changes had to be made.

On the Civil Service side, the Director General launched a pilot program this year that will give CS colleagues a taste of professional diversity in their careers. Under the guidance of the Office of Civil Service Personnel’s career development division, seven GS-12 and GS-13 employees joined the Civil Service Mid-Level Rotational Program in February and went from their regular jobs to other agencies and year-long developmental assignments with duties

specific to Foreign Affairs officers or their equivalents.

Long championed by Deputy Assistant Secretary Linda Tagliatela, the pilot program will test the feasibility of offering Civil Service employees career mobility



opportunities similar to those available to their Foreign Service colleagues.

Technology can be a boon to those willing to use it, and the public diplomacy professionals at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs have turned the Internet into a unique PD tool. Through its Global Connections and Exchange

program, ECA provides virtual linkages between teens and educators in the United States with more than 1,000 schools worldwide, including schools in hard-to-reach Tajikistan, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan and Afghanistan. Participants deal with real issues; students in New York City and Egypt, for example, collaborated on the “Two Rivers One World Project” in which they tested water content of the Hudson and Nile rivers and discussed water supply and pollution with scientists and teachers.

Courage is where you find it, and on March 7 Secretary Rice honored 10 extraordinarily courageous women with the first annual Award for International Women of Courage. Administered by the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women’s Issues, the award recognizes women from around the world who have shown exceptional courage and leadership.

Last but not least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *Paul Claussen; William Walton Duffy II; Beverly S. Gerstein; Esther Rykken Holland; Ihsan Leila Mogannam; Reynold A. Riemer; Elliott Percival Skinner; and Ernest Guest Wiener.*

Rob Wiley
Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

COMING IN JULY/AUG

- Transformational Diplomacy in Liberia
 - Foreign Affairs Day 2007
 - Inside the Ops Center
 - Cultural Diplomacy in Cote d’Ivoire
- ... and much more!



Questions? Comments?
statemagazine@state.gov

LYING IN STATE: THE PAPER SHOW

OKAY, FOR THIS MEETING THE AMBASSADOR
WILL NEED A BRIEFING MEMO WITH
TALKING POINTS AS USUAL -AND MAKE
SURE IT'S IN THE RIGHT FORMAT!

RIGHT- NO
WINGDINGS
THIS TIME.

YOU'LL TAKE NOTES AT THE MEETING,
AND THEN THAT AFTERNOON HE'LL NEED TO SEE
YOUR DRAFT REPORT. OF COURSE THAT IS SEPARATE
FROM THE REPORTING CABLE TO THE
DEPARTMENT- THAT
SHOULDN'T REPEAT
THE FIRST REPORT.

NO, NEVER!

AND AS FAR AS INCLUSION OF THE MEETING
REPORT IN THE WEEKLY SUMMARY REPORT...

COULDN'T THE AMBASSADOR
HAVE JUST ONE
MEETING WITHOUT
ALL THIS PAPERWORK?
WHAT IF I JUST
DIDN'T DO IT?

WELL, POST POLICY WOULD
BE TO PUT YOU IN THE
SENSORY DEPRIVATION
CHAMBER UNDER
JEANINE'S DESK
WITH THIS BOX OF
BITTER AND
DISILLUSIONED
IGUANAS.

I'LL GO GET
STARTED ON
THOSE
TALKING
POINTS.

SO, UH... HELLO, SASSY!
I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE
MY CAT.

HOW DO YOU
SPELL "PRRRT"?

PRRRT.

1992



JUNE.2007

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Bulgaria Managua
Guangzhou Darfur
Port-au-Prince
Ethiopia Mexico City
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