

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATE

SEPTEMBER 2009



Bogotá

Colombia's Capital
Dances With the Stars

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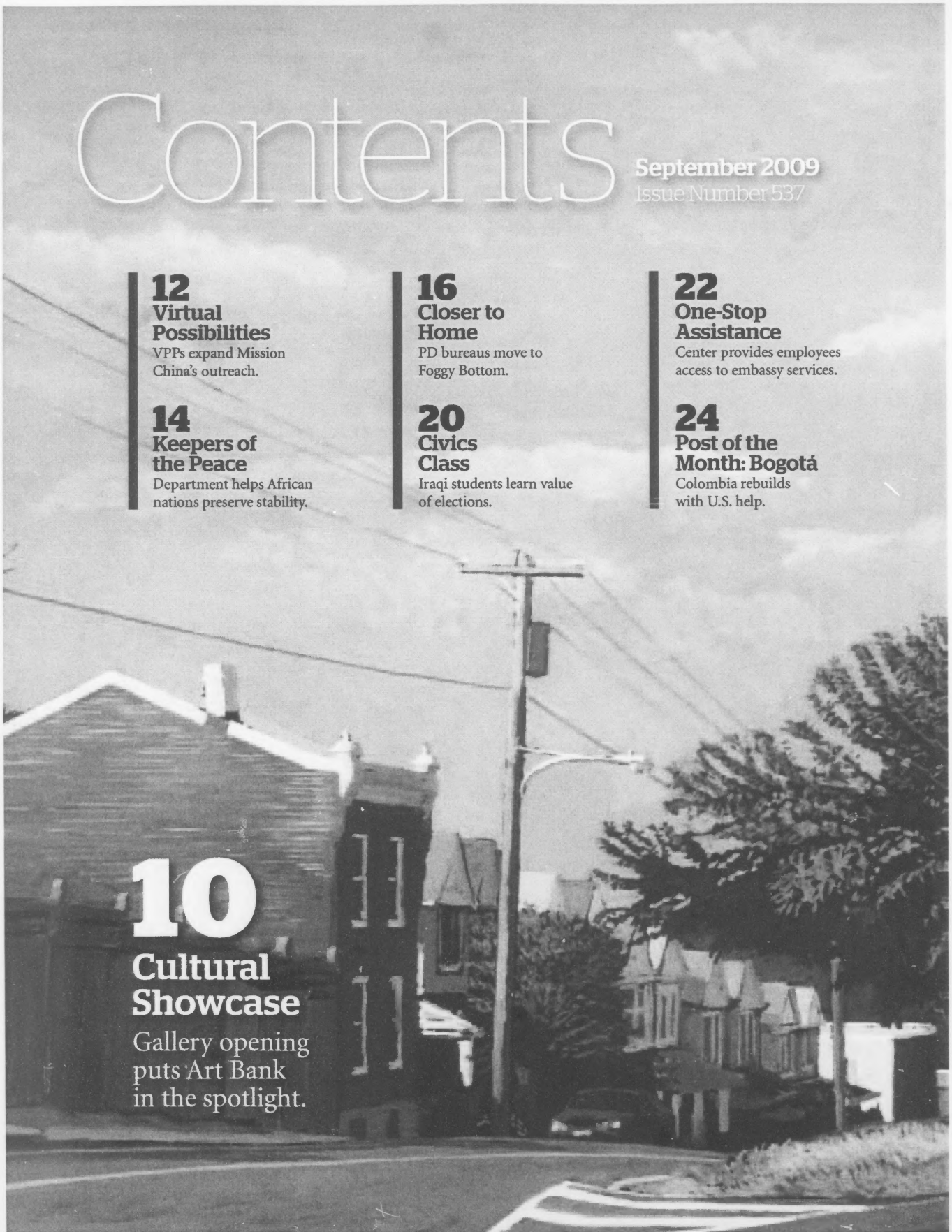
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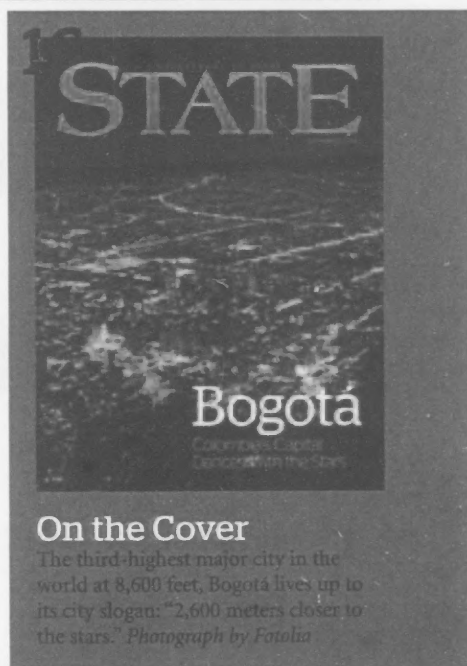
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Honored to Serve

It is a great pleasure, as the new Director General, to begin a dialogue with the Department of State community on the range of issues and challenges affecting the Department's greatest resource -- you. Together and with the help of dedicated Human Resources professionals, we must ensure that our recruitment, assignment, professional development and retirement systems support the needs of our diverse workforce and enable the Department to address effectively the critical foreign policy opportunities and challenges we face today and may face tomorrow.

We have seen significant breakthroughs this year that demonstrate the high value the Administration and Congress place on the Department of State and its employees' contributions around the world. Thanks to funds appropriated by Congress in the 2009 Budget, we can hire 2,300 new FS and CS employees this year, including 1,200 new employees above attrition. In addition, the FY 2009 Supplemental appropriation will enable us at last to start closing the overseas pay disparity. Furthermore, this year, when qualified, our LE Staff received a wage increase of at least 2.9 percent as the result of a Department review of compensation. The Department also extended the full range of legally available benefits and allowances to same-sex domestic partners of members of the Foreign Service sent to serve abroad.

I was delighted that the Department of State ranked first as an ideal employer for Liberal Arts undergraduates in the 2009 Most Ideal Undergraduate Employer Survey, and that federal employees placed the Department among the top five large federal agencies in the 2009 Best Places to Work ranking. But I know we can do even

better. My colleagues and I in HR are already working on a number of important issues.

Among the most pressing:

- Aligning our human resource processes and systems to meet the Department's strategic objectives now and into the future.

- Ensuring that we are providing comprehensive support to our employees and their families before, during and after their overseas assignments, particularly those serving in difficult and/or unaccompanied posts.

- Recruiting people who have skills in critically needed foreign languages, career tracks and specialist categories and who reflect the diversity of our nation.

- Finding more ways to give Civil Service employees opportunities for development at all levels.

- Ensuring that the compensation packages of our Locally Employed Staff reflect their invaluable contributions to our work and the importance we place on their service.

- Guaranteeing that all of our people have the skills and leadership capabilities to meet our complex foreign policy challenges.

- Giving our people the tools to navigate, cooperate and collaborate more effectively within the interagency process both domestically and abroad.

- Assuring that security and medical clearances for new employees are handled as expeditiously as possible.

In order to best serve you, we need to hear your ideas and get your feedback. I welcome your suggestions via unclassified e-mail at "DG Direct."

Members of the State Department family deserve nothing but the best because that is what they have given—and continue to give—to our country. Thank you for the honor of representing you. ■



Grassroots Diplomacy

Your May issue was extremely insightful. The Diplomacy 3.0 vision with regard to hiring will provide the Department with the much-needed workforce to further the work related to global diplomacy. Other articles show the fantastic work our colleagues continue to perform in a number of areas. The work related to justice reform and trafficking is commendable.

Having grown up, studied and worked in the Indian sub-continent, I believe the Department is moving in the right direction with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs by working at the grassroots. The key would be to create opportunities for public and private partnerships through local citizen groups, nongovernment organizations, educational institutions, government and international organizations, as well as visitor-exchange programs for students, scholars, teachers and ordinary citizens.

I had the opportunity to work on some U.S. Agency for International Development programs while serving as the international liaison for the College of Education at the University of Iowa. We collaborated with ministries of education and public schools in Eastern European countries and helped provide training in democracy and civics education. The train-the-trainer model provided an opportunity for foreign teachers to study at Iowa, then go back to their countries and train others in what they had learned, thus creating a ripple effect in democracy education.

The above model seems similar to the justice reform program that has been initiated in Afghanistan. It may be wise to initiate something similar in parts of the world where terrorism abounds and there is lack

of comprehension of the rule of law. South and Central Asia is a region where we will be concentrating a lot of our efforts in the near future. The call for volunteers to serve in Pakistan and Afghanistan and expanded operations in the region prove its importance to our national security.

Krishna Das

Bureau of Diplomatic Security

Fresh Perspective

I want to pass along my thanks for John Robinson's article in the June edition on bullying. I was on the receiving end of bullying from a previous supervisor a few years ago and felt all the things outlined in the article. I felt that I was in a hostile work environment and that my male supervisor had a problem with female officers. (I was the only female officer in the section.) I went so far as to apply for other jobs outside the State Department because I felt strongly that I didn't want to work for an organization that would promote such an individual.

Rather than making a decision based on one experience, I decided to give State one more tour and I'm glad I did because I went into an office with incredible leadership and a very positive, empowering atmosphere.

Your article caused me to reflect on that

experience with a fresh perspective. I plan on sending a copy of it to the female officer who replaced me and had the same experience with this same supervisor.

In short, I appreciate all that you do and I really appreciated Mr. Robinson's article.

A U.S. embassy officer

Remembering Joan Segerson

The June issue carried the sad news of Joan Segerson's unexpected passing on March 4 and mentioned that she mentored many young people. She was that kind of generous person who was always helpful to her colleagues. During her years at RM/FA, she was a strong professional who provided information and guidance. Joan understood more than most the relationship between policy goals and budget needs. Program and policy interests are hard to separate, and she always managed them with the best interests of the Department's overall goals in mind.

Joan had some medical problems but was looking forward to coming back to work. Many of her friends and colleagues have told me of their shock.

Stuart Lippe

Office of Andean Affairs

Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

Talk to Us

Letters should not exceed 250 words and should include the writer's name, address and daytime phone number. All letters become the property of *State Magazine*. Letters will be edited for length, accuracy and clarity. Only signed letters will be considered.

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News



Sounding Board Suggestion Cuts Waste

Implementing one of the first suggestions posted to the Secretary of State's Sounding Board Web site, the Bureau of Consular Affairs has launched an internal program to reduce waste of office supplies by sharing them. The bureau now posts its excess items on its intranet site, a practice patterned after the popular Freecycle.org site, and bureau units needing supplies can review the postings before placing new orders and possibly save money.

The Sounding Board, <http://soundingboard.state.gov>, was established by the Secretary shortly after her arrival in January to solicit suggestions to improve the Department. It has since garnered more than 300 ideas and is posting status reports on the ideas as they move through the review process.

Consular Affairs came up with the supply-sharing idea because it found its offices must often order supplies in quantities larger than needed, due to vendors' minimum order requirements. The excess is now listed on the bureau's site. The bureau also periodically reviews

storage spaces and finds excess supplies that can be listed on the site. It has asked all employees to review the items on the site before placing new orders.

Besides saving on the costs of the supplies, the bureau saves on supply ordering time and the "cost to stock," which includes expenses related to buying storage furniture and the hours spent searching for or storing supplies.

The program operates as a SharePoint application in which all bureau employees have read-only access, and those who deal with supplies can edit what's posted. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Office of the Under Secretary for Management are also participating in initiatives based on the bureau's model. Temporary read-only access to Consular Affairs' site can be provided for employees considering development of a similar program for their bureau or post. Those considering such a program or who have questions may contact Teresa Yata at yatata@state.gov.



Embassy Launches eDiplomacy Initiative

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between the United States and the Holy See, the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See has created online locations to share information on the embassy and its city-state host nation, as well as information on religion, diplomacy and politics around the world.

With technical assistance from the Department's Office of eDiplomacy, the embassy launched a blog and a portal on the Diplopedia Web site,

<http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Vatican>, having information about the bilateral relationship. The blog at <http://vatican.state.gov> covers items of importance for other U.S. missions interested in the influence of the Catholic Church in their host countries.

The embassy began the Diplopedia and blog initiative because of the broad reach of the Catholic Church—there are more than 400,000 Catholic priests, about 750,000 nuns, close to 75,000 monks and friars

and 1.3 billion Catholics around the world. Caritas, the largest Catholic humanitarian assistance agency, has 40,000 employees and 125,000 volunteers, operates programs in 162 countries and reaches 24 million people each year. Information is added daily to the blog on a range of topics including religious tensions, economic issues, HIV/AIDS and food security.

The Diplopedia portal and the blog carry embassy-generated news on the Vatican and the Catholic Church and have links

to media stories on these topics. Readers can subscribe to a news feed on specific regions or issues and have updates delivered to their e-mail in-boxes. The embassy hopes to receive feedback and comment about postings on the status of church-state relations in other nations and will raise information provided by U.S. embassies in those nations in its discussions with Vatican officials.

For more information, visit the Web sites or e-mail bakermansm@state.gov.

Employees Prepare for New Charitable Challenge

This fall will be marked by a transition as the charitable giving of Department employees shifts focus from summer's food drive for the needy to the annual Combined Federal Campaign, which raised \$62.7 million in 2008 from Washington, D.C.-area federal employees and benefits almost 4,000 charities.

The food drive, launched by President Barack Obama as part of his United We Serve promotion of volunteerism, sought to raise 45,000 pounds of nonperishable food for D.C.-area residents. Like the CFC, the food drive also received donations at posts worldwide. The food collected at posts abroad was distributed in the posts' host nations. The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, Vietnam, for instance, provided a nearby orphanage with some of the food it collected.

The Department launches its CFC drive with an Oct. 1 presentation at Main State involving speakers from some of the charities benefiting from the campaign, which last year received \$2.195 million in donations from Department employees.

The Department's manager for both the food drive and CFC, Patty Pittarelli, said this year's CFC will likely not extend beyond Dec. 15, making it about a month shorter than last year's campaign. It will also, she said, feature greater electronic dissemination of the CFC catalog, which lists eligible charities and is on the Web at www.cfca.org/catalog_of_caring. The Department already collects donations via Employee Express, although most givers still use pledge cards. Whichever way they give, donors can spread their 2009 donation over several charities and have a portion of it taken from each of their 2010 paychecks.

Pittarelli also said the Department's campaign will seek better communication with overseas posts and is now developing bureau-level goals so that the Department can meet its target of raising nearly \$2

million for the campaign. The goals are based on each bureau's 2008 donation, employee participation level and number of employees, she said.

One charity likely to send a representative to the CFC kick-off event is Miriam's Kitchen, a feeding program for D.C.-area homeless people located in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. Another D.C.-area charity, the Capital Area Food Bank, also benefits

from the CFC and may send a speaker. A charity spokesperson said the recession has caused record numbers of families and first-time visitors to seek help. The food bank collects food donations and distributes them to local feeding programs.

"Our agencies are reporting from 30 up to 200-percent increases in demand for services," said Capital Area Food Bank President Lynn Brantley.



Embassy Berlin Commemorates Project Manager

In May, Chargé d'Affaires John Koenig and Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Project Director Eduardo Gaarder dedicated the fireplace pavilion and courtyard of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin as the Duncan Ross Room, commemorating the manager of the 2004–2008 embassy construction project.

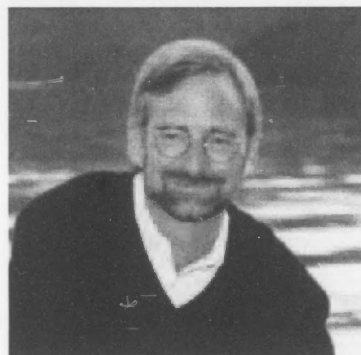
Ross's mother, a sister, friends, colleagues and embassy employees came together to remember

Ross at the dedication ceremony.

For more than 20 years, Ross worked as an OBO construction engineer, handling projects in Tegucigalpa, Santiago, Singapore, Rome, Tunis, Munich, Frankfurt and finally the new U.S. Embassy in Berlin. His energy, professional expertise and experience aided in the project's successful completion. In 2007, Ross became ill and returned to the United States, where he passed away later that year.



Right: Duncan Ross. Above: Chargé d'Affaires John Koenig shares a moment with Ross's mother Doty Colt Ross, middle, and his sister Amy Ross Hegarty in front of the dedication plaque.



Public Diplomacy Alumni Association Picks Award Winners

The Public Diplomacy Alumni Association recently selected the winners of its annual awards from 22 nominations worldwide. The winners include Mission Macedonia Public Affairs Officer Ryan Rowland and Assistant Public Affairs Officer Amy Storrow, who developed an outreach effort targeting Macedonian youth.

Their program's multi-ethnic youth camps brought together more than 1,100 youngsters to build leadership skills, environmental awareness and teamwork. They also expanded the Fulbright program,

promoted a creative writing program that reached schools and the media, and engaged in U.S. election-related activities that brought more than 500 opinion leaders to an event hosted by the ambassador.

Another winner was Tristram Perry, assistant information officer for broadcast media at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. He used his public diplomacy skills and personal credibility to advance understanding of U.S. institutions and foreign policy, gaining media coverage of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton during her

February visit. In a first, he arranged for a popular Indonesian journalist to write a blog while traveling with Secretary Clinton's press corps.

The association also honored three public diplomacy staff members in the Bureau of International Information Programs for guiding production of a worldwide video contest called "Democracy's Video Challenge," which engaged youth worldwide in a dialogue on democracy. Awardees were Lori Brutton, outreach coordinator; George Clack, director of publications; and David Shelby, director of current issues.

Nearly 900 videos were received in the contest, including 70 from Iran. Others came from China, Russia, Cuba and Burma. Participants began their two-minute videos with the statement "Democracy is ..." and posted them on YouTube.com, where the public will choose the winning videos.



The video contest team—from left, David Shelby, Lori Brutton and George Clack—engaged youth in a dialogue on democracy.



Returned Peace Corp volunteers from inside and outside the Department meet as a group before job-shadowing day.

Returned Volunteers Promote Department Careers

The organization Returned Peace Corps Volunteers @ State hosted a job-shadowing day in June for 20 former Peace Corps volunteers interested in Department of State careers. Participants saw the work done in the bureaus of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; Consular Affairs; and Education and Cultural Affairs, among others, and spent time with Department employees who are former Peace Corps volunteers.

"Until now, I've found it difficult to translate the job descriptions and Knowledge, Skills and Abilities statements required for USAJobs.opm.gov into real-life examples," said participant Tina Terrill. "I also wasn't

certain that a Department career was a good match, but now feel much more confident in my career search."

The group worked directly with the Peace Corps to organize the event, and the Department's Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment gave a presentation on the Department's careers and its need for management, consular and economic officers. The group plans to hold other events promoting Department careers for returned volunteers.

An official employee organization, the group was founded in September 2008 and has more than 375 members worldwide,

including Foreign Service and Civil Service employees and ambassadors. Among the Department's highest-ranking former Peace Corps volunteers are Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson, who served in Tanzania from 1965 to 1968, and Ambassador to Iraq Christopher Hill, a volunteer in Cameroon from 1974 to 1976.

One member of the group, Jennifer Cole, a program coordinator in the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, said "I can see Peace Corps' influence in my work on a daily basis as it gives me an instant connection to the visitors I work with on the International Visitor Leadership Program."

The Bureau of Human Resources and its Office of Performance Evaluation have made a "View TIC/TIS History Report" option available to Foreign Service employees through the Employee Profile application in HR Online. The new data table reflects changes to the fields associated with a Foreign Service employee's Time in Class/Time in Service record, such as a promotion or long-term language training. The history report can also reflect the office's changes.

To access the Time in Class/Time in Service History Report through the Employee Profile, click on "View TIC/TIS, Scorecard Data" and then on "View TIC/TIS History Report." Users can also access a help link for information and to report an error in their data. The bureau added the report in Employee Profile to provide FS employees with greater transparency about the promotion process.

News



Director General Thomas receives a certificate from FLO Director Leslie Teixeira.

HR Bureau Honors Departing DG

Bureau of Human Resources officials sang the praises of Director General Harry K. Thomas at a June goodbye party honoring his two years as the bureau's chief executive.

Leslie Teixeira, director of the Family Liaison Office, noted his support for the hundreds of officers and their families affected by unaccompanied tours. Pointing to Ambassador Thomas' signing of hundreds of certificates provided to children of parents serving on such tours, she presented him with a certificate that honored his support of FLO's Unaccompanied Tour Program. She said her action was symbolic of the many other ways he has supported employees and families.

Teddy Taylor, principal deputy assistant secretary for Human Resources, lauded Ambassador Thomas for his willingness to "push the envelope" in terms of taking on challenges.

Alonzo Fulgham, chief operating officer of the U.S. Agency for International Development, said Ambassador Thomas was one of the "last gentlemen in the business" and a good friend to USAID.

Addressing the dozens of well-wishers crowded into the Delegates Lounge, Ambassador Thomas praised his staff, saying, "You have made HR a place where we're all proud to work." He said that during his tenure, bureau offices have become more responsive to customers and the Office of Career Development and Assignments has "transformed Foreign Service assignments."

A career member of the Senior Foreign Service who was executive secretary of the Department prior to becoming Director General, Ambassador Thomas joined the Foreign Service in 1984 and served as U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh from 2003 to 2005. His next assignment has not been announced.

STATE

MAGAZINE

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Background

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Deadlines

The submission deadline for the November issue is September 15. The deadline for the December issue is October 15.

Environmental Notes

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Celebrating Intergenerational Diversity

As the summer comes to a close, we must say goodbye to the hundreds of interns who spent their time out of school helping us further the Department's missions around the world. Their idealism, creativity and enthusiasm remind us that their generation is unique and, as with any generation, a valuable asset to our ultimate goal of increased intellectual capital in the workforce here at the Department.

The word "diversity" suggests race, age, gender and national origin. However, what one may not consider are the differences between the generations of employees in an office, the experiences they implicitly bring and the effects these differences have on their approaches to achieving success in the workplace. From communication styles to systematic values, these intergenerational differences affect our everyday workplace interactions in a variety of ways.

Defined as a group of people who share common age boundaries and were born in a certain era, a generation shares similar experiences during their formative years and develops similar values and attitudes in the workplace. Currently, there are four generations in the workplace: Traditionalists (born before 1946), Baby Boomers (1946–1964), Generation Xers (1965–1980) and Millennials (1981–1994). Although these generations share many of the same ideals and characteristics, they differ from one another in the methods by which these ideals and characteristics are integrated into the workforce.

Last summer, the interns in the Office of Civil Rights held an Intergenerational Diversity Workshop for Department employees that was both fun and informative. Participants were divided into multi-generational groups and participated in a variety of activities that fostered establishing values, both distinguishing and unifying, among the generations. This open forum allowed all employees to discuss views on their own generational values and the

values of other generations. The event was uncomfortable for some, intense at times, energetic throughout, informative and cathartic. Participants laughed and assumed defensive and offensive stances on a variety of issues; but most important, they listened.

Although it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of a one-time, one-hour session, it was clear that relief, light-heartedness and a sense of unity were achieved for those who attended that morning's forum. One might argue that this mini-catharsis, if you will, can be attributed to the overall underrepresentation of the tension between the work style differences of employees from different generations at the Department. Perhaps those interns took the first step toward initiating a cooperative progress toward a generationally united end.

What's next? How do we solidify these new discoveries? The Department of State workplace will be at its intellectual and

creative best when we can all listen and learn across generations. No single age group has a monopoly on patriotism, innovation, humor or wisdom, as a workforce. However, we will be ahead if we harness the best from all generations.

The recipe for harmonious unity of the generations lies in a willingness to continue having those uncomfortable discussions, in sharing laughs about our stark differences and in appreciating the skills and experiences each generation brings to the job every day. So the next time you see a Baby Boomer staying late at work or catch a Millennial multi-tasking, take an extra second to find the advantage in what they are doing. Chances are, whether based on experience or strategy, there is a "method to the madness" and something that each of us can learn from another's perspective. After all, the best way to promote diversity is to eradicate adversity. Take the first step. ■





Cultural Showcase

Gallery opening puts Art Bank in spotlight // By Lisa T. Kuhn

In June, Under Secretary for Management Patrick F. Kennedy and I, as the director of the Department of State Art Bank Program, attended a ribbon-cutting of the Art Bank Gallery. The event culminated more than four years of planning, design and implementation by a team of Department employees, architects, consultants and contractors.

The Art Bank Gallery is on the second floor of the George C. Marshall Wing of the Harry S Truman Building. The design work began in 2005, and focused on retaining and restoring the area's Art Deco architecture and providing a space for rotating exhibits. The renovation was completed in March 2009.

Cultural Diplomacy

The Art Bank Gallery will support the Department's mission of cultural diplomacy by exhibiting the talent and diversity of American artists to the numerous foreign dignitaries who visit the Department.

The inaugural exhibition of 18 recent acquisitions to the Art Bank showcases the rich complexity of American life and culture through realism and abstraction. One of the exhibition highlights is an etching print featuring string and hand-stamping by abstract artist Caio Fonseca. Also featured are gouache paintings that illustrate growing up

in a Philadelphia suburb by photorealistic painter Larry Francis and impressionistic cloud paintings by artist and pilot Sheila Kramer.

All of the artists in the exhibition use paper as an element in their art. This common medium demonstrates the versatility of paper in encouraging experimentation and supporting a broad range of art: watercolors, graphite drawings, oil paintings, monotypes, woodcuts, lithographs and intaglio prints.

The Art Bank

The Art Bank Program was established in 1984 to manage the Department's domestic fine arts inventory. It contrasts with the ART in Embassies program, which provides art to missions overseas and to the United States Mission to the United Nations. The Art Bank's permanent collection of more than 2,000 contemporary American artworks includes original works on paper and limited-edition prints which span a range of styles, subject matter and techniques.

Artworks from the collection are exhibited in the domestic offices and public areas of the Department, including its Washington, D.C., annexes and the offices of the U.S. Agency for International Development. The art is requested for exhibition through bureau executive



offices and is funded through a contribution to the Art Bank. The Art Bank staff assists in the selection, installation, preservation and inventory of the artworks.

The Art Bank's collection has appreciated in value over time as many of its artists have become well-established, and many of its limited-edition prints are no longer available to the public.



Clockwise from upper left: James Winn's "Sketch for Thunderheads"; Art Bank Program Director Lisa Kuhn discusses Winn's painting with Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy; painter Larry Francis' "58th and Lindbergh," a scene from the Philadelphia neighborhood of Francis' high school years.

Diverse Artists

Artists in the collection come from diverse backgrounds, and many have overcome physical or economic challenges. Robert Ferrandini, a prominent landscape artist from Boston, had to relearn how to draw and paint after a stroke paralyzed his right side. Louisiana Bendolph, who grew up in an isolated African American community in Gee's Bend, Ala., transformed a necessity—making quilts—into works of art and beautiful intaglio prints.

Artists also have contributed to the international community with their talents. Ross Bleckner, recently appointed goodwill ambassador for the United Nations, uses his gifts as a painter to work with child victims of enslavement and trafficking in Uganda. Valentina DuBasky founded "Art in a Box," which brings boxes of art supplies to communities in crisis around the world. These art supplies help disadvantaged children use art for empowerment and recovery.

Work Environment

The Art Bank improves the work environment by allowing eligible employees to select art for their work areas. Eligibility is determined by the executive office of an employee's bureau. The art is primarily placed in the offices of under secretaries, assistant secretaries and deputy assistant secretaries, and in the Department's public areas such as reception areas and conference rooms.

Employees often will come in to the Art Bank with an initial style—such as still lifes or landscapes—in mind and will leave with some of the wonderful abstracts in the collection. Art is often exchanged to satisfy the tastes of new staff or to respond to office renovations.

When an employee leaves the Department or is reassigned, the Art Bank will often get a call asking where a print that an employee particularly likes can be purchased. If the request comes from an ambassador going overseas, the Art Bank will provide information about the artwork and its source to one of the curators of the ART in Embassies program.

The Art Bank Gallery will familiarize employees with the Art Bank program and its collection, and provide a venue for quiet reflection. ■

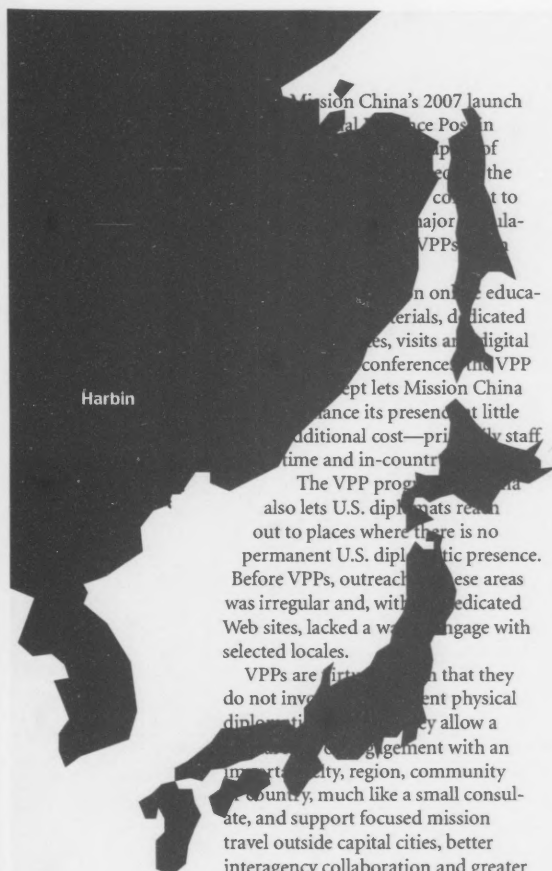
The author is director of the Art Bank Program.

Virtual Possibilities



Near right: Gary Oba of the Consulate General in Guangzhou, rear in bright green shirt, stands with volunteers in Xiamen who participated in an environmental activity supported by that city's VPP. Far right: The author takes questions during a presentation for the VPP in Zhengzhou.





Harbin

Mission China's 2007 launch of Virtual Presence Post in major U.S. cities. The program also lets U.S. diplomats reach out to places where there is no permanent U.S. diplomatic presence.

Before VPPs, outreach in these areas was irregular and, with dedicated Web sites, lacked a way to engage with selected locales. VPPs are a first step in that they do not involve frequent physical diplomatic visits. They allow a more consistent engagement with an important city, region, community or country, much like a small consulate, and support focused mission travel outside capital cities, better interagency collaboration and greater strategic application of program and media outreach resources. From only three VPPs in 2003, the program has grown to nearly 60 worldwide with an additional 40 being planned.

★ Covering China
In China, the VPP in Xiamen, <http://xiamen.usvpp.gov>, promotes U.S. study, the Department Web site America.gov and cooperation on urban planning. During visits to Xiamen, VPP team members have met with Chinese environmental groups, local charities' leaders, organizations

involved in environmental and intellectual property rights issues, legal officials and university students.

The VPP in Nanning, <http://nanning.usvpp.gov>, provides news on the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service, Agricultural Trade Office and consular and public affairs sections. It also has videos that introduce Nanning residents to U.S. diplomats stationed in Beijing and Guangzhou.

One of the newest VPPs in China is that in Fuzhou, <http://fuzhou.usvpp.gov>, which highlights such mission activities as U.S. diplomatic visits to two local universities. In Fuzhou, Foreign Service officers have also met with local environmental, religious, legal and health organizations.

The VPP in Nanjing, <http://nanjing.usembassy-china.org.cn>, was established in 2007 and worked with the Johns Hopkins Nanjing Center in 2008 to organize a U.S. election event for American and Chinese students, academics and officials. This year, it has supported the visit of a senior U.S. Treasury official, American businesses operating in the area and visits to high schools and universities with educational and cultural programs. Officers at the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai are working to set up VPPs to cover Anhui and Zhejiang provinces.

★ Election Education

The VPP in Dalian, <http://dalian-en.usvpp.gov>, has featured that city's relationship with Seattle and Tacoma, Wash., and helped with a mission event on informing the public about the U.S. elections. VPP Dalian team members have made more than 20 visits to Dalian over the past year and assisted the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Team during its pre-Olympic training in Dalian. The VPP also organized business seminars for Dalian-based

American companies and hosted a large July 4 celebration attended by high-level Dalian officials and business community representatives.

In Zhengzhou, the VPP, <http://zhengzhou.usvpp.gov>, has created a blog that allows users to interact with the VPP team and receive photo albums, video clips and links to the embassy Web site. Embassy officials also regularly visit the city and province.

The VPP in Tianjin, <http://tianjin.usvpp.gov>, promoted last year's Summit on China-U.S. Financial Reform and Innovation and the visit of a former U.S. TV executive to a local university.

★ Web Strategy

Eight of the 15 VPPs in China have dedicated Web sites that promote the various embassy or consulate activities aimed at their communities, and others are developing sites.

Recently, members of the VPP Xian team visited potential student participants of U.S. exchange programs in provincial cities and rural areas. They also visited some exchange program alumni—who said they had not had any contact with U.S. officials for more than 20 years. During a joint alumni/VPP team visit to a rural elementary school, some of the students said they had never before met an American.

VPPs in China represent a uniquely effective method of outreach to millions of Chinese citizens, giving them an additional window on the United States.

For more information on VPPs, visit <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/vpp> and the VPP portal, http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Virtual_Presence_Post. ■

The author is a public diplomacy officer at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing.

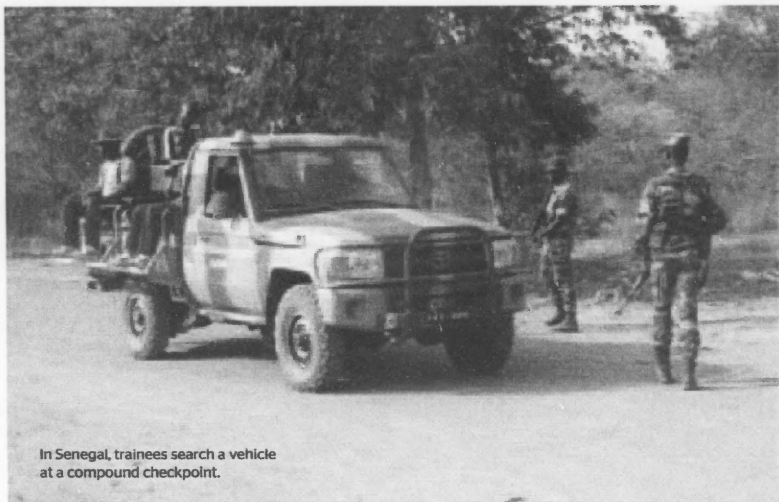


Near left: At center, Anny Ho and Camille Purvis-Dawson of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing pose with elementary school students in rural China, part of their VPP outreach effort. Far left: U.S. Consul General in Shenyang Steve Wickman talks to the Mayor of Dalian at the first July 4th celebration hosted by the Dalian VPP.

Keepers of the Peace

Department helps African nations preserve stability

By Chip Beck



In Senegal, trainees search a vehicle at a compound checkpoint.

Since its inception in 2002, the African Union has assumed an activist role in addressing conflict by launching peace support operations in Burundi, Darfur and Somalia. It also laid the groundwork for an African Standby Force to plan, deploy, implement and sustain complex peace support operations with minimal non-African intervention.

At the same time, the United Nations joined the African Union in Darfur; continued to conduct peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Southern Sudan; and has launched a new peacekeeping operation in Chad and the Central African Republic. The need for peacekeepers, especially African

peacekeepers, has grown.

In June 2009, 32,567 African peacekeepers were serving in nine U.N. or African Union peace support operations, comprising about 45 percent of the continent's 72,262 international peacekeepers. Almost half of the African Union's member nations have volunteered to provide peacekeepers for peace support operations.

Shaping the professional development of African peacekeepers is a State Department program that has earned the respect of the African troop-contributing countries. This Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program has been operating for more than 12 years.



Key Program

The training and assistance program is managed by the Bureau of African Affairs and represents a key program of the Department's broader Global Peace Operations Initiative. The program was launched in May 1997 to enhance the capacities of African nations to participate in multinational peace support operations. A 10-person program office in Washington, D.C., oversees the training operations in collaboration with the Secretary of Defense's Office of African Affairs and the Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

In Africa, a core of 250 American and 525 African peacekeeping instructors is active throughout the continent, providing 10 to 20 field training activities per month for the deploying peacekeepers, battalion and brigade staffs, and multinational force headquarters personnel from among the program's 24 partner countries.

Program training is tailored for each country. The deployment of program-trained peacekeepers is a sovereign nation's decision, but the program helps troops from contribut-



communications and logistics. Training activities can last up to nine weeks and are repeated for every deploying contingent.

Indigenous Instructors

Peacekeepers get frequent refresher training and instructors' skills are constantly updated. Teams of indigenous instructors and the infrastructure provided by the Peace Mission Training Centers have been developed to establish host-nation peacekeeper-training capacities.

The program introduces new peacekeepers to peace support tasks, such as leadership, convoy escort, checkpoint operations, disarmament operations, weapons safety, internally displaced persons protection, field negotiations, rules of engagement and civil affairs. It also promotes respect for international human rights standards throughout its training. The program also promotes awareness of HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, child exploitation and trafficking in persons, among other humanitarian issues.

To help fill peace support operations manpower needs, between May 1997 and June 2009 program instructors directly trained more than 85,000 peacekeepers from 24 partner nations: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

These nations have sent contingents to conflicts in Sudan, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Burundi, Kosovo, Lebanon and Somalia, and to support humanitarian relief efforts in Mozambique. While training large numbers of peacekeepers is important for expanding African states' abilities to respond to conflict, the program's ultimate goals are to ensure that the peacekeepers it trains are effective once deployed and to conduct activities that enable its African partners to develop sustainable self-sufficiency in training their own peacekeepers.

Conflict resolution in Africa is ongoing, and Africa is stepping up by developing increasingly professional personnel, mechanisms and capabilities to transform conflict and chaos into zones of increasing stability. Changing the conflict environment will be a long-term effort, but the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program plans to be there for its partners as long as its services are needed. ■

The author is the ACOTA program and policy officer.

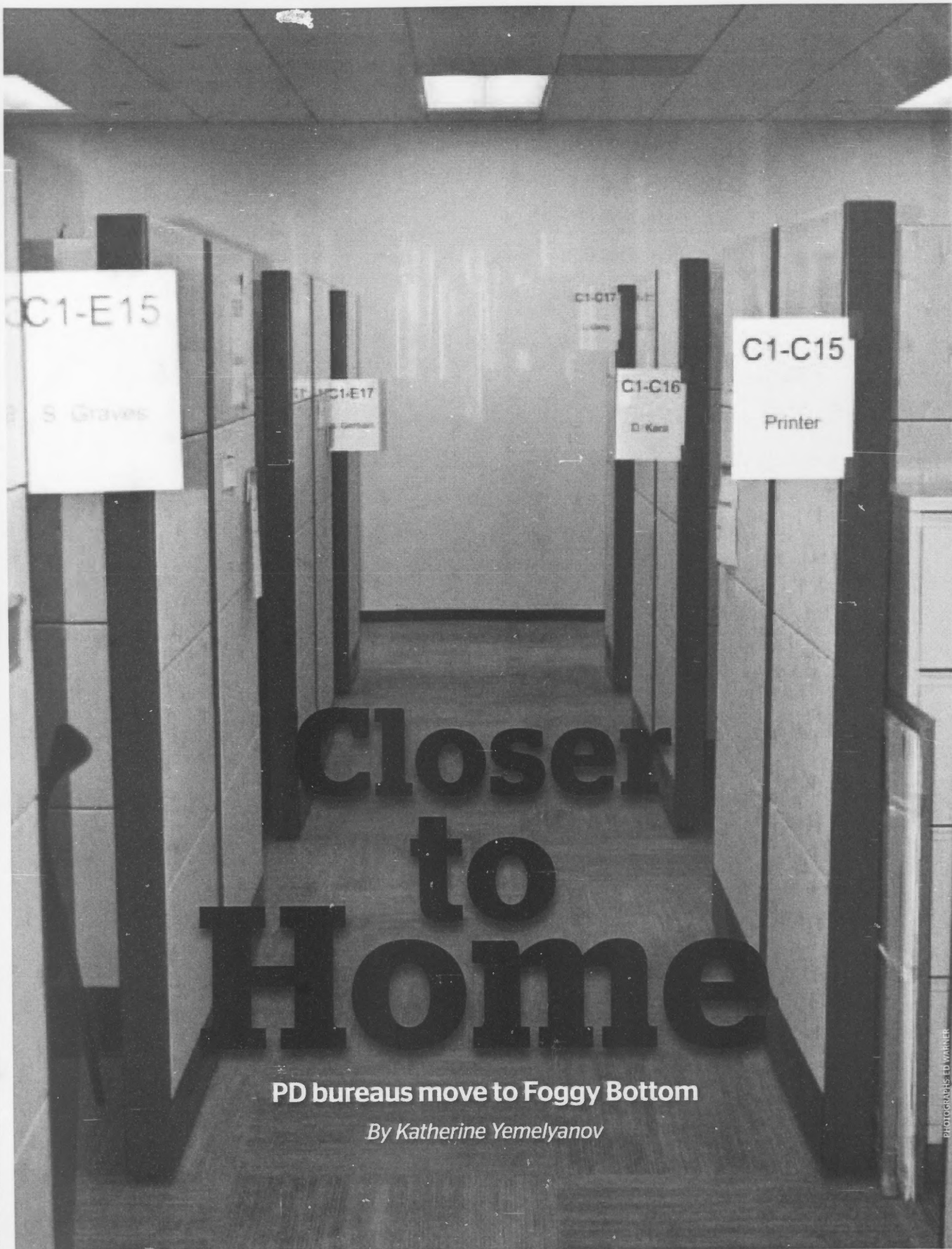


Clockwise from top: Troops training in Cameroon ready for a convoy exercise; in an exercise, a peacekeeper is carried into an ambulance on a stretcher as other peacekeepers take up positions to protect the evacuation; a Togolese trainee practices clearing an urban building at a training site.

ing nations gain the professional qualifications they require. It also complements U.N. and other international peace-support operations through information sharing and coordination.

The program uses U.N.-reviewed programs of instruction to cover training in command and staff operations, peacekeeper skills and specialty areas, such as medicine, engineering,

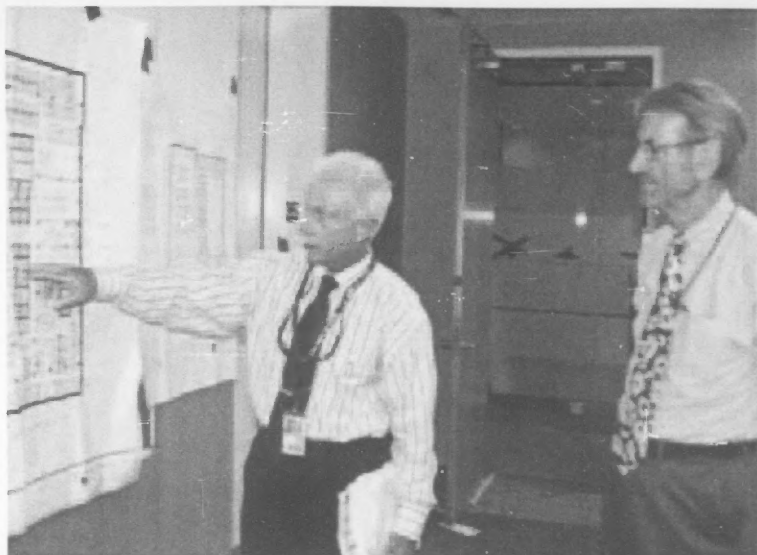




Closer to Home

PD bureaus move to Foggy Bottom

By Katherine Yemelyanov



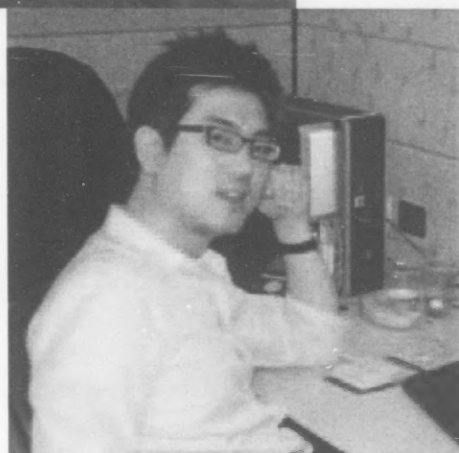
Clockwise from above: The author stands with the Department's seal behind her in a lower floor of the new annex after presenting a tour to members of employees' unions; Mark Schneider, left, of Facility Management Services shows office locations to James York of the American Foreign Service Association during a tour of the new office space; information technology contractor Paul Lim said the new building is nicer than SA-44 but finding parking in the area is more difficult.

In mid-July, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Bureau of International Information Programs completed the first phase of their move from SA-44 in southwest Washington to SA-5 in Foggy Bottom. The move of the two public diplomacy bureaus from the former headquarters of the U.S. Information Agency to the new headquarters of the American Pharmacists Association comes less than two months before the 10th anniversary of USIA's consolidation into the State Department on October 1, 1999. Their new home sits just across C Street from the Harry S Truman Building.

"This long-awaited move by ECA and IIP brings together the entire public diplomacy family, not only physically but also as a cohesive, close-knit team," said Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith McHale. "These professionals will benefit from the modern workspace, and its proximity helps foster a sense of cooperation and unity among the public diplomacy team."

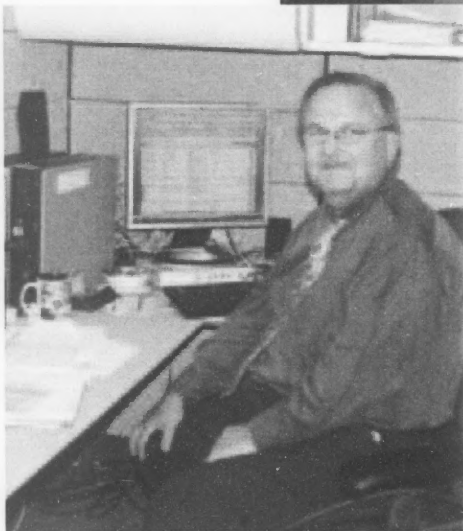
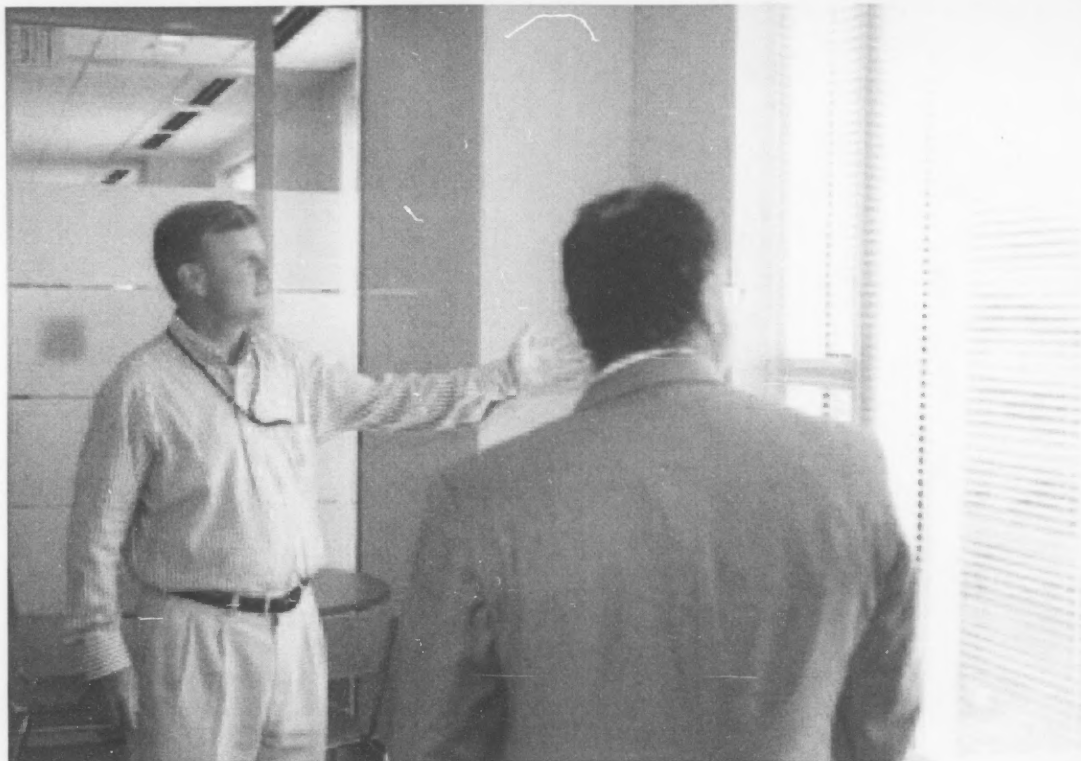
Congressional Mandate

Congress in 2002 mandated that ECA and IIP move closer to Department headquarters, implementing a recommendation of the 9/11 Commission Report.



With much of HST under renovation, the Department needed new space to house the bureaus. The American Pharmacists Association, looking to expand its Constitution Avenue headquarters building, offered the State Department a chance to lease space in a new building, and a lease was signed in 2006. The new building has eight levels for staff, two of which are used by the American Pharmacists Association, and two levels of parking. It will house more than 900 ECA and IIP staff members, as well as personnel from the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources; Global Strategic Engagement Center; Bureau of Resource Management; and Office of Legal Advisor.

"New construction and moving 900 people into a new building, these are exercises in logistics," said Sheldon Yuspeh, director of the ECA-IIP Executive Office, as staff stacked surplus office supplies outside his office. "Our goal is to support IIP and ECA with the same combination of per-



Top: Bureau of Human Resources Chief Labor Management Negotiator Steven J. Polson, left, shows the building's view to Daniel Hirsch of the American Foreign Service Association.

Above: Gerald Luterek of the contractor Microsystems Automation said he likes his new cubicle for its improved layout.

sonal outreach and emerging technologies they use to engage international audiences and foster mutual understanding.”

To this end, ECA-IIP's Executive Office established an Intranet site (<http://ex.pd.state.gov/index.cfm/20530>) to disseminate information about the new building and the move, with easily navigable links providing updates regarding the building's location, appearance, facilities and transportation grid. The site also includes an archive of move-related newsletters and move-schedule updates.

Many Questions

Questions from staff on everything from chairs and computers to parking spaces were converted into dozens of Frequently Asked Questions and placed on the Intranet site.

With the support of Bureau of Information Resource Management's Office of eDiplomacy, the Executive Office also created a blog (<http://move.eca-iip.state.gov/>) called "Home Sweet Annex," which provided updates and interaction regarding every aspect of the move. Included were firsthand accounts by move coordinators who visited SA-5 during construction, drawings of the planned cubicles and

bulletins regarding ergonomic amenities. Blog posts were supplemented with posts on Yammer, a microblogging service similar to Twitter that allows users to share updates on their activities with others inside the Department's e-mail domain.

Brown-bag Lunches

Not all of the outreach was high-tech. The Executive Office hosted brown-bag lunches to build awareness of the amenities and transportation options available in the new location. A senior staff member even added the watercolor touches to the project poster.

The Executive Office established furniture and move committees to promote maximum transparency on every aspect of the move, from seating assignments to selection of desk chairs. Floor charts with seating charts were posted on the Executive Office's walls for staff to review, and a sample cubicle was set up there for staff to "test drive." A selection of ergonomic chairs was also available, from which staff members were invited to choose a favorite. The bureau's information technology office, meanwhile, prepared computers for staff to test in SA-44 in advance of the move, so they could hit the ground running in SA-5.

The author is a program analyst in the ECA-IIP Executive Office.



It's not just the landscaping that makes SA-5 a 'green' building.

New Building Offers Environmental Benefits III By Kitt Alexander

The American Pharmacists Association Building across from the Harry S Truman Building is the Department's first domestic real property to achieve Gold Certification using the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System, which encourages green building and development practices.

The building's design reduces negative impacts on the environment and humanizes the workplace by improving the health, sense of well-being and comfort of building occupants. For example, research finds that windows providing daylight and a view of the outdoors can significantly affect mental alertness, productivity and psychological well-being. Among the building's most desirable features are the 160 windows

that are more than seven feet high and five feet wide and flood the 2nd through 5th floors with daylight. Venetian blinds are perforated, providing light control while maintaining exterior views.

Most private offices are located in interior areas and outfitted with glazed glass doors. Light flows through modular workstation areas nearest to the windows to private offices and even reaches glass-walled conference rooms, frosted for privacy, in interior areas.

To preserve energy, lighting fixtures in private offices are equipped with motion sensors, and fixtures can be dimmed to half power. Task lighting in workstations can be adjusted to suit occupants, and individually controlled thermostats are available for 90

percent of occupants.

The building has bike racks, showers and dedicated parking for low-emission or fuel-efficient vehicles. Its heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems require 25 percent less power than a typical building's. Seventy percent of its appliances and equipment are Energy-Star rated.

To keep the interior healthful, the builders used low-pollution adhesives, sealants, paints, carpeting and furniture. The building's outdoor air ventilation rates are 30 percent higher than required, and the quality of the outside air brought into the building is monitored.

The author is a space management specialist in the Office of Real Property Management.

When only half of registered voters went to the polls in recent provincial elections in Basra, Iraq, local journalists blamed the low turnout on citizens' failure to understand the power of their votes.

One solution: Educate the next generation.



Iraqi students learn value of elections // *By Michael D. Sunshine*

However, studying the electoral process is generally not part of the Iraqi high school curriculum. Staff at the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra thought perhaps the time was right for a program for students on elections. Teaming up with Iraq's Rural Women's Association, the staff created a pilot program called "The Power to Change Is in Your Voice," which was funded through Quick Response Funds for less than \$25,000.

The program's content was reviewed by the director of Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission, the Basra deputy general for education and Basra's director of education planning, who formally endorsed it.

Fifty Students

Twenty-five students from Al-Ashar Girls High School and an equal number from Al-Motamayzien Boys High School attended the course, in which student participation was voluntary. Two members of the Iraqi Bar Association were the course's principal instructors, and five teachers from each high school attended classes, each with an assigned group of five students. The principals of both schools also attended.

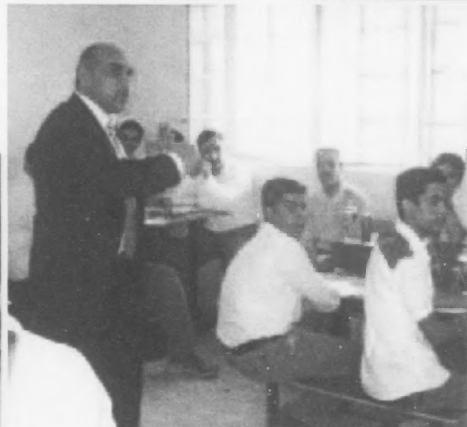
The importance of the course's topic grabbed students' attention after the first week, and several said it was different from anything else they'd studied in school. Participating teachers said the classes broadened their knowledge. Students said they wanted plays and art added to the program.

Several girls in the class wanted to discuss women's rights, likening the subject to a tree and asking "How deep are the roots? How fast does it grow?" Delighted with student and teacher interest, the schools added more classroom hours.

At the completion of the course, the students submitted essays about what they learned, and the student with the best paper from each school received a laptop computer, as did his or her teacher.



Clockwise from above: A student from Basra Al-Ashar Girls High School used art to compare the rights of women to the growth of a tree; Students and teachers from Basra Al-Motamayzien Boys High School ask their teacher questions; Basra Deputy Director of Education Maki Mohsen Mahoos meets with the winner of the essay contest from Al-Ashar Girls High School.



Joint Class

In Iraq, males and females attend separate schools. For the last class, the boys and girls were brought together for the essay contest presentation. There was some concern that parents might not like the idea of the joint session, but no one objected.

The joint session was attended by the deputy general for education, the director of the Independent High Electoral Commission and the director for Basra education planning. Two TV and two radio stations covered the class.

In the last week of the course, all 50 students turned in essays.

The evaluation of the essays emphasized research but also considered class participation and the student's support to his or her team. Both schools provided teachers for the evaluation process.

Once the essays were reviewed by an oversight committee, the winners were announced at a banquet attended by 250 family members, instructors, the essay evaluation board and Independent High Electoral Commission personnel. There, the area's police chief and its newly elected member of the national assembly assisted with the ceremony.

The winning student from Al-Ashar Girls High School

wrote: "When I am able to vote, it will be for the candidate who serves my people before personal aspiration."

The winner from Al-Motamayzien Boys High School wrote: "We must carefully choose our representatives because they will lead not for a day, but for years."

"The program helped raise student awareness for the principles of democracy through the most civilized weapon—the voice," said the Basra Education Supervisor. ■

The author is the public diplomacy officer with the PRT in Basra.



Clockwise from top: Rani Ramadhani of the CSC's help desk receives a customer's call; the CSC staff provides services to embassy employees; a customer gets help from Ramadhani at the BlackBerry/cellphone service counter; Dian Sessarini, right, assists a customer; several Embassy Jakarta employees request General Services and BlackBerry support from CSC staff.



1-Stop Assistance

Center provides employees access to embassy services
By Wade C. Martin

The U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, is a large post with 19 federal agencies, 32 buildings and 1,450 positions. To make life easier for employees, the post established one location where employees can receive help with any issue. This customer service center is located in the heart of the embassy compound next to the community liaison office, American Express travel office, automated teller machine, snack bar and commissary.

Callers to the center are greeted with, "This is Jakarta's customer service center. How may I assist you?" That help can mean the world to newly arriving employees, who are often dazed and confused after a journey to this post. On arrival, they find their new home does not yet have cable TV, Internet or any of their property because their household effects have yet to arrive. The simplest of tasks, such as ordering a bottle of water for the water dispenser can be complex and may seem like a life-or-death matter in this hot country. Although the sponsors of arriving staff members do leave plenty of drinks in the refrigerators—and do a great job helping families settle in—many employees first encounter the customer service center when ordering water.

Welcome Kit

On arrival, employees receive a welcome kit with a brochure outlining the customer service center's offerings and noting the phone number, e-mail address and Web page link used to access the center and, through it, every service the embassy offers. Services available through the center include those of the offices for management, general services, information technology, community liaison, human resources and financial management.

Once they arrive at the center, employees get an even better experience. They use the "eCheck-in" software, which asks one time for the employee's pertinent information and then automatically puts that data into all the check-in forms. At the center, users also receive their OpenNet accounts, BlackBerry handheld computers, thumb-drive storage devices, emergency contact radios and information on the local Internet service provider and cable TV options.

The post's check-in list of 42 items is virtually finished at the customer service center within 20 minutes. The entire process is so efficient and convenient that arriving staff often start work on their first day at post.

"I just want to thank you for everything you have done to make us feel at home," said Charles Egu, the post's deputy controller for the U.S. Agency for International Development. "I don't know which service to praise most—cable TV, Internet, water, furniture or check-in—you took so many actions, even some we are not aware of. Our children's stay in Jakarta has been made more comfortable because of your efforts."

One-stop Concept

The service center's one-stop-shopping idea was initiated by Financial Management Officer Ralph Hamilton, based on the customer service center he started in Dhaka. The Dhaka center started as a joint venture between the post's office of human resources and its facility management center after he noticed that employees were being bounced between the two offices. In Jakarta, post management expanded the concept to consolidate the individual help desks for the information technology, management, general services and human resources offices, so that an efficient and well-rounded staff could handle any issue at any time.

The focal point of Jakarta's customer service center is six Locally Employed Staff members who handle more than 150 requests a day. It also has a customer service Web page that connects directly to the eServices and WebPASS applications and supports the Department's Collaborative Management Initiative. Through the Web page, employees can access 112 ICASSs. Routing of the requests is automatic and reaches the relevant service provider within seconds. Even the remote locations in Surabaya and Medan, Indonesia, can take advantage of these services.

After a long day at work, employees at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta return home knowing everything is in order. The household staff has accepted delivery of the water the employee ordered, a request has been made for delivery of gas for the stove and the children are enjoying the fast new Internet connection—tasks all accomplished with a simple call to the customer service center. ■

The author is the information systems officer at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta.



The cable car travelling up the
Cerro de Montserrat has been in
service since 1955.



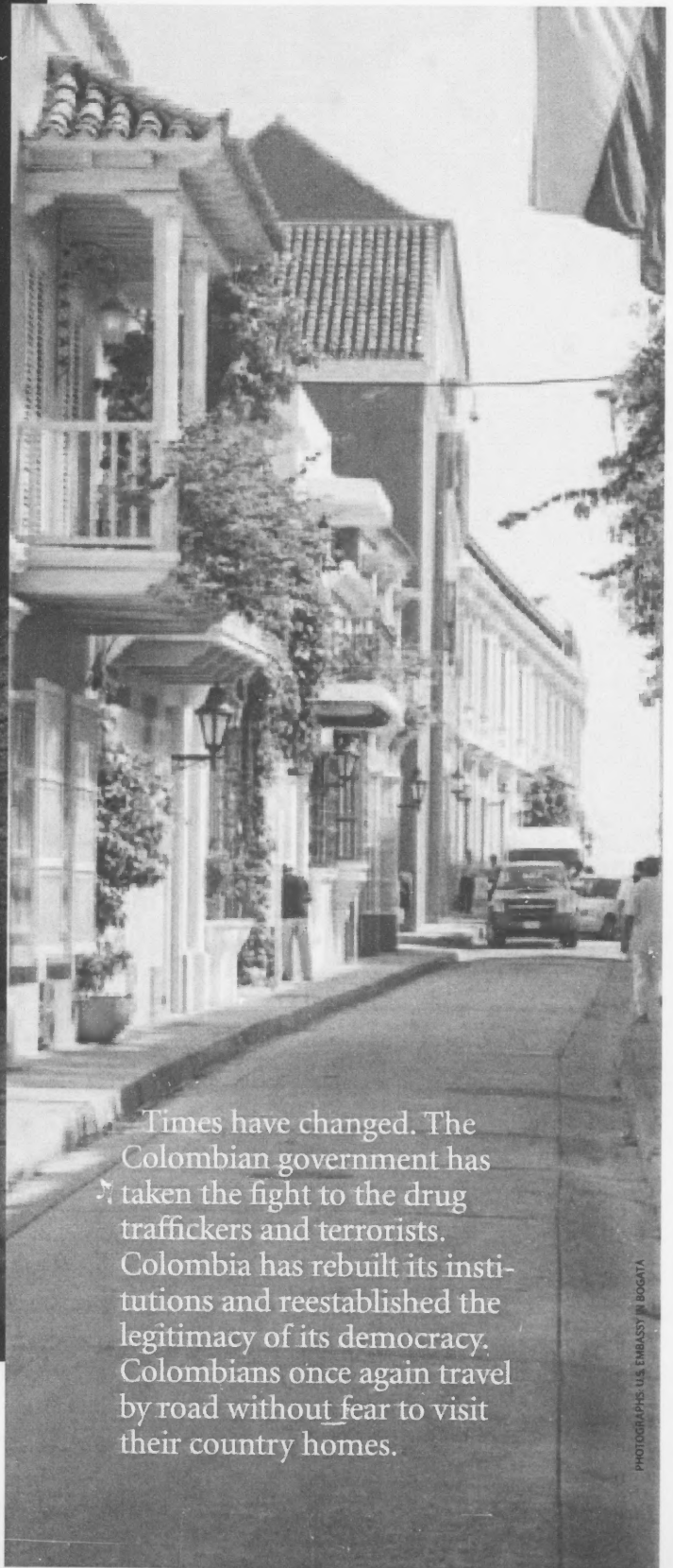
* Post of the Month

Bogotá

Colombia rebuilds with U.S. help // *By Michael Turner*

Post of the Month

During the 1980s and much of the 1990s, drug trafficking and terrorism nearly destroyed Colombia. Fearless drug kingpins either financed or killed presidential candidates. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) encircled and threatened to overrun Bogotá. The Colombian people suffered countless bombings and murders, and lost faith in their government.



Times have changed. The Colombian government has taken the fight to the drug traffickers and terrorists. Colombia has rebuilt its institutions and reestablished the legitimacy of its democracy. Colombians once again travel by road without fear to visit their country homes.

What inspired these positive changes? The Colombian people demanded that their elected leaders take back the country. The government responded by building the capacity of the military to go after drug traffickers and terrorists, expanding the reach of civilian institutions and increasing economic opportunities. The Colombian-U.S. partnership through Plan Colombia married Colombian solutions to the country's problems with Colombian and U.S. resources.

While the work is not yet done, the bilateral relationship is one of the strongest the United States has and makes the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá an intriguing place to work.

Colombia's audacious recovery of 15 hostages from the FARC in 2008 symbolizes Colombia's transformation. In a daring and successful special-forces operation, the Colombian armed forces—with U.S. assistance—tricked the FARC into handing over its prized political hostages, including three Americans, without spilling a drop of blood. Even though the FARC has been brought low, it remains a threat to Colombian democracy.

Under Plan Colombia, the U.S. government has provided more than \$6 billion in assistance to Colombia, including \$1 billion in economic and social assistance. "Hard-side" dollars support efforts to combat drug trafficking and terrorism. "Soft-side" programming, primarily through the U.S. Agency for International Development, focuses on alternative development, increasing literacy, expanding economic opportunities for Afro-Colombians and indigenous communities, providing social services to the internally displaced, reintegrating demobilized fighters, protecting unionists and increasing training on human rights. In addition, Department of Justice programs are helping Colombia reform its overburdened justice system.

Vibrant mission

The U.S. Embassy in Bogotá numbers more than 4,000 employees representing many government agencies. The embassy compound includes a commissary, cafeteria, café and snack bar. Employees occupy spacious furnished apartments in some of the city's most desirable neighborhoods. Parents can send their children to one of five private English-language schools.

Ambassador Bill Brownfield recently inaugurated the Embassy Branch Office in Cartagena, establishing an official U.S. presence on the North Coast.

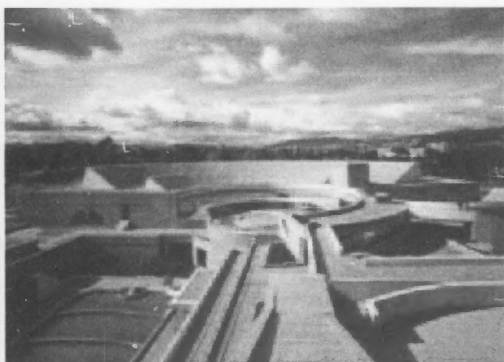
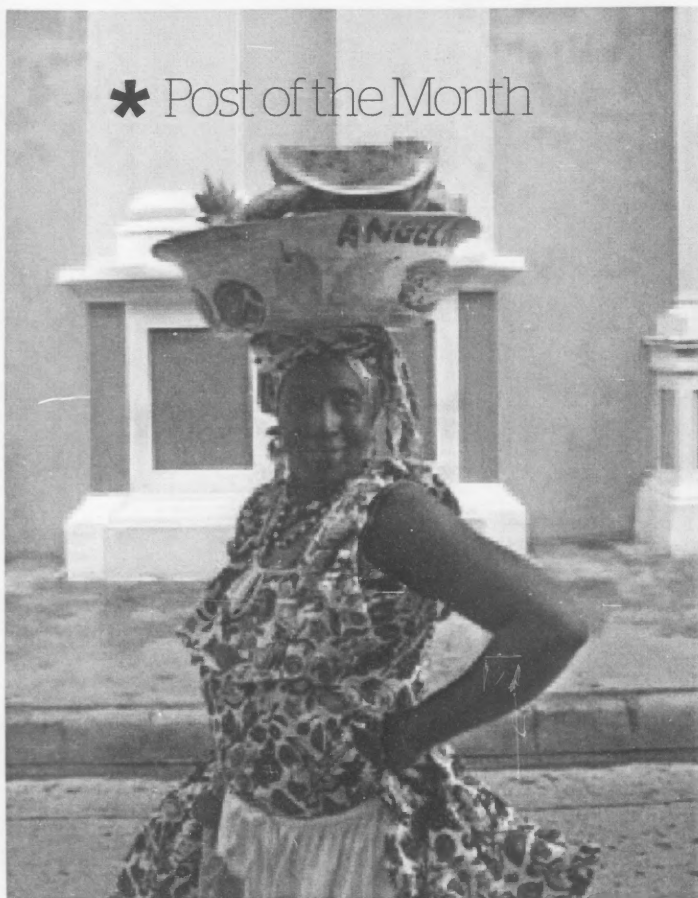
At 8,600 feet above sea level and sitting near the equator, Bogotá enjoys a steady, year-round temperate climate similar to autumn in Washington, D.C.



Clockwise from above: Flowering plants add a colorful accent to the old walled city section of Cartagena; Children from the Fundación Fútbol con Corazón in Barranquilla surround Ambassador Brownfield after a soccer game; The Colombian singer Juanes performs with the USNS Comfort's band during the ship's humanitarian mission in Tumaco.



* Post of the Month



Clockwise from above: A Paienquera woman selling fruit in the coastal city of Cartagena strikes a pose; The Virgilio Barco Library in Bogotá, with its dramatic design, opened in 2001; Bogotá Cathedral anchors the Plaza Bolívar downtown; The quintessential cafetero Juan Valdez is a symbol of the Colombian coffee industry.



Art lovers flock to the Candelaria section, visiting the Botero and National Art Gallery museums. Foodies dine in style at a variety of French, Japanese, Italian and fusion restaurants, if they can tear themselves away from the city's dozens of outstanding steak joints.

Joggers, cyclists and power walkers hit the streets every Sunday morning when the city closes more than 70 miles of its streets to vehicular traffic. Night owls salsa, cumbia and merengue until breakfast at Bogotá's many dance clubs. Families picnic at a number of parks or visit excellent petting zoos. Everyone enjoys the plentiful and cheap supply of the famous Colombian roses.

PHOTOGRAPHS: U.S. EMBASSY IN BOGOTÁ

In two hours, direct flights from Bogotá can have a visitor enjoying Cartagena's colonial-era Old City on the Caribbean coast, rafting the Amazon River in the south or traipsing through coffee country in the nation's center.

Colombia's Caribbean coast greets visitors with warm winds, salty air and the sounds of local vallenato bands. Cartagena hosts thousands of tourists each year from cruise ships and direct flights from the United States. Its colonial walled city and fortress received a World Heritage Site designation in 1984. To control their trade in the Caribbean and compete with the British Empire, the Spanish built fortifications that repelled a British force of 186 ships and 23,600 men sent against only six Spanish ships and 3,600 men in 1741.

Walled city and beaches

Today's visitors can stroll atop the city's walls, facing the sea to the north and the restored colonial center to the south. Guided tours in horse-drawn carriages through the Old City tell the story of pirates, colonies and the Spanish Inquisition in South America. Every visit to Cartagena should include enjoying one of its beaches and the fresh-caught seafood.

The more adventurous travel to Leticia, Colombia's southernmost city, to see the Amazon River, which forms Colombia's border with Peru. Over a long weekend, a visitor can book a guided boat trip and take in the rain forest, including pink dolphins, anacondas and triple-canopy jungle. The boats also offer night tours and piranha fishing.

Colombia's coffee country is a lush region of rolling hills with a mild climate that extends through the western part of the country. It is the perfect place not only to grow Colombia's famous coffee

but also to relax. Most visitors stay at one of the dozens of plantations throughout the countryside. Tourist attractions include the National Coffee Park, a coffee-themed amusement park; Panaca, a petting zoo; and the Valle de Cocora, a mist-shrouded valley that is the gateway to Los Nevados National Park. The park has snow-covered peaks and is home to threatened species, such as the mountain tapir and the spectacled bear.

Colombia has made great strides. Its close partnership with the United States, as well as a recently expanded embassy with the tools necessary to conduct 21st century diplomacy, make Colombia one of the most exciting postings in the Foreign Service. ■

The author, formerly a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, works on the staff of the Executive Secretariat.

At a Glance >>> Colombia



Capital: Bogotá

Government: Republic

Independence: July 20, 1810
(from Spain)

Area: 1,138,910 sq km

Approximate size: Roughly the size of Texas and California combined

Population: 45 million

Language: Spanish

GDP - per capita: \$4,985

Unemployment rate: 11.7 percent

Imports: industrial equipment, transportation equipment, consumer goods, chemicals and paper products

Import partners: U.S., China and Mexico

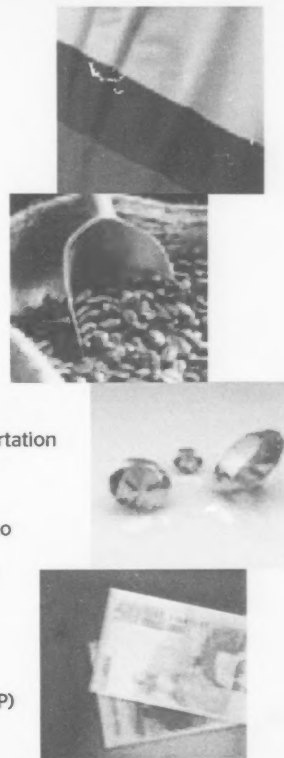
Exports: petroleum, coffee, coal, nickel and emeralds

Export partners: U.S., Venezuela and Ecuador

Currency (code): Colombian Peso (COP)

Internet country code: .co

Source: Country Background Notes



Mission Ready

RSO in Iraq promotes emergency preparedness

By Aaron D. Snipe

With a growing number of Foreign Service personnel serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and other hardship posts, the mandatory Foreign Affairs Counter Threat Course has become an integral readiness component for U.S. diplomats abroad. Department employees positively review the one-week course, which acquaints them with emergency medical training, threat awareness, surveillance detection and firearms instruction, and many say it is one of the Department's best.

However, personnel headed to high-threat posts often want more training. The regional security office team for Tallil Air Base, Iraq, recognized that need and has made it a top priority to keep the civilian personnel it serves mission-ready.

Tallil Air Base, a large base in southern Iraq, serves as a center of operations for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Muthanna, Dhi Qar and Maysan provinces. The security office consists of five Bureau of Diplomatic Security special agents and a team of American security contractors. The office is responsible for U.S. civilian personnel from the Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the other organizations that serve in southern Iraq.

RSO Protection

While most PRTs in Iraq rely on military teams for travel protection, RSO

Tallil itself provides travel and protective services for ground and air trips into the three provinces. Department personnel working in Muthanna Province, more than 60 miles from Tallil, spend much time commuting to the province, especially for frequent meetings with the province's leadership, but spending long hours on the road brings increased risk.

Responding to that risk, RSO Tallil in late 2008 initiated a series of workshops to reacquaint PRT staff from the Tallil-based teams with emergency medical procedures. Instructors from RSO Tallil briefed PRT members on emergency procedures and conducted numerous scenarios on using specific medical tools.

"The security environment in Muthanna Province is relatively calm, but things here can change in a heartbeat," said Paul Higgins, an assistant regional security officer assigned to Tallil. "If something happens, ensuring that those we protect know how to help themselves makes everyone out there safer."

"I got my medical kit in Baghdad more than a year ago and haven't opened it since," said one PRT participant. "I hope we never have to use it, but it's good to have this refresher."

RSO Tallil's refresher training also included a visit to the firing range. PRT Muthanna's team leader, former DS Special Agent Brad Lynch, encouraged all members of the team to participate.

"In an emergency, everyone on the

team, including security and civilian personnel, needs to be ready to react and respond," Lynch said. "There may come a time when PRT personnel have to fall back on their training, and ensuring familiarity with RSO procedures and equipment may save lives."

Personnel from the Dhi Qar and Muthanna PRTs also reviewed the proper handling of RSO weapon systems and re-familiarized themselves with emergency weapons and vehicle procedures.

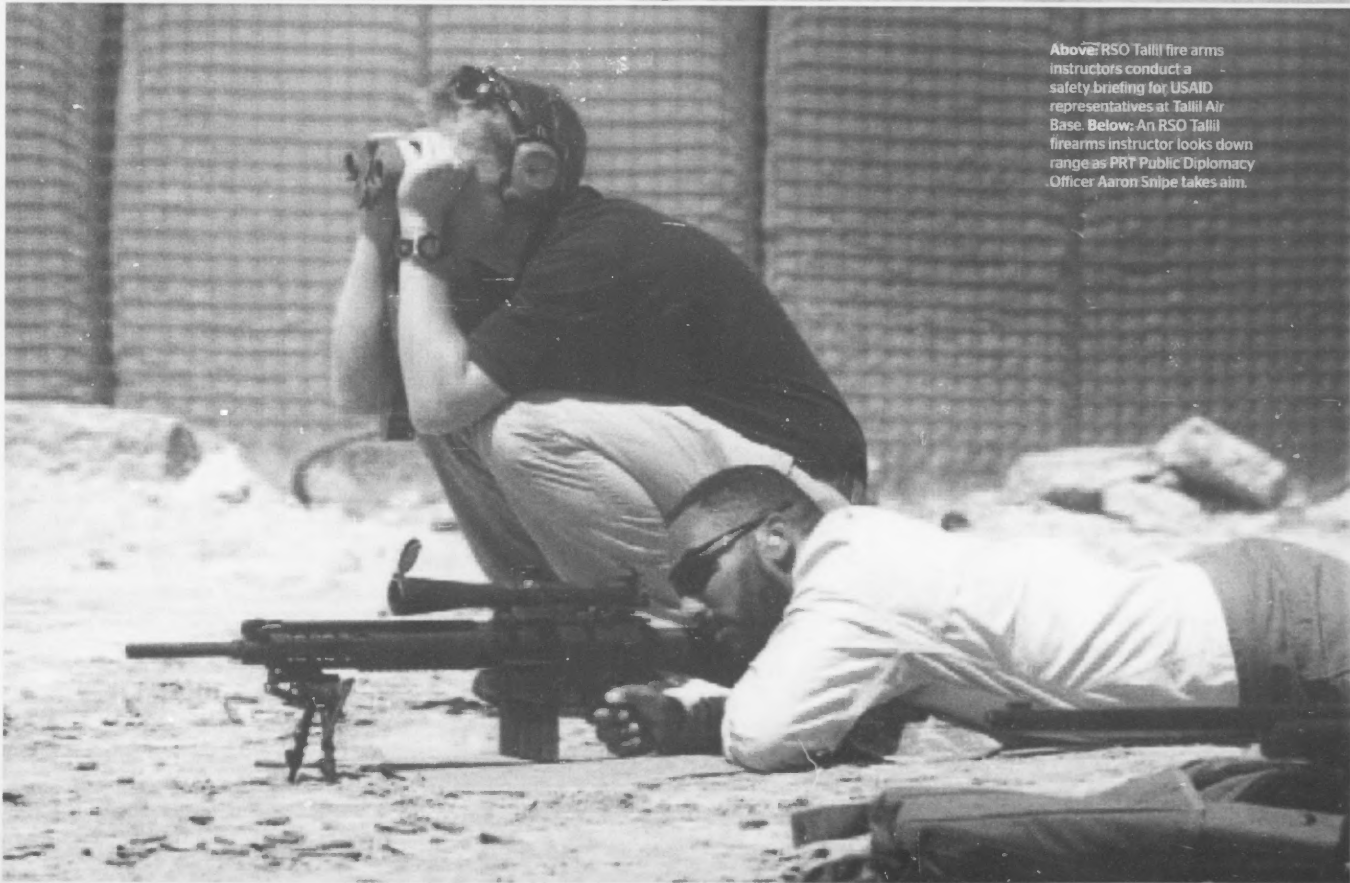
Getting Acquainted

The training event gave PRT members an opportunity to get to know the security professionals who safeguard them every time they leave the base.

"When we are out on a mission, everyone has a specific job and is focused on that job with no time for chitchat or pleasantries," said Assistant RSO Andrew Curran. "Today, we've fused training and team-building, and it's nice for my guys to get to know the folks they are protecting a little better."

The training at Tallil continues, with more refreshers planned for the incoming team. This training is invaluable to those who receive it because they'll be able to use it in assignments beyond Iraq. ■

The author is the public diplomacy officer at the Provisional Reconstruction Team in Muthanna, Iraq.



Above: RSO Tallil fire arms instructors conduct a safety briefing for USAID representatives at Tallil Air Base. Below: An RSO Tallil firearms instructor looks down range as PRT Public Diplomacy Officer Aaron Snipe takes aim.

Developing Peace

In Mindanao in the southern Philippines, U.S. forces and the U.S. Agency for International Development have been helping the Philippine government fight terrorism since 2002.

Mindanao, the second largest island in the Philippines, lies 650 miles southeast of Manila. Its population straddles ethnic, cultural, religious and clan fault lines; these factors have led to robberies, kidnappings and killings. The region has become a safe haven for extremists, particularly the al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Group and Jemaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian terrorist group.

The U.S. Embassy in Manila has combined diplomacy, development and defense efforts to combat terrorism. The interagency effort is primarily implemented by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense, the latter through the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines located in the southern Philippines.

The two agencies' projects are integrated into U.S. support to the Philippine government in Mindanao and aim to

wear the population from armed conflict by boosting economic activity and making institutions better able to respond.

It's a unique partnership between the host nation and U.S. government partners.

Conflict Focused

USAID's development projects focus on conflict-affected areas to promote good governance, increase economic opportunities, protect the environment, strengthen health services and improve basic education.

Since 1996, when the Moro National Liberation Front and the Philippine government signed a peace agreement, the United States has shifted its financial resources toward projects that provide additional leverage for U.S. efforts in Mindanao. Today, more than 60 percent of the U.S. government's development budget in the Philippines is devoted to Mindanao projects.

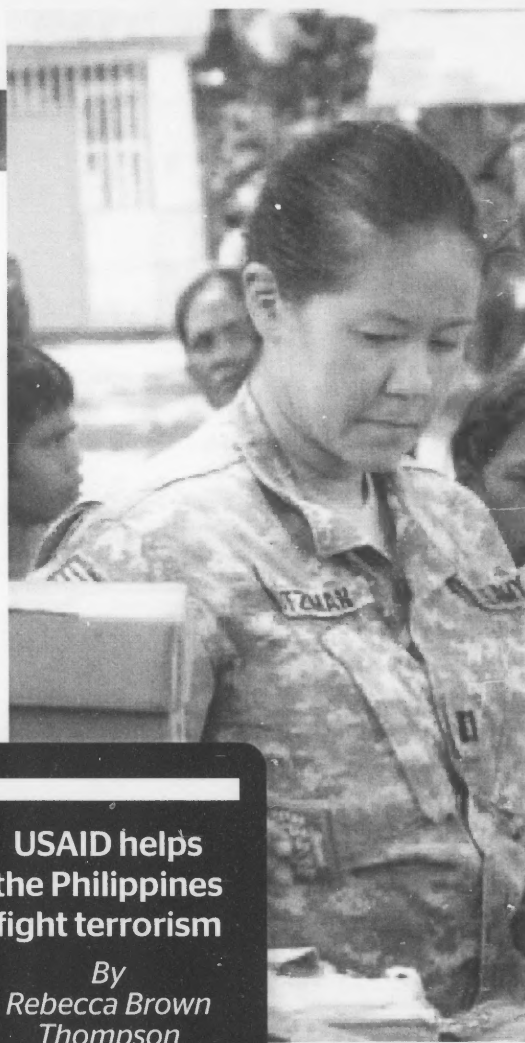
"Our goal is to improve lives in areas that have been breeding grounds for terrorism," said Jon Lindborg, director of USAID Philippines. "With (our) combined efforts in development

and security-related cooperation, we are making a difference because ultimately the issues in Mindanao are not just about security but also about development."

The task force, meanwhile, has an indirect, non-combatant role. Its short-term activities complement USAID's long-term sustainable development approach. It shares information and builds the capacity of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and assists with civil-military operations, such as conducting free medical, dental and veterinary clinics.

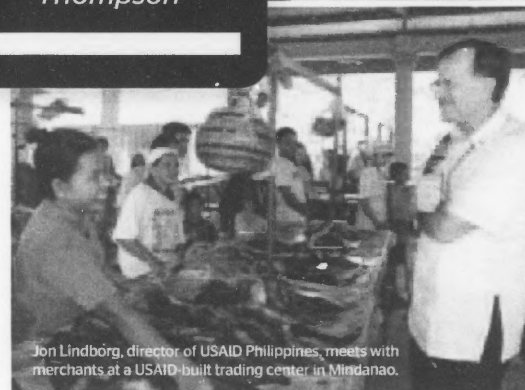
To ensure the best use of resources, both organizations regularly synchronize and coordinate their activities. The collaboration is intended to ensure that the task force's civil affairs efforts fit with USAID's long-term development programs.

Ambassador Kristie Kenney takes a keen interest in the groups' activities. Since arriving in 2006, she has traveled



USAID helps the Philippines fight terrorism

*By
Rebecca Brown
Thompson*



Jon Lindborg, director of USAID Philippines, meets with merchants at a USAID-built trading center in Mindanao.

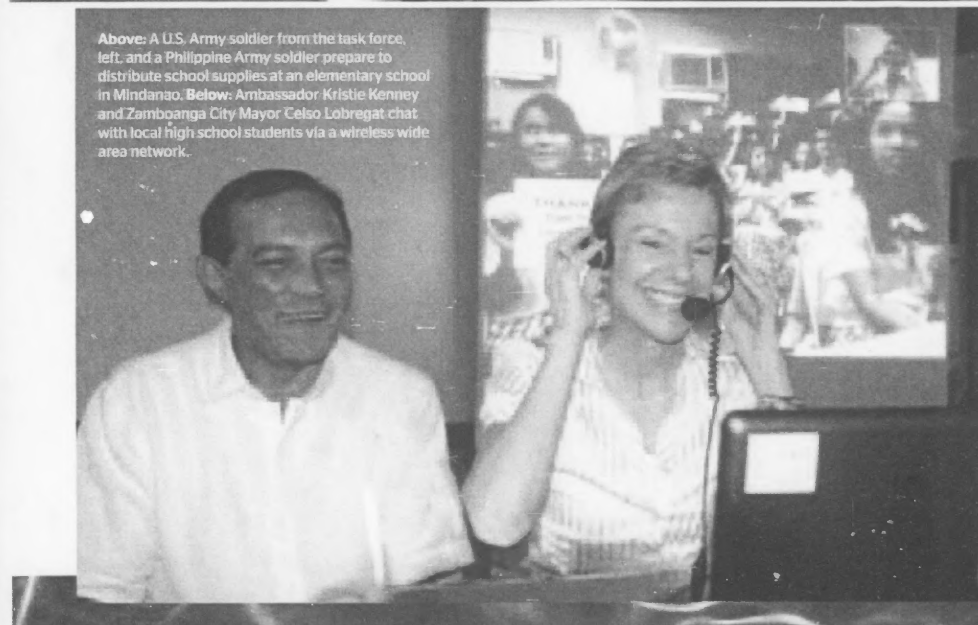
to Mindanao more than 20 times and on each visit sought to connect with those who are involved with projects funded or

otherwise supported by USAID or the task force.

On a trip to the city of Zamboanga, Ambassador Kenney met with the U.S.



Above: A U.S. Army soldier from the task force, left, and a Philippine Army soldier prepare to distribute school supplies at an elementary school in Mindanao. Below: Ambassador Kristie Kenney and Zamboanga City Mayor Celso Lobregat chat with local high school students via a wireless wide area network.



and Philippine commanders and received an update on operations. Later, she was the guest of honor at a school library dedication, a joint project of USAID and the task force. That afternoon, she signed a memorandum of understanding for a technical study at a water treatment plant, a project funded by USAID through its Growth with Equity in Mindanao program. Before returning to Manila, she told one of the region's top radio networks how U.S. efforts are designed to achieve peace and prosperity in the region.

Successful Efforts

Reflecting the projects' success, the 2008 State Department Report on Terrorism cited how U.S. efforts in the region have "continued to marginalize the few remaining Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists in the Southern Philippines." The Philippine military also has taken a more proactive approach in its operations against the terrorists, shifting soldiers from secure areas to areas where terrorists remain a threat.

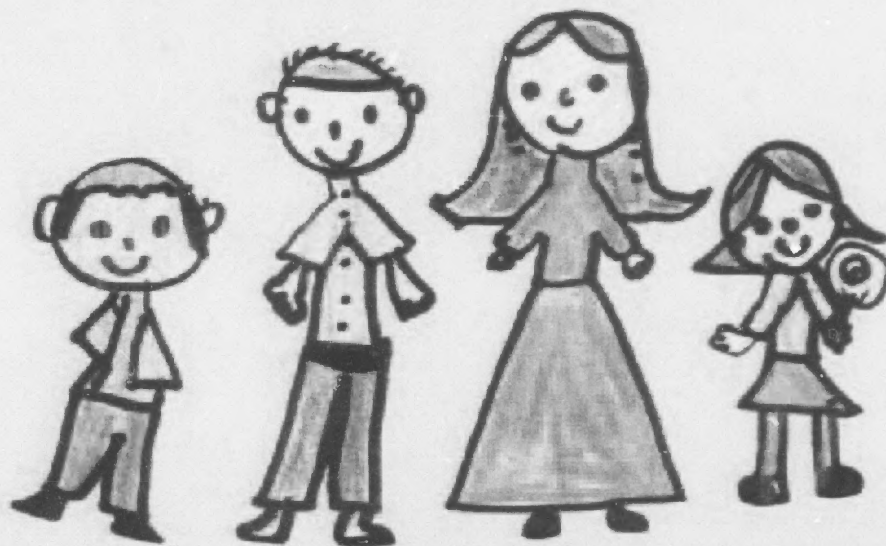
Nonetheless, the terrorists, while less numerous today, remain a threat. Using diplomacy, development and defense, the indirect, coordinated "soft power" approach must be a long-term effort. Working with Philippine partners, the State Department in collaboration with USAID and the task force continues to promote peace and prosperity in this volatile region. ■

The author is press attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

When State Department employees with school-aged children receive their overseas assignments they have a lot on their minds—especially where their children will be going to school. They want their children in a school with a good learning environment that is intellectually challenging and, most important, safe.

Safer Schools

Program upgrades soft target security // *By Jim Witt*





The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations is making overseas schools safer by providing grants for security upgrades through the Soft Target Program. The program's main goal is improving the physical security of overseas schools perceived to be at risk due to the presence of Americans. The security upgrades aim to deter terrorist attacks or violent crimes.

The Department is responsible for protecting more than 60,000 U.S. government employees and family members assigned overseas in more than 180 countries. With the increase in terrorist threats, Congress in 2003 decided the Department needed to do more to protect overseas schools and directed OBO to allocate an initial \$15 million to launch the Soft Target Program.

Upgrades Widespread

Since its inception, the program has provided grants to more than 500 overseas schools enrolling U.S. government dependent students. In the past six years, more than \$85 million in soft target funding has underwritten security upgrades for schools and recreational facilities located outside the post compound. These types of soft targets are deemed vulnerable and requiring special attention.

The program, coordinated by OBO's Office of Security Management, began by funding the most basic security upgrades, such as the shatter-resistant window film installed on windows that are vulnerable to bomb blasts. The program also funded the installation of public address systems, which give school administrators a quick and effective means to provide safety instructions in an emergency. Emergency radio equipment was also provided so school officials could communicate directly with the post to better coordinate emergency and evacuation activity.

After addressing these basic upgrades, OBO began funding more extensive upgrades at the schools. Advanced upgrades, identified and recommended by the regional security officers, included the installation of perimeter walls, fences, gates, bollards and access control systems. Also installed were closed-circuit television systems, guard houses, sanctuaries, reinforced doors and windows, security lighting, metal detectors, window grilles and alarms.

Successful Protection

In 2005, OBO provided a grant to construct a perimeter wall around Khartoum American School in Sudan. Shortly after the

project was completed, the death of Sudan's vice president in a helicopter crash led to three days of rioting throughout Khartoum that damaged buildings and killed 84 people.

"It was quite obvious the high and sturdy wall that surrounds our campus saved us from vandalism and destruction and was the most important factor in securing our campus," said the school's superintendent, Phil Clinton. "Not a day goes by when I don't look out on that wall and see a tangible reminder of the strong ties that link our school to the overall mission of the United States in Sudan."

While OBO funds the program and serves as its manager, it relies heavily on many other offices and individuals in the process of underwriting and implementing these upgrades.

The Process

The process of obtaining a Soft Target Program grant begins when a regional security officer inspects a school and develops a list of security recommendations. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Project Coordination Branch reviews the recommendations to verify that they are prudent and cost effective. Once a recommendation is finalized, OBO assigns funding and requests that the Office of

Overseas Schools or the Office of Logistics Management, both in the Bureau of Administration, prepare and issue grants to the schools.

More than 90 percent of all grant requests are approved and funded, if clearly and logically presented. The average time required for a request to be reviewed and funded and a grant issued is two to three weeks.

The grant officer's representative at post, usually the management officer, oversees the financial aspects of the grant, and the offices of the Procurement Executive and Legal Advisor advise the Soft Target team on policy and legal issues.

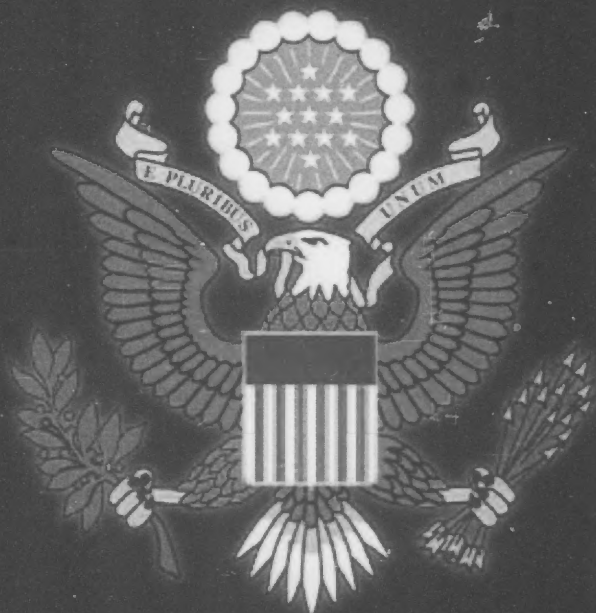
During construction, the regional security officer oversees the installation and determines whether the upgrades were installed properly and work as intended. Implementation of the work varies from 3 to 18 months, depending on its location, scope and complexity. Once installed, the upgrades are operated and maintained by the schools.

The Office of Security Management is seeking candidate projects for the Soft Target Program. For more information, contact the author at WittJW@state.gov. ■

The author is the Soft Target Program coordinator.

Office of the Month

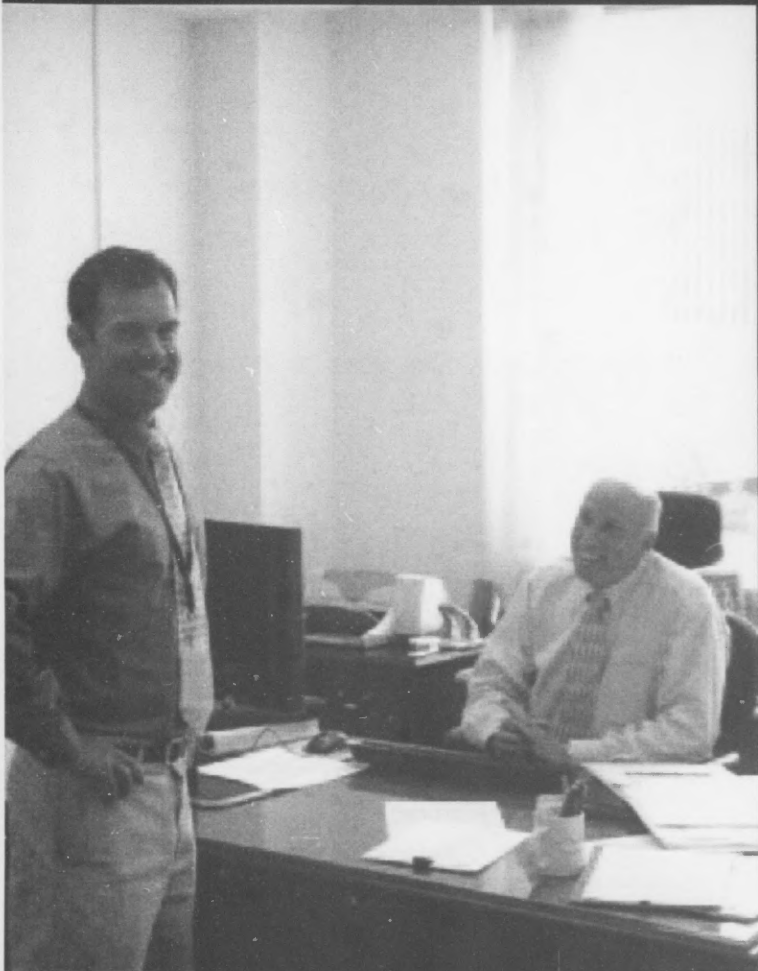
THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE



"Toward a Multi-partner World" III *By Robert Tice Lalka*



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks at the Global Philanthropy Forum.



Clockwise from left: Regional directors Jim Thompson, left, and G. Kevin Saba meet in the GPI office; Ambassador Elizabeth Frawley Bagley speaks at the TED@State conference; Office Management Specialist Mary Holloway works in the GPI office.



Office Hosts TED@State Conference

By Robert Tice Lalka

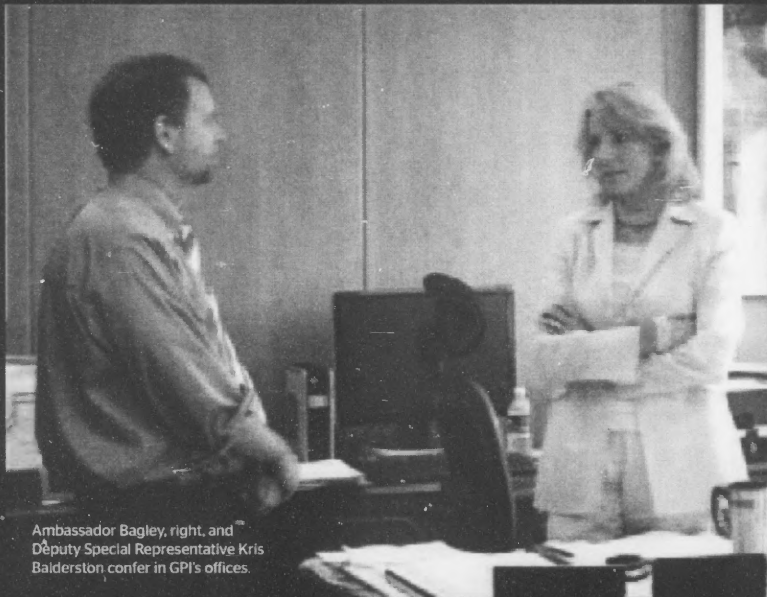
On Ambassador Bagley's first day as Special Representative for Global Partnerships, the Global Partnership Initiative hosted its inaugural event, the first government-sponsored Technology, Entertainment and Design—TED—Talks.

TED began as an organization focused on bringing together the best minds in technology, entertainment and design. It expanded to include science, business, the arts and global issues. Since 1984, TED has challenged great thinkers to give the talk of their lives—in 18 minutes or less.

More than 800 people attended the TED@State conference, including several hundred Department and USAID employees plus guests from the White House, Department of Defense, businesses and nongovernmental organizations. A standing-room-only crowd in Dean Acheson Auditorium heard such speakers as Clay Shirky, who said social media outlets like Twitter have generated "the largest increase in expressive capability in human history."

Before the event, the line of hundreds of guests extended up 23rd Street, NW. Afterward, one attendee called it in an e-mail "the best event that I've ever attended in all of the years that I've been at State."

All of the TED videos can be watched on BNET throughout the month of September or online at http://bnet.state.gov/viewClip.asp?clip_id=1670. They include Oxford Professor Paul Collier speaking on failed and failing states, and the chief executive officer of the Acumen Fund calling for creation of a Global Innovation Fund.



Ambassador Bagley, right, and Deputy Special Representative Kris Balderston confer in GPI's offices.

Keys to Happiness

Cultural Series Features Yearly Piano Recital /// By John Bentel

The State of the Arts Cultural Series and The Foreign Affairs Recreation Association recently hosted several talented pianists and a guitarist.

Wayne Dorsey, who works in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, returned for his seventh performance. Holder of a degree in music from Howard University, Dorsey sensitively played selections by Giovanni Sgambati, Domenico Scarlatti, Ludwig van Beethoven, Claude Debussy and Frederic Chopin, and received resounding applause.

Bhavna Patel led off the yearly recital of State Department and Montgomery College piano students who study under Caryl Traten Fisher. Patel gave a delightful performance of *Moscow Nights* by Vladimir Soloviev-Sedoy and *Gypsy Earrings* by Bret Adams. Richard Livingston played William Gillock's *Autumn Is Here*. Dr. Bob Brady skillfully played *Miniatura #2* by Nilson Lombardi and *Gypsy Dance* by Carl Czerny. Returning for his fifth recital, Dana Floyd played *America* by H. Carey, *Here and Now* by Luther Vandross and *Prelude in C Minor* by Alexander Morovsky. Jane Feldman performed Donnefield's *Minor Mood*. Ricky Jackson played *Nearer My God to Thee* by Lowell Mason and *Funeral March to the Memory of A. Lincoln* by E.A. Parkhurst. George W. Stone III rendered an improvisation of Beethoven's *Fur Elise*.

Victoria Vidal played Chopin's *Nocturne Opus 22 #1 Posthumous*, a real accomplishment given the selection's technical



and musical difficulties. Diana Walker gave a polished performance of *Rondo Expressive* by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Tengo Nostalgia de Ti* by Tata Nacho and *Gnossienne #4* by Eric Satie. Dorothy Ryan played two challenging works, *Prelude Opus 16 #1* by Alexander Scriabin and *Odeon* by Ernest Nazareth, with great finesse. Erin Harbaugh closed the recital by playing *Postludium Opus 13* from *Winterreigen* and *Danza #5 Granados*, both by Ernő Dohnanyi.

Pianist Reynaldo Reyes delighted the

audience with works by Chopin and Debussy. Born in the Philippines, Reyes is now a professor at Towson University and has played in many prestigious venues worldwide.

Classical guitarist Charles Mokotoff returned for his third performance and was accompanied on piano by Barbara Peterson Cackler. He dazzled the audience with his sensitive interpretations. ■

The author is a computer specialist in the Executive Secretariat.

Upcoming Events

Performances are on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium (unless otherwise noted)

September 2

Maharold Peoples Jr. and Tribe of Praise Gospel Choir

September 9

Tango - Peabody Performers

September 16

4th Annual Talent Show

October 7

Ballet Theatre of Maryland

October 21

Ney Salgado, Brazilian pianist



* Safety Scene



Loathsome Guests

Return of the Bedbug // By Claire Huson and W. Jay Nixon

Within the past 10 years, bedbugs have emerged from urban mythology to become a real threat. Frequent travelers are at significant risk from these hitchhiking parasites. Here's how to bite back.

Bedbugs will bite and dine on your blood while you sleep. Their favorite hiding places are tufts and casings in mattresses, box springs, bed frames and headboards. They can also crawl along a wall or ceiling and drop onto your bed. Although their presence is annoying, they have so far not transmitted a human disease.

Bedbugs don't fly or cling well to their hosts. Instead they are transported in furniture, bedding and even suitcases from an infested location into your home.

How can you spot them? Bites are often the first indication of a problem. Bedbugs target exposed skin. The head and neck are most prone to being bitten, but any accessible body part is vulnerable. Severe itching and an inflamed red spot with a hard white swollen center results. Unlike flea bites, there's no red center.

Since bedbug infestations used to be rare, most people, including some pest control professionals, have never seen one. Bedbugs share these characteristics:

- They are typically reddish-brown, but are white after molting.
- They are flat, appear round from above and measure about a quarter of an inch long.
- They have four segmented antennae.
- They lack wings but can crawl quickly.
- They leave dark fecal spots (partially digested blood) on mattresses, bedding or any surface where they congregate.
- They have a foul but sweet, oily odor—a telltale sign of a severe infestation.
- On average, they eat weekly.
- They can survive 560 days without eating.

The best way to avoid bedbugs is not to bring these stowaways home and avoid staying in infested lodgings. Upscale hotels are not immune. Good sanitation helps but is no guarantee. Inspect the headboard, don't place your suitcase on the bed and shake out your night clothes before packing them.

Once you return home, it's prudent to quarantine your travel gear and run your travel clothes through a dryer. Most dryers exceed the temperature

(120°F/47°C) needed to kill bedbug adults, nymphs and eggs in just five minutes.

If you develop bites and suspect bedbugs, seek medical evaluation, since fleas, mosquitoes or a skin rash could be the problem. Look for small blood smears on the bed linens. Inspect with a flashlight, beginning at the bed and working out into other areas of the bedroom.

Remove any potentially infested items. Bag or wrap the items before removal so the bedbugs don't escape while in transit. Launder and, most important, machine-dry all bed linens. Remove the bed pillows and either dry clean them, heat them in the dryer or replace them with new ones.

In warm climates, placing items in black plastic bags outside can kill bedbugs and other insects if temperatures above 118°F (48°C) are reached and maintained for about an hour. Heat fumigation in this manner works on luggage and even larger items if they can be completely enclosed in black plastic. Extreme cold (0° F/-16° C) is also effective, but it takes more than a week.

Most people choose to discard infested mattresses and box springs. An alternative to disposal is outdoor heat treatment or using a bedbug-proof cover. Specially designed covers prevent the passage of bedbugs and trap them until they starve. The cover must be left in place for at least a year without washing to ensure no bedbugs survive. Replacement mattresses and box springs should be encased with a bug-proof cover to prevent reinfestation.

Sometimes, a pest-control professional's help may be needed. Though a variety of pesticides are registered with the Environmental Protection Agency for use against bedbugs, none should be used without positive identification of the bug. Thorough, targeted applications to infested locations are more critical than using a specific pesticide.

Taking simple measures to prevent introducing bedbugs into your home will make the nighttime saying "Sleep tight, and don't let the bedbugs bite" a reality. ■

Claire Huson is a certified industrial hygienist and branch chief in the Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management. W. Jay Nixon is a board-certified entomologist with American Pest Management.

* Appointments



Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs

Robert O. Blake of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs. Previously, he was ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives. Before that, he was deputy chief of mission in New Delhi. Other postings include Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria and Egypt.



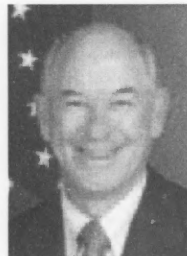
Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation

Susan F. Burk of Virginia is the new Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, she was deputy coordinator for Homeland Security in the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. Before that, she was acting assistant secretary for Nonproliferation. She also served in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. She is married and has two children.



Assistant Secretary for African Affairs

Johnnie Carson of Illinois is the new Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. Previously, he was national intelligence officer for Africa at the National Intelligence Council. Before that, he was senior vice president of the National Defense University. In his 37-year Foreign Service career, he has been ambassador to Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda. Other postings include Portugal, Botswana, Mozambique and Nigeria. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania.



Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

Philip J. Crowley of Virginia, a national security specialist, is the new Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Previously, he was a senior fellow and director of Homeland Security at the Center for American Progress. He has served on the staff of the National Security Council and been principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for public affairs. He served in the Air Force for 26 years, retiring at the rank of colonel. He is married and has two children.



U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Ivo H. Daalder of Virginia, a national and European security specialist, is the new U.S. Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he was a senior fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution. He was a director for European Affairs on President Clinton's National Security Council staff. He is the author of 12 books. He is married and has two sons.



Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

Luis C. de Baca of Virginia is the new Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he was counsel to the House Committee on the Judiciary, where his portfolio included national security, intelligence, immigration, civil rights and modern slavery issues. At the Justice Department, he was a highly decorated prosecutor and chief counsel of the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.



Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs

Philip H. Gordon of the District of Columbia, a European and U.S. foreign policy specialist, is the new Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs. Previously, he was a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. Before that, he was director for European Affairs on President Clinton's National Security Council. He has held teaching and research posts at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.



Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Judith A. McHale of Maryland is the new Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. She is the former president and chief executive officer of Discovery Communications, a global media enterprise, where she forged partnerships and created strategies that focused on understanding and respecting different cultural contexts. Most recently, she launched an investment fund to supply expansion capital to enterprises in emerging African markets.



Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs

Bonnie D. Jenkins of New York, an expert on terrorism, arms control and nonproliferation, is the new Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, she was program officer for U.S. Foreign and Security Policy at the Ford Foundation. Before that, she was counsel on the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as the 9-11 Commission. She also worked for the RAND Corporation and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.



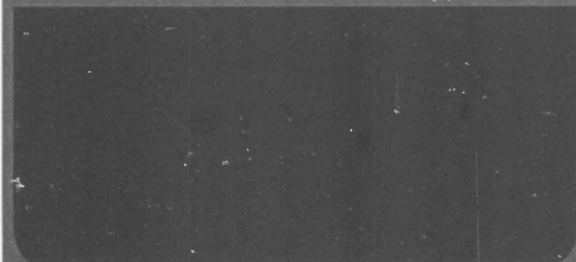
Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs

Andrew J. Shapiro of New York, an attorney and national security expert, is the new Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs. Previously, he was senior advisor to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Before that, he was then-Senator Clinton's senior defense and foreign policy advisor. He has been counsel to the Justice Department's International Competition Policy Advisory Committee and an associate at the law firm of Covington & Burling.

Retirements

Foreign Service

Civil Service



* Obituaries



Terry Barnich, 56, a Civil Service employee, was killed by an improvised explosive device May 25 in Iraq, along with two Department of Defense colleagues. He joined the Department in 2007 as a policy and legal advisor in the U.S. Embassy's Iraq Transition Assistance Office. Later, he was a senior transition program coordinator, and since late 2008 had been acting deputy director of the office. Before joining the Department, he had a 30-year career mostly

devoted to public service.



James J. Blake, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 25 of complications from a broken hip in Washington, D.C. He served in the Army during World War II and joined the Department in 1947. His postings included Belgium; India; Libya, where he coordinated the evacuation of 4,000 Americans during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War; and Iceland, where he was ambassador. After retiring in 1981, he volunteered at the Washington Home and

served as a eucharistic minister at St. Ann's Catholic Church.



Timmy R. Byrd, 66, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died June 22 of an apparent heart attack. He lived in Gainesville, Fla. He served in the Navy and joined the Department in 1988. His postings included Karachi, Bonn, Tel Aviv, Moscow and Frankfurt. He also visited 87 countries. He loved to play and coach baseball and to ride his motorcycle in the mountains.

Howard B. Crotinger, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Sept. 14, 2007, in Oak Ridge, Tenn. He served in the Army during World War II. His postings included France, Vienna, Kobe, Yokohama, Bangkok and Sydney. After retiring in 1975, he was a volunteer photographer for many charitable organizations and taught tennis. His wife, **Lee Crotinger**, 81, died April 19, 2008. She accompanied him on his assignments, taught German and English as a second language, worked as a realtor and loved tennis.



Katherine H. "Kate" Daley, 45, wife of Foreign Service officer Richard Daley, died June 8 in Falls Church, Va., from cancer-related complications. She accompanied her husband to postings in Kingston and Washington, and, when he was in private industry, to assignments in the United Kingdom and Dubai. She was a published poet and active with the Junior League.



Bruce Francis Hoof Jr., 79, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died April 23 of complications from Alzheimer's disease in Portland, Ore. He served in the Army and Air Force before joining the Department as an information management specialist in 1961. His postings included Tunis, Paris, Sydney and Brussels. He retired in 1995. His daughter Cynthia works for the Department as an office management specialist.



Judith Irene "Tracy" Hughes, 66, a retired Foreign Service employee, died May 13, 2008, of Binswanger's disease in Sandy, Utah. Her postings included Italy, Canada, France, West Africa, the Philippines, Laos and Thailand. She loved her pets, traveling and eating in fine restaurants.



Irma Kaplan, 87, wife of Edward Kaplan, former regional acceptance coordinator at the Northeast Passport Office, died March 16 of Alzheimer's disease in West Palm Beach, Fla.



Lydia Wanda Kozlowski, 77, widow of retired Foreign Service officer Joseph Kozlowski, died May 15 of complications from heart surgery. She lived in Fairfax Station, Va. She accompanied her husband on assignments to Iran, Japan, Nigeria, Singapore, Germany and Burma. She later worked as a translator for the Treasury Department. She was an avid equestrian, artist and bridge player.



Joseph I. Krene, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 25 of congestive heart failure in Santa Barbara, Calif. He served in the Army Air Force during World War II and joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1950. His postings included India, Somalia, Rhodesia, Vietnam, Italy and Ireland. He retired in 1979.



Charlotte Eleonore Lantz, 77, wife of retired Foreign Service specialist Rush Lantz, died June 27 of cancer in Arlington, Va. She accompanied her husband on postings to Brussels, Tehran, London, Santo Domingo, Bonn, Luxembourg, Amman and Riyadh. She worked at American schools in Tehran and Amman and in the ambassador's office in Bonn.



Dennis M. McDermott, 66, husband of retired Foreign Service officer Jeanne Topka, died May 29 of complications of pneumonia. He lived in Hutchinson, Minn. He served in the Navy. He accompanied his wife on postings to Guinea-Bissau, the United Kingdom and Canada. He enjoyed painting, photography and writing.



Alvaro Pérez, 91, a journalist and retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died Feb. 19 in Nerja, Spain. A native Spanish speaker, he was posted to Buenos Aires, Managua, Guayaquil and Quito. After retiring, he wrote his memoirs, which received a prize from the king of Spain, and helped build a church for foreign-born residents of Nerja.



John D. Perkins, 80, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 6 of pneumonia in Sun City Center, Fla. He served in the Navy during the Korean War and joined the Department in 1960. His postings included Costa Rica, Milan, Guatemala City, Madrid, Seoul, Caracas and Mexico City. He retired to Sun City Center in 1989 and was active as a volunteer there.



Della Napier Shatto, 84, a retired Foreign Service secretary, died June 14 of heart failure in Frederick, Md. She joined the Department at age 60 and served in Paris, Barbados, Yugoslavia, Geneva and Moscow. She also traveled to China, Scotland, Venezuela and Turkey. She retired in 1989. She enjoyed tennis, golf, bowling, bridge, reading, gardening and art, and volunteered for the Literacy Council.

Robert Topp Tims, 87, died June 27 in Venice, Fla. He served in the Army Air Force during World War II. He worked as an editor and congressional aide before joining the U.S. Information Agency in 1957. His postings included Thailand, Hong Kong, Germany, Vietnam and Romania. He retired in 1987. He was a great conversationalist and enjoyed serious literature, especially Shakespeare.

Keeping the Peace

Peacekeeping operations in Africa have grown steadily over the last few years, with the United Nations working with the African Union in hot spots such as Darfur, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Southern Sudan and Chad. The need for peacekeepers, especially African peacekeepers, has grown accordingly. For more than 12 years, the State Department has played a significant role in shaping the professional development of African peacekeepers through its Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program.

Managed by a 10-person program office in the Bureau of African Affairs, the program collaborates with the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and Secretary of Defense's Office of African Affairs to help African nations participate in multinational peace support operations. In Africa, 250 American and 525 African instructors conduct 10 to 20 field training activities a month. Since 1997, the program has trained more than 85,000 peacekeepers from 24 partner nations.

Two short years ago, the U.S. Mission in China launched its first Virtual Presence Post in Zhengzhou, a provincial capital of more than seven million people. Today, the mission has expanded the VPP concept to 15 major population centers and has plans for four additional VPPs. The virtual post concept allows the mis-

sion to augment its presence—at little additional cost—in places without permanent U.S. diplomatic representation. Based on online educational materials, dedicated Web sites, occasional visits and digital video conferences, VPPs allow a formal level of engagement with important cities, regions, communities or countries, similar to that provided by a small consulate.

Worldwide, the Department's VPP program has grown from three such posts in 2003 to almost 60 in 2009, with plans for 40 more.

The mandatory Foreign Affairs Counter Threat Course prepares Foreign Service personnel for tours in Iraq, Afghanistan and other hardship posts. The week-long course covers essentials such as emergency medical training, threat awareness and firearms instruction. The regional security office team at Iraq's Tallil Air Base, responsible for U.S. civilian personnel from the Department and other organizations that serve in southern Iraq, has added "refresher" training for members of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams operating out of the base. The additional training focuses on medical emergency procedures, firearms training and team-building activities.

Last but not least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *Terry Barnich; James J. Blake; Timmy R. Byrd; Howard B. and Lee Crotinger; Katherine H. "Kate" Daley; Bruce Francis Hoof Jr.; Judith Irene "Tracy" Hughes; Irma Kaplan; Lydia Wanda Kozlowski; Joseph I. Krene; Charlotte Eleonore Lantz; Dennis M. McDermott; Alvaro Perez; John D. Perkins; Della Napier Shatto; and Robert Topps Tims.* ■



Correction

The July/August 2009 issue of *State Magazine* incorrectly referred to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs as a bureau. *State Magazine* regrets the error.

Rob Wiley
Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

COMING IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE

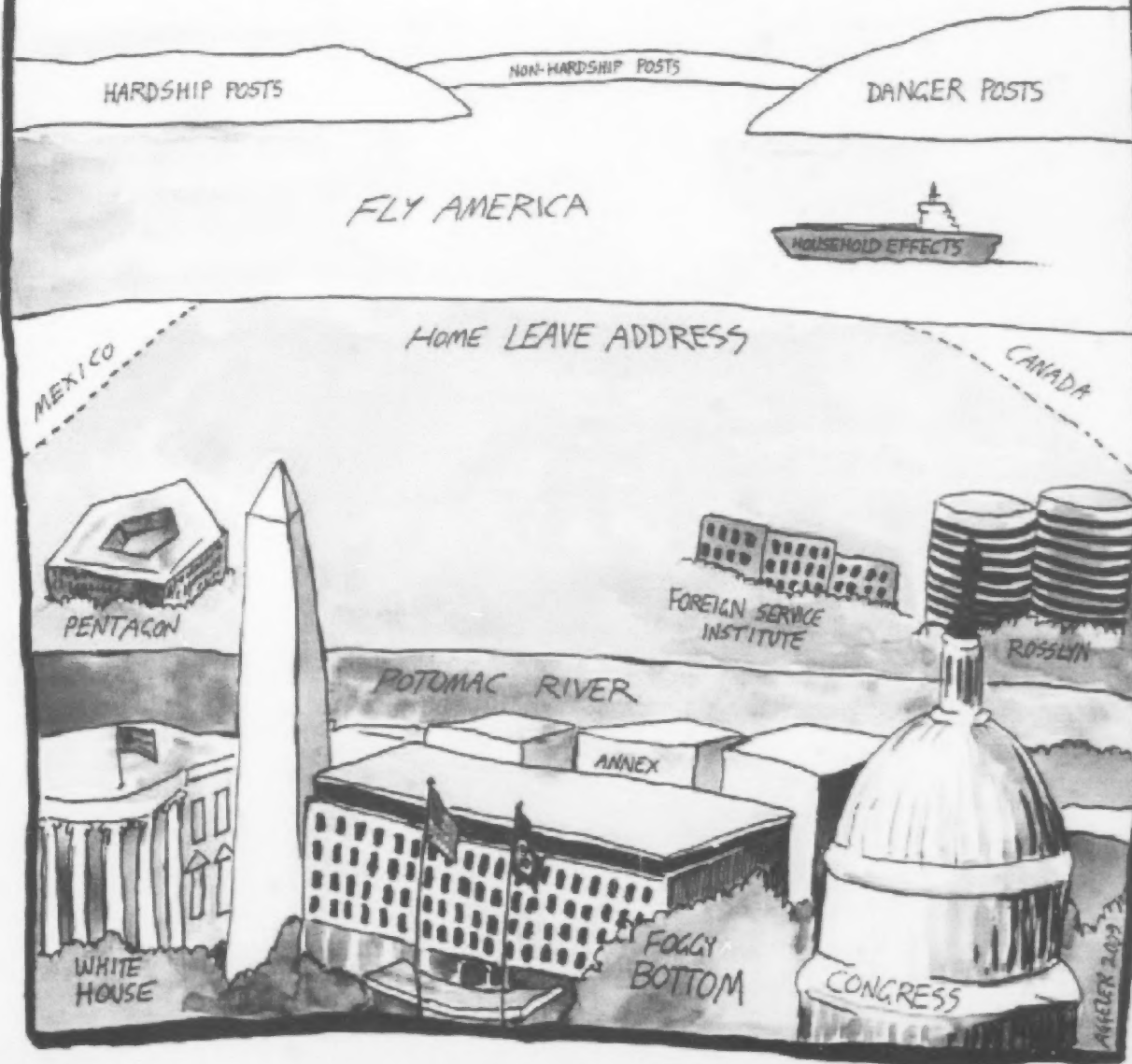
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>>> ELOs Reach Out in South Africa >>>



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A black and white photograph showing several tall, vertical stacks of books on either side of the text. In the center, several pages are shown flying through the air, as if from a book being turned. The books are of various sizes and thicknesses, creating a sense of a large collection.

AAFSW Art and Book Fair Coming

The annual sale of books and art of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide begins Oct. 16 from 2 to 5 p.m. in the Diplomatic Exhibit Hall for Department badge holders and escorted guests. It runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. from Oct. 19-23 for this same group, and on Oct. 17-18 and 24-25, is open to everyone, including the public, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

