

# STATE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SPECIAL SECTION  
**Safety & State**

MAGAZINE

## Heart AND Seoul

JUNE 2008

# JUNE 2008

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### ON THE COVER

Blooming flowers and a booming economy surround this Buddhist temple in Seoul, South Korea.

*Photograph by Getty Images*

## Retirement Services—Serving Those Who Faithfully Served the Department



This month, I would like to tell you about the work being done by Patricia Nelson-Douvelis and her team in the Office of Retirement Services. Ms. Nelson-Douvelis came to us in July of 2007 from the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, where she was the Director for Response Strategy. She now leads the office that is responsible for the many complex issues related to your retirement.

HR/RET administers, with the Bureau of Resource Management, the multi-billion dollar Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund, which is the funding vehicle for the three Foreign Service retirement plans covering nearly 27,000 current and former Foreign Service employees: the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System (the “old” system), the FSRDS-Offset system and the Foreign Service Pension System (the “new” system). These retirement plans paid out nearly \$650 million in benefits last year to all Foreign Service annuitants in the Departments of State, Agriculture and Commerce, as well as the U.S. Agency for

International Development and the Peace Corps.

Pat and her team of 29 counselors, policy experts, HR assistants and other program support staff have sole responsibility for adjudicating retirement annuities for all Foreign Service employees and share responsibility with the Office of Personnel Management for administering benefits to Department employees in the three Civil Service retirement plans: the Civil Service Retirement System (the “old” system), the CSRS-Offset System and the Federal Employees Retirement System (the “new” system).

The HR/RET team works closely with the Foreign Service Institute’s Career Transition Center and participates in numerous planning and related courses to help employees understand the important decisions that surround their retirement. The retirement counselors, led by Jacqueline Long and William Jones, are available to assist individual employees with specific questions or help them understand what questions they should be asking. Other experts on the team, such as Rosetta Wood, also advise on entitlement to Social Security, Medicare, the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance and the Federal Employees Health Benefits programs. In addition, HR/RET administers the Thrift Savings Plan for Department employees.

Most employees start the retirement process by exploring the information provided on HR/RET’s Web site, [www.RNet.state.gov](http://www.RNet.state.gov). If you have any questions after reviewing that site, we recommend that you send them to [RETServices@state.gov](mailto:RETServices@state.gov), or the HR/RET e-mail address—[RETServices](mailto:RETServices)—on the Global e-mail directory.

Working hand-in-hand with HR’s systems developers, HR/RET is working on an exciting project to make the retirement process more efficient and annuity

calculations more timely—all to serve you better. Later this year, first Civil Service and then Foreign Service employees will have access to a new Employee Benefits Information System, a software product that will provide each employee with an immediate, up-to-date, personalized statement of their benefits. The new annuity calculator that is part of EBIS will allow employees to perform “what-if” scenarios concerning their retirement annuity, high-3 average salary, TSP annuity, TSP projected account balance, and so on.

EBIS will contain a comprehensive reference library of information related to Federal benefits, covering Civil Service and Foreign Service plans, FEHB, FEGLI, TSP and Social Security, as well as online seminars about retirement. This new system will also enable employees to submit retirement packages electronically, making the process much more streamlined, although a few forms will still require original signatures and will have to be mailed or faxed to HR/RET.

To make the new system work at its optimum, we will be asking employees within five years of retirement to ensure that their personnel records reflect all of their prior civilian or military service. Correct personnel records will ensure that the employee can run his/her annuity calculation accurately from the outset. For the first time, the new system will allow these changes to remain a permanent part of the employee’s personnel records.

EBIS will be for Department employees only. HR/RET will continue to revise and update the RNet Web site to keep all our annuitants and our clients at other Foreign Service agencies apprised of developments of particular interest to them.

We want to serve you efficiently and well. If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to send them to me via unclassified e-mail at DG Direct. ■



## Story Updated

I would like to provide an update on the Band-i-Amir Lakes article in the March 2008 *State Magazine*. Since early summer 2007, when the author of this article visited the lakes, this significant natural resource is closer to designation as the first national park in Afghanistan. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul partnered with Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency and Ministry of Agriculture, the United Nations Environmental Program, the Asian Development Bank and the Wildlife Conservation Society, which is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, to implement a framework to protect areas of the nation having significant environmental and natural heritage value. A Band-i-Amir Protected Area committee, composed of representatives

from the villages surrounding the lakes, has adopted a management plan for the area that, once approved, will allow NEPA to designate the area as a national park. The success to date is largely due to the effort of the Wildlife Conservation Society. The Wildlife Conservation Society, USAID and the embassy will work for designation of Afghanistan's first national park and to protect other significant natural areas of Afghanistan.

Clay Miller  
Environmental Advisor  
U.S. Embassy in Kabul

### Nadelman Remembered

The obituary of E. Jan Nadelman in your March issue struck a chord for me. Many new Foreign Service officers came under his purview 50 or so years ago

because he was in charge of the A-100 course when I joined the Foreign Service in January 1957. I'll never forget his lasting impression on me, even though I had virtually no contact with him over the years after the course. He epitomized how an American diplomat should look, act, think and speak. He was very articulate, responsive to our inquisitiveness and considerate in all respects to make sure we had a firm foundation about the expectations and rigors of Foreign Service life.

Gilbert H. Sheinbaum  
Retired Foreign Service officer  
Vienna, Va.

### Memorial Established

Friends and colleagues of retired Foreign Service officer Clyde G. Nora have established a memorial foundation to

honor him. He died May 16, 2007, and had retired in 1997 after 30 years in the Foreign Service. The foundation will carry on his important work in providing counseling, mentoring and coaching to young people in their efforts to enter careers in public service.

The foundation's Clyde G. Nora Memorial Award will be presented annually to an outstanding high school senior or college student who has excelled academically, demonstrated leadership skills in school and community, and has actively participated in volunteer services. The winner will receive a plaque and a financial award. As the foundation's contact person, I can be reached at (571) 345-3711.

William Marcellus Butler  
Retired Foreign Service officer  
Silver Spring, Md.

## Let Us Hear from You

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# NEWS



## Be Positive

### Embassy's Health Fair Includes Blood Drive

The U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh's first annual health fair featured 34 exhibitors, including hospitals, pharmacies, clinics and dental offices, and attracted more than 850 embassy employees and family members, plus staff from the German, Japanese and Australian embassies. There were information booths, a blood drive, blood pressure and blood sugar screenings, a play about HIV transmission, a session on women's health screening and a question-and-answer session with the secretary general of the Cambodian Red Cross.

Health care in Phnom Penh has improved dramatically in recent years, as indicated by the many booths showcasing clean and well-equipped medical facilities. One attendee said he had never sought dental care for his children because he neither knew where to take them nor realized it was affordable.

The fair's screenings identified 11 cases of undiagnosed hypertension and two cases of diabetes. Patients with potentially dangerous health conditions were referred to trained local doctors and hospitals.

At the start of the fair, the director of the nation's blood bank mentioned an urgent need for one of the rarest blood types, B negative, for a pediatric cardiology patient. By 4:45 p.m., not a single such donation had been made, but one of the final donations matched, and it was rushed to the hospital. As Ambassador Joseph A. Mussomeli stated in a missionwide e-mail to potential donors: "I hate giving blood. I am afraid to give blood. I repeatedly faint when I give blood. But I *always* give blood."

# Mission India Promotes Nation's Breast Cancer Awareness

On a February morning in New Delhi this year, 3,000 people, including more than 100 U.S. Mission India staff and family members, engaged in the capital's first "Walk for Life," a five-kilometer walk-run to raise breast cancer awareness. Modeled on similar U.S. events, the walk was led by a group of prominent breast cancer survivors, including Jeanne Mulford, wife of U.S. Ambassador to India David C. Mulford.

More than 400,000 women die every year from breast cancer, with more than 75 percent of these deaths occurring in the developing world, where the likelihood of early detection and treatment is low. According to Indian sources, the number of breast cancer cases there is growing rapidly, and many deaths could be prevented if women were adequately informed about the disease and became more proactive about their health.

Mission India began a countrywide public diplomacy campaign to spread public awareness about the growing incidence of breast cancer, aiming to destigmatize family and public discussion of breast cancer. It also partnered with a New Delhi-based organization

caring for people with cancer and invited an executive of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation to meet with women's health activists across the country and share recommendations. Public affairs section staff members in Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai also recently created programs and events to introduce the need for breast cancer awareness in India.

The Walk for Life coincided with the First Asian Breast Cancer Congress in New Delhi the same weekend. The conference attracted more than 350 researchers and doctors from across the region and the United States. Mrs. Mulford spoke as the conference's chief guest, calling on people to reject the taboo of speaking about breast cancer and encouraging her friends in India to undertake "an open and frank discussion of breast exams, treatment and life after cancer."

Being a breast cancer survivor "is a sisterhood none of us would have chosen," she said. "We are committed to working as partners to help other women who face the same fight to receive the early diagnosis and treatment that will let them lead full lives."



# WEEKEND SESSIONS BOOST ARABIC SKILLS

Consular officers of the U.S. Embassy in Damascus and the post language program's instructor traveled to the Syrian city of

Aleppo in March for a weekend of dedicated practice in consular interviewing in Arabic. The Consular Arabic Immersion

Weekend provided an opportunity for the officers to learn how to communicate effectively and clearly with visa applicants and local residents in American citizen services cases. It also allowed consular managers to coach two newly arrived consular officers on the peculiarities of consular operations in Syria.

The weekend featured lessons on vocabulary, nonimmigrant visa interviews, immigrant and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa interviews, in-office ACS appointments and practice in taking ACS emergency phone calls. For the phone-call session, the officers sat back-to-back with the instructor, eliminating visual cues and improving their ability to elicit information verbally.

Attendees spoke only in Arabic during meals, breaks and while in transit, making learning truly immersive.



Consular officer Stephanie Bunce and post language program instructor Ahmed Karout practice handling emergency ACS phone calls without visual clues.



## MARINE SECURITY GUARD TRADITION CONTINUES

In March, the State Department and U.S. Marine Corps signed a new Marine Security Guard Memorandum of Agreement in the Treaty Room at Main State, renewing a civil-military partnership that is more than 200 years old.

The enhanced agreement was signed by Acting Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Gregory B. Starr; Special Agent Charlene Lamb, assistant director of DS International Programs; Marine Corps Lieutenant General Richard Natonski; and Raymond Geoffroy, the Marine Corps assistant deputy commandant who oversees the Corps' security operations.

It has been nearly 60 years since the first letter of agreement was signed by the Secretaries of State and the Navy on December 15, 1948. After World War II, an alert, disciplined force was needed to protect U.S. diplomatic missions, and Marine Corps volunteers were tapped to fill these posts. The resulting MSG program became one of the most prestigious assignments in the Corps.

The 1,300-member Marine Corps Embassy Security Group is an elite group of men and women who have been specially trained and selected for this duty. MSG detachments serve 149 U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide.

MSGs are typically the first Americans seen at U.S. missions. Standing duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, they protect U.S.

government personnel and property and prevent classified information and equipment from being compromised. MSGs also control access within U.S. missions; inspect to ensure that classified infor-



Gregory Starr, acting assistant secretary for diplomatic security, right, and Marine Lieutenant General Richard Natonski sign the MSG memorandum of agreement.

information is secure; monitor surveillance devices and fire alarms; and are the focal point for all post emergency communications. They have protected U.S. embassies and consulates from anti-American riots and demonstrations, and helped evacuate U.S. diplomats and their families during crises.

## FSI Enshrines Consular Leadership Principles



Maura Harty, left, stands with Dr. Ruth Whiteside before a framed copy of the tenets.

At an April ceremony hosted by Dr. Ruth Whiteside, director of the Foreign Service Institute, FSI dedicated a framed poster of the Consular Leadership Tenets to Ambassador Maura Harty on the occasion of Harty's retirement as a Foreign Service officer. As Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, Ambassador Harty championed the development of consular leaders.

New FSOs must do at least one year of consular work at the beginning of their careers, and she encouraged consular managers to model effective leadership to get new officers off to a good start and prepare them for leadership. Ambassador Harty also supported training by conducting sessions for each new A-100 class at FSI and making special presentations to senior leadership courses.

The Consular Leadership Tenets were developed by the Bureau of Consular Affairs in 2006 after receiving input from 87 overseas consular sections. The tenets provide the framework for CA's leadership development efforts, which include the development of a feedback tool for managers and a leadership awards program. FSI's Consular Training Division has also integrated the tenets into many of its courses. Information about these resources is in the Consular Leadership Toolbox on CA's Intranet Web site.





Somali students participate in computer instruction during the Youth Enrichment Program.

The U.S. Embassy in Nairobi's Somalia Unit conducted its first Youth Enrichment Program for Somali youth in April. Twenty-five Somali youth, all living in Kenya, gathered at Al-Imran School of Modern Teachings in Eastleigh, Nairobi's largely Somali neighborhood, for a week of computer instruction, English-language discussion and camaraderie.

During the closing ceremony, where each participant received a certificate signed by Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger, the

## Nairobi Holds Youth Enrichment Day

students praised the program, which largely marked their first exposure to the United States, and said it gave them the opportunity to discuss peace and tolerance. The female students said the program was a rare chance to participate on equal footing with male participants.

## Embassy Celebrates Big Losers



As part of a competition, a group of employees of the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, Romania, lost a total of 168 pounds in 12 weeks. The Bucharest Beautiful Bodies competition ended in April, and prizes were awarded to all who participated, with special prizes going to the top three losers. They are: Sadia Lixandriou, an escort in the regional security office; Maria Chamber, an office management specialist; and Viorell Bastinaru, a communication technician.

The participants received weekly weigh-ins, individual counseling and e-mailed exercise tips. They restricted portion size and made healthy food choices, and every Friday afternoon, received a 15-minute pep talk. The employee cafeteria offered participants special salads and fresh fruit as snack alternatives and displayed calorie counts and the nutritional values of various snack choices. Its daily specials were also analyzed, allowing customers to become more aware of their eating habits.

## Caracas Hosts First Consular Working Group

The U.S. Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela, hosted the first meeting of the Consular Working Group in April. The consular section's fraud prevention unit spearheaded formation of the group by organizing a meeting for officers from 11 foreign missions. The group will expand international cooperation and information sharing on illegal migration, fraud prevention and border protection.

Attending the meeting were consular and immigration officers from the embassies of Argentina, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Panama, Peru and Spain. They met with the U.S. embassy's consul general, fraud prevention unit staff, an assistant regional security office investigator and an officer from the Department of Homeland Security's Visa Security Unit to discuss fraud trends and potential collaboration. The group toured the post's visa unit, seeing biometric collection and visa procedures and the VSU's high-tech fraudulent document examiner.



## Campaign Addresses Student Travel Safety

The walls of the old row house are lined with hundreds of brochures and flyers depicting exotic and romantic locales from around the globe. But this isn't a local travel agency—it's The George Washington University's Office for Study Abroad.

Every year, more than 200,000 students from American universities study abroad, nearly a 150-percent increase over the past decade. Countless others go abroad outside of university programs to volunteer, work, intern and vacation. More than 100,000 students spend spring break in Mexico annually.

Responding to this growth, the Bureau of Consular Affairs has launched a new "Students Abroad" public affairs campaign, encompassing slick brochures called "go! guides," public service announcements, advertising on social networking Web sites, and a new Department Web site, <http://StudentsAbroad.state.gov>. The campaign is designed to promote safe,

smart travel to college students and spring-breakers by packaging the information in a way that appeals to young people.

"We are concerned about the safety and security of all Americans overseas, but college-age Americans can be particularly vulnerable, especially if traveling overseas for the first time," said Michele Bond, CA's deputy assistant secretary for overseas citizens services. "We hope Students Abroad will help young Americans better prepare for their trips, so that their experience will be enriching and rewarding."

The growth in the number of students traveling abroad doesn't seem to be slowing. Last year, a federal commission on study abroad urged Congress to support international programs to increase the number of students studying abroad to one million by 2017.

For more information about the campaign, e-mail [StudentsAbroad@state.gov](mailto:StudentsAbroad@state.gov).

# STATE

MAGAZINE

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





Hurricane Wilma's damage to shopping areas led to a loss of income of nearly \$10 million per day for the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico.



# Storm Teams

MISSION MEXICO READIES FOR HURRICANE SEASON  
BY THU M. NGUYEN

In October 2005, tens of thousands of Americans arrived in Cancun, Mexico, and the surrounding area, expecting sparkling sand, golden sun and luxurious resorts. Instead, they found themselves in the path of Hurricane Wilma, the most devastating storm ever to cross Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

In two-and-a-half days, Hurricane Wilma damaged 98 percent of the hotels in Quintana Roo, the Mexican state that includes the tourist destinations of Cancun, Cozumel and Playa del Carmen. The hurricane crippled the region's communications and power lines, and paralyzed ports, airports and roads.

The U.S. Consulate in Merida, Mexico, which counts Quintana Roo as part of its consular district, had a staff of only six

Department of State direct-hire employees and less than five days' advance warning, so it sought assistance from other Mission Mexico posts. The result of this unified effort was no American deaths, approximately 25,000 Americans evacuated on commercial airlines in one week and more than 12,000 phone inquiries handled.

## Joint Response

While the response was considered a

success, the consulate and the rest of Mission Mexico knew additional steps were needed to prepare for future hurricanes.

During these types of emergencies, the consulate relies heavily on its three consular agents in Cancun, Cozumel and Playa del Carmen. The agents and their support staff offer local expertise and instantaneous information that is difficult to obtain from Merida. The consulate also brings in colleagues from other Mission Mexico posts to assist with preparations, on-the-ground outreach and post-disaster relief.

"In Mission Mexico, crisis management is a team sport," said Consulate Merida Principal Officer Karen Martin. "We prepare, drill and coordinate with many different entities, including our professional and experienced counterparts in the Mexican government."

In short, the missionwide effort requires communication, cooperation and lots of planning.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT): CORBIS; (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP): MANN KIM; (BOTTOM): U.S. CONSULATE IN MERIDA





Hurricane Wilma crippled the region's communications and power lines, and paralyzed ports, airports and roads.

In May 2007, the U.S. Consulate in Merida boosted its preparation for that year's hurricane season by hosting a crisis management exercise that brought in experts from the Foreign Service Institute, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the local civil protection authority, the Red Cross, airlines, other nations' consular representatives and others. They engaged in role playing, travel to the Cancun airport, liaison with key players and discussions about emergency scenarios and responses. As a result, the consulate compiled a comprehensive list of emergency contacts in the Mexican government and local organizations to facilitate future disaster efforts. It also developed its emergency action plan with an eye on the months of July through November, when disaster threatens to strike.

### Teams at Ready

Principal Officer Martin credited the success of preparations for 2007's Hurricane Dean to the crisis management exercise and implementation of recommendations arising after Hurricane Wilma. More than 36 hours before Hurricane Dean was due to hit the Yucatan Peninsula, advance teams of staff from Mission Mexico had been deployed to key areas where Americans were clustered. The teams helped disseminate information to Americans, met with airport and city officials to confirm emergency plans and verified the capabilities of local shelters and transportation companies.

Mission Mexico's presence prior to the storm reassured Americans that the U.S. government was ready to assist. Although Hurricane Dean turned away toward the peninsula's more sparsely populated southern tip, consulate employees believe

that their recent training left them well prepared for any crisis.


This year, Mission Mexico has taken more steps to prepare for the 2008 hurricane season. The U.S. Embassy in Mexico City has coordinated the production of flyaway kits, which will help equip future response teams dispatched to outlying areas. The consulate in Merida has strengthened its warden network to communicate better with Americans. And the entire mission has trained officers and local employees to lend their expertise during preparations and response.

Although no one can predict what storm will strike in 2008 or beyond, the consulate and the rest of Mission Mexico are poised to assist Americans through any crisis. ■

*The author is an entry-level officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Merida.*

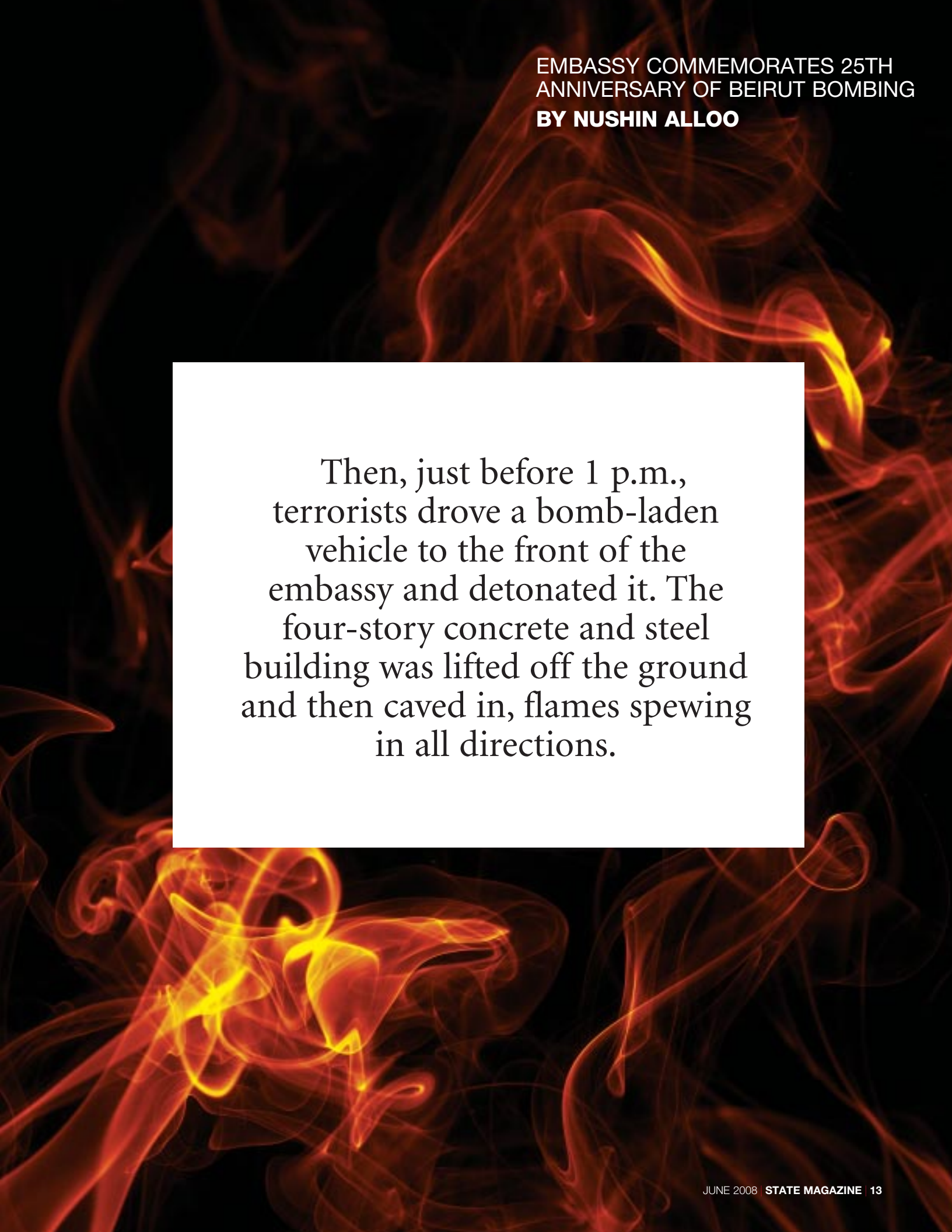
**Opposite page:** Hurricane Wilma as seen from a satellite image. **Above:** An official of the U.S. Agency for International Development works during the USAID-sponsored emergency response training in February. **Right:** Embassy Mexico City Information Officer Judith Bryan, left, discusses the flooding with Mexican President Vicente Fox, in baseball cap.





April 18, 1983,  
was a beautiful spring day  
in Beirut, Lebanon, and the  
U.S. Embassy was bustling.





EMBASSY COMMEMORATES 25TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF BEIRUT BOMBING  
**BY NUSHIN ALLOO**

Then, just before 1 p.m.,  
terrorists drove a bomb-laden  
vehicle to the front of the  
embassy and detonated it. The  
four-story concrete and steel  
building was lifted off the ground  
and then caved in, flames spewing  
in all directions.

On the day of the embassy bombing, a member of the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit stands guard.



## It was the deadliest single attack

on a U.S. diplomatic mission since World War II. In all, 52 embassy employees were killed. Many others also perished as they were visiting or just walking by. More than 100 were injured.

One of the injured was local employee Mary Apovian. Two days after the attack, she awoke in a hospital not remembering what had happened. Later, she was told that Ryan Crocker, then a political officer and now U.S. ambassador to Iraq, had pulled her from the rubble, saving her life. Following a year of recovery and numerous reconstructive surgeries, she returned to work.

Still employed in the embassy's human resources office, Apovian remembers her recovery.

"I had bandages on my head and couldn't walk well," she said. "The Lebanese personnel would actually carry me running across the Green Line dividing East and West Beirut, dodging sniper fire just so I could get to work."

## Second Attack

Seventeen months after the 1983 attack, the new embassy annex had been open for less than six weeks when a van, falsely fitted with diplomatic plates, drove up to the annex at high speed and detonated 500 pounds of explosives. Twelve people were killed and 63 injured, among them Ambassador Reginald Bartholomew, who was found buried under the rubble. Between the two events, on October 23, 1983, terrorists had blown up the U.S. Marine Corps barracks near the Beirut airport, killing 220 Marines and 21 other American servicemen.

Today, the words "They Came in Peace" are carved on the embassy memorial to those killed in the three attacks and others who gave their lives in the service of the United States in Lebanon. Their names are written on the memorial near the entrance to the embassy compound, where each April 18 the American and Lebanese members of the embassy community gather to remember them.

This year, events in Beirut and Washington marked the 25th anniversary of the 1983 bombing.

In Beirut, Chargé d'Affaires Michele J. Sison, the embassy's chief of mission, welcomed the former employees and families of victims. She noted that eight Lebanese who were employed by the embassy in 1983 still work there.

## "Truly Humbled"

"I am truly humbled by such dedication, and I know that all of the American staff here join me in feeling truly proud to be working with you," she said. Just three months ago, she said, two courageous embassy colleagues, Dany Massoud and Bechara Badr, were injured in the January 15 attack on an embassy vehicle.

C. David Welch, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, also attended. As a young diplomat in 1983, he was the desk officer for Lebanon who received the fateful telephone call

reporting the attack.

"In the immediate aftermath of each attack, heroes emerged from the rubble," he said. "Together, American and Lebanese staff members did the work that needed to be done. They pulled their colleagues from the destruction. They tended to the wounded."

Asked why the victims returned to work, given the risks involved, one survivor of the 1983 bombing responded, "I love my job. We are like family here, and you can never leave your family."

An embassy committee that included many local employees who were victims or relatives of victims organized the commemoration, which included the planting of a cedar tree, the symbol of Lebanon. The committee also designed commemorative coins and pins for all who attended, and the children of embassy staff members created a poster in remembrance of the victims.

*The author is a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut.*





**Above:** Secretary Rice addresses the commemoration event. **Top right:** Ambassador Robert Dillon recalls the bombing's aftermath. **Middle:** The Marine Corps color guard stands in front of the granite memorial on the embassy compound. **Bottom:** Claire Votaw, left, and Marina Chamma read the names of victims of the 1983 Embassy Beirut bombing. Votaw's father was killed in the attack.

# Washington Remembers

**BY ED WARNER**

The Americans, Lebanese and others killed 25 years ago in the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut “were all innocent people stolen from us in a moment of terror,” said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in a Main State ceremony commemorating those lost or injured in the attack.

She said the 52 embassy employees who were killed gave America their best.

To the Department employees who rushed to lend aid and bring order to the aftermath, she said: “You made America proud.”

Ambassador Robert Dillon, chief of mission in Beirut at the time, told the 200-some attendees that when terrorists

detonated an explosives-filled vehicle at the front of the embassy, he had been minutes from joining his retinue at that very location. Several close associates, including his appointments secretary, were killed.

In the aftermath, he said, the names of survivors were checked off on a list of embassy employees until, five hours later, no more survivors were found. Several employees who survived, including Public Affairs Officer John Reid, were in the audience and were greeted by Secretary Rice.

Dillon, who received a standing ovation, said he'd been too choked up to finish his first speech in remembrance of the victims, made in the American University of Beirut's chapel a week after the attack.

Claire Votaw, daughter of slain embassy employee Albert Votaw, and Marina Chamma, a locally employed staff member of the embassy, read the names of those killed in the attack, and a moment of silence followed.

The day before the April 18 commemoration event, President Bush issued a statement saying the commemoration of the attack was “a timely reminder of the danger our diplomats, military personnel and locally employed staff bear in their service to the United States.” ■

*The author is deputy editor of State Magazine.*

Deputy Assistant Secretary Colleen Graffy, right, participates in a Skypecast during her March 2008 visit to Budapest.



# Virtual Visits

EMBASSY VIDEOCONFERENCES WITH HUNGARIAN HIGH SCHOOLS  
BY MARK S. TAUBER

**S**chool outreach has been a cornerstone of public diplomacy for years, but limited personnel and staff and the vast size of many countries often make public diplomacy programs for students impractical.

The U.S. Embassy in Budapest has developed a program that overcomes this obstacle, allowing it to extend its school outreach efforts to the farthest outposts of Hungary. Through an innovative program spearheaded by Vice Consul Dan Koski and the public affairs section, officers are engaging remote audiences through free videoconferencing technology provided by Skype.com. Equipped with high-speed Internet connections and Web cams, officers now conduct “virtual” outreach visits with students all across Hungary.

The new program represents a novel way to address one of Ambassador April Foley’s highest priorities: increasing the number of Hungarian exchange students going to U.S. colleges and univer-

sities. Skypecasting helps to increase the number of young Hungarians who return home with a sympathetic interest in American society and values, developing an audience more open to values-based foreign policy messages. To promote U.S. study, the ambassador personally travels at least once per month to high schools and universities all over Hungary to explain the benefits of a term of study in the United States. Embassy officers deliver the same message at other schools, sometimes visiting two or three in one day in small provincial cities.

## Time Constraints

Yet, owing to time constraints, many schools located at a great distance from the embassy cannot be visited easily or often. This is especially true during periods of officer shortages throughout the embassy.

The solution was offered by Koski during his first orientation visit to the public affairs section in





**Left:** A student uses Skypecasting to ask a question. **Below:** Pista Menkó, right, a computer teacher at Rózsa High School in Békéscsaba in southeast Hungary, instructs a class during a Skypecast with Vice Consul Dan Koski.



September 2007. Koski's wife had long used the Skype program and a Web cam to keep in touch with her family in Bolivia and found it had good sound and image quality. He thought the embassy could establish a similar connection to Hungarian high schools. If it worked, anyone from the embassy, without leaving the building, could pay "virtual" visits to Hungarian teens at high schools that would otherwise take hours to reach by car.

The PAS staff was excited to try. Local area network manager Norbert Vitéz conducted test visits with American Corners to ensure that connections and images transmitted well. High School Outreach Coordinator László Vizsy chose, for the first virtual visit, a class taught by American Fulbright teacher Chris Pultz in Békéscsaba, more than three hours east of Budapest by car. Koski anchored the first Skypecast in December 2007—an event lasting more than an hour in which students asked about everything from the Visa Waiver Program to missile defense and the future of Iraq.

### **A First**

The U.S. Embassy in Budapest has held many more virtual visits since that initial Skypecast late last year. During her visit to Budapest in March 2008, Colleen Graffy, deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, conducted a Skypecast to students at a school more

than 200 miles outside of Budapest. Her virtual visit marked the first time a U.S. official had visited that school.


This new outreach model has already paid big dividends. At effectively no cost to the embassy, it has expanded public affairs coverage to hard-to-reach regions of Hungary and significantly reduced an officer's time commitment for each event. An event that previously would take a full day, including travel, can now be accomplished in an hour or less. It is possible to conduct same-day consecutive Skypecasts with multiple schools without officers leaving the embassy.

The Skype outreach model attracts tech-savvy teenagers and has engaged students via the Internet, a medium they embrace. Its broad appeal has sparked local media coverage of Skypecasts.

Since the project's inception, the public affairs section has refined the procedure, and now it can be easily replicated at other posts. Skypecasting has been featured as a best practice on the State Department Web site and within the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. For their contributions, Koski's public affairs section team received a Group Franklin Award for an innovation that opened new opportunities in embassy youth outreach. ■

*The author is cultural affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest.*

An event that previously would take a full day, including travel, can now be accomplished in an hour or less.

A person wearing a white protective suit, a white hood, and a respirator mask is working in a laboratory. They are wearing yellow gloves and are focused on a task. The background is a warm, brownish color.

# A Matter of Time

DEPARTMENT GEARS UP  
FOR POSSIBLE PANDEMIC

**BY VIVIAN KELLER**



Throughout 2005, numerous media reports discussed an aggressive form of avian influenza, the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus, which could pose a serious threat to humankind. If the virus mutated into a form easily transmitted among people, the story went, a massive pandemic could strike down tens of millions worldwide, leaving even powerful governments and economies reeling.



There was no pandemic. But avian influenza has continued its deadly march through more than 60 countries, resulting in the slaughter of hundreds of millions of birds and killing nearly two-thirds of the almost 400 people it has infected. Epidemiologists say it is only a matter of time before an evolved form, or another virus as yet unknown, is transmitted sustainably and efficiently among humans, causing an influenza pandemic. Although scientists cannot predict how severe that pandemic will be, the Department of State is working with global partners to help prepare the world—and the Department—for the worst.

Since 2005, when President Bush charged the Department with leading U.S. international engagement on avian influenza, the United States has pledged \$629 million—more than any other donor—to support containing the disease’s spread and assist human pandemic preparedness in more than 100 countries. Reporting to Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky, the Avian Influenza Action Group is the Department’s 18-member “flu crew,” coordinating and implementing the U.S.

combat avian and pandemic influenza while building capacity to mitigate such threats in the long term,” said Special Representative on Avian and Pandemic Influenza John E. Lange.

AIAG works with others in the Department—including the Bureaus of Management; Oceans, Environment and Science; and Economic, Energy and Business Affairs—and interagency and international partners. Its objectives are to:

- Develop and implement national plans for coping with a pandemic;
- Support disease surveillance and laboratory capacity;
- Stockpile emergency equipment and health commodities;
- Conduct public awareness campaigns,
- Train those who respond to animal outbreaks; and
- Improve foreign governments’ national response capacity.

Thanks to this effort, the world is better prepared for a pandemic—or other potential global emergencies involving animal and human health.

While Under Secretary Dobriansky and Ambassador Lange concentrate on U.S.

efforts, such as enhancing telecommunications, reflect those of other U.S. agencies.

Dealing with a pandemic overseas involves additional measures, however. In March, U.S. agencies approved a policy, advanced by the Department, regarding Americans under Chief of Mission authority and private Americans abroad in a severe pandemic, one that would kill at least one to two percent of those infected. The policy:

- Recommends that all Americans overseas prepare to remain in country, as this may be the only option if commercial transport is not readily available;
- Recommends that, when a severe pandemic begins, Americans who are at greater risk by remaining abroad, or who are not comfortable doing so, should return to the United States;
- Authorizes departure for nonemergency American personnel and eligible family members under Chief of Mission authority in an affected country;
- Institutes “liberal departure” for nonemergency personnel and EFMs in as-yet-unaffected countries, allowing them to use Rest and Relaxation and other authorizations to depart post;
- Advises Americans that once commercial transportation operations are not readily available they should expect to remain in country, without recourse to evacuation; and
- Advises Americans that only in the case of a country breakdown of civil order will the U.S. government consider noncombatant evacuation operations.

The Bureau of Consular Affairs’ Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management has since 2005 been urging Americans abroad to prepare to remain in country for up to 12 weeks, advising them to maintain personal supplies of food, water and medications. The office reaches out to American citizens abroad through hundreds of town hall meetings and warden messages and by liberally distributing brochures and newsletters in consular waiting rooms, at public gatherings and through [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

Some posts have gone even further. The U.S. Embassy in Lusaka, Zambia, sent a



international strategy.

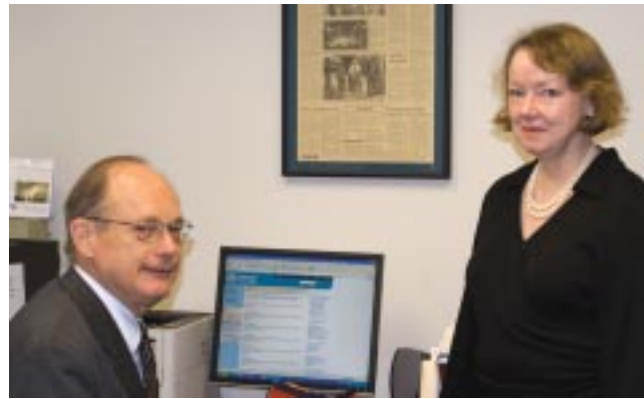
“The experts tell us the pandemic threat has not diminished, and we continue to work with the international community to

international efforts, Under Secretary for Management Patrick F. Kennedy focuses on preparing Department employees worldwide. The Department’s domestic





**Above:** A poultry seller holds his chickens near the site in Bamako of an international conference on Avian influenza. **Top right:** Kathleen Reddy-Smith, deputy coordinator of the AI Action Group, confers with Coordinator Ambassador John E. Lange regarding a report on pandemic influenza. **Bottom:** Members of the AI Action Group gather in the group's conference room.



team upcountry to the towns of Ndola, Kitwe and Kabwe, and to Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo in late January. The team met with more than 120 missionaries in just four days.

The same month, the U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata, India, transformed its scheduled Consular Leadership Day into a live avian influenza outreach exercise when an outbreak among birds occurred in West Bengal. Consular staff responded to the crisis by drafting and issuing warden messages, organizing an emergency town hall meeting, preparing Hindi translations of avian influenza information sheets and DVDs, and visiting backpacker hostels to distribute information.

“Some Americans have told us to stop giving them information—they said they’d heard enough,” said Michelle Bernier-Toth, acting director of CA’s Office of Overseas Citizens Services. “But we can’t do that. They need to know.”

The Office of Medical Services, the Operations Center’s Crisis Management Support, Family Liaison Office, Bureau of Diplomatic Security and other Department partners have pressed missions to prepare.

MED released a video series, *Being Prepared for Pandemic Influenza*, and has ensured that posts have pre-positioned sufficient supplies of the antiviral medications Tamiflu and Relenza to treat Americans and EFMs and to provide work-related post-exposure prophylaxis to all employees. Antibiotics, respirator masks, gowns and guidelines for responding to a pandemic will also be available.

MED’s Safety, Health and Environmental Management Division is also considering possible deployment of the pre-pandemic vaccine once it is available, and MED’s overseas staff regularly hold town hall meetings about the disease.

Many posts abroad have avian influenza action committees that assess in-country conditions, determine an outbreak response and review “tripwires” that would trigger specific mission action. Crisis Management Support staffers are working with the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation, and MED to establish global tripwires, as well. Some posts have revised their water-filtration capabilities to supply potable water or are determining cost-effective treatments to

use water in swimming pools and cisterns. Other posts are reviewing options for emergency food supplies, including meals ready-to-eat, and have identified alternative staging points outside their missions.

U.S. missions in Asia—avian influenza’s so-called “ground zero”—are particularly active. The U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou, China, for instance, cooperates with government officials, scientists and academics on emergency planning, public awareness and monitoring. It also hosted for three months a National Institutes of Health science fellow who enabled the mission to reach out to Guangdong Province’s Center for Disease Control, local hospitals, drug companies and health research institutes, and to strengthen the consulate general’s reporting to Washington.

The science fellow “helped enhance our understanding of how China is dealing with key health-related issues,” said Consul General Robert Goldberg. ■

*The author is the Avian Influenza Action Group’s consular liaison and press officer.*



Wayne Dorsey is a public diplomacy office management specialist in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

# Helping Hands

ELDERCARE BENEFITS EMPLOYEES WITH ELDERLY PARENTS  
BY ED WARNER

A Foreign Service officer's elderly mother-in-law falls at home in the United States, breaking her hip and requiring placement in a long-term-care facility. A father suddenly becomes ill and lies dying in a hospital, but his FSO son is overseas.

When crises like these arise, what are overseas State Department employees to do, given the costs of immediate travel? The answer is the Eldercare Emergency

Visitation Travel program, for when an elderly parent needs personal care or placement in a care facility, and the Medical EVT program, for when a parent is dying. Both

programs underwrite trips by employees, their children and their spouses.

Both programs cover the cost of an employee's or spouse's roundtrip travel to the United States, a benefit that averages \$3,000. The employee's travel time is not charged to his or her leave time, although once in the United States the employee must then use sick leave or annual leave.

## Usage Steady

The Eldercare EVT benefit is likely to see increased use, although use has so far been



steady at about 300 employees annually, according to Mary Jean Dixon, who administers the EVT program in the Bureau of Human Resource's Office of Employee Relations. Growth is expected because the increased U.S. life expectancy means that many more employees' parents will live into their 80s and 90s and encounter significant health problems as they age.

Employees who use either travel benefit must provide a reasonable estimate of how long they will be away and obtain their supervisor's approval for the leave. Complicating this, Dixon said, is that sometimes an employee is uncertain about when he or she can return, because of the uncertain recovery time associated with such medical procedures as open-heart surgery.

Dana R. Williams, a management officer at the U.S. Mission in Geneva, said her husband used the Eldercare EVT program to assist his mother during her hospitalization for surgery in December. Williams said she was "extremely pleased to have the opportunity, especially on short notice, to have my husband there for a short trip during a difficult family time."

### Using EVT

To use the Eldercare EVT benefit, the person needing to travel should contact the post's HR office and his or her supervisor. The post then contacts HR/ER. Dixon said

she responds to the request typically within two business days, and "many are authorized the same day."

For an employee's travel to qualify for the Medical EVT program, the dying family member's healthcare provider must speak with a designated healthcare provider in MED's Foreign Programs unit. If the employee is told that his or her mother or father has had an emergency and "you had better get home right now," that would indicate the employee may need the Medical EVT benefit, Dixon said. MED/FP's e-mail address is [medforeignprograms@state.gov](mailto:medforeignprograms@state.gov), and in an emergency an employee can call the Department's Operations Center at (202) 647-1512 to be referred to the MED duty officer.

The eldercare and medical EVT benefits are two of the four HR/ER services for employees with parents who are seniors. Another is the eldercare drop-in support group that meets on the first Friday of each month in HR/ER's conference room, H-236, in building SA-1. There, Dixon and a social worker from the Office of Medical Services facilitate an hour-long discussion that Dixon said aims to give employees information and a place to share their experiences.

At a recent meeting of the group, one attendee, Isabelle Zsoldos, said the meeting was a safe setting for her to discuss the needs of her parents, who are both 89.

Zsoldos, a foreign affairs officer in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, said she learned that those caring for elderly parents "need to take care of ourselves in the process so we can take care of our parents."

Like Zsoldos, Wayne Dorsey was attending his first meeting of the group. He said he learned to put his situation into perspective, having heard others at the meeting speak of facing more difficult care challenges. He also said he was heartened to learn that others felt as he does.

"You're not alone out there," Dorsey said.

### Information Sessions

The fourth eldercare benefit offered by HR/ER consists of the several senior-related information sessions presented by LifeCare Inc. as part of the IQ: Information Quest Program. Recent presentations have focused on hospice care, communicating with an older loved one and sharing responsibility for the care of an elderly family member. The sessions are being videotaped, and the video on hospice care can be viewed on the Intranet's BNet Web site, <http://bnet.state.gov>.

IQ: Information Quest's eldercare materials are on the contractor's Web site, [www.worklife4you.com](http://www.worklife4you.com). Employees need to log in by entering the screen name "statedepartment" in the site's "registered users"


box, followed by the password "infoquest." Employees may also order materials by e-mailing [specialist@lifecare.com](mailto:specialist@lifecare.com).

HR/ER also works with MED and other Department units, such as the Family Liaison Office, to coordinate other aspects of eldercare. FLO, for example, can help employees who want an elderly parent to come live with them at their overseas residence by having the elderly parent placed on the employee's orders. FLO's *Caring for Elderly Parents* is available at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/hrweb/flo/worklife/eldercare.cfm>. FLO's contact on eldercare, Naomi Ritchie, can be reached at [ritchief@state.gov](mailto:ritchief@state.gov). ■



Trudie Thompson, left, and Isabelle Zsoldos chat at the end of a recent eldercare support group meeting.

*The author is deputy editor of State Magazine.*



This month, *State Magazine* has a safety focus with stories on safe driving, how homes abroad are made safer and what the Domestic Environmental Safety Division and the Safety Health and Environmental Management Division do to protect employee safety and health. To show safety in practice, a consular facility and a warehouse each reveal their secrets. Together, the stories show how we are moving toward a...



# SAFER STATE





# Protective Partners

SAFETY OFFICES GET A LITTLE HELP FROM THEIR FRIENDS **BY DAN HARMAN**

Did you know that there are people working every day to ensure that Department employees leave work in the same condition as at the beginning of the work day? The Domestic Environmental Safety Division and the Safety Health and Environmental Management Division work to protect the safety and health of domestic and overseas employees, respectively.

Domestic facilities and overseas posts are diverse, and all have safety, health and environmental challenges. Despite the geographical and cultural differences between domestic and overseas posts, the underlying philosophy and goals of the safety, health and environmental programs

are similar. DESD and SHEM work to provide a safe and healthy working environment for employees, and to protect the environment, by minimizing risk.

On April 29, the Department had 57,340 employees: 11,467 Foreign Service, 8,784 Civil Service and 37,089 Foreign Service nationals. Of these, 78 percent (44,902) are overseas and 22 percent (12,438) are domestic.

So how do two small divisions protect all these employees? The answer is in a line from an old Beatles song, “with a little help from our friends.”

One of our friends is the designated agency safety and health official that each

federal agency is required by law to have. The Department’s DASHO is Dr. Laurence Brown, the medical director, who oversees the DASHO’s Operations Office. This office formulates Department policy and provides guidance on employee occupational health and safety issues. It also plans and implements procedures for nuclear, biological and chemical countermeasures and for mail and building safety, and coordinates interdepartmental actions in this area.

The DASHO’s Operations Office is headed by Dr. John Keyes. DESD and SHEM work with the DASHO on issues that may affect the entire Department. A good example is the action memorandum that is



drafted as part of a mishap investigation report. These memoranda contain recommendations that will change Department policy and operations, and the DASHO assists with their implementation. The Office of Medical Services also provides the medical evaluations required for some aspects of safety, such as hearing and respiratory protection.

Many overseas employees spend some time working in the United States, often when first hired. This provides advantages for meeting some safety needs. For example, during their orientation training, newly hired Bureau of Diplomatic Security couriers and agents receive hearing-protection training from SHEM and DESD, and baseline audiometric testing from MED while in the Washington, D.C., area. These protections are required because of the employees' occupational exposure to excessive noise.

Another friend of SHEM and DESD is the collateral-duty safety and health officer at each overseas and domestic post. Overseas, they are known as post occupational safety and health officers. Domestically, this responsibility is carried out by individuals such as general services

officers, facility managers and workplace supervisors. DESD and SHEM rely on collateral-duty employees to address routine safety and health issues, and they contact DESD and SHEM for support when needed.

DESD and SHEM also have some inanimate friends—all of those helpful program guidance documents. The documents define how DESD and SHEM conduct operations to ensure the safety and health of employees, family members, visitors and contractors. DESD and SHEM also frequently use another inanimate friend to communicate safety and health information worldwide—the Internet. Visit their Intranet sites and you will find a wealth of information. Information is also available in DESD and SHEM brochures and training materials.

DESD and SHEM rely on you to alert them to unrecognized safety, health and environmental concerns. If you believe that a safety, health or environmental concern exists, report it to your local safety and health officer or to DESD or SHEM.

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*The author is a certified industrial hygienist with the Safety, Health and Environmental Management Division.*



**Below:** Program analyst Felecia Scott, left, meets with David Needham.  
**Opposite page:** Dr. John Keyes heads the DASHO's Operations Office





Aisles in the warehouse are now clearly marked for pedestrians and forklifts.

# Clear Routes

WAREHOUSE REORGANIZED FOR GREATER SAFETY **BY BRIAN PLATZ**

The State Annex-7B warehouse in Springfield, Va., has been reorganized into a more efficient and safer facility.

The warehouse processes items ordered for overseas posts. In the past, pallets of materials accumulated, making it difficult for forklifts and pedestrians to move around safely. Employees inspecting shipments had to climb over or around the stacks. The excess storage also blocked exit paths and emergency eyewash stations.

Now, all the aisles are clear and paths are marked for pedestrians and forklifts.

It was a team effort to streamline inspection and shipping procedures, according to David Fisher, warehouse manager. The team, which includes Fisher,

Allen Naylor, Ervin Smith and David Cook, envisioned an ideal process flow and then addressed safety and efficiency issues.

The efforts also saved \$36,000, according to Fisher. Moving the small-pouch operation to the warehouse eliminated the need to transfer shipments to other Secure Logistics Warehouse Branch warehouses for packing and reduced the average shipment processing time by three to five workdays, according to Fisher. One month after startup of this packing operation, the warehouse staff shipped 531 flow-through orders in a month, a record.

Fisher attributes the safety improvements in part to a DESD-sponsored safety training

program attended by warehouse staff. The safety videos were particularly effective, he said. Following the safety awareness training, the staff had the floors painted with bright stripes to mark distinct aisles for pedestrians and forklifts. DESD itself adopted a policy requiring the wearing of safety shoes by employees in all warehouses, and the team set up a program to ensure routine servicing of emergency eyewash stations. Furthermore, emergency evacuation routes are now posted in all of the warehouses.

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*The author is a certified industrial hygienist in the Domestic Environmental and Safety Division.*



# Star Player

KENTUCKY CONSULAR CENTER EARNS SAFETY AWARD  
BY JULIE SOBELMAN

After two years of working to develop and implement a comprehensive workplace environmental health and safety management system, the Kentucky Consular Center in Williamsburg has received the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Star award for its accomplishment. Of the approximately 110,000 worksites in Kentucky, only 16 have achieved Star status, and only 1,944 worksites nationally, public or private, have it.

The KCC, the first Department of State facility to obtain this designation, began working toward Star status by adopting a comprehensive and rigorous safety and health management system tailored to its

needs. It also needed a cooperative, action-oriented approach where managers, employees and OSHA jointly combat workplace hazards and reduce injuries and illnesses.

OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program recognizes workplaces' safety and health management systems and promotes them as models. Acceptance into the VPP recognizes the employers and employees who have achieved exemplary occupational safety and health management practices, and Star status is the highest VPP honor.

*The author is a certified industrial hygienist in the Domestic Environmental and Safety Division*



Officials at the Kentucky Consular Center unfurl the banner proclaiming their success.

# Home Safe Home

OVERSEAS HOUSING GETS CLOSE ATTENTION **BY CLAIRE HUSON**

From Apia to Zagreb, the Department of State provides safe homes worldwide for Foreign Service officers and their families. Considering the variety in construction and design, and the differences in building codes or lack thereof, providing residential safety is a significant challenge for the Division of Safety, Health and Environmental Management.

World housing styles are as varied as the countries where they are located, but the more serious residential safety and health risks are common to most posts. For instance, improperly installed, operated or vented gas- and other combustion-based

appliances such as water heaters can produce deadly carbon monoxide. Deficient railings or steep stairs increase the risk of a serious injury from a fall, the most frequent type of residential mishap. Injuries and severe lacerations have occurred when occupants collided with plate glass windows and shower doors that were not made of safety glass or covered with protective film. A residential swimming pool requires maintenance with chemical disinfectants and, when not enclosed with a barrier, poses a high risk of drowning for toddlers.

Mixing American lifestyles with local

housing can also produce safety hazards. Locations with 220-volt power require transformers for their occupants to use personal electronics. It's not uncommon for the electrical capacity to be too low to handle the demands of such appliances as air conditioners, computers, microwave ovens or hairdryers.

Occupants of overseas housing can inadvertently increase their risks by simple actions, such as failing to clean the lint trap on the clothes dryer, locating a child's bed next to a low window or allowing pests to enter and then demanding pesticide treatments. Occupants may also unwittingly



PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT): DAN HARWAN; (OPPOSITE PAGE): KATHLEEN BRADFORD





**Above:** A child demonstrates a guard installed over a risky railing at a Foreign Service officer's residence. **Opposite page:** Dennis Dubugras, a POSHO assistant at the U.S. Embassy in Brasília, Brazil, inspects propane tanks at a residence in Costa Rica as part of a training course.

endanger their post's maintenance staff by requiring workers to remove their shoes when working indoors or not allowing the power to be shut off during electrical work.

Families move every few years and are introduced to yet another home with new features, layout and quirks. So it is not surprising that, as in the United States, many accidents occur in the home, some serious. One woman died from pesticide applied in the closet of her Cairo apartment to kill clothes moths. Until a few years ago, audiences at Security Overseas Seminars almost always included at least one person who had served at a post where a toddler drowned in a post swimming pool.

SHEM's comparison of mishaps in overseas residences to those in the United States was eye-opening and showed that overseas housing had to be made safer. So, SHEM developed special-emphasis programs. Partnering with post occupational safety and health officers and several Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations divisions, SHEM used a number of strategies, which include the following:

- Ensuring that swimming pools are surrounded by a barrier with self-closing, self-latching gates to prevent young children from gaining unsupervised access.
- Using integrated pest management to

eliminate the conditions that invite pests and, when appropriate, cautiously using authorized pesticides.

- Installing carbon monoxide alarms in residences that have fuel-burning appliances.

To prevent the rise of new serious hazards, POSHOs now certify prospective residences before they can be acquired or leased. This is particularly important because most housing is leased on a short-term basis, which limits the spending of government funds to correct hazards. Posts must negotiate with landlords to implement safety improvements, often a daunting challenge. SHEM also continually updates its Residential Safety, Health, and Fire Prevention Awareness Checklist, which is used by POSHOs, housing committees and facilities managers to identify hazards in residences.

The improvements have been dramatic. Since the implementation of these changes, there have been no additional deaths from carbon monoxide, pesticide misapplications or toddlers drowning, just near misses and close calls. The overseas housing pool is dynamic, and continuing vigilance remains a SHEM priority.

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*The author is a certified industrial hygienist with the Safety, Health and Environmental Management Division.*

# SAFER STATE



Participants in a driver training course in Manila gather for a photo.

# Buckle Up

OVERSEAS DRIVING POSES RISK **BY DAN HARMAN**

Think of a significant safety or health risk that most people are exposed to every day. Do motor vehicles come to mind?

The overseas motor vehicle fatality rate for Department of State and tenant agency vehicles on official business is more than 20 times the U.S. rate. Eighty-two percent of all reported accidental deaths overseas between 2000 and 2007 were motor-

vehicle-related. U.S. residents don't escape the risk. Although the risk here is lower, in 2002 motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for those ages 3 through 33.

Who are the victims of overseas motor vehicle accidents? Between 2005 and 2007, pedestrians accounted for 53 percent of all fatalities involving official-use vehicles. The

driver involved in a fatal pedestrian mishap can experience a range of distressing emotions long after the accident. Poor lighting, dark clothing, pedestrians' lack of road hazard awareness and the lack of driver adjustments for pedestrians are some of the factors in pedestrian deaths. Of the remaining fatalities, vehicle occupants accounted for 29 percent and cyclists for 18 percent.

## The Drivers

Who are the drivers in these fatal mishaps? Forty-two percent of fatal mishaps involve chauffeurs, and 58 percent involve self-drivers, half of them American

**Overseas driving conditions vary from conditions similar to those in the United States to roads that are almost nonexistent.**



employees. Of the total, 57 percent worked for the Department and 43 percent for other agencies.

Overseas driving conditions vary from conditions similar to those in the United States to roads that are almost nonexistent. Inadequate road design and construction, weak or nonexistent traffic enforcement and aggressive host-country drivers all increase the risk of driving. To reduce the risk, drivers can modify their behavior. Investigations show that excessive speed, poor decision-making, inattention to hazardous situations, failure to scan the roadway ahead and fatigue are some driver-related accident causes.

Many overseas regions do not have highly developed emergency response systems or advanced trauma centers. The World Health Organization reports that, as developing countries increase vehicle use, traffic injuries are expected to become the third-leading cause of death and disability worldwide by 2020.

In response to the vehicle fatality rates and WHO's projection, the Division of Safety, Health and Environmental Management initiated a Safe Driving Train-the-Trainer course in 2005. This effort aims to improve driver behavior, reducing overseas fatality rates. It consists of in-vehicle training and focuses on key behaviors.

The safest vehicle in the world can still be in a severe mishap, one causing serious injury or death. Seat belts are the primary safety device to prevent severe injury or death in a motor vehicle mishap, and the Department requires all occupants of official vehicles and occupants of personal vehicles on official business to wear seat belts. But driving behavior is the best protection. Don't take the chance—drive defensively and always wear a seat belt. ■

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*The author is a certified industrial hygienist with the Safety, Health and Environmental Management Division.*

# SAFER STATE

A special concern in developing nations is bicyclists in traffic.



# Shining Seoul

Glittering Jewel of the Korean Peninsula

BY ANDREW AND ERIN WEBSTER-MAIN



PHOTOGRAPH: CORES



# AT A GLANCE South Korea



**Capital**>>> Seoul

**Total area**>>> 98,480 square kilometers

**Approximate size**>>> Slightly larger than Indiana

**Government**>>> Republic

**Independence**>>> August 15, 1945  
(from Japan)

**Population**>>> 49.2 million

**Life expectancy at birth**>>> 77.4 years

**Languages**>>> Korean and English

**Currency**>>> South Korean won (KRW)

**Per capita income**>>> \$24,600

**Unemployment rate**>>> 3.2 percent

**Import commodities**>>> Machinery, electronic equipment and oil

**Export commodities**>>> Semiconductors, telecommunications equipment and motor vehicles

**Internet country code**>>> .kr



For the last 50 years, the Republic of Korea has been hard at work reinventing itself. The Korean War left the country shattered and impoverished; half a century later, South Korea boasts the world's 13th-largest economy.

South Korea plays a pivotal role in regional and global affairs. What was once called the land of the morning calm is now a buzzing hub of technological innovation.

Seoul, the glittering jewel of the peninsula and a monument to the ROK's phenomenal transformation, sits at the center of an urban area that is home to nearly 23 million people—almost half of the population of South Korea—and to excellent universities, acres of gorgeous parkland, a world-class national museum, a thriving arts community and one of the cleanest and most efficient public transportation systems on the planet.

Cultures brush up against each other every day in the capital. The Lotte department store sends a polished, all-female bagpipe band to local parades and events. In the Itaewon district, epicureans can find excellent Lebanese, Greek, Belgian, Bulgarian and French cuisine—on the same block. The city's ultramodern landscape, punctuated with beautiful reminders of Korea's past, reverberates with activity day and night.

South Koreans are affluent and urbane, with average annual wages of more than \$20,000. More than 90 percent of all households in Seoul have broadband Internet access. And while literacy rates were as low as 22 percent after the end of Japanese occupation in 1945, today 97 percent of South Korean youth complete high school, the highest percentage in the world. Moreover, most of these students go on to college, many in the United States. This year, more than 100,000 Korean students—more than from any other nation—are studying in the United States. Coupled with Korea's democratization in the

1980s and 1990s, these developments have enabled Korean youth to play an active and informed role in civil society that would have been impossible for their parents and grandparents.

Young people were a major voting force in December's presidential election when Koreans decisively elected Lee Myung-bak, a man affectionately known as “the bulldozer,” to be the nation's fifth democratically elected president. Korean newspapers have lauded Lee's legendary energy; he apparently told business and government leaders they could contact him any time except from 1 to 4 a.m., when he sleeps.

### The U.S. Mission

The United States and the ROK have had a formal relationship for 125 years—since the ratification of the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation in 1883. But the partnership that emerged from that agreement, based exclusively on trade and protection, bears little resemblance to today's multidimensional relationship.

The U.S. Embassy in Seoul is home to more than 560 employees working for 15 governmental departments, agencies and bureaus. Employees riding home on the embassy shuttle may one day find themselves chatting with a Foreign Agricultural Service officer working to open South Korea's market to American beef and the next day discussing Korean membership in the Secure Freight Initiative with a Department of Homeland Security representative.

Averaging nearly a half million nonimmigrant visas per year, the embassy is the largest visa-issuing post in the world; the consular section alone boasts 115 employees. The American Presence Post in Busan, which opened in October as the first such post established under the Transformational Diplomacy Initiative, is an important mission component.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) ANDREW AND ERIN WEBSTER-MAN; U.S. EMBASSY IN SEOUL; WAYNE CRAWFORD, AND ANDREW AND ERIN WEBSTER-MAN.





**Clockwise from above:** The Insadong district of Seoul is replete with art galleries and artisans' shops; Secretary Condoleezza Rice greets embassy staff members during her visit to Seoul in February; The Buddha statue at Beopju Temple is gold-plated bronze and stands 33 meters tall; Changdeokgung Palace in central Seoul contains beautiful examples of traditional Korean architecture.





**Clockwise from above:** Noryangjin, Seoul's largest fish market, is seen from above; The Han River flows through Seoul; Lanterns adorn a temple at the foot of Bukhansan, a hiker's paradise not far from central Seoul; Embassy staffers enjoy a night of shopping at Dongdaemun Market, which is often called the largest wholesale shopping district in the world with more than 30,000 stores and 50,000 manufacturing companies; The Tripitaka Koreana, Buddhist sutras carved into 81,340 wooden tablets, remains remarkably well-preserved in Haeinsa's naturally ventilated setting.







PHOTOGRAPHS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) ANDREW AND ERIN WEBSTER-MAIN; SEOUL CITY GOVERNMENT; WAYNE CRAWFORD; AND ANDREW AND ERIN WEBSTER-MAIN.

The United States and the ROK have cooperated closely to ensure peace and security on the Korean Peninsula since 1953. Now the relationship promises to evolve further. Under an agreement reached in 2007, the ROK will assume wartime operational control of its troops in 2012. Moreover, the U.S. military—currently about 28,500 strong on the peninsula—is realigning its presence from numerous smaller bases throughout South Korea to three central hubs. As part of this process, U.S. Forces–Korea will vacate Yongsan Garrison—where embassy staff reside in a lovely enclave built as officers’ housing—and return the property to the city. Although some of this land may eventually be dedicated to the construction of a new U.S. Embassy compound, plans are in the works to convert most of it into what would be the largest urban park in Asia.

The past decade saw the United States and ROK become increasingly close regional and global partners. Korean and U.S. troops serve together in Iraq, and the two countries are collaborating in the Six-Party Talks to eliminate the North Korean nuclear threat. The process has yielded significant gains: North Korea is disabling its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, and in return the United States, China, Japan, South Korea and Russia have provided energy and humanitarian assistance.

South Korea’s economic relationship with the United States has become increasingly close. The United States is South Korea’s second-largest trading partner and largest investment partner, while the ROK is the U.S.’s seventh-largest trading partner and export market. A year ago, the United States and ROK signed the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which will open up billions of dollars in new export and investment opportunities for U.S. businesses and workers. The agreement will require ratification by Congress and Korea’s National Assembly, but both governments believe the economic and strategic arguments for the agreement will win the support of a majority of legislators in both countries.

ROK-U.S. ties will deepen if South Korea enters the Visa Waiver Program. President Bush’s signature on the Homeland Security Bill in August

opened the door for the ROK’s participation in the program. Once the Korean government implements certain security enhancements and begins issuing e-passports, and the United States meets certain requirements, Korean citizens may be able to travel visa-free to the United States for tourism and business visits of up to 90 days.

### Embassy Life

Despite the mission’s heavy workload, embassy staff reserve plenty of time for fun. In a country that celebrates the raucous art of noraebang (Korean karaoke), it is little wonder the embassy community is remarkably musical. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow regularly entertains crowds with his drumming skills and even accompanied the Nunchuks—a ragtag band of Foreign Service officers known more for their comedic exuberance than their musical competence—on a James Brown tune. The Seoul Singers, a choir group until recently directed by the general services officer, are renowned throughout Seoul.

Getting out and about in South Korea is easy. Koreans are avid hikers, and a weekend ramble in the mountains surrounding Seoul is an excellent way to make friends and discover natural wonders. The embassy’s intimate relationship with U.S. Forces–Korea provides staff with countless activities, including trips to the Demilitarized Zone and skiing excursions. The embassy’s excellent post language program schedules trips to points of interest such as Haeinsa, a temple in South Gyeongsang province that houses Buddhist sutras carved in the 13th century into 81,340 wooden blocks that are still remarkably well-preserved.

Koreans have a proverb about faith and perseverance in desperate times: “If the sky falls, there will be a hole to get through.” Seoul is a testament to the wisdom of this adage. In a half-century’s time, South Koreans’ hard work and ingenuity have brought the country from tragedy to triumph. ■

*Andrew Webster-Main was until recently a staff aide to the ambassador, and Erin Webster-Main was a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.*

# Keeping the Peace

OBSERVERS MONITOR TREATY IN THE SINAI **BY BROOKE DE MONTLUZIN**

Blackhawk helicopters, military fixed-wing aircraft, all-terrain vehicles and Global Positioning System receivers are the tools of the trade of a civilian observer serving in the Sinai desert. Each year, Department of State officers temporarily leave the Foreign Service and join the Civilian Observer Unit of the Multinational Force and Observers to serve on the frontlines of peacekeeping and diplomacy in one of the world's most volatile and fascinating regions.

Established in 1982 to monitor the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the MFO is an independent international peacekeeping force consisting of military troops from 11 nations and the 15-member COU, which is staffed entirely by Americans—roughly half of whom are from the Department.

The COU arose from the Sinai Field Mission of 1976, which was established following Israel and Egypt's agreement to third-party monitoring, including access to key strategic areas and reconnaissance flights in the Sinai. The Camp David Accords followed in 1978 and the peace treaty in 1979.

## Vital Role

To ensure the treaty's success, the U.S. led the effort to create the MFO in 1982, agreeing to provide military forces and civilian observers and to fund the organization equally with Egypt



State-seconded Observer  
Brooke de Montluzin boards  
a UH-60A Blackhawk

and Israel. Today, all three nations still shoulder their share of the organization's costs, believing the MFO vital to maintaining the treaty and regional security. In 2005 and 2007, the MFO took on additional COU monitoring duties following Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. Clearly, the COU is central to the Multinational Force's ability to carry out its mission.

The civilian observers operate throughout the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and within a three-kilometer-wide strip along the border in Israel, performing aerial reconnaissance and on-the-ground verification to monitor the military limitations in the treaty. Aerial reconnaissance is conducted in Blackhawk helicopters and military fixed-wing aircraft, with the observers directing pilots over recon objectives. On-ground verification missions last two to four days and use off-road vehicles.

The frequent interaction of observers with liaison officers and senior military officers in both countries allows observers to develop leadership and diplomatic skills. These contacts, together with the integration of the COU into a 1,700-member military force, also provide a unique opportunity for observers to develop a range of useful political-military skills.

## Vantage Point

"My year as chief of the COU, dealing with Israeli and Egyptian officials and watching them deal with each other, was a great vantage point to see how the Camp David treaty





**Left:** State-seconded Observers Brooke de Montluzin and Inga Heemink review maps with COU Operations Officer Pete Scheffer prior to a mission. **Below:** A Beduoin tribesman and his camels move through the Sinai.

actually worked,” said U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Ronald Schlicher. “It was also my first experience in working in a multilateral context, which is useful background for any diplomat.

“Working with my military colleagues was also extremely valuable, and indeed cooperation with the Department of Defense is becoming a central feature of the way the Department needs to do business.”

Another former COU chief, Frank Ricciardone, now U.S. ambassador to Egypt, said he gained his first real professional management and leadership experience while COU chief.

“It was especially moving and illuminating,” he said, “to see how

the Camp David agreement played out on the ground, with soldiers of former bitter enemy states cooperating daily in peace.”

The COU is based at the Multinational Force’s North Camp in the northern Sinai. Life there is much like living on a small university campus. The camp has a main dining area, library, laundry and athletic facilities, a shop and other entertainment and dining facilities.

### Scenic Beauty

The Sinai offers exceptional scenic beauty, particularly its coral reefs. In addition to scuba diving and snorkeling, there is swimming, sailing, waterskiing, windsurfing, rock climbing, trekking, hiking, tennis and golf. The Sinai’s cultural sites include St. Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai.

As an outdoor enthusiast and student of history, Ambassador Ricciardone said he found the Sinai incomparably seductive and a daily adventure.

U.S. Ambassador to Iceland Carol Van Voorst also endorsed the experience.

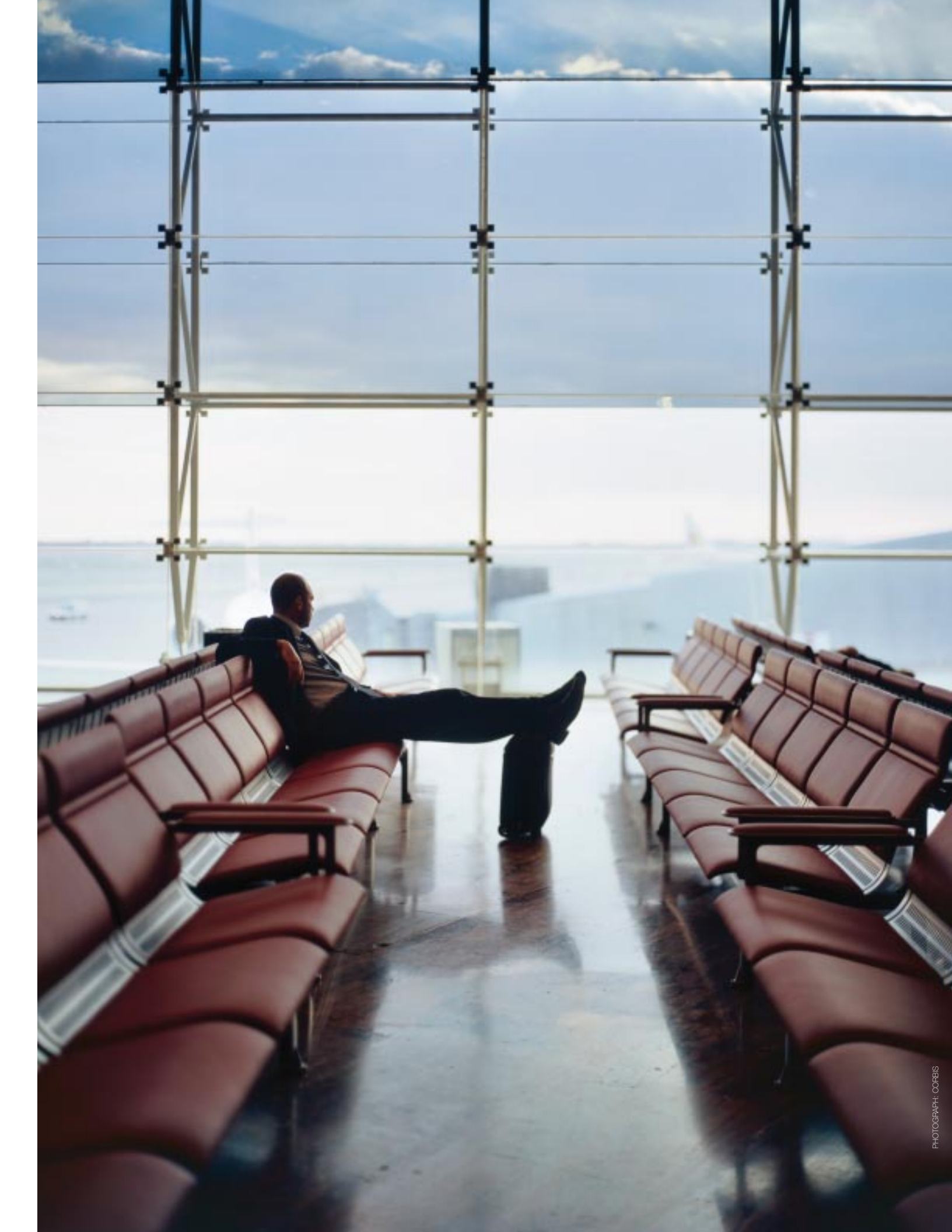
“Twenty years ago I spent one of the best years of my life with the MFO in the Sinai,” she said. “It was exciting, great fun and extremely rewarding professionally. I don’t think I’ve had better on-the-job leadership training.”

The observers have a rare opportunity to engage hands-on in frontline diplomacy and peacekeeping, get front-row seats to one of the most important relationships in the Middle East and gain insight into the elements needed for future peace in the region.

Foreign Service officers interested in working as a civilian observer with the MFO should contact Lucia Verrier ([verrierlc@state.gov](mailto:verrierlc@state.gov)) or Jill Shaunfield ([shaunfieldjr@state.gov](mailto:shaunfieldjr@state.gov)). ■



*The author is a civilian observer from the Department serving with the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai.*







# THE LONELIEST NUMBER

MED HELPS EMPLOYEES READJUST AFTER UNACCOMPANIED TOURS

BY JENNIFER L. GRISE

Have you returned from an unaccompanied tour or are you considering one? The Unaccompanied Tour Support Group, facilitated by Employee Consultation Services in the Office of Medical Services, could be an important resource.

The Unaccompanied Tour Support Group is for any U.S. government employee who has served at an unaccompanied post. The group meets weekly in the Office of Medical Services in State Annex 1 at Columbia Plaza.

Unaccompanied tours are a fact of life for more and more Foreign Service employees. MED cares about their health—not only while at post, but also when they return from these difficult and stressful tours.

Four U.S. missions currently have posts where tours are classified as unaccompanied by any family members. Usually, these tours are for only 12 months, which means an increasing number of employees will experience one. At least 3,000 Department employees have served on an unaccompanied tour.

The support group arose from MED's involvement in a task force in 2007. MED saw the need to provide a protected time and place for employees to review the intense experience and emotions related to serving in an unaccompanied tour. Employees identified a need to connect with other people adjusting to re-entry into the U.S.

ECS provided a venue and privacy to launch the group as a pilot program last fall. The support group is now a vital, active group that meets regularly.

Employees face multiple readjustments when returning to more traditional diplomatic postings. MED's mission "to safeguard and promote the health and well being of America's diplomatic community" means paying special attention to the health risks that unaccompanied tours pose. The risks range from mental and physical stress to more frequent and more intense family and relationship problems.

The support group provides a private, confidential setting for employees to work through adjustment issues and find

emotional relief from the issues or problems they would like to work on. The level of each attendee's participation depends on his or her personal goals. Group members can share as much or as little as they like. Some talk and share, while others just listen and reflect.

Topics discussed in the group relate to personal, family or work issues. Group members may share their unaccompanied tour experiences and discuss issues arising from readjusting to life in the United States.

All employees who have been on an unaccompanied tour are welcome, as is anyone assigned to go on an unaccompanied tour. The meeting is facilitated by ECS's licensed clinical social workers, Ellen Millner or Dr. Stan Piotroski. Each support group meeting lasts 60 to 90 minutes, depending on the needs and size of the group that day.

An employee's membership in the support group and attendance at meetings is not shared with other offices in MED, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security or anyone else. Confidentiality is assured for all, no matter what is discussed or presented.

ECS can provide referrals to other support services inside and outside the Department for group members who have issues they would like to address in a more individualized way. Referrals can also be provided if an employee has health problems that are too broad or complex to be handled in the support group setting. One resource, for example, is the Family Liaison Office's support services for family members of unaccompanied tour employees.

The Washington Unaccompanied Tour Support Group has inspired formation of other support groups at posts where there are employees who came from unaccompanied tour posts.

If you have questions about whether to join the support group, or would like more details, contact ECS at 202-663-1815 or at [MedECS@state.gov](mailto:MedECS@state.gov). ■

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*The author is deputy director of MED's Foreign Service Health Practitioner Program.*



## Student Records Available Online!

Need your class schedule or an unofficial transcript of training taken through the Foreign Service Institute? Visit the FSI Registrar's Office Web page on the Department of State OpenNet at <http://fsi.state.gov/admin/reg>.

## Islam in Iraq: Religion, Society and Politics

The School of Professional and Area Studies has developed a new course that is important for everyone who will work in or on Iraq. Following a brief explanation of aspects of Islam and Islamic history in general, the course focuses on the relevant contemporary religious landscape of Iraq. This course will be directed by one of the world's leading experts on modern Iraq with guest speakers including those who have worked with religious and other leaders in Iraq. For further information on the content of this course, contact SPAS at <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/spas/default.asp?ID=1551>.



## PT250 Leading in a High-Stress Post

Leading effectively in a high-stress situation requires self-awareness coupled with specialized knowledge and skills. This one-day course will cover challenges of living and working in a high-stress situation; stress management techniques; self-management/regulation; and tools for handling challenging situations. You will hear how to create a healthy work environment from a panel of colleagues who have successfully served in high-stress posts. A course book with relevant information and resources will be provided. For additional information, contact the Leadership Training Division at [Fsilms@state.gov](mailto:Fsilms@state.gov) or visit the FSI Iraq Resources Web page at <http://fsi.state.gov/languages/iraqis/default.asp>.

## Distance Learning

Learn at your own pace, when and where you want! FasTrac Distance Learning Program is available to all State Department employees, FSNs and EFM. With your FasTrac password, you may access the entire catalog of more than 3,500 courses, from home or office. To view the complete catalog, visit the FasTrac Web site at <http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac>.

An extensive menu of FSI-developed distance learning courses is also available to eligible participants on the FSI LearnCenter. For more information, visit the FSI Web site at <http://fsi.state.gov> and click on "Distance Learning."

Dates for FSI Transition Center Courses are shown below. For information on all the courses available at FSI, visit the Schedule of Courses on OpenNet at <http://fsi.state.gov>. See Department Notices for announcements of new courses and new course dates and periodic announcements of external training opportunities sponsored by FSI. For additional information, please contact the Office of the Registrar at (703) 302-7144/7137.

Security	July	August	Length
MQ911 Security Overseas Seminar	14,28	11,25	2D
MQ912 Advanced Security Overseas Seminar	22	5	1D
MQ914 Youth Security Overseas Seminar	1,15,22,29	12	1D

Foreign Service Life Skills	July	August	Length
MQ110 Deputy Chief of Mission Spouse	14	11	3D
MQ115 Explaining America	19		1D
MQ116 Protocol and the U.S. Representation Abroad	12	2	1D
MQ250 Young Diplomats Day	14,28	11	1D
MQ703 Post Options for Employment and Training		19	1D
MQ802 Communicating Across Cultures		9	1D
MQ803 Realities of Foreign Service Life		16	1D
MQ950 High Stress Assignment Outbriefing Program	11,18	8,29	2H

Career Transition Center	July	August	Length
RV101 Retirement Planning Seminar	28		4D
RV102 Job Search Program		4	8W
RV103 Financial Management and Estate Planning	29		1D
RV104 Annuities, Benefits and Social Security	30		1D

Length: H = Hours, D = Days, W = Weeks



# Appointments



**U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait**  
**Deborah K. Jones** of New Mexico, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. Previously, she was principal officer in Istanbul. Her other overseas assignments include Abu Dhabi, Addis Ababa, Baghdad, Buenos Aires and Damascus. She is a graduate of the National War College. She is married to Foreign Service officer Richard G. Olson and has two daughters.



**U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh**  
**James F. Moriarty** of Massachusetts, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Previously, he was ambassador to Nepal. Before that, he was senior director at the National Security Council, responsible for East Asia and the Pacific region. His other overseas postings include Beijing, Taipei, Pakistan, Swaziland and Morocco. He is married to retired Foreign Service officer Lauren Moriarty and has two children.



**U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States**  
**Hector E. Morales** of Texas, a businessman and lawyer, is the new U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. He is also a member of the board of directors of the Inter-American Foundation, which works to promote grassroots development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Previously, he was U.S. executive director of the Inter-American Development Bank. He has nearly 20 years of experience in U.S. commerce in the Americas.



**U.S. Ambassador to Egypt**  
**Margaret Scobey** of Tennessee, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt. Previously, she was ambassador to Syria and then political counselor in Baghdad. She served as deputy chief of mission in Riyadh and Sanaa. Her other overseas postings include Jerusalem, Kuwait, Pakistan and Peru. She also served as director of Arabian Peninsula Affairs.

## retirements

### *Foreign Service*

Barge, John M.  
Brennan, Thomas J.  
Perreault, Robert R.

### *Civil Service*

Aguero, Juan A.  
Aronson, Diane S.  
Daniels, Helen June  
Estep, Pearlie L.

Glasberg, Deborah M.  
Richardson, Muriel D.  
Stalnaker, Ronald L.



**Maurice "Moe" Stephen Blais**, 66, a retired Civil Service senior inspector in the Office of the Inspector General, died March 25 in Pawley's Island, S.C. He began his career in the General Accounting Office in

Boston, moving to Honolulu and then Washington, D.C. He joined the Department in 1988 and retired in 1997.



**Anne Jeanne Gurvin**, 75, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 4 in the Washington, D.C., area. She joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1966 and served in Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Stockholm, The Hague and Lima.

After retiring in 1996, she fostered linkages among institutions, leaders and donors. She participated in breast cancer action groups and enjoyed reading, opera, dramatic arts and travel.



**Harriett Hathaway Fitch Fitzgerald**, 92, widow of Foreign Service officer John Francis Fitzgerald, died March 21 in Washington, D.C. She accompanied her husband on postings to Medellin, Tijuana, Bilbao,

Tunis, Valletta, Brussels, Cairo and Buenos Aires during his 1942-71 tenure with the Department.

**Harold Eugene Horan**, 80, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 12 following a stroke in Washington, D.C. He served in the Army during World War II and joined the Department in 1960. He served in Iran, Italy, Mali, Liberia and Malawi, where he was ambassador. After retiring in 1981, he was a consultant to the Department on African affairs and deputy director of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University. He worked with early Alzheimer's patients.



**Leon Reuben Fortune**, 86, a retired career military officer and Department employee, died April 16 in Brandon, Miss. He served in the Army Air Force during World War II and retired from the Air Force in 1962. He later

worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Kabul and for USAID and the U.S. Embassy in Lagos. He retired to Brandon in 1982.



**Kathleen "Katie" Powers Hough**, 34, wife of Foreign Service officer Shane Hough, died Feb. 9 in Guayaquil, Ecuador, where she was the community liaison officer. Earlier, she had worked for the bureaus of

Consular Affairs, Non-Proliferation and European Affairs.

**Marjorie Godby Gist**, 101, widow of Foreign Service officer Justice Ervin Gist, died Feb. 23 in Des Moines, Iowa. She accompanied her husband on overseas postings to Warsaw, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Tangier, Paris, Abidjan and Sofia. After his retirement in 1965, they lived in New York City, Green Forest, Ark., and Des Moines.



**Kamal K. Kadirov**, 58, a Foreign Service National employee at the U.S. Embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan, died April 7 in Baku. He joined the embassy as a chauffeur in 1993 and since 1997 had been the ambassador's chauffeur. He

enjoyed fishing and playing chess.





**Wally Keiderling**, 77, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 9 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, of complications from a stroke and arteriosclerosis. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1962 and served overseas in Bolivia, the

Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Ecuador, Portugal, Brazil and Colombia. After retiring in 1992, he traveled extensively and between trips played his balalaika, acquired cattle and tended his mountainside garden in Cochabamba.



**Barbara A. LaBrie**, 63, a retired Civil Service employee, died March 15 of a heart attack. After working for the Central Intelligence Agency in Europe, she spent 33 years with the Department—the last 19 in the Office of Overseas Schools.

She also worked in several other bureaus and was a general services officer in Georgetown, Guyana. She was an avid supporter of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and several museums and cultural organizations.



**Joseph E. O'Mahoney**, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 26 in Bethesda, Md., after a long illness. He served in the Army during World War II. He joined the Department in 1952 and the Foreign Service in 1956. He served in

Seoul, Hong Kong, New Delhi, Santiago and Port of Spain. He retired in 1988.

**David Newsom**, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 30 in Charlottesville, Va. He joined the Department in 1947 and was ambassador to Libya, Indonesia and the Philippines. He was assistant secretary for African affairs and retired as under secretary for political affairs in 1981. He then served as director of the Institute of Diplomacy at Georgetown and professor of international affairs at the University of Virginia.

**Wendell A. Pike**, 86, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Jan. 25 in Sequim, Wash. He served as a pilot in the Navy during World War II. He joined the Department in 1950 and retired in 1973.



**I. Lee Sanders**, 75, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 20 in Seattle, Wash., of lung cancer. He served in the Army before joining the Department in 1959. His overseas assignments included Romania, Uruguay and Spain.

After retiring, he became an avid equestrian.



**Richard Charles Schoonover**, 70, a retired Foreign Service officer, died of cancer March 12 in Chapel Hill, N.C. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1964 and served in Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Tunisia,

the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Belgium. After retiring, he accompanied his wife Brenda on her tour as U.S. ambassador to Togo. He was co-chair of the Carolina Friends of the Foreign Service and on the board of the online magazine *American Diplomacy*. He was a chef and an avid golfer who enjoyed playing challenging courses throughout the world.



**Billie A. Wilds**, 65, a retired staff assistant in the Office of Medical Services, died Feb. 11 at her home in St. Petersburg, Fla., after a long illness. She joined the Department in 1966 and retired in 1996. She and her husband Bill were

avid boating enthusiasts.

## A Matter of Time



Throughout 2005 and much of 2006, U.S. media were ablaze with alarming reports on avian influenza, especially a particularly nasty virus that potentially could jump species and attack humans. A worldwide pandemic could kill millions, the reports claimed, and the Department prepared accordingly by forming the Avian Influenza Action Group (“Coming to America,” *State Magazine*, June 2006).

While the pandemic never arrived, avian influenza still lurks in more than 60 countries, and experts say it is only a matter

of time before a mutated form of the virus strikes humans. With that sobering prediction in mind, the Department’s 18-member “flu crew” remains vigilant, coordinating and implementing international containment and preparation strategies in more than 100 countries.

These diplomatic tools definitely fall outside the pale—Blackhawk helicopters, military fixed-wing aircraft and Global Positioning System receivers. But they are invaluable to the Foreign Service officers who serve on the Civilian Observer Unit of the Multinational Force and Observers, an independent international peacekeeping force established to monitor the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. The force consists of military troops from 11 nations and the 15-member COU, roughly half of whom are from the Department. Civilian observers operate throughout the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and within a three-kilometer-wide strip along the border in Israel.

Program veterans rave about the opportunity to develop their leadership and diplomatic skills while providing invaluable peacekeeping service in one of the world’s most volatile regions.

When the United States, China and the Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea (North Korea) ended open hostilities with an

armistice in July 1953, the Korean peninsula was devastated. Half a century later, the Republic of Korea—South Korea—stands tall as the world’s 13th largest economy and as a leader in regional and global affairs. What was once a shattered and impoverished moonscape is now a buzzing center of technological innovation. Responsible for managing U.S. relations with this urbane and affluent country, the U.S. Embassy in Seoul is home to more than 560 colleagues working for 15 government departments, agencies and bureaus. The consular section alone processes almost a half million visas a year, making it the largest visa-issuing post in the world.

Last but never least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *Maurice “Moe” Stephen Blais; Harriett Hathaway Fitch Fitzgerald; Leon Reuben Fortune; Marjorie Godby Gist; Anne Jeanne Gurvin; Harold Eugene Horan; Kathleen “Katie” Powers Hough; Kamal K. Kadirov; Wally Keiderling; Barbara A. LaBrie; Joseph E. O’Mahoney; David Newsom; Wendell A. Pike; I. Lee Sanders; Richard Charles Schoonover; and Billie A. Wilds.* ■

*Rob Wiley*

Rob Wiley  
Editor-in-Chief

## Coming in July/August

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- Foreign Affairs Day 2008
- Arabic Discussion Group Speaks Up
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