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March 2012

MAGAZINE

Fire & Ice

Turkmenistan Post
a Study in Contrasts

A Powerful Voice

Office of the Month
Advocates Women's Rights



The War on Piracy

Contents

March 2012 // Issue Number 565

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Amazing Ashgabat

Post of the Month boasts
ancient pedigree

Nestled between the Kara
Kum desert and the Kopet
Dag mountain range,
Ashgabat has grown from a
small village to the capitol of
a developing Turkmenistan
in less than 150 years.

Photo by Cercamon





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On the Cover

Members of guided-missile cruiser *USS Chosin's* visit, board, search and seizure team practice anti-piracy boarding techniques from a rigid-hull inflatable boat, while under way in the Gulf of Aden.

Photo by MC1 Brandon Raile

Post One

BY ISAAC D. PACHECO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Troubled Waters

Over the years, Hollywood has romanticized pirates, casting them as churlish miscreants that sail from one happy misadventure to the next. Led by fearless, often morally ambiguous captains, and crewed by a rag-tag assortment of surly characters, they swashbuckle their way across the high seas in tall ships while looting, firing cannons and drinking rum.

Unfortunately, the grim reality of modern piracy provides a stark contrast to the fantasy portrayed on the silver screen. Unlike their cinematic counterparts who roamed the Antilles, 21st-century pirates most frequently hail from war-torn countries near the Horn of Africa, where corruption, poverty and lawlessness combine to create a perfect environment for organized criminal enterprise.

Riding in small, high-speed skiffs, today's pirate gangs ambush much larger ships, using rope ladders and grappling hooks to pull themselves aboard. Though often ill-equipped and outnumbered, these armed bandits use intimidation and violence to subdue passengers and crewmembers.

In the past decade alone, pirates have launched hundreds of these attacks against commercial and recreational vessels in waters off the east coast of Africa, and recently on the other side of the continent in the Gulf of Guinea. Instead of simply looting onboard treasures and leaving, pirates now frequently sail captured ships to unregulated seaports where pragmatic and unscrupulous officials abet their cause. There they hold captives and stolen cargo hostage for immense ransoms. In some cases, pirates have killed hostages when their demands were not met.

Emboldened by successful raids that often net them millions in ransom, pirates continue to brazenly prowl highly trafficked sea routes despite increased security. As boats in their coastal hunting grounds become more difficult to assail, some gangs are hijacking vessels hundreds of miles from their home ports with the assistance of larger mother ships.



In an effort to combat this increasing threat to international trade and maritime security, a number of governments have begun working together to provide counter-piracy patrols and naval escorts to vessels in high-risk waters. At the forefront of these efforts is a State Department-led coalition that brings together disparate agencies with important roles in the war on high seas piracy (pg. 14). A small team of professionals in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Counter Piracy and Maritime Security office coordinates the Department's response, building inter-agency partnerships and participating in working groups with the U.S. Maritime Administration and U.S. Coast Guard.

As a result of their efforts, successful pirate attacks off the East African coast have decreased steadily since 2008. The Department's sustained engagement, along with a number of highly publicized military operations, including a recent nighttime raid by U.S. Special Forces to rescue two hostages held in Somalia, have proven that modern pirates are not beyond the reach of justice, wherever they hide.

That's one part of the story Hollywood usually gets right.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Isaac D. Pacheco".

Corrections

Nov. 2011, pg. 22 – The photo credit in the *Post of the Month's* opening spread was omitted. Ron Shoshani took the high-dynamic-range photo of Tel Aviv.



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Inbox



@ Mission Statement

The State Department's mission statement reminds all employees what they actually do, why their organization exists and is pivotal to understanding our mission. It may be wise for the mission statement to be depicted clearly not just on the main State Department web page but on the web pages of all bureaus. This may help create a workforce with a broader perspective of the Department and employees who are more cognizant of what they do and where they are heading.

Krishna Das
*U.S. Embassy
Pretoria, South Africa*

f Boards and Bridges

So proud of my diplomat skateboarding son up there (February, 2012), Evan Paul Collisson, building international bridges of peace and love, everywhere he goes!

Nancy Wd
Via Facebook

@ Looks Good, Reads Well

I just had a chance to page through the January issue of *State Magazine*, and I want to congratulate you and your staff on the brilliant changes. I know it can be a huge effort to make major changes in a publication, and I think the new layout is energetic, attractive, thoughtful and engaging. Keep up the good work. I think the new look and feel of the magazine will translate to greater engagement with your audiences.

Joe Costantino
*U.S. Embassy
Sofia, Bulgaria*

@ Please send my sincere thanks to the entire staff for their professionalism and enthusiasm in putting together a remarkable issue each month.

Ambassador Frankie A. Reed
*U.S. Embassy
Suva, Fiji*

@ My compliments to the new editor for the spiffy makeup of the magazine—exciting cover on the January 2012 issue and use of color photos in page layouts. I especially liked the Ambassador Appointments page with the world map. *State Magazine* is now much more interesting to read.

Stuart Gorin
*U.S. Information Agency (Ret.)
Viera, Florida*

@ Congratulations to you for the great work on *State Magazine*. It has become a much more dynamic and readable publication under your editorial guidance. Thank you for keeping us so well informed of State Department news, programs and developments from Washington and posts around the world.

Ambassador D. Brent Hardt
*U.S. Embassy
Georgetown, Guyana*

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In the News



Secretary of State Clinton speaks at the Istanbul Process conference. Department of State photo

Conference Promotes Religious Freedom

During a December conference in Washington, D.C., Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told delegates representing 30 countries and international organizations that “We are working together to protect two fundamental freedoms—the right to practice one’s religion freely and the right to express one’s opinion without fear.”

The three-day conference inaugurated what is known as the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief. The conference arose from more than a decade of U.S. and allied diplomatic efforts at the United Nations and marked a series of firsts for U.S. diplomacy on religious tolerance and free speech. For instance, it was the first time that government experts worldwide jointly developed concrete ways to protect vulnerable religious minorities, train government officials on cultural

awareness and enforce anti-discrimination laws.

Sessions offered lessons and sought solutions to such national challenges as enforcement mechanisms and institutional insensitivities. For example, the U.S. Transportation Security Administration discussed how it addressed concerns about full-body scanners with technical solutions that respect a traveler’s modesty but do not compromise airline security.

For 13 consecutive years, U.N. resolutions have supported action against those who defamed religions. These resolutions insisted that insulting the beliefs of others could be a crime. However, they legitimized states that criminalized what their rulers deemed “blasphemous” speech, thereby sacrificing freedom of speech in the name of religion.

At the March 2011 session of the U.N. Human Rights Council, this changed. Due to

extensive U.S. efforts, the “defamation” resolution was not presented for the first time since 1988. Instead, Resolution 16/18 passed, becoming the basis for the Istanbul Process. It calls for practical ways to combat religious discrimination without calling for legal restrictions on speech. A similar resolution passed the U.N. General Assembly the month before the Istanbul Process conference.

These momentous developments at the U.N. and at the ensuing conference were not lost on Suzan Johnson Cook, ambassador-at-large for religious freedom in the Office for International Religious Freedom. In her address at the three-day conference, Johnson Cook emphasized the significance of the past year’s events and called for maintaining the momentum.

“History will judge us not by the resolutions we pass,” she said, “but by whether we put these resolutions into practice.”

Department Employees Meet Annual Giving Goal

In a difficult economic climate, Department employees worldwide demonstrated their generosity by responding to the need for charitable giving through the 2011 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), ensuring that the Department reached its CFC goal of raising more than \$2.2 million to support the more than 4,000 charities in the CFC catalog.

Meeting or exceeding their goals were the bureaus of Information Resource Management; African Affairs; Consular Affairs; Diplomatic Security; International Information Programs; Educational and Cultural Affairs; Human Resources; Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs; Economic, Energy and Business Affairs; Congressional Affairs; Public Affairs; and Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Foreign Service Institute and Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Several fund raisers held during the CFC drive highlighted their sponsoring bureaus' creativity and light-hearted approach to giving. They included a fun run/walk, cupcake taste-off, Halloween costume contest, used book and CD sale, video game tournament and the CFC circus hosted by the Foreign Service Institute.

Office of Employee Relations Work Life Division Chief Judy Ikels said the campaign was a team effort and thanked its donors, organizers, coordinators and key workers. She urged those with ideas about how to make the 2012 campaign an even greater success to contact her or Shelly Kornegay, CFC coordinator in the Work Life Division.

FSI Transition Center Director Ray Leki serves as ringmaster and promotes global charitable giving strategies with School of Professional Studies Dean David Newell, the driving force behind FSI's CFC circus.
Department of State photo



Inspiring Foreign Language Teaching Assistants

Assistant Secretary Ann Stock, center, meets with Fulbright FLTAs from around the world during the Mid-Year Conference.

Department of State photo

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) in December sponsored a conference attended by 440 foreign language teaching assistants (FLTA) from 51 countries, and representing 32 different languages. The FLTA Program, a component of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program, provides young English teachers the opportunity to refine their teaching skills and broaden their knowledge of U.S. culture and customs while strengthening foreign language instruction at U.S. colleges and universities.

Assistant Secretary Ann Stock's participation was a highlight of the 2011 Fulbright FLTA Mid-Year Conference in Washington, D.C. Her speech recognized FLTAs' contributions at U.S. colleges and universities, and

encouraged participants to capitalize on their time in the United States. Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board Chair-elect Tom Healy also spoke.

Other highlights included a poster session with approximately 30 exhibits spotlighting participants' cultures and their experiences in the United States. The conference included interactive presentations by ECA's Office of Alumni Affairs and Office of English Language Programs, and a luncheon with Department staff, including representatives of ECA and the regional bureaus. A talent show featured 13 performances by the participants, and 10 FLTAs representing each region of the world visited Capitol Hill.

News

Los Angeles Lauds DS Agent

After enduring a series of arson-related car fires over the New Year's weekend, Los Angeles city officials expressed their gratitude to Bureau of Diplomatic Security Special Agent Jonathan Lamb for his help in identifying and arresting the alleged arsonist in January.

"The city couldn't be more grateful for your work in helping to identify the suspected arsonist and putting an end to fires that were, frankly, creating a terror in our community," said Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

Lamb and Deputy U.S. Marshal Luis Flores, who had worked with Lamb on a related fugitive case, recognized the suspect and provided L.A. authorities with the information to identify and locate him just five hours later. The suspect, 24-year-old Harry Burkhart, was arraigned on 37 counts of arson and later charged with more than 100 arson-related counts for allegedly setting numerous other fires in surrounding areas.

Burkhart is charged with setting more than 50 fires in and around Los Angeles, primarily in West Hollywood and Hollywood, beginning

Dec. 30 and continuing through Jan. 2. Most of the incidents involved cars parked near enough to homes that a spreading fire could have caused acute danger. Damage estimates place the toll of the fires at \$3 million.

"We are proud that we were one of those cooperating federal authorities in this case," said State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland.

Police set up an interagency arson task force that put out a video showing a person of interest in the case, and DS agents in the L.A. field office contacted the task force and provided their information, which arose from a separate ongoing investigation.

L.A. Mayor Villaraigosa issued a proclamation to Special Agent Lamb that recognized



Los Angeles Police Department photo

his "exemplary contributions in helping to identify the suspected arsonist and putting an end to the tragic fires that affected the city and its neighbors."

"It is because of your actions that we were able to avert further damage and the potential loss of life," said Villaraigosa. "We give thanks for your exemplary work and service to the community."

State of the Arts

The Foreign Affairs Recreation Association and State of the Arts Cultural Series late last year featured stimulating performances by pianists, harpists, a violinist, flutist, cellist and the Department's own choral ensemble, the T-Tones.

In October, Ukrainian pianist Serhii Morozov gave a piano recital, and the American Youth Harp Ensemble, under the leadership of Artistic Director and Founder Lynnelle Ediger-Kordzaia, performed. In November, concert violinist Rafael Javadov, who has worked as a soloist and member of chamber ensembles, performed.

In early December, the North Nottingham Ensemble (Heidi Schuller, flute; John Kaboff, cello;

and Brad Clark, piano) performed contrasting works by Johannes Brahms and Heitor Villa Lobos. The T-Tones' holiday concert later in December featured holiday music, a sing-along and musical parodies such as *Guard Well Your Stored Plutonium*, *State Budget Song* and *It Came Upon a Morning Clear*. Kathryn Schultz is the group's director and Steve Honley is the assistant director and piano accompanist. The T-Tones dedicated their program to Cathleen Lawrence in honor of her 42-and-a-half years of government service. She led the Executive Office of the T family of bureaus, whose support and provision of rehearsal space makes the T-Tones possible.

By John Bentel

Manila Hosts Diaper Drive

In honor of National Adoption Month, the immigrant visa (IV) unit at the U.S. Embassy in Manila partnered with the U.S. Embassy Club, a 40-year-old local charity, on a diaper drive in the embassy community. Participants donated more than 7,500 diapers and large quantities of baby formula. The donations will go to Hospicio de San Jose, a home for orphans, abandoned persons, individuals with disabilities, families in crisis and the elderly. Nearly 75 immigrant visa unit staffers traveled there with Ambassador Harry K. Thomas Jr. and Consul General Mike Schimmel to deliver the donation.

At Hospicio de San Jose, the visitors were briefed on its services, orphans' experiences with immigrant visa interviews, and the process of international adoption from the Philippines, which usually takes at least two years. The long wait arises from Philippine and international laws that protect the best interests of the children. The United States is the top placement location for older children from the Philippines due to a "Summer Program" initiated by U.S. adoption agencies in which available children are placed with potential adoptive parents for a one- or two-month U.S. stay. This program has helped place older children, sibling groups and children with disabilities, who are all often harder to place in adoptive homes.

The visiting IV staff also toured the facilities and interacted with infants, children, individuals with disabilities and the elderly. Locally Employed Staff members from the IV unit then performed an original show about bullying.

"I was humbled and moved by the tireless energy of the workers and volunteers who dedicate themselves to improving the lives of special needs children at the home, many of whom have difficulty finding adoptive parents," said Consular Officer Kevin Ogleby.

Among the other highlights were the three dances performed by Hospicio residents and the presentation of the donation by Ambassador Thomas, who thanked the IV unit staff for its work on adoption cases. In 2010, the unit adjudicated and processed 243 international adoption cases from the Philippines, Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau. ■

Diversity Notes

BY JOHN M. ROBINSON
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Hidden Disabilities and Reasonable Accommodations

Of all the protected bases under the jurisdiction of the Office of Civil Rights, disability is perhaps the least understood, and with good reason: The disabilities that are entitled to protection have changed continuously since the passage of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act in 2008, the ADAAA. The law did not change the obligation of the employer to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees and applicants for employment who have disabilities.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, a disability can be a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. While many people are familiar with disabilities that are obvious, such as deafness, blindness, missing extremities, paraplegia or severe intellectual challenges—often called “targeted disabilities”—the majority of individuals with disabilities in the workplace have hidden disabilities. Although not obvious to the average observer, these disabilities are afforded the same protection of the law.

An individual is not obligated to disclose a disability to an employer unless and until the employee needs a reasonable accommodation. Under the 3 FAM 3670, an employee can initiate a request for reasonable accommodation orally or in writing with either the supervisor or the Disability/Reasonable Accommodation Division of the Office of Employee Relations (HR/ER/DRAD). Every request for reasonable accommodation requires an individualized review of the employee’s circumstances and a response tailored to meet

the needs of the employee and the Department. But such conversations about disabilities and accommodations can be difficult for both parties. Here are a few key points for managers when an employee initiates the reasonable accommodation request with them directly:

- *Empathy:* A person with a hidden disability might be apprehensive about revealing it, especially if that person has succeeded in the workplace without the need for a reasonable accommodation. Listening without judgment makes employees more willing to explain specifically what they need and why.

- *Confidentiality:* An individual with a disability has a legal right to confidentiality about his/her reasonable accommodation and underlying condition. Managers and supervisors, no matter how well-intentioned, do not have a right to know the specifics of an employee’s medical situation, even if that employee is receiving a workplace accommodation. Managers and supervisors are entitled to information about the employee’s medical condition on a “need to know” basis. For example, managers are entitled to enough information to be able to implement a reasonable accommodation. Additionally, a manager may not disclose to other employees the fact that someone in the workplace is receiving a reasonable accommodation, even to dispel the perception that the individual with a disability is receiving special treatment.

- *Action:* The Department’s designated decision-maker for all reasonable accommodation requests is HR/ER/DRAD. If a manager or supervisor



receives a reasonable accommodation request directly from an employee, the most important thing to do is to contact the DRAD office immediately.

When an employee makes a request that is not clearly linked to a medical- or disability-related circumstance, some managers fail to recognize the request as one for reasonable accommodation. While the legal burden is on the employee to make the request, managers should be alert to the conversation. Employees do not need to use the magic words “reasonable accommodation.” If at any point managers feel uncertain about their responsibilities under the ADAAA, HR/ER/DRAD is the best resource.

Any one of us at any time can become an individual with a disability. Working to achieve a model workplace for individuals with disabilities not only serves the interests of current personnel with disabilities, it could one day make the difference in your own life between remaining gainfully employed and having to stop working before you are truly ready.



EX-SOVIET BLOC POSTS CELEBRATE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

By Llywelyn Graeme ,
office management specialist,
U.S. Embassy Kyiv

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the United States recognized 15 newly independent nations that resulted from the fall of the Iron Curtain. By May 1992, in addition to its embassy in Moscow and consulate in Leningrad, Russia, the State Department had opened (or reopened) embassies in each of the other 14 republics and planned to open consulates in Vladivostok and Yekaterinburg.

The unprecedented collapse of the Soviet Union led to the largest expansion of U.S. diplomatic representation ever—and all in six months. The Department provided the resources to open the new embassies such as American staffing and funding for new local staff, new properties and equipment. With the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs in the lead, it made the needed decisions and plans with astounding speed.

The following anecdotes from several missions that opened in the winter of 1991-92 reflect this amazing accomplishment.

Kiev (now Kyiv), Ukraine

When Under Secretary for Management Ivan Selin traveled from Moscow to Kiev in 1991, his flight on the ex-Soviet airline Aeroflot landed and the problems began, recalled FSI Director Ruth Whiteside. The door to the pilot's cabin was stuck and nearly had to be broken down to get the pilots out. Then, Selin and company had to walk across the tarmac to the terminal past dozens of dormant Aeroflot planes that were likely cannibalized for spare parts.

At the consulate, they met with Consul General Jon Gunderson and his deputy John Stepanchuk, the entire American staff at the time. The consulate's one car and driver couldn't accommodate everyone, so when they traveled around the city Stepanchuk followed on the city's Metro.

Tallinn, Estonia

The U.S. Embassy in Tallinn began operations Oct. 2, 1991, in room 507 of the Palace Hotel, a corner suite with a sauna. The ambassador had the smaller room, the rest of the staff had the bigger one and the sauna became the supply room. The first four employees were Chargé d'Affaires Robert C. Frasure, who became ambassador in April 1992, Political Officer Elo-Kai Ojamaa, Economic Officer Ingrid Kollist and Public Affairs Officer Sandra Kaiser.

Astana, Kazakhstan

The U.S. Embassy in Astana first opened in a small room without furniture on the ground floor of a building that was also a workshop for local artists. A local crew built plywood shelves for the offices. Later, the rooms housing the embassy were torn down and the embassy's garage was constructed on the site.

Dushanbe, Tajikistan

From 1992 to 1998, the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe was evacuated five times due to threats to American staff, who were finally forced to move to Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 1998. They remained there until 2004, coming to Dushanbe for short visits in the interim. By 2002, they were officially assigned to Almaty but spent most of their time in Dushanbe on TDY status.

Meanwhile, local staff there moved to the embassy residence in Dushanbe, which became offices, with its sauna converted to the safe haven. Safe haven equipment was stored in the sauna's pool, where the toilet was also located. A cage in the basement stored office supplies, local guards' equipment such as arms and bullets, and representational items. In 2004, American staff were reassigned to Dushanbe permanently.



The first two local staff hired at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine in 1991 were driver Victor Golovatyuk and protocol Chief Irina Vozianova. Both are still employed with Mission Ukraine.
Photo by Llywelyn C. Graeme



Standing outside the former Palace of Prince Orbeliani, now the second chancery, are several staff members hired in Embassy Tbilisi's first year, including from left Tengiz Japaridze, Alexander Amiranashvili, Teimuraz Suleimanashvili, Mariam Gavasheli, Robert Riboshvili, Giorgi Khmelevski and Medea Kochoradze.

Photo by Michael F. Turner

Tbilisi, Georgia

In 1992, the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi opened in the Sheraton Metkheki Hotel. Embassy employees say they loved working there, as it was the only Westernized hotel in Georgia and had power, hot water, heat and air-conditioning. Each office had its own bathroom, and some had Jacuzzis. The embassy used the meeting rooms in the hotel and the employees could take advantage of the swimming pool and other amenities.

The facility had a metal detector and a “no weapons” policy, since shootouts had occurred in the lobby. The Georgian Mafia ran much of the city’s infrastructure, crime was a problem, curfews existed and many citizens carried illegal weapons. In 1993, the embassy moved to a new chancery that had been a cultural building during Soviet rule. The general services office arranged delivery of kerosene and even sent a pickup truck to local villages to procure vegetables and fruit. Embassy staff members remember the post’s parties as a source of fun, team building and diplomacy. ■

Special thanks to the Office of the Historian and Foreign Service Institute Director Ruth Whiteside, Laine Lembavere, Christina Temen, Lourenda Block, Karen Nickel, Ginny Philips and Michael F. Turner who all contributed to this article.

Mission Ukraine Celebrates New Building

The U.S. Mission to Ukraine marked the 20th anniversary of U.S.-Ukrainian diplomatic relations in dramatic fashion by moving into a new embassy compound almost 20 years to the day after the first embassy was opened by a handful of American and Ukrainian staff, Jan. 22, 1992, in a building vacated by a district Communist Party headquarters.

To mark the opening of the new facility and two decades of diplomatic relations, the U.S. Embassy staged a gala concert and reception that drew a standing-room-only crowd of more than 2,000 people from every walk of Ukrainian society. The event was sponsored by 17 U.S. companies, including Chevron, Citibank and Coca-Cola, and brought together a broad range of people with a stake in the U.S.-Ukrainian relationship: former and current Ukrainian government officials, including Deputy Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin; NGO and business leaders; exchange program alumni; artists; and academics.

U.S. Ambassador John Tefft told attendees that people-to-people contacts “are the cement that holds us together.”

A Marine Honor Guard presented Ambassador Tefft with the first flag to fly over the old chancery building, and the audience watched on a big-screen TV as the first flag was raised over the new embassy. The concert included performances by the Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra led by an American, Hobart Earle, Ukrainian rock band Druha Rika, Ukrainian pop star Gaitana and hip hop dance group BFF. Ukrainian Eurovision announcer Pavlo Shylko, known as DJ Pasha, was master of ceremonies.



Top: The band Druha Rika performs during the anniversary celebration. Photo by Jim Wolfe Above: DJ Pasha introduces the performance of the Odessa Philharmonic. Photo by Vitaly Makarenko



From left, Ambassador Scot Marciel and Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer Arend Zwartjes meet with State Islamic University graduate students after Marciel's lecture on Religious Tolerance and Pluralism.

Outreach trips deepen ELOs' experience

Story by Corina R. Sanders, assistant information officer, U.S. Embassy in Jakarta
 Photos courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta

Few first-tour consular officers get to talk with a terrorism expert about countering extremist messages, witness a mass-vaccination or discuss trade on TV after an exchange with a local chamber of commerce about boosting economic opportunities. But these are just a few of the opportunities that entry-level officers (ELOs) at the U.S. Mission in Indonesia have experienced recently.

Activities that go beyond the usual job description are a regular feature of ELO life at Mission Indonesia, a result of an innovative travel and outreach effort called the Regional Liaison Officer (RLO) program.

Created six months ago by the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta to promote professional development and expeditionary diplomacy, the RLO program teams ELOs with a mid-level officer and local staff member and assigns each team to a high-population Indonesian city that has lacked an official U.S. presence for at least a year. RLO

teams travel once a quarter, design their own itineraries and set up meetings with governors, mayors, university rectors, students and leaders of business and religious or nongovernmental organizations. When a team returns, it reports on its experiences.

The RLO Mentor Board, the program's four-member steering committee, coaches the teams and provides feedback. The board consists of three mid-level officers, one from each of the political, economic and public affairs sections, and an entry-level representative. They recommend trends to focus on, review trip reporting memos and cables, suggest additional outreach opportunities and debrief teams in a supportive "lessons learned" environment.

The stories from the RLO teams come from throughout the archipelago. One team toured a massive offshore coal port in Banjarmasin, Kalimantan Province, and learned how the private sector is developing its own export facilities to

overcome Indonesia's infrastructure challenges.

A team that went to Poso, in Central Sulawesi, to visit an Islamic boarding school invited a key Christian leader to foster interfaith understanding and respect.

Another team went to Bandung, Java, accompanied Deputy Chief of Mission Ted Osius as he opened the Indonesian International Education Foundation Conference and launched an initiative sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to create overseas study ties between six U.S. and six Indonesian universities.

In Bandar Lampung, Sumatra, a team visited Phillips Seafood's processing facility to learn about sustainable fishery practices and the challenges facing U.S. investors in Indonesia. They reported that information to Washington.

The RLO program's 14 trips have also had a public diplomacy impact since their visits to schools, universities and civil society organizations make a splash in the news. The RLO teams

often find themselves on the front pages of local newspapers and on popular radio and TV programs that reach millions of average Indonesians with the mission's message. The personal connections they make enhance U.S.-Indonesian understanding and respect.

Sometimes, the ELOs have been surprised by the opportunities they gained to learn about Indonesia and Indonesians.

"When I was in my A-100 class, I never thought I would be sitting in a simple open-

air café operated by former radicals talking with a former journalist about grassroots efforts to curb radicalism in Indonesia," said first-tour Consular Officer Mia Terhaar.

The teams' reports allow the mission to place macro trends in Indonesia into local contexts. Domestic issues and events occurring outside Jakarta are now in the spotlight, including fuel shortages in Kalimantan, demand for U.S. educational opportunities, trade and investment opportunities for medium-sized busi-

nesses and infrastructure shortcomings affecting economic development. RLO team reporting has highlighted the trends shaping Indonesia's international policies.

"RLOs increase our understanding of issues on the ground," said Ambassador Scot A. Marciel. "We can consistently develop stronger personal relationships and do more effective people-to-people outreach."

The program also fosters leadership skills by allowing each RLO mid-level officer to mentor and support a team's ELO. Both officers draft the reporting cable, select meetings for the trip, develop contacts and use their language skills. The LE Staff member on each team adds logistical expertise and long-term knowledge of local contacts.

Mission goals and expeditionary diplomacy come together in the RLO program, which combines ELOs' enthusiasm with the knowledge of mid-level officers and invaluable LE Staff experience. The program offers something for every participant via opportunities for travel, decision making, high-level access and support, and professional development access to the front lines of diplomacy. As the program approaches its first anniversary, its successes are only beginning. ■

Left: Entry-level officer W. Marc Murri, right, meets with students after a presentation about U.S. education to about 100 students at Public High School 2 in the community of Palu. **Below:** Entry-level officer Rocco Costa, right, and mid-level officer Hilary Dauer, second from right, members of RLO Team Banjarmasin, meet with members of a local nongovernmental organization involved in social justice to discuss its efforts at grassroots empowerment in the community of Banjarmasin.



Lagos Consulate Responds Creatively to Week-long Strike

By Kerry McIntosh, vice consul, U.S. Consulate General Lagos



Demonstrators in Lagos protested the cut in a government fuel subsidy with a week-long strike. Corbis photo

American and local staff at the U.S. Consulate General in Lagos, Nigeria, found themselves doing different sorts of work for a week in January as the consulate scrambled to maintain operations during a nationwide labor strike and protests that brought Nigeria to a standstill.

The Nigerian government's decision to cut a fuel subsidy culminated in the week-long strike and mass demonstrations. While the protests themselves were generally peaceful, according

to eyewitness accounts and security reports, armed thugs took advantage of the empty streets and diminished police presence. After a Locally Employed Staff member in the consular section was assaulted and robbed on her way to work, the consular section asked all LE Staff to remain home for the rest of the week.

In response to the reduced staff, diminishing supplies and threats to morale, all consulate employees improvised solutions. The consular

section rescheduled immigrant visa interviews, but couldn't put off nonimmigrant visa (NIV) interviews given the high volume.

"We organized ourselves to deal with the situation quickly," said Consular Chief Carl Cockburn.

Consular officers quickly learned to perform intake work and the photo-capture and data-entry roles normally performed by LE Staff. NIV officers with more experience led teams of other officers to process and interview visa applicants, some of whom had also encountered armed gangs on their way to the consulate.

"We all worked as a team," said Acting NIV Chief Chris Richardson, who helped develop and oversee the work plan. "I'm proud that we were able to keep the consulate open all week in the midst of a crisis."

Vice Consul Brian Sells said the experience gave him a broader view of the visa process and helped him identify areas for improvement. "I got a better understanding of what LE Staff members do every day and an appreciation for their hard work," he said.

Meanwhile, the management section arranged for emergency LE Staff members, such as motor pool drivers, facilities workers and security personnel, to sleep at locations closer to the consulate, allowing them to avoid the long commutes from mainland Lagos to the island where the consulate is located.

Some staff members slept in a refurbished shipping container that had been used as an office during the consulate's recent renovation. LE Staff from the regional security office, who were essential to the post's efforts to assess and inform the community about potential dangers, shared an apartment in a vacant consulate housing unit. American employees volunteered to house LE Staff in spare bedrooms and staff quarters, and the American Employees Recreation Association (AERA) provided the LE Staff who stayed overnight with no-cost meals.

According to Supervisory General Services Officer Mary Davis, some LE Staff did not return home for the entire week. "It was very difficult for them to be away," she said. "It was gratifying to know we had such support from our American community."

In the political-economic section, the LE Staff who stayed home proved to be an asset, calling in reports of the conditions in their neighborhoods, which they said deteriorated as the week wore on. Political-Economic Section Chief Rolf Olson said his office was busy calling contacts, gathering information and writing daily cables on the events.

As protests grew larger and the strike continued, concern arose over the delivery of necessary supplies such as fuel and water to the consulate community. The management office asked employees to conserve water, and generators (necessary to overcome the city's unreliable municipal electric grid) were turned off on a rotating schedule to conserve fuel.

During the strike, most grocery stores opened for very limited hours to conserve stock, so the community liaison office (CLO) and management office used their connections to find open stores. Eligible Family Member (EFM) Aline



From left, Vice Consuls Chris Richardson and Derell Kennedo assist Visa Assistant Caroline Omordia with visa processing, as the consular section dealt with limited staffing caused by a nationwide strike and mass demonstrations.
Photo by Kerry McIntosh



Enjoying a barbeque at the consul general's residence after the week's tumultuous events are, from left, Vice Consul John Sarraf, Marine Security Guard Eric Lafkoff, Management Officer Fred Armand, Eligible Family Member Tyler Onufer and Assistant Regional Security Officer James Hill.
Photo by AnnaMarie Capuano

Barna said she felt like an undercover reporter as she entered one grocery store through a back alley. One shopping trip organized by the CLO was postponed due to a nearby protest march.

As they awaited news of negotiations to end the strike, American employees and families gathered at the consul general's residence for a picnic organized by the CLO. Adults and children had water-gun fights, barbequed and played tennis.

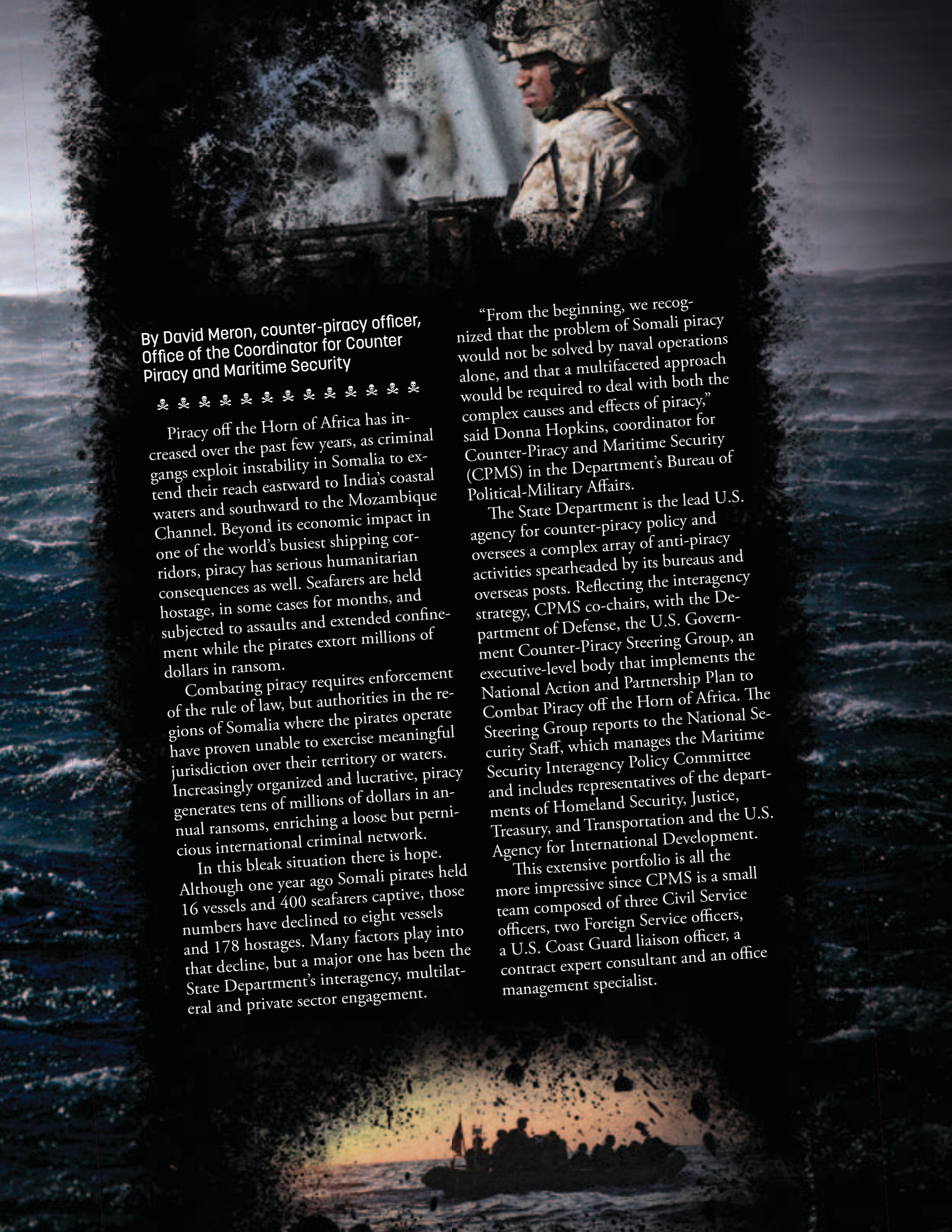
After a week of cancelled classes, the Lagos American International School let students complete coursework online. EFM teacher Brenda Nicely allowed the children of consulate employees to participate in two days of courses at the AERA facilities.

When the strike ended after seven days, Management Officer Fred Armand said the events had brought the consulate community closer. "We wanted to focus on the morale of the community," he said.

"Needless to say, I'm tremendously proud of our consulate community for the dedication, resilience and creativity everyone displayed throughout this crisis in upholding the ideals of the Foreign Service in outstanding fashion," said Consul General Joseph D. Stafford. ■

Safeguarding Seaways

Interagency, multilateral approach counters piracy



By David Meron, counter-piracy officer,
Office of the Coordinator for Counter
Piracy and Maritime Security



Piracy off the Horn of Africa has increased over the past few years, as criminal gangs exploit instability in Somalia to extend their reach eastward to India's coastal waters and southward to the Mozambique Channel. Beyond its economic impact in one of the world's busiest shipping corridors, piracy has serious humanitarian consequences as well. Seafarers are held hostage, in some cases for months, and subjected to assaults and extended confinement while the pirates extort millions of dollars in ransom.

Combating piracy requires enforcement of the rule of law, but authorities in the regions of Somalia where the pirates operate have proven unable to exercise meaningful jurisdiction over their territory or waters. Increasingly organized and lucrative, piracy generates tens of millions of dollars in annual ransoms, enriching a loose but pernicious international criminal network.

In this bleak situation there is hope. Although one year ago Somali pirates held 16 vessels and 400 seafarers captive, those numbers have declined to eight vessels and 178 hostages. Many factors play into that decline, but a major one has been the State Department's interagency, multilateral and private sector engagement.

"From the beginning, we recognized that the problem of Somali piracy would not be solved by naval operations alone, and that a multifaceted approach would be required to deal with both the complex causes and effects of piracy," said Donna Hopkins, coordinator for Counter-Piracy and Maritime Security (CPMS) in the Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

The State Department is the lead U.S. agency for counter-piracy policy and oversees a complex array of anti-piracy activities spearheaded by its bureaus and overseas posts. Reflecting the interagency strategy, CPMS co-chairs, with the Department of Defense, the U.S. Government Counter-Piracy Steering Group, an executive-level body that implements the National Action and Partnership Plan to Combat Piracy off the Horn of Africa. The Steering Group reports to the National Security Staff, which manages the Maritime Security Interagency Policy Committee and includes representatives of the departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Treasury, and Transportation and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

This extensive portfolio is all the more impressive since CPMS is a small team composed of three Civil Service officers, two Foreign Service officers, a U.S. Coast Guard liaison officer, a contract expert consultant and an office management specialist.

THE WAR ON PIRACY

In late 2008, the United States began working with like-minded countries to press for establishment of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, which has since become the focal point of international efforts to address maritime piracy emanating from Somalia. The United States convened the first Contact Group meeting at the U.N. in January 2009 after extensive consultation with other governments, and the group's first plenary session helped to advance international and national efforts endorsed by piracy-related U.N. Security Council resolutions. The Contact Group focused the international community's counter-piracy efforts by forming five working groups focused on improving military coordination, delivering judicial consequences for piracy, increasing the shipping industry's self-awareness and self-protection, improving strategic communications and developing the means to track and arrest pirate financiers and facilitators.



Above: A Navy Seahawk chopper provides support to a visit, board, search and seizure team in a 7-meter rigid-hull inflatable boat from the guided-missile destroyer *USS Kidd*. The team boarded an Iranian-flagged fishing dhow *Al Molai* and detained 15 suspected pirates who were reportedly holding the 13-member Iranian crew hostage for the past two months.

U.S. Navy photo



Working Group 3 of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia holds its 11th plenary meeting in November.

Photo by David Meron

Today, nearly 70 countries and several international organizations, including the African Union, Arab League, European Union, International Maritime Organization (IMO) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization are active Contact Group participants, along with various U.S. departments and agencies.

Since the Contact Group's inception, the U.S. Maritime Administration and U.S. Coast Guard have co-chaired Working Group 3, a collabora-

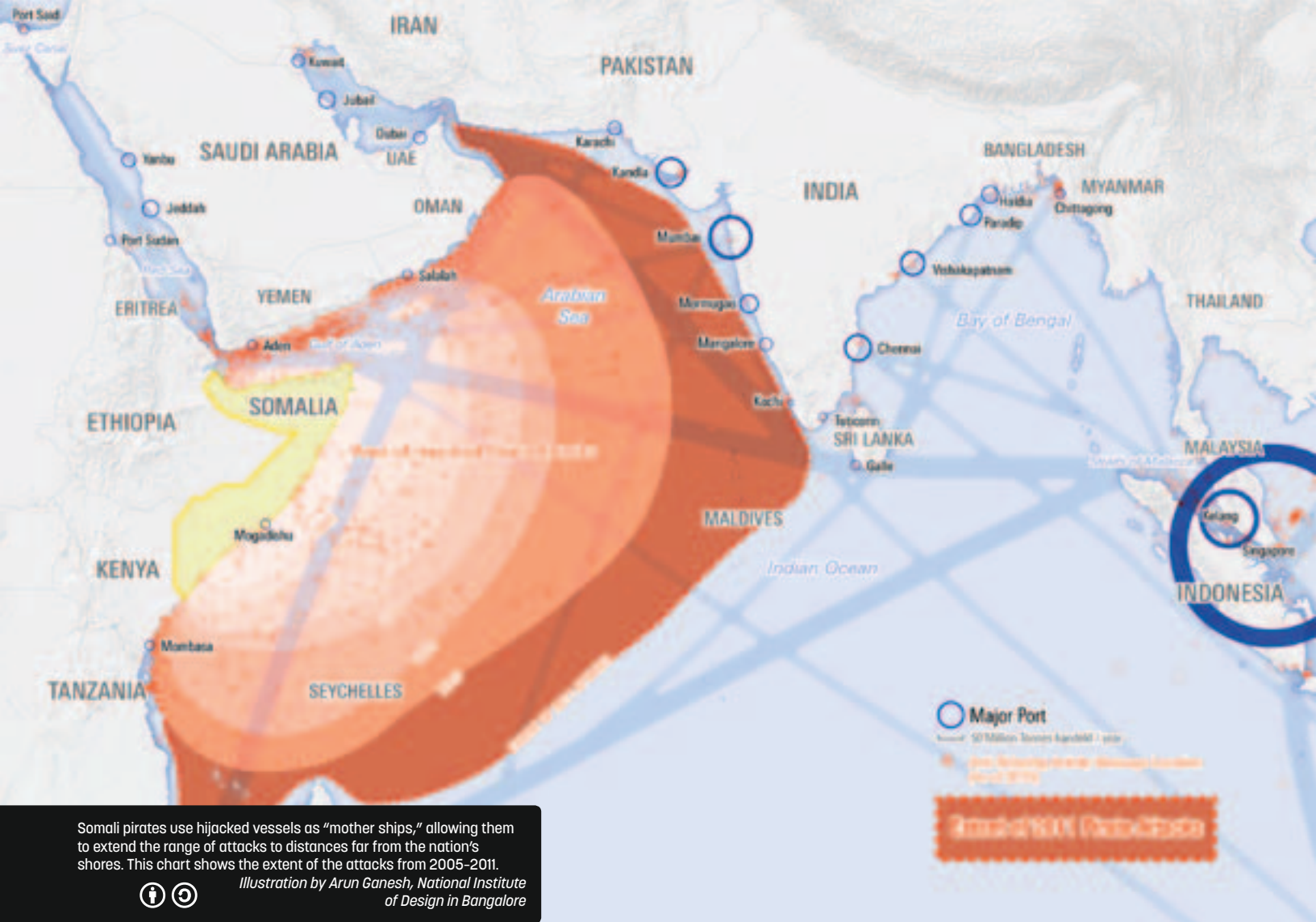
tion of Contact Group participating states, the IMO and the private shipping industry. The group seeks to improve the industry's self-awareness and self-defense capabilities by having shipping companies adopt and implement technical guidance on self-protection measures. The group also works with the industry on such complex and controversial issues as proposals to allow privately contracted armed security on commercial ships that travel through high-risk waters.

Working Group 3 has designed and actively promoted self-protection measures for commercial vessels, including proceeding at full speed through high-risk areas, placing additional lookouts on deck watches, using closed circuit television to monitor vulnerable areas, employing physical barriers, reporting positions to military authorities and mustering the crew inside secured areas of the vessel should pirates get aboard.

Today, the majority of vessels transiting the region's high-risk waters implement these practices, contributing to a significant decrease in pirate hijackings in the western Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and southern Red Sea.

"Thanks to these efforts by Working Group 3, the shipping industry is increasingly implementing best management practices to prevent pirate boardings before they take place," said Hopkins.

An additional measure that has helped prevent successful piracy attacks is the use of privately contracted armed security personnel. While the United States encourages all U.S.-flagged commercial vessel owners and operators to assess the need for such personnel when transiting high-risk waters, not all governments allow or support



Somali pirates use hijacked vessels as “mother ships,” allowing them to extend the range of attacks to distances far from the nation’s shores. This chart shows the extent of the attacks from 2005-2011.



Illustration by Arun Ganesh, National Institute of Design in Bangalore



Left: A U.S. Navy officer keeps a watchful eye on a commercial ship in waters frequented by pirates. *Associated Press photo*
Above: Pirates leave the Ukrainian merchant vessel *MV Faina* in 2008, headed for Somalia’s shore but under observation by a U.S. Navy ship. *Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason R. Zalask*

their use due to philosophical, political and practical concerns. However, the use of armed security personnel is undeniably effective; to date, pirates have been unable to hijack a ship protected by such employees.

“Combating piracy is not just the job of governments. It requires action from both the international community and the private sector,” said Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs Andrew J. Shapiro. “If all commercial ship owners and operators around the world implemented these self-defense measures, the rate of successful pirate attacks would decline dramatically.”

Though nations may not agree on all approaches to combating Somali piracy and bringing the perpetrators to justice, the United States will continue to pursue a multilateral response in the context of the Contact Group until Somalia’s government can enforce law and order on land and offshore.

For the State Department, playing an active role in the Contact Group is a win-win situation.

“Counter-piracy is a bright spot in our bilateral relations with a number of countries with whom we might otherwise not see eye-to-eye,” said Hopkins. “The Contact Group is a new kind of model for international collaboration on transient issues of mutual interest. It is ad hoc, agile, targeted and a low-budget success story.” ■



Department programs recognize Arab women in science

By Caron DeMars, environmental hub officer, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

At least three Department programs recognize the achievements of female scientists in the Arab world or offer rewards and mentoring for accomplished women so they can achieve even more.

One of these programs is that which I started, the Women in Science Hall of Fame, which highlights the achievements of a dozen Arab women annually in the nations within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) purview. Nominating posts schedule events, television and radio interviews, and mentoring sessions for the Hall of Fame inductees to inspire girls and young women to pursue studies and select careers in science.

Among those women honored in 2011's inaugural hall of fame inductions was Jordanian electrical engineer Reem Hamdan. She won first prize in 2006 from an international power industry association for a presentation

on energy privatization and is now modernizing Jordan's electrical distribution through satellite tracking and "smart grid" technology. She participated in media events arranged by Embassy Amman, and led a mentoring session with Jordanian middle-school girls who had attended a summer science camp.

"I started mentoring other female engineers at work, and I will arrange visits to female students studying at Jordanian universities during my business trips," said Hamdan. "The hall of fame program gave an excellent signal to the local society to encourage women working in science."

Another 2011 hall of fame inductee, Lebanese engineer Nesreen Ghaddar, was one of three women pursuing a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1985. She has since become the holder of an

endowed chair at the American University in Beirut, won the Outstanding Reviewer Award from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and published more than 130 journal articles.

A third 2011 hall of fame inductee, Khawla Al Kuraya, as a teenager ranked second out of all applicants in Saudi Arabia's university placement exams. However, she was allowed to go to college in Riyadh only if chaperoned by her brother. She later graduated with honors, and by the time she graduated from medical school, she already had three children—her husband had allowed her to continue her studies only if she also immediately started a family. She is now director of King Fahad Children's Cancer Center and the first Saudi woman to receive the King Abdul Aziz First Class Quality Award.

Another inductee, Palestinian Ansam Sawalha,



American mentors in the TechWomen program Taghrid Samak from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, front left, and Mimi Hills from Research in Motion, front right, meet with Moroccan students interested in pursuing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) degrees. The students and their teacher drove through the night from the mountains to attend the TechWomen delegation's conference in Casablanca, Morocco, in October 2011.

Photo by Denise Gammal



Left: Dr. Nesreen Ghaddar sits at her desk at American University in Beirut. *American University Beirut photo*
Below: Mentors, mentees and staff from the TechWomen program gather at the conference they hosted in Casablanca, Morocco, in October 2011. **Bottom:** TechWomen program participants included, from left, Taghrid Samak, a mentor from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory; Fabiola Addamo, a mentor from Yahoo!; and mentee Sanae Baatti from Women in Technology in Morocco. They spoke of the challenges and rewards of technology careers at a panel for Moroccan girls at the Khalil Gibran School in Rabat, Morocco, in October 2011. *Photos by Denise Gammal*

earned her Ph.D. in toxicology from the University of Texas in Austin. While teaching pharmacology at An-Najah University in the West Bank in 2006, she founded the Palestinian Territory's first poison control center. She trained her students to read protocols in English and respond in Arabic when panicked callers want information about antidotes. Her shoestring operation received a boost when the NEA Environmental Hub obtained a \$4,000 grant from the Department's Economic Support Funds so that the center could print posters, phone stickers and refrigerator magnets with its toll-free number.

"When we distributed the phone number," Dr. Sawalha said, "many people didn't know the poison control center existed. This will save lives."

The full list of 2011 inductees is at jordan.usembassy.gov/wshf.html. They are also depicted on a calendar published for the February 2011-January 2012 period and distributed by posts in the nations from which hall of famers were drawn.

The 2012 list of hall of famers includes among its new inductees Iraqi women scientists from



When her mentor had to pick up her sick child from school, Lamia realized American super-achievers face many of the same challenges as Arab women.

Baghdad and Basrah. That's especially good news since, during NEA's call for nominations, some potential Iraqi nominees declined to participate, fearing for their safety if they identified themselves as affiliated with Americans.

The 2012 list also includes an Arab scientist in Israel, and it was to have included a Lebanese scientist, but the latter declined since it is illegal for Lebanese people to fraternize with Israelis, even on a list of honorees.

Another Department effort to recognize tech-savvy women is the TechWomen program, which funds travel for women from Algeria, Egypt,

Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen and the West Bank/Gaza to the Silicon Valley for mentorships. One of several Moroccan women who benefited from that experience, Dalila Loudyi, is a civil engineer with a Ph.D. who established Morocco's Women in Engineering and Science network upon returning to her homeland. Another program participant, engineer Lamia Ben Hiba, said she'd been impressed with the passion that her American mentor had for her work and, when the mentor had to pick up her sick child from school, realized American super-achievers face many of the same challenges as Arab women.

A third Department-supported effort to promote women in technology is the Global Innovation in Science and Technology (GIST) initiative, which empowers young scientists to turn technology innovations into new products, companies and jobs. Under that initiative, Egyptian computer scientist Rofaida Awad won the Top Female Entrepreneur award in GIST's video-based pitch contest. The GIST training and grant she received will help develop her company, which uses technology to deliver affordable, locally sourced flowers and gifts within Egypt. ■



Post of the Month

Ashgabat

Strategic Turkmenistan boasts ancient pedigree

By Brad McGuire, information officer, U.S. Embassy Ashgabat



When Turkmenistan makes the news in America, it's often for the wrong reasons. A recent story told of the resurrection of a monumental gold statue of the former authoritarian ruler "Turkmenbashi" (the father of all Turkmen) that was torn down after his sudden death in 2006. Such stories, implying that little has changed in this country of hard desert surrounded by mountains, rivers and an inland sea, do not do justice to Turkmenistan's complexity.

During Soviet times, Turkmenistan was mainly known for its natural gas riches, massive cotton fields along the Amu Darya River and fabulous carpet bazaar. History buffs also know of Turkmenistan's role in the old Silk Road. Ancient sites—some excavated, but most not—are everywhere. The remains of Nissa, capital of the Parthian Empire, are in an Ashgabat suburb. Ancient Merv, reportedly the world's largest city in the 12th century, is near the modern city of Mary. Some of the sites are so untouched that fields remain covered with 800- or 900-year-old pottery shards from Mongol sackings.

The sense of discovery extends to modern attractions, such as Turkmenistan's most famous tourist site, the Darwaza fire crater, also known as "The Gates of Hell." In the center of the country is a gigantic hole in the earth that has been burning nonstop for 41 years. During gas exploration in 1971, a cavern beneath a rig collapsed, leaving a chasm 230 feet in diameter. Geologists decided the safe thing to do was burn off the gas over a few days, but the fire never went out. It's the world's largest camp fire—an incredible site.

Add to this the vibrant bazaars found in every city, centuries-old craft traditions such as carpet-making and the national reverence for breeding the beautiful Ahal-Teke horses, and you realize you can only be in Turkmenistan.



Tough Neighborhood

A California-sized nation that is home to five million people, Turkmenistan lives in a tough neighborhood. It shares a land border with Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Russia and Azerbaijan are littoral neighbors in the Caspian Sea. A foreign policy of neutrality has allowed Turkmenistan to keep both friends and rivals at arm's length while cherry-picking opportunities for engagement, either bilaterally or via multinational organizations such as the United Nations.

That policy allows plenty of opportunities for the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat to engage. Under new Ambassador Robert Patterson, the post works with the Turkmenistan government to address issues such as energy, human and narcotics trafficking, economic growth, health care, human capacity development, terrorism and Afghanistan's regional integration. Security issues play a major role in the bilateral relationship; the two countries work together on border security, counter-narcotics, military-military cooperation and security infrastructure.



Top: Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Susan Elliott, center, stands in front of the 7th-century site Gyz Gala, where the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is funding a restoration project. With her, from left, are a tour guide, Cultural Affairs Specialist Maya Meredova, the director of the Ancient Merv Archaeological Park and Political-Economic Officer Sarah Manaker. *Photo by U.S. Embassy Ashgabat*
Above: Schoolgirls attired in traditional garb wait to give a performance. **Left:** Fabrics are stacked and hung along one colorful row of the fabric section at Talkuchka Bazaar on the outskirts of Ashgabat. *Photos by Lisa Landes*
Opposite page: Embassy staffers on the far rim peer into the Darwaza fire crater at dusk. *Photo by Michael Durfee*



Development work occurs in the context of exchange and cooperation, rather than simple assistance. Turkmenistan is a middle-income country with vast natural resources. However, there are real opportunities for cooperation in human capacity development, so the post seeks ways to engage its host-country counterparts and promote gradual transformation. The fruits of this approach are visible throughout the country, from farmers who have improved their livelihoods through training in new horticulture techniques to government employees who have been trained in international financial accounting standards to health care professionals who are better able to detect and treat tuberculosis. The bottom line is that U.S. efforts are having a real impact.

Broad public diplomacy efforts focus mostly on access to information and education and exchange programs. Three award-winning American Corners, which provide information on the United States, attract more than 50,000 young visitors each year in Turkmenistan's sometimes desolate regional centers. Despite Internet penetration that hovers at less than two percent of the population, the post reaches nearly 15 percent of those users through

innovative social media outlets. Exchange programs and cultural programming are in huge demand, as isolated Turkmen are eager for international exposure and global culture.

Commercial Ties

In recent years, the embassy has put more effort into developing commercial ties, as evidenced by the first-ever Turkmen/U.S. Business Expo, held last May. More than 60 U.S. companies participated in the well-publicized two-day event. The enthusiasm of the Turkmen government led to unprecedented U.S. company access to high-level officials, and a handful of American firms are now in contention for government contracts. The post plans to host another U.S. Business Expo in May.

While the recent collaborations are encouraging, the road to progress is often fraught with challenges. The Turkmen government's way of doing things is deliberate and sometimes opaque. Seventy years of Soviet-era inertia coupled with two decades of isolation as an independent state have created a heavily bureaucratic system. Diplomatic notes are the funnel through which every interaction with any state office or enterprise must pass, and that includes almost every organi-



Above: Turkmenistan's National Cultural Center is framed by fountains and mountains. *Photo by Lisa Landes* **Right:** Embassy staff members take a break during a hike in the Kopet Dag mountains. *Photo by Lisa Landes* **Below:** A hiker wades through a canyon in the Kopet Dag mountains, not far from the embassy's housing compound. *Photo by Ben Mills*



zation in the country. This is a post for the patient, the resourceful, the creative and those who are troubleshooters at heart.

Fortunately, life is physically comfortable, and there are many joys to be had for the post's tightly knit group of about 40 Americans. The residential compound holds about one-third of the staff, with the rest housed in Ashgabat's famous white-marble-clad, 12-story apartment buildings. Ashgabat is a huge construction site where every new building seems more opulent than the last. Turkmenistan's ample gas revenues are funding a comprehensive, decades-long city rebuilding project.

Armies of street sweepers flood the downtown streets daily, keeping Ashgabat clean and tidy. They are doing their part to create the perfect stage set for the picture that the Turkmen government wants to present to the world. The thriving and lively traditional bazaars stand in stark contrast to the omnipresent police and security personnel found on main thoroughfares. Stores don't stock many American goods, but post employees can find most of what they need. Sometimes that includes good pizza and fried chicken.

Desert Adventures

Despite a lack of movies and well-stocked bookstores, the country offers post employees unique experiences. Ice rinks draw families for weekend skating, cavernous modern swimming pools are available year-round and good hiking and horseback riding can be found in the foothills of the Kopet Dag Mountains moments from the



residential compound. Restaurants, while basic, are improving in quality and breadth, and shopping for Turkmenistan's famous carpets is a popular pastime. The Turkmen people take pride in their carpet-weaving tradition, and the quality and variety is amazing. Children are well cared for at the QSI Ashgabat International School, which has seen a near doubling in the student population over the past three years to nearly 150.

Ashgabat is an ideal spot for people who value safety, orderliness, cleanliness and a blend of affordability, exoticism and adventure. Add to that the rich hospitality and kindness of Turkmenistan's citizens and you end up with an enjoyable assignment that provides the chance to make a meaningful contribution to the development of and relations with an important young country in transition with an ancient and fascinating pedigree. ■

Post of the Month



At a Glance

Turkmenistan

Capital: Ashgabat

Government type: Republic

Area: 488,100 sq. km.

Comparative area: Slightly larger than California

Population: 4.99 million

Languages: Turkmen (official), Russian and Uzbek

Ethnic groups: Turkmen, Uzbek, Russian and other

Religions: Muslim and Eastern Orthodox

GDP—per capita: \$7,500

Export commodities: gas and oil products, textiles and cotton fiber

Export partners: China, Turkey and UAE

Import commodities: Machinery and equipment, chemicals and foodstuffs

Import partners: Russia, Turkey and China

Currency: Turkmen manat (TMM)

Internet country code: .tm

Source: Country Background Notes

DIGGING HISTORY

Embassy Rome Makes Archaeological Discovery

By Valeria Brunori,
cultural heritage curator,
U.S. Embassy Rome

In the heart of the Eternal City, the U.S. Embassy in Rome compound sits on a site that had been the summer estate of Roman emperors and was once the home of Queen Margherita di Savoia in the early 20th century. In May 2010, routine digging for a Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) project unearthed a Roman-era statue and several other sculpture fragments from an area that had been an embassy parking lot.

Recognizing the exceptionality of the find, I prepared a project for the archaeological investigation of the area. OBO's caretaker of the Department's rich overseas heritage, the Cultural Heritage Program in the Office of Residential Design and Cultural Heritage, quickly responded by funding the excavation. I managed the project, which complied with local laws, received approval from the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and was carried out under the scientific guidance of the Superintendent for Archaeological Heritage of Rome. Archaeologist Silvia Festuccia, who has collaborated with the embassy for the past 15 years, performed the excavation in August 2011.

The excavation revealed a circular fountain, about 16.5 feet in diameter, just 1.5 feet under the parking lot. The fountain was built into the ground and decorated with black-and-white diagonal stripes composed of irregularly cut mosaic tiles. Period plans date the fountain to the 18th century, when this area of the property was described in the documents as a "secret garden," suggesting a more private and enclosed area.

The fountain contained a considerable number of marble and travertine artifacts, including statues and fragments, busts, architectural elements and sculptural decorations dating from the Roman to the modern period. The chronology of the pieces, including the bust of a Fascist leader, suggests someone filled the fountain with them shortly after World War II. The entire lower portion of the portrait bust, possibly depicting Benito Mussolini, was damaged, possibly due to vandalism. Other significant white marble objects found include a beheaded 2nd-century sculpture representing Dionysus, a sculpture representing Hermes (probably from the Renaissance or modern period), a bust of a gentleman from the late 19th or early 20th century and the coat of arms of Queen Margherita di Savoia, who from 1900 to 1926 lived in the palace that today houses the chancery.

The burial of the secret garden's fountain likely occurred in 1949-1950, shortly after the embassy took ownership of the property and began several major construction projects to adapt the property to the needs of a modern diplomatic mission. A new wing was added to the main palazzo, which unfortunately also involved the partial demolition of former buildings.



The author, in red, works with personnel from the embassy's supply section to organize the findings. Photo by Silvia Festuccia



Above: A bust representing a WWII-era Fascist leader, possibly Benito Mussolini. *Photo by the author* **Right:** A sculpture representing the Roman god Dionysus. **Below:** The fountain during removal of the findings. *Photos by Silvia Festuccia*



The addition of office space required the creation of parking areas that covered former green spaces and the fountain. Mixed material that was considered waste, including the remnants of the demolished buildings and statues that were broken and considered unworthy of restoration,

were dumped in the fountain's basin before it was covered up. This operation seems to have provided those who managed the construction project an opportunity to bury relics that were considered embarrassing or unusable. Apparently, in post war Rome, the restoration of ancient

sculptures, of which the city has always had a rich supply, was not so urgent a priority as economic recovery and reconstruction.

Archeologically interesting discoveries such as the sculptures found in the fountain are quite common in Rome. However, this excavation was particularly noteworthy because of the broad chronological span of the findings, which ranged from the Roman era to the Fascist period. The site's extra-territoriality also made this project unique.

The post used all elements of cultural heritage protection. These included archaeological surveillance, implementation of a complete archaeological excavation and final recovery and conservation of significant findings. The project reflects how the decennial collaboration between the embassy and the office of the Superintendent for Archaeological Heritage of Rome has achieved excellence due to its respect for the relevant laws, guidelines and best practices.

"This was one of the rare examples of an environmentally friendly archaeological worksite," said archaeologist Festuccia. She said the exceptional find reflects exemplary collaboration and use of green practices. "We avoided completely the use of plastic waste materials, reduced the discharge of excavated soil by reusing it as much as possible, minimized the use of electric energy and of machineries by working during the day, used manual and mechanical tools, applied maximum parsimony in the use of water and avoided noise pollution," she said.

The embassy's general services office thanks the Cultural Heritage Program and Roman authorities for their support of the project and guidance in uncovering the historical items, which the embassy hopes to soon put on public display. ■





Office of the Month



A woman endorses the opening ceremony of the City of Joy Center, which assists survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Photo by Susan Braden



Several years ago, then-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was visiting a developing country, when a government official remarked that women in his country had little role in the national economy. Clinton stopped him and said, “Sir, as far as the eye can see, women are bent over, many with children on their backs doing the farming, carrying wood, carrying water... if they all stopped but for a day, your country would shut down.”

Melanne Verveer was traveling with Clinton as her chief of staff. She loves to tell this story to this day as she promotes the role of women in advancing economic, political and social progress around the globe as the United States’ first-ever Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues. The contributions of women continue to be undervalued—yet are vital, for no country can get ahead if it leaves half of its people behind.

Empowering Equality

Office Stands Up for Women and Girls Worldwide

By Daron Christopher, S/GWI
policy advisor for Africa

Office of the Month

The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) ensures that U.S. foreign policy promotes the rights of women and girls around the world—described as “an untapped reservoir of potential” by Secretary Clinton. S/GWI's work is based on four pillars:

- Promoting the full political and economic engagement of women;
- Combating violence against women in all forms;
- Addressing underlying socioeconomic problems, including climate change, food security and women's access to health and education; and
- Ensuring that women are equal participants in reconciliation, reconstruction and development in areas affected by conflict.

Since her confirmation in Month 2009, Verveer has tirelessly traveled to more than 40 countries—from Indonesia, Nepal and Egypt to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mexico—advocating for greater roles for women and girls. The reach of the office is truly global—SGWI has been engaged in the strategic dialogue with India; fostered cross-cultural exchange through the U.S.-China Women Leadership Exchange and Dialogue initiative; collaborated with Australia and New Zealand to support progress for women in the Pacific islands; strengthened data collection on women's employment and

entrepreneurship with the U.S. gender initiative at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; and supported the women leaders of the Arab Spring.

S/GWI also provides high-impact grants through U.S. Embassies and private sector partners to NGOs at the grassroots level that are doing cutting-edge work to meet the critical needs of women and girls.

“It's difficult to deny the importance of supporting women's political enfranchisement or economic development, which we can demonstrate through their stories and qualitative evidence,” said Iraq Program Manager Radhika Prabhusaid. “These programs make a remarkable difference—not just to the women themselves, but to their families and communities and to their nations. Women empowered through the Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative or the Secretary's War Widows Program create a ripple effect that benefits all of society. The role of Iraq's women will be particularly important if Iraq is to be stable and prosperous.”

“Women everywhere want a better future for their kids,” said Lida Noory, who develops policy and programming for women in Afghanistan, where the U.S. strategy for women and girls addresses illiteracy, extreme poverty and political exclusion. “They want to be engaged in policy planning and decision making, and they are es-

sential to any prospects for sustainable peace.”

The office staff of 22 works with other offices and posts to integrate gender into U.S. foreign policy. “The office culture is very dynamic,” said Justin Sosne, Special Assistant to the Ambassador focusing on the intersection of women's issues and the environment. “It's very fast-paced and fluid, with an opportunity to make a real impact.”

Program Manager and Policy Advisor Sandrine Rukondo agrees. “Everyone has a voice at the table, regardless of title or portfolio,” she said. “If you have an idea, it is welcomed and discussed to go forward and become something great.”

An example is a recent collaboration with the mission in Brazil and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to organize an exchange between American and Brazilian women scientists. The scientists visited universities, research institutions and organizations for women in science, and took part in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

“The completion of the dual exchange programs like this demonstrates the successes we are having with women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields at the government/policy level,” said U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Thomas Shannon. “These programs increase mutual understanding and provide the connections and forums for women

Secretary of State Clinton meets with female Afghan leaders of civil society organizations at the London Conference on Afghanistan.
Department of State photo





Clockwise from left: Ambassador Verveer, left, discusses progress on the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security with senior military officers at the Sea Service Leadership Association's 24th Annual Women's Leadership Symposium. *Photo by Ann Kambara;* Walking along a Northern Uganda road, an African woman brings home water. *Photo by Susan Braden;* Ambassador Verveer, center in blue, meets with Panchayat village council members in Rajasthan, India. *Photo courtesy of The Hunger Project*



to put their heads together. By forging a network for exchange, the U.S. and Brazil can enhance opportunities for women in science.”

The story is similar in every corner of the world. Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia John R. Beyrle describes the women of Russia as essential in shaping the country's future. “Their voices are clear and their commitment firm as they press their government at all levels for better health care, stronger environmental protection, and more humane conditions for army conscripts,” he said. “Russian women number among the country's most influential journalists and commentators, and are taking more seats in Russia's boardrooms.” S/GWI works with the Russian government under the auspices of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission to enhance women's economic participation, providing small grants to local NGOs combating gender-based violence and improving women's access to business development resources.

The argument that empowering women benefits society as a whole is one that Secretary Clinton explicitly made in December for the release of the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in a landmark speech at Georgetown University. The plan reiterates commitments in U.N. Security Resolution 1325, elaborating specific steps the U.S. government will undertake to ensure that women are equal partners in peace and security building. S/GWI worked with a coalition of government stakeholders in drafting the plan.

“We're convinced that including women in peacemaking is both the right thing to do and the smart thing as well,” Secretary Clinton said. “It's the smart thing because we have seen again and again that when women participate, they help build a better, stronger and more durable peace. And that's good for everyone.”

Embassies around the world have already responded. Embassy Baghdad, for example, began

efforts to create its own action plan on Women, Peace and Security. Meeta Yajnik, chief of staff to Ambassador Peter Bodde, assistant chief of mission for Assistance Transition and Coordinator for Women's Issues, said, “This has been a great opportunity to come together as a mission and discuss what works, what doesn't and how we can continue our strong programming, outreach and advocacy for women in this year of transition. We want to ensure we integrate women into everything we do, including in areas where women may not have traditionally been included.”

Because investments in women are key to delivering aid effectively, S/GWI works closely with USAID. As part of the Global Health Initiative, S/GWI has issued groundbreaking guidance on health and gender equality and challenged legal and cultural barriers that prevent women from accessing quality health care.

S/GWI has also worked to support Feed the Future, the U.S. global hunger and food security initiative promoting women's leadership in agriculture through policy changes such as increasing women's land ownership and strengthening their access to financial services. Feed the Future investments combine with impact evaluation and research to document how reducing gender gaps and empowering women affect household outcomes and larger-scale agricultural productivity and growth.

As daunting as the challenges are, Verveer and her staff take heart from the stories of the women change-makers they work with each day. Verveer recalls a particularly inspiring Afghan woman leader who told her, “Please do not look at us as victims. See us as the leaders that we are.” ■

Sports United

By Cindy Gire, division chief,
and Trina Bolton, program
coordinator, SportsUnited

Sporting events can draw people from all over the world, motivate thousands to rise simultaneously, bring together national leaders who are at odds with one another and send a powerful message with no translator needed.

From the ancient Olympic games to recent India-Pakistan cricket games, sport opens channels of communication in tense diplomatic climates, taps into the unity arising from a shared passion and promotes “a level playing field,” human contact, good health, inclusion and respect.

Recognizing this, the SportsUnited division of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) uses sports-based programs to promote mutual understanding, transcending cultural hurdles to advance U.S. foreign policy.

To ensure that athletes who are not among a nation’s elites are not left out of the Department’s people-to-people programs, ECA identified sports diplomacy as a potential driver for U.S. outreach. Established in 2002 to better connect with young Muslims in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, SportsUnited has expanded to include programs for underserved youth and those who influence them worldwide.

Since its founding, SportsUnited has spearheaded programs for thousands of participants from nearly 100 countries in popular sports like basketball, soccer and baseball and less widely practiced ones like baseball, snowboarding and disability sports.

SportsUnited’s initiatives promote fitness and fun and enhance participants’ leadership, teamwork and drive for success. Foreign and American participants gain insights about each other and learn to communicate effectively. In essence, the initiatives are people-to-people exchanges without the need of a common language.

Working closely with U.S. missions overseas, SportsUnited has developed four core sports diplomacy programs: Sports Envoys, Sports Visitors, Sports Grants and Empowering Women and Girls through Sports.

Sports Envoy Cal Ripken Jr., the former Baltimore Orioles star, made a November 2011 baseball goodwill visit to Japan that generated positive news coverage in that baseball-mad nation. Embassy Tokyo reported that the Hall of Famer’s visit also helped Mission Japan promote understanding of and support for U.S. policies, goals and values. More than 300 young players participated in the baseball clinics held with Ripken countrywide and millions of Japanese citizens learned of the program through the media.

Working with U.S. embassies, the U.S. Olympic Committee, sports federations and professional leagues, SportsUnited dispatches prominent athletes or coaches identified as role models to strategic countries such as Venezuela, South Korea and Tanzania. These star envoys have included Sam Perkins, Michelle Kwan, Ken Griffey Jr. and Shannon MacMillan. They have conducted sports clinics, visited schools and community organizations, and delivered speeches on teamwork, impacting the lives of hundreds of youths.

Two-time Olympian Butch May, in purple, and Florida Southern College Head Volleyball Coach Jill Stephens conduct a volleyball clinic in 2010 in Zambia.
Photo by Priscilla Ann Hernandez





A young Indonesian woman participates in a two-week clinic sponsored by a 2011 SportsUnited grant recipient, the International Center for soccer coaches and athletes. Photo courtesy of The International Center

Right: In November, a group of young female martial arts athletes from Tajikistan came to Washington, D.C., for a Tae Kwon Do program. *Photo by Cynthia Gamboa* **Below:** President Barack Obama plays basketball with a group of young Russians as part of a 2010 Russia Basketball Visitors Program. *White House photo*

The Sports Visitors program gives young people and their coaches opportunities to take part in fast-paced and exciting programs in the United States. SportsUnited and U.S. missions overseas send delegations of non-elite youths and their coaches to the United States for two weeks of hands-on sports clinics and scrimmages that build connections between foreign and U.S. participants. The visits include educational sessions on prevention of violence against women, conflict resolution, disability rights, HIV/AIDS and the history of Title IX, which put women's sports on equal footing with those played by men in America. The coaches and sports administrators receive intensive training on applying sports management best practices in their home countries.

Under the Sports Grants program U.S.-based nonprofit groups coordinate with SportsUnited on two-way, people-to-people exchanges designed to enhance the infrastructure of sports programs



worldwide. The grants emphasize sports-related programs dealing with youth, health, disability and social change. Successful applicants work with U.S. embassies to plan and execute the funded program. SportsUnited has supported activities ranging from wheelchair basketball in China to training soccer coaches in Uganda, using the diversified capabilities of its partners to reach larger target audiences.


The Empowering Women and Girls through Sports Initiative, first launched by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in June 2011, has its roots in a partnership between SportsUnited and the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues. The initial program sought to promote women's rights through a multilateral sports program for teenage girls centered on the Women's World Cup soccer championship.

Taking it a step further, SportsUnited established the Empowering Women and Girls through Sports Initiative to inspire women and girls' increased involvement in sports and thereby enhance their health, self-esteem, leadership skills and academic success. The three-part initiative, consisting of sports visitors, sports envoys and a flagship sports mentorship component, shows foreign participants the United States through the lens of sport, while also introducing Americans to different cultures.

These four pillar-programs of SportsUnited support the Department's goal to increase people-to-people connectivity at all levels of society and reach large and diverse groups. Not only are the State Department's messages sent efficiently and economically through sports-related channels, but they capture the attention of "hard to reach" or marginalized individuals.

Moving forward, SportsUnited aims to extend the scope of its programs through increased use of social media, as this is often the best means of staying in touch with young, non-elite former participants. The SportsUnited staff also plans to explore the viability of virtual seminars for alumni visitors at embassies and encouraging participants to develop sports programs or projects in their home countries.

After 10 years, SportsUnited has made leaps and bounds in promoting the United States through sports diplomacy and is warming up for a marathon of new activities.

Additional SportsUnited information is available at exchanges.state.gov/sports. The program staff can be reached at sportsunited@state.gov and on Twitter and Facebook. 

WHAT DO THEY MEAN? STRANGE DREAMS AT STATE

CONSULAR OFFICER CHEVRETTE COLBY-SWITZ: "I'M FLYING WHEN I SEE MY AIRFREIGHT FLYING THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. THEN ELVIS APPEARS WITH A COPY OF MY TRAVEL ORDERS AND SUGAR-FREE TWIZZLERS."



AMBASSADOR SPALDING BLUESTONE: "I GO TO A MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF LOUD NECKWEAR AND REALIZE I'M NOT WEARING PANTS AND DON'T HAVE MY TALKING POINTS. I SEND MY STAFF ASSISTANT TO GET ANOTHER COPY OF THE POINTS AND WIN THE MEETING WITHOUT PANTS. I AM, AS ALWAYS, MAGNIFICENT."



OFFICE MANAGER IRA BOUT: "I'M BEING CHASED AROUND THE ROOF OF THE EMBASSY BY A DEMONIC ALIEN MONSTER. THEN I SEE ON THE MONSTER'S BADGE THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE THE CLEARANCE TO BE UP THERE. I WONDER IF THIS IS A SECURITY VIOLATION."



AKELER 2012

LANGUAGE STUDENT WAYLON BIGGLES: "I AM FALLING AND TRY TO ASK MY LANGUAGE TEACHER FOR A ROPE, BUT I ACCIDENTALLY USE THE WORD FOR BLUE-TONGUED SKINK. THE TEACHER GIVES ME THE SKINK, WHICH CHIDES ME IN THE VOICE OF WARREN CHRISTOPHER."



ECONOMIC OFFICER PRISCILLA HOOTEN-WAGS'MORE: "I DRAFT AN URGENT MEMO ON ARCTIC BORDER DISPUTES BUT THE OFFICE OF URSINE AFFAIRS WILL NOT CLEAR ON IT UNLESS THE MEMO IS ACCOMPANIED BY A JAR OF HONEY. I WAKE UP AND BUY MORE HONEY."



Story by Sarah Talalay, vice consul,
U.S. Consulate General, Chennai

Nearly every weekday afternoon, up to 25 Foreign Service officers and Locally Employed Staff fill the courtyard at the U.S. Consulate General in Chennai and kick off their shoes to perform a ritual that's as old as India itself, but with a modern spin. They take part in five-minute yoga sessions, a breather from the daily stresses of working in one of the highest-volume visa posts in the world.

India-inspired exercise is just one of the ways Consulate General Chennai and other U.S. posts across the subcontinent are weaving local customs into their workdays. The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi includes alternative medicine in its annual health fair. Employees at the U.S. Consulate in Hyderabad have participated in cricket matches, an 18th-century British import that's synonymous with India. Officers throughout India also join their local counterparts in Indian dress—saris, kurtas, dhotis—to celebrate the Diwali and Holi holidays or, as in Chennai, just because they want to.

The Chennai yoga sessions, led by entry-level officer Michelle Zjhra, start with the prayerful Namaste pose and include breathing, stretching and loosening up.

"I think it's particularly appropriate we're doing yoga in India, since it's the birthplace of yoga," said Zjhra, a vice consul who has practiced yoga for years. "It's nice doing it in a group; your shoulders are a little bit looser. It helps you mentally disengage and focus."

Some of the activities are tweaked to respond to posts' limitations. The U.S. Consulate in Hyderabad, for instance, had no gym, so it offered employees demonstration sessions in yoga, zumba, kickboxing and Bollywood dancing, all of which could be done in smaller spaces. They chose yoga. Since September, for an hour on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, as many as 20 employees, including Consul General Katherine Dhanani, have participated in Vinyasa Krama yoga, which combines body movements and breathing.

Badminton and ping-pong have been added since the consulate opened a small gym, but the yoga sessions continue. Radhika Merchant, a health unit nurse, said consulate employees are paying more attention to their hearts and health, including having tests done on their lipid profiles, which measure the levels of fat in the blood.

"Yoga started all these activities," she said, adding that the class's 4:30 p.m. start time means employees can exercise before going home at the end of the workday. She said many health unit patrons said they wanted to exercise but felt they wouldn't if they waited until they got home from work.

"Now when you go home you're not as tired, and you feel much better," added Merchant.

Since "there are so many ways of healing and of reducing stress in our lives," at the embassy health fair last year in New Delhi it only made sense to include alternative healing practitioners among the 72 booths, which also featured



Indian Traditions Aid Work-Life Balance

physicians, hospitals, dentists and organic food and products, according to Regional Medical Technologist Christine Deigni.

"The Art of Living, Reiki, yoga and other positive energy healing arts are very important parts of Indian life, and we have the privilege of learning more about them," said Deigni, who oversees the annual health fair. "That is why it's important for us to invite these artists to the health fair, so that our colleagues know what is available."

At the consulate in Chennai, Indian customs help employees ease the burden of a heavy workload. Chennai serves a three-state consular district in southern India that includes 32,000 U.S. citizens and more than 168 million Indians, who speak six official languages. In fiscal year 2010,

the post issued the most nonimmigrant visas among India's five consular sections. Chennai processes all of India's Blanket L visas for intra-company transfers of specialized workers.

But the consulate plays hard, too. It toasts staff arrivals, departures, promotions, awards and holidays with the Indian traditions of tea and samosas, a type of fried dumpling, and offers employees sweetened milky chai tea and South Indian coffee, both in the stainless steel urns seen throughout India.

The post's consular officers don traditional Indian shirts on "kurta Fridays." As the number of female officers has grown, "sari Fridays" have begun occurring every six weeks or so. On those days, local staffers, many of whom wear saris daily, pull out safety pins and help their sister

officers fit into saris, which are made from six meters of brightly colored fabric. Men, meanwhile, are encouraged to wear dhotis, a fabric sheath that is wrapped around the waist like a skirt and worn long.

Local employee Madras K. Dhanasekaran said the officers' practice of wearing saris or dhotis is fantastic, and "the applicants on the other side of the [visa] windows appreciate it, too." Dhanas-

ekaran, a visa assistant who is scheduled to retire this month after 28 years at the consulate, said the tradition, which gives him an excuse to wear one of his 10 silk dhotis, started when officers wore local dress to appear in photos with visiting dignitaries. Vice Consul Zjhra said she believes one of the neatest things about the post is that their "traditions are steeped in India."

"They are traditions we all celebrate, we all

engage in. We celebrate by wearing saris, salwar kameez and kurtas, and by eating samosas. Officers appreciate what is beautiful and delicious about the local culture," she added.

No one quite remembers how the yoga breaks started, but Zjhra said they were inspired by Chennai's former consular chief, a student of yoga named Bryan Dalton. Dalton sometimes started meetings with "asanas," or yoga positions he'd learned at the Bihar School of Yoga in north-eastern India. Dalton's gestures "showed there was room for work-life balance," Zjhra said.

Visa Assistant Sheaji Barnett, an eight-year consulate veteran who works on the business visa team, enjoys the daily yoga, saying "everybody needs at least five minutes break from daily work."

Barnett and Chandralekha Sripada, also visa assistants, said they appreciate that American officers are interested in following Indian customs and feel the yoga break refreshes the staff. Each yoga session in the post's courtyard ends with a Chennai flourish: a visa-stamping yoga pose. The pose begins with yoga's tree pose, in which the participant stands on one leg, with the other leg bent at the knee and that leg's foot resting against the standing leg.

In the tree pose, the yoga practitioner reaches straight up with both arms. However, in the Chennai version of the pose, one instead makes a fist with one hand and punches or "stamps it" onto the upturned palm of the other hand, which is held about waist high; it's as if the practitioner is actually stamping a visa.

"We thought it would be funny," said entry-level officer Halima "Bibi" Voyles, who came up with the idea. "It's a real yoga pose. It uses your leg muscles and arm muscles, and it makes you smile from your head down to your toes." ■



Officers and Locally Employed Staff participate in one of the twice-weekly yoga sessions held at the U.S. Consulate in Hyderabad. Photo by Chandni Lakhmna Opposite page: Vice Consul Michelle Zjhra leads a five-minute afternoon yoga session at Consulate General Chennai. Photo by James Talalay

Retirements

Foreign Service

Alvarez, Jean-Paul Joseph
Armstrong, Kyle D.
Armstrong, Robert A.
Arnot, Frank M.
Bagley, Sandra W.
Bryant, Deanne
Cavanaugh, Jean M.
Cook, Frederick Bishop
Coulson, Linda
Durkin, Joseph P.
Elbinger, Lewis Keith
English, Charles Lewis
Evanoff, Michael T.
Fountain, David E.
Frazee, David K.
Gilligan, Kevin C.
Gotoh, Kay E.
Hoffmann, Phillip P.
Hurtado, Dorian
Hutchinson, Anthony A.
Kleinsmith, Wanda D.
McDonald, William N.
Melvin, Ronald Herschel
Millet, Donna L.

Morris, Lorraine F.
Mott, Arthur H.
Oman, Gerry Charles
Piccuta II, Daniel William
Pruett, Richard K.
Salmon, Larry Dean
Samson, Elaine Marie
Scanlon, Michael H.
Schmitt, Conrad V.
Simkin, Andrew T.
Smith, Joseph
Soler, Richard Peter
Speer, Mary
Srinivasan, Subramaniam
Vela, Arnoldo
Verdoes, John P.
Wadelton, Joan S.
Wilkinson, Robert L.
Williams, James Hammond
Wilson, Antoinette D.

Civil Service

Anderson, Michael G.
Becker, Robert A.
Bell, Cynthia L.
Belz, Janice S.
Burman, Harold S.
Coleman, Carla V.
Dahiyat, Siham
Dao, KC Thi
Dawkins, Gloria Ann
Dobbins, Rochelle P.
Duncan, Fern J.
Dunlap-Phelps, Sandra L.
Eickman, Eleanor M.
Ellis, Chloe D.
Ellis, Joe W.
Ferguson, Inez G.
Floyd, Robert M.
Gall, Luis G.
Glover, Rita Maria
Grahm, Ulf A.W.
Green, Gloria
Hafner, Anne Marie
Henderson, Donna M.
Hernandez, Angela

Holton, Howard L.
Houlihan, Margaret B.
Hubert, Georgia K.
Huckaby, Richard W.
Hunter, Gaynell
Johnson, Cornelia L.
Kinney, Joyce Roymane
Kirschner, Bruce A.
Knott, Sarah A.
Lawrence, Kathleen E.
Look, Karin L.
Marinos, Eleni H.
Miller, William D.
Minor, Dorothy L.
Morison, Eileen
Oswald, Jerry D.
Papiz, Andrew J.
Parker, Beverly Ann
Porter, Polly B.
Pryor, Carlene B.
Queen, Guilford C.
Rashkow, Bruce C.
Riffle, Patricia S.
Scarborough, Jean Savoy

Scensny, Leonard F.
Scott, Sylvia A.
Serituk, Gail M.
Smith, Fatima
Smith, Sheryl R.
Soudee, Rene J.
Suzal, Hatice Evin
Tapscott, Dorothy L.
Taylor, Willie L.
Terry, Brenda Sue
Thompson, Bruce C.
Thompson, Luria Gwendolyn
Torres, Ruben
Walker, Maureen O'Connell
Wallace, Karen A.
Whaley, Walter T.
White, Yvonne
Williams, Gloria Jean
Williamson, Catherine
Williams, Unita E.
Wray, Linda Ann
Young, Laura A.
Zarbo, Judith Ann

Safety Scene

BY RON MARTIN
OFFICE OF SAFETY, HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Think Twice

Read instructions before flushing medications

Have you ever cleaned out your medicine cabinet, found expired medications and flushed them down the toilet without a second thought? While pills may seem small and harmless, they are still potent and can have a lasting impact on the environment if not disposed of with care. In fact, many studies have detected pharmaceutical drugs in rivers, lakes and groundwater. Research suggests that some of these drugs are causing unintended consequences to the natural ecosystem and humans.

Many classes of drugs raise ecological concerns. Antibiotics and antimicrobials may promote drug-resistant pathogens. Estrogenic steroids have been implicated in causing aquatic organisms of one sex to develop characteristics of the opposite sex. Antidepressants can affect spawning and other behaviors in shellfish. Anti-epileptic drugs may have neurological effects on humans. Calcium channel blockers can inhibit sperm activity in some aquatic organisms.

These drugs enter the ecosystem when they are flushed down the toilet or poured down the drain. Unfortunately, sewage treatment facilities and septic systems are incapable of effectively filtering these drugs, and many persist once released into the aquatic system.

What can you do to help? First, take drugs as prescribed by your doctor. Usually, the prescription should be used up. Take note of expiration dates on medications, so you not only receive the optimal effects of treatment but also avoid wasting drugs.

If drugs must be disposed of, follow the disposal instructions on the label or in the patient information provided with the drug. The Environmental Protection Agency

(epa.gov) and Food and Drug Administration (fda.gov) also provide guidance on their web pages. When a drug contains instructions that call for it to be flushed down the toilet, it is because the FDA has determined this to be the method of disposal presenting the least risk to public safety.

Many U.S. localities have initiated programs to collect expired or unused medications or accept them with their regular household hazardous waste collection programs. Once collected, the waste medicines are generally incinerated.

Some medicines, such as narcotics, are strictly controlled and harder to dispose of because they must be collected by police officers or Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agents. Check with your local government to identify what collection programs are available and when they will accept pharmaceutical wastes. State and local police forces in collaboration with DEA collect pharmaceutical drugs, including narcotics, once or twice a year during National Prescription Take-Back Days.

If instructions are not provided and take-back programs are unavailable, most waste medicines can be disposed of in normal household trash with some precautions. An exception is narcotics, which in the absence of alternative means of disposal should be flushed down the toilet to prevent accidental contact, unintended use or overdose by humans or pets. Other unwanted medicines, including over-the-counter medicines and veterinary medicines, should be taken out of their original containers and mixed with a substance such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds to make them unrecognizable and unappealing to children and pets. This mixture should then be placed in a sealable bag, can or container to prevent the medicine from escaping the garbage bag. The FDA recommends scratching

out empty medicine bottle labels or otherwise making them unreadable to protect your identity and personal medical information.

Never give prescription drugs to friends or family members. Not only is this illegal, but prescription drugs are dispensed based on a person's specific symptoms and medical history, which could make them dangerous to others.

Overseas, be aware of the problems associated with using the sewer to dispose of medicines at an embassy or consulate that treats sewage onsite and recycles the water for environmental sustainability. If questions arise about appropriate disposal of medications, contact your regional medical officer, facility manager or the Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management for additional guidance. ■



FSI-USAID Course Builds Joint Understanding

By Katherine Hadda, associate dean for Stability Operations, Area Studies and Economics, Foreign Service Institute

Can you identify which president established USAID? What about the U.S. percentage of the world's total global development assistance or the eight goals of the development blueprint accepted by all the world's countries and leading development institutions?

No? Perhaps you know what an officer needs to consider before discussing youth programs with a nation's health minister or which members of a typical country team might play a role in promoting U.S. foreign assistance strategies in a host country.

Still stumped? The answers to these and many other questions are contained in a new distance learning course jointly designed and offered by the Foreign Service Institute and USAID—their first such collaboration.

FSI and USAID developed the course, *Development in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*, because officers serving overseas and in Washington are increasingly likely to encounter development assistance matters as core components of their work. In today's linked world, one country's problems can reach beyond its borders and impact others, which means U.S. assistance programs must go beyond improving food security and providing increased access to education and medical care. Building transparent and accountable governance, investing in human capital and creating economies resistant to negative impacts of climate change are all equally important to helping break the cycles of instability and poverty in developing areas.

Many U.S. civilian agencies now carry out development projects and prevent and respond to crises, but this work can be better focused and coordinated.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton used the Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review (QDDR) to call on the State Department and USAID to provide the strategic framework and oversight to be better aware of what all U.S. agencies are doing, so that all are able to allocate their resources wisely and well.

Nonetheless, many Department officers reach post without ever having worked with USAID, and USAID officers don't always take into account non-USAID programs at post that may help reach development goals. These include the political section's demarches, public affairs grants, law enforcement training programs and counternarcotics efforts. Other civilian agencies are often similarly unaware of how their work fits into larger development goals.

Modeling the interagency cooperation highlighted in the QDDR, the new three-hour distance learning course was developed by a team of experts who have a range of overseas and domestic foreign assistance experience. They include a senior USAID officer, FSI instructors, former Peace Corps volunteers, Department experts and the FSI Distance Learning team.

Because FSI offers the course via distance learning, employees of the Department, USAID and other U.S. agencies will be able to take it anywhere in the world. The course offers an overview of U.S. foreign assistance history and processes, gives examples of the theoretical underpinnings of development theory over past decades and explains who in government and the private sector works on development issues. It also uses case studies based on a fictitious developing country to help students determine the most effective means of delivering assistance in the field.

FSI launched the course Nov. 30, and it was so popular that 300 students registered in its first six weeks, including entry-level and senior Department and USAID officers.

"Working with each other daily, we sometimes assume we know more about other agencies than we really do," said Ken Seifert, USAID officer in Honduras. "The course helped fill my knowledge gaps."

Senior FSI and USAID officials gathered on Jan. 13 to celebrate the course's launch. FSI Director Ruth Whiteside noted how the QDDR emphasizes the importance of Department, USAID and U.S. agency staff working in tandem to promote U.S. foreign policy objectives through the coordinated use of diplomatic and foreign assistance tools.

"No such effort will succeed, however, unless our officers know and appreciate each others' roles, and learn to work together towards common goals," she said.

USAID Counselor to the Agency Hilda "Bambi" Arellano agrees. "By taking this course before deployment, officers will have a deeper sense of



Senior USAID and FSI officials celebrate the course's launch. From left are FSI Director Ruth Whiteside, USAID Counselor Hilda "Bambi" Arellano, FSI Deputy Director Tracey Jacobson and USAID Human Resources Director Deborah Kennedy-Iraheta
Photo by Sandra Niedzwiecki

their joint agenda," she said. "You instill that attitude through a course like this, and we will see tremendous impact from this training."

"This course is a model of how both agencies can be smarter and more cost-effective in designing training with constrained resources," said Deborah Kennedy-Iraheta, director of USAID's Office of Human Resources.

USAID and FSI are jointly developing a more advanced classroom version of the course and the first USAID Mission Directors Course ever held at FSI. Both organizations look forward to more joint training opportunities, in keeping with QDDR objectives and students' needs.

Department employees wishing to enroll in *Development in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy* can click the "Apply Now" button on the class's website at fsi.state.gov. USAID staff should register through the USAID University at university.usaid.gov. Other agency employees and all third-party contractors must submit a funded SF-182 Request for Training to the FSI Office of the Registrar by fax to (703) 302-7152. Tuition is \$75. ■

Appointments

Norman L. Eisen
U.S. Ambassador to
the Czech Republic



Joyce A. Barr
Assistant Secretary of
State for Administration
Washington, D.C.



Stuart E. Jones
U.S. Ambassador
to the Hashemite
Kingdom of Jordan



**Michael Anthony
McFaul**
U.S. Ambassador to the
Russian Federation



Dan W. Mozena
U.S. Ambassador to
the People's Republic
of Bangladesh



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to watch a video
message from the
ambassador.

Joyce A. Barr of Washington (SFS), class of Minister-Counselor, is the new Assistant Secretary of State for Administration. Previously, she was international affairs advisor and deputy commandant at the Industrial College for the Armed Forces. She was ambassador to Namibia and has also served in Malaysia, Turkmenistan, Sudan, Kenya, Hungary and Sweden.

Norman L. Eisen of the District of Columbia, a lawyer and former White House official, was confirmed by the Senate as the new U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic, a position he has held since January 2011. Previously, he was special counsel to the President for Ethics and Government Reform. He co-founded Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington.

Stuart E. Jones of Virginia (SFS), class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Previously, he was deputy chief of mission in Baghdad. He has also

been DCM in Cairo and deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Other postings include Iraq, Turkey, El Salvador and Colombia.

Michael Anthony McFaul of Montana, a professor, author and government official, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation. Previously, he was senior director for Russia and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council. He is on leave from Stanford University, where he is a professor of political science. He is also a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford.

Dan W. Mozena of Iowa (SFS), class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Previously, he was ambassador to Angola. Before that, he was director of the Office for Southern African Affairs. Other postings include Zambia and Zaire, where he and his wife had previously served as Peace Corps volunteers.

Obituaries



Calvin C. Berlin, 86, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Oct. 15 at his home in Lafayette, Ind. He served in the Army during World War II and joined the Department in 1959. His postings included Naples, Port of Spain, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, London and Mexico City. After retiring in 1985, he worked as an international trade consultant for the State of Indiana and then for American Electric Power.



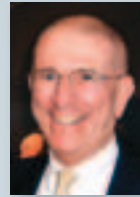
Seymour S. Goodman, 93, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 7 in Washington, D.C. He had congestive heart failure. He served in the Army Air Forces during World War II. He was an economist with the Department and served as an economic officer in Dublin and Belfast. Later, he transferred to the Commerce Department. After retiring, he volunteered as a tax preparer, information specialist at the Smithsonian Institution and with the Boy Scouts. He enjoyed tennis.



Janet A. Hampton, 73, wife of retired Foreign Service specialist John Hampton, died Nov. 30 of pancreatic cancer at her home in St. Petersburg, Fla. She accompanied her husband on postings to Caracas, Beijing and Canberra, where she served as community liaison officer; New Delhi where she worked for USAID; Nairobi; and Ottawa. In retirement, she was active in the St. Petersburg Literacy Council and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Eckerd College.



Ruth E. Higgins, 83, a retired Foreign Service secretary, died Nov. 8. She lived in Springfield, Va. She was a civilian employee of the Navy Department for six years before joining the State Department. Her postings included Tokyo, Bonn, Brussels, Salzburg, Lima, Tehran and Luxembourg. She retired in 1986. She enjoyed horseback riding, reading, sewing, music, genealogy research and cats.



John H. Kelly, 72, died Sept. 15 of acute myeloid leukemia. He lived in Conyers, Ga. He was ambassador to Lebanon and Finland and assistant secretary for the Near East and South Asia during the Gulf War. Other postings included Turkey, Thailand and France. After retiring in 1994, he ran a consulting firm that assisted U.S. companies with overseas marketing strategies. He enjoyed nature, yard work, tennis and hiking. He walked the 500-mile Camino de Santiago de Compostela in three segments.



Andrew J. Schwartz, 88, died Oct. 20 in Fairfax County, Va., of complications from Parkinson's disease. He participated in the invasion of Italy during World War II. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1961 and served for 27 years as a cultural affairs officer in Costa Rica, the Philippines, Bolivia, Venezuela and Guatemala. He retired in 1988. He was a Fulbright scholar, university professor and author of a book on the Russo-Finnish War prior to joining USIA.



Max L. Shimp, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 2, 2011. He served in Africa, Sicily and Italy during World War II. He joined the Foreign Service in 1955 and was posted to Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Turkey and Panama. He retired in 1976 and moved to Orlando, Fla. He was active in Foreign Service and military officer retiree groups and enjoyed amateur radio.



Charles Thomas Skoda, 86, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 22 of natural causes. He lived in Tucson, Ariz. He served in the Army during World War II. He worked briefly for the Navy Department and joined the Foreign Service in the early 1960s. His postings included Cairo; Dacca, East Pakistan; and Paris. After retiring in 1977, he lived in New York and Florida before moving to Tucson. He was active in the Lions Club and veterans organizations.

Robert P. Smith, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Jan. 20 at home in Missoula, Mont., from complications of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War and joined the Department in 1955. He was ambassador to Malta, Ghana and Liberia. Other postings included Lahore; Beirut; Enugu, Nigeria; and Pretoria. After retiring in 1981, he was president and CEO of the African Wildlife Foundation. In 1989, he returned to the Department as a part-time employee of the Office of Asylum Affairs until 1998. He was a volunteer English teacher and active in his church.

Theodore L. "Ted" Austin Jr., 81, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 8 in Chapel Hill, N.C. He served in the Marine Corps and was a member of the security guard

detachment at the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon. In his Foreign Service career, he was posted to Tokyo, Panama City and Rome. After retiring in 1984, he was an independent consultant. He and his wife lived in McLean, Va., before moving to Chapel Hill. He became a Master Gardener and volunteered at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens. He enjoyed traveling.

Howard Everett Buckley, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 22. He lived in Chevy Chase, Md. He served in the Army during World War II and after the war conducted humanitarian relief in Germany and France. During his 26-year Department career, he served in Turkey, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Dahomey, Niger, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. He retired in 1980.

End State



Jakarta



Bicycles for rent await courageous riders in Jakarta's Kota district. Notorious for its chronic traffic congestion, Indonesia's largest city opened its first dedicated bicycle lane May 22, 2011. The lane stretches 1.5 km (approx. 1 mi.) from Ayodia Park to Blok M in South Jakarta.

Photo by Mo Riza

PG.
10



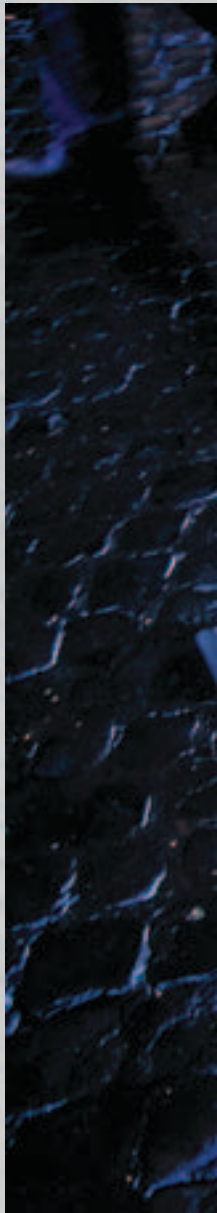
India

A young boy peeks timidly from behind a door in Mahabalipuram, a coastal city 60 km (approx. 32 mi.) south of Chennai in Tamil Nadu. The city is well known for its historic monuments, many constructed between the 7th and 9th centuries.

Photo by Marco Pari



PG. 34



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Lagos



A man scales a fish along the shores of Lagos Lagoon, which drains into the Gulf of Guinea. With a population of nearly eight million, Lagos is the African continent's second largest city after Cairo.
Photo by Zuorio

PG. 12



Rome

Puddles of rainwater in the cobble streets of Campo Marzio reflect the bustling commerce and beautiful architecture that characterize this historic Roman district, which is home to the widest staircase in Europe, the Spanish Steps.
Photo by Jody Sticca

PG. 24





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A close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The flag is the background for the entire lower half of the page.

Reserve Your Spot at Foreign Affairs Day

The annual Foreign Affairs Day event for Department retirees is May 4 and will feature discussions and an elegant luncheon for 250. Invitations go out early this month. Please return your RSVP cards and, if attending the luncheon, payment checks as soon as possible. Retirees who have not recently attended and wish to should email foreignaffairsday@state.gov, stating their full name, date of birth, retirement date, service (Civil Service or Foreign Service), mailing address, email and telephone number.