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February 2016

MAGAZINE

**Task force helps El Salvador
combat organized crime**

**MSG recalls evacuation
of Embassy Seoul**



**Embassy cultivates 'special friendship'
in standout Scandinavian capital**

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Tap once anywhere on your screen to reveal navigation bar and menu. Tap again to close.

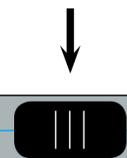


In this issue you will find the icons below throughout to help navigate, swipe and scroll through it all.



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- In the Table of Contents and on the cover, all titles can be tapped to jump directly to an article.
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- Swipe to the left to advance to the next article, or to the right to go back to the previous.

Drag the scrubber bar to find an article in a mini-display window.
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Tap Headlines To Navigate

Features

Office Spotlight

Team supports coalition battling terror group

Gang Busters

Task force helps El Salvador combat extortion

Georgetown Embed

FSO's detail serves Afghan women

Strategic Studies

Department staff attend security college

ESTH Hubs

Officers bring environmental issues to the fore

The Faithful Few

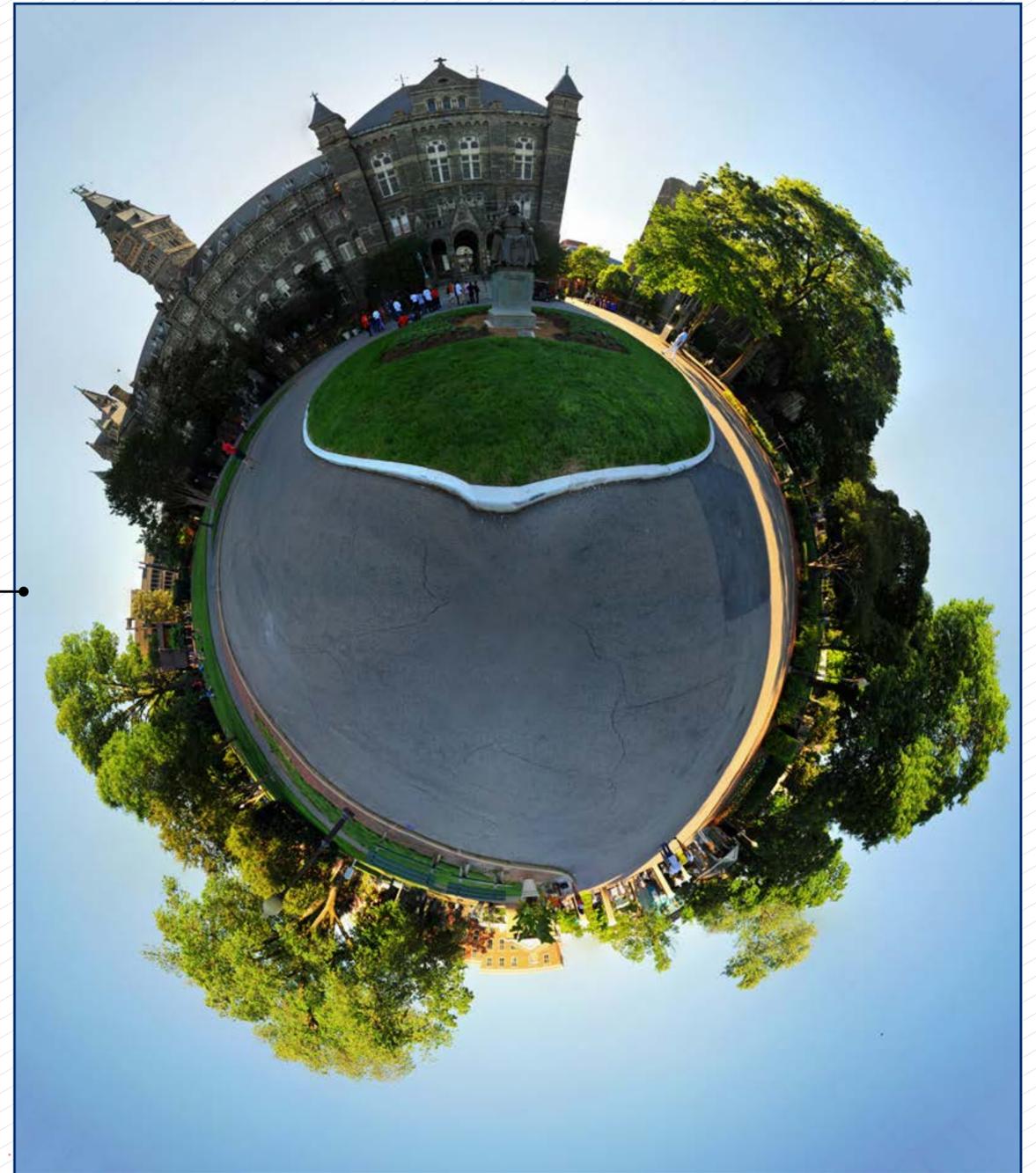
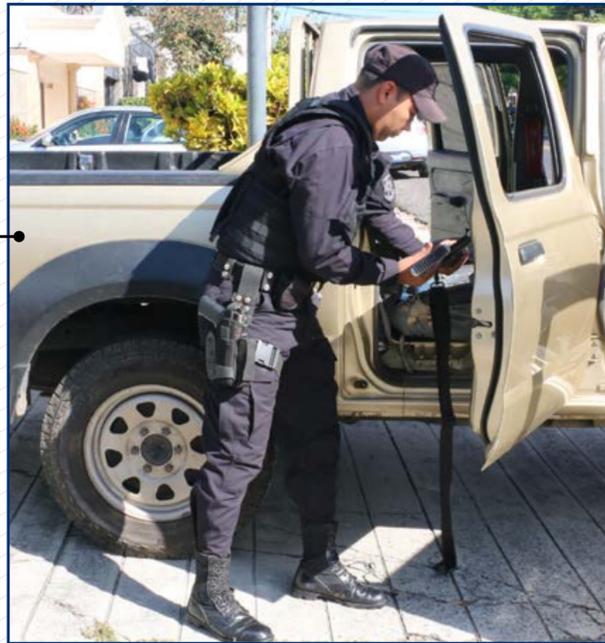
MSG recalls evacuation of Embassy Seoul

FLO Paves the Way

Helps EFMs seek federal employment

Writers' Haven

American Corner meetings attract youth



Columns

In the News

From the DG

Diversity Notes

In Brief

Retirements

Lying in State

Appointments

In Memoriam

End State



On the cover:

The sun sets over a masted ship moored to a pier along the Nybroviken (New Bridge Bay).

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

STATE MAGAZINE



Isaac D. Pacheco
Editor-in-Chief
pachecoi2@state.gov



Ed Warner
Deputy Editor
warneres@state.gov



Michael Hahn
Associate Editor
hahnmg@state.gov



Luis A. Jimenez, Jr.
Art Director
jimenezla@state.gov

Submissions

For details on submitting articles to *State Magazine*, request guidelines by email at statemagazine@state.gov or download them from state.gov/statemag.

2401 E Street NW, Room H232
Washington DC 20037
statemagazine@state.gov

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At the stadium, the U.S. team poses with embassy children.
Photo by Gabrielle Punch

Mission Children Are Soccer Escorts

As the Trinidad and Tobago national Soccer team hosted the U.S. men's national soccer team in a World Cup qualifying match on Nov. 17, 22 children of American and locally employed (LE) staff of the U.S. Embassy took the field, hand-in-hand with the players of both teams for the opening ceremony, in which the nation's president and prime minister and U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Margaret Diop also participated.

“The U.S. and Trinidad and Tobago are great friends and strong partners—as this match demonstrated,” Diop said.

Consular Deputy Chief Kevin Ogley, who was the embassy's point of contact for the Trinidadian team, suggested including the children as player escorts and the chargé as a presiding dignitary. LE staff and American employees attended the game together and cheered throughout.

Stakes were high as Trinidad and Tobago fought to try to beat the U.S. team and qualify for its first World Cup appearance since 2006. After the game, the president, prime minister, chargé d'affaires and other dignitaries came on the field to shake hands with the players and children. One child, the grandson of the consular cashier, announced, “I just shook hands with the president, the prime minister and the chargé. I'm never washing this hand again.” ■





Gambian teachers gathered in groups during the conference's opening ceremony to study and identify key course modules for the conference.
Photo by Hatab Fadera

School Hosts Education Conference

More than 100 educators traveled from around The Gambia to the campus of Banjul American Embassy School (BAES) Nov. 21 to attend workshops, share ideas and focus on inquiry-based education.

Ambassador Patricia Alsup opened the conference. Joseph Yorio, CEO of School Specialty, followed as the keynote speaker. Together with their Peace Corps volunteer counterparts, each Gambian participant chose four one-hour workshop sessions from among 12 presented by BAES faculty. Topics included early literacy activities, fostering writing skills through the creative arts, promoting critical thinking through debate and classroom management techniques, among others.

The school's faculty planned each session knowing that many of the nation's teachers often lack chalk, paper and teaching technology. The workshop, financed by a U.S. Embassy in Banjul grant and with Yorio's support, helped educators move from a basic-level drill and practice and question and answer format to teaching higher-level questioning and thinking. During the sharing session, the group debated the qualities leaders of the future need and how educators can help them develop these qualities. Participants exchanged emails and forged what are hoped will be sustainable professional relationships. ■





Dr. Stephen A. Young, director of Mental Health Services, discusses mental health issues overseas with workshop participants, including James Segraves, left.

Photo by Emily Nolte

Management Officers Hold Workshop

Nearly 200 management officers convened in Washington, D.C., in December for the first Combined Management Officers' Workshop. Senior Department leaders, including Deputy Secretary Heather Higginbottom, Under Secretary Patrick Kennedy, Assistant Secretary Greg Starr, Director General Arnold Chacon, and Budget and Planning Director Doug Pitkin spoke about the federal budget, security issues and developments in management at the Department.

Participants from the Bureaus of African Affairs (AF), East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP), Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) and Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) discussed such issues as emergency preparedness, fraud, conduct, regionalization, strategic planning and cost containment. Management officers also heard from leaders of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Offices of Inspector General and Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation and Logistics Management.

Workshop attendees raised close to \$4,000 for the FSN Emergency Relief Fund in an event at the DACOR Bacon House.

Each regional bureau hosted sessions on their posts' needs, and NEA-SCA's session featured former Ambassador Prudence Bushnell speaking on leadership and management in a crisis situation. AF's presentation looked at crisis management, cooperation with interagency partners, LE staff compensation and regional classification. WHA focused on its region's policy drivers and their impact on management. EAP focused on data-driven decision making and held a hands-on exercise with subject matter experts to examine posts' data.

Participants said the workshop should become a regular event, as it provided networking and valuable insights from senior leadership. ■





FSI Innovation Lab staff members experiment with new training approaches in the immersive learning environment.

Photo by Michael Morrison

FSI: Innovation Lab
Exploring New Digital
Learning Technologies



FSI Opens Innovation Tech Lab

FSI recently opened its Innovation Technology Lab, where instructors and staff can experiment with 21st-century learning technologies and incorporate digital learning strategies into FSI's curricula.

"The most extraordinary innovations occur at the intersection of technology, learning and creativity," said Skydance MacMahon, FSI's digital media administrator. In the lab, FSI instructors will learn from one another and discover new approaches to training and digital-age learning, he added.

The lab's layout promotes innovation, as everything is on wheels and one can write on its walls. Its innovation pods let users prototype new hardware and software. It also has virtual reality headsets, and offers tablet casting, SMART computing, 3D printing, cutting-edge instructional development software and collaborative recording devices.

Carla Gonneville, staff member in FSI's School of Language Studies, participated in an immersive simulation in the lab, in which a colleague used Spanish to help her navigate the unfamiliar sights, sounds and busy streets of a virtual Mexico City. She thus practiced her language skills while making her way through a new environment. She called the lab "an exciting space for instructors to design lessons based in immersive environments that simulate real-world opportunities for language use and the challenges associated with being in a country that is completely new to you."

Tin Cao, associate dean of the School of Applied Information Technology, said the lab offers far-reaching implications, including letting students use "their skills through an interdisciplinary approach, which is how they are expected to use them on the job."

Modern diplomacy calls for relevant training, and the FSI Innovation Lab will create rewarding learning experiences to prepare the foreign affairs community throughout the digital age. ■





Secretary of State Kerry and Ambassador Peter Selfridge, chief of Protocol, pose with children at the Diplomacy at Home for the Holidays reception.

Photo by Michael Gross

Secretary Hosts Holiday Event

In December, Secretary of State John Kerry hosted the seventh annual Diplomacy at Home for the Holidays event in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms at Main State, honoring the service, dedication and sacrifice of U.S. government employees and their families, especially those involved in unaccompanied tours.

Largely focused on children, this year's event included special activities, performances and gifts, including a keepsake box to fill with mementos children could share with their parents upon the parents' return from an unaccompanied tour. Attendees mingled with Frosty the Snowman and posed in the digital photo booth for holiday pictures to send instantly to a loved one serving overseas.

On arrival, families involved in unaccompanied tours were treated to holiday music by a local middle school's girls' chorus. In the Ben Franklin Room, guests were serenaded by a jazz quartet. Later, they heard Secretary Kerry express his gratitude, saying, "We want to reach out and give everybody here a big hug, and everybody hug each other and say thank you very much, because everybody is experiencing the same thing, which is the challenge of modern diplomacy." Next, the three young actors who share the leading role in the Tony Award-winning Broadway hit "Matilda" performed the popular song "Naughty." ■



Direct from the D.G.

ARNOLD CHACON
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE



Diplomacy Past, Present and Future

Despite the breakneck speed of technology and a hyper-connected global environment full of unconventional threats, the adage “the more things change the more they stay the same” still rings true. I recently re-read Harold Nicolson’s classic 1961 essay “Diplomacy Then and Now.” The world has changed dramatically since 1961, but the fundamentals of the profession of diplomacy are the same, and more than a half century later, the words of that pre-eminent diplomatic scholar and practitioner still resonate. Noting the impact of long-distance telephone communication (an innovation that was revolutionary at the time), he insisted “the fact remains, and will always remain, that the man [or woman] on the spot is in a key position and no action should be taken... without his advice being sought.” Diplomatic grounding, field experience and perspective combined with judgment were as important then as they are now.

Diplomacy is an art and a profession; it must be worked at constantly. That is why the Bureau of Human Resources is committed to ensuring our employees have the tools, training and support to be leaders; to identify, pre-empt, contain and solve complex problems and advance U.S. values, interests and goals.

In my January column, I outlined our reform agenda for 2016: Civil Service reform, Foreign Service bidding and assignments streamlining, and targeted recruitment for certain specialist categories. These efforts will help ensure our people have the strengths—and our systems the adaptability—to meet new dangers and demands, and to create opportunities to advance our nation’s foreign policy agenda. New challenges and new tools do not fundamentally alter the nature and objectives of our work—they can, in fact, enhance them. By tackling structural and personnel challenges, we can make the Department a stronger and more efficient and effective institution.

In 1945, the Foreign Service had just 770 members. By the time I joined in 1981, that number had jumped to 9,500. In 2015, the Foreign Service (including generalists and specialists) totaled about 14,000, while the Civil Service had 11,000 employees, and Locally Employed staff around the world numbered 47,000. That’s roughly 72,000 people. While the raw numbers don’t do justice to the complexity and scope of organizational change, they’re indicative of growing demands and requirements placed upon the Department. The corresponding rise in internal rules and processes can be a drain on productivity and our main mission—information gathering, analysis and decision making; identifying and cultivating influential audiences; forging and building relationships; and policy advocacy. My goal is to cut internal clutter and complexity so that employees can devote more time to diplomacy.

Agility and flexibility require that we put greater focus on training, leadership and management skills, and career-long professional development. Technical skills and competencies will change, and we must adjust accordingly. But whether we’re armed with better data analytics or the latest social media platforms, all these tools augment persuasion, public advocacy, engagement and negotiation—the fundamental activities of the diplomat.

Knowledge and understanding of the past is invaluable and we are rightly proud of our rich institutional history as the oldest federal department but equally valuable is openness to changing the things that no longer work in order to seize the opportunities before us. In a somewhat wistful 1997 essay about the evolution of the Foreign Service, George Kennan conceded that a Foreign Service “lacking the rigidities of earlier conceptions” would likely better adjust to an increasingly uncertain world. We would be smart to heed his advice. ■

Arnold A. Chacon



The 2015 Equal Employment Opportunity Award

Achieving the Department's diversity and inclusion goals is a collective effort, requiring the commitment of all employees across various levels. It requires a workforce composed of individuals who value unique perspectives in the support and practice of diplomacy. Each year, the Department recognizes employees who have served as champions for equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion. The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Award recognizes outstanding contributions made by a Foreign Service or Civil Service employee in furthering the Department's EEO program. The award committee selects winners based on their exceptionally effective leadership, skill, imagination and innovation in extending and promoting equal opportunity for all employees. In addition to public recognition, the recipient receives a certificate from the secretary of state and a \$10,000 cash award.

The 2015 EEO Award recipient, Vella Mbenna, from the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, truly represents the spirit of shaping our workplace to reflect our commitment to EEO principles. The committee was impressed when Vella, a long-standing EEO counselor, rebuilt Embassy Tunis' EEO program after it had been disintegrated in the years following the 2012 attack and subsequent drawdown of Embassy Tunis. The political developments in Tunisia after the 2012 attack led to tension and hostility among the embassy staff, which resulted in an increase of disputes based on religious beliefs. Many of these incidents went undetected and adversely impacted morale and efficiency, particularly among the Locally Employed (LE) staff who were least aware of their rights under U.S. law. Vella addressed these issues by recruiting and training five LE Staff liaisons who helped her launch a vigorous bilingual information campaign. The campaign involved emails, mission wide training sessions, an EEO SharePoint site and other initiatives, all in English and French to ensure that language was not a barrier to accessing information. Vella's superb efforts in rebuilding a robust EEO program at Embassy Tunis helped to foster inclusivity and improve morale.

The committee chose David White from Embassy Mexico as the 2015 EEO Award runner-up for his leadership in rebuilding morale in the call center of one of the world's largest U.S. diplomatic missions. David helped to uncover and address a number of conduct issues that were negatively affecting workplace morale at Mission Mexico's call center, which supports Embassy Mexico and eight consulates. He took the initiative to create an office policy to ensure nondiscrimination and equal treatment among employees in matters such as conduct, leave, shift scheduling and overtime. Thanks to his exceptional leadership, the call center's workplace morale and customer service has improved tremendously. His exceptional contributions are another good example of doing it right on the EEO front—getting rid of what's wrong and then taking steps to make sure it won't happen again.

What's so gratifying about these stories is that both David and Vella clearly understood the importance of making EEO principles a priority and core part of their job duties. They each found exemplary ways to integrate EEO principles into practice and ultimately helped to improve the Department by promoting and enhancing equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion. They both deserve to be recognized for their outstanding contributions. I know that there are other employees like these two who work tirelessly each and every day to advance the Department's goal of propagating equity, fairness and inclusion. I hope to read about the exceptional work of others in next year's award nominations. For more information on the EEO Award, please contact S/OCR at diversity@state.gov. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Crosshairs on ISIL

Team supports coalition battling terror group

By Sam Morgan, international liaison officer, Office of the Counter-ISIL Coalition

In the summer of 2014, forces of the group calling itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) launched a major offensive across cities in northern Iraq and went from being a dangerous insurgent group to a major terrorist organization, requiring an international response.

President Obama kicked off the international response to ISIL with the announcement at the U.N. General Assembly of the formation of a global coalition to counter ISIL. This put in motion a broad U.S. interagency response to the threat posed by ISIL under the purview of the special presidential envoy to the global coalition to counter ISIL (SECI). That role was first held by Gen. John Allen, who was followed in November by his former deputy, Brett McGurk.

The United States coordinates the 65-member coalition through the offices of SECI and the Office of the Counter-ISIL Coalition (CWG) in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Together, the CWG and SECI work to manage and coordinate U.S. government and international efforts to degrade and defeat ISIL.

CWG focuses on the effective management and coordination of the international coalition that arose in the wake of President Obama's September 2014 call to action. The global counter-ISIL coalition has no enabling U.N. resolution and lacks a headquarters and international secretariat. It is instead bound by only a shared commitment to defeat ISIL, and is supported organizationally by the 12-person team in CWG, which includes the author (a British embed) and Brian Haug, our CENTCOM military liaison officer, and officers from diverse backgrounds to support the regional aspects of our work.

CWG has at its core two tasks. Firstly, it supports the coalition, including the coalition's "small group" meetings of more than 200 persons, held every 90 days at venues around the world, and facilitating numerous smaller meetings in between. The CWG also operates a collaborative online workspace, tracks coalition member contributions and finds ways to fill the gaps in our military and civilian arsenals.

CWG's other core task is to facilitate a broad interdisciplinary approach to the ISIL problem, focusing on: providing military support to our partner in Iraq, impeding the flow of foreign fighters and addressing ISIL's global ambitions, stopping ISIL's financing and funding, addressing stabilization needs as ISIL is pushed off of territory in Iraq and Syria, and exposing ISIL's true nature.

To promote discussions and work in each of these efforts, the coalition established four working groups, each chaired by one or more of our international partners, including the U.K., The Netherlands, Germany, Turkey, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Italy. The United States co-chairs the Counter-Messaging and the Counter-Finance Working Groups. The Department of Defense also holds regular political-military consultations among countries partnering in the military effort. Each of the working groups has an action plan and meets regularly to share information, agree on joint activities and set priorities. The CWG, with SECI, works with U.S. policymakers across government and coalition partners to align and track progress toward defeating ISIL.



Having a post-meeting chat are, from left, the author, Office of the Counter-ISIL Coalition Director Pamela Quanrud and the office's deputy director, Stephen L. Kontos.

Keeping our coalition on course is a smaller group of key stakeholders who meet quarterly, and the coalition as a whole meets at least once a year. In 2015, the U.S. hosted a summit meeting on countering ISIL and violent extremism attended by 43 coalition heads of state and featuring an opening session dedicated to coalition efforts to defeat ISIL. The summit also welcomed three new members to the coalition: Nigeria, Malaysia and Tunisia.

Co-chairs of the coalition working groups meet frequently to address issues requiring coordination. According to Presidential Envoy McGurk, "this unanimity of policy and operational priorities helped drive back ISIL in both Iraq and Syria and degrade its capabilities."

The coalition's military and civilian efforts have hit ISIL hard, limiting its freedom of movement and its ability to finance operations. In Iraq and Syria, local forces and coalition contributions in the air and through training and materiel, have pushed back ISIL front lines significantly. The government of Iraq has reclaimed around 40 percent of the territory ISIL once held. In northern Syria, ISIL has lost much of its territory and is now cut off from all but about 100 kilometers of the 822-kilometer border between Syria and Turkey.

More than 5,000 coalition trainers and advisors from 18 countries are in Iraq supporting the Iraqi government's successful efforts to liberate Ramadi and strengthen and develop local security forces in preparation for the liberation of Mosul. Separately, more than 900 coalition personnel are assisting the train-and-equip mission for Syrian opposition forces. In recent months coalition members have stepped up their contributions, offering more air strike support, trainers and materiel to keep pressure on ISIL and deny them safe haven.

The coalition has also stepped up efforts to stop the flow of foreign terrorist fighters into Iraq and Syria. The U.N. requires member nations to take steps to prevent suspected terrorists from entering or transiting their countries, and to disrupt and prevent their financial support. Many countries have now improved their legislation, border security and information sharing to restrict those who want to fight with ISIL in Iraq and Syria, or commit crimes for ISIL elsewhere. This is especially true in the wake of such recent ISIL external operations, including the attacks in Paris in November.

To prevent ISIL using our financial systems, the coalition has used sanctions against ISIL senior leaders, facilitators and financiers, freezing their assets and making it more costly and more difficult for them to do business. It has also worked with the military effort to destroy ISIL's oil infrastructure and assets in Iraq and Syria.

The coalition has also greatly assisted in the stabilizing of liberated areas in Iraq as ISIL is forced out. The coalition supports and funds U.N. operations to quickly rehabilitate newly liberated areas through light infrastructure projects, cash for work projects and small cash grants for newly reopened businesses. This has helped people return to their homes in towns like Tikrit and begin rebuilding their lives. More than 100,000 civilians have returned to Tikrit and surrounding areas in the past six months. Stabilization plans for Ramadi are underway.

ISIL has been incredibly adept at using social media and online communication to build an aura of success and attract new recruits. Collectively, the coalition is countering that narrative online, collaborating on public messages, best practices and sharing content. Coalition-supported messaging centers such as the Sawab center in the UAE and other planned regional centers represent moderate, tolerant and constructive approaches in online conversations and social media.

The fight to defeat ISIL has seen progress over the last 18 months, but recent attacks all over the world by those identifying with ISIL show this to be a continuing struggle requiring international effort. Until that struggle ends and ISIL is finished, the CWG will help build and maintain the coalition that can and will defeat ISIL. In the words of Presidential Envoy McGurk, "It is a privilege to be able to work on the most important security issue facing our country." ■

About the author: Sam Morgan is a member of the British Diplomatic Service and has primarily served in the Middle East. Now a Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellow in the Department's Office of the Counter-ISIL Coalition, he works with coalition partner countries and Washington policy leaders to increase coalition members' collaboration against ISIL.

A meeting of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL gets under way in Brussels in November.

Photo by Jean-Pol Schrauwen



Members of the office staff, with Office Director Pamela Quanrud at center in pale jacket, gather above the C Street entrance to Main State for their group portrait.

Photos by Ed Warner



Awaiting the start of a meeting at the Office of the Counter-ISIL Coalition are staff members, from left, AnnaMary Portz, Michael Jackson and Debra Lo.



GANG BUSTERS

Task force helps El Salvador combat extortion

By William Dokurno, El Salvador reporting and communications advisor,
Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs



Above: Salvadoran National Civilian Police (PNC) agents assigned to the Business Crimes Task Force stop a suspicious vehicle as part of their investigation into the extortion of small businesses in the capital city.
Photo courtesy of the PNC

In El Salvador, the high crime rate has in recent years come to include widespread extortion of citizens and small-business owners. The MS-13 and 18th Street gangs, in particular, have links throughout Central America and the United States, their extortion networks cause youths to flee to the U.S. and they hinder private sector investment and small businesses, especially in impoverished communities.

To address this transnational threat, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and the Department of Justice's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT) worked with Salvadoran authorities to establish a Business Crimes Task Force (BCTF). The BCTF is mentored by an OPDAT resident legal advisor and an INL law enforcement advisor and combines under one command the police specialties of analysis, investigation, surveillance and tactical operations, plus criminal prosecution.

When members of one of the country's major gangs robbed a small restaurant in the capital of San Salvador in 2014, those dining there had their money stolen too—and the guard even had his weapon taken. The gang members were brazen enough to hand the restaurant owner a telephone number, saying he should call later to arrange his “rent” payments.

The owner complained to the BCTF. They called the number and negotiated a lower “rent” for him, made undercover deliveries of marked currency, then conducted surveillance and obtained warrants to intercept the extortionists’ phone calls, all investigative tools the BCTF developed with the help of U.S. government advisors. The BCTF determined the extortion was led by a top leader of the gang—who was already in El Salvador’s Izalco prison—and got the evidence to prove the case. The BCTF charged 50 gang members with extortion, and the imprisoned leader was transferred to a maximum security prison.

The restaurant owner has since said that, after the gang leaders were transferred to another prison, “Everything has been calm. The gang members have not come back to ask for more money or to cause problems.”

More broadly, between July 2013 and September 2015, the BCTF made more than 300 arrests and, of these, 78 defendants have been tried and 75 found guilty—a 96 percent conviction rate in a country where the criminal conviction rate is usually less than 10 percent.

Perhaps the BCTF’s most encouraging success has been the Salvadoran government’s eagerness to expand the model nationwide. This year, the nation’s attorney general’s office created additional task forces to cover the nation’s western side and eastern half. Since the U.S. government began supporting these additional task forces last year, one new task force has arrested 31 individuals (and secured 23 convictions) while another has arrested 44 individuals.

The task forces’ success has built confidence and hope among El Salvador’s business community that local law enforcement can address extortion, confidence that will continue to grow as the task forces expand. ■

Below: Task force agents search suspects for marked bills, cell phones and other evidence to build a case against the larger extortion network.
Photo courtesy of the PNC





Post of the Month

Stockholm

Embassy cultivates 'Special Friendship'
in standout Scandinavian capital



Story and photos by Isaac D. Pacheco

On bright summer mornings in Stockholm, the enticing aromas of freshly baked cardamom buns and strong espresso waft out from bakeries and restaurants lining the cobbled streets of the city’s historic old town, Gamla Stan. Located at the heart of modern-day Stockholm, the 13th-century city center is a popular destination for tourists and locals, who flock to its crowded corridors seeking culinary and cultural treasures.

Gamla Stan is just one of numerous distinct neighborhoods spread across the 14 islands that comprise modern-day Stockholm, Sweden’s capital and the most populous city in Scandinavia. The city, on the country’s southeastern coast, was founded in 1252 and throughout the centuries has grown into a hub for business and academia in the Nordic region. Home to numerous world-class institutions, including the Nobel and Vasa museums, as well as several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Stockholm is also highly regarded as one of Europe’s top cultural centers.

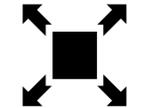
“Sweden is an incredibly developed country,” said Steven Giegerich, former consular chief at the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm. “It’s a very liberal country so people can really live as they see fit. It’s very healthy and outdoors oriented, and Stockholm is a very cosmopolitan city, so the quality of life here is really excellent.”

Due to the city’s northerly latitude, summers are short and mild, with long days where the sun barely dips below the horizon before quickly rising again. Conversely, the “twilight” days of mid-winter are dark and cold, and test the resolve of those who thrive on sunshine. The Swedes have adapted by embracing outdoor activities throughout the year. Residents are particularly fond of winter sports such as skiing and ice hockey, and top athletes from the region routinely excel in these events during international competitions.

Swedes strive for balance in their everyday lives, a concept referred to as lagom (roughly translated, “just the right amount”). This is evidenced by a



Opening Spread: A metro train passes over a bridge connecting central Stockholm to the Södermalm neighborhood.



TAP Image to Enlarge



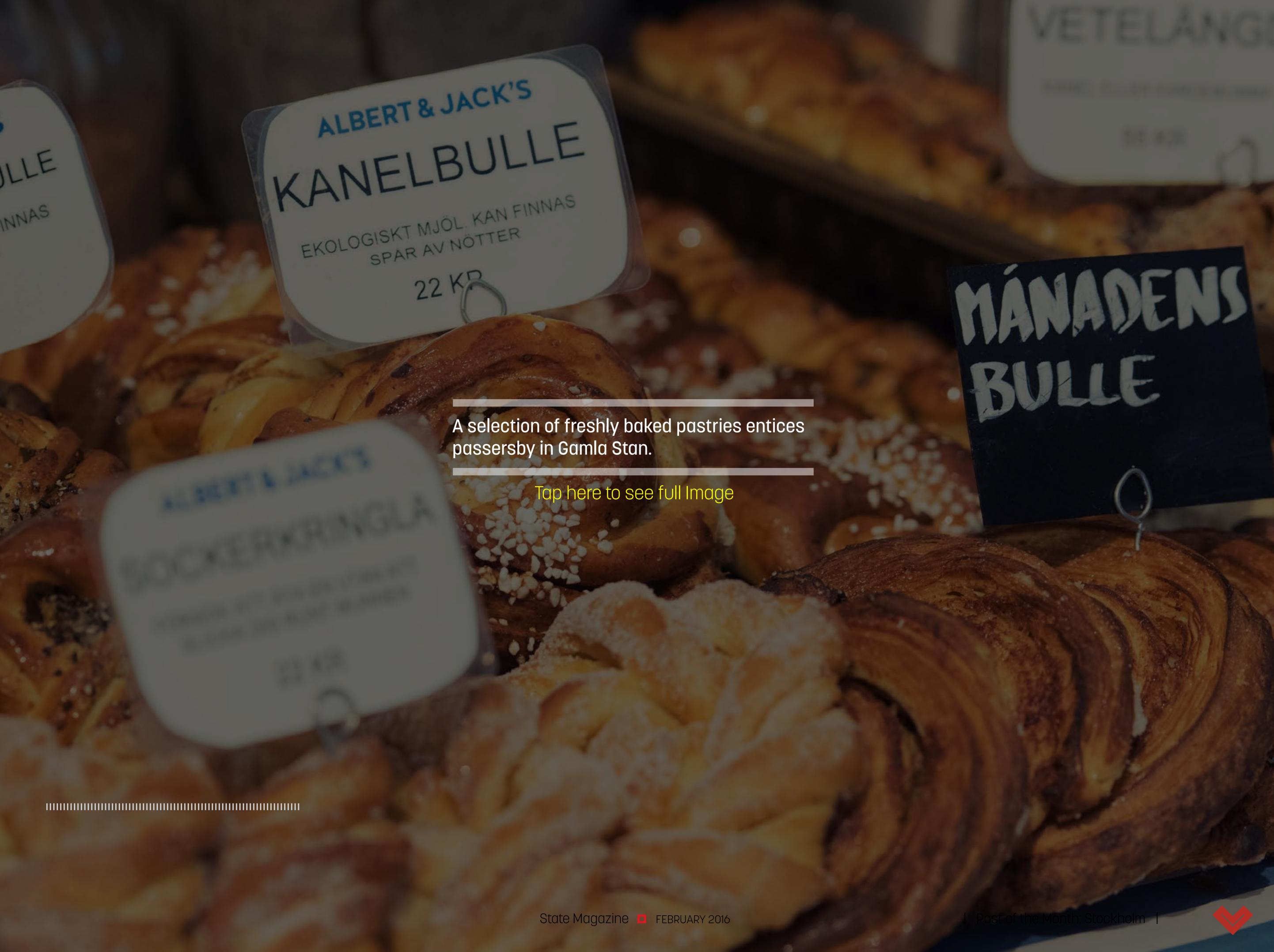


Cars and motorcycles line Storkyrkobrinken (Big Church Slope) in Stockholm's old city.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)

|||||





ALBERT & JACK'S
KANELBULLE
EKOLOGISKT MJÖL. KAN FINNAS
SPAR AV NÖTTER
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**MÅNADENS
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SÖCKERKINGLA
EKOLOGISKT MJÖL. KAN FINNAS
SPAR AV NÖTTER
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A selection of freshly baked pastries entices passersby in Gamla Stan.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)



Gamla Stan rises up behind a gilded crown
adorning Skeppsholmsbron Bridge.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)



WKS.





Post of the Month

A tree-capped hill provides a peaceful setting for meditation in Skogskyrkogården, a cemetery located in the Enskededalen district south of central Stockholm that has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)



broad cultural emphasis on cultivating harmonious interpersonal relationships and sustainable connections between humans and nature. Swedish society also values work/life equilibrium, with many businesses offering generous leave and flexible work opportunities that allow employees to spend more time at home with their young children and elderly family members.

“I couldn’t think of a better place to have a family,” said Michael Layne, Embassy Stockholm’s economic unit chief, whose four children go to one of the city’s highly touted international schools. “I especially appreciate that my kids can go out anywhere; it’s a very safe atmosphere.”

As springtime temperatures rise, residents emerge from under their heavy winter garb and head for the city’s sunny promenades, vibrant waterways and bustling cafés. While the spring thaw heralds a re-emergence of the life-giving sun, Stockholm truly blooms during the warm summer months, with myriad outdoor shopping and dining options in the city center and an abundance of activities available further afield.

“During peak summer season, as soon as the cruise ships start arriving (late May through early October), we get an influx of about 200,000 Americans,” said Giegerich. “Of course anything and everything can happen during that time: lost or stolen passports, deaths, medical injuries ... things like that. Our primary function is the protection of American citizens overseas, so that’s probably our greatest challenge.”

Since 2011, Embassy Stockholm’s consular section has been a regional hub for immigrant visas for much of Scandinavia, overseeing approximately 600 applications each year from Sweden, Norway

A signpost in Djurgården, an island in central Stockholm, highlights the numerous nearby attractions.

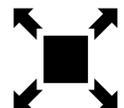


and Denmark. Although Sweden participates in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), the embassy processes more than 18,000 nonimmigrant visas annually, about 75 percent involving Swedish citizen applicants or third-country nationals participating in educational exchange programs.

“There are some unique challenges in terms of the complexity of the applicant pool here,” said Giegerich. If there were no VWP, they estimate, there would be about 1 million [NIV] visits from Sweden each year, which is amazing for a country of about 9 million people.”

Sweden, historically a haven for immigrants, has opened its doors to diaspora communities around the world and to those displaced by political turmoil. In recent years, as an influx of refugees from war-torn areas of North Africa and the Middle East have poured into the country, Swedes have had to balance national security concerns with a desire to maintain an open and welcoming society.

The United States, an immigrant-rich nation facing similar challenges, has fully embraced the dialogue about changing demographics in Sweden. Embassy Stockholm has partnered with Swedish authorities on





Post of the Month

The Kaknäs Tower provides a breathtaking panoramic view of Stockholm's city center and outlying neighborhoods.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)



immigration-related best practices as well as programs aimed at countering violent extremism and addressing concerns about foreign fighters.

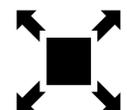
“Sweden has a very diverse population. It is bringing in a lot of immigrants, a lot of asylum seekers. There’s an interesting constellation of issues that we deal with at the American embassy,” said Robert Gilchrist, chargé d’affaires. “On one level, we can share our experience with diversity, and how important it is to American democracy. It’s something that the Swedes, no matter how tolerant they are as a society, are still wrestling with to some degree, and I think we have an interesting model for them.”

Embassy officials say they have a seamless partnership with the Swedish government, praising their counterparts as “sophisticated and competent” colleagues who continuously seek to be a part of the solution to mutual challenges. Underpinning this solid partnership is a suite of shared values between the nations on social and gender equality, environmental sustainability, economic development, international aid and security.

“America and Sweden are very special friends,” said former U.S. Ambassador to Sweden Mark Brzezinski. “Sweden is delivering in terms of the challenges of our time and its relationship with America like never before. That is the product of the hard work of the team at Embassy Stockholm.”

The enduring bilateral relationship includes one of America’s most robust trade and investment partnerships in Europe. Sweden has the largest population and economy in the Nordic and Baltic region, and is the highest per capita contributor to direct investment in the United States.

“Sweden is the 11th biggest investor in the United States; that means a lot of jobs for U.S. citizens,” said



TAP Image to Enlarge





Embassy Stockholm Chargé d'affaires Robert Gilchrist, left, speaks with American Chamber of Commerce in Sweden Director Peter Dahlen, right, after an AMCHAM event.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)





A selection of freshly baked pastries entice passersby in Gamla Stan.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)





Post of the Month



The original gathering room for the Swedish parliament is now used for smaller committee meetings.





Post of the Month

Layne. “I think what sticks out about the relationship is the trust the Swedes have and how they feel very comfortable in doing business with the United States, and that can be enhanced even more when we have a trade investment agreement through Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).”

The Swedes have been outspoken in their support of TTIP, an ambitious American-led trade and investment agreement being negotiated between the United States and the European Union (EU). The embassy has sought to parlay Sweden’s favorable outlook on free trade into momentum for TTIP in other EU countries.

“The Swedes are very important advocates for [TTIP] because they have a prosperous, modern economy that is almost entirely based on exports and trade,” said Brzezinski. “Sweden understands the benefits of trade and exports, and how that prosperity can be widely shared in society.”

Highlighting that fact is Sweden’s remarkable engagement in international development and humanitarian assistance. Sweden is a global leader in aid contributions, allotting 1 percent of its GDP annually to overseas assistance. The country has a unique partnership with USAID, wherein the agency helps the Swedish government facilitate a number of development and relief efforts. One notable example of Sweden’s cooperation with USAID is the country’s commitment of \$1 billion in 2014 to the White House’s Power Africa initiative, which aims to provide electricity to millions of sub-Saharan Africans.

“Sweden and the United States are very close,” reiterated Mark Cameron, Embassy Stockholm’s public affairs officer. “The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Swedish USAID equivalent, is USAID’s largest partner, so we’ve been doing a lot of programs to highlight that aspect.”

Sweden boasts a burgeoning tech industry and one of the world’s most well-connected, media-savvy populations. Thus, the embassy’s communication of American priorities to Swedes is

Window washers clean the façade of a skyscraper in a business district south of the city.





◀ SCROLL TO VIEW PANORAMA ▶

Another of Sweden's UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Drottningholm Palace, the private residence of the Swedish royal family lies just west of the city.



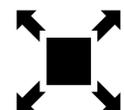
more about participating in a two-way discussion than trying to control the message. Public affairs officials tackle this task through a variety of traditional public diplomacy programs and innovative social media campaigns.

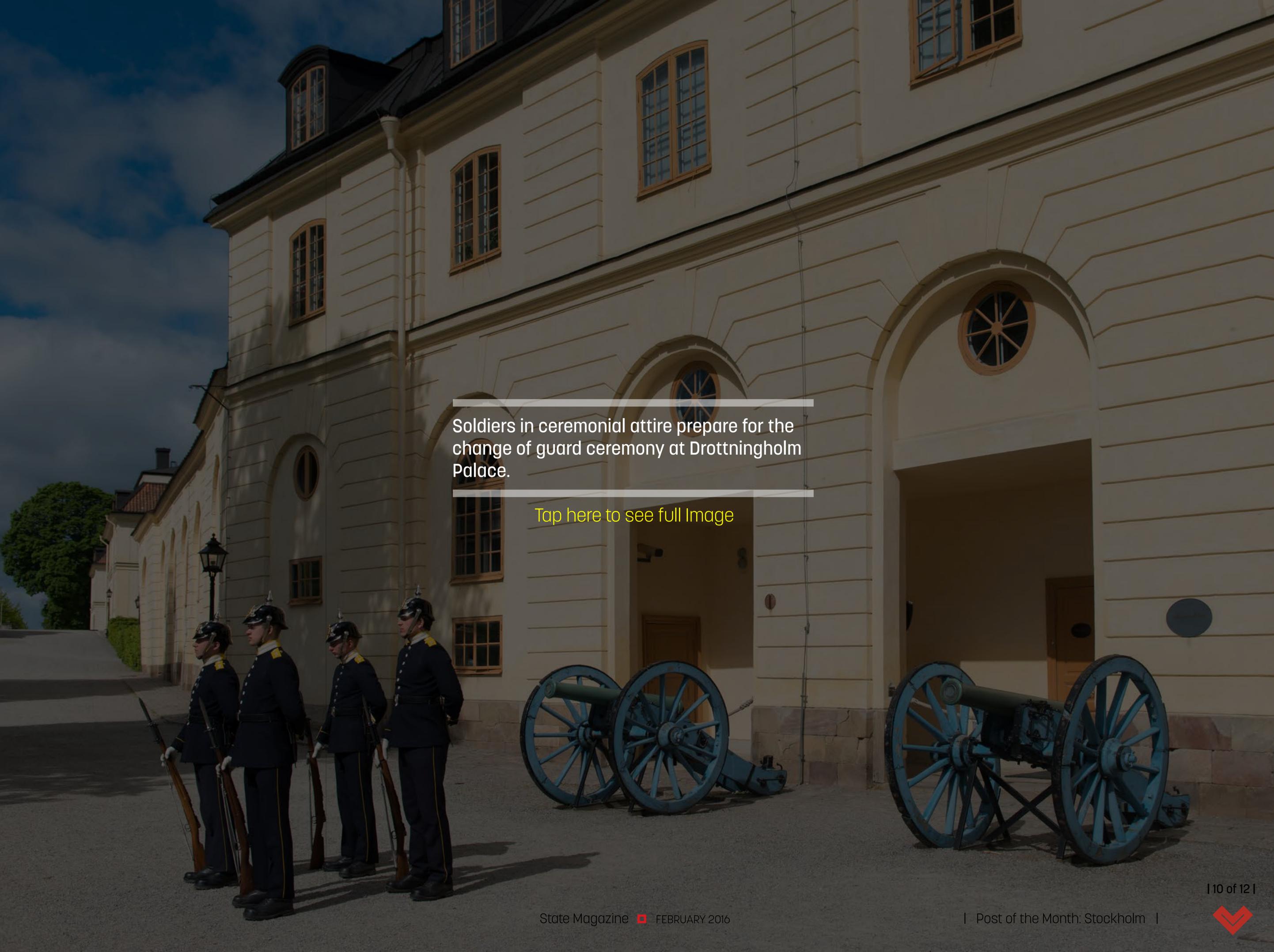
“It’s a really active environment,” said Cameron. “There are a lot of brilliant people here. For us to be relevant, we have to be part of that conversation.”

The embassy engages with the Swedes on a wide variety of topics, but has focused on a few key areas such as economic partnerships, immigration issues and global climate change. Sweden is a member of the Arctic Council, and both countries have a vested interest in policy related to the region. Reflecting this, the embassy has conducted a well-received social media campaign that uses the hash tag #oursharedarctic to highlight discussions about the joint efforts there.

One topic that has dominated the recent dialogue is security cooperation. Since the 19th century, Sweden has maintained a policy of neutrality in armed international conflicts. The nation is not a member of NATO, despite its strong international peacekeeping work and military training partnership with the United States. The embassy has worked with Swedish officials to bolster that cooperation and to identify areas where both countries’ armed forces can work together to promote regional security. Following an uptick in aggressive posturing and unannounced military incursions by neighboring Russia, the Swedes participated in the NATO Response Force for the first time in 2014.

“Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has altered the security context for all of northern Europe, including Scandinavia and Sweden,” said Brzezinski. “Sweden is directly impacted by Russian overflights without transponders, invasion of Swedish air space and other activities in the surroundings that can be attributed to Russia, with an assessment that this may be even some form of message-sending or intimidation.”





Soldiers in ceremonial attire prepare for the change of guard ceremony at Drottningholm Palace.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)





Embassy Sweden leaders meet with Swedish Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist during a U.S. congressional delegation visit.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)



Post of the Month

The potential for greater bilateral security cooperation is only one of many areas where the two nations' flourishing relationship continues to evolve. The dynamic diplomatic environment and high standard of living in Sweden make Embassy Stockholm an attractive professional opportunity for Foreign Service officers looking for a rewarding assignment.

“There are lots of issues here, and with the Swedes we really have world-class interlocutors,” said Gilchrist. “[Embassy Stockholm] is the kind of place where you can look at what you do and almost reach infinity in terms of how to develop your portfolio.”

Pedestrians enjoy a pleasant walk along the cobblestone pathway near Gamla Stan.



At a Glance

Sweden

Capital: Stockholm

Government Type:
Constitutional monarchy

Area: 450,295 sq km

Population: 9,801,616

Pop. growth rate: 0.8%
Country comparison to rest of world: 139

Languages: Swedish (official), small Sami- and Finnish-speaking minorities

Religions: Lutheran 87%, other (includes Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist) 13%

Export partners: Norway, Germany, U.K., Finland, Denmark, U.S., Netherlands

Import partners: Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, U.K., China, Russia, Finland

Currency: Swedish kronor

Internet country code: .se



* from the CIA World Factbook

[↑ Return](#)



STRATEGIC STUDIES

Department staff attend security college

By Colonel Ann Peru Knabe, dean of students and associate professor, College of International Security Affairs, National Defense University

National Defense University's newest senior-service school, at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., offers a one-year master's degree in Strategic Security Studies, and 17 Department employees have graduated from the school's College of International Security Affairs (CISA). Seven more will complete their master's degrees in June.

A 2015 grad, Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) Special Agent Christopher Bakken said the CISA program helped him gain a more strategic level of analysis. He credits CISA with having "transformed my thought process with respect to how I perceive my role as a leader in government."

Roosevelt Hall on the grounds of Fort McNair in Washington, DC, as viewed from across Washington Channel in East Potomac Park. *Photo by Mr.TinDC*



Bakken, a division chief in Security Physical Programs and Contingency Operations, said his recent development of contingency plans for a breach of the Mosul Dam in Iraq reflects how the program changed his thinking, causing him to assess “the nuts and bolts of the plan” and look at “issues like public diplomacy and emergency preparedness for the Iraqis, mitigating the long-term effect of our [U.S.] influence in the region, and broadening interagency cooperation.”

CISA’s student body is composed of military officers, interagency civilians and international students from partner nation governments, all studying strategic security challenges. Department of State attendees typically take either the International Counterterrorism Fellowship program or the South and Central Asia Security Studies program.

The International Counterterrorism program boasts more than 600 graduates from 90 countries. During their stay at CISA, counterterrorism fellows write a thesis that addresses a specific security issue relevant to their area of operations.

In contrast, the school’s South and Central Asia Security Studies program provides officers and civilians participating in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands program with theoretical, analytical and regional expertise in South and Central Asia. FSO Alan Meltzer, who graduated from that program in 2014 and is now DCM at the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, said his CISA studies were extremely relevant to his current position.

He also lauded his interaction with U.S. Armed Forces classmates, saying he gained “greater understanding how the military is structured, and how U.S. military members think.” The Central Asia coursework was especially relevant to his current position, he added, including South Asian history.

In 2015, for the first time, two Department employees entered CISA’s Joint Strategic Master of Arts program at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, N.C. There, they study side-by-side and conduct strategic-level analysis with Special Operations Forces (SOF) and the military’s civil affairs and warrant officers, tailoring their research to career-relevant areas.

One of the students, Donald Pinkston, was interested in the connection between transnational organized crime and terrorism, and law enforcement’s role in combating it. A DS special agent, Pinkston is researching how to integrate Diplomatic Security Service intelligence with information from law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Although a U.S. military veteran, Pinkston was not part of the SOF, and therefore found his recent six months at Fort Bragg to have aided his understanding of the special operations community’s work and how the SOF can assist U.S. law enforcement overseas.



A student from the Department, Michele Siders, defends her thesis on countering ISIS, at the College of International Security Affairs’ 2015 Thesis Symposium.

Photo by Katie Lewis



Pinkston's classmate, FSO Rebecca Gardner, meanwhile, said Department of State-military interaction among her classmates helped her better understand the whole-of-government approach to problem solving. Gardner, whose most recent assignment was at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, is researching interagency approaches to foreign policy challenges.

CISA's curriculum allows some flexibility, particularly in choosing one's thesis research. The program's core courses include Geostrategy; Power, Ideology and Legitimacy; Strategic Thought; and Policy Analysis and Critical Thinking. Attendees also choose concentrations based on their program of study, and produce a thesis based on their concentration. Their coursework is supplemented with government agency visits and practicums.

Department of State staff also may serve the school as visiting faculty or in leadership positions. For instance, FSO Todd Kushner is a visiting faculty member with CISA's Department of Regional and Analytical Studies, bringing 30 years of Department experience to the classroom.

"We impress upon our students that strategic leadership requires multidimensional aspects of national power, and as an experienced economic officer, I bring in experience in the economic and diplomatic dimensions," he said.

Kushner said this experience boosted his professional development, particularly through interacting with faculty members and international students, and in his work preparing for and conducting classes, lectures and workshops.

Ambassador Henry Ensher, chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. in Vienna, previously was the college's vice chancellor. He said a tour as a CISA student or faculty member helps an FSO "focus on the most pervasive set of issues affecting U.S. national security interests.

"Our national strategy is made increasingly complex by the entry of new players into the global arena, including NGOs, subnational governments and various transnational



Scholars from the College of International Security Affairs participate in a trip with staff to the Antietam Battlefield near Sharpsburg, Md., to promote learning in the Strategic Leadership Foundations Course. In preparation, they examined how the strategic ends of the U.S. changed after the battle was won and how that affected the Confederate States.

Photo by Ann Knabe

| 3 of 4 |



groups such as terrorists and criminals, as well as cyber threats posed by quasi-governmental actors,” he continued. “CISA offers an integrated look at all of these new elements and helps students work collaboratively to understand and address the issues.” He praised how students coalesce into interagency teams for problem solving but are free to “develop their own views in the thesis writing and research process, while being supported by expert faculty.”

By serving as faculty or administrators at the school, more-senior FSOs, he said, can put their career experience to use while interacting “with academic experts spanning a full range of security issues.”

More information on eligibility and admissions visit their web site. [Click here](#) ■

Course Focuses on National Security Decision making

A great way to see whether the offerings of the College of International Security Affairs (CISA) meet one’s career needs is to take its two-week course in national security. The course, at National Defense University in Washington, D.C., will be offered this year starting on April 4 and July 18.

Originally designed for senior officers in the National Guard and Reserve, the Reserve Component National Security Course (RCNSC) recently opened to interagency professionals, including Department of State employees.

The RCNSC, part of the NDU mission for nearly 40 years, lays a foundation for students preparing for or involved in joint management and staff responsibilities in a multinational, intergovernmental or joint national security setting. The curriculum consists of lectures, panel discussions, seminars, on-site visits and a simulation exercise dealing with national security policy and defense resource management.

The course is presented by members of CISA’s faculty, as well as instructors from the National War College, Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy, Information Resources Management College and other institutions.

The course concludes with a national crisis-response scenario in which those involved identify and apply the instruments of national power in support of national interests. It calls for the use of a wide range of political, economic, financial, military, diplomatic, law enforcement and social instruments of power and influence to advance national objectives, emphasizing joint and combined operations. ■

More information about the course and links to register, [click here](#).



ESTH HUBS

Officers bring environmental issues to the fore

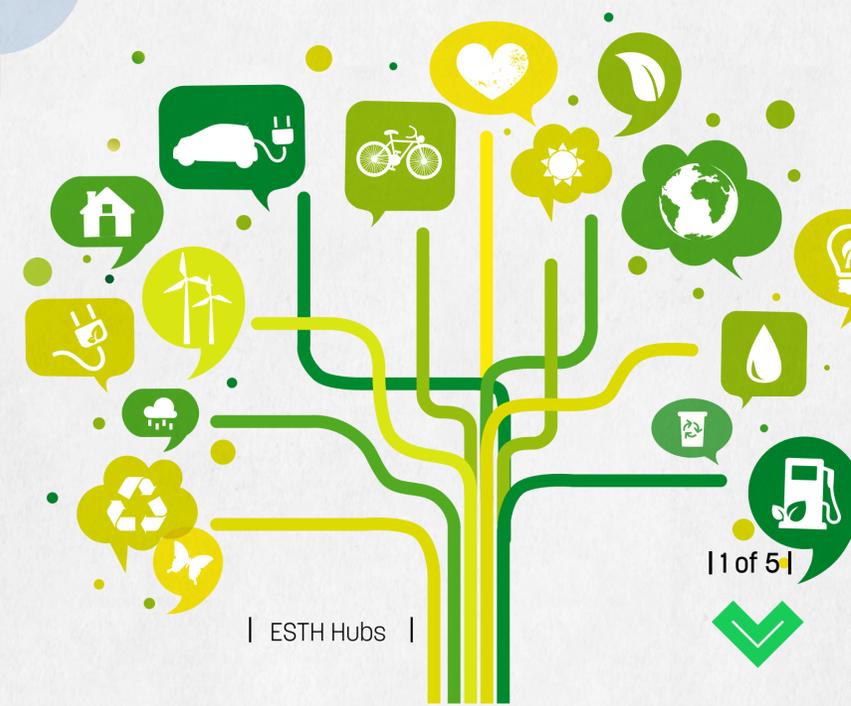
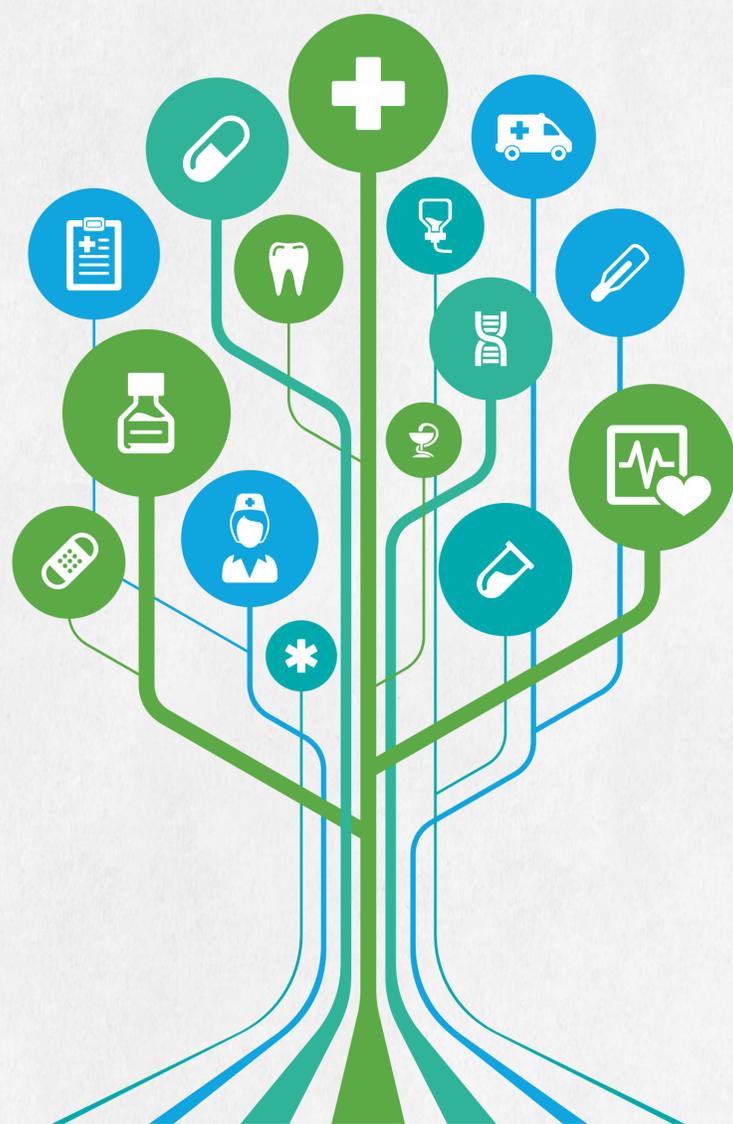
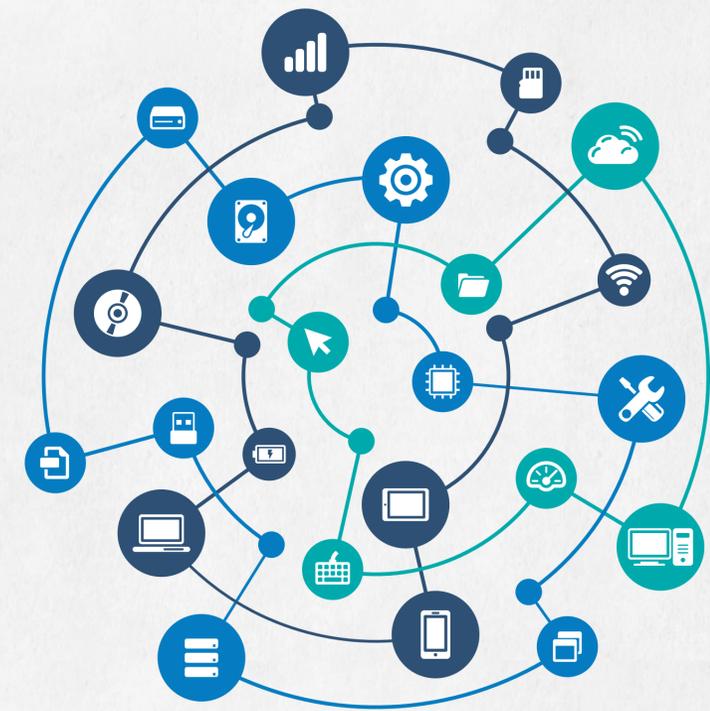
By James Swift, public diplomacy officer, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs

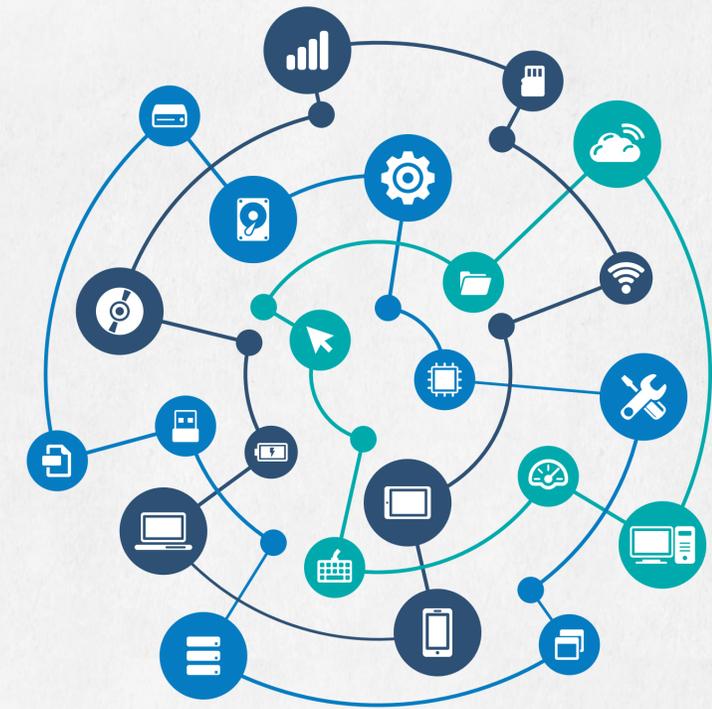
FSO Andrew Griffin turned a polluted lake into a diplomatic opening. FSO Karen Bel rode a rickety boat down the Congo River to recruit allies against wildlife poaching. Bo Gregersen accompanied diplomats and journalists to Greenland's melting ice sheet to bring attention to climate change.

These activities demonstrate the nexus of diplomacy and conservation work done by the Department's regional Environment, Science, Technology, and Health (ESTH) hubs. Established in 1997, the 12 hubs coordinate policy through some 50 ESTH officers at U.S. Embassies throughout the world. The heads of those hubs, called regional environmental officers (REOs), and their colleagues among Locally Employed (LE) staff held their most recent meeting in Washington, D.C., in November to share experiences on best practices and how to serve multiple objectives in the field.

"These are incredibly complex jobs," said Griffin, REO in the Lima, Peru, hub, which encompasses 12 countries and 15 posts. "Hub offices have to be creative and entrepreneurial in advancing a high-priority agenda." The meeting reflected the Department's focus on environmental issues, from the Paris climate talks to the annual Our Ocean conferences launched by Secretary of State Kerry. Climate change is also one of four strategic priorities in the Department's 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.

"There has never been a better time to work on ESTH issues," acting assistant secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES), Judith G. Garber, told the meeting's attendees. "The president and Secretary Kerry





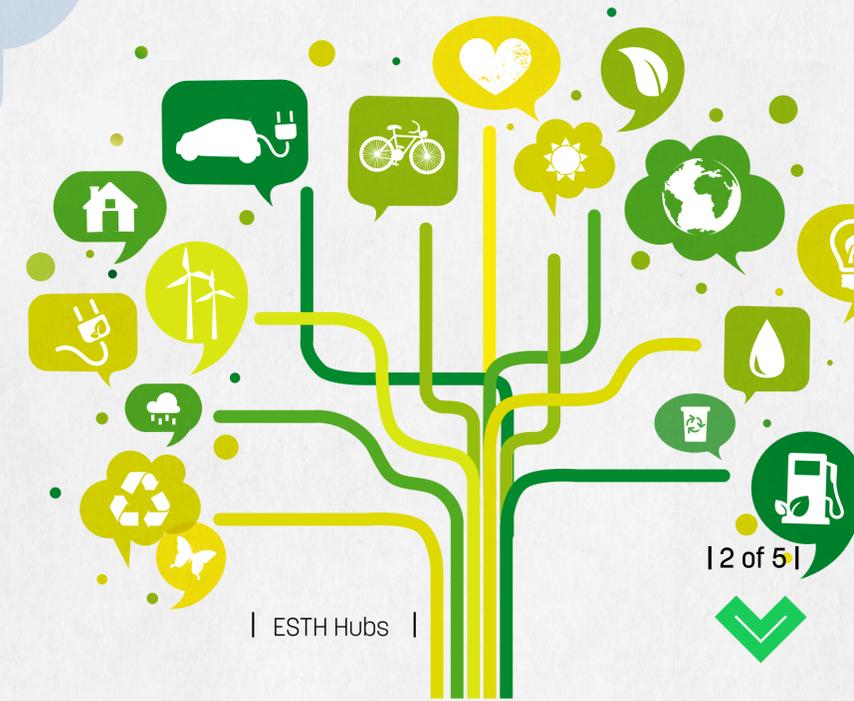
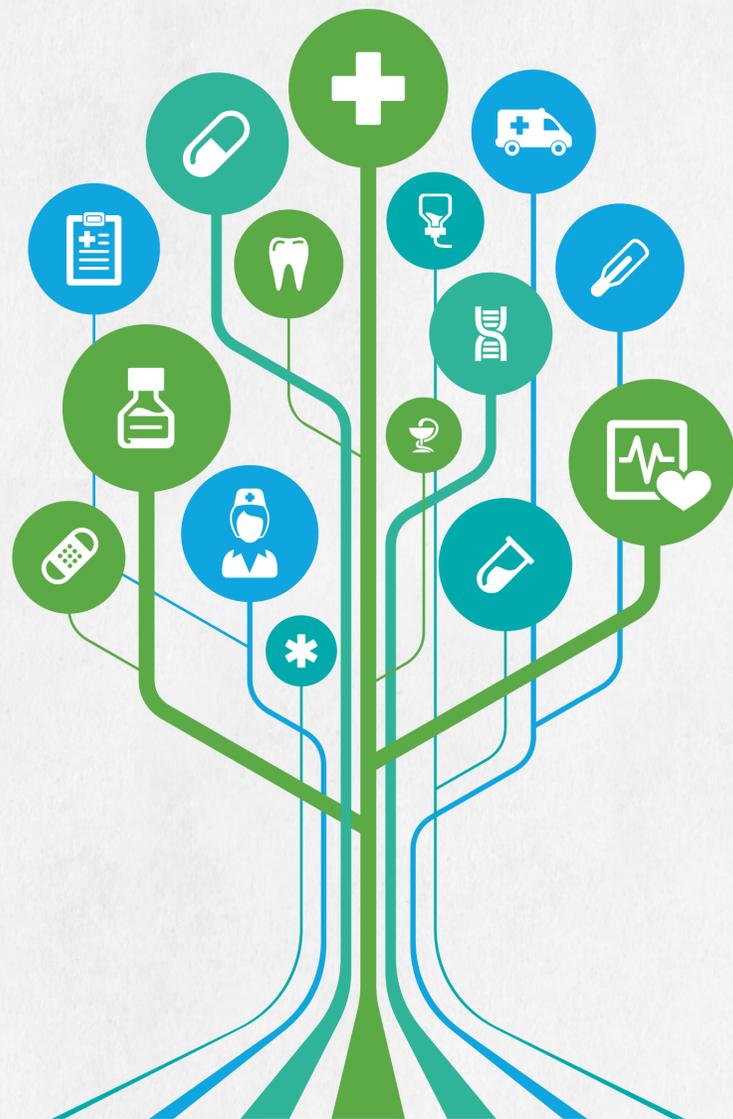
From the front, Regional Environmental Officer Karen Bel and LE staff specialist
Isaiah Tuolienue travel down the Congo River to Lac Tumba bonobo preserve.
Department of State photo

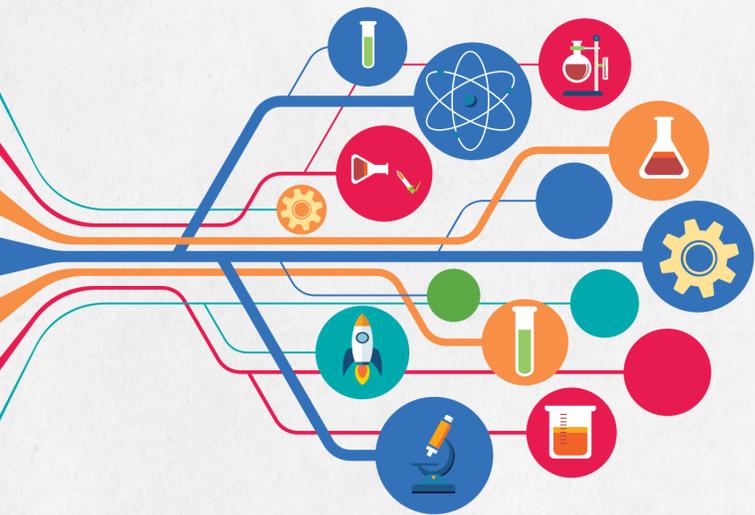
have really put these at the top of the agenda, so now is a time when you can make a difference.”

Managed by OES, the ESTH hubs work on issues that don't fit neatly inside national boundaries, such as wildlife trafficking, public health, scientific cooperation and shared waters. They serve as resources to posts on climate and other transboundary concerns, and bring regional and interagency stakeholders together to work on solutions.

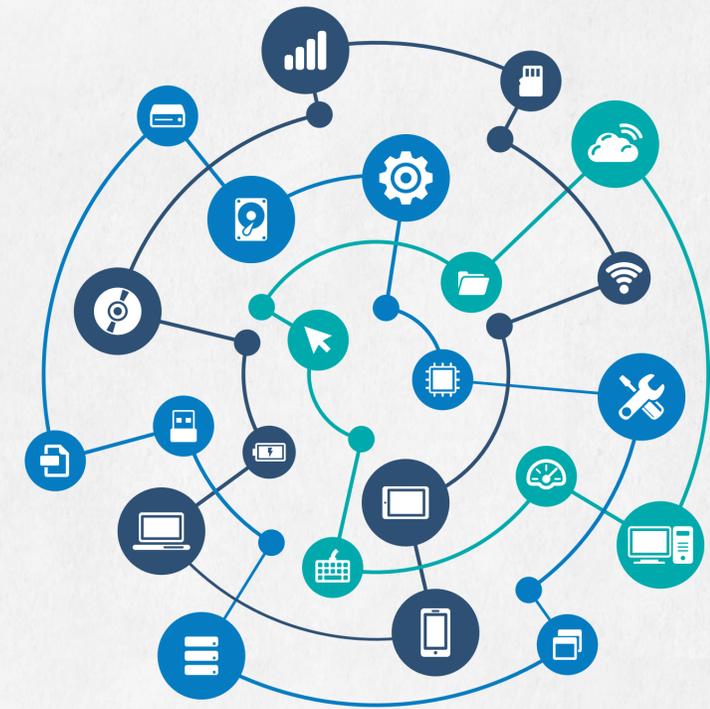
The REOs are working on the “seminal problems of our time,” said Catherine Novelli, under secretary of state for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. She praised their ability to “work together across regions and across nationalities, and across divides at the Department.”

Griffin, who was the REO in Lima for two years, brought expertise in binational management of the Great Lakes to that assignment. The ecosystem of Lake Titicaca, which is between Peru and Bolivia and is the world's highest-elevation lake, is “bordering on collapse,” he said, due to the inflow of untreated sewage and heavy metals. The pollution threatens





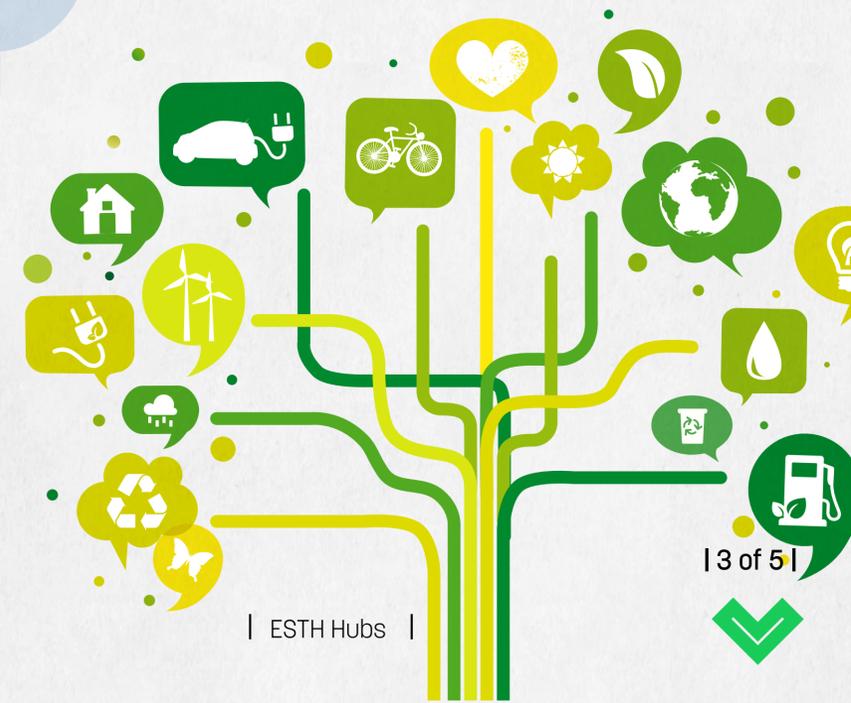
Confiscated ivory in Thailand originally bound for Laos stands ready for destruction. *Department of State photo*



plant and animal species, and communities that depend on the lake for food and jobs on both countries' shores.

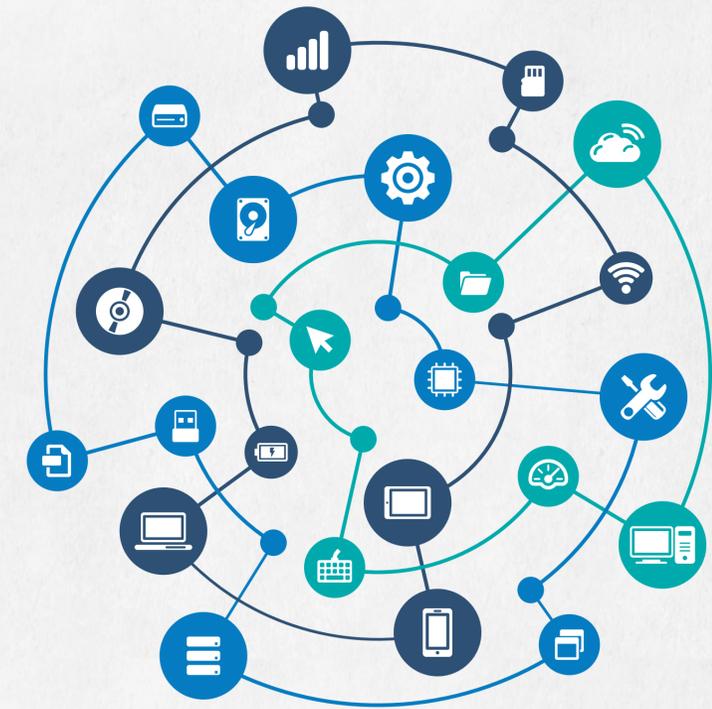
Griffin and LE staff specialists Adriana Quevedo and Ricardo Toledo partnered with the Canadian Embassy to bring top Environmental Protection Agency and Environment Canada experts to tour the affected area and meet local officials. The visits strengthened remediation plans for the lake and contributed to Embassy La Paz's efforts to build dialogue with the Bolivian government, which has had a strained relationship with the United States in recent years.

"It provided just the right opening to start working on an issue of mutual concern," Griffin said.





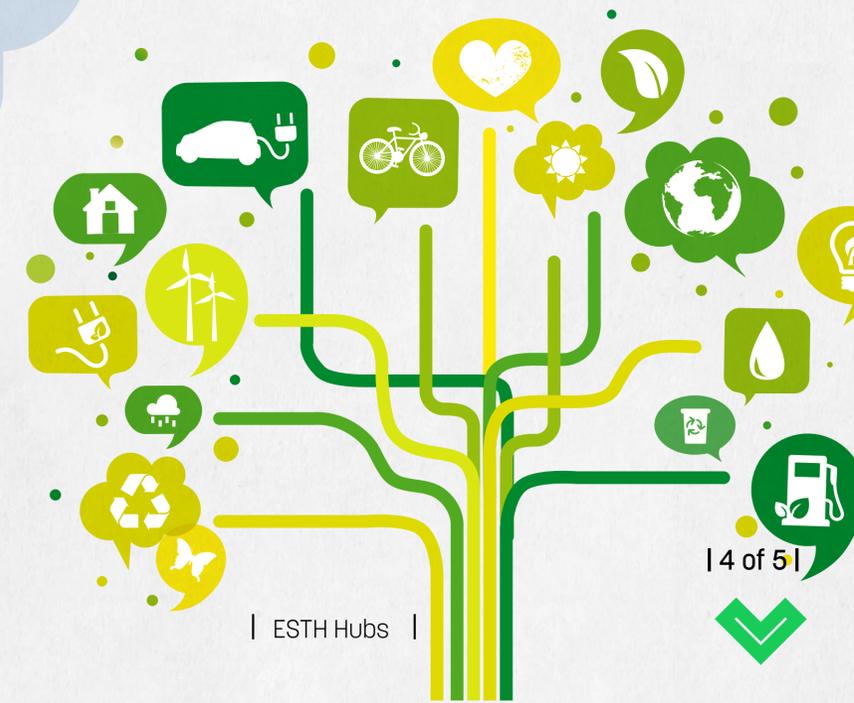
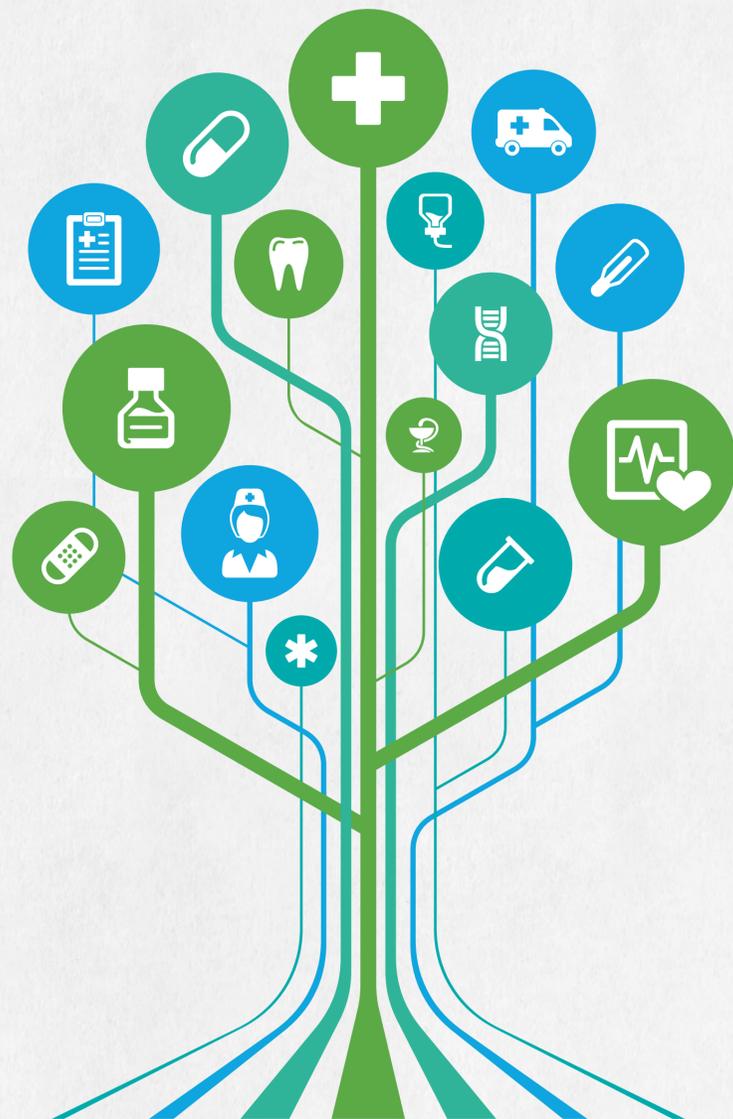
Copenhagen LE specialist Bo Gregersen sits out a storm at a camp in Greenland.
Department of State photo

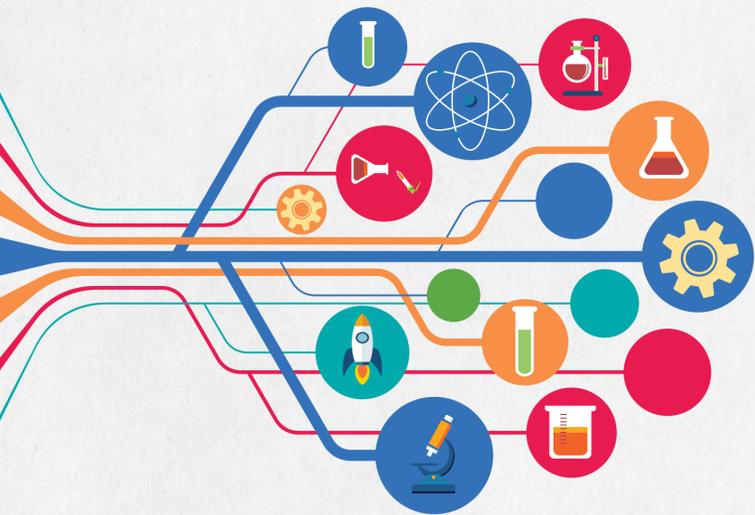


The Lima hub also facilitated a pilot project in Cusco, a city high in the Peruvian Andes, that uses field-based and satellite mapping data to improve resource management, urban resiliency and disaster preparedness. The project is part of the Secondary Cities initiative from the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues within the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), which sponsored the ESTH hub conference. INR is working with the REOs to find local partners for the mapping projects, which can help with economic development, studies of population dynamics and watershed analysis.

Water is at the heart of many ESTH projects. The trans-boundary nature of water resources and their connection with food, energy security, development and public health make these issues contentious and politically sensitive.

The ESTH hub at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, currently headed by REO Jessica Megill, has worked for more than a decade to support multicountry dialogue on the Nile Basin's water resources. From Kathmandu, Nepal, REO Ari Nathan has empowered schoolchildren in testing water quality. At the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan, REO Elizabeth Hattingh supports Arab-Israeli cooperation in regional water projects. And in Budapest, Hungary, the hub is helping to engage youth in management of the Sava River Basin.





A problem that links water issues and hubs in many parts of the world is pollution from illegal mining, which can turn a resource blessing into an environmental curse. Western Africa is so rich in gold that flecks of it can be found in the bricks of people's homes, said Karen Bel, the REO in Accra, Ghana. The low-tech way of getting the gold is to use the heavy metal mercury, a poison, to bind with the ore and then burn off the mercury with a blowtorch.

"Unfortunately, the use of mercury is really cheap," Bel said. "It's destructive to operators and destructive to the environment."

Mercury pollution can lead to severe neurological ailments such as Minamata disease. The ESTH hubs are working to build awareness of the problem and encourage local authorities to adhere to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, a treaty that aims to reduce mercury pollution.

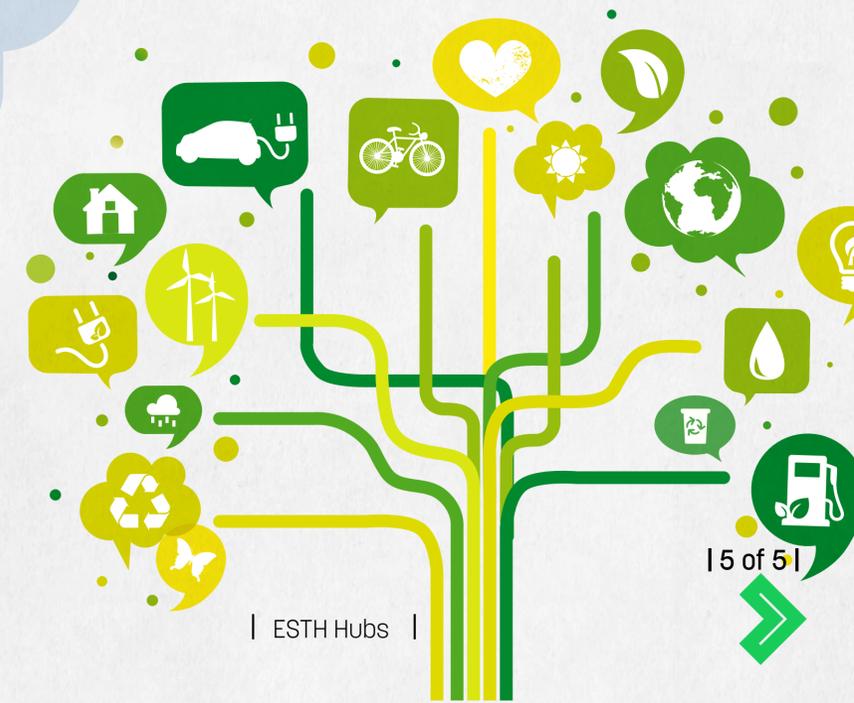
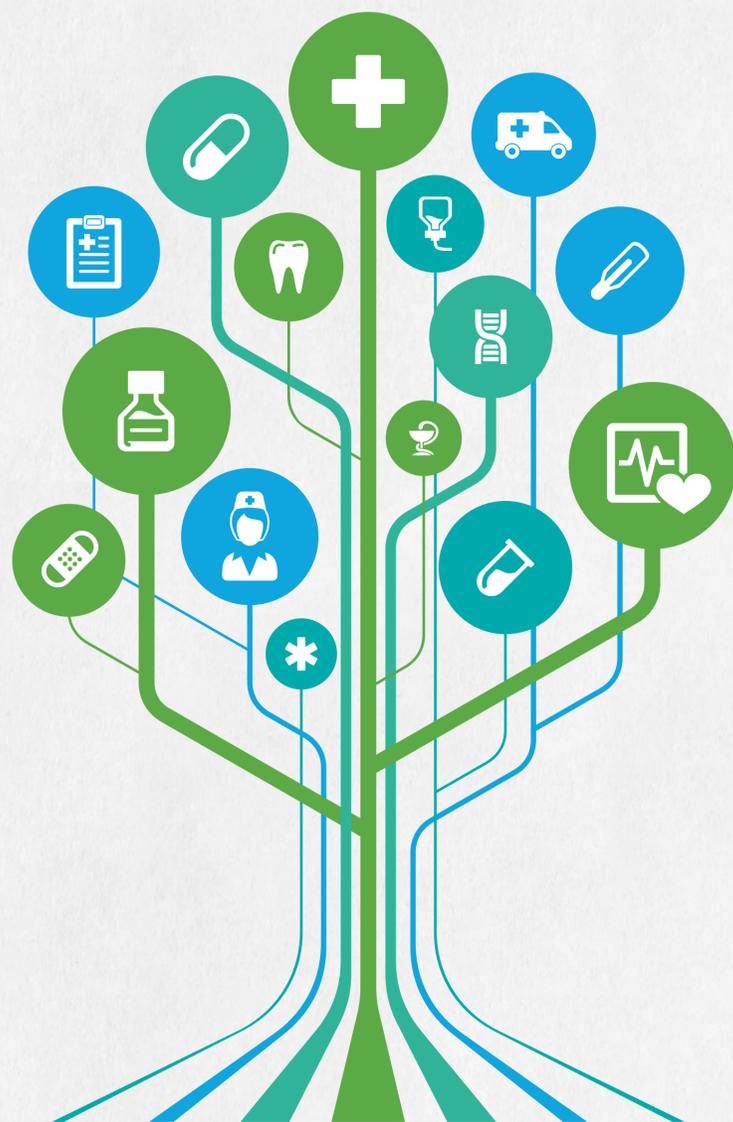
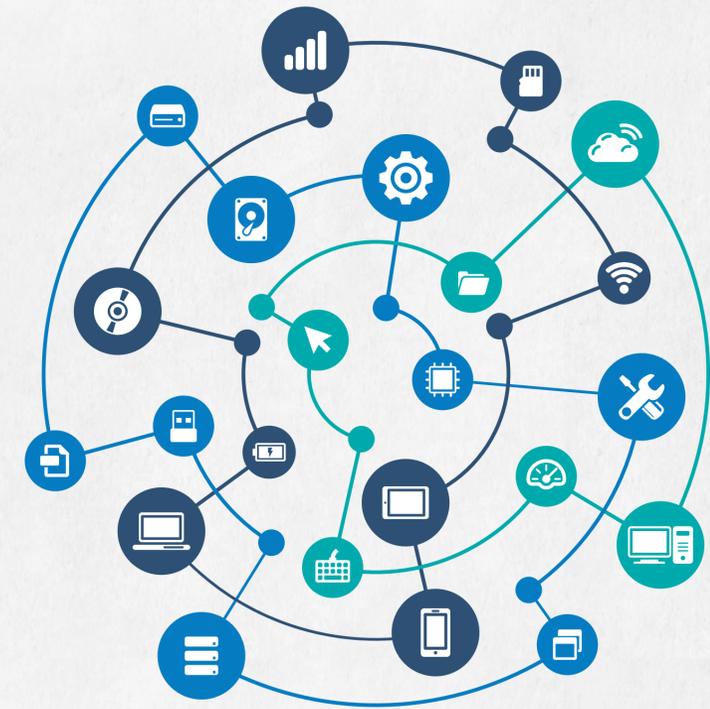
REO Bel, meanwhile, is working with partners in Central and West Africa to develop a wildlife enforcement network (WEN) to stem the poaching and trade of protected species. Recently, she took a boat down the Congo River to see a bonobo ape reserve, a trip that required her to row for shore when the engine gave out.

"You can't solve wildlife trafficking on just one side of the border; it's a cross-border problem," Bel said. "If you don't have people working together to interdict the product, it doesn't work."

The hubs are starting up and supporting WENs in Africa, the Americas and South Asia. A WEN for Southeast Asia, established a decade ago with the support of the Bangkok hub, has served as a valuable example for the start-ups, said Yeneneh Teka, an LE staff specialist at the hub in Addis Ababa.

LE staff specialists like Yeneneh attended the conference in November along with the REOs, allowing them to share information that's typically gained over a longer time span than the tenures of officers, who rotate out every few years. Bo Gregersen, an LE staff specialist who works with REO Susan Delja at the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, said the gathering helped him put names to faces and tap into resources in Washington and around the world.

"I know now who to call," he said. ■



The Faithful Few

MSG recalls evacuation of Embassy Seoul

By George Lampman, U.S. Marine Corps retiree

The 20 United States Marines who would eventually serve as the first Marine Security Guard detachment at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, Korea, were selected from a group of approximately 100, mostly veterans of World War II. They reported Nov. 10, 1948, and were trained for several weeks by Department of State security officers in Washington, D.C., then taken to a local clothing store and fitted for civilian attire.

I should know—I'm one of the detachment's two surviving members. In October, I returned to South Korea, and the visit brought to mind all the experiences of more than 65 years ago.

The reason we Marines had to be outfitted with civilian clothes was that we could not wear our uniforms where we would be going. My colleagues and I were also told not to tell anyone where we were to be assigned.

We then flew, via Hawaii and Japan, to Kimpo airfield near Seoul (today the Gimpo International Airport), arriving on Jan. 9, 1949, without uniforms, identification cards—or even dog tags.

We went to the Bando Hotel, which housed the embassy, and set to work, establishing security quickly and being rapidly accepted into the embassy community. On Nov. 10, 1949, the detachment held its first Marine Corps Ball there, with more than 200 guests.

Next came routine duties, and time passed quickly, until June 25, 1950, when at 8:45 a.m., we learned that North Korean forces had crossed the 38th Parallel at 4:00 a.m. I was sent to the main railroad station to pick up an embassy staffer arriving from Pusan (now Busan). Later, we were sent



Retired U.S. Marine Corps Warrant Officer George V. Lampman is shown in December at his residence at Greenspring Retirement Center in Springfield, Va.

Photo by Fred Lash

to alert embassy families in outlying residences that there may be an evacuation.

By the afternoon, we began burning the embassy's classified material alongside embassy staff, secretaries and code room personnel, working in a building that was exposed to danger, according to Jack C. Edwards, the only other surviving member of the MSG detachment. (Edwards, 95, now lives in Florida.)



“The ambassador himself moved to another office, as his own corner office was too exposed to random bullets.”

“Embassy staff were told to remain inside [the building] and stay off the roof because of North Korean strafing,” said Edwards. “The ambassador himself moved to another office, as his own corner office was too exposed to random bullets.”

Meanwhile, the burning of classified documents got underway, and it soon became clear what an enormous job that would be. “The Army attaché alone seemed to have tons of the material, mostly confidential technical manuals,” Edwards recalled. “It all had to be destroyed by the Marines, at first using the furnaces in the embassy basement, on a day that was already a boiling temperature of above 90 degrees.”

My assignment that morning was to destroy two of the embassy’s code machines. “With two or three armed escorts we took the machines to the sidewalk in front of the embassy and hooked them up with leads to a jeep battery,” he said. The code machines were encased in a fire-starting material called thermite. When they turned on the jeep’s engine, the thermite caught fire and the code machines began to melt.

“In about three or four minutes, all that was left were two lumps of molten metal, each about the size of a football,” Edwards recalled.

The next morning, we MSGs were destroying all embassy vehicles by firing rounds from our weapons into the engines. The large motor pool took hours to destroy. During this time, American dependents and nonessential employees assembled at the embassy for evacuation. We then escorted the evacuees’ bus convoy to Inchon, where the women and children boarded the only available ship and were sent to Japan.

On June 27, the Marines escorted some remaining embassy personnel to the Kimpo airfield, then returned to the embassy to finish burning all classified material and destroying switchboards and code machines.

That night, Edwards served as Ambassador John J. Muccio’s

bodyguard when the ambassador departed Seoul. “As we were driving south, we were ordered to pick up a passenger near the government buildings,” Edwards told me. The passenger was South Korean President Syngman Rhee, who had ordered most of his staff to evacuate the city that same day. As they left Seoul, two North Korean fighter aircraft strafed their vehicle with machine guns. “We all exited the car very rapidly and dove into the ditch of a nearby rice paddy. We were pretty muddy when we got back into the vehicle, but were able to make it all the way to Pusan.”

Meanwhile, the rest of the MSGs and I were ordered that day to drive to Kimpo, where a plane was to land and take us out of the country. We navigated the streets of Seoul, crossed the Han River Bridge (blown up the following day) and crept along the crowded road to Yong Dong Po among a throng of refugees heading south. At the airfield, a large group of non-Korean nationals were milling around, also awaiting evacuation, and we kept close to our vehicles in case we might have to go somewhere else.

Eventually, a lone C-54 cargo aircraft landed and taxied toward us—the last plane that was to leave Korea. We boarded it, along with a few embassy staff members, and the plane soon became so crowded that some Marines were standing in the navigator’s compartment.

Then the pilot came on the intercom to warn that the plane was overloaded and the crew chief should throw out anything that wasn’t nailed down. Thus, a stream of suitcases, boxes, bags, survival gear and even weapons were tossed onto the taxiway as we departed.

And if we weren’t motivated enough to get out of there in a hurry, the war suddenly made itself known through the sound of machine-gun fire coming from the airfield’s perimeter.

We’d escaped by the skin of our teeth. ■

FLO PAVES THE WAY

Helps EFMs seek federal employment

By Julie Washburn, employment officer, Family Liaison Office

As they accompany Foreign Service employees from post to post, many Foreign Service family members seek employment that is both professionally engaging and portable. When posted to the United States, some family members qualify for noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) for federal positions due to their prior work in a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

The Bureau of Human Resources' Family Liaison Office (FLO) survey results over the past four decades consistently show that family member employment is one of the top three concerns for employees and family members. But, as recently as the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were few U.S. government positions overseas that were open to family members. Since then, due in part to FLO's advocacy, it's become common for family members to apply for local positions when overseas, and those who find work inside the mission get to build on that experience on their return to the United States. A 1982 Executive Order was an early step forward for family member employment, providing eligible family members (EFMs) with NCE if they worked for 18 months in overseas missions. The current version of the Order requires 52 weeks of satisfactory service at an overseas post in a family member appointment. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR 315.608) has the specific rules on the length of time and requirements to gain NCE.



FLO staff members brief hiring managers on hiring family members with NCE. From right are Bert Curtis, Julie Washburn, Amy Canby and Chris Baumgarten.

Photo by Daniel Schwartz



Logistics Management Specialist Grant Hayne earned NCE status serving at Embassy Mexico City.

Photo by Daniel Schwartz

FLO is getting the word out about what family members can offer a federal agency or department, and how quickly they can be hired. FLO is educating the managers who do hiring on the benefits of hiring EFMs who have NCE, as these workers often also have professionalism, advanced degrees and a security clearance that simply needs revalidation.

One aspect of this initiative is FLO's NCE web portal, which has information for State and non-State hiring managers on hiring family members with NCE. It offers a list of frequently asked questions and a tutorial on the federal hiring process, including information on how to demonstrate NCE eligibility when applying for positions on USAJobs.com.

In cooperation with the Office of Civil Service Human Resources Management (CSHRM), FLO has briefed more than 80 hiring managers and human resource specialists at the Departments of State and Education, and at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FLO has also briefed Foreign Service human resources officers as they get ready for overseas tours, so that they can apprise EFMs of the benefits of earning NCE. FLO also fields questions from hiring managers regarding the Civil Service hiring process for family members with NCE.

The Network listserv is FLO's main vehicle to disseminate federal job vacancies to family members, many of whom have NCE. Applying to a vacancy on The Network is one of the fastest ways family members can connect with hiring managers and react to vacancy announcements.

FLO is also working on a project with the Human Resources Shared Services Special Employment Unit in Charleston, S.C., that will give hiring managers more opportunities to connect with family members. The coming database of family members with NCE and/or Civil Service employees with reinstatement eligibility will allow hiring managers to request a competency-based list of potential applicants who are returning to the U.S. or are already here. FLO will release more information on this initiative this spring.

Sharon Hardy, chief of the Office of Career Development and Training, attributes the success of the Foreign Service Institute's Transition Center, where she was deputy, to hiring qualified family members. "The Transition Center's mission is to help prepare employees and their families for transition. Who better to help us than family members?" she asked.

USAID also supports the hiring of EFMs, and its new EFM Unit promotes family members' awareness of special hiring authorities, including NCE.

Grant Hayne, a Department of State logistics management specialist, earned NCE while at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City's General Services Office, on a family member appointment. Before heading back to Washington, D.C., he networked with his contacts and gained a federal job, for which he said having NCE was critical. He advises family members that each NCE earned overseas can be used once at the Department of State for a career-conditional position.

Another employee with NCE, administrative officer Sandra Oswald, earned the eligibility while at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia. She advises EFMs to start looking for jobs before they depart post for a domestic assignment. "I'm really grateful that I got it [NCE] and that I used it to initiate a new career," she said.

FLO continues to do outreach and support for family member employment. "Our job in FLO is to ensure that hiring managers and specialists across agencies and bureaus understand the advantages of using this special hiring authority and understand the ease with which they can hire an eligible family member," said FLO Director Susan Frost.

Hiring managers, HR specialists and EFMs may contact FLO for information on NCE and on other family member employment services. More information is also available by email from FLOAskEmployment@state.gov or by visiting www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo. Other information sources include the NEC Web page; The Network listserv; and FLONetwork@state.gov, where one can register or post a vacancy. At USAID, information is available by emailing HCTM-EFMCoordinator@usaid.gov. ■

Writers' Haven

American Corner meetings attract youth

By Dr. Joe Christopher, cultural affairs assistant,
U.S. Consulate in Hyderabad

The city of Hyderabad, India, has thousands of restaurants, museums, movie theaters and cafés but few spaces for artistic and literary gathering and idea sharing. Since 2014, however, the U.S. Consulate in Hyderabad has held monthly meetings of a writers' group at its American Corner (AC), providing space for nascent authors to spark their creativity.

The first session, in October 2014, involved Dr. Prakash Kona, a professor of English literature at the English and Foreign Languages University and an acclaimed writer. He brought with him a former student, Priscilla Jolly, who was then teaching locally. Jolly, Kona and Clement Babu, the AC's coordinator, next invited young writers from several colleges and universities to attend the inaugural session. Most writers in the resulting Hyderabad Young Creative Writers' Group are under the age of 30, and many are engaged in literary studies at India's best universities. Some are pursuing doctoral degrees while others work as teachers, journalists, freelance writers, software engineers and managers. They include budding novelists, essayists, poets and short story writers. The group meets to discuss, critique and edit each other's work, with each attendee bringing a piece of his or her writing.

Though the writers can write on any topic, Babu often suggests and encourages the writers to work on themes, such as inclusive growth or environmentalism. In February 2015, the group poets commemorated African-American History Month by taking their themes from America's "beat poets." One short story writer penned a creative non fiction piece inspired by the work of Toni Morrison and highlighting the situation of India's displaced Adivasi families. In March, to commemorate Women's History Month, the public affairs section hosted Carolyn Danckaert and Aaron Smith—the co-founders of *amightygirl.com*, the company that hosts the website with the world's largest collection of books and movies dedicated to the raising of smart, confident and courageous girls, in Hyderabad. Carolyn and Aaron had a lengthy interaction with the writers' group. The discussion focused on narratives featuring strong women protagonists. At that meeting, attendees also discussed the narrative techniques writers need to use to make their work more inclusive. At another meeting, George Bishop, an English language specialist in India, read excerpts from his second novel, "Letter to a Daughter."

In April, the writers' meeting focused on environmentalism for Earth Day and invited Pankaj Sekhsaria, the environmentalist and author of the novel *Last Wave: An Island Novel*, to read from that book. The author, who also moderated the meeting, spoke of his experience as an author and emphasized the need to conduct research and plan the writing process.

Beyond offering writers a place to interact, the group provides them with feedback and connections. In fact, one attendee said the meetings' best aspect is that it "provides young writers with an audience," letting young writers "meet new people, and discover their strengths." Another attendee, Krishna Kanchith, who has attended every single meeting, said the best thing about them is that "we don't follow the conventional 'workshop' style." He said the group has helped him experiment with writing styles.

A third attendee, Kona Prakash, noted how writing in isolation requires discipline and willpower: "Having a forum to discuss shared concerns about the craft is one of the best parts about the meet," he said, adding that the group has helped participants to write regularly.

The group will hold a writers' workshop this summer and will collate and publish participants' works in 2016.

Having hosted the group for more than 13 months, the American Corner has facilitated the emergence of another group, this also composed of young people but those more broadly interested in literature and art. The Forum for Arts and Ideas hopes to meet monthly as well, to discuss issues pertinent to the city's youth. The AC has thus become a quiet and dedicated place bringing people together, a retreat in this bustling city for aspiring writers and thinkers. ■



Several writers gathered in August after their monthly meeting at the American Corner. They are from left, Priscilla Jolly, Devaleena Kundu, Kalyani Vaishnavi and Aayothi Sengupta.

Photo by Mohammed Suheil

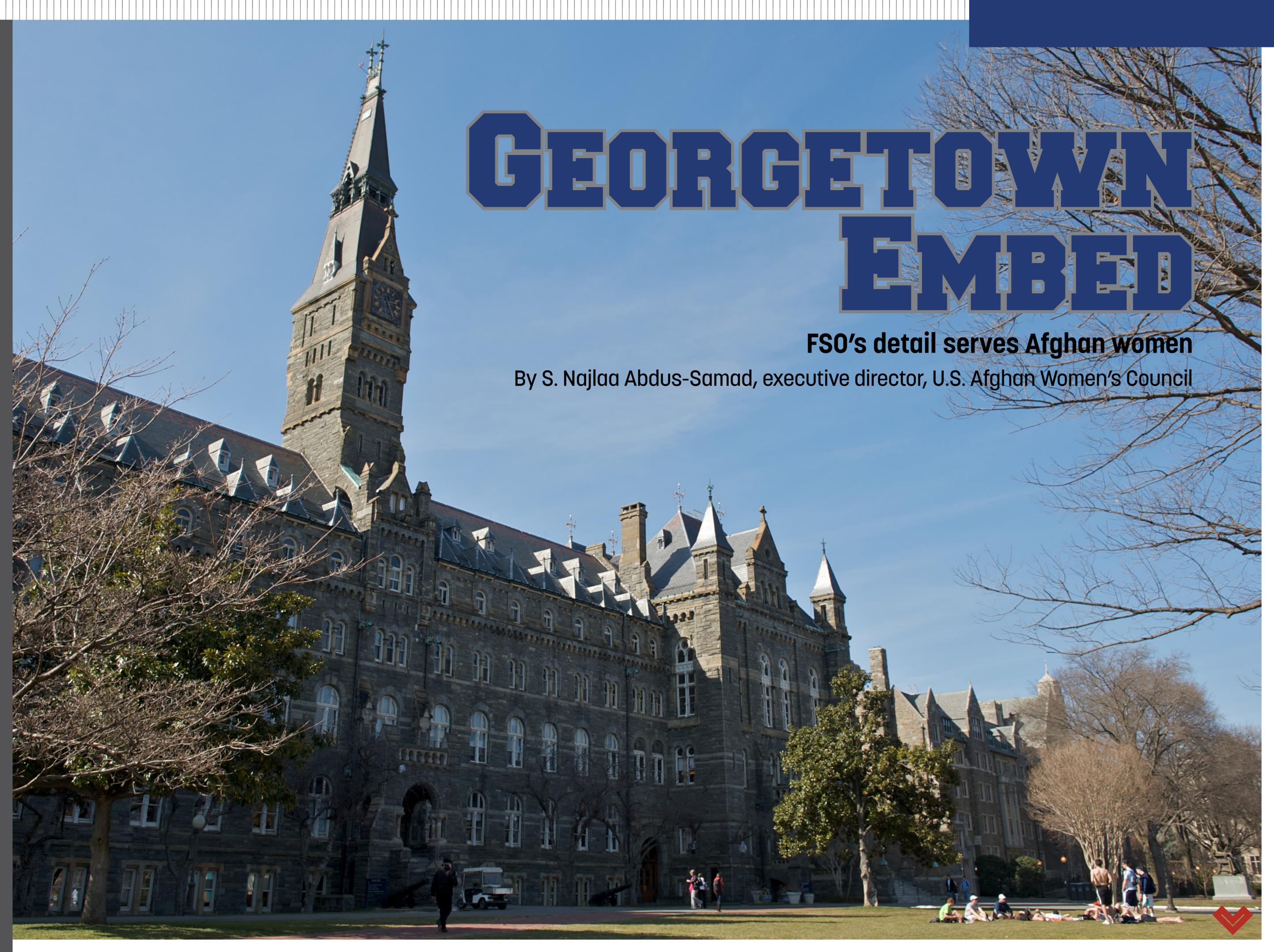


The writers have just finished reading their works at a meeting in December 2014.

Photo by Clement Babu

A bustling street market stands in front of one of Hyderabad's most iconic monuments, Charminar.

Photo by Ryan Dearth



GEORGETOWN EMBED

FSO's detail serves Afghan women

By S. Najlaa Abdus-Samad, executive director, U.S. Afghan Women's Council



As an FSO coming home after consular and public diplomacy tours at several posts, I signed on in September 2014 to serve as executive director of the U.S. Afghan Women's Council (USAWC). This coincided with the formation of a new Afghan unity government.

In my new role, I've been well positioned to chart and engage these political shifts in real time while supporting the council's many projects in Afghanistan.

The council was originally housed at the Department of State and employs a bipartisan, inclusive approach to supporting women in Afghanistan and their communities. It moved to Georgetown University in 2008, where it has focused on aiding Afghan women in the fields of health, education, leadership and economic empowerment.

The move to Georgetown was facilitated by the Department's creation of this one-to-two-year detail position for an FSO as executive director,



2015 Rising Afghan Women Leaders Initiative attendees pose for a group photo at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, D.C.

Photo by S. Najlaa Abdus-Samad



thus helping bridge the divides between government agencies, NGOs, universities and the private sector. Council Vice Chair Phyllis Magrab strongly supports having an FSO embedded in her team, because he or she brings “a foreign affairs lens to the work we do, which complements the academic and social sciences perspective of our center at Georgetown.”

One of my first goals in 2014 was to secure the participation of the new Afghan administration. Thus, the council’s new honorary chair is the first lady of Afghanistan, Rula Ghani. As executive director, one of my main responsibilities is to incorporate input from all the council’s leadership—from the U.S. and Afghan first ladies to the council’s governmental and academic co-chairs in the U.S. and Afghanistan, and the council members, who represent public-private partnerships. This ensures all stakeholder voices are heard in the decision-making process.

In some ways, this detail is quite unique, blending academia, diplomacy, management and ingenuity. Having worked in public health research with a focus on health disparities in New York City, I was intrigued by the chance to return to a college campus. It’s been good to be back in an academic setting with all the perks (quiet office with a window) and none of the hassles (no competition for tenure). For instance, I’ve had the opportunity to attend the Georgetown Leadership Academy and use that experience to enhance my ability to administer the council’s leadership program.

My other work has been a mix of managerial and academic. I’ve coordinated the 2015 annual USAWC meeting with the George W. Bush Presidential Center and the council’s stakeholders. On the academic side, I presented at the Georgetown University Women’s Center and the Foreign Service Institute, and conducted liaison work with Washington, D.C., think tanks and NGOs on issues related to Afghanistan, gender parity and foreign policy.

As a public diplomacy officer, communication skills come in handy in crafting and updating the council’s online and in-person presence. In this, I’ve had plenty of opportunities for professional and personal growth. In the summer of 2015, I faced the steep learning curve of working with U.S. legislators and their teams on Capitol Hill to present the council’s observations from members’ work on the ground in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is in transition and its relationships with the international community are evolving, so this has been an unpredictable year.

Next year, on behalf of the council, I will partner with the Freer and Sackler Galleries on programs for an exhibit called “Turquoise Mountain:



Artists Transforming Afghanistan” that will showcase the resilience and talent of the Afghan people, and highlight the U.S. and international community’s continued commitment to the country. In 2016, I’ll be organizing the annual gathering of council members from around the United States and Afghanistan to review the council’s 2015 efforts and prepare for the future. I’m also coordinating the council’s participation in the launch of a book that discusses Afghanistan by former first lady Laura Bush, who is the council’s founding honorary chair. If there’s one example of the council’s good work, it’s the Rising Afghan Women Leaders Initiative (RAWLI). To develop Afghan women as leaders, USAWC launched RAWLI in 2014. RAWLI’s Kabul-based partners at the International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development (ICAWED), located within the American University of Afghanistan, have since pilot-tested this leadership training in Afghanistan. In 2015, I helped continue this partnership and expand training through a new cohort of trainers. Some of the project’s alumni have already moved on to advanced leadership positions in government and continue to contribute to this circle of leadership mentors.

A key part of any job is to secure and ensure ongoing interest and funding for core projects. Fortunately, the council has a strong legacy of public-private partnerships, led by support from the Department of State and



U.S.-Afghan Women's Council banner displays both nations' flags.

Photo by Georgetown University



USAID. The Goldman Sachs Foundation has also been a leading private funder of RAWLI, and the council's members willingly contribute their time, expertise and finances.

This has been a solid tour. Working on issues of human equality with a backdrop of ongoing, multilayered conflict can be difficult terrain. The support of an ever-expanding circle of colleagues and allies in Afghanistan and America has made the job extremely rewarding. I am energized to return to the Department next year, taking with me the friendships and lessons I've learned. Most of all, I am grateful to be part of a Department of State legacy that continues to stand by the women and people of Afghanistan who are determined to pursue progress and prosperity for their families and their country.

More information on the council's activities is online. The council is also on Facebook and Twitter. FSOs from any cone interested in a multi faceted challenge in an academic setting can bid on this detail via FSBid. Those with other questions can contact me at usawc.georgetown@gmail.com. ■



The U.S.-Afghan Women's Council's 2015 Annual Meeting at the Bush Presidential Center in Dallas was attended by first ladies Rula Ghani and Laura Bush, seated, third and fourth from right.

Photo courtesy of the Bush Presidential Center



Coping in Stressful Environments: FSI focuses on resilience

By Dr. Sam Thielman,
senior advisor for resilience

Experts define resilience as the ability to do well during periods of adversity and to bounce back after hard times or traumatic events. Since foreign policy development and implementation is stressful and many Department employees must operate in austere and high-threat environments, fostering employees' resilience is critical to achieving U.S. foreign policy goals.

In 2014, after 16 years as a regional medical officer, I embarked on a special assignment at the Foreign Service Institute as the mental health subject matter expert for FSI's Resilience Project. As part of a team of four with the proper training, knowledge of mental health and "boots on the ground" experience, we developed a synergy around the concepts of promoting resilience throughout the Department and foreign affairs community and put cutting-edge resilience training in place in FSI's curriculum.

I first became interested in resilience and related issues 10 years ago while working with FSI's Transition Center to develop the high-stress assignment out-briefing program (MQ 950 and MQ 951). More than 3,700 people have attended this out-briefing, learning how to succeed in difficult assignments and the pitfalls those in such assignments face. The high-stress out-briefing program made it clear that, as an organization and as individuals, we must promote resilience during times of difficulty and stress.

Over the last several years, FSI has increasingly recognized and supported the use of resilience strategies to enhance workforce productivity and innovation. FSI's Resilience Program emphasizes that people can thrive during times of stress. For example, resilient people take responsibility for their own emotional well being. They pay attention to physical, mental and



emotional discipline. They often identify and emulate resilient mentors. They are altruistic, with many drawing on personal religious and spiritual resources. There are many other resilience factors too, and while resilient people do not always have all of the characteristics noted, people can choose to focus on and develop resilience, not simply presume it arises from fixed personality traits.

The resilience team frequently travels to work directly with colleagues serving in challenging environments. For me, the most memorable experience on this score was the program we put together for the U.S. Embassy in Juba, South Sudan, in March 2015. FSI sent a team composed of the transition center Director, a USAID social worker, the post's medical provider and I. We conducted a four-day resilience training with more than 70 Locally Employed staff members and U.S. government employees from the region. We also provided clinical care to those who needed it.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Deputy Mission Director and training participant Alfreda Brewer commented that

the combined State/AID team approach was a great idea and hoped it would be replicated in other places. All of us at FSI's Resilience Project share this hope and encourage individuals and offices across the Department to take advantage of this program's resources.

The Resilience Project is just one element of FSI's dedication to driving forward with innovative training and collaboration across disciplines. "Fostering resilience" is also featured in the Department's new leadership and management principles as a key component to encouraging the highest degree of morale and productivity. If you haven't already done so, consider enrolling in one of FSI's courses on resilience (such as MQ502 "Resilience Strategies for Success Overseas" or MQ500 "Encouraging Resilience in Foreign Service Children") and consider how you might benefit from this well-grounded approach to your career. For more information, check out FSI's blog on fostering resilience. ■



Post Holds African Dress Day



Staff of the U.S. Embassy in Dakar, Senegal, show their fashion flair during the post's African Dress Day in mid-November. The event, with more than 100 employees participating, was hosted by the Community Liaison Office and the LE Staff committee. Ambassador James Zumwalt said he enjoyed seeing so many employees wearing outfits from prior postings such as Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Togo—as well as Senegal. ■

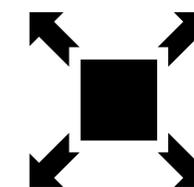
Photo by Craig Gerard



Ethics Answers



Retirements



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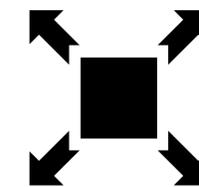


Embassy Sponsors Visit to Lebanon



Leila Buck, a Lebanese-American actress and educator, speaks to attendees at a free public performance of the one-woman show in which she portrays her grandmother, a Lebanese immigrant to the United States. Under the auspices of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Buck visited Lebanon from Nov. 8–10, for activities involving youth on such topics as women’s empowerment and their role in shaping art and society in the Middle East. ■

Photo by Shadi Jaber



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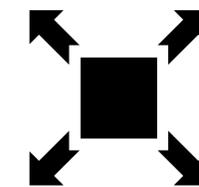


More than \$1.8M Raised for CFC



Megan Nguyen, not fully pictured, watches as her daughter Maeve sneaks her golf ball into the hole during the annual Office of Resource Management and Organizational Analysis mini-golf fundraiser for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). This year's outing had a flight theme, with holes named "Rainbow Ramp," "Airplane Lane" and "Outer Space Place," and raised more than \$500. By mid-January, the Department had raised \$1,870,521 in the CFC fund drive. ■

Photo by Lindsay Huntemann



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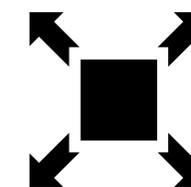


'Gator Parade Promotes Community



Basia Yeziorna puts the finishing touches on the alligator float sponsored by the health unit at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul for the post's annual day-before-Thanksgiving 'Gator Parade. The parade brings the embassy community together for a friendly competition to kick off the holiday season. This year, the first prize went to the regional security office's gator float, which highlighted post's recent switch from bottled to tap water as a greening and emergency preparedness measure. ■

Photo by Musadeq Sadeq



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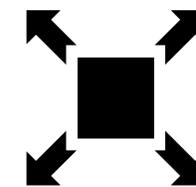
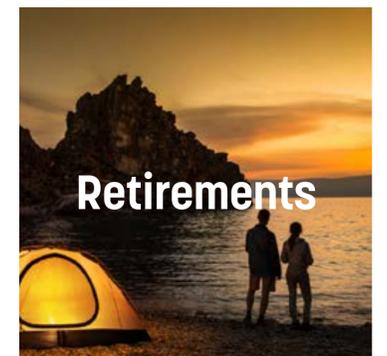


Ethics Answers

Q: My office recently hired Joe, who comes to us from the private sector. Joe does a great job and like a few of us is a huge basketball fan. This morning, Joe emailed a basketball bracket listing to a few of us in the office, in preparation for March Madness. Joe wants us to put in \$10 to enter the winner-take-all pool. Joe used his Department email address to circulate the bracket, but did so long before business hours. I told Joe that, as government employees, we were not allowed to use our Department email addresses for this type of activity. Was I right?

A: Yes, you were right. In order to play, an employee would need to put \$10 into the pool, and whoever picks the winning team will win the pool at the season's end. Even if an employee were an expert on this season's basketball teams, this is still a game of chance for money and is therefore considered to be gambling, which is prohibited on U.S. government property. By using his Department email address, Joe effectively used U.S. government property to gamble; he should immediately recall the emails. If Joe and a few co-workers wanted to do this as a completely voluntary, outside, personal activity, that would not be prohibited by these rules. However, no activity involving the pool should take place at work and no Department email addresses should be used.

Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov.



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Retirements

Civil Service

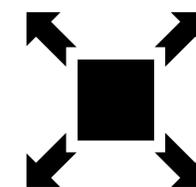
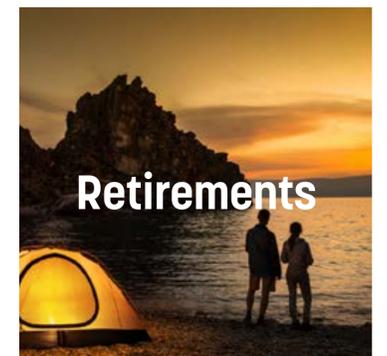
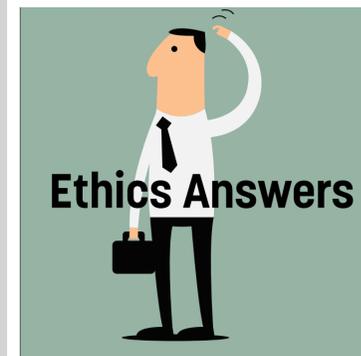
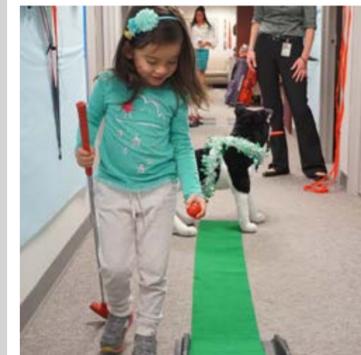
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 Blanding, Donna J.
 Burns, Mark
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 Curtis, Lucia D.
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 Marshall, Walter C.
 Netherton, Martha J.
 Porter, M. Charlene
 Pratt, Elizabeth J.
 Robinson, Tracy Cooper
 Sayasithsena, Douangkeo
 Watson, Yvonne Marie
 Weech, William A.

Foreign Service

Asquino, Mark L.
 Baldwin, Steven
 Ball, Susan M.
 Bergstrom, Georgia K.

Bohnet, Anne Virginia
 Boswell, Gary P.
 Carter III, Phillip
 Davis, Elizabeth W.
 Delisi, Scott H.
 Foreman, Gilda A.
 Genco, Margaret L.
 Green IV, Wesley
 Hagopian, Patti
 Hartman, Karen P.
 Hession Jr., Leo J.
 Hutchinson, Arthur E.
 Ingalls, Joanne
 Ingmanson, Katherine M.
 Jarvis Sr., Karl J.
 Johnsen, Mark S.
 Julian, Wayne E.
 Kane, Eileen H.
 Kennedy, Marilyn
 Kerchoff, Steven P.
 Krajeski, Thomas C.
 Levine, Jeffrey D.
 Major, Laurie M.
 Martschenko, Alexander

Mbenna, Vella G.
 McCracken, James E.
 McGowan, Timothy R.
 McNab-Visick, Christine J.
 Munroe, Glen A.
 Pelphrey, James D.
 Phillips, Virginia D.
 Sauer, Frank E.
 Sawyer, Mark A.
 Simpson, Richard G.
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 Thielman, Samuel B.
 Townsend, Jeanne C.
 Villalona, Mercedes E.
 Wakahiro, Gary S.
 Whitehead, David Richard
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Todd C. Chapman

U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador

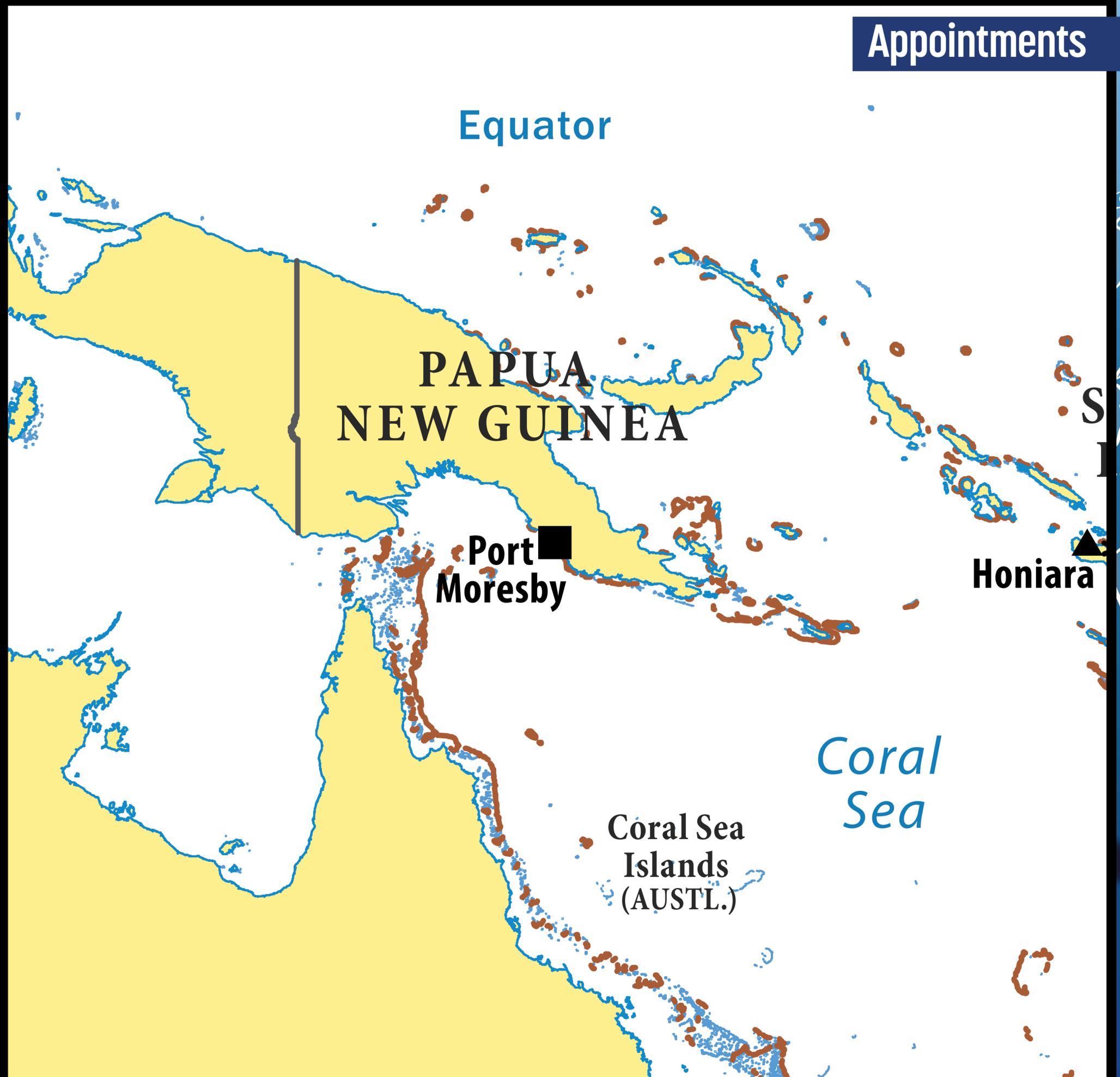
Todd C. Chapman (SFS) of Texas is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador. Most recently, he was acting assistant secretary in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. Previously, he was DCM in in Brasilia, senior deputy coordinator for economic affairs in Kabul, chargé d'affaires in Maputo and executive assistant in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA). His other overseas assignments include posts in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Nigeria, Mozambique and Taiwan. Before joining the Foreign Service, he was a consultant in Brazil and Houston, Texas, and a commercial banker in New York and Saudi Arabia.





Catherine Ebert-Gray
U.S. Ambassador to
Papua New Guinea

Catherine Ebert-Gray (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Republic of Vanuatu. Her most recent assignment was as deputy assistant secretary (DAS) in the Bureau of Administration (A). Previously, she served as director of the Office of Overseas Employment and as management counselor in the Philippines and Morocco. Before that, she was a supervisory post management officer in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and program analysis officer in A. She also served in Mali, Germany, Togo, Australia, Egypt and Papua New Guinea.





John D. Feeley
U.S. Ambassador
to Panama

John D. Feeley (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Panama. Most recently, he was principal deputy assistant secretary (PDAS) in WHA. Previously, he served as DCM in Mexico, assessor in the Office of Recruitment, director of the Office of Central American Affairs and deputy executive secretary in the Executive Secretariat. He has held numerous other positions in WHA, including deputy director in both the Office of Caribbean Affairs and the Office of Andean Affairs. Earlier in his career he served in Mexico, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.





G. Kathleen Hill

U.S. Ambassador to Malta

G. Kathleen Hill (SFS) of Colorado is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malta. Most recently, she was senior advisor in the Office of the Executive Secretary. Before that, she held positions in that office as deputy and executive director. She has also served as deputy executive director for the Bureaus of European Affairs and International Organization Affairs, supervisory post management officer in the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs, and post management officer in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Her overseas posts include Vancouver, Milan, Tashkent, Sarajevo and Belgrade.





John F. Kirby

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

John F. Kirby is the new Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Since May 2015, he has also been the Department's spokesperson. Before that, he served as Pentagon press secretary after retiring from the Navy as a rear admiral. He also served as chief of information for the Department of the Navy, deputy assistant secretary of defense for media operations, special assistant for public affairs to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and special assistant for public affairs to the chief of naval operations. He was commissioned as a naval officer in 1986.





Deborah R. Malac

U.S. Ambassador to Uganda

Deborah R. Malac (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda. She most recently served as ambassador to Liberia. Previously, she was director of the Office of East African Affairs, director in the Office of Career Development and Assignments, DCM in Addis Ababa, deputy director of the Office of East African Affairs and deputy director of the Office of Agricultural, Biotechnology and Textile Trade Affairs. She has served at posts in Senegal, Thailand, South Africa and Cameroon.

Appointments





David Malcolm Robinson

Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations and the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization

David Malcolm Robinson (SFS) of Connecticut is the new Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations and the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. Until recently he was principal deputy high representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he was responsible for implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement. Before that, he served as assistant chief of mission in Kabul; PDAS and DAS in the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration; special coordinator for Venezuela in WHA; ambassador to Guyana, and DCM in Paraguay and Bolivia. His earlier assignments include posts in El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Iceland.





Eric Seth Rubin

U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria

Eric Seth Rubin (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria. Most recently, he served as DAS in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Before that, he was DCM in Moscow, executive assistant to the under secretary for political affairs, director of the Office of Policy and Coordination, consul general in Chiang Mai and Rusk Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy (Georgetown University). He has held positions as assistant White House press secretary and National Security Council director for public affairs. He also served in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Bulgaria factsheet: www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/bu/





Kyle R. Scott

U.S. Ambassador to Serbia

Kyle R. Scott (SFS) of Arizona is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia. Most recently, he served as a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund. Previously, he was consul general in Milan, director of the Office of Russian Affairs and DCM at the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. He also served at U.S. Missions in New York and Geneva. His other postings include the U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels and posts in Budapest, Moscow, Zagreb and Tel Aviv.

Appointments

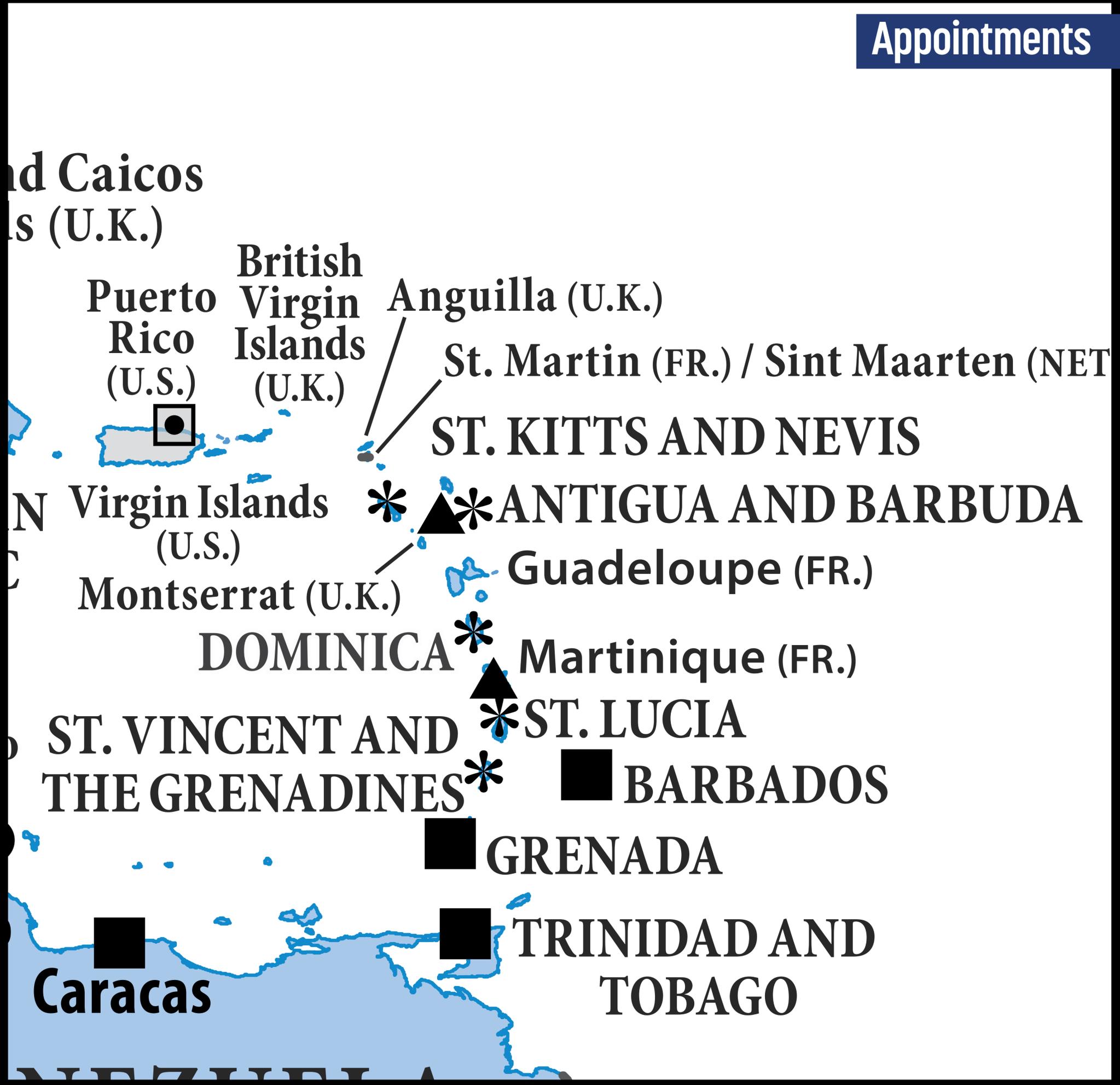




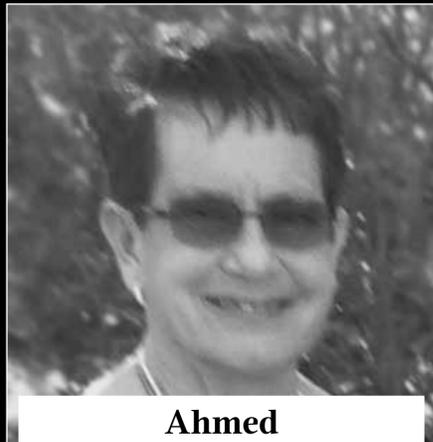
Linda Swartz Tagliatela

U.S. Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

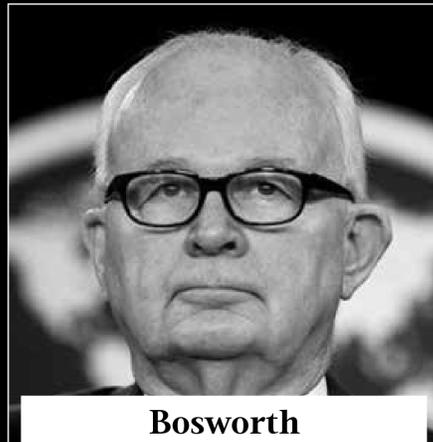
Linda Swartz Tagliatela is the new U.S. Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Most recently, she served as DAS in the Bureau of Human Resources. Prior to that, she was director and deputy in the Office of Resource Management and Organization Analysis. Earlier in her career, she held positions in the Bureau of International Communications and Information Policy and in the Office of the Inspector General, and served as counselor for administration at the U.S. Embassy in Bern.



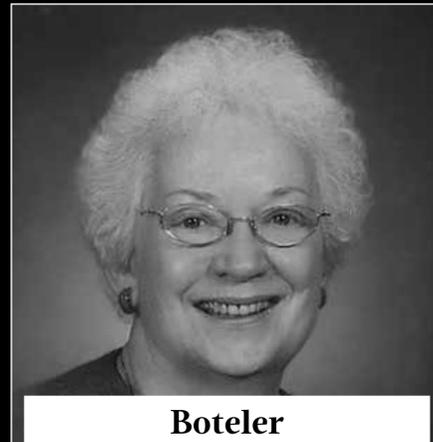
In Memoriam



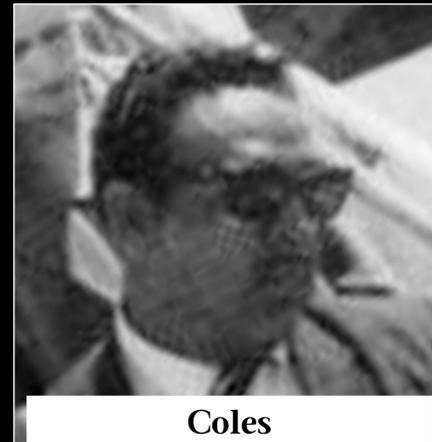
Ahmed



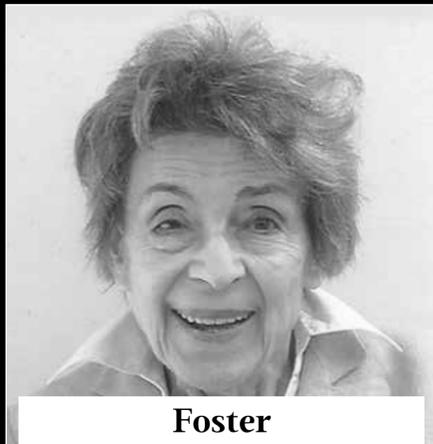
Bosworth



Boteler



Coles



Foster



North



Purl



Sweeten

Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact Michael Hahn at hahnmg@state.gov or (202) 663-2230.



In Memoriam

Linda Rowe Ahmed



Linda Rowe Ahmed, 67, wife of retired FSO Naim Ahmed, died Nov. 24 of complications from cancer in Rockville, Md. Together, they served in Dhahran, Brasilia, Tunis, Amman, Manila, Riyadh and Calgary. For her community outreach efforts in Riyadh, in 1998, she received the CLO of the Year award. After retirement, she worked as a teacher's aide at a Montessori preschool in Bethesda, Md., until 2011.



In Memoriam

Stephen W. Bosworth



Stephen W. Bosworth, 76, a retired FSO and three-time ambassador, died Jan. 4 at home in Boston, Mass. He joined the Department in 1961 and served in Panama, Spain and France before assuming senior positions in Washington, including director of policy planning. He was ambassador to Tunisia, the Philippines and South Korea. Most recently, under President Obama, he served as U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy. Among his many non-governmental posts, he was president of the United States-Japan Foundation and dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.



In Memoriam

Thelma G. Boteler



Thelma G. Boteler, 76, a retired Civil Service employee, died Dec. 14 in Waldorf, Md., after a lengthy illness. She retired in 1994 after working for 37 years as a budget analyst. Her husband of 48 years, Robert, a retired Bureau of Diplomatic Security agent, died in December 2014. In retirement, she served as a volunteer for many church and nursing home events. She enjoyed the outdoors, whether fishing with Bob or just working in her flower garden, and always had a soft spot in her heart for animals. A compassionate and giving person, she left an impact on many lives.



In Memoriam

Lemuel Coles



Lemuel Coles, 90, a retired FSO, died Sept. 21 in Ashland, Va. He joined the Department in 1954. His 35-year career included postings to Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong, Saigon, Djakarta, Singapore, Mumbai, Tel Aviv, Monrovia, Accra and Bridgetown, accompanied by his wife of 65 years, Carol. He also served as director of finance for the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in Ankara. He was an avid tennis player.



In Memoriam

Ludmila Aleksandrovna Foster



Ludmila Aleksandrovna Foster, 84, a retired Civil Service employee, died Nov. 14 from a stroke in Alexandria, Va. After emigrating from Russia and pursuing an academic career in America, she joined VOA's Russian Service in 1974; she also worked for USIA, facilitating U.S.-Russia exchanges, before retiring in 1996. She enjoyed travel, ballet, music and the arts, attended lectures in the Washington area on myriad topics and was a member of the Harvard Club. She published numerous articles in Russian and American periodicals.



In Memoriam

Helen Hope North



Helen Hope North, 84, wife of retired FSO Charles North, died Nov. 15 in Albuquerque, N.M. They served together in Liberia, Ghana, Colombia, Greece, Korea and Ecuador. At most posts she helped her husband, an Actors Equity Association member, present plays and was the treasurer for the American clubs. In retirement after 1983, she and her husband were volunteer museum docents, ACLU members and happy travelers on many cruise ships and bus trips.



In Memoriam

Jennifer Purl



Jennifer Purl, 50, an FSO, died of cancer Dec. 10 in Washington, D.C. She joined the Department in 2003, serving in San Salvador, Moscow and Washington. With her previous career in the energy sector and in IT, she brought insight and skills to combating terrorism finance, helping negotiate the Columbia River Treaty with Canada, building relationships with the EU and strengthening global support for LGBT persons. She worked with enormous energy, despite her illness, and inspired her family and many friends, who miss her dearly. She is survived by her husband, Felix Alvarado, an education specialist.



In Memoriam

Lorri Sweeten



Lorri Sweeten, 48, a Foreign Service information specialist, died unexpectedly Nov. 8 in Arlington, Va. She joined the Department in 2011 and served in Bamako, New Delhi and Guatemala City. Most recently, she was in the Bureau of Information Resource Management's Office of eDiplomacy. She is sorely missed by her IRM colleagues and friends around the world.



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End State



The Palace of Mysore is a historical palace in the city of Mysore in Karnataka, southern India.

Photo by Spiros Vathis

◀ SCROLL TO VIEW PANORAMA ▶