OBAMA-BIDEN TRANSITION PROJECT

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THE EMBASSY OF THE FUTURE

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CSIS | CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Embassy of the future / project cochairs, George L. Argyros, Marc Grossman, Felix G. Rohatyn ; project director, Anne Witkowsky.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-89206-508-0 (pbk. : alk. paper) 1. United States—Foreign relations administration. 2. Information technology—United States. I. Argyros, George L. II. Grossman, Marc, 1951– III. Rohatyn, Felix G., 1928– IV. Witkowsky, Anne. V. Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.) VI. Title.

JZ1480.E43 2007

353.1'30973—dc22 2007031146

The CSIS Press

Center for Strategic and International Studies

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PREFACE

The CSIS Embassy of the Future project was launched in the fall of 2006 to explore the tension between protecting U.S. diplomats and enabling them to conduct their missions effectively. How can both diplomatic platforms and practices meet security objectives and best serve America? How should the State Department equip and empower U.S. diplomats with the benefits of twenty-first century technology?

CSIS invited three highly respected individuals to serve as the study's cochairs—George L. Argyros, Marc Grossman, and Felix G. Rohatyn—each of whom drew on his experience as an ambassador to lead our discussions and investigation. CSIS expresses its gratitude to the 25 distinguished commissioners who participated, including former senior government officials, former career ambassadors and noncareer ambassadors, retired military officers, private-sector representatives, and academic experts.

This project developed from discussions between Henrietta Holsman Fore, undersecretary of state for management, and Dr. John Hamre, president and CEO of CSIS. The commission and staff owe Under Secretary Fore a special debt of gratitude for her active support of the project. The State Department cooperated extensively with the commission, but the findings and recommendations are those of the commission.

The study was funded by the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, an organization dedicated to furthering the U.S. Foreign Service. The project benefited from the generous encouragement and support of the foundation's trustees and in particular from its executive director Ambassador Clyde Taylor.

The commission's goal was to create a vision for an embassy of the future that could be realized by implementing practical recommendations for today. Participants looked at how the diplomat's job is changing and then at the training, platforms, technology, and business practices that tomorrow's diplomats will need to promote and protect U.S. interests.

The commission met formally three times: in October 2006 to obtain baseline information and chart the project's course; in March 2007 to discuss draft findings and recommendations; and in May 2007 to review the draft final report. In June 2007, commission representatives twice briefed the secretary of state and her senior staff on the commission's draft recommendations.

Project research was conducted in Washington and overseas. CSIS convened four working sessions: the first session addressed how the diplomacy of the future will shape the needs for the embassy of the future; the second examined business models for overseas presence; the third discussed diplomatic platforms and presence—from bricks and mortar to online outreach; and the fourth explored new technology. Working session participants included commissioners, current and former State Department and other government personnel, and other outside experts.

CSIS staff conducted a number of focus group meetings in Washington to generate and review ideas for the project. These groups were composed of current State Department personnel ranging from young professionals through senior management. CSIS staff also interviewed a number of private-

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sector executives to learn from industry models for overseas operations and consulted with experts from across the substantive scope of the project. We thank them for their generous time and insights.

Commissioners and staff together engaged in an extensive program of fact-finding overseas, conducting interviews with dozens of individuals at 37 posts. While traveling overseas on other business, commissioners devoted personal time to the project and met people at 13 overseas posts. Commissioners, CSIS staff, and experts interviewed posts widely via videoconference and telephone. We are grateful to all the personnel stationed at posts around the world who bent their schedules around time zones to convene for the videoconference interview sessions, hosted visiting commissioners and staff, and otherwise made themselves freely available to discuss the embassy of the future.

The report builds on a long line of distinguished studies on diplomacy and overseas presence. We express appreciation to Lewis Kaden and the 1999 report of the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel, which inspired our own approach.

The commission and staff express appreciation to all those who presented at the full commission sessions and in the working sessions, as well as to those working session participants who shared their time, talent, and wisdom. These individuals are identified by name in the appendix. We are grateful to the numerous State Department officials who assisted with information, expertise, and insight. We thank Frank Coulter, Ruth Whiteside, Gretchen Welch, Susan Swart, Susan Jacobs, Larry Richter, Phil Lussier, Anne Carson, Allison Shorter-Lawrence, and Tim Cipullo. Rudolph Lohmeyer and the State Department's Project Horizon team provided valuable perspective. Many outside experts provided important insights as well; we thank especially Amy Weinstein, Ed Feiner, Donald Hays and Steven Pifer.

Post interviews were supported with the expert contributions of the Executive Potential Program group. Ashley Rasmussen, our project coordinator, and our project interns served as key members of the team. We thank Vinca LaFleur for her fine editing skills. Kate Phillips played a critical role in bringing the project to closure. Finally, none of this would have been possible without Peter Roady, the project's talented research assistant.

Most of the commission's recommendations were drawn from ideas provided by individuals with whom the commission and staff met over the past year. The commission is deeply grateful to all those who gave generously of their time and insight throughout the duration of the project.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The truest test of the value to our nation of the U.S. diplomatic presence abroad is whether the people we ask to represent us effectively promote American values and interests.

Diplomacy is a vital tool of national security. The aim of this report is to make the diplomatic pursuit of U.S. interests abroad even more effective than it is today. Our diplomats and those who support them must have the right tools and capacity to do their work. This is an urgent national priority. Transnational threats, including terrorism, put U.S. citizens and national interests at risk. Potential competitor nations are emerging on the global stage. Anti-Americanism can have lethal consequences for our nation and its citizens. Operating in a higher-threat environment is part of today's diplomatic job. Traditional diplomacy—where government and social elites interact in highly formal channels—is being transformed. U.S. diplomats will still need to influence foreign governments, but increasingly they will work directly with diverse parts of other nations' societies. The Embassy of the Future Commission envisions an embassy presence in which U.S. officials reach out broadly, engage societies comprehensively, and build relationships with key audiences effectively.

This project is called the "Embassy of the Future," but "embassy" is meant in a broad sense, of which embassy buildings are only one dimension. The commission underscores that the U.S. presence and our diplomacy are about our people—Foreign Service, Civil Service, Foreign Service nationals and other locally employed staff—and their capacity to carry out their mission.

We want to empower U.S. diplomats to succeed in the work they do for America. Modernization and reform of the diplomatic profession and its infrastructure have begun. But the State Department must do more. The department needs more people and a well-trained workforce; modern technology that will expand diplomatic capacity and reach; policies, communications tools, and resources that support mobility outside embassy compounds; platforms that serve mission effectiveness; and a risk-managed approach to security that allows for the interactions in the field required to achieve successful diplomatic engagement. To do so, we propose the following ten recommendations:

- **Invest in people.** The security of the United States depends on the capacity of its diplomats to carry out the nation's business. The State Department must hire more than 1,000 additional diplomats—a 9.3 percent increase—so that it can fill positions at home and abroad while providing the education and development programs that twenty-first-century representatives of the United States need to reach their potential. Professional education and development programs must be enhanced across the board. The State Department must also, where possible, make greater use of the foreign national component of its workforce at posts overseas.
- **Integrate technology and business practices.** Senior department leadership needs to raise the profile of technology within the State Department and place technology more effectively in the service of business practices. The department must fund technology more consistently across its bureaus. To

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help the State Department develop strategies for the application of technology in support of new business practices, the commission recommends the appointment of a chief innovation officer. The department should also establish a Technology Center at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center that would serve as a demonstration and instruction facility for technology and new business practices; partner the center with embassies as test beds for technology innovation; and establish a special fund for technology innovation at posts.

- **Expand knowledge and information sharing.** Knowledge and information sharing are indispensable to organizational success. As an information-producing, knowledge-rich organization, the State Department must do a much better job of sharing both. Best-practices sharing needs to be vastly expanded, together with the significant expansion of virtual communities of practice as a tool for reporting and sharing information. The State Department should implement an organization-wide relationship management system and improve its search and retrieval capabilities for digitized material. The use of videoconferencing should be expanded.
- **Embrace new communications tools.** The State Department must exploit Internet-based media such as online discussion forums and video-sharing services, which are changing the way people interact with one another around the world. The State Department should enhance its embassy Web sites in line with other content-rich Web sites, train its officers in the strategic use of these forms of outreach, and develop and distribute more content using these new tools.
- **Operate beyond embassy walls.** U.S. diplomats must work effectively and routinely outside the embassy compound. Policies within the State Department and at embassies must value and support this work. Mobile communications capabilities should be available to all personnel, together with sufficient resources for travel and outreach.
- **Strengthen platform and presence options.** The commission recommends a comprehensive, distributed presence around the world that will allow for a broader and deeper engagement with governments, opinion leaders, and the global public. Designing this presence in each country should begin at post, tailored to local needs, and coordinated with the relevant State Department bureau. The commission advocates the founding of a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) to support the task of analyzing the overseas requirements for this presence.

The current State Department construction program for diplomatic facility replacement needs to be continued. Embassies and consulates must be modern, safe, and functional places to work. They must not only protect diplomats, but also advance the diplomatic mission. Locations remote from urban centers should be avoided wherever possible.

Building on initiatives already under way, the State Department should strengthen, develop, and fund options for extending the diplomatic presence in capitals and outside them. These include American Presence Posts, traveling circuit riders, and Virtual Presence Posts as well as American Corners and American Centers.

- **Strengthen the country team.** Large interagency country teams and a distributed presence pose increasing challenges for the ambassador's leadership. Interagency cooperation at overseas posts is essential for the embassy of the future. The critical component of success will be the capacity of ambassadors and deputy chiefs of mission to lead. Ambassadors' authorities as the president's personal representative should be codified in an executive

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order. Organizational structures, the physical layout of embassies, and personnel practices should be designed to encourage a high degree of cooperation and coordination among the representatives of all agencies at post. All agency representatives must be able to readily communicate across their respective information systems.

- **Manage risk.** To support a diplomatic presence that is distributed, the department's security culture and practices must continue to transition from risk avoidance to risk management. The secretary of state should begin a dialogue within the State Department, with the Congress, and among other interested parties on this serious challenge. Ambassadors' instructions from the president need to be revised to reflect this need for engagement and the risk it can entail. All diplomats need security skills training throughout their careers, beginning at the time of their entry to the department. Diplomats' families also need this training. Security officers should be well trained in diplomatic practice, and more must have language training. Finally, the State Department must provide care for its people who serve in the most challenging assignments.
- **Promote secure borders, open doors.** With the post-9/11 removal of the waiver for personal appearances for nonimmigrant visas, together with increased visa workloads, embassies face big challenges in managing their visitors. The United States should have welcoming consular waiting areas that showcase our country. The State Department should continue testing its remote visa interviewing program and explore traveling consular services to create more distributed consular operations.
- **Streamline administrative functions.** The State Department must continue the process of streamlining and standardizing its administrative functions and consolidating them regionally. There should be renewed emphasis on making administrative processes in support of diplomacy more efficient and cost effective.

Projecting U.S. influence through diplomatic engagement requires a serious commitment of funds. The State Department must take a consistent approach to working with Congress if it is to receive these resources.

The men and women who represent the United States abroad serve with skill and dedication, often under dangerous and difficult circumstances. The commission wants this study to enhance their capacity to promote, protect, and defend the nation's interests. The commission believes that these ten practical recommendations will result in a more effective U.S. diplomacy.

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INTRODUCTION

A NEW AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

The United States faces unprecedented opportunities and challenges around the world. We will not meet these challenges, or grasp the opportunities available to us, without successful American diplomacy.

. . .

What we think of as traditional diplomacy—where government and social elites interact in highly formal channels—is being transformed. As today's diplomats continue to conduct traditional business, they must also adapt their capabilities to nontraditional settings, beyond conference rooms and offices.

America's diplomats are doing business in new ways. They work to bring development to mountain villages in Nepal and Peru, travel to remote jungles to support drug eradication missions in Colombia, and have delivered food and water in tsunami-devastated Indonesia. They deploy with U.S. military forces in provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan and Iraq and operate from one-officer posts to promote American business in commercial centers in France.

America's diplomats are also struggling to break free from the bureaucratic practices that keep them inside U.S. embassy buildings and that emphasize the processing of information over the personal, active, direct engagement that wins friends and supporters for America—the kind of diplomacy that inspired Foreign Service officers to serve their country in the first place.

Today's diverse diplomatic challenges—such as highlighting and demonstrating American values; strengthening the growth of civil institutions and the rule of law; promoting democracy; serving and protecting the millions of American citizens who live and travel abroad; promoting trade and investment; fighting drug trafficking; stopping the trafficking in persons; supporting sustainable development to combat poverty; preventing genocide; strengthening foreign cooperation and capacity to address global security challenges such as terrorism, weapons proliferation, international crime, disease, and humanitarian disasters—cannot be accomplished from Washington. These objectives require frontline activity by skilled diplomatic professionals operating in—and increasingly out of—embassies of the future.

America's diplomats will still put effort into influencing foreign governments—bilaterally and multilaterally. But they increasingly will work directly with diverse parts of other nations' societies, including the emerging interest groups and future leaders—from business and academia, urban centers

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and remote villages, and religious institutions—who shape their nations' values and behavior over the long term. Around the world, youthful populations are forming their identities. Will they view the United States favorably or as an adversary?

Global anti-Americanism has lethal consequences for our nation and its citizens. Suspicion and misunderstanding of what the United States stands for and what we seek in the world do as much damage to our national interests as an attack by a hostile intelligence service or a terrorist group. Twenty-first century diplomats must meet this great challenge directly, using tools and practices that will help them create and sustain partnerships across and within societies on a much deeper and broader level.

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A successful U.S. diplomacy must be backed by military force. The United States will continue to face situations where armed conflict is inevitable. There will be nations or terrorist groups who will not change their strategies or tactics because of diplomacy, no matter how energetic and creative. If conflict does come, our diplomats need to support our military forces before combat by making it possible—through arrangements with other countries—for our forces to project power. During conflict, our diplomacy must promote the widest possible coalition to support our efforts and, during the post-conflict phase, our representatives must be ready to lead the reconciliation and reconstruction of countries and societies.

But we should strive for an effective American diplomacy for the twenty-first century based on values, integration, alliances, and coalitions and built on America's unique position of strength to set an example and encourage others to join us in pursuing great objectives.

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What kind of diplomats will our nation need abroad in five-to-ten years? What jobs will we ask them to do and how best can they accomplish those missions? Our diplomats need to operate in many different environments, on many different tasks. They must be better equipped to work collaboratively, with other parts of our government or the private sector and with our friends and allies. They must be more capable of operating independently, connected at all times to the broader network of the embassy and with their colleagues.

The strategic contest over the future is not an abstraction. Many of the factors and trends that emerged before September 11, 2001, have been discussed widely in previous reports. After September 11, however, we have a keener understanding of both the stakes involved and the potential national security consequences of acting—or failing to act—to strengthen our global diplomatic effectiveness.

Modernization and reform of the diplomatic profession and its infrastructure have begun. The Embassy the Future Commission supports this current rebuilding effort, including personnel recruitment and training, and the program to replace outdated facilities with modern, secure embassy buildings. But we must do more. For example, the State Department needs more people so we can deploy and train our diplomats properly without leaving long gaps in staffing diplomatic posts abroad.

Our diplomats must operate effectively and safely outside of embassy buildings, new or old, and the State Department must find new and better ways to help our diplomats operate in different venues. To support this more dispersed concept of operations, the State Department must do more to embrace the tools and practices of modern communications and

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information sharing. Our ambassadors will need greater ability to coordinate the activities of their personnel. The commission's objective is to create more flexibility in where and how our diplomats pursue America's interests abroad.

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Supporting an embassy of the future will require changes in how Americans perceive diplomacy. Americans sometimes mistake diplomacy as a tool for the weak, always about making concessions or appeasing our foes. In fact, diplomacy is a vital tool of national security. The men and women who pursue America's diplomatic objectives abroad are as honorable and dedicated in their promotion and defense of America's interests as our men and women in uniform.

The more diplomats we have engaged further forward and deeper into societies, the more likely it is that even best efforts to protect them will sometimes fail. Threats will be more prevalent in more places. Many American diplomats have been killed in the course of their work. They should never be forgotten. As even more of America's diplomats operate in harm's way, we will need to provide them new kinds of training and protection: the better able they are to work in troubled lands, the more secure our nation will be.

American diplomacy can help our country defeat our enemies, support our allies, and make new friends. What follows are practical recommendations the commission believes necessary to create the philosophy as well as the foundation for twenty-first century diplomacy. Carrying out our recommendations will take resources and the continuing commitment of both the executive branch and Congress. The commission urges that this effort start today.

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THE EMBASSY OF THE FUTURE

Our embassies and the people who work in them are on the front lines of the new diplomacy. The State Department has made significant strides in the last several years toward meeting new challenges, with improvements in training capacity, construction of new buildings, and technological advances. Nevertheless, if the State Department is to effectively meet tomorrow's challenges, much more must be done.

The commission built its approach on three premises:

- First, diplomacy is the first line of America's defense and engagement. Diplomats cannot accomplish their work from Washington. U.S. diplomats overseas engage in a complex environment where national interests are at stake. More than ever, they need to be able to understand and influence societies abroad.
- Second, the power of non-state actors and new audiences is growing. With the spread of democracy, advances in communications capabilities, and globalization, many actors affect and influence U.S. interests. The State Department and its people must be able to engage with a wider audience and new centers of influence.
- Third, operating in a higher threat environment is ever more part of the job. America's men and women overseas today operate in an environment of increased risk. Threats to their security and safety are higher and more prevalent than in the past. Acts of terrorism can occur anywhere, as we have seen—from Nairobi to Karachi to London. We must plan for a future in which the threat of terrorism will continue and likely grow.

The commission envisions an embassy presence in which U.S. officials reach out broadly, engage societies comprehensively, and build relationships with key audiences effectively. Resources, technology, a well-trained workforce, and a culture that is more tolerant of risk will offer opportunities to expand the capabilities of U.S. personnel to operate outside the embassy and thus develop and sustain the relationships that are at the heart of diplomatic engagement.

Embassy structures, while important, are only one dimension of the embassy of the future. The commission underscores that the U.S. presence and our diplomacy are, at the core, about our people and their capacity to carry out their mission.

As technology advances, so too will the capability of U.S. diplomats to operate independently beyond embassy compound walls. Communications and information-sharing capabilities should facilitate a decentralized diplomatic presence. Technology can

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also support a model that is substantially "optimized for the edges"—that is, one in which diplomats have the ability and authority to operate independently at the local level, under broad strategic guidance.

Building new relationships between diplomats and their host nation audiences depends principally on personal interaction. Even with improved technology, there will continue to be a vital role for face-to-face contact in the same physical space.

Security requirements will continue to challenge the ability to operate effectively in the field. The embassy of the future requires security, but the principal objective remains engagement. These twin objectives may be in tension, but trying to create a zero-risk environment will lead to failure.

PRINCIPLES

The U.S. presence of the future must be designed strategically and comprehensively for each country, on the basis of U.S. interests and objectives. The form of the design should follow function and should be resourced accordingly. This presence should be distributed, coordinated, and connected. It should be based on the following principles:

Decentralized, flexible, and mobile.

- Missions should have the capacity for dispersed operations, away from the embassy compound and toward integration with and access to key target audiences.
- Diplomats should be able to function principally outside the embassy in most environments. They should have the mandate, skills, communications technology, and other support to operate independently and securely.
- In this model, personnel need training to take on new tasks. For example, diplomats must have greater language proficiency and public outreach skills and the ability to stay safe in potentially dangerous situations.
- A more distributed presence—both physical spaces and virtual presence—should be planned strategically in support of mission objectives.
- Back office functions should continue to be standardized, regionalized, and consolidated overseas or repatriated to the United States, consistent with efficiency and cost.

Expanded and sustained reach among broader communities. Technology should allow for expansion of reach, relationships, and networking through videoconferencing capabilities, online communities, and other means of establishing networks and staying connected. It should allow diplomats to engage more broadly and more creatively with wider audiences—groups, individuals, local politicians, and businesses. Communities of interest should be more readily created and sustained across the foreign affairs community, between the foreign affairs community and foreign contacts, and across agency lines.

Connected, responsive, and informed. Information and communications technology should allow for greater speed of reporting both in the field and from the field as well as greatly enhanced sharing of knowledge and information within embassies and globally, across agency lines, and among groups outside the embassy. Technology should provide for more effective information use and retrieval. New and creative methods of sharing knowledge and information should be easier; text can be enhanced with maps, charts, video, and photos.

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Platforms that advance American interests. The embassy compound should be safe and secure and serve the needs of U.S. overseas missions. The physical representation of the embassy should reflect well on the United States. The embassy compound, together with distributed platforms, should promote engagement with the host country, consistent with security. Embassy construction standards should demonstrate respect for the natural environment.

Cohesive country teams. The country team at posts, composed of many agencies, should be well integrated. The power of the U.S. overseas presence derives from the ability to mobilize diverse agency resources effectively toward the achievement of mission priorities.

Capable of sustaining risk. The safety of the men and women serving in the field must remain a top priority. At the same time, the need to protect U.S. personnel must be reconciled with the realities of greater threats in the very places where diplomats must work. Skills, training, and cultural change must enable chiefs of mission and their staffs to manage risk more effectively in higher-threat environments.

Properly resourced. Projecting U.S. influence through diplomatic engagement requires a serious commitment of funds and must be viewed as a long-term investment. Funding should be commensurate with the value of diplomacy as a first line of defense and engagement. The State Department must take a consistent approach to working with Congress to get the resources that it needs. Where possible, the recommendations below include rough estimates of resource implications.

Diplomacy and the tools needed to support it are evolving. Overseas posts are attempting to widen their reach. The number and type of distributed platforms are expanding. Handheld wireless devices are enabling greater mobility. Increasingly, officers in the field can access the unclassified State Department system from their homes and from anywhere in the world. Internal State Department "communities of practice" are starting, using technology to speed information flow and break down bureaucratic stovepipes that hinder effectiveness.

Based on its findings and the principles outlined above, the commission has sought to determine what tools diplomats need so that U.S. missions abroad can fully transition to a twenty-first century way of doing business. It has sought recommendations that would be resilient against a range of possible futures. These recommendations underscore the need for growth and for change. Both Secretary Powell and Secretary Rice have promoted improvements to State Department operations. These recommendations build on those steps. They are practical recommendations that serve longer-term objectives and that the State Department, together with Congress, can implement starting now.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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1

INVEST IN PEOPLE

A successful overseas presence depends on a highly capable workforce. There are many important dimensions to achieving such a workforce, including recruitment, hiring and promotion policies, workforce structure, pay, and family and quality of life issues.

The most important aspect of the workforce, however, is the job itself. U.S diplomats are participating in reconstruction projects and working with the next generation of world leaders. They are actively engaged in discussions to prevent conflict, in cultural and educational programs to foster dialogue and greater understanding of different cultures, and in providing disaster relief. They are involved in negotiations to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, in drug eradication, trade negotiations, and in managing programs to prevent trafficking in women and children. The nature of the job requires not only highly talented individuals, but also individuals who are well prepared to undertake these significant and extremely varied responsibilities.

The diplomats of the future will need traits and skills that are different in some respects from the diplomat of a decade ago, or even from those needed by the diplomat hired today. The new diplomat must be an active force in advancing U.S. interests, not just a gatherer and transmitter of information. The State Department has a study under way to derive the tasks and responsibilities flowing from the range of current and future conditions faced by the United States and to pinpoint the new competencies/skills necessary to perform those tasks effectively. This study will recommend new personnel skill sets and systems enhancements. The commission underscores the importance of conducting such reviews periodically in the coming years.

Although the embassy of the future has many important personnel implications, the commission highlights four points that have direct and immediate relevance to the job it envisions for the diplomat of the future: personnel resources for training, training programs, assignments to very high-threat areas, and the support of locally employed foreign nationals.

NO SUCCESS WITHOUT MORE PEOPLE

The commission believes that significantly more people are essential for the missions of the future. Proper training will be critical to enhancing reach outside the embassy. But even if training courses are developed and funded, their benefit will not be realized without sufficient personnel who can take the

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training. A sufficient training and transit float is the norm in the U.S. military, but not in the U.S. State Department.[1]

In 2001, the State Department set out to build such a float when former Secretary Colin Powell launched the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative (DRI) to enhance the department's ability to deploy—at a moment's notice—motivated, highly skilled personnel to global flashpoints in support of U.S. counterterrorism and foreign policy objectives.[2] Over the period FY2002–2004, the DRI called for hiring an additional 1,158 department employees above attrition—at a cost of $98 million per year.[3] The DRI was designed to achieve three interrelated staffing objectives: increase training and professional development activities for staff while ensuring that ongoing projects and requirements are addressed; respond to crises without neglecting the tasks central to maintaining productive diplomatic relations; and fill understaffed critical overseas and domestic needs.[4]

By FY2004, State Department hiring efforts had fallen slightly below the initial target number of 1,158 new hires above attrition for the three-year period, but the new hires reenergized the department. Combined with attrition, the additional strain of deployments to fill needs in Afghanistan and Iraq, and other requirements, the staffing flexibility once available under the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative has been severely eroded.

By its own analysis, the State Department now has a substantial staff deficit. It has a shortage of 1,079 positions for training, transit, and temporary needs—including for language training, professional education, rotations to other agencies, and transit ("in motion"). (See table 1.) The State Department has also identified a staff deficit of 1,015 positions for operational assignments overseas and domestically. These deficit numbers are derived from State's analysis of current staffing patterns, State's overseas and domestic staffing models, and its training needs. The commission supports immediately restoring a training and transit float to eliminate the training deficit that State has identified. The commission did not take on the task of evaluating operational assignment position shortages, where State's analysis also shows a significant staff deficit, to include, for example, positions for a Civilian Response Corps. The commission does believe, however, that the substantial operational assignment deficit within the State Department must be addressed with urgency. This will require further examination at the State Department and within the Office of Management and Budget and Congress. In general, the State Department needs a comprehensive, disciplined, and rigorous system of analysis for its personnel staffing so all relevant parties can understand the requirements for properly supporting the Foreign Service.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

If the current level of training and education is not enhanced, then professional education and development will not keep pace with expectations for the future diplomatic job. The need for broad training capacity and new skills to meet the challenges of the future emerged in the commission's many interviews. If training is to be effective with a diverse set of players—government officials, multilateral organizations,

[1] According to a 2007 RAND Corporation study, the TTHS (Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students) account is defined as the actual or projected people not filling billets in the programmed manpower structure. The total number of personnel in the account fluctuates throughout the year, but is typically between 12 and 15 percent of end strength. See Harry J. Thie et al., *Alignment of Department of Defense Manpower, Resources, and Personnel Systems* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2007), available at http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/2007/RAND_TR419.pdf.

[2] U.S. Department of State, *Diplomatic Readiness: The Human Resources Strategy*, Washington, D.C., 2002.

[3] Ibid., 3.

[4] Ibid., 6.

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Table 1. **FOREIGN SERVICE STAFFING NEEDS**

	Required Staffing[a]	Actual Staffing	Staffing Deficit
ON ASSIGNMENT			
Overseas	8,516	7,836	680
Domestic	3,359	3,024	335
Subtotal	11,875	10,860	1,015
TRAINING, TRANSIT, AND TEMPORARY NEEDS			
Language training	527	193	334
Professional education[b]	279	74	205
Other training[c]	199	39	160
On rotation to other agencies/institutions[d]	131	85	46
In motion[e]	199	0	199
In-entry/discharge processing	358	358	0
Temporary needs[f]	135	0	135
Subtotal	1,828	749	1,079
TOTAL	13,703	11,609	2,094

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Human Resources, September 2007.

[a] The "required staffing" number is derived from overseas/domestic staffing models and training models.
[b] "Professional education" refers to education at, for example, war colleges, command and staff colleges, and universities.
[c] "Other training" refers to tradecraft courses such as public diplomacy, economics, security, information technology, or other specialty skills.
[d] Agencies and institutions to which FSOs rotate include, for example, the Department of Defense, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Security Council, and Department of Homeland Security.
[e] "In motion" refers to the time when personnel are rotating between domestic and overseas assignments. This includes physical moving time and home leave.
[f] "Temporary needs" are the pool of positions that can be allocated to meet temporary needs over 1-2 years.

the public, and the private sector, and with other U.S. agency representatives—it should be enhanced at all stages of officers' careers. The commission identified a number of key areas where such training, as well as professional education, will be important.

> "I would like to have more emphasis on language training. I came in with a 2/2 [limited working capability], but to be more effective in the future, I need more language. It would have been more effective to just give me the three months of extra training to get to a 3/3 [general professional capability]." —*Foreign Service Officer*

First, it is vital that diplomats be proficient in languages. Many more must have the opportunity to master the languages in which they work. They must be able to speak the language with fluency and confidence, including with public audiences, with the press, and in discussions online.

In many cases, additional in-country language training should be required to enhance fluency in local dialects. The commission applauds the government-wide effort to create greater language proficiency in the United States and the State Department–specific effort to recruit officers who have backgrounds in certain languages.[5] Language training

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"[With respect to language,] the more training we can get in the field the better….you need to get out and practice." —*Foreign Service Officer*

should be reinforced with more training in local culture and cross-cultural communication, including for media appearances. Diplomats must understand global issues and the principles of preventive diplomacy.

Diplomats must be able to lead and collaborate inside a mission comprising many agencies, to better access and leverage the expertise, knowledge, and operational capabilities of the entire U.S. government. Joint training with, and rotations to, other agencies must become a more routine part of personnel development and available to more people. Cross-training for personnel from agencies other than State (e.g., from the military, law enforcement, and economic communities) must be developed. Recent U.S. government efforts to create more interagency rotation and joint education opportunities are a positive step in this direction; the State Department must position itself to participate fully in a national security professional development program once it is developed and implemented.[6] Rotations to multilateral institutions and working or studying closely with allies will also strengthen diplomats' capacities.

Diplomats must be good leaders and know how to get the most from their employees; this includes developing each to his or her fullest potential. The leadership training established a few years ago is a start. They must also be able to manage programs and support a greater role in executing specific projects and programs.

Diplomats must be more comfortable with the latest technologies and continue to stay current as technology evolves. They need to be well prepared for roles in newer types of assignments—for example, post-conflict reconstruction teams and American Presence Posts.

All diplomats must have security skills training so that they are equipped to work beyond the confines of the embassy compound. The types of field activities that may become more prevalent in the future may offer opportunities to certain personnel with certain competencies and career goals. Post-conflict reconstruction teams assignments and other posts requiring unaccompanied tours pose special challenges and require special training. The State Department should consider very specialized training and opportunities for personnel who would like to spend all or some of their careers exclusively in higher-threat postings.

At every level, officers must have the skills and knowledge to deal effectively not only with governments, but also with nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and the media.

In the future, more training can be accomplished outside Washington through in-country and regional programs as well as more extensive use of distance training. Expanding the use of examinations could help ensure that students have mastered the material they are taught. The commission believes it is important to reward successful participation in professional education and development programs. Personnel evaluations and promotion opportunities are the key to these incentives as is the tone set from the top.

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[5] Foreign Service officer candidates who pass the written test and essay and claim proficiency in a Super Critical Need Languages (Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Farsi/Dari, Hindi, and Urdu) take a language proficiency test. The test results are taken into consideration by the Qualifications Evaluation Panel, which determines whether candidates advance to the oral examination. Candidates who then pass the Oral Assessment receive extra points for Foreign Service Institute–tested language proficiency, especially in Critical Need and Super Critical Need Languages.

[6] See Executive Order: National Security Professional Development, Exec. Order No. 13,434, 72 Fed. Reg. 28583 (May 17, 2007), available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070517-6.html (accessed July 5, 2007).

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EXPAND USE OF LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF (LES)

Locally employed staff (LES) should be used more effectively and have greater opportunities. The State Department is tremendously fortunate to have a cadre of extremely talented and valuable locally employed staff helping the United States achieve its diplomatic objectives overseas. Approximately 54,000 LES currently work at U.S. missions abroad. Most LES are foreign nationals, and the majority work for the State Department, primarily in administrative roles. Indeed, the State Department could not function overseas without them.

The Foreign Service national component of LES provides valuable local knowledge, contacts, language capability, and continuity of service within embassies. Increasing needs for a combination of continuity and specialized expertise in a variety of functions abroad have led a number of U.S. government agencies to expand employment of LES in professional occupations. USAID, for example, employs foreign national development specialists. The Centers for Disease Control employ scientific and medical field personnel, and the Library of Congress employs librarians. Since at least the 1980s, the preponderance of public diplomacy staffing abroad has always comprised foreign nationals. This staffing trend will need to continue in order to meet specialized U.S. government mission demands abroad effectively.

Against a backdrop of trends in both globalization and specialization, of anticipated U.S. government-wide fiscal constraints, and of security concerns associated with deployment of U.S.-citizen staff abroad in some places, growing reassignment of responsibilities to Foreign Service nationals should be welcomed and expanded. The growing emphasis on diplomatic engagement with nongovernmental actors suggests that a more locally based workforce may be essential to a more effective diplomatic pursuit of U.S. interests abroad in the future. Foreign nationals can serve a valuable support role in building, managing, and understanding wider networks of relationships, because of their own networks and local access. An increased professional foreign national workforce would mirror trends in U.S. business operations overseas, many of which employ foreign nationals almost exclusively. Although specific differentials depend on the type of job, there are significant cost differences between U.S.-hired staff and LES.[7]

As an incentive for increased responsibility, foreign nationals should have more opportunities, including higher grade levels. This will be a critical component of enhanced responsibility and, in some cases, retention. Increased training locally and regionally should complement higher pay grade opportunities and could include more opportunities to come to the United States to better understand the department's critical mission.

> "We are expected to perform at the same level as an American diplomat but we are not trained like them. Embassies say they cannot function without us, but that is not how we feel."
>
> —*Foreign Service National*

[7] U.S. Department of State, Office of Rightsizing the U.S. Government Overseas Presence, *Overseas Rightsizing: 2006/II*, Washington, D.C., December 2006, 7–8, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/77386.pdf.

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The State Department should also develop the capacity to use foreign nationals more routinely on deployments outside their "home" country—for example, in short-term crisis deployments that require specialized skills or languages. The State Department could catalog skill sets for a State Department database to draw on for deploying foreign nationals to third countries on a quick turnaround basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Hire enough people.** The Diplomatic Readiness Initiative significantly improved the capacity for training. That increased capacity has been eroded by new emerging requirements. A renewed increase is needed to provide for training and professional development activities and transit, while ensuring that ongoing projects and requirements are addressed and crisis needs can be met. The commission calls for rebuilding a "float" by hiring 1,079 additional Foreign Service personnel to achieve real "readiness" for U.S. diplomats. A rebuilt float must be maintained consistently over the years ahead to use diplomats' new skills efficiently, sustain career-long training, and meet new demands for diplomats as they emerge. Deficits in operational assignment positions must also be addressed with urgency.

> **Resources.** Based on State Department estimates, it would cost approximately $198 million to hire 1,079 people for building a float to meet training, transit, and temporary needs. Hiring should be done over the next three years, and future budget planning must include funds to maintain this float. By comparison, the estimated cost of hiring more people is less than the cost of a single C-17 transport aircraft.

- **Strengthen professional education and development programs across the board.**
  - Enhanced language training, including more options for in-country language training, should be a priority.
  - Joint agency-based training, rotations to other agencies, and educational opportunities at universities should be expanded. Cross-training for personnel from agencies other than State (e.g., from the military, law enforcement, and economic communities) must be developed.
  - Leadership training must be sustained. Program management skills should be taught. Media training—including public speaking, media strategies, presentation skills in new media, and Web-based communication—should be required for all officers. Skills-based security training must be developed for a broader group of personnel. Technology training is needed for those who were not raised in the age of the Internet and to keep all personnel current with new technology. Tailored training is needed for new types of assignments, such as American Presence posts.
  - The State Department needs to enhance its systems for evaluating and testing skills once coursework is completed. Most important, training should be career enhancing and tied to promotion.
- **Offer specialized training.** The State Department should offer the opportunity for specialized training for service at the hardest posts at various stages of officers' careers. Foreign Service and Civil Service employees should be able to opt for specialized training, to include training offered by U.S. military and/or intelligence agencies, connected to service in the most challenging assignments, including high-danger pay posts and provincial reconstruction teams. The State Department could establish rewards for this type of service, including increased pay and special consideration for promotion.

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- **Assign greater substantive responsibility to foreign nationals.** In addition to administrative functions, foreign nationals are already providing substantive support to Foreign Service officers. Foreign Service nationals must have more opportunity in both administrative and substantive areas and be as integrated as possible into the mission, consistent with security. The State Department should create more professional-grade positions for foreign nationals and provide more opportunities for them to serve as third-country nationals. They should not only receive training at post, but should also have greater opportunities for specialized regional training to develop their expertise in their areas of concentration, whether it is accounting, public affairs, or economic reporting. Truly outstanding LES personnel should have more opportunities to come to the United States for top-level training.

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INTEGRATE TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS PRACTICES

The pace at which technology and business processes evolve presents an ongoing challenge for the embassy of the future. Computing power increases constantly. The user's ability to harness such power does not increase at the same rate. Although most government agencies cannot claim to be on or near the cutting edge of technology, the State Department historically has been particularly slow to modernize. The last 1980s-era Wang computer was not retired from the State Department until the early twenty-first century. It was not until Secretary Powell made technology a focus of his tenure that every State Department employee obtained desktop Internet access.

The commission recognizes that the State Department has significantly improved its use of and approach to technology in the past several years, but believes that much more remains to be done. In some cases, technology at the State Department has been driving the way people work instead of the other way around. For example, the informal system of e-mail is overtaking the cable system out of necessity, but does not fill all the needs of the users, including the distribution of information.

As the State Department looks to make strategic investments in technology over the coming years, it is essential that mission and user needs drive acquisition. For that to happen, the senior leadership must place greater emphasis on technology within the department, with a concerted focus on strategy, funding, and training.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR SUCCESS

In terms of strategy, the focus should be on matching technology acquisitions to business practices and user needs for the future. The State Department has a chief information officer responsible for operations, acquisitions, and strategy. The commission believes that the State Department should continue the process, under the chief information officer's leadership and guidance, of centralizing high-level systems acquisitions, particularly for equipment like servers and IT platforms. State has appropriately identified the goal of having a department-wide enterprise architecture, and this must be done through department-wide acquisitions for network technologies.

The State Department should emulate many leading private sector companies that have added chief technology officer or chief innovation officer positions to their senior executive ranks. The State Department should create a similar position for an officer who could develop long-term, innovative strategies for use of technology in support of State Department business needs. The officer, working

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with diplomats and others in the Department and in the field, would identify and evaluate technologies and associated new practices to support the diplomatic mission; provide input to the acquisition process; and build support, through training and user testing, for the use of the new technologies and associated practices. The existence of a chief innovation officer would allow the chief information officer to focus on operations and acquisitions, particularly as high-level department systems acquisitions are further centralized.

Finally, because technology is evolving so rapidly, regular consultations with private sector representatives who understand options and strategies for leveraging technology would help the State Department better understand how the business community has overcome many of the same problems.

FUNDING AND INNOVATION

Funding for technology is a real challenge for the State Department, given the relatively long lag time between funding requests and receipt of funds. Technology moves quickly, and the State Department needs to have the flexibility to experiment with and test new technologies as they become available. Quite often, it will be the users—the diplomats in the field—who will be best placed to identify and work with new technologies and applications. The commission believes that the State Department, through a fund administered by the chief innovation officer, should make money available directly to posts specifically for innovations and testing new technologies.

If, as the commission anticipates, the State Department is going to depend more on technology and a virtual presence to compensate for location and access issues, this dependence means that it will need to keep its information systems up to date. It also means that the State Department will want to be in a position to exploit new technologies as they are proven in the private sector. In the past, State had difficulty funding its technology "refresh cycle" and fell badly behind other agencies and the private sector. In the last few years, the department has made a serious commitment to updating its technology on a consistent basis, through its Global IT Modernization (GITM) program. We applaud this effort and urge the department not only to have a policy that calls for a "refresh cycle" of 3–4 years but to commit to fully funding the acquisition of state-of-the-art commercial technology.

The State Department should create a constant stream of innovation and evolution with regard to technology and business processes. To facilitate innovation, training, and familiarization, the State Department should create a Technology Center at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). The Technology Center's staff could function as technology instructors for NFATC students, and students would play a role in testing and evaluating new ideas. When other agency personnel are in training at the NFATC, they could also have an opportunity to work with the Technology Center.

"With technology in general, the department lacks adequate training and implementation plans. Our end users need more training badly." —*Foreign Service Officer*

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TRAINING AND KNOW-HOW

Younger officers have had much greater exposure to technology, and just as in the private sector, there is a generational gap in user capabilities within the State Department. Training will play a vital role in bringing and keeping all officers up to speed with technology and its uses and will be important for everyone as technology changes. User support groups will also be helpful. Acquiring and deploying the right technology means nothing if users do not know how to employ it fully.

The State Department should identify Technology Center alumni and other interested personnel and work with them to test new technologies and business practices at their future posts. Some of the best innovations will come from the end-users, and it could be the Technology Center's job to capture these best practices as well as to determine which of the innovations developed in the field should be adopted by the State Department as a whole. In this context, the transient nature of the Foreign Service workforce provides a significant advantage: as technology advocates rotate from post to post, they will leave behind the knowledge and expertise they have imparted over the course of their tours.

As the State Department puts technology in service of its missions and its people, it will be important to establish some means of measuring success. Metrics could be as simple as the number of people who have completed online distance-learning courses, or less quantifiable outcomes like the better management of existing relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Raise the profile of technology in the State Department.** The senior leadership of the State Department must make technology a priority and demonstrate its commitment to doing so.
- **Appoint a chief innovation officer.** As part of an effort to better integrate business practices and technology, the State Department should establish the position of chief innovation officer. This officer would identify and evaluate technologies and associated new practices to support the diplomatic mission, provide input to the acquisition process, and build support for use of the new technologies within the Department.
- **Establish a standing advisory group with representatives from the private sector.** The State Department needs to draw upon outside expertise to stay current with how other organizations are using technology to support business practices and increase their productivity. Representatives should be both senior leaders in business and creative entrepreneurs who can identify new solutions. This group should meet regularly and advise the top State Department leadership on matters of technology and associated practices. This group should help the State Department benchmark against private sector best practices.
- **Fund technology more consistently across the State Department.** Enterprise-level systems acquisition and asset allocation need to be done centrally. At present, the State Department has been working toward consolidation, but still relies on an IT central fund, together with bureau-by-bureau funding for technology. This approach, while enabling individual bureaus to tailor acquisitions to their budgets and priorities, results in the uneven application and use of technology across the State Department's different bureaus.
- **Establish a quicker "refresh cycle."** The State Department has taken a good first step toward institutionalizing a technology "refresh cycle" of four years with its Global IT Modernization program. The commission underscores that this program must be continued and funded, with the goal of shortening the refresh cycle to the industry average of roughly three years for servers and mobile communications devices.

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- **Create a fund for testing new technologies in the field.** Posts should also be able to experiment with new technology and applications for local needs. The chief innovation officer would use a special fund in support of local innovation and experimentation with new technologies and applications.

> **Resources.** Based on private sector experience, a revolving fund of $1 million would provide for technology pilot programs in the field. If successful, this number should be increased.

- **Create a Technology Center at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.** A Technology Center on the grounds of the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC) would serve as a demonstration and instruction facility where the State Department and interagency personnel could try out different technologies currently in the marketplace as well as next-generation technologies. Users could also test new business practices that would help them achieve their missions more effectively and efficiently. The center could start with a small staff of a coordinator plus several trainers.

> **Resources.** Roughly $900,000 to $1.2 million annually for a small Technology Center staff.

  - The State Department should use one or more embassies as test beds for new technology and business practices in the field. Piloting new technologies and practices at posts would help the State Department match tools to needs and would encourage a continuous stream of innovation. The State Department could target technology experts at posts to work closely with users to ensure that technology and associated practices are meeting their needs. Since the State Department already conducts overseas pilots, there will be no additional cost associated with this recommendation.

- **Bring all personnel up to speed with technology before departure for post and offer formal technology training to those who need it.** Personnel should not arrive at post having never used the tools they will need to do their jobs. Foreign Service personnel are required to pass a language exam before assignment to a language-designated position. A similar technology proficiency exam would help those who need additional assistance with technology to get the training they need to do their jobs. In addition to the training offered by the Technology Center at NFATC, personnel should have access to regional training, online distance learning, and user support groups.

  - The State Department should also create a voluntary technology reverse mentoring or partnership program at posts, pairing more seasoned personnel with recent hires. This is already happening informally, and the opportunity should be formalized and expanded. Active participants in such a program should get credit for mentoring.

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EXPAND KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SHARING

Knowledge and information sharing are not just consultant jargon; increasingly they are indispensable tools of organizational success. The State Department produces information from officers around the world but this storehouse of knowledge is not easily accessible to those who might need it most. Many critical transnational and multilateral issues—terrorism, for example—would benefit substantially from new cross-embassy, cross-bureau, and inter-agency methods of information sharing. The commission urges the development of effective State Department processes and tools for knowledge and information management and best practices sharing. Such tools would enable department officers to stay at the leading edge of their profession.

The advances the State Department needs to make are already normal practice outside government. Information and knowledge-based communities of practice can be developed and maintained on not only a "hub and spoke" (field to Washington) model, but regionally and globally, by utilizing new, readily available applications and tools. The State Department has made some progress on this front, with more than 39 communities of practice currently in operation. For example, Embassy Ankara's economic section reports via an online community of practice, and the North American Partnership brings the many agencies involved in border-security issues together online. These communities tend to be based around blogs (short for Web logs), which are online journals hosted on a Web site where individuals can post information, including images, charts, audio, and video clips.

The State Department has also established Diplopedia, its version of Wikipedia, the popular online encyclopedia to which anyone can contribute, and is considering broader use of wikis, or systems for collaborative publishing that enable many authors

> "We don't train people to disseminate information properly. We should be looking at training so that people know how to make their documents accessible to everyone who might want to use them—whether that is via a listserv, wiki, blog, or e-mail." —*Foreign Service Officer*

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to contribute to a document or dialogue. Similar efforts have made progress in other national security agencies, particularly the intelligence agencies, and the State Department should expand its efforts in this area.

FINDING INFORMATION

As more of the State Department continues the transition to online, shared work, it will be important to have effective search and retrieval tools in place so that personnel can find the pieces of information they need to get their work done. The State Department has implemented a potentially effective search system, but the data that the search engine crawls through are not structured or tagged in any coherent way, and the accuracy of results remains mediocre. The process of tagging cables—something that people have been doing for decades—needs to be adopted by users of newer forms of communication—including documents, e-mails, blogs, and wikis—for easier search and retrieval.

SHARING BEST PRACTICES

Although virtual, online communities of practice continue to form and evolve, the sharing of best practices in the State Department remains sporadic. In some areas, including public diplomacy, it is relatively ingrained. Yet too often officers are working without the benefit of understanding where others have succeeded. The State Department depends on oral traditions, where an officer leaving post has a few days at best to provide his successor with the expertise and insight he or she has built up over the course of the tour. Innovation and lessons learned at posts would be more valuable if they were shared systematically and routinely across the community.

Such sharing of best practices will become more important as the practice of diplomacy evolves. Primarily, this will require a change in departmental culture, wherein officers not only recognize the value in sharing their knowledge and experiences, but are also given incentives to do so. Just as officers are given incentives to participate on a promotion panel, they could also receive credit for contributing to common information sites. Additionally, the State Department should integrate participation in communities of practice and sharing of best practices into the performance evaluation process.

VIDEOCONFERENCING

Other forms of technology can help promote collaboration as well. As many other government agencies and the private sector can attest, videoconferencing has become a good option for consultation and meetings. The State Department has installed videoconferencing equipment (DVCs) at nearly all of its overseas posts and has DVC capabilities in Washington. Already in use between Washington and the field, for internal meetings and public outreach, videoconferencing holds promise also

"For the State Department of the future, I would like to see more of a focus on best practices and making them crystal clear." —*Foreign Service Officer*

"If Embassy Stockholm has a best practice for blogs, why doesn't Embassy Accra copy it? Why can't we share best practices? We need to be looking at the best of America not only in our hiring practices, but also in the way we do business. Why aren't the best practices aggregated?" —*Foreign Service Officer*

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for international meetings—bilaterally and multilaterally. It could support embassies by supplementing their diplomatic consultations with Washington experts and in a number of other circumstances. Videoconferencing can save money, both in personnel time and travel funds.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

The transitory nature of the State Department's workforce overseas makes relationship management a constant challenge. Officers leaving post often provide their successor with no more than a written list of key contacts and a few words of advice. Foreign Service nationals are an important source of institutional memory, but too much knowledge and situational awareness is routinely lost in the current system. The department needs a new, common approach to relationship management that tracks and retains this information and facilitates the development of larger contact networks.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world participate in social networking, or systems that allow participants to learn about other participants' skills, talents, knowledge, personal history, and preferences. The State Department has discrete systems that contain some of these functionalities already, including a human resources system that can be used to identify expertise, but these databases are neither linked nor designed for department-wide use. Such a system could be valuable both in the field, where officers will be able to locate immediately the expertise to finish their task, and in Washington, where the senior leadership will be more easily able to put together task forces based on knowledge and experience. It will not be expensive to create a foreign affairs social network using commercially available software.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Identify, capture, and share knowledge and information, including best practices.** As an organization, the State Department does a poor job of making use of all its information and knowledge. Traditionally, the State Department has used annual meetings to share best practices and lessons learned from the field. With the maturation of online collaboration spaces and the continued dispersal of videoconferencing technology, these annual meetings no longer have to be the principal opportunity for State Department personnel to learn from one another. The State Department needs to develop and implement incentives to encourage its personnel to contribute to the organization's knowledge base.
- **Promote virtual communities of practice.** These communities, which can take the form of blogs or wikis, as invitation-only groups, capture and consolidate dispersed experience and offer new potential for sharing information and knowledge. These communities are self-forming and can be dissolved as easily as they can be created, with the captured information archived for easy search and retrieval. In the future, traditional field reporting could migrate almost completely to an online system of these communities of practice. Mission interagency communities spread out across a country could share information among themselves; expertise and reporting could be shared globally; individual officers at different embassies within a region could better track issues together that are common to a region; and crisis information from the field could be posted rapidly to a common site. These can also be used for communities external to the embassy as well. Such systems, as they mature, will need capable site management. Incentives for participation must be developed and implemented.

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- **Develop and implement a State Department–wide approach to sharing information about contacts and networks.** Although bureaus and posts work with various relationship management software, the State Department needs an organization-wide system. Such a system would facilitate the early identification of influential actors in host societies and improve biographical reporting. Training users, both in terms of usage and behavior, will be a significant challenge; the State Department should add a section to employees' performance reviews related to their contributions to relationship management.

> **Resources.** Based on private sector estimates, roughly $15 million–$20 million.

- **Use social networking.** The State Department should, in addition to implementing relationship management software, develop and deploy an internal foreign affairs network to allow personnel overseas to readily access expertise within their embassy and around the world. Participants would be able to self-create individual profiles featuring information such as professional history and expertise, which they then could link into a broader network of contacts. LinkedIn is an example of such a network in a public setting.
  - Social networking has possible external uses as well. Officers in the field are already using existing social networking Web sites to reach out to audiences, create networks, and build outreach efforts. As increasing numbers of people participate in social networking and applications are more widely available around the world, embassies must take advantage of this medium.
- **Develop and implement a flexible State Department–wide portal.** A portal is a Web site that offers easy access to frequently used services. The State Department does not have an enterprise-wide portal at present. The portal should contain a search function that can readily pull up information from the massive State Department archives and other sources of information. The page might also contain a number of options that the user can select. For example, applications could include a global directory search, post-specific updates from the regional security officer and others in-country, and commercially available automatic translation capabilities. This portal would place most of the information officers need at their fingertips in an accessible, aggregated, easy-to-use format. It will take a long-term and institution-wide commitment to build a State Department–wide portal, but the return on investment will be significant in terms of productivity.

> **Resources.** Based on private sector estimates, roughly $5 million to $10 million.

- **Promote use of videoconferencing, both for internal collaboration and outreach.** Videoconferencing, or DVCs, already in wide use for U.S. government meetings, will be increasingly useful for meetings with foreign counterparts as well. Although not a replacement for in-person relationship building, videoconferencing can be useful for many types of meetings and offers an enhanced alternative to e-mail or telephone. DVCs are being used with success at State for public outreach, connecting speakers from one part of the world to audiences in another. DVCs allow for greater interaction without additional travel costs.
  - In addition, desktop videoconferencing capabilities should be pursued. As the technology continues to take root and as sufficient bandwidth develops in countries around the world, videoconferencing between State Department personnel and nongovernmental groups and individuals will also open up options for enhanced networking and for maintaining relationships.

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4

EMBRACE NEW COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Diplomacy's successful future will depend in large part on the State Department's ability to leverage the Internet and new communication tools for outreach. As technology improves and the use of new technology grows, the generation of younger users—the technology "natives"—will make up an ever-larger part of U.S. audiences and the American workforce. U.S. embassies cannot afford to be left behind.

> "Most of the members of the cabinet, including the foreign minister, in the country in which I represent the United States are young, technologically savvy; several are American educated. I do much of my business with the foreign minister by text message. He texts me several times a day, and you can bet I am quick to respond. One day, I was texting back and forth with three cabinet members during a cabinet meeting!" —*Foreign Service Officer*

As of January 2007, more than a billion people—one-sixth of the world population—use the Internet (see figure 1).[8] This number will continue to grow as infrastructure emerges and the costs associated with Internet use continue to decline. As some indication of the potential for growth, only 3.5 percent of people in Africa and only about 10 percent of people in Asia and the Middle East use the Internet. The embassy of the future will of necessity look to the Internet to connect with its audiences.

It is in the U.S. interest to promote the development and deployment of increased bandwidth (digital telecommunications capacity), particularly in less-developed regions. Just as we have provided access to information through our libraries, so too can we now provide access to information through the Internet. Access to information provided by Internet connectivity represents one way the United States can promote openness, pluralism, and transparency. The State Department, together with the Agency for International Development, should work with companies and NGOs to expand bandwidth around the world.

[8] See http://www.internetworldstats.com (accessed January 11, 2007).

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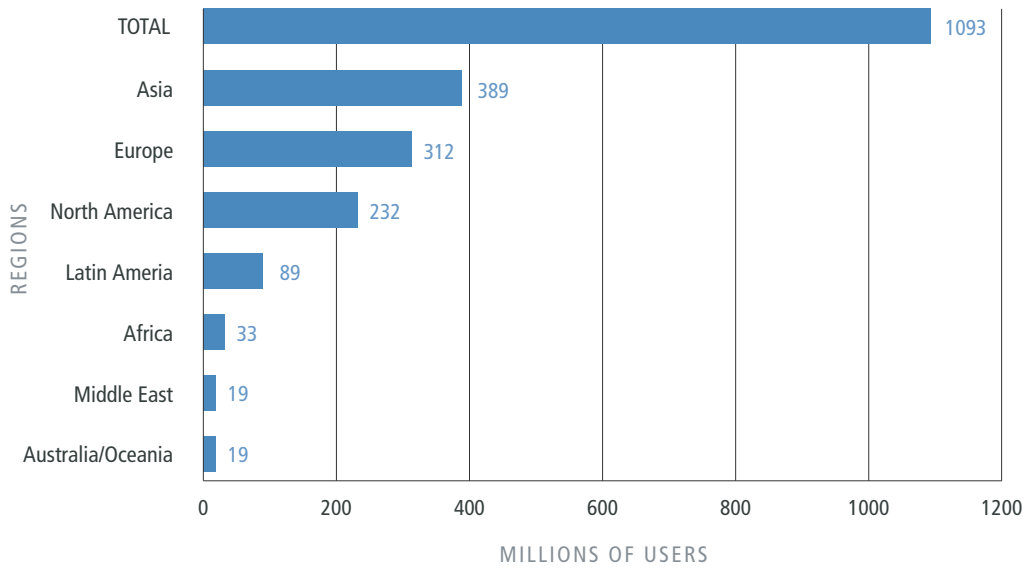
Figure 1. **WORLD INTERNET USERS**



Source: Internet World Stats: Usage and Population Statistics, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm.

THE INTERNET AND NEW MEDIA

As Internet usage has grown in numbers, it has also evolved in content. In the late 1990s, Web logs (blogs) were primarily personal journals published on the Internet. Today, there are more than 93 million blogs in existence, with 175,000 new blogs coming online everyday.[9] Some of these are still just personal journals with small readerships, but many more are media outlets in their own right that receive millions of hits a day and inform opinion on a wide range of topics around the world. Taken in aggregate, there are more than 1.6 million blog updates per day, or 18 updates per second.[10]

The Internet is the vehicle of the new media. Web sites and blogs offering written material and video are becoming as important as traditional broadcast and print media in shaping public opinion. Individuals with whom the project staff spoke made clear that the State Department has come to appreciate the importance of blogs, particularly as global public opinion has taken an increasingly negative view of the United States. State Department personnel are now allowed to participate in the blogosphere in a limited role; they may comment on things posted by others to correct the record or to present U.S. policy on an issue. Personnel are just beginning to engage in this medium. Although this is a good first step, it is not sufficient.

If the State Department does not participate more rigorously in new media, it will miss the opportunity to have a voice in this increasingly important global conversation. Our opponents will not wait for the United States to catch up. Terrorists already use the Internet to recruit, distribute training materials, collaborate on terror plots, share videos of their attacks, and otherwise spread their message to as

[9] See http://technorati.com/about/ (accessed July 23, 2007).

[10] See ibid.

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> "[With respect to] American Corners, putting in the computers is great. The Georgians are packed in to use the computers and get on the Internet. That is a gateway to the world. It is opening their eyes. When they go into these American Corners, they are overwhelmed with this information." —*Foreign Service Officer*

wide an audience as possible. Hostile regimes use the Internet to provide false or inaccurate information to key audiences about U.S. policies and actions. We must be as disciplined about rapid response in new media like blogs and video-sharing Web sites as we are in traditional media like newspapers and television. Successful use of these media will require a clear strategy, targeted participation, and effective content.

A host of policy issues remain and must be addressed if blogging is to become a widespread practice. An evaluation of this engagement and where it fits into other diplomatic priorities will be essential. The policy, and its implementation, will require discipline to ensure that blogging does not become just a forum for airing personal opinions on policy issues. Yet engaging in this medium is precisely the direction the State Department must go if it is to sustain a clear voice in the increasingly cacophonous global arena. To participate effectively in the changing communications environment, the State Department should expand training in these new forms of media and communication.

VIDEO AND AUDIO CONTENT

In addition to participating in the conversations that shape opinion and inform popular decisionmaking, the commission recommends that the State Department use new media to push its message out to its audiences. The State Department has begun to experiment with podcasting—distribution of audio and video clips to be played on computers and portable music players like iPods. This provides a good option for some embassies, particularly in more developed countries.

The commission examined a range of new tools that would supplement the means of communication used today—radio, TV, newspaper—and has concluded that blogging, online discussions and exchanges, podcasting, and videoconferencing should become mainstream embassy practices. The face of the embassy of the future will be its virtual presence, not just its bricks and mortar. Visits to the embassy will come not only in person, but increasingly online. Current Web sites are a significant improvement on previous efforts, but reflect too much of a static one-way flow of information. Just as effective diplomacy requires welcoming public spaces, so must embassy Web sites make room for visitor participation and engagement.

Videoconferencing, as previously noted, is already being used for public outreach with considerable success. Its use in connecting speakers in the United States with audiences around the world illustrates its significant additional potential, both for its reach and for the opportunity it presents to extend dialogue across continents.

Although virtual interaction will never be a substitute for face-to-face contact, it provides opportunities for enhancing outreach and maintaining relationships. As the Internet continues to develop as the hub of global dialogue, the State Department needs to ensure that embassies have a healthy virtual presence and complete fluency in all the outreach tools available today. Embassies must stay current with these tools as they evolve.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Enhance Web sites.** Mission Web sites should be designed for their in-country audiences and should not reflect an America always in "send mode." Web sites should weave more multimedia into text, including video and audio clips as well as images. Mission Web sites should enable the embassy to connect with host country and regional audiences. Ambassadors are responsible for, and must be able to determine, the content of their missions' Web sites and should encourage contributions by the other agencies at post.
- **Develop forward-looking policies on Internet-based and new media engagement and train officers on the policies to guide their engagement.** These policies should allow and provide guidance for State Department officers to engage in policy-related discussions on blogs and in other forums following the example set by many major American corporations.
- **Expand new media training.** Time in training courses at all levels should be devoted to new media and Internet-based outreach, including blogging and video-sharing Web sites, and should teach strategies for outreach using these new forms of communication. Additional training should be offered to all who need it via distance learning and regional training.
- **Develop downloadable, portable audio and video content and make it available for wider distribution.** Mission personnel should be able to repackage relevant State Department and mission personnel-generated audio and video clips for wider distribution via the Web site or through Internet syndication, known as RSS (Really Simple Syndication). Embassies should be encouraged to have small multimedia production centers to create and edit this video and audio content for the Web site and distribution and perform other media product-related tasks as needed. Content value and impact must be evaluated periodically.

> **Resources.** Based on State Department and private sector experience, $10,000 per embassy for a small media center that primarily edits audio and video content, and considerably more for a media center that creates its own content. Total costs will depend on worldwide embassy demand.

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5

OPERATE BEYOND EMBASSY WALLS

"My belief is that our Foreign Service is building-centric. We know how to engage from an embassy or a consulate; without a building, things are much less clear. However, our presence is what we are doing, not the buildings." —*Foreign Service Officer*

"In the past, many of us viewed our job as being 'super-journalists.' Increasingly, we need to start looking at our job as being the host country's window back onto the United States." —*Foreign Service Officer*

Being able to work outside the embassy will increase the effectiveness and the ability of the individual officer, or officer operating in a team, to conduct his or her diplomatic mission. Yet creating the mobile diplomat of the future will require changes in key aspects of department culture.

Outdated business practices present a major obstacle to moving personnel outside the embassy. Many believe the prevailing culture at missions sets too great a priority on serving internal and Washington-based requests. Project staff interviewed senior managers who are trying to change this culture, but also spoke with individuals who believe that they are still too often tethered to their desks writing and clearing cables or otherwise serving internal embassy meetings and functions.

Researching and writing submissions for mandated reports also consumes significant amounts of time. Ways to reduce the hours diplomats devote to these projects should be pursued. These may be necessary functions, but if mission personnel are to engage as diplomats, they must be outside the embassy to the maximum extent possible.

REPORTING PRACTICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Although the formal process of sending cleared cables remains in place, a second, informal process

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run by e-mail is rapidly replacing cables as a quicker, more responsive alternative. Cables are still being written and cleared, but the slow process renders this material less useful in time-sensitive situations. Many formal cables are going unread by the decisionmakers to whom they were targeted; their content is supplanted by the immediacy of e-mails or phone calls.

As new systems of providing and sharing information evolve, new communications options should be explored. At the same time, some elements of the existing cable system should be retained. For example, e-mail distribution is determined by the sender. That is, in many cases, appropriate, but the distribution tags of the cable system are a helpful means of ensuring that all relevant parties receive the message. The State Department is working to field a new system that will enhance communications targeting in this way, but full deployment is not scheduled until 2009.[11]

Most important is ensuring that practices reflect the real reporting needs of embassies and the State Department. If there is to be less emphasis on pure observation and reporting from inside the embassy and more on advocacy and action outside the embassy, then officers need to be able to report directly from the field. The commission sees a hybrid process in which some reporting could be widely shared on a virtual community of practice, directly from the field, while other field reporting would go to a colleague at the embassy who would then draft and clear a formal report for Washington through the chief of mission. There must be a distinction between the proper role of spot reporting and those communications that also provide key analytical or policy judgments.

If State Department personnel are able to report directly from the field to a community of practice or other collaborative space, it follows that other agencies should be able and encouraged to do so as well. This will require cultural change, the proper tools, and remote access for non–State Department personnel to the State Department or other common access network.

> "Everyone who wants them should have laptops, flash drives, and PDAs. In Jakarta, for instance, they gave everyone PDAs so that they could get work done while in traffic."
>
> —*Foreign Service Officer*

TOOLS

If officers are truly to be more independent in the field, they need to be able to take their computing environment with them. Foreign Service personnel should have access to at least the same level of technology as their globetrotting private sector counterparts. State Department personnel have already found their handheld mobile communications devices to be very useful as they spend more time out of the office, but because of the way that information technology management is decentralized in the State Department, these devices have not been as widely available as they should be.[12]

In the future, each officer should be issued a handheld mobile communications device. That device should be issued during each new Foreign Service officer's basic training—the A-100 course—and officers will carry them on their assignments, rather than depending on having a mobile communications device issued by a regional bureau, whose priorities

[11] The new system, which will be called SMART (State Messaging and Archival Retrieval Toolkit), is slated to be fully deployed by August 2009.

[12] Current examples of handheld mobile communications devices include the BlackBerry and Treo.

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may preclude having such devices available to all who need them. The domestic bureaus' use of these devices has already been centralized, with cost-saving benefits. The biggest challenge here is not the technology; it is the organization of the State Department, whereby individual bureaus and posts control the money and responsibility for systems that should be run centrally. These devices must be replaced regularly, as technology changes.

Global use of these devices is still not possible because of insufficient telecommunications infrastructure in some parts of the world, but those parts of the world are shrinking rapidly. The State Department should consider expanding the use of mobile satellite communications technologies for those areas where mobile communications are important, but otherwise not available.

Another means of enhancing mobile communications today is through the use of "fobs," or electronic keys that allow remote access to the State Department's unclassified network. Again, these devices vary in their utility, depending on the country. These are in demand within the State Department, but despite their relatively low cost, they are not available to all who might want them.

Much embassy business can be conducted on the unclassified network of the State Department that handles data up to the level of sensitive-but-unclassified information (OpenNet). Handheld mobile communications devices, fobs, and laptops available today could significantly enhance the mobility of personnel and their ability to operate outside the embassy compound. Security training for use of these devices will be necessary, even for their unclassified use.

Officers will also need means of classified reporting, via secure phone, secure handheld mobile communications device, or secure laptop. The State Department must stay apprised of these options, review them, and determine what circumstances would benefit from their use. State Department officers should have access to these technologies as needed.

TRAVEL AND OUTREACH FUNDS

Increased operations beyond embassy walls cannot be supported with today's limited travel and outreach funds. Travel funds are enablers both for getting officers out of the embassy and for providing them with a means of meeting outside U.S. office spaces with their colleagues and audiences. They are needed for moving within cities, particularly where embassies are far from the center of town, and are essential for supporting circuit-riding teams and other travel beyond the capital.

> "In order for us to be out and doing our work, we need to have responsibility and we need tools and we need to be mobile. Some of this is a resource issue, but in general, we are talking more than we are doing." —*Foreign Service Officer*

Outreach funds (traditionally known as representation funds) will become more important as a tool for all officers at all levels, particularly given that many embassies are not well suited to meetings, because of distance and/or security. Officers are meeting counterparts at restaurants, in hotels, or in their homes. By design, most small American Presence Posts (APPs) lack meeting spaces, so these outreach funds are needed to facilitate meetings for APP officers. These funds are also essential for circuit riders in developing contacts without the benefit of a U.S.-

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owned or operated meeting space. These funds need not be reserved for senior personnel; in capitals, and on travel, younger officers can make excellent use of a relatively small amount of representation funds to cultivate relationships with their young counterparts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Foster reporting and other policies within the department and at posts that value and support work outside the embassy compound.**
  - Requirements need to be adjusted so that personnel are encouraged to report from outside the embassy, including policies establishing when it is appropriate to report to Washington directly from the field and when information should be sent via an officer back at the mission who can write and clear a complete report for transmission.
  - Other agencies must be capable of communicating with their State Department counterparts outside the embassy, and policies should encourage having them contribute to embassy-wide sites (e.g., local community of practice or contributions for a cross-agency report from the field).
  - As reporting policies are adjusted, it will be important to have mechanisms that continue to ensure rigor and accountability in mission assessments.
- **Provide personnel with the tools they need to communicate from the field.**
  - All personnel should have the means to communicate remotely. Officers should be issued fobs (electronic key devices allowing remote access to the State Department's unclassified network) and mobile communications devices at the conclusion of their basic training. These should be provided through centralized funding. They must also be replaced on a regular basis with upgraded devices commensurate with advances in available technology. Laptops must also be available to all those who need them.
    > **Resources.** For example, mobile handheld communications devices would cost about $3 million for Foreign Service personnel (a small number have them already), and roughly $12 million annually for service. Fobs would cost about $3.4 million annually for Foreign Service personnel. There would be additional costs for Civil Service and other personnel.
  - As the technology continues to improve, secure mobile communications devices for classified information should be provided overseas for all who need them. These should become much more widely available in the future. Resources for these devices would need to be determined.
- **Provide sufficient travel and outreach funds.** Increased travel and representation funds will be key tools for enhancing the American in-country presence. The commission proposes that the State Department, in consultation with Congress, create an outreach fund available to officers below the rank of ambassador.

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6

STRENGTHEN PLATFORM AND PRESENCE OPTIONS

The U.S. diplomatic presence must reflect the objective of reaching out and influencing a diverse audience beyond a nation's central government and foreign policy elite. The commission envisions a physical presence that is composed of a central embassy coupled with options for distributing the mission presence in-capital and in-country. American officials should have the capacity to reach routinely outside the embassy compound and, in many cases, outside the capital city.

COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN

The future overseas mission requires a comprehensively designed in-country presence. The ambassador and country team must lead this design process. As part of the mission's strategic planning process, ambassadors should lead this effort, looking systematically at the in-country presence options, and match available resources to a presence that achieves desired outcomes. This presence assessment should be undertaken in cooperation with the relevant regional bureau. Together, the country team and the regional bureau should determine and assess the best "footprint" for each country. This assessment should become part of the annual Mission Strategic Plan.

DESIGN CRITERIA

Form should follow function. If optimal placement and distribution of U.S. platforms and presence are to be achieved, criteria should be created for all missions to systematically evaluate these platform and presence options. For platforms and presence beyond the embassy compound, mission teams must ask the following: What results do we want? How can we best achieve these results? Where? What type of platform or presence would best achieve those results? Which agency or agencies can best achieve those results for us? What are the resource trade-offs and financial implications? What are the security implications? Reflecting the rapidly changing global environment, flexibility will be of paramount importance.

Several general principles must also guide decisions on platform needs. First, in every country where the United States is represented, there must be a modern, safe, secure facility in which to work (and live, if needed). Second, the State Department needs new concepts of operations, tools, and training to support the conduct of diplomacy outside these secure facilities, at different venues. Other chapters of this report also address these ideas in detail. Third, in particular in a capital where the embassy (or

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consulate) location is more remote from an urban center, it will be important to have satellite locations—an American Center, an American Corner, a library, or other places convenient for outreach to the public—that provide resource materials, public Internet access, and/or space for public gatherings and other diplomatic functions. The ambassador's residence traditionally offers an important venue for hosting diplomatic functions as do hotels, restaurants, and other private or public venues that may be available for diplomatic use.

In general, a more distributed presence will require careful coordination from the embassy. As a result, the ambassador's role and capacity to coordinate will become more important. Lessons from American Presence Posts have illustrated the need for strong coordination from embassy leadership and the value of a clearly articulated set of objectives and mission scope for those in the field.

ANALYTICAL SUPPORT: CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN DIPLOMACY

Government agencies are struggling to keep pace with changing private sector patterns of interaction, commerce, and communication. Government agencies with regulatory responsibilities over the private sector are feeling the strain, as is the State Department. The challenge goes well beyond trying to introduce cutting-edge technology into State Department business operations. The environment in which the State Department must operate changes far more quickly than can government institutions.

Federal agencies with technical missions have developed offices to navigate this dynamic environment, apply advanced research methods to understand the environment and measure the effectiveness of the agency's programs, and evaluate through modeling and simulation the introduction of new business methods and procedures. The commission believes that given today's complex world, the State Department needs such capabilities on an ongoing basis.

The commission recommends that the State Department establish a Center for Innovation in Diplomacy to systematically support innovation in diplomatic practice and presence. This center would undertake complex operations research on new business challenges and opportunities and determine optimal ways to structure or modify operations. The center would support the State Department in systematically matching resources to identified tasks in a particular country or region including the roles and responsibilities of personnel needed to support these tasks; the concept of operations; the platforms and/or technology that are needed to achieve the tasks; and the associated costs to support the tasks. For example, at the time of a decision to build a new embassy in a foreign capital, the State Department would have in-house expertise to evaluate the location of the embassy, the trade-offs that each possible location poses in terms of transportation demands on embassy staff, time lost in transit and costs of transit, security risks posed by various locations, impact on host nation visitors, and techniques for mitigating the implications of each location. This center would also help the State Department develop criteria to determine what scope and scale and type of presence is most appropriate in different circumstances. It could be applied not only to routine peacetime situations, but also to diplomatic needs in crisis situations, for relief efforts, and for reconstruction and stabilization tasks.

The capability should be tied closely both to the department and to field operations, but the commission does not believe that the State Department should hire this level of expertise as full-time

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government employees. Instead, following the lead of almost all other departments, the State Department should use a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC).[13]

FFRDCs are not a substitute for private contractors and are not allowed to compete for commercial work. They undertake technical support activity as an extension of government organizations that cannot, and should not, try to acquire technical skills in house. The department has used such a capability in the past for human resources analysis. The State Department FFRDC could be freestanding or could be housed as a separate entity within an institution that has existing FFRDCs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Systematically determine and coordinate the central and distributed U.S. presence in each country.** The mission should conduct this assessment, in coordination with the relevant State Department bureau, and integrate it into the strategic planning process at the mission. Assessment criteria must be developed. A strategically planned and distributed presence will be a powerful force for enhancing effectiveness and will require careful planning and coordination.
- **Create a Center for Innovation in Diplomacy.** To support the effective development of this comprehensive design and, beyond that, new business practices, the State Department should establish an FFRDC Center for Innovation in Diplomacy. The center would support the task of analyzing the requirements for people, platforms, technology, and business practices in the field, and the resources needed to support those requirements.

> **Resources.** When other executive branch agencies start their respective FFRDCs, they generally begin with a goal of hiring 30 people the first year and build up as demand requires. Basing projections on comparable experience in other agencies, the State Department would need approximately $7 million the first year and an estimated $13 million for steady annual operations.

CENTRAL PRESENCE—THE EMBASSY

The embassy itself is a core component of any diplomatic presence. As such, there is significant pressure to get this vital piece of our diplomatic presence right. Bricks and mortar are on the landscape for decades and require a significant financial investment for construction and maintenance. Personnel will change and the strategic landscape will change, but the buildings will endure.

The law, policies, and practices associated with new embassy construction have had unintended consequences. The commission believes that every country in which the United States is represented should have a modern, safe, and secure facility in which our representatives can work and, as needed, live. The commission has found that the level of security of the embassy compound can be in tension with the mission of diplomacy. In some cases, distance from city centers creates new challenges for mission personnel in the conduct of daily business. Our embassies must be safe, secure, and functional places to work, but our nation's interests depend in large part on our diplomats' ability to do their jobs effectively—and that means facilitating interaction with host nation audiences.

NEW EMBASSY CONSTRUCTION: BACKGROUND

The history of the current embassy construction program dates principally to the 1983–1984 bombings of U.S. embassy facilities in Beirut, Lebanon. Against

[13] For a list of other government FFRDCs, see http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/nsf05306/.

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the backdrop of the Beirut attacks, an advisory panel chaired by Admiral Bobby Ray Inman issued extensive recommendations, including the need for improvements to the security of buildings and facilities. Of 126 facilities identified by the Inman panel as inadequately secure, only 49 were rebuilt or enhanced to meet post-Beirut standards during the next 15 years.[14] After the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, two accountability review boards, chaired by Admiral William Crowe, argued that every post should be treated as a potential target and recommended a major capital building program. The 1999 Overseas Presence Advisory Panel, chaired by Lewis Kaden, conducted a global review of American posts abroad, declaring the condition of many "often shameful" and lacking adequate security, in addition to suffering from poor maintenance and overcrowding.[15]

Congress authorized new building construction in 1999 in the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act, and the State Department soon began a long-term, multibillion dollar effort to replace its unsafe and aging diplomatic facilities. In 2001, the State Department reorganized its overseas construction office under the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations (OBO) and created a long-term overseas building plan. In the last six years, construction has proceeded at an unprecedented rate. OBO has completed new facility projects at 44 posts, with additional new embassy compound and annex projects under way at 16 posts.[16] Building construction costs are now shared government-wide through the Capital Security Cost-Sharing Program (CSCS) initiated in 2005. Agencies pay a share of the capital infrastructure costs on the basis of their overseas presence. Under the CSCS program, the State Department is planning to complete 150 major projects by fiscal year 2018, at a projected cost of $17.5 billion, not including building rehabilitations and general compound security upgrades.[17]

The State Department has instituted a Standard Embassy Design (SED) program and a design-build strategy to increase construction efficiencies. The SED has common characteristics that can be adapted across a range of facility sizes.[18] The new embassy compounds are multi-building campuses located on average on ten-acre sites.

MODERN AND SECURE

In the commission's interviews, personnel said that they were pleased to be working in modern and secure facilities. Where a single building replaces dispersed facilities, collocation under one roof provides advantages for coordinating the activities of mission personnel.

New embassy compounds are subject to the security provisions of the 1999 Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act. The law includes two key security stipulations: all U.S. government personnel under chief of mission authority will be located on the site, and the facility will be sited not less than 100 feet from the perimeter of the property. The secretary of state has waiver authority for both of these provisions.[19] The State Department

[14] Susan B. Epstein, "Embassy Security: Background Funding and the Budget," *Congressional Research Service Report*, updated October 4, 2001, 2. Available at http://www.opencrs.com/rpts/RL30662_20011004.pdf.

[15] U.S. Department of State, America's *Overseas Presence in the 21st Century*, 46.

[16] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Overseas Building Operations, September 2007.

[17] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Overseas Building Operations, September 2007. In total there are completed, in progress, or planned new facility projects at 205 posts from 2001 through 2018. See also http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/56718.pdf (accessed July 17, 2007).

[18] Standard Embassy Design, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/37418.pdf (accessed July 23, 2007).

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has supplemented these legal requirements with a number of additional security features for new facilities, including a nine-foot anti-climb/anti-ram wall.[20]

IMAGE

The security measures that protect our embassies significantly affect their appearance. The new embassy facilities have in some places created the perception among some of a fearful United States, retreating behind high walls and isolating itself from the people it is trying to reach. This situation is not unique to new embassy compounds. At older embassies in places like London and Paris, buildings in the heart of the city are now cordoned off with street closures and/or concrete barriers.

This is not the image that the United States should present to the world. The commission believes that it is important to meet security needs in ways that reflect the new diplomatic job. The General Services Administration (GSA) award-winning Design Excellence Program, applied to more than three-dozen completed federal courthouses, has promoted the use of architectural features consistent with security and the need to project an open presence in the local community.[21] The security required for domestic federal courthouses is not nearly as stringent or complex as that required for overseas embassy compounds, but setbacks, barriers, and other security features can be designed in ways that integrate security with the overall building design and surroundings.

U.S. embassies should also represent the best of environmental design and should, to the greatest extent possible, meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) industry standards for "green" construction.[22] The State Department has made progress on this already—it is pursuing energy conservation and sustainability initiatives, including the development of a Standard Embassy Design prototype that could meet LEED standards. The new embassy compound in Sofia, Bulgaria is the first U.S. embassy to become LEED-certified. The commission believes that the State Department should continue on this path with all future construction. Setting such standards will make an important statement about U.S. values and objectives.

LOCATION

Although the consequences of security measures on the appearance of U.S. embassies deserve careful consideration, the location of the buildings is of higher importance. The State Department has been building many of its new embassies outside old city centers. The tracts of land required to meet facility size and setback requirements are more expensive and hard to find in downtown urban areas.

These new embassy locations are changing the operational practices of diplomats. The commission's interviews suggest that, in some capitals, State Department employees are struggling to adapt to the reality that they must do some or all of their business outside of these new facilities. Officers are in new, safe facilities, but they are no longer in

[19] According to section 606 of the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-113; 22 U.S.C. 4865), the secretary of state has the authority to waive these legal requirements, if he/she determines that security considerations permit and it is in the national interest of the United States. In the case of personnel location, the decision to waive the requirement is made together with the head of each agency employing personnel that would not be located at the site.

[20] See Capital Security Cost-Sharing Program slide overview, November 2006, available at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/56718.pdf (accessed July 17, 2007).

[21] For more information, see "Design Excellence Program," http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/channelView.do?pageTypeId=8195&channelId=-12885 (accessed July 10, 2007).

[22] For an overview of LEED standards, see http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CategoryID=19 (accessed June 7, 2007).

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the middle of political, economic, and cultural life of the city—where many of them need to be. This creates logistical challenges in traveling to and from the downtown locations where embassy staff must be for meetings and events. It creates difficulties as well for embassy visitors. Time is lost in transit, and travel costs are increased. Meetings have moved with greater frequency to hotels and other venues outside the embassy, where there are separate security considerations. Visitors still want to come to the U.S. embassy for meetings and events, but in general it requires a greater effort for them and their American hosts.

In Tbilisi, Georgia, the new embassy is located well outside of the city center. To get there, embassy personnel and visitors must travel about 30 minutes each way in a country where driving is hazardous. The new embassy compound in Zagreb, Croatia, is also far from downtown and not easily accessible by public transport. In many big cities, traffic is congested, creating challenges no matter where the embassy is located; distance from urban centers will exacerbate these challenges.

The importance of meeting business needs for diplomatic engagement and outreach should be balanced against the need to manage security risk to U.S. embassies. The commission believes that, first, the location of our diplomatic platforms must be determined in a broad context: All key criteria—current and projected mission needs, security requirements, and costs (financial, and personnel time, near-term and long-term)—must be an integral part of location decisions. Second, the State Department and other agencies must find new ways to carry out their responsibilities, consistent with managing security risk. That is in large measure what this report is about.

The commission examined the possibility of establishing additional offices in a downtown area where an embassy may be well outside of the city center. Although the commission did not see a need for such separate office space in general, it would support such an option when a need could be identified, security requirements could be met, and costs justified. In general, however, the commission favors a mobile and more flexible presence outside the embassy, consistent with sound security practices.

> "I have to say that we are in this beautiful space, and we like that. We do have to overcome how far we are from downtown. You do feel like fortress America. I know there are valid security concerns, and I don't know what the answer is, but we need to keep thinking about it."
>
> —*Foreign Service Officer*

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Beyond the question of location, other issues have arisen around this rapid, but still relatively new, building program—for example, whether a sufficient funding stream for operations and maintenance can be assured.[23] The State Department, having made a substantial investment already, needs to give due consideration to the upkeep of these new buildings

[23] "Embassy Construction: State Has Made Progress Construction New Embassies, but Better Planning Is Needed for Operations and Maintenance," GAO Report GAO-06-641 (Washington, D.C.: Government Accountability Office, June 2006), 3–4, at http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06641.pdf (accessed June 22, 2007).

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or they will deteriorate like the infrastructure they replaced. Without a significant commitment and planning process to support funding, it would not be hard to foresee a future report issuing the same devastating critique of building conditions that the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel presented in 1999. Older facilities not slated for replacement must receive needed maintenance as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The current State Department building program for facility replacement needs to be continued.** The State Department and Congress should support the continuation of the new embassy construction program, consistent with the considerations set forth below.
  - Every country in which the United States is represented should have a modern, safe, secure, and functional facility in which our representatives can work and, as needed, live.
  - The State Department must take an approach to its building program that integrates security and cost with the long-term impact on the State Department's mission. The secretary of state should make the final decision on the location of new embassy compounds. Accessibility for business needs is a key factor; locations remote from urban centers should be avoided wherever possible.
  - The State Department should explore use of architectural design features for the new embassy compounds that meet security needs and are consistent with American values of openness.
  - The State Department should make every effort to build new embassy compounds to industry (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards for "green" construction.
  - The State Department must make it easier for U.S. diplomats to conduct business outside of these secure facilities. Recommendations that address this need follow in this section and can be found in other chapters of this report.
- **The State Department should undertake a comprehensive lessons-learned review to determine building user needs for the future.** The review should develop lessons learned from the new embassy construction program to date and apply these lessons to the remaining facilities slated for replacement and upgrade. The review must include both the builders of U.S. facilities abroad and State Department personnel who work in those facilities, as well as personnel from other agencies posted to U.S. missions overseas.
- **The State Department must plan for and consistently fund operations and maintenance costs for new facilities; older facilities must be maintained as well.** Operations and maintenance costs for the new facilities are significantly higher than for those facilities they have replaced, and State needs to ensure these costs are built into future budgets.[24]

> **Resources.** For older facilities, the State Department estimates $529 million for major rehabilitation projects for FY07–FY12 and a backlog of $112 million for long-term maintenance and repair. One major industry methodology predicts annual maintenance costs to range from 2 to 4 percent of a facility's replacement value.[25] Rough estimates for maintenance can be determined by using this industry standard.

[24] Ibid, 3.

[25] Ibid., 40.

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DISTRIBUTED PLATFORM AND PRESENCE OPTIONS

The embassy of the future will be more than just the chancery building in the capital. With the innovative use of smaller platforms distributed in a capital and around a country, traveling teams, and virtual platforms, opportunities for strengthening the American presence are significant. There are a number of these presence options beyond the U.S. embassy and consulates, to include single-officer American Presence Posts, American Corners, American Centers, Binational Centers, circuit riders, and Virtual Presence Posts. For any diplomatic function—public outreach or private meetings—our platforms may also include leased or rented space. Building on initiatives already under way, the State Department should develop and strengthen these options, consistent with the need to be able to tailor the U.S. presence to strategic planning objectives and national requirements. Flexibility will continue to be important to meet evolving needs. Lessons learned for the effective design and use of these models must be collected, shared, and applied as such practices increase and mature.

AMERICAN PRESENCE POSTS

The commission strongly supports the concept of American Presence Posts, or APPs, as originally developed in France. These posts are small, generally with one Foreign Service officer and several locally employed staff, and operate on an unclassified basis outside capital cities. Currently there are eight APPs worldwide—five in France, and one each in Canada, Egypt, and Indonesia. Significantly enhanced relations with local and regional contacts have flowed from APP activities, improving the ability of embassy officers and the ambassador to reach local officials and opinion leaders on matters of interest. They have had beneficial effects for commercial and public diplomacy objectives. The State Department plans to triple the number of APPs, with many opening over the next two years.[26]

The State Department has made some progress in defining criteria to assist in deciding whether to open an American Presence Post; these criteria are essential to the planning process. As the State Department has learned with its existing APPs, these small posts make sense in locations that are enduring centers of influence and opinion and/or where significant American economic interests are located, and where security conditions will permit a small post in a commercial or government building. In cases where these criteria might be met but a permanent presence is less feasible for cost or security reasons, the use of circuit riders, as discussed later in this chapter, might represent a better option.

The chief benefit of the enduring physical presence provided by American Presence Posts is that, as they have been around longer, they have expanded their networks and contacts, and built relationships

> "The advantage of an APP is that you become part of the local fabric of society. The newspapers call you. People ask for your input. You get into all of these questions and people look at the United States as a country that has valuable advice on a lot of things.... I am basically a local politician." —*Foreign Service Officer*

[26] Remarks by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in the East Auditorium of the State Department, Washington, D.C.: February 8, 2007, http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/pr022607.html (accessed July 23, 2007).

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that have led to increased opportunities. APP Medan, Indonesia, provides an excellent example. Sumatra is an island of 42 million people with 12 major ethnic groups. Many of these people have never seen an American other than our APP officer. The local governors have a great deal of power, and there are large numbers of social organizations, religious groups, and others that form and shape local perspectives and policies. Yet it is not possible to reach out to them effectively from as far away as Jakarta. The APP officer on the ground is able to represent the United States in a sustained, relevant way.

There are a number of challenges to making APPs successful, most notably that APPs pose certain security risks. The commission favors an approach to APPs that retains their flexibility, permitting APPs to be in cities where the security environment will allow them to be located in commercial or host government office spaces. APPs require strong embassy support and coordination to ensure success within the limited scope of APP activities. A senior-level APP coordinator at the embassy is essential.

The individuals who run APPs are also critical to their success. An APP officer has to be proactive and entrepreneurial, skills that not everyone possesses in equal measure. The amount of money available for travel and events needs to be sufficient for the level of activity that APP officers can maintain. APP officers are on the leading edge of American diplomacy and should actively share best practices with one another.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Support expansion of American Presence Posts.** In the context of the country assessment process identified above, the commission endorses the concept of APPs along the lines of the small and unclassified France model. APP selection must be evaluated against mission objectives, resources, security, and other presence options. Lessons learned from APPs in France also suggest that maintaining a focus on core activities and avoiding mission expansion are important.

> **Resources.** Based on recent State Department experience, new APPs will cost roughly $1 million–$2 million to open and about $500,000–$1 million per year to operate.

- **Select officers carefully for American Presence Posts.** Because APPs depend on a single officer, their success is highly personality dependent. Officers must possess strong leadership, language, and interdisciplinary skills.
- **Require a mission coordinator.** American Presence Post officers must have an individual at the mission who will provide support and a senior person to whom the officer can report.
- **Institutionalize sharing of best practices from American Presence Posts and the officers who run them.** Current and former American Presence Post officers should be able to routinely share best practices and lessons learned with one another and with those mission officers who support them.

AMERICAN CORNERS

An effective embassy presence depends on effective engagement with the public and demands tools that provide for a breadth of reach, flexibility, and impact on the people the United States seeks to influence. In the past, this presence had been provided in a number of ways—for example, through readily accessible resource centers in our embassies or through American libraries housed separately from the embassy. Our new embassies are less suited for hosting the public because of their more limited accessibility, higher security, and limited public spaces. They do, however, have some capability—small multipurpose rooms for hosting events, with videoconferencing capabilities.

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In the coming years, the commission envisions a number of options that should be available. If funded and configured properly, the commission sees a continuing role for American Corners—a type of "franchise" operation for public diplomacy. These spaces, which contain books, materials, televisions, video and DVD libraries, and computers with Internet access, are housed in a local institution such as a library or university and are run by an employee of that institution. They are not nearly as visible as our old libraries, and they are dependent on the commitment of the partner institution, but they do provide distributed places for access to information about the United States and space for public programming.

American Corners can be cost-effective and will have potential over the next decade, if they are managed and maintained properly. They offer public outreach opportunities within capital cities and distributed outposts outside capital cities. They can be reinforced with embassy staff visits and can extend the U.S. presence through videoconferencing, which some have used effectively already.

Developing and maintaining American Corners in a way that reflects positively on the United States remains a major challenge. There are, at present, 365 American Corners around the world, all of which have opened since 2000.[27] Some of these American Corners have been tremendously successful, others not at all. The best American Corners enjoy a strong partnership with a local institution and have outstanding entrepreneurial staff; receive adequate funding; maintain a close relationship with the embassy, including frequent officer visits and programming assistance; and serve a sustained local need.

The American Corner in Medan, Indonesia, is one such success story. In 2006, the corner received 20,623 visitors, held a program every week, and received one or more visits from embassy personnel every month. The staff speak English and maintain a collection of 1,600 volumes as well as eight computers with Internet and database access. The host institution has been very accommodating, allowing the corner to use a large room for programming, and is open to the idea of moving this successful corner to a larger space to better meet the demand for its services.

But other American Corners have not prospered, because of a bad relationship with the host institution, weak local staff, and/or a paucity of funding and mission attention. Because American Corners represent America's public face in many places, it is imperative that they reflect well on the United States in appearance, services provided, and the overall image presented. Embassies must shut down those that are failing and fund those that are successful.

The State Department should undertake a regular, global review to assess the "brand" and services associated with these outposts. These outposts do not have to be known universally as "American Corners."

"When I travel to a city with an American Corner, I find that the American presence is amplified. It would be helpful to have more American Corners here."—*Foreign Service Officer*

"It is useful to have the American Corners as a hub. They are just terrific. It doesn't have to be that model, but the more American presence places we can set up in country the better."
—*Foreign Service Officer*

[27] U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs (IIP), June 2007.

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In some places, for example, they are called Lincoln Centers; in other places they are known as InfoUSA. The commission believes that American Corners need to target the local population to the greatest extent possible; local branding and meeting local needs will play a central role in their success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Integrate American Corners tightly into mission strategic plans and establish a strong partnership between the mission and the host institution.** The key to ensuring a successful and lasting partnership is a strong, clearly worded memorandum of understanding that specifically addresses staffing and space issues.
- **Plan for startup and sustainability costs in advance and dedicate resources to ensuring the continuing success of the American Corner.** Posts must plan for startup and sustainability costs in advance, even if that means spending $50,000 to open one successful American Corner rather than spending $10,000 to open five weaker American Corners. In addition to securing adequate sustainability funding, a locally employed staff (LES) member should be dedicated to the program full time. This person would work closely with each American Corner to develop full programming schedules, to include regular visits from embassy personnel, and otherwise maximize the impact of our presence.

> **Resources.** Based on State Department experience, missions should plan to spend at least $50,000 to open a new American Corner and at least $10,000 per corner per year in upkeep costs.

AMERICAN CENTERS

As noted above, although it is useful that not all of the library functions were eliminated alongside the buildings, the resource center model as currently practiced inside embassies does not meet increasing outreach needs. Space is reduced, security is high, and in-person visitation tends to drop off when Information Resource Centers (IRCs) move onto embassy compounds. The difference now is that these IRCs are supposed to have a focused, target audience of key opinion leaders and decisionmakers in each country, rather than the general public. Besides research services, IRCs reach out with information from U.S. resources and conduct programs to inform host country citizens about U.S policy goals and American culture, government, and values.

American Centers, which include these IRC functions, but are more expansive in their public outreach programming, should continue to be an option for meeting public outreach needs of the future. Unlike American Corners, American Centers are staffed by U.S. government personnel. American Centers are located principally in South Asia and Africa, but these are also in the process of closing or moving into our consulates or embassies as new facilities are built.

As a general matter, the commission believes there is value in preserving the existing American Centers as open and separate from the embassy. The State Department should also consider opening new American Centers in countries of critical interest—in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America—where the security requirements for maintaining separate facilities can be met and the security risk managed. In places where freedom of speech and information access are restricted—for example, in China or Burma (Myanmar) —these facilities are vital to effectively reaching the public. In Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar), for example, the American Center has 15,000 members.[28] Separate facilities that meet current security standards, unfortunately, can be very costly.

[28] See Jane Perlez, "American Center in Myanmar provides a lifeline of information," *International Herald Tribune*, November 23, 2006, http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/11/23/news/myanmar.php (accessed July 23, 2007).

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RECOMMENDATION

■ **Support American Centers where public outreach demands are high and where security challenges can be met.** American Centers can offer significant opportunities for public outreach. They can provide major advantages over capital-city American Corners in terms of ability to determine content, staff, and programming, and overall visibility. American Centers provide more space for programming as well as a broader array of services like educational advising, U.S. business promotion, and English-language training. They offer more flexibility for public access than embassies and consulates.

BINATIONAL CENTERS

Binational Centers (BNCs) are locally registered not-for-profit organizations whose aim is to foster understanding between the United States and the host country through English-teaching, cultural activities, educational exchanges, and libraries. For many years, the United States provided Foreign Service officers to direct some of the principal Binational Centers, a practice that was discontinued in the 1990s when U.S. funding for BNCs was greatly reduced. BNCs currently operate in nearly all countries of Latin America, covering most major cities and key provincial capitals, and in some other parts of the world as well. Their utility in promoting U.S. interests could be much greater if the State Department were to provide more financial support and once again link them to U.S.-content cultural and information programs coordinated from embassies and consulates.

RECOMMENDATION

■ **Reestablish U.S.-content cultural and information programming at Binational Centers and allot them greater financial support.**

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND PRIVATE CITIZEN VISITS

Although the platforms are important, public diplomacy programming is the critical component of public outreach. Traditionally many public diplomacy functions have taken place in American Centers, residences of American embassy officials (for example, ambassadors, public affairs officers, and cultural affairs officers), or within the embassy itself.

Public diplomacy is also carried out widely in conjunction with local institutions—public, private, academic, and cultural—through events staged in local facilities. This requires the constant interaction of U.S. diplomats and Foreign Service national employees with host country citizens outside U.S. embassies and consulates.

With the gradual disappearance of our cultural centers, the distance of some of our facilities from city centers, and increased security challenges and space limitations, a new look at our outreach capacities is necessary. As it becomes more difficult to have activities in our own facilities, it becomes more important to provide resources for external programming. This requires funds for leasing or otherwise providing resources for space in the city center for performances, screenings, lectures, and other cultural events. None of this will be possible without significant increases in public diplomacy funding and in personnel, both at posts and in the State Department.

Educational and cultural exchange programs are an enormously valuable means of advancing U.S. interests. Funding for these programs, notably the International Visitors Program, should increase. The Fulbright program and other academic exchanges are particularly useful tools, and new programs should be introduced. Given the youthful population throughout the Middle East and in many other countries, public diplomacy programs should also

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emphasize cultural and sports events that appeal to young people. Tools such as the Internet are also opening up new public diplomacy options that are more agile and mobile—as one possible example, video games in Internet cafes.

Embassy-based knowledge of leaders, especially young leaders, should be tapped for more creative exchanges, including filmmakers, athletes, artists, authors, as well as young entrepreneurs and scientists. U.S. science and technology and business know-how, as well as U.S. cultural exports, earn admiration. We can capitalize on these attitudes both by bringing foreign visitors to the United States and by showcasing U.S. "best practitioners" abroad.

There is also an opportunity to reemphasize the potential for making use of private citizens who are traveling abroad. The State Department should reinstitute the practice of informing posts about the schedules of traveling scholars, performers, writers, and others who could be useful to public diplomacy outreach. An office within the department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange should be tasked with identifying individuals in the cultural field and should assist posts with making initial contacts. The International Information Programs office should offer a similar service for travelers in noncultural fields.

The Cold War taught the value of exposing broad audiences to U.S. society, its values, and its culture. The tours of authors and artists demonstrated the diversity of cultures and attitudes in the United States and successfully communicated core ideas about freedom and democracy. These lessons apply to the new struggle the United States faces. Programs that emphasize performance and mentoring should be revived and strengthened: they show off the best of the United States, provide exposure to the richness and diversity of American culture, and introduce American citizens to others around the globe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Significantly strengthen cultural, educational, and professional exchanges.** Funding for these exchange programs should be significantly increased as critical long-term investments.
- **Capitalize on private sector visits.** The State Department needs to reestablish the capacity to reach out to the private sector for advance information about visits so that embassies can most effectively use such opportunities for reaching out to the public.

CIRCUIT RIDERS

Operating in a dangerous, resource-constrained world means that the United States cannot have a physical presence everywhere it might like. Nor should it. As discussed in the context of APP site selection, the State Department must think carefully about where and how to allocate its resources over the next 5 to 10 years. It is true that there are numerous cities with large populations where the United States has no formal diplomatic presence. It makes sense to put an APP in some of those cities. In others, however, individual traveling diplomats or teams of diplomats and other agency representatives can engage in "circuit riding" in various regions,

> "We intend to use additional officers to help create an American presence as circuit riders. We want generalist, mid-level types who would spend a couple of weeks a month living in a hotel in the areas of their responsibility. This is a low-cost way to have a reasonable impact without the same resource and security constraints that bricks and mortar require." —*Foreign Service Officer*

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visiting the same towns and cities every month or every couple of months. In so doing, they create an American presence in each place they visit. These circuit riders can also reinforce an American Presence Post or American Corner.

RECOMMENDATION

■ **Posts should build circuit riders into their mission strategic plans and allocate resources accordingly to ensure their success.** Travel funds and representation budgets will be an important determinant of circuit rider effectiveness. By visiting places where the United States has some form of distributed diplomatic presence, circuit riders can play an important role in ensuring the continuing success of those endeavors. At the same time, circuit riders can touch cities, towns, and regions where the United States would otherwise have no presence.

> **Resources.** Costs associated with circuit riders will vary widely from country to country. Based on interviews at one embassy, $35,000 for one American and one locally employed staff member per year (for travel and accommodation) is a lower-range estimate.

VIRTUAL PRESENCE POSTS

Even with the increased use of circuit riders, American diplomats cannot be everywhere they need to be. Thus, creating a virtual presence becomes a crucial option for creating a comprehensive presence in-country that meets diplomatic objectives. The State Department has made some progress on this front already with Virtual Presence Posts (VPPs), but the commission believes that more should be done to expand the virtual diplomatic reach of the United States. As with American Presence Posts and circuit riders, the State Department, regional bureaus, and country teams need to think carefully about when and where virtual presence makes sense.

Criteria specific to investing in greater virtual presence need to be developed. Virtual presence must serve a range of purposes and, just like ground presence, must be strategically designed. Virtual presence can reach into places with no U.S. ground presence at all, such as Iran; with limited access, such as Gaza; or across very large countries with comparatively limited U.S. physical presence, such as Russia. A virtual presence can sustain relationships in places where circuit riders make periodic visits, but where the United States does not have a routine presence, as is now the case in a number of cities in Brazil.

Under the current concept, Virtual Presence Posts are generally designed to combine virtual presence through an embassy-hosted Web site with coordinated outreach, programming, and travel targeted at a particular city or region. There are more than 40 active VPPs worldwide.[29]

Structurally, a virtual principal officer (VPO)—typically a young, technology-literate Foreign Service officer who is asked to perform this task in addition to his or her regular duties—supports Virtual Presence Posts. This officer works under the authority of the deputy chief of mission (DCM) to coordinate travel, outreach, and programming for the target region. Posts establish a Virtual Country Team to coordinate interagency programming and activities for the target location(s). By coordinating agency activities, the virtual principal officer and the Virtual Country Team help prevent duplication of effort, to maximize the impact of U.S. outreach.

The most visible aspect of the Virtual Presence Post is its Web site (see figure 2). VPP Web sites are designed to serve both local country residents and U.S. citizens by delivering content of interest in the local languages and by offering information on the local area in English. Virtual Presence Posts are inexpensive—the dollar costs associated with the

[29] U.S. Department of State, Office of eDiplomacy, August 2007. Locations include, for example, Porto Alegre, Brazil; Gaza, Palestinian Territories; Busan, South Korea; Davao, Philippines; and Chelyabinsk, Russia. A full list of VPPs can be found at http://usembassy.state.gov/.

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Figure 2. **U.S. VIRTUAL CONSULATE DAVAO**

Source: The VPP Davao, Philippines, Web site.

program come almost entirely from setting up the Web sites and are met with embassy program and travel funds.

Although the commission believes that the idea behind Virtual Presence Posts is sound, a number of challenges have arisen from the VPP experience to date. The current model is uneven—very dependent on the interest, availability, and skills of the embassy staff. At present, with several exceptions, little to no funding or staff have been assigned to the program. The State Department is trying to institutionalize the Virtual Presence Post strategy through language in the *Foreign Affairs Manual*, post mission plans, and Foreign Service personnel job descriptions. Such efforts are an important step toward solidifying this form of virtual presence on the menu of presence options.

Although the commission believes that a virtual presence will be an important option for our future overseas presence, the lack of analytics and metrics associated with Virtual Presence Posts presents difficulties. Some metrics should be developed or, at the very least, the popularity of the Web sites, chat sessions, and impact of the travel to the target city or "post" should be measured and monitored to evaluate and determine a set of best practices for virtual presence.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Expand virtual presence as part of the U.S. strategy for creating a comprehensive presence in-country.** An expanded virtual presence will require high-level support from the State Department's senior leadership.
- **Institutionalize and integrate Virtual Presence Posts into mission plans and personnel job descriptions.** To be successful on a more widespread basis, Virtual Presence Posts can no longer be an add-on activity; they must be fully integrated into the post's plan and job requirements. The VPP effort must also involve all sections and a number of other agencies.
- **At posts, ensure that personnel and funds are properly dedicated to the Virtual Presence Post venture.** Web sites and relationships, once established, must be maintained as part of an effective Virtual Presence Post strategy. Travel funds and personnel must be dedicated to visit the VPP target cities and communities. VPPs require participation from all department sections and a number of other agencies at post.
- **Create an assessment program to determine Virtual Presence Post effectiveness.** Lessons learned from officers who have operated Virtual Presence Posts should be reintegrated and adopted into the program, particularly as the utility of Virtual Presence Posts grows, and outreach efforts should be adjusted accordingly.

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7

STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY TEAM

All embassies are interagency platforms. Large country teams and a distributed presence pose increasing challenges for the ambassador's leadership. The scope and scale of representation from other federal agencies at embassies have been growing steadily, with 27 agencies (and numerous subagencies) represented overseas.[30] In some large embassies, the proportion of State Department representation relative to other federal agencies can be less than one-third of full-time U.S. personnel.[31] From 2004 to 2006, Defense Department personnel grew by 40 percent over previous periods, Department of Justice by 18 percent, and Department of Homeland Security by 14 percent, respectively.[32] These increases reflect not only staffing in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also the growing importance of counterterrorism and law enforcement in U.S. foreign policy generally.

The future strength of U.S. embassies depends on the ability of U.S. representatives to work together at all levels to serve the United States and advance American objectives. Ambassadors' authorities over mission personnel are articulated in a presidential letter that provides the ambassador full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of U.S. government employees assigned to the embassy on official duty.

U.S. ambassadors need the capabilities, authorities, support, and institutional structures and processes in place to lead a unified team. In the course of this study, which looked principally at routine embassy operations, the commission identified a strong desire on the part of State Department personnel to more effectively leverage the presence of all agencies overseas.

Ultimately, the responsibility for establishing a truly coordinated interagency policy is in Washington, where policy decisions are made and resources assigned. But if building enhanced interagency unity of effort must begin in Washington, a number of steps can be taken in-country to build mission cohesion (where interagency cooperation is often stronger than in Washington) and strengthen policy implementation wherever possible. The recommendations below reflect commissioners' experiences, views, and

[30] U.S. Department of State, Human Resources Fact Sheet, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2007.

[31] U.S. Department of State, Office of Rightsizing the U.S. Government Overseas Presence, August 2007.

[32] U.S. Department of State, Office of Rightsizing the U.S. Government Overseas Presence, *Overseas Rightsizing: 2006/II*, Washington, D.C. December 2006, 8, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/77386.pdf (accessed July 23, 2007).

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project field interviews. We note that in a number of cases they reiterate recommendations from one or more of the many other studies on this subject. [33]

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ensure that ambassadors and deputy chiefs of mission have the capacity to lead.** The most important ingredient in a strong country team is the leadership capacity of the ambassador and, increasingly, the deputy chief of mission. To fulfill their roles successfully, they must be strong leaders, capable managers, and adroit spokespeople for U.S. policy objectives. They must also be fully invested in the coordination of mission personnel and capable of providing strategic guidance. Conversely, mission personnel and their home agencies need to be educated and informed about the ambassador's authorities in advance of deployment to the embassy.
  - **Leadership skills**. Ambassadors must have leadership training and access to advice that will support them in leading large numbers of people who are both in the State Department and outside it. DCMs should have access to the leadership training as well. Language ability will continue to be a very important factor for most assignments. Security training is discussed in the next chapter.
  - **Ambassador's authorities as the president's representative.** The ambassador's authorities, articulated in a letter from the president, should be codified in an executive order. Such an order would have the value of being carried over across administrations and would underscore the ambassador's role as the president's representative. Ambassadors should develop a strong relationship with the interagency group that is supporting them while they are in-country, meeting with that group before and during their service overseas.
- **Promote interagency cooperation.** Agency cooperation at post can be enhanced in a number of ways.
  - **Organizational structure.** To strengthen, broaden, and refine the use of interagency task forces or "clusters," ambassadors' experiences implementing these task forces must be shared routinely with other ambassadors. Beyond that, the State Department should also explore the value of organizing embassies along functional rather than agency lines.[34]
  - **Physical collocation.** The State Department, together with other agencies represented overseas, should, to the extent possible, adopt floor plans that facilitate interagency interaction and cooperation. Floor plans that have been used successfully to implement this objective should be widely shared.
  - **Personnel practices.** Personnel should have the opportunity, particularly in larger posts, to serve voluntarily in a rotation in another section with State Department personnel, or rotate to another agency's section. Rotations might be a short duration; three months would be sufficient to expose personnel to another perspective. These short rotations would be most appropriate for personnel who are not yet in management positions. Longer

[33] Many other distinguished reports have made these and similar recommendations on the country team and the role of ambassadors and DCMs. See, for example, Frank Carlucci, *State Department Reform*, Task Force Report No. 31, sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2001); U.S. Department of State, *America's Overseas Presence in the 21st Century*; U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Embassies as Command Posts in the Anti-Terror Campaign*, Senate Report 109-52, December 2006; Robert Killebrew et al., "The Country Team in American Strategy" (Washington, D.C.: Department of State/Department of Defense, December 2006); The Henry L. Stimson Center, *Equipped for the Future,* October 1998; and Robert Oakley and Michael Casey Jr., *The Country Team: Restructuring America's First Line of Engagement* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, September 2007).

[34] See Oakley and Casey, *The Country Team.*

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rotations of up to one year should also be encouraged, potentially as part of the initiative to develop a national security professional corps.[35]

- **Improve access to information across agency lines.**
  - **Ensure common network access.** Many mission personnel are linked together through the State Department unclassified system (OpenNet) and, for those who have classified access, through a classified system. Problems persist for individuals who are not subscribed to OpenNet and who must communicate with their colleagues across stovepiped legacy networks instead, creating major delays in message traffic. All mission officers should be required to subscribe to OpenNet, or alternatives must be found to allow agencies' unclassified networks to communicate directly with one another. As handhelds come into common use in the field, all agencies must also be on compatible wireless systems that can access the mission's unclassified network for communications and reporting.
  - **Implement embassy-wide directories.** The State Department should develop an internal online directory that overseas missions can populate with full contact information and relevant professional data for all personnel. A regularly updated directory will prove invaluable as officers find themselves increasingly collaborating and cooperating across mission and agency lines.
- **Extend ambassadors' authority over performance evaluations.** To further the alignment of ambassadorial responsibilities and authorities, the ambassador should conduct performance evaluations for all members of the country team. That authority, now vested in the ambassador for all foreign affairs agencies, should be expanded to all agencies overseas.

[35] See Killebrew et al., "The Country Team in American Strategy."

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8

MANAGE RISK

A critical challenge for the embassy of the future is an approach to security that also allows for the interactions in the field required to achieve successful engagement. Ambassadors, charged in writing by the president with responsibility for the security of all employees under their authority, confront the dilemma of keeping their people out of harm's way and getting an important job done. Protecting the people assigned to U.S. missions abroad must remain a top priority. The work of diplomacy is based on human interaction that in many cases cannot take place without people meeting face-to-face.

RISK MANAGEMENT, NOT RISK AVOIDANCE

The commission believes that, for our embassies to realize a diplomatic presence that is more distributed outside the walls of the embassy and a capital city, the department's security culture and practices must continue to transition from risk avoidance to risk management. Although the department's security culture and capability have changed significantly since the passage of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Anti-terrorism Act of 1986, a risk-averse culture persists. When diplomats are deployed to the field, force protection has been a driving consideration.

Any security philosophy that is based on zero-risk and that judges security-related decisions only to that standard will fail. Risk is primarily associated with threat (the potential of an adversary to exploit a vulnerability), vulnerability (the susceptibility of people or things to compromise), and value (the worth of assets or information and the impact of their loss).[36] Managing risk requires a balance between protecting assets and effectively undertaking the mission. Risk is lower in some environments than others but can never be eliminated.

The importance of having the capacity to send diplomats and embassy personnel to dangerous locations where their influence may be of greatest value requires rethinking the way that risk in the field is evaluated. Where necessary for the diplomatic mission, the State Department, Congress, and our society will have to adjust the expectation of potential risks to personnel in order to ensure that those personnel have the latitude to engage local communities and do their jobs effectively.

[36] John J. Hamre and Anne Witkowsky, *Science and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 1, 2002).

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With respect to managing risk, there are many lessons to be learned from the department's experience with its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The commission recognizes that each situation is unique and that the department's worldwide emphasis must be engagement. The department should study the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan and apply them where appropriate.

CRISIS IS PART OF DIPLOMATIC LIFE

Expectations of risk may be catching up to the reality of the security environment. A study by the Foreign Service Institute in 2004 concluded that of Foreign Service generalists (officers) with more than 15 years of experience, 87 percent had served in a crisis.[37] Today a significant number of personnel are serving in higher-threat environments—not only in Iraq and Afghanistan but in many other parts of the world as well. With the spread of terrorism, no post in the world is considered completely safe.

TAKE SECURITY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Security must be an enabler for achieving mission goals because effective diplomacy cannot be conducted from behind embassy walls. Safe and secure embassies are one critical component of security, but security is not only about perimeter walls, blast-resistant doors, and a well-trained Marine Security Guard force. Effective security can mitigate but not eliminate risk in the environments where the diplomatic mission must be performed.

The commission believes that it is not only necessary but also possible to evolve toward risk management in large part because the practice of security has improved in the State Department. Since the enactment of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Anti-Terrorism Act of 1986, security is more integrated into the State Department's culture and practices. Security standards are applied far more consistently. Communications between Washington and the field have improved, providing more global situational awareness. Training and crisis management exercising have increased. State Department security professionals have worked to create the more security-conscious culture essential to effectively managing risk. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security must continue to recruit high-quality people, employ state-of-the-art technology, and develop innovative approaches for managing complex security environments in which the department and its people must perform.

With respect to APPs, circuit riders, and other concepts discussed in previous chapters, it should be noted that a more decentralized presence can have security advantages. The Peace Corps model may be instructive. The security of Peace Corps volunteers, which is managed through integration with the local populace, is built on developing the trust and respect of the local community.[38] Although the Peace Corps model is not directly applicable to diplomatic missions, the concept of integrating personnel, keeping a low-profile physical presence, and building strong relationships in the surrounding community will be an important aspect of enhancing security for embassy personnel in a distributed model.

Security can now be taken to the next level. In doing so, the commission highlights several key elements:

Ambassador's Responsibility and Accountability. It is crucial that ambassadors maintain responsibility and accountability for mission personnel. The ambassador's letter from the president stipulates that the ambassador in the field has full

[37] *Crisis Management Survey: Surveying the Crisis Experience of Department of State Employees Overseas* (Arlington, Va.: George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center, September 2004).

[38] Interview with Peace Corps executives, November 29, 2006.

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responsibility for the security of the personnel under his/her authority.[39] In general, security-related incidents at post under chief of mission authority are subject to independent review by an Accountability Review Board (ARB).[40] Board members are selected from the foreign affairs and intelligence communities, law enforcement, and other related fields. The board is charged with determining accountability for incidents causing serious injury, loss of life, or property destruction at or related to a U.S. government mission abroad; or incidents that result in a significant breach of security involving intelligence activities (excluding those targeting installations under the control of the U.S. military). Limited exceptions from the legal requirement to convene a board have now been established for security incidents at or related to the U.S. missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. In a case where the secretary of state chooses to exercise the waiver, the secretary must nevertheless notify Congress, conduct an inquiry, and submit a report to Congress on the findings, recommendations, and actions taken as a result of the inquiry.

Ambassadors should also be in a position to make risk-based judgments about security in service of the mission. The commission believes that the language in the president's letter and the ARB process promote a perception among ambassadors that any security incident at post would call their judgment about carrying out the mission into question. When personnel want to move in parts of a city or outside the capital area where the threat may be high, for example, the ambassador faces a difficult decision. The ambassador has to meet his responsibilities to the safety and security of his people. That should be the ambassador's first concern. But he or she needs confidence that in the event of a security incident, the pursuit of the mission will be taken into consideration if proper procedures have been followed and all precautions taken. Establishing criteria to help guide such decisions, consultations with the mission's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) and security officer, and proper training must underpin the ability to make these decisions with higher confidence. Changes in the letter and broader ARB waiver authority will also be necessary.

Training. Security professionals underscore that the more training and scenario-based application exercises personnel have access to, the more prepared they are to work safely in a range of environments. Skills-based counter-threat training for Iraq and Afghanistan—to include emergency medical care, defensive driving, firearms familiarization, and surveillance detection—is now being adapted for personnel deploying to other critical threat posts. However, as noted previously, training at the State Department is a function of personnel availability and resources. With more of both, the enhanced level of sophistication and skill that results would directly benefit those in the field. Training must begin early, as part of a Foreign Service officer's initial instruction. All State Department employees and their family members, as well as those from other agencies, should have skills-based security training, including training tailored to their deployments—not just an initial course, but also refresher courses throughout their time overseas. Accountability for security at all levels must continue through performance evaluation requirements for all officers.

[39] The letter of instruction gives chiefs of mission (COMs) ultimate responsibility for the security of employees, dependents, and official facilities under their control. The letter states in part that the secretary of state and, by extension, COMs abroad, must protect all U.S. government personnel on official duty abroad (other than those under the command of a U.S. area military commander) and their accompanying dependents. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Handbook*, 12 FAH-7 H-711.

[40] "Security-related incidents" are defined as "cases of serious injury, loss of life, or significant destruction of property at or related to a USG mission abroad; or a case of a serious breach of security involving intelligence activities or a foreign government directed at a U.S. mission abroad (other than a facility or installation subject to the control of a U.S. military commander)." See U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual*, 12 FAM 31.3, http://foia.state.gov/masterdocs/12fam/12m0030.pdf (accessed July 23, 2007).

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Training for embassy regional security officers (RSOs) must continue to be enhanced to ensure that it meets the demands of the embassy of the future. Opportunities for language and cultural training, which are needed for building strong cooperation with local law enforcement authorities, should be expanded to all RSOs. RSOs also need to have more training on the underlying principles of diplomacy so that they better understand the capability for which they are designing security systems, within the embassy and outside it. Security professionals need a training "float" that would provide for additional training while allowing the ability to meet pressing diplomatic security mission requirements. Without the necessary resources, this training is sacrificed to meet mission needs.

Best Practices. As in other parts of the diplomatic community, lessons learned and best practices should be more widely shared within the security community. This sharing of practices must be expanded with a view toward building a system that rewards new ideas and approaches to strengthen security in support of mission accomplishment.

Support Structures. With more diplomats serving in critical and high threat areas, it is vital that the State Department regularly examine and adjust as needed the support it provides before officers rotate to these posts, during their overseas assignments, and after they return. Recent preliminary estimates suggest that some 40 percent of diplomats who have served in Iraq may suffer symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder.[41] The commission supports State Department efforts to evaluate officers returning from the field for the effects of high stress environments and believes that the State Department must have a strong program to help its officers address any identified problems. Counseling cannot be perceived as having a negative impact on one's career. Families and loved ones need to be taken care of as well when officers are deployed apart from family members, in particular as the number of unaccompanied tours has increased.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Begin a dialogue on risk management.** The secretary of state should begin a dialogue within the State Department and with the Congress and public on the serious challenge of managing risk.
- **Revise the letter from the president to the ambassador.** The president's letter should be revised to clarify that the ambassador should be able to exercise his or her judgment in weighing the risk to the safety and security of mission personnel against mission priorities. It must also be clear that the ambassador is expected to exercise appropriate care in making such judgments with respect to activities that may put personnel at security risk. Ambassadors must also receive decisionmaking support that includes establishing criteria for weighing security risks against mission objectives and ensuring access to advice from the mission's Emergency Action Committee and security officer.
- **Amend the ARB process.** Although ambassadors must remain responsible for the security of their personnel, the ARB process should be adjusted to reflect the need to operate in higher-risk environments. The security practices and security philosophy of the department have changed significantly since the original ARB legislation. These changes and the higher-risk environment in which the United States is conducting diplomacy make it appropriate to update the ARB process. Authority for the secretary to waive the ARB process in favor of an internally led inquiry should be extended from Afghanistan and Iraq to all posts. Such a process would expedite the accountability review

[41] See testimony of Steven Kashkett, vice president, American Foreign Service Association, "Working in a War Zone: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in Civilians Returning from Iraq," http://www.afsa.org/congress/061907testimony.cfm.

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and would reflect the new security realities, both in the department and in the field where diplomats operate. Even in those circumstances where the secretary chooses an internal inquiry, however, the commission favors having one or two outside reviewers participate. This will require working with Congress to make additional revision to the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Anti-Terrorism Act of 1986.

- **Provide skills-based security training for mission personnel at all levels.** Personnel posted abroad should undergo skills-based security training. With the training established for personnel in Iraq as a model, enhanced training should be provided for all personnel of all agencies deployed to posts under chief of mission authority, beginning with high and critical threat posts. Such training, tailored to the mission, should be made widely available over time. For Foreign Service officers, skills-based training should begin upon entry as a routine element of the foundational A-100 course. Ambassadors and DCMs should have additional training that will specifically prepare them for leading the country team. Spouses and family members should also be given skills-based security training, again tailored to the particular assignment. The State Department should develop expanded security training and add specialized training for officers who will be spending more time outside of traditional mission compounds. Refresher training for all personnel should be provided periodically, including while at post.

> **Resources**. If, as a starting point, the State Department counter-threat training course were to be expanded to all State Department personnel posted to critical and high threat missions, the total cost would be roughly $6 million additional to current funding for the course. Costs would increase as more personnel attend training, as new training elements are created, and as security-skills training is incorporated into other routine training, such as the introductory A-100 class.

- **Enhance training for regional security officers.** Just as diplomats should receive enhanced security training, regional security officers should be well trained in diplomatic practice to improve their understanding of the mission they must support. More language-training opportunities must be provided; language training for regional security officers should be the rule rather than the exception. The State Department will need more personnel to make this training available, with a commensurate increase in resources.
- **Provide personnel support.** As more diplomats are deployed to high-threat environments, they must be prepared for their deployments before they depart and have access to counseling and care after their return. The State Department must support programs to help its officers address stress-related or other problems that may develop because of overseas deployments. Family members must also have access to the care they need.

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9

PROMOTE SECURE BORDERS, OPEN DOORS

The Consular Affairs section is the most visible area of any embassy. It is estimated that 93 percent to 95 percent of all foreign nationals entering an embassy visit the consular section.[42] Following the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, the Bureau of Consular Affairs implemented substantial changes to procedures and requirements. A high-impact change was the removal of the "personal appearance" waiver for nonimmigrant visas. With only three types of exceptions, every individual now has to report for an interview at the consular section of their respective embassy.[43] This places an additional burden on our embassies' physical infrastructure.

The challenges of managing the consular workload will increase. According to informal estimates, the State Department's 20 largest posts are poised to more than double their visa workloads in the next two years. Traditional American Citizen Services workloads are expected to remain at around 2 million requests a year. To address this increased workload, the State Department anticipates hiring 219 new employees between FY2006 and 2008, in addition to the 105 new positions added at the end of FY2005. Adequate staffing and resources will continue to be vital.

Recognizing that consular waiting areas see enormous amounts of traffic—more than 9 out of 10 embassy visitors—the State Department should capitalize on the opportunity these spaces present to showcase America. Visitors should be made to feel welcome rather than treated as a "captive audience" and forced to wait in an inadequate space. Some embassies have taken the initiative to place televisions in the waiting areas, but this is not the norm. The State Department's effort to launch a "Focus on America" program for video and poster displays is a start, but much more can be done.

Embassies can furnish waiting rooms with flat-panel televisions, screen images, and short feature films about the United States. The State Department's "Art in Embassies" program currently places original works in the public rooms of diplomatic residences; this program could be expanded to cover embassies and their consular sections and meeting rooms.[44] Videoconferencing capabilities would allow officials from

[42] Remarks by Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Maura Harty at the first CSIS Embassy of the Future Commission meeting, October 23–24, 2006.

[43] See http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html (accessed July 23, 2007).

[44] See http://aiep.state.gov/mission.html (accessed February 16, 2007).

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Washington or even groups outside the government to communicate with the waiting audience. Family-friendly features should be considered. Beyond that, waiting areas should have sufficient covering, lighting, heating, and air-conditioning.

The State Department's initiative to conduct visa interviews remotely could eventually take some burden off the embassy building. Announced as part of the "Secure Borders, Open Doors" initiative, the State Department successfully ran several proof-of-concept tests in 2006 at both the Foreign Service Institute and in the United Kingdom. In Germany the United States has also begun a remote visa pilot system in Hamburg that has been popular with the local community, and the program has been tested in Japan. The State Department, having developed the technology, must now grapple with business process challenges. The question is how to use this technology in a way that meaningfully improves the visa process without being a drain on resources. Infrastructure and security issues persist, as well as questions of how to best use and prioritize staff. This process, however, could improve the State Department's ability to reach remote areas in larger countries or help leverage the use of local facilities that are appropriate for this work on a temporary basis. Remote interviewing could also be used to reach across embassies, supplementing an in-country team where there are long wait times.

Traveling consular services may offer another opportunity to bring visa services to applicants in far-flung areas, though they face a number of significant challenges. Laptop biometric enrollment is now possible and has been demonstrated with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford, England, using what the State Department terms "NIV on a laptop," or nonimmigrant visa on a laptop. As with remote visa interviewing, the use of traveling consular services raises questions of efficiency, security, and accountability that would need to be addressed. Additional resources to support this activity would be necessary.

Appointment scheduling processes can continue to be enhanced. The State Department has sought to reduce the length of lines at U.S. consulates by instituting an online appointment process, which is now available at 40 posts.[45] Ultimately, the State Department would like to expand the system to a single global "portal" to allow visa applicants anywhere in the world to make an appointment for a visa interview. The State Department is moving cautiously so as not to disrupt the current system.

As demand for its services continues to increase, Consular Affairs might consider opening off-hours call centers for its foreign customers, along the same lines as those services currently provided for American citizens. Making consular operations information available 24/7 is another potential customer service offering that would ease travelers' ability to have their questions answered, particularly if they encounter problems with their visas or have in-country concerns during nonworking hours. As with traveling consular teams, additional resources would be required to support such call centers.

Capitalizing on the interest in online worlds, the use of a virtual online persona has been considered to explain the visa process to people and expedite their visit to the embassy. As these virtual environments become more commonly used and readily available, a creative way to manage embassy visitors' expectations could be valuable. However, such programs cannot replace the value of interacting with a person who can answer questions on the phone or online.

[45] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, March 2007.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create welcoming consular waiting areas that showcase America.** The State Department should seize the opportunity to leave a positive impression of the United States on the many people who pass through its consular sections each year. This can be accomplished with a relatively small and creative investment.
- **Continue piloting and testing the remote visa interview program.** The State Department's initiative to conduct visa interviews remotely should be continued with two objectives: remove the infrastructure burden of the embassies and create new ways to put more people on duty at embassies where wait times are long.
- **Explore ways to improve accessibility to services for visa applicants.** Traveling consular services offer another opportunity to bring visa services to applicants in far-flung areas and should be considered. This will require working through a number of security, accountability, and efficiency challenges. As demand for its services continues to increase, Consular Affairs should consider opening off-hours call centers for visa inquiries.

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10

STREAMLINE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

The State Department began a process of "regionalizing" back-office functions several years ago, repatriating certain activities to U.S. regional centers in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and Charleston, South Carolina, and establishing large centers in Frankfurt, Germany; Bangkok, Thailand; and Pretoria, South Africa. These efforts are a step forward, but the State Department still lags well behind its global industry counterparts in reducing levels of administrative support overseas. The U.S. military has also made significant inroads in consolidating its administrative operations and taking them out of the field.

More important than identifying and creating specific regional sites, however, is shaping the State Department culture and building the business processes and structures that will make successful regionalization possible. The individual post is still the basic unit for providing administrative functions, but posts do not have common service standards or business processes. Furthermore, most posts still do not use common software and technology. This limits the possibilities for successfully regionalizing and repatriating activities or simply conducting them where it may provide the State Department the greatest returns in terms of quality and cost.

In general, the commission believes that the State Department should continue to streamline its administrative processes wherever possible. This will require support for standardization of processes, implementation of enterprise-wide solutions, improvements in efficiency and service quality, supporting a culture of innovation and quality, and looking to industry as a model.

If fully implemented, such a strategy would allow the flexibility not only to regionalize activities, but also to conduct them wherever the greatest efficiencies and economies of scale can be found. Activities would not necessarily have to be regionalized "in theater," but could be conducted from anywhere in the world. In countries and posts where labor costs are high and staff quality is low, or where seasonal flux, unexpected vacancies, or unexpected workloads occur, activities could be moved elsewhere. With additional data collection and interpretation capabilities, embassies could be "sized" more readily to perform only base load activities that cannot be outsourced or regionalized.

RECOMMENDATION

- **Continue the process of administrative streamlining and regionalization of administrative functions.** The commission supports State Department efforts to implement common operating procedures within and across regional bureaus to allow process standardization and foster objective comparisons between posts. It also supports new State Department efforts to require the installation and use of standard administrative software at all posts and supports the creation of communities of interest across bureaus to share best practices.

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APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX A

ABOUT THE COMMISSION MEMBERS

Cochairs

George L. Argyros is the chairman & CEO of Arnel & Affiliates. He has served previously as the U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and Principality of Andorra (2001–2004) and as a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations for the U.S. trade representative. His contribution to numerous boards includes the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, chairman of the board of trustees of Chapman University, chairman of Beckman Foundation, founding chairman of the Nixon Center, and chairman emeritus of the Horatio Alger Association. He is also a trustee of the California Institute of Technology.

Marc Grossman is the vice chairman of The Cohen Group. He has served previously as the under secretary of state for political affairs (2001–2005); director general of the Foreign Service and director of human resources (2000–2001); assistant secretary of state for European affairs (1997–2000); U.S. ambassador to Turkey (1994–1997); executive secretary of the State Department and special assistant to the secretary of state (1993–1994); deputy director of the private office of the NATO secretary-general (1983–1986); and at the U.S. embassy in Pakistan (1976–1983).

Felix G. Rohatyn currently serves as senior adviser to the chairman of Lehman Brothers and chairman of Lehman's International Advisory Committees. He served as the U.S. ambassador to France from 1997 to 2000. Earlier he was managing director of the investment banking firm Lazard Frères & Co., LLC; and chairman of the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC) of the State of New York (1975–1993). He has been a member of numerous boards, including the Board of Governors of the New York Stock Exchange (1968–1972).

Commissioners

Richard L. Armitage has been the president of Armitage International since March 2005. He has served previously as the deputy secretary of state (2001–2005); president of Armitage Associates L.C. (1993–2001); director of U.S. assistance to the new independent states (NIS) for the former Soviet Union (1992–1993); presidential special negotiator for the Philippines Military Bases Agreement; special mediator for water in the Middle East; special emissary to Jordan's King Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War; and assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs (1983–1989).

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Anne L. Armstrong is currently vice chairman of the executive committee at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and from 1986 to 1998 served as chairman of the CSIS Board of Trustees. She has served previously as the U.S. ambassador to Great Britain (1976–1977); chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (1981–1990); counselor to Presidents Nixon and Ford (1973–1974); member of the Commission on the Organization of Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy (1973–1974); and member of the Board of Overseers of the Hoover Institution (1978–1990, 1991–1997).

Kenneth H. Bacon is the president of Refugees International. He has served previously as the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs and Pentagon spokesman (1994–2001) and as a reporter, editor, and columnist for the Wall Street Journal based in Washington, D.C. (1969–1994). He is currently the cochairman of the Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping and serves on the boards of the American University in Cairo, Population Action International, and InterAction.

Stuart A. Bernstein served as the U.S. ambassador to Denmark from 2001 to 2005. Prior to this service he was a recognized leader in real estate development, investment, and management in the mid-Atlantic region. Other presidential appointments include serving as a commissioner of the International Cultural and Trade Center and a trustee of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. In addition, he was a trustee of the American University and has been a member of numerous boards, including the Weizmann Institute of Science. Currently he is a cochair of the Kennedy Center International Committee.

Keith L. Brown is a chairman of the Council of American Ambassadors and was president thereof from 1999 through 2004. He has served as the U.S. ambassador to Denmark (1989–1992) and Lesotho (1982–1983). He was the founder and original partner of Vail Associates and served there as director for many years. Currently he is the chairman of the board of Brown Investment Corporation.

Prudence Bushnell is the CEO of Sage Associates. She has served previously as the U.S. ambassador to the Republics of Guatemala (1999–2002) and Kenya (1996–1999); dean of the Leadership and Management School at the Foreign Service Institute (2002–2005); and principal deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs. She has also held positions in Bombay, India, and Dakar, Senegal.

LTG James R. Clapper, USAF (Retired)* is the under secretary of defense for intelligence. He has served previously as the chair of the Intelligence and Security Alliance at Georgetown University's Foreign Service School, as professor of military intelligence; director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (1991–1995); director of the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (2001–2006); and director of intelligence for three combatant commands. He retired as a lieutenant general in 1995 after a 32-year career in the United States Air Force.

* LTG Clapper served on the commission until April 2007, when he returned to government service.

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James Dyer is a consultant for Clark & Weinstock. He has served previously as the clerk and staff director of the Committee on Appropriations of the U.S. House of Representatives; professional staff assistant on the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Foreign Operations; and deputy assistant to the president for legislative affairs (1986–1988, 1991–1993). From 1987 to 1989 he was deputy assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs for the House of Representatives and principal deputy assistant secretary of state for legislative and intergovernmental affairs.

Stuart E. Eizenstat is a partner and head of the international practice at Covington & Burling. He has served previously as the chief domestic policy adviser to President Carter and executive director of the White House Domestic Policy Staff (1977–1981); deputy treasury secretary; under secretary of state for economic, business and agricultural affairs; and under secretary of commerce for international trade. He was ambassador to the European Union from 1993 to 1996.

Charles A. Gillespie, Jr. is a principal at the Scowcroft Group. During his foreign service career he served as the U.S. ambassador to Colombia and Chile (1985–1992); special assistant to the president and National Security Council senior director for Latin America and the Caribbean; deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs; and U.S. ambassador in Grenada.

Louis W. Goodman has been dean and professor of international relations at American University's School of International Service since 1986. Previously, Dr. Goodman served on the faculty of Yale University's Department of Sociology and as director of the Latin American and Caribbean Programs of the Social Science Research Council and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He is the author of numerous books and articles.

Jamie Gorelick chairs both the public policy and strategy and the defense, national security, and government contracts practices at WilmerHale. She served previously as the deputy attorney general of the United States (1994–1997); member of the 9/11 Commission; member of the CIA's National Security Advisory Panel; and cochair of the Advisory Council of the Presidential Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection.

A. Elizabeth Jones is the executive vice president of APCO Worldwide. She spent 35 years in the U.S. Foreign Service and has served as assistant secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia; U.S. ambassador to Kazakhstan; principal deputy assistant secretary for the Near East Bureau; senior adviser for Caspian energy diplomacy; executive assistant to Secretary of State Warren Christopher; deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Bonn, Germany; and deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan.

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James R. Jones is cochairman and CEO at ManattJones Global Strategies. He has served previously as the U.S. ambassador to Mexico (1993–1997); president at Warnaco International; chairman and CEO of the American Stock Exchange in New York (1989–1993); member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Oklahoma (1973–1987); chairman of the House Budget Committee; ranking member of the House and Ways and Means Committee; and appointments secretary under President Lyndon Johnson.

Kenton W. Keith is senior vice president of the Meridian International Center and vice chair of the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange. Previously, he held a career as Foreign Service officer with the United States Information Agency, including positions as the director of USIA's Office of North African, Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (1995–1997); U.S. ambassador to Qatar (1992–1995); counselor for press and cultural affairs in Cairo; senior cultural affairs officer in Paris; and various posts in the Near East and Brazil.

Alan P. Larson is senior international policy adviser at Covington & Burling. He is a career ambassador in the Foreign Service and has served as an economic counselor to five secretaries of state. He held presidential appointments as under secretary of state for economic, business, and agricultural affairs; assistant secretary for economic and business affairs; and ambassador to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Tara Lemmey is the chief executive officer of LENS Ventures, which she founded with the mission of helping companies make innovation tangible. She advises senior executives of Fortune 2000 companies, serves on a variety of boards and committees, and is a leading member of the Markle Task Force on National Security in the Information Age. She is an active participant at the Aspen Institute/Fortune Brainstorm and Fortune Most Powerful Women Summits and is a visiting lecturer at several universities. She was formerly the president of the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the founder of three technology companies.

W. Robert Pearson heads the International Division of The SPECTRUM Group, a consulting firm in Alexandria, Virginia. He completed a 30-year career with the Department of State as director general of the Foreign Service. He served as U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Turkey (2000–2003); deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Paris and the U.S. mission to NATO in Brussels; executive secretary of the Department of State; deputy executive secretary of the National Security Council; chair of NATO's Political Committee; and political officer in China.

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Thomas R. Pickering is the vice chairman of Hills & Company. He has served previously as the senior vice president of international relations and member of the Executive Council at the Boeing Company (2001–2006); under secretary of state for political affairs (1997–2001); president of the Eurasia Foundation; U.S. ambassador to the Russian Federation, India, Israel, El Salvador, Nigeria, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, with additional positions in Zanzibar and Tanzania; ambassador and representative to the United Nations in New York (1989–1992); and executive secretary of the Department of State and special assistant to Secretaries William Rogers and Henry Kissinger (1973–1974).

ADM Joseph W. Prueher, USN (Retired) is a consulting professor and senior adviser at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). He is a retired admiral in the U.S. Navy and has served previously as the ambassador to the People's Republic of China (1999–2001) and commander-in-chief of the U.S. Pacific Command. He spent his first 24 years of service as a carrier-based attack pilot. Admiral Prueher has received multiple military awards for combat flying as well as naval and joint service. Additionally he has been decorated by the governments of Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia. Currently, in addition to speaking and consulting on international issues, he sits on the boards of Merrill Lynch, Emerson, New York Life, Fluor, and several other corporate, educational, and civic boards.

Cynthia P. Schneider is a distinguished professor in the practice of diplomacy at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. She has served previously as U.S. ambassador to the Netherlands (1998–2001) and as a professor of art history at Georgetown (1984–2004). She currently teaches, publishes, and organizes initiatives in the field of cultural diplomacy. As a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, she leads the arts and culture initiative at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy and organizes the Arts and Cultural Leaders Seminar for the annual U.S.-Islamic Forum in Doha, Qatar.

BGN Francis X. Taylor, USAF (Retired) is the chief security officer at General Electric Company. He served in the government for 35 years, where he held senior positions managing investigations, security, and counterterrorism issues. These positions include assistant secretary of state for diplomatic security; director of the Office of Foreign Missions; U.S. ambassador-at-large and coordinator for counterterrorism for the Department of State (2001–2002); and head of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. He retired as a brigadier general after serving with distinction in the United States Air Force for 31 years.

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APPENDIX B

PRESENTERS AT FULL COMMISSION MEETINGS

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Daniel Fried
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Heather Hodges
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
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Under Secretary of State for Management

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APPENDIX C

WORKING SESSION PARTICIPANTS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

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Allison Talarek

* Indicates those individuals who delivered presentations at the working sessions.

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APPENDIX D

INTERVIEWS

Embassies, Consulates, and American Presence Posts

Embassies

Kabul, Afghanistan
Vienna, Austria
Sofia, Bulgaria
Santiago, Chile
Bogotá, Colombia
Zagreb, Croatia
Cairo, Egypt
Paris, France
Berlin, Germany
Conakry, Guinea
Delhi, India
Jakarta, Indonesia
Astana, Kazakhstan
Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
The Hague, Netherlands
Abuja, Nigeria
Islamabad, Pakistan
Lima, Peru
Manila, Philippines
Warsaw, Poland
Doha, Qatar
Madrid, Spain
Ankara, Turkey
Abu Dhabi, UAE
London, United Kingdom

Consulates

Sao Paulo, Brazil
Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Munich, Germany
Tijuana, Mexico
Dubai, UAE

American Presence Posts

Winnipeg, Canada
Lyon, France
Toulouse, France
Medan, Indonesia

Companies

American Express Company
Citigroup Inc.
The Coca-Cola Company
Google Inc.
Marriott International, Inc.

The number of people interviewed at each site ranged from videoconferences or visits with one or more groups of participants to single-officer interviews via telephone.

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GLOSSARY

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GLOSSARY

A-100: A-100 is the name given to the training class for all incoming Foreign Service officers. The program, held at the Foreign Service Institute, is meant to provide an orientation to the work assignments and environment of the Department of State and to instill the knowledge and skills that will enable new officers to perform their duties.

Accountability Review Board (ARB): The Accountability Review Board is an investigatory board that provides an independent review of security-related incidents involving U.S. missions abroad. The board, which convenes at the direction of the secretary of state, seeks to determine accountability and encourage improved security programs and practices. It examines the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident or incidents and makes written findings.

American Center: An American Center is a U.S. government facility providing a broad array of resources and outreach to the public. American Centers generally house the public affairs section of the embassy, a library/information resource center, a multipurpose meeting space, an English language teaching program if it exists in that country, educational advising resources and the Foreign Commercial Service library. American Centers are staffed by U.S. government personnel and are usually located in higher-traffic areas near the center of the capital city. An exception to this model is in Russia, where American Centers are joint ventures between the U.S. embassy and regional institutions.

American Corner: An American Corner is based on a partnership between the public affairs section of the U.S. embassy and a local host institution, such as a university or public library. The mission of each American Corner is to foster mutual understanding between the host country and the United States. The American Corner is a space (usually a room) in the local institution, run by an employee of that institution. It houses collections of books, magazines, music, and on- and off-line databases from and about the United States. Some American Corners are located in capital cities, and many are outside capital cities. Many American Corners have digital videoconference capabilities for bringing American speakers to audiences at the Corner. American Corners can host lectures and other public outreach programming. The first American Corner was established in 2000. Today there are more than 360 American Corners.

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American Presence Post (APP): An American Presence Post is a small, special-purpose post designed to expand the localized U.S. presence outside capital cities. APPs are operated by one or two diplomats, supported by a small number of locally employed staff. An APP office is generally housed in a local commercial office building. It is operated only on an unclassified basis. APPs focus on one or two objectives, such as public diplomacy, commercial outreach, or minority outreach. They seek to build relationships with local officials and organizations in support of their primary objectives. With respect to consular matters, they handle only emergency American citizen services. As of June 2007, there were eight APPs operating worldwide—five in France (Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Rennes, and Toulouse) and one each in Egypt (Alexandria), Indonesia (Medan), and Canada (Winnepeg). New APPs are scheduled to open in China (Wuhan) and Korea (Busan). The State Department plans to triple the number of APPs in operation.

Binational Center (BNC): A Binational Center is an autonomous, foreign institution dedicated to the promotion of mutual understanding between the host country and the United States. English teaching is usually a major component of their cultural, educational, and information activities. BNCs often work in close cooperation with American embassies but are independent in their financial and administrative management. Most are located in Latin America.

Biometric enrollment: Biometric enrollment is the process by which the State Department collects digital index fingerscans from visa applicants. U.S. law requires that as of October 2004, the State Department issue to international visitors "only machine-readable, tamper-resistant visas and other travel and entry documents that use biometric identifiers."

Blog: A blog is a user-generated Web site where entries are made in journal style and typically displayed in a reverse chronological order. The term "blog" is derived from "Web log." Blogs often provide commentary or news on a particular subject or function as online diaries and may combine text, images, and links to other sites. In many cases, viewers may comment instantaneously on posted messages.

Chief of Mission (COM): The chief of mission is the principal officer in charge of U.S. diplomatic missions and certain U.S. offices abroad that the secretary of state designates as diplomatic in nature. The U.S. ambassador to a foreign country, or the chargé d'affaires, is the COM in that country. Ministers, consul generals, or consuls can be COMs when no more senior officer is present. The COM has full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all U.S. government employees in a foreign country, except for those under command of a U.S. area military command. COMs are appointed by the president by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. They may be career members of the Foreign Service or they may be appointed from outside the Foreign Service.

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Circuit rider: A circuit rider is a Foreign Service officer who travels periodically from his/her post to towns and cities that lack a formal U.S. diplomatic presence. Circuit riders travel alone or in teams, including with representatives of other U.S. agencies. In their travels in the field, circuit riders are involved in a wide range of activities fitting the particular needs of the area. Activities can include meetings with local officials, speaking and outreach with the public (including students and community groups) and press outreach.

Community of practice: A community of practice is an online forum for information sharing, communication, and collaboration. The State Department's interactive communities of practice enable officers with a common functional or issue-specific interest to share information through the medium of a secure Web site, within the State Department, and across agencies. The State Department currently has 39 communities of practice in operation.

Foreign Service National (FSN): A Foreign Service national is a non-American citizen employed by the Department of State and its associated agencies. As of February 2007, the State Department employed 37,089 Foreign Service nationals.

Foreign Service Officer (FSO): A Foreign Service officer (FSO) is a U.S. citizen who advocates American foreign policy, protects American citizens, and promotes American business interests throughout the world. FSOs staff embassies, consulates, and other diplomatic missions. They are appointed by the president, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, after having served under a limited appointment as a career candidate. FSOs enter within one of five career tracks—consular, economic, management, political, and public diplomacy. As of March 2007, the State Department employed 6,568 FSOs.

Foreign Service Specialist: A Foreign Service specialist is a State Department employee who provides specialized expertise required to meet Foreign Service responsibilities around the world. Expertise may be technical, support, or administrative in nature. Professions include medical specialists, office management specialists, information management specialists, diplomatic security agents, human resource specialists, regional English language officers, and information resource officers, among others. As of March 2007, the State Department employed 4,896 Foreign Service specialists.

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Information Resource Center (IRC): An Information Resource Center is an information outreach service of a public affairs section of an embassy or consulate. IRCs (formerly known as U.S. libraries) provide information and a range of opinion about the United States to host country nationals. IRCs range in size from a cubicle inside an embassy to a large lending library located outside the embassy, with large book collections, many computers, and Internet access. IRCs support public diplomacy goals by distributing publications and reports, offering programs on bilateral issues, providing Internet training, maintaining the embassy's public Internet Web site, and promoting IRC services to high-level audiences as well as to the general public if open access facilities are available. They also work in support of American Corners and Virtual Presence Posts in countries where these have been established.

Locally employed staff (LES): Locally employed staff are foreign nationals and other locally resident citizens (including U.S. citizens) who are legally eligible to work in a foreign country. Foreign Service nationals are a subset of LES.

Mission Strategic Plan: A Mission Strategic Plan is an annual document that sets country-level U.S. foreign policy goals, resource requests, performance measures, and targets. It is meant to facilitate long-term diplomatic and assistance planning. Washington-based bureaus draw on Mission Strategic Plans to gauge the effectiveness of policies and programs in the field and formulate requests for resources.

OpenNet: OpenNet is the State Department's sensitive-but-unclassified network.

OpenNet Everywhere (ONE) Fob: A ONE fob is an electronic security device that allows State Department personnel remote access to OpenNet.

Podcast: A podcast is a digital media file (including audio and video) that can be distributed over the Internet in a way that allows software to automatically detect new files and download them. Once downloaded, these files can be replayed on personal computers or portable media players.

President's letter of instruction: The President's letter of instruction gives all chiefs of mission full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all U.S. government executive branch employees within the host country or in the relevant mission to an international organization, except those personnel under the command of a U.S. geographic area military commander or on the staff of an international organization.

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Really Simple Syndication (RSS): RSS is a way to publish and deliver frequently updated Web content—including blog entries, news headlines, and podcasts—to subscribers. Subscribers of RSS content use programs called "feed readers" or "feed aggregators" that can check the user's content and update it automatically with any new content that may be available.

Social networking: Social networking is a means of online interaction and information-sharing among geographically dispersed individuals or groups. Online social networking allows users to create extended networks of contacts, share knowledge and expertise, and exchange information. Public examples include LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook, and Friendster.

Standard Embassy Design (SED): SED is a tool to enable the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations to plan, award, design, and construct new embassy projects more quickly than in the past; to simplify the building process; and to provide economically feasible facilities overseas. The SED consists of a series of documents, including site and building plans, specifications, design criteria, an application manual describing its adaptation for a specific project, and contract requirements.

Virtual Presence Post (VPP): A Virtual Presence Post is a means to provide formal U.S. diplomatic engagement to an important city or region, but without the use of a physical facility. This engagement is achieved through targeted travel of members of the Virtual Country Team, program, and media outreach to the region, as well as the establishment of a branded Web site. Such Web sites formally declare a U.S. diplomatic presence in the region and provide services to American citizens. There are currently more than 40 active VPPs in operation worldwide.

Wiki: A wiki is a collaborative Web site that can be directly edited by anyone with access to it. Visitors can add, remove, and otherwise edit and change available content. The ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for collaborative authoring. Diplopedia and Intellipedia are examples of wikis run by the State Department and the intelligence community, respectively, to enable approved personnel to share knowledge and information across job functions.

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ISBN 978-0-89206-508-0