17. See Biderman, pp. 152-161.
18. For a list of the others, see Ezra S. Krendle and Bernard Samoff.
20. Ibid., p. 10
21. Ibid., p. 30
26. For the best compilation of the various issues involved, see Bengt Abrahamsson, Military Professionalization and Political Power (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1972), pp. 71-79.
29. Ibid., p. 6.

Selected References

The more recent classics on the military profession are Samuel P. Huntington’s, The Soldier and the State (1957), Morris Janowitz’s, The Professional Soldier (1960), and Bengt Abrahamsson’s, Military Professionalization and Political Power (1972). Continuing analysis of the military profession and civil military relations is being done under the auspices of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS), chaired by Morris Janowitz and headquartered at the University of Chicago. The IUS journal, Armed Forces and Society, and IUS-sponsored Sage Research Progress Series on War, Revolution and Peacekeeping represent some of the best work in the field.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS:
PROFESSIONALS WITHOUT PROFESSIONS?

William I. Bacchus, Consultant

To a casual observer, the Foreign Service of the United States may appear to be among the best established governmental professions, with its high visibility and extensive traditions. This is a doubtful conclusion, since today serious questions exist about its ability to adapt to changing circumstances, the degree to which it is able to establish or retain exclusive functions, and therefore about its future role. Many of the same questions arise with respect to the much larger group of government officials who are not in the Foreign Service but who nevertheless devote their efforts to the conduct of foreign affairs.

Such uncertainty is not new. Diplomacy in the United States has existed as a non-political, career occupation only since the turn of the century. The modern Foreign Service did not come into being until the Rogers Act of 1924, which amalgamated the previously separate Diplomatic and Consular Services, and through stringent entry standards, provided the basis for the development of a self-consciously elite corps of generalists. By most accounts, the service was well equipped to carry out its limited responsibilities in the period until the beginning of World War II. Wartime is never auspicious for diplomats, and by 1945 the Foreign Service faced a pressing need to rebuild itself (attrition and suspension of recruitment had considerably reduced its size) and to find an appropriate place in the new world of postwar diplomacy. The chosen instrument of this renewal

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was the Foreign Service Act of 1946, drafted primarily by members of the Service itself and under which (as amended) it still operates today.1

The architects of the Act did not foresee, however, the radical transformation of American foreign policy which would occur in the following decades, or the pressures such changes would bring on the Service. In the first two decades of the period, until the mid-’60s, there was a doubling of the number of countries with which the United States had formal diplomatic relations; the creation of new foreign intelligence, assistance, and information agencies; increased international interest and activity by virtually the whole government; and the proliferation both of overseas programs and of representatives of agencies other than the Department of State abroad. Overseas involvement and engagement, including numerous formal alliances and membership in an ever-increasing number of international organizations, became routine for the first time in our history outside of war.

The implications of all this for foreign affairs staffing did not go unnoticed, but proposed changes to meet new conditions either did not resolve the difficulties (such as the amalgamation of the Foreign Service and the State Department’s home service as a result of the 1954 Wriston Report), or were never placed into effect (e.g., the “family of compatible Foreign Affairs Services” for the several foreign affairs agencies proposed by the Herter Committee in 1962).2

As time passed, problems increased as still other changes occurred. Most striking perhaps was the frequently noted expansion of the foreign affairs agenda into new functional areas of interdependence, particularly related to science and economics and bringing new participants and demands for new kinds of expertise. A relative decline in U.S. military, economic, and political predominance became noticeable, reducing the national margin for error. Policy making became a more complicated process, as the line of demarcation between foreign and domestic policy eroded and in some areas disappeared. Partially as a result, traditional acceptance of the premise that foreign policy “belongs” to the Executive Branch began seriously to be challenged by the Congress.3 In response to these challenges, reports and studies proliferated, but reform has not kept pace with demands, largely because no agreement exists about what is needed.4

The fundamental point of all this is that there has been a major evolution in the nature of foreign policy, bringing with it great diffusion of responsibility and confusion about what a profession in foreign affairs is or should be: “If it was ever true that foreign affairs was a technical specialty, best managed by experts, it is true no longer.”5 What is equally true is that great ambiguity now exists about who should do what. Finding a profession under such circumstances is extremely difficult.

To focus exclusively on the Foreign Service Officer (FSO) Corps is to ignore those who carry out the majority of official activity germane to foreign affairs; but to focus on this considerably larger group is to stretch standard definitions of a profession beyond recognition.

The Murphy Commission identified more than 20,000 civilian professional and executive level civilian government employees involved exclusively in international activities, and this excludes an even larger number, nominally unconcerned with foreign affairs, whose actions today may have significant impacts abroad. By contrast, the total number of FSOs is now about 3,500, as it has been for some years.5 Even if administrative and support personnel and those charged with managing operating programs are excluded to leave a group most directly related to policy, the remaining 2,300 FSOs are far outnumbered by those civilian professional and executive level government employees employed outside the Department of State.

At least in Mosher’s liberal usage of the term profession (a reasonably clearcut occupational field which ordinarily requires higher education and offers a lifetime career to its members)6 the Foreign Service Officer corps qualifies, more because of institutional base and service orientation than exclusive function; the larger grouping of foreign affairs officials by almost any definition does not. More restrictive definitions, for example those including individual work autonomy or shared and specific education, would exclude even FSOs.8

The Jurisdictional Problem

The failure of the Foreign Service (unless explicit reference includes non-FSOs in the Foreign Service, the terms “FSO corps” and “Foreign Service” are used interchangeably hereafter) or of foreign affairs officials in general to be accepted as constituting a true profession begins with their inability to establish a monopoly over
knowledge necessary for the conduct of foreign affairs, much less of the exclusive right to apply that knowledge. Unlike lawyers, doctors, military officers, or even economists, it has been impossible for them to sustain claims to be the sole practitioners of their trade. This has been compounded by the already-cited emergence of a whole new range of international policy issues. Diversity, the need for an increasingly wide range of technical and specialized competence, and the often conflicting bureaucratic interests of the many units of government with legitimate stakes in the international arena also act to impede development of the group cohesiveness — whether the result of common perspectives, skills, education, or experience — which marks most established professions.

It has been suggested that there are now both “old” and “new” foreign policy agendas, the former consisting of traditional bilateral issues between nations, and the latter of those new or newly important economic, scientific, technical, and resource problems of interdependence — including trade and investment, international monetary arrangements, food, energy, weather modification, oceans, environment, technology transfer, nuclear proliferation, and the like. Such problems are global in nature, and are increasingly dealt with through multilateral organizations. As a generalization, the right of the Department of State and of the Foreign Service to a leading role is much more accepted with respect to the first agenda than the second. But just as other foreign affairs officials encroach on the traditional domain of the Foreign Service, the former in turn find the rest of government contesting their right to exclusive control of the new global agenda, since every important problem in this area has major domestic implications.

In short, the boundary lines of activity which might define a full-fledged profession or professions in foreign affairs are indistinct, and likely to become more so.

**Contrasting Approaches:**

**Generalists and Specialists**

Differences between the old and new foreign policy agendas tend to be mirrored by different approaches to dealing with them. In a way, this takes the form of the long, inconclusive, “generalists versus specialists” controversy about the appropriate nature of the FSO corps. The “either-or” form of this argument is now clearly dated.

Both mid-career generalists who can deal with a wide range of issues and carry out diverse policies skillfully abroad, and senior generalists able to integrate disparate policy strands are needed; and varying degrees of specialization are required within the total system. Division of labor may be both inevitable and necessary in the face of how much more needs to be known and done today, but it brings with it the critical problem of avoiding fragmentation. The distinctions drawn below between FSOs and foreign policy analysts are not absolute, but they do represent central tendencies of each group.

While there have been some recent steps toward equipping the FSO corps with greater specialist capability, especially in economics, the depth of specialization is still low, and the prevailing mode still emphasizes widely applicable diplomatic skills. Recruitment is designed to ferret out general background and aptitude, presence, and the ability to cope with stressful circumstances, with less concern for specific knowledge. FSO careers are built upon short assignments with varying functional requirements and rotation among a number of countries abroad, and quite different responsibilities in Washington. Primary emphasis is given to the career as a whole, with less to the expertise necessary for any single position. In the best examples, this produces broad-gauged individuals with diverse experiences who are fully equipped as senior officers to deal with many kinds of situations. Unfortunately, this is not always the result, and in any event a price is paid with respect to detailed knowledge about any one policy area, familiarity with Washington bureaucratic mores, and understanding of relationships between foreign policy and domestic political issues.

In contrast, most of those in the career foreign affairs community other than FSOs specialize in one area of related policy issues, or occasionally a country or geographic area. Whereas most FSOs enter at the bottom, recruitment for these others can be at any level, and is on the basis of qualifications, including both relevant academic training and job experience, for the responsibilities of specific positions. Each change of position is dependent upon having the required qualifications, and is generally made by selection among several qualified candidates. Service is likely to be in the same locale throughout the career (mostly Washington), and more often than not in the same agency or department. At the same time, there is some movement to and from those parts of the
private sector concerned with the same range of policy issues. The result tends to be deep familiarity and expertise with respect to a relatively narrow set of related problems, but often at the price of inability to accommodate conflicting perspectives and a constricted view of broad national interests. The frame of reference is that of a functional specialty practiced in an international affairs context; in contrast, for most FSOs, that context or some geographically defined part of it is the paramount occupational interest.

Conducting the Public’s Business:
Ethos, Values, Methodology

These very different patterns of entrance and experience, as reinforced by the incentives each career experience provides, strongly conditions performance and tends to legitimate different operating styles and modes of problem solving. The FSO “sub-culture” (a term sometimes used only half facetiously by its members) is rooted in its overseas responsibilities. This involves the need to be conversant with the whole range of U.S. policy, particularly as it may affect the foreign government to which accredited, and to develop personal relationships and contextual knowledge which will facilitate accurate reporting of developments, including how that government will react in a wide variety of circumstances. A premium is thus placed upon experience (rather than academic training), “feel,” and intuition as preferred elements of problem solving. Rigorous analysis ranks lower on the scale.

The Washington foreign affairs expert community also reflects its (very different) operating milieu. Formal training is likely to be valued more highly (although experience is by no means ignored), and the more technical and narrower nature of individual responsibilities combine to place a higher weight upon analysis and formal problem-solving approaches. At the same time, analysis may be influenced by the bureaucratic forum in which it is undertaken, as well as by engaged domestic political interests, and is likely to become one of the weapons to further agency or client group interests in the inter-agency policy fray.

These stylistic differences underscore the obvious but frequently neglected fact that two very different forms of activity are involved. As Harold Nicolson argued, policy and negotiation should not be confused with each other, nor should these “two branches” of the subject be called by “the same ill-favoured name of ‘Diplomacy.’” Foreign policy for him was for the executive to decide; in contrast, its execution was best “left to professionals of experience and discretion.”

The Foreign Service is oriented toward diplomacy in the second sense of execution. By training and by predilection its members are best equipped for negotiation and for carrying out national policy abroad, and not for the rough and tumble that characterizes the modern American foreign policy making process in Washington. Used to an environment at post in which a sense of unity is likely to prevail and to relatively smooth working relationships with representatives of other agencies at the mission, Washington is often a shock difficult for FSOs to absorb.

Under the best of circumstances, the Foreign Service provides important support and information for policy makers, a task likely to become even more important as it becomes increasingly necessary to be able to predict how other governments will react to contemplated U.S. actions. This reporting falls more naturally into the categories of input to and feedback about the process, rather than being an integral part of that process itself. Success in these core activities of the Foreign Service requires a compromising style, and at times a passive, non-aggressive approach.

In contrast, most of the Washington-based foreign affairs bureaucracy is more directly concerned with policy determination, even though its role may primarily be that of providing analysis, alternatives, and argumentation for more senior, politically appointed policy makers. Because these officials almost invariably represent specific agency and departmental viewpoints (usually along narrow functional lines and responsive to client groups and explicit congressional interests), the process of which they are a part is often featured by intense advocacy, aggressive behavior, and disinclination to compromise. While this policy bureaucracy is well attuned to the dynamics of the policy process, the domestic political implications of proposed policies, and facts and analysis, it is too often unknowledgeable and unearcing about overseas ramifications of what is done at home, and uninformed about the ease or difficulty of implementing a given policy abroad.

This overseas-domestic dichotomy has been complicated for the Foreign Service at least since the Wriston program of the 1950s, which moved domestic employees of the State Department into
the FSO corps, partly in order to open positions in Washington for what was virtually an expatriate Foreign Service, the better to "re-Americanize" them. Since that time, the large majority of the key career positions in State have been filled by FSOs, serving on tours of limited duration. While there have been a number of outstanding exceptions, FSOs for the most part have never been completely at ease with these responsibilities, especially those whose entire career has been in the Foreign Service. Their non-activist style, limited job continuity, and lack of technical expertise have sometimes placed them, and therefore the Department of State, at a disadvantage in contending with members of other bureaucracies who have been dealing in depth with the same issues over an extended period.

A striking example of the orientation of FSOs comes from their self-chosen institutional affiliation. Rather than saying, "I work for the State Department," as others would mention Treasury or Commerce, their answer is most likely to be, "I'm an FSO." In short, the overseas career is still the primary focus of the Foreign Service; problems result from their need to participate in domestic policy making as well.

The two quite different kinds of foreign affairs occupations described ought not to be in conflict, for both are essential for successful national policy. The past tendency has been to downplay the differences, or to try to force both occupational groups into a common mold. With its demand for greater specialization — and therefore, paradoxically, the requirement for a higher order of integrative, generalist competence to mold the pieces together — the future requires a total process which accommodates and values the different contributions each group can bring to bear on increasingly complicated policy issues.

Career Preparation

The Janus-like nature of current FSO responsibilities causes uncertainty about skills and attributes needed for successful performance, which in turn raises questions about the most appropriate type of formal education and career experience as preparation for senior responsibilities. If, as argued above, duties in Washington are very different from those in the field, requiring quite different competences, the question arises of which "cluster" of skills should be emphasized in recruitment and career development.

Quite different answers have been given through the years. A decade ago, Harr found in his comprehensive survey that FSOs strongly endorsed management, negotiating, and reporting as the central functions of the diplomatic profession, with considerably less emphasis placed on policy development. William Macomber, who as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Management came to hold a broader view, emphasized not only the need for traditional diplomatic skills such as reporting, negotiating, and persuading, but also specifically the need to be able to analyze objectively and to develop sound and creative policy choices. These skills were needed by all officers, independent of speciality; in addition, substantive knowledge, in many cases of a specialized nature, was held to be essential.

Still later, in 1976, a staff study conducted by several mid-rank FSOs for a professional development working group attempted to isolate qualities and skills needed by the "ideal" foreign affairs executive, based in part upon those of a group of senior officials generally agreed to have been successful and therefore good role models. The list emphasized management, operational skills, persuasiveness and negotiation, with less concern about expertise or analytic skills.

What is striking about these and other self-analyses is the degree to which the generalist mentality persists, augmented by an increasing concern with program management (at a time when the need to operate large programs abroad is diminishing). Few of the qualities cited suggest that different kinds of senior positions may require individuals with different configurations of skills. Moreover, analytic, conceptual, and integrative skills presumably critical for policy development are also invariably down-rated or missing entirely. As long as such lists of qualities reflect what the service itself thinks it needs, it is not likely to recruit or develop individuals with specialized expertise, or who have the combative style needed to contend more successfully in the Washington arena.

That generalists are still preferred is reflected by the recruitment process. Broad formal education is clearly an asset in doing well on the FSO examination; technical training is less valuable. Even more telling than the continued preponderance of history and political science majors among new FSO classes is the lack of any system designed to put to use specialized expertise that new FSOs do
Another problem is the bifurcation of the FSO career. The system recruits at the bottom, giving primary weight to those generalist qualities thought to be necessary a quarter-century later for service abroad as an Ambassador. However, many of the middle-level policy-related jobs through which FSOs pass in the intervening period are best filled by those with substantial specialized expertise. This is particularly true in the functional bureaus of State, such as those dealing with economics, environmental and scientific affairs, and political-military affairs. When such expertise is lacking, the Department is unable to play an across-the-board role as integrator of policy because it is overwhelmed by the greater technical competence of the more functionally oriented units of government. State can never duplicate the amount or depth of expertise found elsewhere, but it needs enough to keep the policy process honest.

There is little incentive for FSOs to acquire such competence. Since they are evaluated as generalists for promotion to senior ranks, the best personal strategy is to be sufficiently specialized to survive in the middle ranks where promotion is on the basis of functional competition, without becoming overly narrow. This perception of self-interest leads to under-utilization of skills; e.g., it is seen as safer to be a more general economic/commercial officer than a more specialized financial economist, even when there may be a more critical need for the latter. Service in such specialized areas over the extended period necessary to develop professional-level expertise is not likely to establish the credentials required for promotion to senior ranks, nor even to provide the generalist skills required at that level.

Another problem exists at the most junior ranks, where highly talented individuals with generalist potential and in many cases specialized education are often dissatisfied because they are given little responsibility or opportunity to apply what they know best. A rank-in-person, total career oriented personnel system has a number of virtues, but is poorly suited for an environment the demands of which do not allow smooth progress from bottom to top. This is exacerbated for the Foreign Service by the very different overseas and domestic responsibilities, and by the need to gain greater technical expertise to deal effectively with new kinds of international issues.

The rest of the foreign affairs community is by no means fully equipped for evolving responsibilities, but in many respects its problems are less complex. Focusing almost exclusively on Washington needs and on a more limited functional spectrum, its many sub-elements can be less schizophrenic than the FSO system. Since hiring and promotion is on the basis of qualifications for specific positions, and there is easier access from outside at the middle as well as junior levels, it is possible to respond to changing needs with less difficulty than in a bottom-entry system. Furthermore, it is the organization rather than the profession which controls entry, making it easier to change standards to be more responsive to new circumstances. How effective the system is in providing needed experts depends upon how well it is administered, which varies considerably from agency to agency.

While a task-oriented system is superior at gaining specialized talent, it is less clear that it can produce broad-gauged policy generalists in the numbers or sub-categories needed. This is a governmentwide problem, not one limited to the foreign affairs area. To date solutions such as the broadening programs of the Federal Executive Institute have provided only a partial answer to the question of how best to change specialists into effective broad-gauged policy makers.

**Responsiveness and Adaptation**

The foreign affairs community faces major changes in the domestic and international environments in which its members practice their trades, especially with respect to specialization, policy integration, accommodation to the domestic scene, analytic capability, and self-perceptions.

Implications of the evolving, more technical international issue agenda for the competences which will be required are not yet clearly recognized. In the State Department, some FSOs gain specialized skills through multiple assignments dealing with one set of issues and accompanied by short-term training, but within the context of overall generalist career patterns. But no fundamental changes in recruitment practices seem likely, such as bringing any significant number of established professionals in economics or science into the service at mid-levels. Actions taken to date to meet new demands reflect a preference for minimizing impact on the existing structure and mores of the FSO culture. At the same time, some
policy expertise is also acquired for the Department through non-FSO appointments. Specialists from the private sector or elsewhere in government are appointed in limited numbers both temporarily (for periods of five years or less) and permanently, using Foreign Service Reserve, Reserve Unlimited, and Civil Service authorities.

The concept underlying these two approaches taken together is that many or most FSOs might eventually be "generalist/specialists," while "deep specialists" would be employed in other categories. While many doubt the efficacy of this strategy, it may be the best practical solution as long as FSOs must fill more generalist roles abroad at the same time the Department of State has an urgent need for greater functional competence at home. From the standpoint of the FSO corps, however, it may bring the risk of increasing irrelevance in Washington. It is conceivable that influence and responsibility will in the future flow more heavily to subject matter experts, both non-FSOs in State and officials and analysts in other agencies.

Whether or not the FSO corps is able to adapt sufficiently to retain an important portion of the Washington "action," a major problem will remain of meshing effectively the quite different overseas-generalist and headquarters-specialist policy perspectives. Policy synthesis will be at a premium, and it is unclear that either the FSO corps or the policy analyst/specialist group will be able routinely to provide sufficient individuals with the necessary integrative ability to excel at senior-level responsibilities.

The Foreign Service is also under increasing pressure of a different sort, to become more representative of American society. Specifically, its critics want it to include more women, minority group members, and individuals whose geographic and educational background will help make the composition of the FSO corps more nearly resemble that of the total population. The rationale is to insure that the American people as a whole are adequately represented abroad. There has been progress, but the service remains heavily white and male. A related drive has been to bring FSOs who have been serving abroad back into close touch with the American people, and not just the Washington community. Most recently, this has been legislatively mandated through the Pearson Amendment, requiring that a number of mid-career officers be assigned to tours of duty in state and local government positions each year. The impact may be mostly symbolic, but such concerns as these about the FSO corps give strong evidence that it will be increasingly difficult for it to be elitist, on the basis either of achievement or social background.

The strongest suit of the Foreign Service should be the application of its foreign-related knowledge across a broad spectrum of issues. Even here, there is evidence change is needed. Recent critiques conclude that reporting from overseas needs to be more analytic than it now typically is, and much more attuned to U.S. domestic political realities and to the Washington policy context. The Murphy Commission argued that the major future function of State — both embassy personnel abroad and the Washington establishment — will be foreign assessment, or "analysis of probable host country responses to emerging issues of concern to the U.S.," including not only factual information but also "predictions and proposals on specific issues." Its goal should be to explain why foreign governments act as they do and the most likely impact of proposed U.S. actions, and to present such information in a way that suggests "how U.S. initiatives can be designed or modified to have their desired effect." In short, traditional reporting must become more analytic, pertinent, and timely — and thus more integrated into the policy-making process.

Adjustment also seems inevitable in the most sacrosanct of FSO functions abroad: representation and negotiation with foreign governments. It is sometimes argued that the era of bilateral, state-to-state relationships has passed, being replaced by multilateral diplomacy carried out in an ever increasing number of specialized and general purpose international organizations. But the rise of multilateralism and of the related technical issues of interdependence are more likely to place additional burdens on those who carry out bilateral relations. It will be increasingly necessary, with the decline in U.S. power advantage, to seek support for American positions on multilateral issues through individual persuasion of other nations, rather than expecting it to come naturally. FSOs will be critical to the success of such efforts. Moreover, since such issues are likely to be highly technical (law-of-the-sea, food production, resources, e.g.), sufficient specialized knowledge to insure effective negotiation will be needed; and of course, many of the more purely bilateral issues, for example landing rights for Concorde, will be more technical as well.
Given all these pressures, perhaps the most fundamental adaptation facing FSOs collectively will be perceptual, in bringing their self-assigned roles into greater congruence with existing realities. Recognition that the FSO corps does not have proprietary rights to the exclusive conduct of the nation's foreign affairs, or even increasingly to a primary place, is necessary if the Foreign Service is to serve well the more restricted but critical responsibility of bringing consistency to the totality of foreign policy. Other parts of the Washington policy community, by virtue of more restricted interests and parochialism, cannot be a surrogate for the Department of State and the Foreign Service in playing this role.

Public Servants or Employees?

In the face of such challenges, and of changes in American society, it is not surprising that today much of the Foreign Service is restive. Some members are hostile to any major adaptive efforts, while others are scathing in their contempt for the status quo. To the outside observer, it sometimes appears that almost everyone, FSO or not, considers him- or herself to be part of a beleaguered minority, contending with others who are seen as gaining a disproportionate share of the limited rewards the system can offer. In addition, some of the traditional attractions of service overseas have dissipated. The cost of living has increased everywhere, and the dollar declined in value. Allowances for hardship duty and other purposes are increasingly inadequate, the tax situation is becoming threatening, an increasing number of posts are undesirable places to live, more spouses are frustrated if they cannot pursue their own careers abroad, and a number of recent episodes have driven home the threats to personal safety which exist.

As a result, the morale and comradeship which hold the Foreign Service together have declined. A major change has occurred in perceptions of appropriate relationships between individuals and the leadership of the service and of the Department of State. Officers are more assertive about their careers, less willing to accept any assignment offered, and more inclined to enter into formal actions to obtain redress for personally disadvantageous management actions. For their part, managers lament the loss of discipline in the service. Contentiousness and mutual suspicion are increasingly the norm.

It is under these circumstances that the American Foreign Service Association has evolved in the past decade from a professional association into what is for all practical purposes an employee union, and one that is often aggressive. In 1973 it became the exclusive employee representative for Foreign Service employees of the State Department, AID, and USIA through National Labor Relations Board representation elections. Since that time, many issues which in earlier years would have been settled informally among colleagues have become subject to formal employee-management consultation and negotiation.

AFSA, however, has not yet succeeded in convincing many Foreign Service professionals, particularly those who are not FSOs, that it is able effectively to represent their interests. In 1976, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), a more established government employee union, succeeded in displacing AFSA as exclusive representative for USIA employees, in a new election. Moreover, AFSA's internal politics have sometimes been worthy of the Borgias, with factionalism making it very difficult in some cases to arrive at a unified position, or to be effective in negotiations.

The trend toward organization of public employees seems well-established throughout the government, even while questions remain about the extent to which union membership is compatible with professional status. It is argued by some that AFSA ultimately may have to choose whether to revert to its earlier form as strictly a professional association, leaving employee representation to another organization, or alternatively to become a true union, because it cannot effectively do both.

Whatever the future mechanism of employee representation, a more formal and less accommodating relationship between the Foreign Service and its members seems almost inevitable. Careerism in its negative sense is a clear danger. New grievance procedures have been legislated, and there is little reluctance to use them. It seems possible that all this activity, which is highly focused upon individual concerns and bread-and-butter issues, rather than on the service ethic which has so long been characteristic of the Foreign Service, may undercut the image of the FSO corps as an elite professional group of public servants, reducing differences between them and other government employees in the public mind. Like the rest of the foreign affairs community,
they may become more an occupational group than a profession.

Future Prospects

Perhaps the only future certainty is that there will continue to be a need for diplomats abroad and for policy analysts at home. Evolution in the institutional and professional means by which they are provided and in the career services of which they are a part may be inevitable.

One possibility, with the advantage of having the least impact on individuals except those at the top, is the Murphy Commission plan to establish a foreign affairs communitywide Executive Corps, somewhat similar to the 1971 proposal for a governmentwide Federal Executive Service. Each of the existing personnel systems in the involved agencies would serve as feeders, with individuals being selected for the most senior positions on the basis of having the specific skills necessary for a given job. Ideally, such an arrangement would allow the Foreign Service Officer to focus for most of his or her career on skills most needed overseas, while the Washington-based counterpart remained a policy specialist. Individuals in each category who demonstrated the necessary bureaucratic skills and integrative talents could rise to the top on the basis of equitable competition.

Alternatively, it is conceivable that the Foreign Service as it exists today might disappear, being merged into the larger federal service and operated on rank-in-job principles. Another, less likely, plan, advocated within the Department of State as a result of a 1974 inspection of the personnel system, would retain the rank-in-person principle through the middle grades, switch to rank-in-job at the top, and recruit and evaluate all members below senior levels as specialists. Both of these approaches would encourage employment of individuals with specialist skills, but might have a negative impact on the development of broad-gauged diplomatic generalists, since each would impede assignment of individuals to a variety of different tasks during a career.

Whether the future brings adaptation of the current system, or adoption of some such alternative as described, a prior condition for the success of any approach is a clearer sense than now exists of the demands professionals in foreign affairs must meet, and of the roles they should play in making and carrying out national policy. Many of the usual criteria of a profession will never be present in foreign affairs occupations, so the focal point must be a combination of sense of mission and of stewardship for U.S. relations with the rest of the world. Diversity of function must be accompanied by unity of purpose. Anything less will guarantee that the national interests will not be well served in the challenging years ahead.

Notes


4. Two of the most prominent later reform studies can be found in Toward A Modern Diplomacy, A Report to the American Foreign Service Association by its Committee on Career Principles (Washington, D.C.: American Foreign Service Association, 1968); and


14. Cf. William I. Bacchus, Foreign Policy and the Bureaucratic Process (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 229-230, for discussion of the possibility that "non-typical" FSOs, i.e. those with career experiences outside normal career patterns, may be more likely to succeed in the Washington environment.


19. Professional Development Working Group, Department of State.


Further Reading


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