

XVII. Personnel and Professional Development

Human Resources

The State Department's workforce changed substantially in size and composition from 1993 to 2000, in response to decreased federal funding, the reinventing government program, the downsizing of federal agencies, the emergence of global issues, the reorganization of the Department, and the dramatic political events following the end of the Cold War. A table showing the Department's employment levels is at the end of this section.

Recruitment and Personnel Reform

Discussions took place on a strategic approach to recruitment that would provide the Department with a diverse, high caliber workforce able to adapt to the demands of rapidly evolving American interests abroad. Under the Department's "Co-op in Residence" program, the Bureau of Personnel hired students at New Mexico State University and Howard University to serve as part-time recruiters.

In February 1994, Under Secretary for Management Richard Moose formed a Civil Service Advisory Group comprised of Department employees from all grades to advise on professional issues relevant to the Civil Service. Other initiatives undertaken by the new administration included the establishment by Director General Genta Hawkins Holmes of a Civil Service Career Development Design Team. As the Civil Service became more active, a 1994 election resulted in AFGE Local 1534 being chosen as the bargaining unit for Civil Service employees at the State Department. The restructuring of the foreign affairs agencies also created additional job mobility for Civil Service employees through greater opportunities for excursion tours, and career opportunities overseas for spouses also expanded.

Responding to a Presidential executive order on federal-labor management relations, the Department and the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) established a Labor-Management Partnership Council in 1993. A similar Partnership Council was formed at USIA with AFSA and the Civil Service Union AFGE. The partnership agreement at State resolved to "involve open sharing of information at the earliest pre-decisional state, thereby engendering mutual trust and respect and allowing the greatest participation in problem-solving, to better promote the Department's objectives."

In September 1994, in accordance with Executive Order 12584 (1986), the Department began random drug testing in the Washington metro area.

In November 1994, the Director General formed working groups to address Civil Service reform. By December government-wide downsizing was in full swing. In its FY 1995 budget, the Department proposed to accomplish its goals with 366 fewer positions than in the previous year. Position cuts were recommended under every heading in diplomatic and consular programs with the exception of medical services, which remained static. The goals of the downsizing were to "reduce staff and create a more flexible management structure, appropriate to the Department's foreign policy responsibilities with more authority at operations levels and more attention to goals and

performance;" "right-size" the overseas structure while maintaining essential U.S. representation and preserving the ability to conduct foreign affairs; and "increase the Department's focus on people: a smaller, better-managed workforce that encourages diversity, career development and teamwork."

Downsizing proceeded in 1995 with the implementation of five buyout programs. Delayed buyouts approved for 1996 and 1997 resulted in the voluntary separation of more than 600 employees from the Department of State. (From 1993 to 1997, the U.S. Information Agency also lost almost 2,000 positions through reductions in force and downsizing.) The Office of Overseas Employment in the Bureau of Personnel was established in order to consolidate the management of all locally hired employees at overseas missions.

In November 1996, the State Department established the Civil Service to Foreign Service Hard-to-Fill pilot program to fill Foreign Service positions that had received no bids, and to give Civil Service employees an opportunity to serve on temporary tours. The following month, the Civil Service performance appraisal process was revamped and changes were made to the Department-wide awards program.

During 1997 both State and USIA implemented the President's Welfare-to-Work Program and began to employ workers who were being moved into the working economy. November 1997 saw the announcement of the Civil Service to Foreign Service conversion program.

In 1999 the Department released the McKinsey "War for Talent" study. The study emphasized that attracting, keeping, and developing talented employees, both in the Foreign Service and Civil Service, should be a top priority for the Department. The Department also faced the pending retirement of baby boomers from the ranks of the Civil Service. In 1999 the Senior Executive Career Candidate program and the Leadership Competencies Development Initiative were launched to begin grooming the Department's future Civil Service leaders and managers. Also in 1999, after several months of negotiation, the State Department signed its first-ever labor contract with the American Federation of Government Employees, which covered about 6,000 Civil Service employees.

Following the bombing of the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel (OPAP) was formed to look at the way America organized its activities overseas. Personnel issues were a large factor in this study. The OPAP report released in 1999 made a series of recommendations for personnel reform, many of which echoed recommendations from the McKinsey report, including faster promotions, more honest employee evaluations, greater spousal employment, and greater use of foreign national talent at post. In 2000, a 360 Degree Evaluation pilot program was launched to provide confidential feedback and improve talent and leadership/ management skills of individual employees as part of the "War for Talent."

An OIG inspection in 1997 had recommended that the Department revise its hard language incentive program to encourage more repeat tours. After 2 years of research and negotiation with the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), the Department

inaugurated on October 1, 1999, its new language incentive program, which rewarded the use rather than the study of hard languages.

Both the McKinsey and OPAP reports recommended that the Department consider new methods to bring people into the Foreign Service. In response to their recommendations and to provide for more flexible and targeted intake of Foreign Service officers, the Alternate Exam pilot program was established in May 1999. After several very lean hiring years, the Department completed its FY 1999 hiring cycle with a record intake of 313 Junior Officers and 600 Foreign Service Specialists (including security officers). Nine hundred student interns were hired domestically and overseas.

As part of an effort to strengthen the career Civil Service, ten Civil Service professionals were recruited in February 2000 for State's new Career Entry Program (aimed initially at six targeted occupations). A new policy governing Civil Service re-employment rights was implemented to provide Department-wide rights to Civil Service employees serving on Foreign Service excursion tours overseas.

In May 2000, Secretary of State Albright changed the name of the Bureau of Personnel to the Bureau of Human Resources.

Restructuring of the Foreign Affairs Agencies

Less than 2 weeks after taking office, Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Deputy Secretary Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. undertook a reorganization of the Department as called for by "State 2000: A New Mode for Managing Foreign Affairs," a 1992 internal study. The new structure included the creation of an Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs.

Vice President Gore met with State Department employees in May 1993 to discuss the "reinventing government" program. Later in the year, discussions began on the consolidation of the Agency for International Development (AID), the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), and the State Department into one foreign affairs agency. After 3 years of debate about the scope and timing of the reorganization, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 was passed. It ordered the merger of USIA and ACDA with the State Department; the Broadcasting Board of Governors and AID would remain separate. The personnel offices of the three agencies developed an orderly and fair transition for the thousands of employees who would be absorbed into the State Department.

ACDA merged with the Department of State on April 1, 1999, followed by USIA on October 1, 1999. More than 1,800 Foreign and Civil Service employees and 2,000 Foreign Service Nationals were "cross-walked" into appropriate bureaus and offices throughout the State Department. (More detail on the integrations is in Chapter II.)

Family Friendly Policies

As the reorganization of the Department progressed, its policies came to encompass employees' growing focus on family needs, including career stability for spouses. In March 1994, the Professional Associates Program was established to provide portable benefits for Foreign Service spouses. The Department also implemented the

"Rockefeller Amendment" allowing embassies and consulates to employ expatriate American citizens in positions formerly available only to foreign nationals.

In 1994 the Department established a permanent emergency relief fund for Foreign Service Nationals to provide employees in Washington and at posts overseas a way to demonstrate their appreciation and support for Foreign Service National colleagues who found themselves in need of emergency relief.

In May 1996, the Department opened its first on-site child care center in Columbia Plaza, and in 1998 a partnership agreement was signed with the National Science Foundation to provide near-site child care for Department employees at Ballston center.

During 1998, a job share program for Foreign Service employees in domestic tours and the Family Member Appointment, which provided access to retirement and other benefits to eligible family members working at embassies and consulates, were initiated.

In October 1999, the Office of Casualty Assistance was established in the Bureau of Personnel as a result of the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

In response to growing concerns among State Department employees, the Department established an eldercare coordinator and working group in 1999, and in May 2000 a resource referral service was inaugurated to assist employees worldwide with child care, adult care, education, and other personal needs by telephone, e-mail, and the Internet.

Also in 2000, the Department adopted its first telecommuting policy and implemented a new home leave policy allowing employees returning to Washington assignments to take 5 (instead of 3) weeks of home leave. In October a new alternative work schedule was approved for domestic implementation. The monthly transit subsidy program (Metrocheck) was offered to all domestic employees as was an eldercare travel benefit allowing employees to come home to assist parents whose health had broken down.

Department of State Employment Levels, 1993-1999

The figures for 1999 in the chart below include ACDA employees but not USIA employees since the merger of USIA with the State Department did not take place until FY 2000 (October 1999). The figures for 2000 do include all USIA employees.

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Civil Service employees	5,545	5,364	5,166	5,150	5,136	5,134	5,500	6,580
Foreign Service Generalists	5,071	4,877	4,730	4,061	4,453	4,448	4,492	5,193
Foreign Service Specialists	3,671	3,572	3,428	3,288	3,219	3,266	3,579	3,778

Training Programs

During the Clinton administration, the Foreign Service Institute (M/FSI) was located organizationally under the Under Secretary for Management. Headed by a Director appointed by the Secretary of State, the Institute was created under the Foreign Service Act with the primary mission to promote career development within the Foreign Service and to provide necessary training and instruction in the field of foreign relations to members of the Service and employees of the Department and other agencies. The Institute also provided training to family members accompanying employees abroad and, over time, had its authorities expanded to include training, under certain circumstances, on a reimbursable basis to foreign governments to support the promotion of democracy worldwide. Through 2002, the Institute had pilot authorities under which it may provide, on a space available and reimbursable basis, training to Members of Congress, legislative and judicial branch employees, and certain U.S. private businesses on a limited scale.

The signature event for the Foreign Service Institute during the Clinton years was the October 1993 dedication and opening of the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC), situated on the 72-acre Arlington Hall Station property in Arlington, Virginia. NFATC was the only U.S. government training facility dedicated to foreign affairs. Students from more than 40 U.S. government agencies and the U.S. military service branches attended training at the Foreign Service Institute during the Clinton administration, primarily in preparation for assignments at U.S. diplomatic missions abroad. In 1993 FSI had about 14,000 enrollments a year equaling 1.8 million training hours. By 2000 enrollments had more than doubled and training hours had increased over 23 percent.

In line with Clinton administration efforts to promote the expansion of technology in the workplace, the Foreign Service Institute steadily refined both program content and delivery mechanisms by introducing distance learning and computer-based training through multimedia products and Internet- and Intranet-based training, and by taking training into the field. FSI trained more people in shorter time by compacting courses in response to modern workforce needs.

In 1997 the Foreign Service Institute had another milestone—its 50th anniversary. At the time, Secretary of State Madeline Albright said of the continuing importance of diplomatic training: “It was said in the 19th century that Great Britain’s wars were won on the playing fields of Eton. I believe that American wars in the 21st century are being prevented in the classrooms of FSI. Here, the skills of modern diplomacy are taught. Here, the ability to turn the raw material of information into the finished product of American policy is developed. Here, the knowledge that will inform the peacemakers of tomorrow is conveyed. And here, America’s future Kennans, Bunches, Athertons, Newsoms, and Pickeringings are produced.” (*State Magazine*, May 1997, p. 2)

The years of the Clinton administration coincided with a decline in the Department of State’s resources, leading to cuts and streamlining throughout the agency, as well as initiatives such as the National Performance Review and reducing government size. The Foreign Service Institute played an important part in the Department’s effort to build a culture of change by offering new courses on managing change, re-engineering, teambuilding, and leadership. FSI addressed its own need to downsize and consolidate

by combining its School of Area Studies and its School of Professional Studies in April 1996, and by creating a School of Applied Information Technology and the Career Transition Center in October 1996 as programs were realigned and consolidated from other Department bureaus. And, in October 1999, with the restructuring of the foreign affairs agencies, the Foreign Service Institute absorbed public diplomacy training as the U.S. Information Agency was integrated into State.

The Foreign Service Institute's curriculum addressed the priorities established by the Clinton administration: global competitiveness, reducing weapons of mass destruction, human rights, worldwide environmental concerns, and the continued promotion of democracy. In addition, in response to world events, panels and commissions were convened to look at the future of modern diplomacy and the Department of State. In the wake of bombings at U.S. Embassies in Africa, FSI constituted a vigorous Crisis Management Training program to exercise posts in Emergency Action Plans designed to respond to both political and natural crises.

The McKinsey "War for Talent" report and the report of the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel, both released in 1999, presented persuasive cases for the Department to plan for future leadership so that it could retain effectiveness into the 21st century. FSI worked with the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources to foster a more pro-training mindset and address the concerns of the post-"baby boom" workforce. And in the final year of the Clinton administration, FSI established a Leadership and Management School to train future policy makers and managers.