

Drop by Drop

In some ways, professional life at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul is similar to other embassies—preparing for visiting congressional delegations, arranging interviews with U.S. media, visiting local clinics for child drug addicts, checking on the progress of a USAID-funded school house in a remote village. Afghanistan, however, magnifies the differences.

CODEL visits average one a week; media interviews likely focus on controversial issues such as the national government's possible reconciliation with the Taliban; the FSO jumps into an armored vehicle to visit the local clinic; and the civilian development expert wears a military flak jacket to the remote school. That's all part of an average day for colleagues at Embassy Kabul, where progress is measured day by day and drop by drop.

Afghanistan is one of the "AIP" posts—Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan—that account for most unaccompanied tours. The Department has developed a Service Recognition Package as part of its support for employees serving unaccompanied tours. Support ranges from pay and tour-length incentives to a host of services designed to alleviate or prevent potential long-term emotional harm stemming from the unaccompanied tours.

With at least 13 unaccompanied posts, odds are high that Foreign Service officers will serve at least one unaccompanied tour during their careers. HR estimates show between 900 and 1,000 employees currently serving such tours, about five times the 2001 level. Many are motivated by public service and the value of the work, but the incentives recognize the extra stress.



Diplomacy 3.0, the descriptive term coined in 2009 for the hiring surge to increase the Department workforce by 25 percent, doubled the new entry-level officers beginning their careers in the traditional

A-100 class, the Orientation for Foreign Service Generalists course. Demands in 2010 on FSI's Orientation Division, which introduces all new Foreign Service generalists and Civil Service employees to the Department and to diplomacy, will be even greater.

To accommodate the huge influx of newcomers, FSI added three more classes a year and shortened the course from seven weeks to five. Class size grew from an average of 65 students to 98—maximum classroom capacity. To maintain high-quality orientation and to present the information more efficiently, FSI installed the Department's first wireless network in the A-100 classroom.

Despite the challenges, says FSI Director Dr. Ruth Whiteside, "When a fully-funded training float is in place, the Department will be able to ensure that all employees get the training they need."

Last but not least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: Mary E. Andrews; Wat T. Cluverius IV; Ann Glanville; Stuart Halpine; James A. Klemstine;

Wanda E. Kurland; Raija-Leena Nyborg; Russell E. Olson; Robert Fleming Slutz Jr.; James C. Suma; Alfreida Green Walker; and Jim Wilkinson. ■

Rob Wiley

Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

COMING IN JULY/AUGUST

- >>> Ambassador Runs Post with ICASS Precision
- >>> Department Vets Gather for Foreign Affairs Day
- >>> DOS Children Taste Diversity of Parents' Work >>>
- ... and much more!

