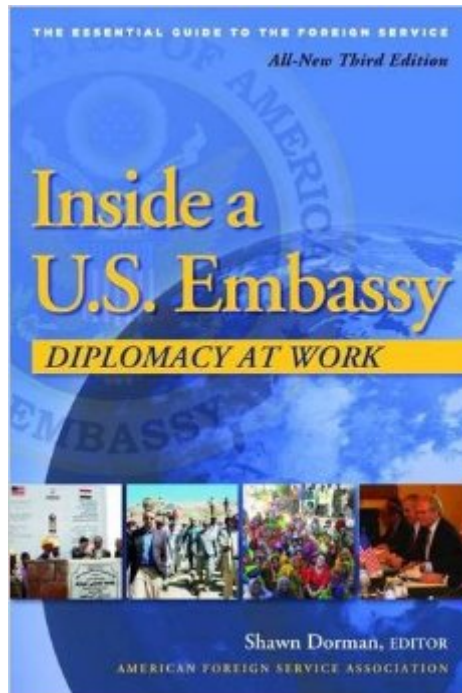


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Inside A U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy At Work, The Essential Guide To The Foreign Service



Synopsis

Inside a U.S. Embassy is widely recognized as the essential guide to the Foreign Service. This all-new third edition takes readers to more than fifty U.S. missions around the world, introducing Foreign Service professionals and providing detailed descriptions of their jobs and firsthand accounts of diplomacy in action. In addition to profiles of diplomats and specialists around the worldâfrom the ambassador to the consular officer, the public diplomacy officer to the security specialistâis a selection from more than twenty countries of day-in-the-life accounts, each describing an actual day on the job. Personal reports from the field give a sense of the extraordinary challengesâthe coups, the natural disasters, the civil warsâand rewards of representing America to the world. Inside a U.S. Embassy includes new chapters on the highly competitive Foreign Service entrance process, Foreign Service life outside the embassy, and briefings on topics such as handling high-level visits and service in war zones.

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Customer Reviews

This book goes far beyond the traditional image of a U.S. diplomat abroad, providing the perspectives of people in all of the Foreign Service careers and some of their family members. Part I profiles members of the Foreign Service in the different generalist `cones' (economic, political, consular, and management) and specialist career tracks (medical doctors, office management specialists, etc). The second part explains how all the different positions examined in the book work together under the head of the mission. There is also an interesting piece in Part II that provides

insight into what it takes to coordinate an official visit from the perspectives of four Foreign Service officers working on it. The day-in-the life journals in Part III open a window into the variety of work that people in these different positions perform in a given day. Part IV is a series of very different 1-3 page stories ('tales from the field'). Where Part III focuses more on everyday work and life, these stories in Part IV are focused on more extraordinary times. A couple of these center around dangerous situations from the perspective of being 'on the ground' in the embassy as it is attacked - or coordinating the evacuation of US citizens from a foreign country during a time of upheaval. Some of these stories are really touching and inspiring - like that of a specialist in Liberia who finds himself in a unique position to make a small difference in the local community, or an Ambassador in the Balkans who is able to calm an angry riot and prevent the mob's scapegoating of some innocent refugees. The guide to the hiring process in Part V is helpful. Instead of focusing on just passing the written exam like most test prep books, it guides the applicant through the entirety of the process. A lot of junior officers are also included in various parts of the book, which provides a solid view of what to expect at the start of the career.

The State Department helps produce this book with the American Foreign Service Association as a marketing/recruitment piece for those interested in becoming Foreign Service Officers. It contains stories by FSOs in the different "cones" - Consular, Economic, Management, Political, or Public Diplomacy. Something like 25,000 people apply annually to join the 14,000 member FSO workforce around the world; last year the State Department had more than enough applicants to hire fewer than 300. For many aspirants, reading this book is as close as they will come to achieving their dream. The book begins with an introduction to the Foreign Service and a bit of its history. Part I is a collection of profiles of specific people in embassies around the world, including Ambassadors, USAID reps, entry-level FSOs, and even locally-hired employees. Part II explains the process of becoming an FSO and being deployed, and features some day-in-the-life profiles giving examples of work. Part III is a collection of "one day journals," "day-in-the-life" stories written by FSOs highlighting their everyday routines including problems they've solved, challenges they face, and routine boredom they deal with. It gives details about their family life (many spouses work or volunteer for the embassy), workout routines, deployment history, etc. Part IV contains tales from the field -- interesting stories written by FSOs highlighting stresses (disasters and terrorist attacks), problems they solve, and people they meet. The most interesting story is by an FSO in Macedonia in 1999, serving under Christopher Hill (later a negotiator with North Korea and Ambassador to Iraq). "One summer midnight in the Balkans, an American ambassador walked into a (Kosovar Albanian) refugee camp

to try to quell a riot and save the lives of Roma (gypsy) refugees under attack. He succeeded, and went home to bed. It wasn't diplomacy around big tables in grand rooms. The U.S. embassy had no responsibility to intervene, and few who were not there ever heard about it. But the actions of Ambassador Christopher Hill highlight the power of the individual Foreign Service officer's moral and physical courage...We never talked much about that night again each day at Embassy Skopje brought too many new problems and issues connected with the Kosovo crisis. But I've come to realize that night was characteristic of much of our work in the Foreign Service: We confront so many unknowns, we have so little time, and on scales large and small the consequences of our actions and inactions can be so extraordinarily profound." I give the book 4.5 stars out of 5. A must-read if you're interested in the Foreign Service. The individual day-in-the-life stories get a bit repetitive or dry, as they should-- this is real life.

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