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A LOOK AT FOUR FOREIGN SERVICES: BRAZIL, WEST GERMANY, ISRAEL, JAPAN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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FIFTEENTH SESSION

SENIOR SEMINAR IN FOREIGN POLICY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE



1972-73

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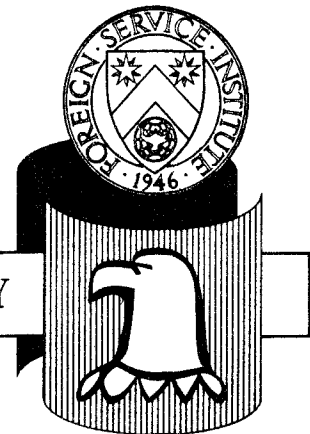
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INTRODUCTION

This paper is an effort to look at the diplomatic establishments or foreign services of four nations today, in 1973, to see how they are similar and how they are different. It is not a comparative study in the strictest sense, with graphs and statistics on salaries, allowances, or leave patterns. The central effort has been to try to find the essential characteristics of each of the services, to see what are the dynamics within that service, and, as far as possible, to present an impressionistic picture of each.

A word as to methodology. This paper has been prepared as a case study for the Senior Seminar in Foreign Policy. It originated in discussions with senior officials in the Office of Management in the Department of State and with appropriate desk officers. Conversations with officers assigned to their nations' Embassies in Washington followed. Next, visits were made to all four Foreign Offices. An attempt was made wherever possible to schedule additional visits in foreign capitals with representatives at other Embassies along the lines of the Washington visits. I have reviewed published materials available and have sought the opportunity of discussing the topic with journalists, American observers, and others whenever possible.

I have greatly appreciated the cooperativeness of all those I have contacted. It is my conclusion that there is a wide-spread interest throughout all Services in the topic and a genuine concern about the problems we all face. Yet, I should like to make clear that the conclusions and impressions I present are my own. I hope they are accurate, but if not, it is my own perceptions which are fuzzy and inaccurate.

I am aware of the perils of my study. I have had to rely, except with Germans and in Germany, upon a knowledge of English to conduct my investigation. I may have heard a "pretty" story rather than a totally accurate one, but I have attempted to relate what central authorities entrusted with implementing personnel policies say to what the troops in the field have to say. I have considered the possible conflicts between image and reality and reached what I hope is a fair assessment. I am aware that my approach has, by design, encouraged a superficial view, for I have not delved into historic roots, cultural phenomena, or the national economies.

Nonetheless, I am hopeful that my study has some merit on its own and may stimulate more detailed studies. Foreign Services are important and diplomacy, I believe, is a profession with some special characteristics. Since nations want to have strong, capable foreign services, it is worthwhile to see what other nations are doing about theirs in order to see our own in proper perspective; the US Foreign Service in recent years has gone through a process of intensive self-analysis and, as a result, we have lost sight of our colleagues and competitors.

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BRAZIL

The Brazilian Foreign Service is a cohesive group of dedicated officers, perhaps somewhat small in number with respect to the economic strength and vitality of Brazil. It is a service with traditions, proud of its status and its emphasis since 1919 on professionalism. The Service may be characterized as youthful, bright, attractive, hard-working, with a certain quality of vibrancy, color and dynamism.

The Foreign Service of Brazil is an integral part of the nation's Civil Service, but it has a quality of independence as well. Members of the Foreign Service assigned to Brasilia staff almost all substantive positions in the Foreign Office, which is housed in one of the capital's most attractive new structures. Most of Brazil's Ambassadors are career officers. Considerable prestige is accorded to the Foreign Service and diplomacy is considered a worthwhile and attractive career. Well-qualified university students apply for admission to the Service, and there is no present inclination to reduce requirements or lighten the strict examinations.

Candidates apply to take the examinations on an annual basis. Provisional or preliminary exams, mostly of a general aptitude nature, are given in five or six of the major cities; those successful in the preliminaries are invited to Rio for the intensive written and oral examinations conducted by the Instituto Rio Branco, equivalent to a Foreign Service Institute. Competence in French and English is required and tested both orally and in writing.

The written examinations are given in series; failure to pass any exam with a grade of fifty or more prevents the candidate from taking the next exam. He must have a passing grade of 60 or more for the series, based on simple averaging. If he has passed his physical, security, and psychological tests as well as his formal exams, he is appointed and assigned to a two-year course at the Institute.

The examinations test a candidate's knowledge of International Law, Brazilian History and Geography, World History, International Affairs and Diplomacy. The Institute's curriculum includes additional instruction (mostly lectures and readings) on these subjects, Economics, Brazilian Government, the working methods of the Foreign Office, and foreign languages. Recently the Institute has been experimenting with other projects such as the drafting of background papers for a visit by the Foreign Minister to certain African countries and field trips to Brazilian cities and regions. Particularly since the move of the Foreign Office to Brasilia, the Institute is seeking ways of cooperating with the Foreign Office as closely as possible.

Following his introductory training program, the new officer in most cases is assigned to the Foreign Office for a period of two years or more before assignment for the first time abroad. Assignments tend to alternate thereafter between four years abroad (two two-year tours) and four years in Brasilia (generally in two different assignments). This is particularly true during the earlier portion of one's career, and an officer in higher grades will likely stay abroad for longer periods. On the average, a diplomat will spend two-thirds of his career overseas and one-third in Brazil.

A recent reform of the promotion system, which appears not to relate directly to the assignment process, provides an unusual combination of objective and subjective appraisals, seniority, and peer-group evaluation. A promotion committee produces a list annually of those officers considered eligible for promotion. The list is based on a point system with certain points allocated for time-in-grade, for special positions held, for length of service, etc. The list is published and made available at home and abroad. All officers of the Foreign Service are asked to vote for ten of their colleagues at the same level whom they consider should be promoted. Each of these votes carries ten points.

The list with peer-group ratings is next made available to a promotion board of 15 high-ranking officers; each board member's vote counts 1000 points toward promotion. This figure sounds astronomical compared to the point-count of the vote of a colleague, but officers believe board members are influenced by the votes a promotion candidate receives from his peer-group. If the entire board supports the promotion of one officer, he will be awarded 15,000 points. The number of candidates a board member votes for is determined by the estimated number of promotions from a particular class; this number is based on promotion-created vacancies at the higher level and estimates of attrition due to death, sick-leave, or extended leave for special purposes.

When points are all counted in, a tabulation is made and the board produces a second list of promotable officers. This too is published and thereafter the Ministry must promote on the basis of the list whenever a vacancy occurs. It is conceivable but not likely that not enough vacancies will occur during the calendar year to promote those officers recommended; should that occur, the disappointed officer would likely be put at the head of a subsequent list. After the second list is published or "gazetted", actual promotions are made on a quarterly basis.

Although the system was introduced only in 1972, officers believe it will work well and be an improvement over the previous promotion system, which relied almost exclusively on subjectivity--whom do you know and who knows you. Subjectivity has not been eliminated and still has a very significant weight in promotions. This is not necessarily a bad thing in a Service small enough for almost everyone to know most of his colleagues on a personal basis. When the Service grows larger, as I believe it probably will to accommodate the nation's growing importance, perhaps other techniques of promotion will have to be adopted.

What makes the promotion scheme somewhat unique is the absence of required and periodic evaluations or efficiency reports. Supervisors are not required periodically to evaluate the work of officers under them. Commendations for particularly good work are sparingly used; more effective is the practice of mentioning an officer's good work in the right quarters, perhaps in an informal conversation with a member of the Board, or in a telephone conversation or a personal letter.

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What officers in the Service like about the new system is the improved prospect for promotion for officers who may be well regarded by their colleagues but not particularly well known in Brasilia. They believe the old promotion system was perhaps somewhat unfair to officers who had long been assigned overseas; they do not consider that the old system resulted in granting promotions to genuinely ineffective or undeserving officers. They think the new system will perhaps speed up the rate of promotion for truly deserving officers.

The new system has produced a side benefit; it makes somewhat more appealing the possibility of an assignment to Brasilia, a fate earlier considered as slightly less than an assignment to oblivion. Many officers tend to see an assignment to Brasilia now as tantamount to a better possibility for promotion, since the Promotion Board sits there and opportunities abound for making oneself and one's work known. It is understandable that such a possibility makes the prospect of four Copacabana-less years in Brasilia more palatable. On assignments, personal connections can also be important. A number of officers follow senior officers around from post to post. On occasion, familial relationships appear to be of great importance, but one can no longer say that they are a dominant factor in the Foreign Service. Officers are able to resist assignments without prejudice to their careers. If their reasons for rejecting an assignment are not too sound, officers may have to accept assignments they would prefer to avoid, but most officers feel all assignments, in the beginning at least, are negotiable.

On the other hand, there is a quality of discipline and organization in the Brazilian Service. Some officers are proud of similarities between the Foreign Service and Brazil's military services. A recent wage boost, for example, was described as putting the Foreign Service on a par with the military services. Some officers feel the tempered discipline of the Foreign Service is a civilian model of the more strict discipline in the military. Emphasis on training in the Service is considered parallel to that available to military officers, and the organization of the Foreign Office is considered to be patterned on that of the Defense Ministry.

The Brazilian Foreign Service has a kind of time-in-grade limitation, operative only in the upper levels when an officer must retire if not promoted to the rank of Ambassador from the rank of Minister Counsellor by the time he reaches the age of 60. As far as could be determined, the concept is applied only at the upper levels and a quality of rapid promotion governs at lower levels. An officer expects to be promoted regularly and quickly to the rank of First Secretary; this permits his assignment to positions with a great deal of responsibility at a comparatively young age. Thereafter his promotions will slow down, but he can have a reasonable expectation of ultimate appointment as Ambassador since almost all Ambassadorships are appointed from the career service and since Ambassadors generally serve no longer than four or five years before retirement.

The Service has succeeded in changing its earlier image. It was formerly considered a lightweight institution characterized by

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neopotism, in an exclusive club-like atmosphere, mostly involved in nonserious pursuits. Although family relationships continue to have some importance and an impressively large number of Brazilian diplomats are children or relatives of diplomats, there is some sensitivity on this point and officials now take some pleasure in the fact that children and relatives of diplomats do not receive preferential treatment; they must enter the Service through the examination process and, it is somewhat gleefully reported, some of them don't pass.

The Service does not pretend to represent the nation racially, geographically, or socially. There is, however, no bar to the acceptance of dark-skinned Brazilians other than examinations. Since most of the best universities are located in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, those who take and pass the examinations are likely to come from those cities. The government's liberal policy of providing deserving students from the outlying and underdeveloped areas with scholarships and assistance to study in the larger cities has already brought into the Service representatives from outside Rio and Sao Paulo. In addition, as universities elsewhere in Brazil improve the quality of education available to students, there will likely be successful applicants from other universities.

The Service has emphasized the introductory training course for its diplomats and, although the interest and intentions are there, it has apparently neglected further training at middle and upper levels. This may be explained by a shortage of funds as well as of personnel. The Institute is already experiencing difficulties as a result of the Ministry's move to Brasilia. Plans are for the Institute itself to move, when suitable quarters become available. The move will likely produce mixed results; it will be unpopular with students and staff, it will remove the Institute from the rich educational resources available in Rio, and it will at the same time permit close coordination and cooperation between the Institute and the Ministry.

Further problems may arise in the inevitable need to expand the size of the Service. Already experiencing a drop in the number of applications for a variety of reasons (primarily the government's move to Brasilia and the competitiveness of other career opportunities in a rapidly growing economy), an increased need for more officers may have to be met by a downward adjustment of requirements and examinations, which may create further burdens on the Institute.

Some officers point to problems which arise through the frequent exchange and transfer of Foreign Service Officers assigned to the Foreign Ministry. There are few permanent career non-Foreign Service personnel in the Ministry. Although the system of assigning officers to substantive positions in the Ministry has obvious advantages, transfers of these officers every two or three years prohibits continuity in Ministry operations.

There has been some public criticism about the Ministry's liberal policy of allowing officers to leave the Service temporarily; at any one time, perhaps twenty-five or more officers are maintained on the books but not working in the Ministry or abroad. Some take

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leave to accept high-paying positions for a time; some accept positions in other government ministries; and some leave for personal or family reasons. When officers on leave for any of these purposes wish to re-enter the Foreign Service, they are entitled to the first vacant position available. There have been some instances of officers remaining outside Service positions for as long as five years before seeking reinstatement or resigning.

There is a growing concern about female career diplomats, and women officers are increasingly concerned about prejudicial treatment. Women officers feel the Ministry is unduly rigid in requiring that women officers married to male diplomats abandon their career when their husbands are assigned abroad; husband and wife teams may work in the Ministry in Brasilia. The Ministry is aware of this as a growing problem, but does not seem to be moving away from its present policy.

In general, wives of diplomats assigned abroad are not expected to be able to continue their own separate career. A journalist-wife might be an exception, or a musician or an artist. Regulations in the host country on employment of foreigners would apply and there would be little inclination to request special authorization or waive diplomatic immunity on behalf of a diplomat's wife.

Parenthetically, a new regulation on marriage of diplomats is raising some concern, since it requires the Foreign Minister's approval for marriage to another Brazilian and Presidential approval for marriage to a foreigner.

Present Foreign Office regulations preclude the assignment of a diplomat to the country of his wife's former nationality, though exceptions can be made. A foreigner married to a Brazilian diplomat is not required to adopt Brazilian citizenship.

These present and prospective problems can be solved without diluting the quality of excellence in the present Service. Officials are aware of these problem areas and there is abundant evidence of talent and ability to solve them.

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WEST GERMANY

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The German Foreign Service is a well-established institution, tied closely to the Civil Service. There is little difference between the German Foreign Service Officer assigned in Bonn and his colleagues in other ministries. Salary scales, working conditions, retirement benefits, insurance, etc. are almost identical; the separate and distinct status of the Foreign Service is maintained through special Bundestag regulations on such matters as home leave, travel, schooling allowance, shipping costs, provision of air conditioners, and the like.

The Foreign Service was the subject of study for a Commission established by Willy Brandt when he was Foreign Minister in 1969; reportedly, Brandt had become interested in the Foreign Service and somewhat concerned when he visited a number of German missions abroad as Lord Mayor of Berlin. The Commission was made up of highly regarded politicians, university professors, public officials, and similar persons. It began its intensive study in 1969, which included visits to most missions overseas, and presented a final report with some 132 separate recommendations in 1972. All but one or two of the proposed changes will be implemented by the end of 1973, either in terms of new ministerial directives or legislation, if required. This is perhaps an unparalleled example of how one goes about effectively reforming a national institution; Brandt and the members of the Commission are to be commended for the seriousness of the study and for its effective implementation.

Well on its way to completion of the reform, the German Foreign Service today gives an impression of considerable authority, competence, and professionalism, with a few occasional examples of conservatism and "old guardism." The new look of German diplomats is particularly noticeable in the lower and middle levels; there are a few (but not many) representatives of the aristocratic families one would expect to find in a German Foreign Service, and there are a few officers who represent the old traditions rather than the new.

The Germans themselves are concerned that so many of their diplomats come from the field of law--approximately 2/3 of the "higher" or diplomatic service. While the Ministry would be happy to see a wider variety of professional studies represented, the Ministry does not want to sacrifice quality, and those students who do best on the examinations are in the majority, law students. This perhaps has its roots in the German educational system which makes law a favorite field of study at the university level for aspiring public servants, businessmen, students of international affairs, and politicians as well as for those interested in a career as lawyers or judges. There is no evidence for the assumption that the examination favors law students, other than the assumed statistic that about two-thirds of those in the Foreign Office responsible for preparing the examinations are probably themselves lawyers. Some recent initiatees, however, were quite outspoken in saying that the study of law, they felt, was a particularly good discipline in preparing students well to take almost any kind of written and oral examinations; preparation of law briefs was good training for writing clear prose, and training in courtroom procedures was helpful in preparing for the oral examinations.

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The examinations test both general as well as specific knowledge. Competence in two languages is required--English or French, or both, or one plus another language. Written examinations are followed by approximately five days of oral examinations, individually and in groups, giving the examiners ample opportunity to form sound judgments. Upon successful completion of examinations, including a physical (mostly aimed at testing the candidate's health in terms of possible assignment in difficult climates) and a security check, the new appointee embarks on an eight-month training program in the Diplomatic School, a handsome and well-equipped new building with dormitory facilities located on the Venusberg outside Bonn.

The examination procedure is arduous, but it includes strong feelings of camaraderie. The Germans have seized on the English word "crew" to define officers who enter the Service at the same time. Identification with one's crew remains throughout one's career, and meetings of a crew are held from time to time when enough members are available in the same city. Officers in the Service are identified as belonging to the crew of 1956, for example. Members of a crew tend to receive promotions at about the same time, and members try to be helpful to each other whenever possible.

After finishing his introductory course at the School, a new officer in most cases is assigned for an internship of about six months to a mission abroad. He then returns to Bonn for a further language examination, any additional exams which may have been found necessary during his training program at the School, and an assignment in the Foreign Office. At the end of this assignment, he is granted career status and is off probation.

The rather long period of introductory training, internship and probation has obvious advantages in permitting the Ministry an on-trial situation in judging the suitability of new officers before a career commitment is given; since it is difficult to remove people from the Service, it is better to be sure before they are completely admitted. An obvious disadvantage is the extended period required before an officer is really in the Service; this compounds the problem of a relatively high average age for beginning officers, most of whom have completed their university studies before the examination process.

Thereafter, promotions in the lower ranks come relatively fast and almost automatically, with length of service in class a primary consideration. Evaluation reports are required on a periodic basis, which are perhaps as important for offering the officer a chance to express his wishes and interests as much as for promotion purposes. The officer must see and discuss his report with his supervisor, and he has the opportunity to comment or rebut.

The Ministry is obliged to discuss promotions and assignments with the Personnel Council of the Ministry, a body of thirteen representatives elected periodically by members of the Foreign Service at home and abroad. The Council represents the effort to

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introduce the concept of "co-determination" (Mitbestimmung) into a government office similar to the council of workers in an industrial plant. Management and the Council appear to have a harmonious and cooperative relationship and do not consider themselves adversaries, although the Council does have considerable power and authority.

The Council also functions as a grievance board, a place for an individual to go for adjustment and settlement of complaints. In a similar way, each mission has an elected "Obmann," an ombudsman, to listen to complaints, hopefully provide useful services to individuals, and act as an intermediary in representing the interests of individuals or groups with the Ambassador or chief of mission. The Obmann is expected to act as the local arm overseas of the Personnel Council.

Promotions are in large measure related to assignments; officers will be promoted in connection with their next assignment. The number of promotions in any one year, however, is severely circumscribed by the Federal Budget which prescribes exact numbers for each of the levels or grades in the Foreign Service at home and abroad. These positions can be shifted from one post to another by the Ministry in case of need. If the Ministry requires additional positions to staff a new Embassy (Peking, for example), it must in effect steal the positions from other posts or free up some positions by closing down posts. In the face of the cuts called for in Federal employment, it is very unlikely that the Foreign Office could ask for and obtain additional new positions from the Bundestag on a special basis; new positions are established generally only at the time of preparation of a new Budget.

Since the total number of officers is so tightly controlled, there is little slack in the system, which makes advanced training difficult and sometimes complicates the timing of transfers and replacements. The Ministry would like to have a few more officers, a reserve, in order to work out transfers and replacements smoothly, as well as initiate a more intensive training program for middle and higher level officers.

Perhaps as a result of the difficulties German diplomats suffered in the Nazi period and at the time of denazification, the German Foreign Service is determined to avoid the excesses of the past in its relationship with politics. Almost all Ambassadors are career diplomats, and there are very few political appointees at other levels. Most observers anticipated a large number of SPD appointments to the Foreign Office at the time of Brandt's tenure in the Foreign Office and subsequently upon his election as Chancellor. These anticipations have not been fulfilled. German diplomats who wish to become active in politics are encouraged to resign; there are, of course, no restrictions on participation by diplomats in elections or on membership in political parties.

The Ministry on occasion must borrow officers from other ministries (especially Economics) or from public life (press and cultural attaches) if the Services does not contain officers of the requisite

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skills. Such appointments from the outside are generally limited in tenure to the specific assignment; on occasion, the Ministry will offer permanent career status to a temporary appointee, but such offers are few in numbers, perhaps because of the budgetary ceiling.

The German Service appears to operate effectively under a paternalistic system; most officers are devoted to their career and feel that good decisions are made for and about them in the Ministry, and that central authorities are willing to listen to their problems and do whatever possible to be of help. They do not feel exploited or deprived of due process as a result of government employment. The Personnel Council is seen as an effective Court of Last Resort, but officers rarely envisage having to use it as such. On its side, the Ministry encourages officers to correspond with the Assignments Officer and to consult with him while in Bonn. The Ministry circulates questionnaires from time to time to elicit comments and views of officers.

The life-long career available after confirmation has some advantages and some disadvantages. The career offers a great deal of security to its officers; the rate of promotion is somewhat variable, but it is difficult under the German system for an officer to be fired. On the other hand, the system can become stagnant with slow-moving or non-promotable officer blocking the advancement of younger and more capable officers. Less productive and less capable officers can take refuge behind strong Civil Service procedures which require practically a court proceeding before dismissal.

Within the Ministry, most significant positions go to career officers. Bonn is considered good as a place of assignment for promotion purposes, and it has become more attractive a post for assignment, particularly in terms of improved housing, schooling advantages, career-minded wives of diplomats, and the general improvement of life-style taking place in this somewhat artificial capital city. With this development and change, some new problems have arisen in that some officers are now reluctant to accept foreign assignment and leave Bonn.

There is some growing concern about women's liberation and the role of the woman diplomat. Wives of German diplomats overseas are not permitted to work except in cultural or educational fields. Women in the Foreign Service who marry German diplomats are faced with the choice between marriage and a career of their own, since the Ministry is not prepared to assign working couples to a post abroad. Exceptions to this policy can be made in assignments to different missions in the same city (New York, for example). There have been a few examples in the German Service of women officers married to non-Foreign Service husbands who have continued Foreign Service careers.

The Ministry denies it has any sort of quota system in accepting women candidates for the Foreign Service; some officers believe, however, that the Ministry deliberately keeps the number of women appointees low, even though qualified women who have passed the examinations are available. Should this be the case, the Ministry

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can be highly selective in taking only the very best women candidates. As German society as a whole becomes more involved with some of the career concepts of women's liberation, the Foreign Service may have to change some of its present policies and attitudes; at present, however, women in the Service do not feel they have been given prejudicial treatment in terms of assignments or promotions. A number of women have reached high ranks in the career; admittedly the pyramid of women officers thins out appreciably at the top, with some loss of women officers to marriage and other careers.

With the reform program nearly completed, the German Foreign Service is looking forward to changes in style and atmospherics more than to radical departures in policies. The Foreign Office is focussing attention on the need for management skills and leadership; at the same time, it is trying to establish a human relationship with officers in the Service on personnel matters. It's not so much a matter of relaxing discipline as it is of eliminating a certain stuffiness or "formalism," as one source put it. The combination of dedicated, professional officers with the present skillful and sensitive administrative leadership of the Foreign Office augurs well for the future of the German Foreign Service.

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The Israeli Foreign Service is a small, highly dedicated, hard-working service which displays a great deal of elan and esprit de corps. The institution is a reflection in part of the permanent crisis situation under which the nation lives.

Perhaps as a result, new officers who have passed successfully through a rigid examination process generally begin to work after a brief introductory training program. Although there is interest in creating a more viable training program, particularly for beginning officers, shortage of personnel and limited funds do not permit extensive training in the middle or upper levels.

The Foreign Service continues to attract a large number of applicants in comparison to the small number of openings each year (ranging between four and eight). Most applicants come from students in the field of law, political science, and languages, a few from economics.

Promotion is directly related to assignment. It tends to be rather rapid at the lower levels, slowing off at the upper levels because of a log-jam which will probably be resolved in the future through retirements. The Service is, of course, still a new one and many of its initial officers are only now preparing for retirement.

The outstanding characteristic of the Israeli Service is a sense of mission (Shliut). Israeli diplomats tend to see all problems in international relations in terms of the Arab-Israeli dispute. This focus gives their work a certain sense of non-involvement in extraneous matters; the primary job of the Israeli Foreign Service is to carry out its nation's foreign policy, to present Israeli views on Middle East developments, and to secure support for these views. With concentration on this limited horizon, the Israeli Service appears efficient, effective, and dynamic.

Some Israeli diplomats believe the crisis atmosphere has had some negative results. The Foreign Office has moved, they say, from one crisis to the next without time, energy, or interest enough in long-range planning and policy development. The handling of crises at the Cabinet level often leaves the Foreign Office specialist removed from the scene of action, and officers occasionally feel their knowledge and expertise are being ignored. Some of the concerns in the Israeli Service relate to age, an unusual phenomenon in a Service so young. Higher ranking officers are frequently the parents of children who are ready for or preparing for university; most Israeli diplomats strongly prefer that their children be educated at the university level in Israel. In addition, compulsory military service for both boys and girls is another factor which makes an assignment in Jerusalem attractive to parents with teen-age children. Thus, there is considerable resistance to transfers abroad for Foreign Service Officers in this group. The Foreign Office itself is small and there are not enough demanding or attractive positions to go around; the result is perhaps best explained as a combination of

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underemployment of officers in terms of their experience and expertise, dissatisfaction on the part of officers forced to take jobs they consider undesirable; and difficulties in filling overseas vacancies.

In Jerusalem, there is furthermore some feeling that work in the Foreign Office per se is not particularly rewarding. There is little independent responsibility, far less than in overseas assignments. Some officers feel that foreign policy matters are often decided by a small group of leaders at a high level, often without the direct participation of the Foreign Office; the fact that Prime Minister Meir was formerly Foreign Minister leads some officers to conclude she operates in the foreign policy field without utilizing the Foreign Office.

Israeli Foreign Service Officers abroad feel a sense of participation in decisions made about their assignments. They feel the Foreign Office will listen to their personal wishes and ideas. They also feel that the ten-member elected Personnel Representative Body is a real help to them in providing possible assistance in grievance cases, carrying forward the campaign for better salaries and allowances, etc.

The Personnel Representative Body is in reality a trade union representative, with direct connections with the Trade Union for Government Employees. About 90 to 96% of Foreign Office permanent employees at home and abroad belong to the Union and pay monthly dues; the Body considers it represents union members as well as all permanent career employees in its dealings with the Foreign Office on administrative and personnel matters. Union membership is not required, but it is considered of real importance in regard to retirement, health insurance, and other benefits.

An important function of the Body relates to appointments to the Foreign Service from outside. After intensive negotiation, the Body recently secured the right to publicize upcoming vacancies which appeared to be difficult to fill with personnel in the Foreign Service; members of the Foreign Service at home and abroad could apply for these positions and, if qualified, be assigned to them. If no appropriate assignment could be made from within the Service, the Body endorsed the proposal of the Ministry to fill the position from outside. Should the Foreign Office subsequently determine that it wished to grant permanent status to an outside appointee, the Body has the right to review the case and pass upon the applicant's credentials as well as his indispensability. The Body has been successful in limiting the number of such conversions; recently the Body endorsed permanent career status for six outside appointees, with the proviso that there would be no more similar conversions for the next three years.

The influx of officers into the Foreign Service from outside is, of course, controversial since it impinges upon the career aspects of the Service. Most officers applaud the efforts of the Body to control the Ministry in this respect; they believe the Body's

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participation in the process insures greater reliance upon the prospect's credentials and talents, less upon his political leanings. By and large, there are relatively few appointments, including those of Ambassadorships, which can be labelled political appointments in the traditional sense.

There is a growing amount of concern about the role of and limitations on women officers in the Service. Some posts are considered unsuitable for the assignment of women officers, especially since the step-up of terroristic activity. Women officers themselves will say they believe women have been treated prejudicially in terms of assignment and promotion, often adding that they themselves have experienced nothing of the kind. The record of Israel in regard to women officers is not a bad one; there have been women career diplomats who reached the Ambassadorial level and women continue at present to hold extremely responsible positions in the Foreign Office and missions abroad.

Some problems have arisen with regard to wives of diplomats abroad who wish to remain active in their professions. By and large, the Foreign Office is extremely reluctant to waive diplomatic immunity when this is a condition for employment. Wives may be involved in cultural, educational or journalistic careers with less difficulty, but most wives of diplomats abroad are not encouraged to seek employment in the host nation. Security considerations may account in part for this view.

These problems do not confuse the image of the Israeli Foreign Service. It is a disciplined, hard-working group, filled with a sense of mission, determined, tough-minded, and able.

JAPAN

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The Japanese Foreign Service is a quiet, serious, efficient and hard-working Service. It is small, particularly in terms of the nation's growing economic and political importance. This leads on occasion to a feeling of being over-worked which is relatively widespread both abroad and in Tokyo.

The Foreign Service attracts promising candidates from Japan's universities, predominantly those in Tokyo and in Kyoto, although this is not the result of policies favoring those two centers of learning. The examinations are considered difficult; competence in at least one foreign language is required. The training program for new Japanese diplomats is extensive. After appointment, the initial course at the Foreign Service Institute lasts approximately three months and is followed by an assignment of one, two and sometimes three years to a university abroad, where the officer is expected to perfect his foreign language, learn the culture and customs of the foreign country, etc.; the Assignment Office decides which university the new officer will attend, but the officer himself arranges his program of studies.

The Service emphasizes the desirability of further training during an officer's career, but shortage of personnel precludes it. Training is sometimes offered occasionally to a senior officer (Bowie Seminar, for example) for whom no suitable assignment is immediately available; these number perhaps no more than one or two a year and do not represent a major training program. At present, some short courses are available to officers of the middle level while on assignment in Tokyo.

The Japanese Foreign Service has placed major emphasis on language training for its diplomatic officers, perhaps because of the nation's insular traditions. The Institute spends half of each day during the introductory course in teaching French and English at the Institute; it also offers courses in Spanish, German, Russian and Chinese. Interestingly enough, the overseas campus program includes Russian, sometimes with preliminary studies in the United States followed by Moscow University, sometimes directly in the Soviet Union. Chinese is available so far only in Taipei.

A primary characteristic of the promotion scheme of the Service is its emphasis on seniority and time-in-grade. Promotions generally are made at the same time to officers who entered the Foreign Service together; promotions are in large part automatic, although periodic evaluation reports are required.

Although almost 90% of the officers do not utilize the evaluation report to provide information on their own career wishes and plans, these reports are considered fundamental to the assignments branch because of the comments and career suggestions of supervisors. In this respect, the evaluation reports are more important for assignments than for promotions. Supervisors are expected to discuss the reports with the officers reported on and to bring shortcomings to their attention; officers do not see completed reports.

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Aware of some of the problems of this system, authorities in Tokyo are now considering something like a preference report to be submitted by each officer independently of the evaluation report. The assignments office feels it has not enough information about officers to make good decisions; it also wishes to have information about an officer's family, health, pregnancies, etc., in order to make good decisions about transfers and their timing. The Assignments Branch would like to be responsive to individual preferences, but on occasion has to make rather arbitrary decisions sometimes in the absence of detailed knowledge, sometimes in spite of it. Most officers accept this as a special requirement of the Service and feel it is supportable.

Economics is of considerable importance in the Service. Some officers feel the ball has been stolen away from the Foreign Office by Finance, other ministries, and international Japanese private capitalism. Some officers feel that the Ambassadors abroad do have control of economic policy, but that a growing number of economists are required within the Service. On occasion, the Foreign Office borrows officials from other ministries for specific assignments and specific tours of duty; these officers do not, as a general rule, become part of the permanent Foreign Service but return to their previous jobs when a tour is completed. New officers are urged to concentrate their studies abroad on economic subjects, and the Institute attempts to improve the knowledge of economics of new officers.

Women's liberation has not yet made a full impact on Japan and there is relatively little concern about it in the Foreign Office. Few women apply for the diplomatic service, perhaps more for the language services branch and the so-called middle branch. These two services are controversial at the moment; originally designed to take care of those officers specializing in languages, visa and consular work, and in administrative work, who were not in the career chain leading to Ambassadorial positions, the distinction has become somewhat blurred as the educational backgrounds of all applicants have become more standardized. Applicants for the non-diplomatic ladders take different entrance examinations, follow different promotion patterns, and do not advance as rapidly or as far as their colleagues in the "higher" service. Since working conditions and diplomatic and consular ranks abroad are similar, and since educational qualifications are now about equal, there is considerable dissatisfaction. One hears charges of discrimination and prejudice. Unification of the three branches provides a possible solution and is being seriously considered.

With no union representation, the Inspector of the Foreign Service serves as a kind of ombudsman to hear complaints and adjudicate problems. Officers interested in reform and change are referred to as "young Turks;" they seem to be mostly in Tokyo and to be interested in modernization, greater investment in machinery (computers, better typewriters, more equipment), a somewhat expanded Foreign Service to lighten the work load, and overall improvements in salary, allowances, pace of promotions, etc.

One gets somehow the feeling discipline is there somewhere in the Japanese Foreign Service without being able to see it. Disciplinary actions against an officer can be taken for serious offenses ranging from dismissal to reduction in salary or a simple oral or written warning. A famous recent case was that of a female officer who was fired for leaking information to the press. Perhaps the disciplinary sense is invisible because it is self-imposed and self-understood. Officers do not question or attempt to challenge the authority or the wisdom of the Ministry on personnel matters.

Change is in the wind for the Japanese Foreign Service in any event. One source feels the Service must be doubled in the next ten years. In view of the extended time required for training and initiation, which may total five years, this would appear an impossible goal without major changes either in examination procedures or in the training process. The major question then becomes: can quality be maintained if such changes are made?

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The study of these Services has produced a number of interesting and, in part, humorous inconsistencies:

If you are color-blind, you may not be able to pass the Foreign Service physical examination in Japan. Once in, however, your chances for a "fortunate" marriage are good; approximately 70% of the Service, to quote one source, have married into "good" families, i.e., aristocratic families or wealthy ones.

The Brazilians, though interested in economics, don't require an economics test for admission and strongly prefer that students learn their economics at the Foreign Service Institute rather than in the universities.

For the Germans, the rites of initiation into the Foreign Service produce a fraternity-like feeling without visible scars which lasts throughout a career life-time; honorary memberships in the "crew" may be extended to those who tried but didn't pass the examinations. Also in the sporting tradition is a regulation that the Government will pay shipment charges for a pet if it can be demonstrated he is a reliable and needed watchdog at the post of assignment.

Once someone is accepted into the Israeli Service, he has both to commit a crime and be caught at it in order to be dismissed; criminal proceedings are practically a pre-condition to firing. The Israeli Foreign Service also operates under an anti-nepotism law, which prohibits the granting of special favors (i.e., jobs) to the children of Foreign Service Officers and other government employees.

Unionization per se does not appear to relate directly to the effectiveness of a Foreign Service. It is a fact of life in two of the Services studied and plays no role in the other two. Union membership is high in the German and Israeli Services (85-96% of those in the diplomatic branches entitled to join); the union is seen

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mostly as a protective organization offering certain benefits toward retirement and insurance, but it is not a prime factor in determining personnel policy. In the Japanese and Brazilian Services, associations have developed in the absence of unions, mostly devoted to credit, loans, and similar forms of assistance.

These special features apart, all four Services have a lot in common:

1. All Services studied are both relatively small in size (600-800 diplomats) and high in quality. The smallness leads authorities to strict planning on utilization of personnel and to personal knowledge of most officers; officers feel themselves integral parts of their Services which make good use of their talents and abilities.

2. All Services are firmly based on the view that diplomacy is a career and that diplomats should be professionals. Proficiency in foreign languages is considered a necessary first tool for diplomats, indeed a requirement for admission. Rigorous examinations are intended to limit new appointees to candidates with high academic and intellectual capacity. Efforts are made to improve professional qualifications through intensive introductory training, in some cases with additional training available at the middle and higher levels.

3. The Foreign Service represents an attractive career to university students in all four countries on a par with and sometimes higher than other professions. There are elements of idealism and prestige which compensate for the lack of real material incentives in a diplomatic career. Foreign Service salaries are not competitive with those available in private business or industry, and some officers leave the Service for better pay.

4. Promotions are made according to plans, often related directly to assignments, and in many cases limited severely by budgetary restraints and vacancies. Length of service and time-in-grade are primary ingredients in promotions at the lower levels; early promotion comes rapidly and almost automatically. Evaluation reports are, with one exception, required, but they seem to have comparatively little significance in the promotion process. As a result, officers can be fairly sure of when they will be promoted and there is little trauma associated with promotions, even for those not promoted.

5. Careers are almost entirely free from security worries in the Services studied. Once an officer is beyond probation, it is assumed he will remain in the Service, receive promotions, and advance to the highest levels. Dismissal or removal from the Services is relatively rare, and only in the upper levels of some Services does time-in-grade play a role.

6. Most individual officers are sure their career choice has been the right one. They have a sense of satisfaction about their work and only a normal amount of conviction that they are overworked and underpaid. There is no widespread worry and concern about career prospects, and morale is generally quite high. Most of the Services contain a strong element of discipline, some of paternalism. There is little concern or preoccupation over possible conflicts between Service discipline and individual freedoms; most officers assume they are joining a system when they enter a Foreign Service in which certain rules and regulations will apply; they do not, in general, feel that the Foreign Service is to be shaped and designed by those who enter it.

7. There is a growing concern over the role of economics in international relations and a feeling that Foreign Services must produce economically trained officers in order to remain competitive with other government agencies interested in this field. There is nonetheless a widespread feeling that Foreign Officers are not doing too badly in competition with other ministries in the design and implementation of foreign economic policy. There is furthermore an insistence upon the Ambassador's primary authority in overseas operations of other ministries.

8. There is almost no feeling that a nation's Foreign Service should mirror the nation. Quality is a more important consideration; "elitism" is not an ugly word when applied to ability and intellect, in fact it is strived for in these four Services.

9. There is some attention being given to the role of women in Foreign Services and an awareness that a woman's career may have to suffer if she marries. There is no intention, however, to offer special consideration to women and their careers at the expense of smooth operation of the Service. Wives of diplomats are expected to submerge their own career interests when stationed abroad with few exceptions. There is strong unwillingness to waive diplomatic immunity for a diplomat's wife who wishes to work overseas.

10. All Services have extremely close relationships with their nation's Civil Services. The special demands of Foreign Service employees, however, are recognized through special regulations and legislation.

11. Most Services emphasize the generalist officer rather than the specialist. Some Services are moving toward modest specialization programs involving training, and many achieve specialization of sorts through relatively long tours and repeated assignments in the same country or area.

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12. Most Services make a clear distinction between diplomatic officers, who are on the career ladder, leading to Ambassadorships and other officers, who spend most of their careers in consular or administrative work. There are different requirements, different examinations, and different career patterns for the two groups. Some Services have made transfer between ladders easy but limit the number of transfers.

13. There is a genuine feeling in all four Services that we should all know much more about each other, that we all have things to learn from each other, and that it is important we should take time for the effort.

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