

WHAT ROLES FOR SPOUSES?

Time Use Survey: **LOTS OF HOURS**

— Margaret W. Sullivan

"I knew I worked hard, but I was surprised at how many hours it really was", commented a wife as part of her response to a time-use survey undertaken this year by the Association of American Foreign Service Women *Newsletter*. The survey documents the hours of unremunerated work spouses contribute to the official functioning of U.S. Missions and delineates the ways these hours are spent. Time use — not opinions about if or how it should or should not be recompensed — is all the survey studies. The results do not so much present a new picture as fill-in, highlight and confirm areas of the commonly assumed one.

Although some respondents report no involvement at all in the official life of a Mission, a substantial majority contribute to it in some way. The degree of involvement — except in activities of a purely community-building nature — is generally related to the employee's position. The unique demands of the specific post and the variations of individual personalities are also factors in the amounts of time invested.

Two findings stand out:

- *Being an Ambassador's wife is frequently a full-time job. An Ambassador's or Charge's wife probably devotes an average 167 hours a month — over four 40-hour work-weeks — to official functions. Some devote much more. The top number reported was 328 hours 30 minutes, or almost 11 hours a day, seven days a week; enough for two full-time jobs.*

- *Being the wife of an officer with representational responsibilities is frequently*

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'72 DIRECTIVE UNDER REVIEW EVERYONE'S COMMENTS WANTED

All members of the Foreign Service family — employees, non-employees, marrieds, singles, adults, children — are requested to participate in a review of the Joint State-AID-USIA 1972 Directive on Wives.

A cable to this effect was sent to all posts in mid-May. In an unprecedented effort to solicit everyone's opinion, Chiefs of Mission have been instructed to insure that all employees and family members of State, AID and ICA (formerly USIA) promptly receive copies of the cable. Distribution of take-home copies to Washington based foreign service employees of the three agencies has also taken place. A complete text of the cable, which includes the 1972 Directive, is reprinted in this *Newsletter* starting in the next column.

Responses from individuals or groups should be sent to the Family Liaison Office by July 1. People just now learning of the request who wish to participate should send in their ideas as soon as possible.

Janet Lloyd, the FLO Director, will coordinate the analysis of responses and draft revisions in the Directive that then seem warranted. As the legally designated employee representatives, AFSA, for State-AID, and AFGE, for ICA, will be consulted as

appropriate on any revisions of the current policy. AAFSW, and any other special interest groups so wishing, will also be involved in the process. The aim is to produce a policy statement based in reality which is responsive to the needs of both the institution and the individuals affected.

The review of the Directive is one of the recommendations of the AAFSW Forum Report. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance authorized its implementation at a meeting last summer with members of the Forum Steering Committee. AFSA was also represented at that meeting. Since then, a small working group from AAFSW, Janet Kennedy, Lynn Johnson, and Margaret Sullivan, has met periodically with the Director General of the Foreign Service — initially Ambassador Carol Laise, then Ambassador Harry Barnes — and with Stephanie Kinney of the DG's office to clarify objectives and formulate the review process which this cable initiates. Janet, Lynn and Margaret, in turn conferred regularly with the Forum Steering Committee. Before the cable was sent, clearances were obtained from appropriate offices within State, AID and ICA as well as AFSA and AFGE.

As the process now passes into a new phase, individual AAFSW members are faced with the responsibility of personally responding to FLO and urging others to do so. See the cable's Peanuts quotation.

The Cable

1. As a result of a recommendation of the Association of American Foreign Service Women's (AAFSW) Forum Report on the Concerns of Foreign Service Spouses and Families there will be review of the joint

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STOP PRESS

Bills that will affect the Foreign Service spouse's interest in annuities and survivor benefits are being drafted in Sen. Muriel Humphrey's and Rep. Pat Schroeder's offices, the *Newsletter* has learned. Watch for mark-up dates and bill numbers.

COMPLETE TEXT OF DIRECTIVE REVIEW CABLE

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State-AID-USIA 1972 Directive on Wives, text of which follows. This effort has the concurrence of the Secretary of State (*News-letter*, October 1977) and the support of the Directors of AID And the new International Communication Agency (ICA). Initial planning has been undertaken by the Director General of the Foreign Service with a small committee of spouses named by the AAFSW. The review and any revisions flowing from it will be coordinated in the Family Liaison Office, which is located in the Department of State but provides services to the employees and families of all the Foreign Affairs Agencies. Consultation and conferrals as appropriate will be held with AFSA and AFGE on any revisions of current policy.

2. The reassessment will continue to affirm the private individual status of employees' spouses and children as delineated in the 1972 Directive. In addition, ways will be sought to address and clarify areas of foreign service life not considered in that directive. These include (1) revitalizing a sense of community among foreign service personnel at posts around the world, (2) appropriate forms of recognition for family members who advance the interests of the mission in traditional and/or nontraditional ways, (3) the representative nature of employees' and family members' lives when on assignment abroad and subject to the conditions of diplomatic immunity.

3. It is essential that any reconsideration of the 1972 Directive on wives be a cooperative and participatory effort between the foreign service agencies and all members of the community — employees, non-employees, marrieds, singles, adults, and children. Members of the foreign affairs community are, therefore, asked to express their thoughts about the relationship of family members to the agencies, and about the 1972 Directive, including whether it should be revised and, if so, why and how. If warranted, based on these comments and from a study of the post responses to the Forum Report, a revision of the 1972 Directive will be formulated into a draft policy statement and circulated for further comment early next fall. A formal policy statement would follow by the end of the year.

4. Action requested: Chiefs of Mission should insure that all foreign service employees and family members of State, AID, and the International Communication Agency promptly receive a copy of this cable and should also encourage all to express their views. All responses should be sent to Janet Lloyd, Director, Family Liaison Office, Room 1216, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520, by July 1.

5. We look forward to receiving your thoughts and would remind everyone of the election time cartoon in which Linus says to

Lucy: "if you don't vote, don't crab".

The 1972 Directive

6. Following is text of A-728, March 22, 1972, subject: Policy on Wives of Foreign Service Employees.

7. "The Department believes that the tradition of husband and wife teams and of wives' participation in the representational activities of a post has been one of the major strengths of the Foreign Service. It is convinced that the great majority of married couples in the Foreign Service have welcomed this unique opportunity to work together and to contribute together towards the attainment of the objectives of the Service and of the U.S. Government

8. If this tradition is to continue and be strengthened there must be a recognition that participation by a Foreign Service wife in the work of a post is a voluntary act of a private person, not a legal obligation which can be imposed by any Foreign Service official or his wife.

9. From its inception under Jefferson and Franklin, a basic principle of American diplomatic practice has been that our style of diplomacy must be representative of our way of life. In the past few years, rapid changes in American society have provided wider roles for women than were traditionally available. Women have gained increasing recognition of their right to be treated as individuals and to have personal and career interests in addition to their more traditional roles as wife or mother. If the Foreign Service is to remain representative of American society, and if its traditions are to be preserved and strengthened, the Foreign Service must adapt to these changing conditions. Recently these changes in American society have resulted in a growing attention to the role of a Foreign Service wife abroad. To some extent, this has been heightened by occasional but serious abuses in which requirements have been levied on some wives which are today considered unnecessary and demeaning.

10. The attached policy statement is designed to eliminate these occasional abuses which have occurred in the past, and more importantly to permit wives to choose for themselves the roles they wish to follow. It is not intended to undermine the sense of cooperation, participation and community spirit abroad or the tradition of response by Foreign Service communities to special and emergency situations which arise. On the contrary, the Department believes that emphasizing the voluntary nature of wives' contributions will strengthen and enhance the traditions of cooperation and common purpose which have characterized Foreign Service life.

11. It should also be emphasized that this policy statement is in no way intended to criticize the past actions of any group of

employees or their departments, nor is it designed to pass judgment on the relative merits of various roles which Foreign Service wives may wish to play. The Foreign Service can benefit when wives follow the traditional role of Foreign Services wives, but it also can benefit when wives pursue other interests, be they academic, professional, family, or avocational which are not in conflict with the appropriate conduct of diplomats in a foreign country.

12. The following is U.S. Government policy regarding wives of Foreign Service employees. This policy applies as well to male spouses and other dependents of Foreign Service employees. Copies of this instruction should be made available to all employees and their dependents. Ambassadors and principal officers are asked to insure that this policy is observed and that all concerned understand the voluntary character of wives' participation on which it rests.

13. 1. The wife of a Foreign Service employee who has accompanied her husband to a foreign post is a private individual; she is not a government employee. The Foreign Service, therefore, has no right to levy any duties upon her. It can only require that she comport herself in a manner which will not reflect discredit on the United States.

14. 2. Foreign Service officers have broadly defined representational responsibilities overseas. These are an integral part of their jobs, and they are expected to lead generally active social lives. An officer is not relieved of such responsibilities if his wife chooses not to assist him in carrying them out. However, the U.S. Government has no right to insist that a wife assume representational burdens. Each wife must decide the extent to which she wants to participate as a partner in this aspect of her husband's job. She is free to follow her own interests (subject only to the laws and regulations of the host country and the U.S. Government.)

15. 3. Many wives may want to engage abroad, as they do at home, in charitable activities. In doing so they not only help others less fortunate than themselves, but often contribute favorably to the image of the U.S. abroad. However, a wife's participation in charitable activities must be truly voluntary. Which particular charity, if any, and the extent of her involvement is a decision for the wife alone to make.

16. This applies also to wives' participation in activities such as binational organizations, clubs, and "in-house" social gatherings which are often worthwhile, contribute to morale and the effective functioning of the post, and thus benefit the Foreign Service. Many wives enjoy these activities, provided they are not viewed as requirements. Some do not and are not required to engage in them.

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'72 DIRECTIVE: HOW IT CAME TO BE

Hailed as the "Emancipation Proclamation" of Foreign Service wives...Blamed for the breakdown of community of Foreign Service personnel...Decried for going too far and for not going far enough...Various viewed with alarm and pointed to with pride. The Joint State-AID-USIA Policy on Wives of Foreign Service Employees has been widely discussed, often misunderstood or misapplied, and has profoundly affected both the institution and the individuals in it. Yet little is commonly known about how the '72 Directive, as it is frequently called, came into being. As the process of review and reassessment begins on a world-wide basis, some historical perspective may be useful.

The policy was issued on March 22, 1972. Its roots, in an organized sense, go back to late 1968 when the subject of what to do about Foreign Service wives was first raised before the Secretary of State's Open Forum Panel. The Open Forum Panel was started by Secretary of State Dean Rusk as a vehicle of airing primarily substantive issues and bringing them to the direct attention of the Secretary. Although it is open to all employees, its most active participants, then as now, were younger mid-level officers.

In a less formal sense, the directive's beginnings were in the changing roles and expectations of women which were building in the society as a whole. In the Foreign Service context, an increasing number of wives were no longer content to follow the traditional mold and were resentful of "abuses" — real and perceived — which subjected them to "senior wives" and the demands of the system.

In 1970, William B. McComber, Jr. became Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration. He initiated a department-wide open discussion of policies and procedures with a view toward modernizing the Department. When the Diplomacy for the 70s Task Force report appeared, however, it made scant mention of women, either as employees or as wives.

According to Dorothy Stansbury, who was at that time Chairman of the "Wives Seminar", this caused a furor among some women. There were a number of meetings. One of the outgrowths of them was the

establishment of the Women's Action Organization.

Additionally, in response to a suggestion of the Diplomacy for the 70s Task Force, a group of twenty-seven wives of various levels of experience in the Foreign Service and allied agencies met to arrive at some consensus in defining "the representational responsibilities and optional opportunities for wives in our posts abroad". They produced a paper — Management Reform Bulletin No. 20, June 3, 1971 — which was an attempt to "make these definitions and distinctions". The Guidelines recognized that "Wives in the Foreign Service were individuals with their own value systems and their own priorities". While it spelled out a broad range of liberalized dos and don'ts, the main thrust of the paper was in the old school tradition. "Requiring" was said to be poor leadership. Flagrant abuses, asking wives to do such things as "cleaning the Embassy residence, doing the service at a formal dinner or acting as a lady-in-waiting" were viewed as things a wife would be "in her rights to refuse to do". However, participation on the part of wives was basically presupposed and the purposes of formalities observed in embassies were reaffirmed.

This document in turn caused an outcry that it was inadequate. The Secretary's Open Forum Panel again addressed itself to the question of the role of wives. The Panel was the logical channel for such a project since at that time it was the only group with direct access to the Secretary of State. It was also felt that wives were not employees and therefore that it was not inappropriate that the Panel take the question up. A drafting group was formed, headed by Richard Williamson. Carol Pardon was the only wife on the committee. Otherwise, it was composed of a small but shifting group of primarily younger, mid-level officers. In general the drafters consulted with their own wives so that there was a "couple" dynamic. Occasional larger meetings were held. Other organizations — WAO, JFSOC, AFSA and AFGC — were kept informed. AAFSW did not participate as a group although some of its members were personally involved.

"Employees", reports Williamson, "were

unhappy in their own right". They felt that having spouses in the efficiency report was an unfair employment practice since what a wife did or did not do should not reflect on her husband's chances for promotion. "We tried to address the legal relationships. Initially, we tried do's and don'ts but wound up with many of the same problems as the earlier MB-20". The group then tried to write down what would follow if one started from the premise that the wife is a private person. Individual drafts were merged, edited, revised.

Finally, a draft was presented to Under-Secretary McComber. McComber was aware that the draft policy would be viewed as an attack on the past yet he also recognized that substantial change was needed. Director General William O. Hall and the two senior professional Assistant Secretaries at that time, Martin Hillenbrand and David Newsom, were also brought into the discussions. What emerged was a preamble to the policy, wanted by Management, designed to recognize the value of traditional roles of wives to the Foreign Service. The policy itself, the basic concern of the Panel group, affirmed the private person status of the Foreign Service wife vis-a-vis the Department.

"The only thing", says Williamson "we were seeking to assure was that nothing required a Foreign Service wife to play (the traditional role) if she wished to play some other. She was free to choose whether, and the extent to which, she wished to take part in traditional activities." The aim was not to discuss life-style but rather legal status. And wives were eliminated from their husbands' efficiency reports.

The policy did not cover all the points its originators had hoped for but it addressed the two primary ones. The major changes intended were under way. The discussion continues.

This article was drawn from personal conversations with Williamson and Stansbury and from tapes that are a part of the Oral History project of the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.

Directive Review Cable Text Cont.

17. 4. Although membership in a diplomatic community and the requirements of protocol inevitably involve considerations of rank and precedence in dealing with people outside the post, this does not grant to any wife authority over, or responsibility for, the wives of other employees. The American tradition of neighborliness, personal courtesy and mutual concern is the appropriate way to be helpful and friendly without assuming a superior-subordinate relationship.

18. 5. Mention of wives' participation or lack thereof in the types of activities dis-

cussed in this instruction may not be made in performance evaluation reports, inspectors' efficiency reports, or training evaluations. Every rating and reviewing officer has the responsibility of insuring that employees' ratings are not affected by such considerations. However, should violations of this policy occur, remedial action will be taken.

19. 6. The Department, USIA, and AID are instituting careful reviews of their regulations and guidelines to insure that they conform with these principles. Posts are instructed to review their own programs and guidelines to

insure conformity with this instruction. These agencies are confident that this policy statement will receive the support and cooperation of all concerned. If violations do occur, every effort should be made to resolve them at post. However, if after such an effort is made, they cannot be resolved in the field, they should be brought to the attention of the Director General for the Department of State, Office of Personnel and Manpower for AID, and the Assistant Director for Personnel and Training for USIA. Complaints of abuse will be handled on a confidential basis".