



SECRETARY COLIN L. POWELL

Great News from the Recruitment Front

The Bush Administration's new Diplomatic Readiness Initiative is designed to help the State Department attract the talent our country needs to meet the foreign policy challenges of the 21st century.

We are proud to report to you that the initiative has already achieved a major turnaround in our recruitment efforts. Here are some highlights:

We exceeded our FY01 hiring targets of 225 junior Foreign Service officers and 300 Foreign Service specialists. The "standard" A-100 class now numbers more than 90 junior officers.

To handle the influx, we now must book our A-100 classes and specialist orientation classes four to six months in advance.

More than 23,500 candidates registered for the Sept. 29 Foreign Service Written Exam—more than twice the number in 2000. In fact, we haven't had this kind of response since the 1980s. And, as a result of targeted minority recruitment efforts, minority registrants accounted for approximately 35 percent of the total—the highest percentage of minority registrants in the history of the Foreign Service. The number of African Americans registering to take the exam—over 3,000—was nearly triple last year's count, while Hispanic registrants doubled to more than 2,000.

More than 800 applicants have opted for an alternative exam pilot program this year—50 percent higher than last year. This program specifically targets the three deficit career tracks: administrative, consular and public diplomacy.

We got a strong response, especially from the military, to our mid-level alternative exam entry program. This is the first time since the 1980s that we are hiring Foreign Service officers at the mid-level. Our target is 30 new FS-03 officers.

We have also reduced the average time for clearing new hires to fewer than 80 days, so that they are less likely to be snapped away by competitors at the last minute.

For the same reason, we will compress the current oral assessment cycle into a 90-day period. Our current objective is to reduce the time it takes to bring a prospective employee on board from 27 to close to eight months, and we want to reduce the wait even further than that.

In August, we launched our Diplomacy Fellows Program. We are calling for applications from PMIs and Boren, Fасcell, Pickering and AAAS Fellows, and making it possible for them to advance directly to the oral assessment phase of the application process. The program aims to recoup the U.S. government's substantial investment in this particularly rich and diverse talent pool.

Today's best and brightest are used to conducting their business over the Internet. Our recruitment process must be state-of-the art and user-friendly if we are to capture and hold their interest. Hence, our new web site (www.foreignservicecareers.gov). Currently, 87 percent of our applicants apply online. We have begun work on a counterpart Web site for Foreign Service specialists. We have also launched a hotline to our recruitment counselors ([703] 875-7490). From within the Department, dial 57490.

We have implemented a new salary policy that will allow qualified junior officer applicants to enter at the FS-04 level. This will help us match the current salaries of mid-level military and Civil Service colleagues seeking to join as junior officers.

On Foreign Affairs Day, we launched a "Recruiter Emeritus" program that will help us unleash the energies of experienced retirees in the search for talent. We will provide retired and current employees with attractive presentations they can use to recruit in their communities.

We are well on the way to hiring 1,433 new career personnel for Foreign Service and Civil Service positions in FY02.

Thank you for helping us send the message far and wide to the most talented young Americans of all backgrounds that exciting, challenging, rewarding careers await them at the Department of State. We are counting on you to keep spreading the good word. ■

President Thanks Employees, Announces More Afghan Aid

By Paul Koscak

President George W. Bush received a rousing welcome Oct. 4 during an unexpected State Department visit, assuring employees they're fighting a war between good and evil as they work to forge an international coalition against terrorism.

"I want to thank you for all your long hours in building the coalition," the President told the overflowing crowd in the Dean Acheson Auditorium. "The State Department has been on the forefront of battling terror."

Even with just a few hours' notice, the 868-seat auditorium quickly filled up. Employees also watched the President's speech on closed-circuit television in the adjoining Loy Henderson Conference Room, on monitors throughout Washington, D.C. and at posts worldwide. The visit marked the second time in less than six months that President Bush visited the Department and spoke to employees.

The President, along with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, used the occasion to announce a \$320 million humanitarian aid package to Afghanistan, saying America opposes the Taliban regime but supports the Afghan people. He reminded the hundreds of cheering employees that Americans are "a compassionate people."

The coalition, the President said, is already taking action. Suspected terrorists throughout the world have been arrested, questioned and jailed. "The first shot of this war has already been fired," he said, implying more forceful action is expected. "We're freezing their money."

He characterized the fight against terrorism as "a war between good and evil. We will stand strong on the side of good and expect other nations to join us."

Employees reacted positively to the President's remarks. "I thought it was a good message," said Charles Hughes of legislative affairs. "He's assuring people that we have an approach that's defensible. We're not singling out people, just the criminals."



The commander-in-chief commended employees for working to build an international coalition to fight terrorism.

Photo by Michael Gross

Mr. Hughes' wife, Harriet, who works in the Bureau of Administration, also supported the President. "He's assuring the people that they're [the Administration] doing everything possible. That they're on top."

"He did an excellent job of thanking people for their overtime," said Angie Piscitelli, an intern in international organizations. "It was critical to come here."

Jeff Rusinek, a Diplomatic Security agent trainee, thought the President's remarks had a moderate tone.

"It sounded more like a law enforcement problem than war," he said. "He also stressed the humanitarian aspects." ■

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