

but his secretary hands him a list of 20 phone calls that must be returned. He picks out six from the array of home-state politicians, reporters, and contributors; he turns the rest over to his administrative assistant. He finishes the calls at 6:30 and asks his staff in. They have been waiting for a crack at him all day on matters they think are urgent. But those matters must wait; today is the last day he can name his state's quota to West Point. Awash in papers, he starts trying to balance the grades of boys he doesn't know against the recommendations of people he owes favors. He finally scribbles the prescribed number of names, and that's that.

By now his aides can tell from his gray countenance that he is bushed, so they don't press him for decisions. Everyone has a drink or two, the talk is pleasant and general, and gradually the chief's

energy revives. His cleaning is brought in and he changes. He has dinner scheduled tonight with a columnist who has seven outlets in his state. ("I'd better not have that third drink.") And after that, he has promised to take his wife to an embassy party. He hates the thought of it, but he hasn't seen her for three nights, and tomorrow night he will be speaking for a \$1,500 fee in Pennsylvania. ("She's always telling me how tired I look and how I ought to slow down and get some rest, but she sure likes those parties.") Maybe when he gets home, around midnight, he'll take an hour to dig into his briefcase, to read that material on the population explosion, on a new idea for housing in the ghetto, on the missile defense system, on the currency crisis, on the nuclear proliferation treaty. Yes, he's been trying to get to that briefcase for days. □

Europe on \$233 Million a Day

by Joseph Nocera

This piece appeared in 1979.

In the culture of the foreign service, the subject of European assignments occupies a special niche. Who, after all, doesn't long to be sent sometime in his life to Paris or London or Rome or any of the other great cities of Western Europe? The lure is obvious—it's living, first of all, in The Developed World, which, as any foreign service officer knows, means toilets that flush, telephones that work, and hot and cold running water. There are large swatches of the globe where that isn't the case. There are also all the wonderful things to do that come with living in Europe—the great museums and cathedrals to visit; the pleasant weekends spent in the countryside searching for (and invariably finding) the perfect little provincial *auberge*.

But in the long run, what has been good for the lives and careers of the "Europhiles" has not necessarily been what is good for the country. An entire area of foreign policy—our European policy—has not been seriously examined or questioned since World War II. By this, of course, I don't suggest that there hasn't been discussion of "the problems of the Western Alliance" and so on; indeed, few foreign policy topics are more frequently discussed than those having to do with Europe. What I mean is that the underlying dogma upon which the U.S.-Europe relationship is based—a dogma that was

devised some 35 years ago—has almost never been questioned since.

When was the last time the foreign policy establishment took a fresh look at whether it still makes sense even to *have* a joint Western defense or a NATO umbrella? Or whether it was really in America's best interest to continue spending upwards of \$81 billion a year to keep NATO in business? That isn't happening, largely because the people who are in a position to question the dogma are the ones so tied to it. These people include not only the diplomats who live and work in Europe but the journalists who write from there, the military brass who operate from there, and even the congressmen who junket there.

Take the military. The military saw in NATO a chance to get in on the same kind of career and lifestyle benefits that their brethren in the foreign service had enjoyed for so long. Bases would have to be established in cities and towns all over Italy and France, Germany and Belgium. There would be a new, sudden need for military liaison officers stationed hither and yon, and military outposts where up-and-coming colonels could "consult" and "study" with their Italian counterparts. Being in Europe would no doubt turn out to be a great ticket-punch, while providing that same style of living that embassy staffers had grown so fond of. Indeed, in some cases, the military did the foreign service one better by establishing ports, as the Navy did, in towns like Villefranche—which may well be the most

picturesque city on the Riviera.

Probably the officers involved in choosing Villefranche as a navy port could list a half-dozen iron-clad strategic reasons for doing so. And if the navy ships were lit up each night in the harbor, well that, too, was surely done for reasons of security—it was only *incidental* that lit ships added immeasurably to the ambiance of the Villefranche scenery.

Congressmen, likewise, find Europe irresistible.

In 1980, 75 of them made hard-hitting, fact-finding trips to England, and 71 made trips to France. In contrast, only seven visited Saudi Arabia. To make sure their correspondents are where the action is, newspapers have stationed their foreign affairs heavyweights, like Flora Lewis and R.W. Apple and Len Downie, in Paris and London, too. What kind of big news is there left to be written in Paris and London? Well, you can interview visiting congressmen. □

So Hard to Remember, So Easy to Forget

by William and Elizabeth Paddock

In the military and foreign service agencies, people seldom serve at a post for more than three years. One reason is to prepare everyone to be chief of staff or secretary of state. Another is to reward those who serve in hardship posts with assignments to Paris or Rome. But the result is to erase institutional memory, as the Paddocks found out when they returned to Guatemala to visit an AID mission where he had once worked. This article appeared in 1973.

Paddock: I understand Barcenas includes the forestry school the U.S. government helped establish

ten years ago and later helped merge with the agricultural school there.

Hinton: I don't know anything about that. You must remember that I have only been here 15 months. There is a lot about previous programs I don't know.

Paddock: Is any money going into the experiment station at Barcenas?

Hinton: What experiment station? There is no experiment station there in the sense any of us would think of one. It's a work farm for the Barcenas students. . . .

Paddock: I don't mean the school's farm. I mean the experiment station. When I worked here in the 1950s this and the station at Chocoma formed a major U.S. government effort. . . .

Hinton: I know nothing about it. I'm still learning. □

35 Ways to Cut the Defense Budget

by Phil Keisling and Jonathan Alter

At the time we began publishing in 1969, there was not one liberal democrat in the Congress who took a truly responsible attitude toward national defense—asking what works and what doesn't and what the nation really needs. Defense was not a fashionable issue among liberals because of their opposition to Vietnam. It was remarkable, then, in 1969 when Robert Benson told Monthly readers of

his 'modest proposal'—an outline of how \$9 billion (which was worth something at the time) could be cut from the Pentagon budget without reducing our national security.

But the need for defense reform was vital then and remains so today: we need a Navy that won't be hamstrung by a few Iranian mines and an Army whose troop carriers don't sink when they're supposed to float, as in the Bradley fighting vehicle. We also need to save these exorbitant sums to put them into things that are important—whether it's civilian needs or more of the weapons we really need, like