

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training

Cracking the Glass Ceiling:
A conversation with Foreign Service pioneers
who overcame challenges and rose to the top.

Panelists: PHYLLIS OAKLEY, ELINOR CONSTABLE, STEPHANIE KINNEY
Moderator: EILEEN MALLOY

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Jo DeBusk: The core mission of Executive Women at State is to promote, support and mentor career women in leadership positions in the Department. Our structure is a three-tiered structure of the junior and entry level women at State. Then we have the Associates Women at State, and then we have our senior leadership at State. So we highly encourage everyone to sign up in back if you haven't already for our newsletters and our events and volunteer opportunities for these programs. Thank you.

Lycia Coble Sibilla: I would also like to thank our colleagues at The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training for cooperating today on this event and providing our very illustrious panel here. For those of you who are not familiar with the ADST's work, they are an NGO that is located at FSI. They conduct oral histories of foreign service professionals and their families. Excerpts of these oral histories including all of our panelists are available on their website and are used for training courses and other activities at FSI. Be sure to check them out.

The Executive Women at State recently met with HR. We shared statistics on the advancement of women here at the State Department. We learned that from about 1994 to 2014 there were more women here at State in every senior level and mid level grade. For example in 1994, 24% of the DCMs were women and today 29% are. In 1994 only 10% of women were chiefs of mission and today 35% hold top spots at our missions overseas. I am delighted that we will hear the stories on how we achieved some of that success today, and our panelist's suggestions on how to keep moving forward. If I can ask two technical things. First turn off your cell phones. We are taping for B-Net and this will be available later on for B-Net. And finally we all have a question and answer period at the end, and we ask that whenever you have a question because we are recording for B-Net and for people who are not here, that you use the microphones. So Ambassador Malloy, thank you for being here today and we will turn it over to you.

Eileen Malloy: Thank you. I know this is not a lunchtime presentation so I want to thank all of you for taking time to come join us today. It is a really impressive group. Those that are in the door who want to come and take a seat on the floor you are more than welcome. Get comfortable. It is my job to basically keep this moving. I am going to ask each of the panelists to speak for about six minutes and if you have a question during

their presentation please jot it down on your program and hold it. Then afterwards we will open it to questions. We will have lots of time for questions at the end. So without further ado we are going to go right into the presentation because the bios are printed in the program just to save time. I am going to ask Phyllis Oakley to be our first speaker.

Phyllis Oakley: Well, as Elizabeth Taylor said to her husbands I won't keep you long. You know in 1957 and 1958 I did not fight having to resign when my husband and I decided to marry, and both of us studied French. He was sent from Washington to Nice where the State Department used to keep their French school. That was closed needless to say. From Nice he was sent immediately to Khartoum where they spoke English and Arabic. One does kind of wonder about that. I had to resign. I went home to St. Louis to get ready to fly out to see him. A nice person in personnel did suggest that they would help me arrange a proxy marriage if I wanted to do that. That was their contribution. I declined. It didn't seem to me marrying Bob in such exotic circumstances and going to Khartoum for our first two years that I was really giving up much of the adventure of the foreign service. Our arrangement was that we would always be a partnership.

In those days in the late 50's nice girls didn't make waves. All of this brings me to what I see as the greatest difference for women and in women from that period of the 50's and 60's and now, and it is today's women are confident young women who were extremely well educated, and they are not going to take restrictions or discouragement or guff from anyone. In my day it was kind of felt that we were not going to make waves. Would you agree? You did.

The statement was always said to me over and over ad nauseum: "We are just getting two for the price of one." I cannot tell you how much I hate that saying. But since that time the world has changed, and you really have to realize how drastically it has changed. Vietnam and the protests against the war Civil Rights, Gays and women's lib. This society has really transformed itself. I was really interested in a story I heard from one of our wonderful foreign service friends who was killed in Khartoum, Cleo Noel. He was working in personnel working for somebody named Bill Macomber if that name rings a bell back then. Cleo was doing personnel at that time. Congress said we have got to have a meeting they are threatening women. We have to get together and resist. And Cleo and all of his cohorts, there were two men who knew what was happening in the world on his office said, "No we are not going to resist. They are going to bring lawsuits and they we will lose. It was the foresight of people like that who realized they had to change here and made it possible.

But this brings me to another point. None of the progress that women have made in the State Department or other areas of society would have happened without the threat of lawsuits and bringing the lawsuits that were successful. I don't know of many societies that have changed as much as we have but the law and the willingness of people to bring those lawsuits was what it was all about. When I re-entered the Foreign Service in 1974 we were coming back from Beirut, and I generally had support among all of the friends of our age. People who had known me and had seen me in various posts and activities that I had done. What I did find was that occasionally older men would make remarks

close to me so that I could overhear them. Things like “What does she think she is?” “Why is she coming back into the Foreign Service?” and what not. You just learn to ignore it and go on. In general I found most of the people with whom I worked to be extremely helpful and helpful to me because I knew about all of the places we lived and the political situation and various things like that. When I came back into the Foreign Service and somebody said, “What tags do you want on that telegram?” I said, “What are tags?” I had no idea of the mechanics of a lot of this. Now I think a lot of us sitting here have had our share of small firsts. My first was I was called up to be a staff assistant on the seventh floor. Now what is a staff assistant job on the seventh floor mean to any of you? It was working for a principal but it was very much along the military model. The staff aides were generals we called up and these were the promising young people. They wanted to get them exposure on the seventh floor and help groom them and push them up.

In the summer of 1976 because we were celebrating a lot, I was asked to go up on the seventh floor as the staff assistant for Phil Habib. Now does that name ring a bell. Whose work was intentional Lebanese background political officer. He had headed the political section out in Saigon when my husband was there, and he considered Bob one of his boys. Well there I was working on a Sunday morning spreading out his traffic you know what was happening like this. He looked up at me and he smiled and he said, “Why aren't you home fixing breakfast for your husband?” Now do you think anybody could get away with that today? But you know what can I say. I just kind of laughed and went on telling him what he had to do. Now I don't think anybody thinks anything about it. Has anybody served as a staff assistant on the seventh floor? Meet me out side.

The other first that I had was supposedly under Harry Barnes when Bob went out to be ambassador in Kinshasa, and I went to work in his embassy. Supposedly that was a first. He chose a position in USIA because we didn't want to really make a lot of trouble and make it too difficult. It was a wonderful job. I loved it. I was doing all the exchange programs with Zaire, all the university professors and people like that. It was a wonderful job and I enjoyed it. What helped in those days for me to work where Bob was, was the disparity in our ranks. Because I had been out for 16 years and he had moved up the ladder and I was lower. It was easier to find me a job. It would have been much more difficult of course if my assignment had come first and then he tried to follow. I was the first woman spokesman at the State Department. I don't think any of you would ever think about the fact whether a spokesman for any U.S. Government agency was a man or a woman. It is just not an issue anymore.

But I had been the Afghan desk officer. In those days I had been on the McNeil-Lehrer news program on the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion. George Schultz was on vacation in California. He happened to see it and called me up. Six months later when they needed a spokesman he remembered. I mean this supports our long held maxim that what happens to you in the Foreign Service depends on three things: who you know, what you know, and just plain luck. Anyway that was in a sense, my real breakthrough. A lot of things happened after that. When we got to Islamabad in 1988 and Bob was named ambassador right after Arnie Raphel was killed, that embassy was the most integrated

embassy I have ever seen. The DCM was married to the assistant PAO. The budget and fiscal officer was married to the economic officer. And it was just like that throughout there and to me it was just a great mark of change. Is it a perfect system? Do things work perfectly? Of course not. The assignment process has gotten more difficult with security concerns and short tours and the various things like that. It is different but it is still very complicated. So let me just end by saying “You have come a long way Baby!”

Eileen Malloy: Now we are going to ask Elinor Constable to share her experiences with us.

Elinor Constable: Oh I loved that, and there were some stories in there that I had never heard before. Phyllis and I share a lot of things. My husband succeeded Bob Oakley as Ambassador to Zaire. My husband was DCM at Islamabad. We were both Assistant Secretaries of State together under Tim Wirth so our journey ended up in a lot of the same places. It did start out a little bit differently. Phyllis said in those days we were taught that we shouldn't make waves, and you know we could get pushed around. Well, that may have been what we were taught but it wasn't what I did. Phyllis knows me well enough to know, and I don't know where it came from but all you had to do was tell me that I couldn't do something. Don't every say that to me. Now I hadn't even wanted to come into the foreign Service which probably helped because I wasn't nervous about it. It wasn't going to be my life. I really didn't care. I wanted to go to Harvard but I didn't get in because they weren't taking women in the program I applied to.

So I passed my Foreign Service exam and went to my first day of my A-100 course which in those days was a very long course I think it was three months. I sat down next to this man. I took one look at him, I am sorry this is true, and fell in love with him at first sight. So career, everything out the window. This is the man for me. It took about a year for him to come around. But then he proposed. Wow, I was just on cloud nine. Well then personnel called me in and congratulated me, and I was touched. Isn't that nice of them. Then they said, “When do you plan to resign?” I said, “Actually I don't.” That is what I said, “I don't.” “You what? You have to resign.” “Well, make me.” This is how it went. “Make me. You gonna hold a gun to my head? You gonna forge my signature? You gonna fire me?” Well they didn't, long story short, but what was even more interesting, there was nothing in writing. Because I asked to see the regulation. I asked to see the policy. I asked to see something just out of curiosity. Nothing. They just imposed this discriminatory policy as a kind of a custom. I don't know. I like to think what I did changed things for some other women. I know it did for some because a friend of mine got married a short time after that and was not asked to resign. I wonder if it changed things permanently. Who knows?

In any case I went on my honeymoon and came back to work and then of course I got pregnant. Well that was off the road because believe this, there was no maternity leave. Period, for anybody if I wanted a family so I resigned and went overseas with my husband as a foreign service spouse. Our first post was a two man, or as we would say today a two person post in rural Spain. There were no spouse issues at that post because it was so small. The principal officer's wife was a friend and a delight and all that. What I

did find there was a true epiphany. I hated it. I just hated it. One day I said, OK, you have got three choices sister. You can go home. I could have gone home. Or you can stay and whine, or you can figure out some way to like this place. I decided the third was probably the best approach. That stayed with me for the rest of my life no matter where I was or what the situation was. It is really about the love, the friends the work, and much less about the place. Although the place can be fun.

Then we went to Central America to our first embassy. Oh boy. Then it hit me full in the face. What is the Foreign Service officer's spouse supposed to do? Well you are supposed to do what the boss' wife tells you to do, like the military. Since my husband was a very junior officer, that made me a very junior wife. Now way as you can imagine. In a way the first thing that happened to me was a help because it was so outrageous. We had moved to our house without furniture. In those days you took your stuff with you but it took forever to arrive. We had a sofa, a crib for the baby, a bed for the other kid, a bed for us and that is about it. No phone, no car. A couple of women came to call on me and said, "Congratulations." I thought what for? Phyllis knows this story. "You have just been elected as chairwoman of the Tea Committee of the Voluntary Dames of Tegucigalpa" "What?" "Don't worry. All you have to do is tea for 50 women once a month." "What?" It took awhile but finally I persuaded them to let me use their phone. I called the president of the Voluntary Dames of Tegucigalpa.

By then I was bilingual in Spanish and I told her in Spanish and I am afraid I did not use very nice language that by the way I would not chair her committee but I would not join her organization if this is the way they operated. One of the women said, "You can't do that." I said, "I just did." "The Ambassador's wife just gave us your name." "I am sure she did. She should have asked me first." Well I was on a tear. When my husband called I told him what I had done. Now Phyllis knew him, some of the rest of you may know him by reputation. He was a rather remarkable man, way ahead of his time. He understood that women were entitled to a role but he didn't buy into any of that old stuff. Nevertheless, in those days we were part of our husband's efficiency ratings. So he went, "Ahhh, Ummm." So we came up with a plot. He was great. We loved plotting together. Now we had to disarm the ambassador's wife. Now I had a job teaching at the university. I did a lot of other stuff down there too. I loved Honduras. None of the fast stuff except for parties. A lot of parties. Again this is pretty old fashioned, but I didn't think a diplomat's wife should take a salary out of a really poor country. So I planned to donate it back.

My husband came home one day and he said guess what." "Uh oh, what?" "Well the ambassador's wife is interested in the charity that you were going to give your money to." Ohh, lay one on. So I went to call on her. "I said, I have a few thousand dollars here. I know this is small change. I wanted to give it to this charity but you might want to do it in the name of the American women's club. Well after that I was golden. I made some notes to try to keep this short. I came back to Washington and I decided at that point, you know in the 50's and 60's feminism I only thought was a word. You discovered things about yourselves and about the world and what you wanted to do. I discovered that I wanted to go back to work and have a career. And I did.

Then in 1968, we were posted to Islamabad. I had to quit. I am sorry too. DC was a fascinating place. I had to quit and go with my husband and three children. I will admit and I think some of this is in my oral history I did not play well. I got very frustrated. Probably the worst thing I ever did was to leave a party that we were giving before the party and go to night clubs with some guys. I did that. It was bad and when I came back to Washington in '71 I told my husband I am not going through that again. I resumed my career. He was a very clever guy. You must know from the Tegucigalpa incident, so he came home one day waving this pink sheet of paper saying, "The State Department wants you back." "Well I don't want to go back." I think I am quoted at the bottom of this thing as screaming. He said, "Well why don't you come back you can always quit if you don't like it." That was sort of smart of him actually. So I did come back. One thing after another.

I was a GS 13. I was brought in as an FS-05. I should have been brought in as a 04 but you can't grieve your terms of employment. I tried to get a job in the admin. For any of you who remember in those days the admin was suffering with having cone admin discipline. They needed help anywhere and I liked personnel and budget and management and all that stuff. I volunteered, I could not get a job. Old boy's network I applied for the most ridiculous assignments anything. So I said, OK, I will go back to economics. So let's get an economic job. Well I had to be in the economic cone. Remember cones? I had to be in the economic cone, so OK, fine. I will be in the economic cone, but you have to take the six month economic course to get into the cone. Now I am on to something. To get into the course, you had to be in the cone. To get into the cone –

Well the old lions don't say no to me. I called out all the people who picked people for the course, and I got in. I studied really hard. I was always good at memorizing stuff and handing it back in a test. The department was always in awe of people who got high grades in that course. I don't know if it doesn't exist anymore. I don't know if any of you here took it. It was a killer course. In six months you got the equivalent of a Masters in economics. I came back to the Department and the rest is sort of history. I had a wonderful time. I had some good bosses and some bad bosses. One of my bosses, by the way was Brad Bishop, the guy who murdered his family. I didn't have a clue. He was perfectly normal to me. Ever since I have always said to myself, you can't really tell what people are like. At one point my husband was posted back to Islamabad. I never could take leave without pay, never.

So I wanted a tandem assignment. Those were tough to come by but I was able to negotiate a transfer through USAID and had a wonderful time. I loved Pakistan. On that tour I behaved myself because I got to work which was a privilege. My husband was DCM and I really didn't want to make waves for him. I was called back to Washington to take another job in the economic bureau and was having a fine time when around 1980 or '79 I have to look up the date, a new assistant secretary called me up to his office to offer me another job. Well I suddenly got very nervous because the Carter administration had a policy that every bureau had to have at least one woman DAS [Deputy Assistant Secretary]. Now this is not smart. I don't think it was smart then and I don't think it

would be smart now. I have a lot of ideas on what to do with these issues. We don't have time to go into all of that now. So I went into his office and there was a token job in the bureau that a woman had. It is a good job today, but it was token then. I was sure he was going to offer me that. But he didn't. He offered me the plum job in the economic bureau. Whoa. I will have to get back to you. Does anybody hear know Dean Hinton? Legendary guy. Dean reared back in his chair and I will not quote him word for word. But he said, Elinor, you are a competent woman. Bunch of curse words. If you don't take this job they are going to shove an incompetent blankety-blank down my throat. I thought OK that is a pretty good way to talk me into taking a job. So I did and had a wonderful time.

At that time my husband went to Zaire as ambassador. I didn't do what Phyllis did. I was riding high in the building here. I didn't want to quit again, and I did not go to Zaire. But I had been negotiating with the government of Zaire for two years as part of my job, so I actually took three trips to Kinshasa as a negotiator which was fun. I met Mobutu. I wanted to meet the woman who was squeezing him financially. We have to wrap up. I tried to make this, he is in Kinshasa. We were apart on seven continents for seven years. We didn't plan it. It happened. I rose up and he rose up. I became an ambassador and I only want to share two quick things about Kenya. There are a lot of stories. I was called Madame Ambassador. I didn't like the title. I was called Ambassador, and I was the first woman American ambassador in Kenya; there have been a lot since. The navy used to come to Mombasa to use it as a liberty port. I would fly down and take a helicopter out to these aircraft carriers. What a thrill. My father was a naval officer and wasn't allowed to see this. Go down the red carpet, tour it and then go down and have lunch with the admiral. I walk into the admiral's mess and there would be a rose on my plate. Now I still have trouble explaining to people why this is not appropriate. So I had a policy. If there was a rose on my plate I made these guys talk to me. All men, about women in combat. In the 80's that was a hot issue. If no rose, no argument. If I had a rose, they had to talk to me about women in combat. They couldn't argue with me. I was the ambassador. I was a guest. I have to stop. I agree with everything Phyllis said, and I don't want to repeat it.

Eileen Malloy: Let me put in a plug for the oral history program. There is so much more on this. I encourage you to take some time and read through them. Now we would like to have Stephanie Kinney share with us.

Stephanie Kinney: I came along in the early 70's having discovered the foreign service by what means I have no recollection, in a little town in central Florida called Winterhaven. We learned how to write research papers [in high school] by having a really dumb theme, the vocation of my choice. For reasons that I don't recall they said that I did a magnificent cover for it, I chose to look into the foreign service. My conclusion which I parroted back some years later was that and so if you are a young woman who wants to have both a career and a family, it would appear that the foreign service is not for you. The only way to rise is to marry a successful officer. This refers to the system that both Elinor and Phyllis have very aptly and accurately describes. It was an unpaid job and credit to many of the women, there were dragons. But they made contributions to American diplomacy that today we are the poorer for not having. My view. Separate topic.

Anyway the famous Macomber report in reforms as they were known in 1970 declared something astounding and unusual. Married women would be allowed to take the exam and come into the foreign service. My husband and I were both in Cambridge at the time. He had wanted to be a foreign service officer since he was 14. It was pretty clear what his trajectory was going to be, but he did have to look at Citibank and AID. He had gotten into economic development studies without Howard Hershman. I said, "No you always wanted to be an FSO, go for it. They just made this change, and I will go and take the exam and we will just go around the world being foreign service officers together. Well the beauty of youth is that your opinion is right and you have no idea of the improbability of your propositions. That is what happened. I was not a first. I was a second. I don't know who the first was. But in 1971 I was told by the board of examiners that I was the second married woman to have taken the exam and they put up a list. I never knew who the first one was. Except for like Phyllis, Doug and I had very carefully calculated the dynamics of this very revolutionary proposition and so I had taken the exam for USIA. I was a liberal arts graduate and considered myself a water lily floating on a sea of culture And thought that was just right. I remember that one of the in the oral exam which still existed in those days, one of the questions was to defend or refute the proposition that the American Musical theater was based on the Spanish Zarzuela. Understand that no one even knew where Spain was in those days nor gave it any credence. I had however fallen in love with it in Junior year in Madrid.

The wisdom of President Nixon and his concern about hippies in government caused him to put a freeze on hiring. So I accompanied my husband as a spouse on his first tour in Mexico City. Of course they lifted the freeze on hiring three months after my eligibility on the list ran out. I took it again in '75 which again was the year of the class action complaint came in on my own and the rest was my career history from there. But that three years as the wife of, had the same galvanizing effect on my as it did on Elinor and Phyllis. I was to my knowledge at that time, and I will have to see now if something happened earlier. But I was told that I was the first diplomatic wife ever to work. I got to work for \$5,000 a year as a teacher at the Colegio Mexicano. Thanks to the fact that I followed a family rule. When in doubt, go. I had had enough of the parties. One more American Legion group was just not something I could tolerate. I said I wasn't going but I was persuaded to go and that is where I met the woman who offered me the job because she thought it was the greatest thing since sliced bread. Especially since I had taught at the Commonwealth School in Boston and had an education masters from Harvard, and set up the model UN program there which is still flourishing today. Perhaps that was what gave me a sense of the importance of building institutionally which is the thought I want you to take away from my undistinguished life history in the State Department.

I came back and my options were quite the same as Phyllis'. I looked at my situation and said well he has got to choose between his chosen career and me or I have to choose between him and having a career, or just change the foreign service. Of the three at the time the third seemed like the best option. So that is what I proceeded to do. I got together and found some older women who seemed sympathetic. We formed the research committee on spouses in which we discovered what Elinor already knew, which was in fact there was no statutory basis for disallowing married women, pregnant women, or any

other kind of woman not to be in the foreign service. But it was at a time of rising bra burning and feminism and rancor particularly within the Department. It was our considered opinion that this was not going to go well if it got framed as a women's issue. I suspect Elinor and I have some shared views in this regard. I don't think that hyphens are appropriate. I don't think that special interests are appropriate in this institution in foreign policy or in American diplomacy. The short unscientific survey which we managed to do with the help of friends of officers in the department and the results were astounding. 33% of the male officers, and that is who they were in those days -- this would have been about '74-'75 -- came back and said their next assignment would be influenced by the working status and possibilities of their wives. Well that is not a woman's problem; that is a management problem. It is an institutional problem.

Long story short, Donnie Radcliff a couple of years later said it is unusual that things go from policy decision to execution in one year. With the foundation in the State Department of the family liaison office was an unusual example of such. I have been cleaning out at the ripe old age of 70 and found the original report. Are there more lessons to be learned? Framing the issue correctly. This wasn't about women; it was about the institution. It wasn't about me; it was about us, the foreign service family. This was an issue that was emerging but it had a broad constituency which when mobilized turned out to be passionate and could be united. Both of those things are crucial. This was coming from inside, and not outside. In my experience very little has happened in this building that is significant that comes from inside. If it comes from outside it is like building sand castles. They get washed away as soon as the next bunch of short termers leave and we all know why. Finding senior friends, senior women was not the problem, senior women were not the enemy, in fact many of them were the fix. We found a way of working across the generations.

Timing, both Democrats and Republicans in the late 70's were worried about families. Aha. It was not going to be the women's office or anything else. We framed it in terms of the foreign service family. To skip forward because time is fleeting it was established in 1978. A cockamamie idiotic what are you going to come up with next?, Stephanie idea that Ben Green sat back in his chair at. By 1980 came into effect and I get to define it this afternoon. On June 12, 1980, the United States and Canada agreed reciprocally to allow the family members of U.S. and Canadian government officials stationed in each other's countries what in 1975 I envisioned as reciprocal work agreements. I never really believed the skills bank or work was going to yield that much came into existence. Today I understand there are hundreds of them.

Something else I found the moral of this story is the nature and the condition of this institution depends on you, not anybody else. It is not about your ego, it is about what is good for the institution. I am personally very distressed about what I see as the deterioration of professional diplomacy in our professional diplomatic service. There is a big report coming out on Wednesday that I hope will ignite a debate the likes of which there has not been for awhile. It is being published by the American Academy of Diplomacy. But the main point is to build institutionally, and that is what I took away from the creation of FLO because I knew that if it was just a bunch of tactical fixes and

ameliorations it was not going to make a difference. What we tried to build was an institution that would provide for people who had been disallowed even acknowledgment by the 1972 declaration on spouses which turned women from being dependents into non persons. And to help people help themselves in the belief that if they had the information and if they had the access to information they could not only solve their own problems they could do best kinds of work. So that is what I spent the rest of my career doing. Whether it was bringing democracy back to Uruguay, making sure they got long lived earmarks and A and G quotas and textile fabric quotas under the multi fiber agreement which lasted way beyond the State visit or taking on the intellectual left institutionally in Venezuela or being one of the foreign service officers involved in one of the negotiators on the convention on climate change, start to finish creating the first hand, pioneering the model for the environmental health program, which I am proud to say today has I think about a dozen branches overseas, and helping to head up with I think was the last institutional effort called SOS in 1998.

Things had gotten particularly difficult in the institutions so I would encourage you if you have complaints don't look at what can't be done. Do like Elinor; do like Phyllis and think about what you can use at hand including those with more experience than you to make a difference and move this institution from the 20th century into the 21st.

Eileen Malloy: Wonderful. I have been asked to add just a couple of comments, so I am going to rush through this very quickly so we can have time for questions I have been spending the last 11 years as an inspector, and as I go around the world speaking to entry level officers and other officers, I quite often hear complaints about what State does or does not do for families to support women in the work place. What I always remind these people is that this is a continuum. The issue that is troubling you today is so far advanced from those issues that were troubling women when we were first allowed to come in. So for my perspective when I came in in 1978, there was no family support at all. There was no child care at all. No maternity leave, no formal tandem program. As you heard you had to go out and broker it one way or another.

Q: Forgive me but my husband and I were among the first tandem officer, officer couples and that is what we started out with. But the more there are of course the bigger the problem for management.

Eileen Malloy: It is and so we thought there are now "Diplotots." There is the child care at FSI, which is even more recent. There are formal programs and there is this vibrant discussion on work and life balance so my point to people is your concerns today are perfectly legitimate but it is really helpful if you look back and see what the Department has already done and what the constraints are and that will help you do what Stephanie has done and that is frame it in the most constructive way. That is a really important point.

The other thing I want to mention is the Palmer suit. That was the base line suit that said the department was discriminating against women across the board, in hiring in assignments, in evaluations, everything. And I was the beneficiary of that. I was a part of

the class action suit and I was allowed to change my cone and move from consular work which I actually really adored. I am an operations management specialist into political work because it was my perception at that time that I had no future if I stayed in the consular cone. That only by moving could I get into the types of leadership programs that I wanted. I really supported that. I believed in that lawsuit. So where we are now is you no longer hear the overt expressions from officers that women are not good enough. I was introduced by my boss in Moscow to a group of my Soviet contacts by a monologue of “the State Department requires us to hire women and we search for the best ones we can and we take what we got and here’s our science officer.” You couldn’t get away with doing that nowadays.

So in recent times I was trying to mediate a conflict overseas and the man, the superior said, “Well you know she really got off to a bad start with me by showing up and telling me she had to go off on maternity leave. So I said OK, there are still some out there, but most of them have moved out of the system. The people who were raised in a different era and really couldn’t adapt so right now in my humble opinion the major challenge for the State Department in terms of women is how do we retain them through the upper grades. How do we keep them when you run into that awful crunch between the desire to hold a family and the responsibility and elderly parents and illness, because we are still losing far too many women form the mid grades up. We are bringing in more than before but we aren’t holding on to them.

So the key in the job for all of you in the room especially you younger folks is working really hard to create work life balance conditions that work for both men and women. I have been so happy to have a male subordinate come to me and say, “I really need to go home on time every Wednesday to coach my kid’s little league.” He feels empowered to do that because the women of the previous generation fought for those rights. So I don’t want a system that works just for women, I want a system that works for both men and women and only then will we have a healthy work force and have really talented people willing to stay in the foreign service. So I am going to shut up and open up the floor for questions. Where is the microphone?

Elinor Constable: Can I just make one statistical addition. I should have mentioned this in my talk but just as in indication of how far we have come. We have a long way to go, keep the pressure on. When I became an ambassador to Kenya I was the only woman with an overseas post in the world outside of a handful of political appointees. The only career foreign service officer with my own post. Can you believe that?

Q: What year?

Elinor Constable: 1986.

Eileen Malloy: So if you have a question if you are in the back row we have a microphone here. If you are at the table turn on your mics so they can hear. Yes sir.

Q: I would just like to start off by saying your talk is real inspirational every one of you.

Some of you have touched on this a little bit so please forgive the redundancy. I am wondering what are some issues you saw during your careers for women who had advanced to your high levels that you continue to see today?

Eileen Malloy: I can tell you right off the bat it is the way people are evaluated. If anybody's ever worked on a promotion panel and you read the evaluation reports of women and the evaluation reports of men you see a huge difference. Women are evaluated on the bases of where they are right now. What they have already demonstrated, what they have already learned,. Men tend to be evaluated by their potential. Women tend to be called good managers and men are called leaders. Yet of you get down to the specifics they are actually doing exactly the same thing and showing the same traits. So that would be my answer.

Elinor Constable: Yeah, I am amazed. I thought we had actually gone beyond that. I think that the issues related to women whether it is in the State Department or in the world are very real and very persistent. There has been a change over the years. I would urge anyone who is working here or works at another agency to simply be mindful and pay attention what is happening. What can I do to support sensible reasonable change? I work with people on performance evaluations quite a lot during my career. I have a couple of tips for people: If a man is writing about a woman for example, I said go through and change all of the pronouns to he and see how it reads. If it sounds OK it is probably OK. I wish you could have seen I don't think any of you have, what used to be in reports about women. A friend of mine was described as doing a very good job even though she was broad in the beam. Seriously. Hopefully that has stopped. But there are subtle ways in which these distinctions remain, and I love the idea of thinking about men and women. My policy by the way when I managed a lot of men, I made them go home at close of business. I made them. Their deadlines were opening of business, not close of business. I would stand over them as they packed up their briefcases and walked out the door to go home with their families. . If they came in at 5:00 A.M. The next day I didn't care but they were going to go home So I get that idea.

Eileen Malloy: Other questions?

Q: I am just curious what your thoughts or comments were about mandatory retirement age?

Phyllis Oakley: The mandatory retirement age. I have really have not given it that much thought because it was not something that was a factor for us. I don't know whether you did or not. I was so ready to retire. It had been a long run and Bob had retired so that worked out. For me that was just never an issue. Was it for you?

Eileen Malloy: It wasn't an issue for me. I had more than 30 years when I retired in my 50's but I came in early. People coming in later it could be more and more of an issue just as more and more we are getting people in their second career. But on the other hand you will find out that after 30 years of being in this job it physically is a whole lot tougher than 30 years at a regular domestic job. I mean every tour you end up with an injury or an

illness that bogs you down. So I personally don't have a problem with it.

Stephanie Kinney: I think some thought needs to be given to the fact that particularly in the foreign service, people were much younger. The service is designed along the lines of needing personnel for a reason, 50+20. This whole second career and then I want to go on with people living as long as they are and with the service as demanding as it is, I think we have to be rather brutally honest and not politically correct on this. The idea of bringing in people aged 56 to me is ridiculous and a waste of my tax dollars which I find deeply offensive. But the policy itself I think is pretty sound for good reason because the world is changing rapidly. Technology is changing dramatically and one has to question whether people whose heart, minds and instincts still basically reside in the late 20th century need to be extended that far into the 21st century.

Stu Kennedy: Yes I just wanted to add something of an historical note. I don't know if any of you have seen weather beaten copies of something called the Biological Register which lists I think It came out in '74 but before that there was this book that was put out and gave the background. When you were born and it is practically all male. And where you attended school and what assignments you had.

Eileen Malloy: It is called a stud book actually.

Stu Kennedy: Well that is what I was getting at. The reason it is called a stud book was that it particularly the foreign service secretaries who were generally women and extremely well qualified. At one post I had a secretary who was Phi Beta Kappa. But she couldn't get into the foreign service because of prejudice. But they would take a look at this and say Aha he is not married and has got the right places to go and is known as a stud, yes. But it was a major source of recruitment for the secretarial staff in those days, I know one of my consular assistants a woman married a gentleman named Larry Eagleburger, Marlene Heinemann. So it was a different world. I have written efficiency reports on wives. Horrible. I mean just sort of what can you say. I mean officially you just want to get that out of the way. It is silly.

Eileen Malloy: Well thank you. Yes?

Q: You all have given your personal experiences and I can relate deeply to. But nobody has mentioned political considerations. You mentioned under Jimmy Carter a quota for a DAS and that kind of thing but nobody has mentioned Madeline Albright, Hillary Clinton, and those factors. Did you have anything to say about that?

A: What do you mean by that? The influence of having a woman as Secretary?

Q: Whether changes, somebody just sent me a book, Karen Garner and Gender in the Clinton Administration and I was reading that. So did you see changes coming down or was it you give most of the credit for pushing up?

Phyllis Oakley: I'll comment on that if you don't want to do it.

Elinor Constable: No I will do it too.

Phyllis Oakley: The Clintons did make an effort to put more women in mid level positions consciously than I have ever seen until that time and I think probably afterwards,. They really did want to place women throughout government, not just in the State Department. They were concerned at the level of assistant secretaries and senior deputies and what not. I am sure part of that was Hillary I think. They wanted to get those people pushed up. So it made a real difference. It was at those middle levels that I saw it. I don't think the following secretaries of State women or men have made that kind of effort.

Elinor Constable: Well really up to a point. I think the middle level qualification is critical. Having a woman or a minority at the top of an organization may or may not make any difference at all, and very often it makes no difference at all. What you have to have is somebody no matter who they are, in a position to influence the middle level to get a situation where competent women are considered for jobs. In my own experience I had a terrible time getting my hands on a job. Once I got my hands on it I could do it, but there was nobody except for a certain token effort, and the Carter Administration was very ham handed about it. They meant well, but they were very ham handed about it. So I think it depends.

I agree with Phyllis about the Clinton administration. My view on this has always been and I still work with organizations where this is an issue. You need to have within the pool that you are considering for any position a woman and a minority. Then go for the best person. But if you don't make sure that pool always includes some diversity, you are never going to get there because people hire their clones. That is just standard, I don't know how you would describe it. White guys hire white guys. If they know them; they are comfortable with them. So you have to make sure that the pool is mixed.

Stephanie Kinney: Well said. I think what is most important is to develop, form, mentor, nurture talent across the board. But if you are talking about women I am sorry it is a flash in the pan at the top for two years and then it is gone. It is like building sand castles rather than real castles. I am not sure how long the op-eds and photo ops will last. I will be much more interested in looking at what was happening both with women and other groups of people who have not had as much access at the middle level because that is the future of your institution and if that doesn't change it doesn't matter what is going on on the top.

Q: Thank you. I really appreciate the comments that have been made. The continuing discussion that goes on seems to be involved right now is whether women can get ahead or if they have to act like men. I would just like your thoughts on that. Thank you.

Eileen Malloy: Since I entered the workforce, that was in the 1970's that was a period of time when women thought they had to be more masculine than men. A lot of women were not nurturing or particularly helpful to fellow women in that time period. We now

have gone beyond that. In the last ten years or so I have seen a blossoming of women at all levels coming together and making a conscious effort to help other women at all levels. Since there is only one token job for a female and it is either you or me is no longer there. There are more opportunities. I think you can be a feminine female, be whatever you want to be as long as you have the leadership skills and technical skills and management skills for whatever your specialty is and a good deal of emotional intelligence that you can succeed. You don't necessarily have to wear a three-piece striped suit. You can be yourself and still succeed.

Elinor Constable: Amen to that. It is true that when I came into the Foreign Service in the 50's and then on through there was this notion about women acting like men. I never bought it and I never did it. I always was me. Now maybe I am like a man, I don't know, but I was always just me.

Now I have to tell you that very often, I am ashamed to say this but we all do this. We use our character our qualities and who we are and in my case I am a woman and when I was in Kenya I had a very good relationship with the president of Kenya. I didn't approve of him really. I had to have a good working relationship with it. I used to go into his office and sit next to him and pat him on his knee. Now a man could never do that, but he loved it. He told a couple of senators one time, "We love your ambassador; she is a mother." So I think what Eileen said is right on. Be yourself, use your strengths. Don't pretend to be anything. If you are a tough lady, be a tough lady. If you are a softer person, be a softer person but whatever you are, be you.

A: And do a good job.

Q: I would like to pick up on a couple of things that were said. Lycia had mentioned that a report came out from HR and the improvement in some areas for women. I also want to pick up on something that I heard that Phyllis or Stephanie said that there need to be numbers grouping together. Where I am going with that is we have two bureaus that are still very underrepresented in terms of women, which gives you the double dilemma of how do you get big enough numbers for the department to see an issue as something significant.

A: Which are they?

Q: Overseas building operations. We have got one out of 21 managers, and I can tell you I made the SES Certs [certifications] and I made the 15 Certs and I can break through. I have been trying for years. I am your generation. I am and that is difficult too because I am becoming a real minority in the building just because of age. But it is very close to me because I would like to do something constructive and yet the numbers that you referred to as being able to do it for the department which is as it should be.

A: What is the other one?

Q: Diplomatic security as you might expect. So I feel it is very difficult having to do that.

A: Stephanie?

Stephanie Kinney: I think you have to have _____. I think you have to have evidence. I think that the way you do things is as important as what you are doing. That was certainly one of the lessons I took away from the early FLO experience. It taught me that institutional change was possible in the department but that it very much turned on how you did it as much as what you were advocating for. So I think you have to make your case and I think you have to bring to bear that the current situation is disadvantageous and particularly let's say take a ten year span going to have some adverse impacts versus a proposition that you would put forth to change that. Change is hard and it is time consuming. It is not something that happens fast and it is not something that people like, and I think this is why our institutions are against such fragile state right now, because they were magnificent in the mid 20th century. But they are a little long in the tooth for now.

Eileen Malloy: I am going to take one more question over there because everybody needs to get back to work.

Q: I think American feminism has focused just a little bit too much on where to place feminism or this trickle down feminism where as long as there is the leadership the rest will follow. Do you think we need an equal rights amendment? And that will help us just as much.

A: CEDAW, How many people in the room remember CEDAW?

Elinor Constable: Yes, Yes. And just quickly on the trickle down, I have always believed that any woman in a management position should recruit other competent women to work for them. Now you want to have a balance today it probably doesn't matter as much in my day if you had all women in that office, if that office got shoved aside so quick and easy you couldn't keep track. I don't think it is as much of an issue today. But women in mentoring positions it is not just good, but you have to recruit other competent women and get them in to good positions. I was able to do that up to a point in Kenya. Certainly in the economic bureau. The Economic Bureau by the time I left was riddled with women.

Jo DeBusk: We are going to have to end the program I want to thank all of our panelists and for all of you for coming this afternoon.

End of discussion