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Racial Justice is a National Security Priority:

Perspectives from the Next Generation

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Strike for justice protesters are seen Monday, July 20, 2020, in Milwaukee. (AP Photo/Morry Gash)



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Introduction

In the words of Walter White, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1929–1955, “Race discrimination threatens our national security. We can no longer afford to let the most backward sections of our population endanger our country by persisting in discriminating practices. We must meet the challenge of our neighbors, not only because discrimination is immoral, but also because it is dangerous.”¹ What was true more than half a century ago continues today.

On his first day in office, President Biden signed Executive Order (EO) 13985, entitled “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.”² As the Biden Administration’s first executive order in office, it signified a symbolic commitment to addressing the systemic racism that has plagued the United States for centuries. In the wake of historic nation-wide Black Lives Matter protests, EO 13985 set the tone that his administration was serious about delivering on the promises of increased racial equity after a hard fought election campaign.

Executive Order 13985 directed the federal government to take a comprehensive approach to advancing racial equity, including by identifying and addressing racial disparities in their policies and programs. It asked the head of each U.S. federal agency to conduct a review within 200 days examining whether underserved communities faced systemic barriers in accessing benefits and opportunities related to the agency’s programs and policies.

1 Walter White, Letter to Secretary Dulles, 17 March 1954, Papers of NAACP, Group II, Box A617, State Department, General, 1952-1954 file, Library of Congress, quoted in Michael Krenn, *Black Diplomacy: African Americans and the State Department 1945-1969* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc, 1999), 77.

2 “Executive Order 13985 of January 20, 2021, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, Code of Federal Regulations, 86 (2021): 7009-7013, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01753/advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government>

Executive Order 13985 was a significant step forward in the fight for racial equity in the United States government. It was followed by several other EOs that established a federal framework for targeting systemic racism within the federal workforce and in the federal government's domestic policies:

- “Executive Order 13985 National Security Memorandum on Revitalizing America’s Foreign Policy and National Security Workforce, Institutions, and Partnerships” from February 2021.
- “Executive Order 14035 Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Government” from June 2021.
- “Executive Order 14091 Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through The Federal Government” from February 2023.

Together, these Executive Orders signal **the Biden Administration’s decision to address systemic racism within its institutions and policies and improve U.S. national security.**

The federal prioritization of diversity prompted the State Department to implement a number of important steps towards more deeply embedding diversity across the institution:

- Creating the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI)
- Appointing the first-ever Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- Appointing Special Representatives for Racial Equity and Justice, Advancing the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons, and International Disability Rights
- Paying State Department interns
- Incorporating diversity as a core competency (“precept”) for performance evaluations, among other things.

The State Department’s recent actions to promote diversity and inclusion are a welcome improvement. However, significant challenges remain. The biggest question is whether these initiatives have been properly institutionalized within

the department to last beyond the next presidential election cycle. Currently, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) reports directly to the Secretary of State, and Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley announced last month (June 2023) that she is stepping down from her position as the inaugural ODI Chief. This reporting structure exposes ODI's critical work to political winds and potentially jeopardizes any progress that has been made because of changes in leadership. Backsliding on DEI³ would harm the future generations of dedicated public servants who seek to join and contribute to a Department of State that accurately reflects the true diversity of the United States.

The reversal of the modest gains in DEI pose an enduring challenge to U.S. foreign policy by deterring future talent and depriving the institution of the major benefits that come from a more diverse workforce. A lack of diversity encourages groupthink and stagnation that could critically harm the formation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. This imperative is even more salient given the July 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College* which overturned the earlier *Grutter v. Bollinger* decision (2003) and ruled that the consideration of race in higher education admissions violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. We do not yet fully comprehend the impact that this will have on disadvantaged students' access to elite universities. Interestingly, however, the Court granted an exception to American military academies. Although this was merely a brief footnote and was not explained in detail, it suggests an understanding that diversity is fundamental to the strength of our national security.

As articulated in the 2022 National Security Strategy, the U.S. finds itself in a world of “strategic competition” which will shape the future of the international order. Leading with its values, the U.S. will prove that democracy is stronger than autocracy. The Strategy admits that the “quality of our democracy at home affects the strength and credibility of our leadership abroad” and points to challenges from within: domestic terrorists, polarization, and information manipulation operations.⁴ But what does it say about the health of American democracy if

³ DEI: Diversity, equity, and inclusion

⁴ White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2022), 7, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>

its minority populations are systematically disenfranchised, disproportionately imprisoned, and in the worst cases, impunably murdered?

The jarring scenes of police brutality against Black and Brown Americans reverberates around the world and provides fodder for those countries that seek to undermine the U.S.'s credibility abroad. The 2021 meeting between Secretary Antony Blinken and Chinese Communist Party foreign affairs chief Yang Jiechi in Anchorage, Alaska in which the Chinese delegation accused America of hypocrisy is a case in point. Discrimination is dangerous because it corrodes the U.S.'s ability to lead by the power of its example.

Conversely, in an era of increasing global interconnectedness, progress on DEI will have positive effects not only on the perception of America abroad but also on other democracies worldwide. As one of the world's largest heterogeneous and pluralistic democracies, the U.S. can serve as a model for other nations on how to treat minority populations more equitably and harness our population's diversity to better address complex challenges.

This collection of essays begins with a historical overview of the connection between American foreign and domestic racial justice as exemplified by civil rights leader Malcolm X.

The second essay is a first person account from a Rangel Fellow who addresses some of the current challenges of retaining diverse talent at the U.S. State Department.

The third is written from the perspective of a close ally, Germany, and demonstrates how the U.S. can be a model for other pluralistic societies.

Each essay argues that the time to fully imbed racial justice into the practice of and vision for foreign policy is now, and future practitioners are demanding action.

Malcolm X the Diplomat:

The Global Civil Rights Movement

Erika Manouselis

When Malcolm X was gunned down onstage at the Audubon Ballroom in February 1965, he, much like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with his anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, was espousing an internationalist vision of human rights for Black people all over the world and actively forging transnational solidarity. From the 1940s through the 1960s, civil rights leaders were connecting the dots between their struggles for true equality under the law and the decolonization struggles in Africa and Asia. That gap, they argued, between American ideals and actions at home undermined the U.S.'s image abroad. This is relevant today as the global order splits into post-post-Cold War ideological camps and the imperative of racial justice for American national security is increasingly self-evident.

Although Malcolm X is often misunderstood as solely a proponent of violence, he was a complex and evolving thinker who sought to create new international and domestic alliances to achieve racial justice. From 1963 until his assassination, he worked to unite the different strands of the American civil rights movement with the larger decolonization process in Africa, as well as with Black diaspora communities throughout the Western Hemisphere and Europe.

To highlight the gap between American ideals and actions at home, X led an effort to hold the U.S. accountable at the United Nations for its treatment of Black Americans. As he told a group of young students in Selma, Alabama while on a visit to foster ties with MLK's nonviolence movement, "you and I are within our rights to wire Secretary-General U Thant of the United Nations and charge the federal government...with being derelict in its duty to protect the human rights of twenty-two million Black people in this country. And in their failure to protect our human rights, they are violating the United Nations Charter, and they are not qualified to continue to sit in that international body and talk about what human rights should be done in other countries on this earth."⁵

⁵ Malcolm X. "The House Negro and the Field Negro (February 4, 1965)." In *February 1965, the Final Speeches*. 1st ed., edited by Steve Clark. (New York: Pathfinder, 1992), 26.

This theme of limited African-American representation at the United Nations was an old refrain. Back when the UN was founded in 1945, the NAACP wrote to the U.S. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius asking whether the United States delegation to the UN Conference on International Organization in San Francisco would have any Black representatives going to “advocate and advise measures for their own social progress and also be given opportunity to speak for other peoples of African descent whom they in a very real sense represent.”⁶ As a result, Walter White, NAACP Executive Secretary, W.E.B Du Bois, civil rights activist and one of the founders of the NAACP, and Mary McLeod Bethune, also a civil rights activist and one of the founders of the United Negro College Fund, attended as consultants. Similarly, in 1946, Du Bois observed that in meeting of the UN General Assembly “not a single person of Negro descent will have any voice save in the case of Ethiopia and Liberia, which are free nations.”⁷

The lack of representation of Black Americans at the UN was a symptom of the lack of representation within the foreign policy machinery of the U.S. government, as exemplified by the U.S. State Department. African American activists criticized U.S. officials for not fully comprehending just how important race was in the postwar world, i.e. the colonial struggles for independence, nor how badly America’s global reputation was harmed by racial discrimination and segregation within its borders.⁸ Therefore the following issues were all interconnected: equal opportunity employment and civil rights at home, the lack of Black diplomats of color at the Department of State, a shifting international landscape amid a wave of decolonization in the ‘Third World,’ and bolstering international credibility vis-à-vis America’s democratic ideals.

President Harry S. Truman recognized that if the U.S. was to maintain its position as world leader, it would need to pass civil rights legislation: “We can’t go on not doing the things that we are asking other people to do in the United Nations.”⁹ To do so, he established the President’s Committee on Civil Rights (PCCR) and banned discriminatory hiring practices by federal agencies and desegregated the

6 “Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors, March 12, 1945,” Spingarn Papers, Box 41, Minutes and Reports, Board of Directors, 1945 file, Library of Congress, quoted in Krenn, *Black Diplomacy*, 11.

7 W.E.B Du Bois, Letter to Lester Walton, July 24, 1946, Papers of Lester Walton, Box 16, W.E.B Du Bois 1944-46 file, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, quoted in *Ibid.*

8 Krenn, *Black Diplomacy*, 4-5.

9 Harry S. Truman, “Remarks to a Delegation From the National Emergency Civil Rights Mobilization Conference,” 17 Jan 1950, *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1950*, 115.

U.S. armed forces.”¹⁰ However, as highlighted by a 1949 memorandum entitled “Policy of the Department of State with reference to the assignment and transfer of Negro personnel of the Foreign Service,” which will be described in more detail in the next essay, proved that discrimination was alive and well within the State Department, confining Black Foreign Service Officers to serve on a “Negro circuit.”¹¹

Under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, however, progress on countering negative effects of America’s civil rights issues and appointing more African-Americans to diplomatic positions slowed until 1957 when an incident of racial violence reverberated around the world. That was the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas where a white mob threatened nine Black school children and the Governor deployed the state’s National Guard to prevent the students from entering.

The damaging impact this had America’s international prestige was immense, and civil rights leaders such as MLK and Roy Wilkins were unequivocal:

“It is no secret that the foreign relations program of our nation has been hampered and damaged by the discriminatory treatment accorded citizens within the United States, solely on the basis of their race and color. In our world-wide struggle to strengthen the free world against the spread of totalitarianism, we are sabotaged by the totalitarian practices forced upon millions of our Negro citizens.”¹²

Indeed, the Soviet Union would often use images from Little Rock to diminish the U.S.’s credibility abroad.

10 Department of State, “Discrimination in Transfer and Reemployment of Government Employees,” 15 January 1946, Records of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights (PCCR), Box 6, State Department file, Harry S. Truman Library.

11 “Policy of the Department of State with reference...,” May 10, 1949, Dudley Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, Amistad Research Center, quoted in Krenn, *Black Diplomacy*, 51.

12 “A Statement to President Dwight D Eisenhower,” 23 June 1958, Dwight D Eisenhower, Papers as President of the United States, 1953-1961, (Ann Whitman File), Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 33, June 1958-Staff Notes (2) folder, Dwight D Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS (Dwight D. Eisenhower Library), quoted in Krenn, *Black Diplomacy*, 77-78.

During the Cold War and at a time when the Non-Aligned Movement, an organization which consists of over 100 developing countries that are not formally aligned with or against the U.S. or USSR, was gaining strength, Malcolm X embarked on several trips abroad throughout the Middle East and Africa. He was received as an “unofficial President of Black America,” and as such, met with several heads of state. For example, on his pilgrimage to Mecca, he was Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud’s state guest in Saudi Arabia. He also met with the leadership of newly independent states such as President Gamal Nasser in Egypt, President Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria, and President Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana.

X attended the Organization of African Unity’s second meeting in Cairo, Egypt on July 17-21, 1964 to convince the 33 heads of independent African nations to help back his effort to hold the U.S accountable at the United Nations. Arguing that race relations in America was not a question of civil rights but rather one of human rights made it an international problem linked with the decolonization process of the African continent at the time:

“Our problem is your problem. It is not a Negro problem, nor an American problem. This is a world problem, a problem for humanity.”¹³

Ultimately, Malcolm was unsuccessful in his aim of securing support for concrete action against the U.S. at the UN. His foray into international affairs had him recognize that “the science (art) of diplomacy and political ‘maneuvering’ at the international level is much different and more delicately difficult than getting on the soap-box there in Harlem.”¹⁴ But officials at the State Department understood X’s danger to American foreign policy interests if he had been successful and acknowledged that it would have undermined the U.S.’s role as a leader in defending human rights.¹⁵

13 Malcolm X. “Speech to the African Summit Conference (July 21, 1964).” In *Malcolm X: Collected Speeches, Debates & Interviews*, edited by Sandeep S. Atwal, 445-48.

14 “Malcolm X to Betty Shabazz,” July 26, 1964, Malcolm X collection, from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library.

15 M.S. Handler, “Malcolm X Seeks U.N. Negro Debate,” *New York Times*, August 13, 1964, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1964/08/13/118673340.html?pageNumber=22> (accessed April 2, 2023).

Malcolm X's transformation into an international human rights advocate is a lesser-known part of his legacy but one of the most important aspects of his fight against racism. His vision can inspire us today as domestic racial injustice continues to tarnish the U.S.'s reputation overseas and is used by other countries to raise doubts about American credibility on the world's stage. X died before seeing the U.S. live up to its democratic ideals. We still have time.

The Dance of Diversity:

**Identifying Retention Challenges for
Underrepresented Foreign Service
Officers**

Korde Inniss

Diversity and inclusion expert Verna Myers, once stated that “diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance.”¹⁶ Though the State Department has made strides towards a more diverse workforce through programs such as the Rangel and Pickering Fellowships which aim to attract and prepare outstanding yet underrepresented young people for careers in the Foreign Service, the senior levels of the Department do not reflect this. **Currently, underrepresented minorities only make up 16% of the Senior Foreign Service, of that 16%, 12% are male.**¹⁷

In fact, there is a significant attrition rate with respect to Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) of color. Two obstacles that inhibit diversity of representation in the senior ranks are retention and mentorship.

First, retention is a problem because it is a direct product of management biases which inhibit underrepresented FSOs ability to promote and contribute to higher levels of attrition. The Department of State maintains that attrition rates remain at historical levels, around 3 to 4%; however, anecdotal evidence would suggest this is much higher within smaller constituencies. For example, in 2018, **the attrition rate for racial and ethnic minorities was 15% higher than the 15-year average.**¹⁸ This has been attributed to management bias among mid-level officers. Overall, the work is predominantly on FSOs from underrepresented backgrounds to “weather the storm” to rise the ranks.

Second, the lack of mentorship is also a problem because of how representation contributes to the retention of underrepresented FSOs. I am no stranger to racial disparities within the public service space. As a young officer in the United States Air Force, I was often met with bewilderment being one of few Black officers. When looking for mentorship, I observed that there were even fewer officers that looked

16 Janet H. Cho, “‘Diversity Is Being Invited to the Party; Inclusion Is Being Asked to Dance,’ Verna Myers Tells Cleveland Bar - Cleveland.Com,” accessed May 2, 2023, https://www.cleveland.com/business/2016/05/diversity_is_being_invited_to.html.

17 “1222_diversity_data_for_web.Pdf,” accessed March 26, 2023, https://afsa.org/sites/default/files/1222_diversity_data_for_web.pdf.

18 Constanza Castro Zuniga, Mojib Ghazani, Caroline Kim, “The Crisis in the State Department,” Georgetown University, July 2021, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/vu5gk9qfh6vd0uc6feagqu1u6o7mmawc>

like me. Although this is not necessarily an indication of the failure of the Department of Defense's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, it has significant repercussions for retention of underrepresented officers. An officer's ability to see themselves represented in these positions of leadership is integral to their retention. For example, African Americans make up 9% of active duty officers but only 6.5% of generals. They are especially underrepresented at the three and four-star general level.¹⁹

However, if the lives of Ambassadors such as Edward Dudley or Terrence Todman have taught us anything, it's that resilience is not enough to create change, but rather systemic changes and strategy are needed to bring about necessary transformations in our institutions. Ambassador Dudley authored a memo detailing how the Department of State was in breach of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 which provided for the equal opportunity and fair equitable treatment for all without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or disability.²⁰

The memo focused on the "Negro circuit," the invariable assignments of African American personnel only to Monrovia, Ponta Delgada, and Madagascar.²¹ In developing the memo, Ambassador Dudley identified every Black diplomat in the Foreign Service from when they had entered the Service and how long they had been in; where they were serving; and whether they had been reassigned to other posts. The data confirmed that:

African-American Foreign Service Officers were sent to hardship posts in a limited group of countries, which obviously stunted their careers, while other Foreign Service Officers of similar age received multiple assignments every few years and were not confined to hardship posts.²²

19 Christopher S. Chivvis Lauji Sahil, "Diversity in the High Brass," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed May 2, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/09/06/diversity-in-high-brass-pub-87694>.

20 United States Congress House Foreign Affairs, *The Foreign Service Act of 1946*, (Public Law 79-724) as Amended to November 7, 1965, January 10, 1966, 1966.

21 Leola Calzolari-Stewart, "The American Diplomat," American Experience, PBS, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/american-diplomat/>.

22 "Edward R. Dudley," *Historical Society of the New York Courts* (blog), accessed May 2, 2023, <https://history.nycourts.gov/biography/edward-r-dudley/>.

Similarly, Ambassador Todman spoke out about the issue of being unable to eat lunch with his white colleagues at a segregated restaurant in Rosslyn, Virginia while he was attending the Foreign Service Institute for training. Angered at the injustice, he pursued this issue within the Department until it reached the office of the Undersecretary for management. As a result, the State Department leased half of the restaurant and erected a partition to ostensibly desegregate it.²³ Recently, the State Department's cafeteria was renamed "Todman" in his honor.²⁴

Both Ambassadors Dudley and Todman held the Department of State accountable for their inability to address discrimination effectively within the inner workings of the Department's bureaucracy. However, today, senior members of the Foreign Service have described getting to the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) level as kin to "playing the game."²⁵ If this is true, then the question becomes are we incentivizing our Foreign Service leaders' capacities to play the game or to actually lead and make change? For underrepresented FSOs, how are they to play this "game" if they were never taught the rules?

If the State Department wants to retain the diversity of talent that it sought through the Pickering and Rangel programs, then it must support a system of transparency around promotion. It must make "the game" fairer to all of its employees regardless of race, class, national origin, religion, ability, etc.

The Association of Black American Ambassadors (ABAA) has suggested several recommendations to improve retention.²⁶ The first is to mandate exit interviews to gather data on separation which includes information on types of assignments, impact of cone designation, and employment opportunities for spouses. This would provide more fidelity on the reasons why FSOs are choosing to leave. The second is to provide transparency on best practices for navigating the State Department's promotion system outside of the Career Development and

23 "The American Diplomat | American Experience | PBS," accessed March 26, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/american-diplomat/>.

24 "Secretary Antony J. Blinken At a Ceremony Renaming the Harry S. Truman Cafeteria After Ambassador Terence A. Todman," *United States Department of State* (blog), accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-a-ceremony-renaming-the-harry-s-truman-cafeteria-after-ambassador-terence-a-todman/>.

25 "Modern American Diplomacy, Amb. Harry Thomas: Straight Talk on Crisis Management, Career Progression, and the Joys and Challenges Of...," Spotify, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://open.spotify.com/show/2TivVOY0wbPwaak5iMhV07>.

26 "Diversity and Inclusion in the U.S. Foreign Service—Recommendations for Action," *The Foreign Service Journal*, American Foreign Service Association, January/February 2021, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://afsa.org/diversity-and-inclusion-us-foreign-service-recommendations-action>.

Assignments office. The promotion system can be a nebulous process, so having a clear delineation of what milestones an FSO should accomplish before heading to the next grade from other experienced FSOs may help to retain underrepresented talent. Finally, educate FSOs on the Pickering and Rangel program to mitigate negative perceptions of either program. There are still FSOs who chose to hide their fellowship affiliation out of fear of being ostracized for joining the Foreign Service outside of the traditional route. Elucidating the rigor of these programs as well as illustrating that FSOs produced from these fellowships are just as capable as others is another way to improve retention.

Systemic discrimination and bias, although not outwardly obvious, can persist within institutions if not appropriately addressed. Bias should not have to manifest itself as a direct exclusion of the underrepresented to be recognized as such. Developing a more diverse Department of State at the senior levels will be contingent upon having an institution that is more sensitive to these issues. However the emphasis to improve diversity is not just a moral argument but a strategic one as well.

As mentioned by Marshall Sherrell, an Entry-Level-Officer at State “diversity is not merely to promote a moral imperative of wider inclusion: It’s a strategic decision to better serve the interests of the State Department in navigating complex problems on the global stage.”²⁷ With these sentiments in mind, we as underrepresented FSOs have already taken the responsibility of serving the public in spaces which have historically precluded us from success or creatively excluded us. The onus is now on our institutions to rectify these acts. In short, underrepresented FSOs such as myself have already arrived at the dance, but the Department itself will determine whether or not we have dance partners.

²⁷ Marshall Sherrell, “Meritocracy at State: Who Deserves What,” American Foreign Service Association, March 2023, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://afsa.org/meritocracy-state-who-deserves-what>.

Breaking Barriers:

What Germany's Foreign Policy
Can Learn from America

Tiaji Sio

Germany has a long history of institutionalized discrimination starting from its colonial endeavors in the 19th century to the cruel acts of World War II and the communist rule in East Germany. At the same time, the country has been praised for its efforts to rectify its past and has been committed to making amends both morally and financially. Given the liberal immigration policies of the past decades and the recent influx of refugees into the country, the demographic landscape has been undergoing significant changes. Today, approximately 25% of the population has a “migration background” with figures reaching 40% for people under the age of 15.²⁸ With Germany’s population becoming increasingly diverse, calls for the adequate integration and representation of marginalized communities have recently become louder.

However, prior to 2020 when the Black Lives Matter movement rallied tens of thousands of protestors in all major German cities, there was little awareness regarding discrimination and the need for integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion in political decision-making processes. In fact, far-right and populist parties have been on the rise both in Germany and throughout Europe making it difficult to have constructive conversations about how to deal with the reality of an increasingly diverse society and forthcoming challenges regarding the democratic legitimacy of the country’s institutions.

After the end of World War II, in 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany was founded and regained its foreign policy sovereignty. The Federal Foreign Office (FFO) was rebuilt by civil servants who had already been in office during the era of national socialism, which was the racist and anti-semitic ideology of the Nazi regime.²⁹ However, German diplomacy has since developed into a strong defender of human rights and democracy and gained a reputation of favoring

28 According to the German Federal Statistics Office: All individuals who have immigrated to the Federal Republic of Germany since 1949, all foreign citizens born in Germany, and all children born as German citizens to at least one parent who immigrated or was born in Germany as a foreign citizen are considered to have a migration background. For historic reasons, Germany does not collect census data on race or ethnicity.

29 Eckart Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Karl Blessing Verlag, 2010).

peaceful and multilateral solutions. While Germany's foreign policy has changed significantly over the postwar years, the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures of the FFO and the demographic composition of foreign policy decision-makers, especially those in leadership positions, have remained surprisingly similar.

As Germany aspires to create a more inclusive and representative diplomatic corps, it can draw on the experiences of the U.S. and other countries pioneering to integrate their diverse societies in decision-making processes to inform its approach. **Germany's current government, which assumed power in 2021, was the first administration to acknowledge the underrepresentation of societal diversity within administrative ranks in its coalition agreement and actively seeks to implement policies to rectify this issue.**³⁰ Germany's efforts to identify and support aspiring civil servants and diplomats from diverse backgrounds are in their early stages but will gain in importance as the demographic shifts in the country persist.³¹ DEI efforts can tap into the untouched potential of parts of society that are currently underrepresented in decision-making processes and, at the same time, leverage national interests through the unique perspectives and skills these communities have to offer.

The FFO published its first ever diversity strategy in 2021 to acknowledge the potential of underrepresented groups.³² The strategy includes recommendations for collecting comprehensive and up-to-date data, hiring personnel dedicated to DEI, advancing internal culture and leadership, monitoring and evaluating what works and what doesn't, and dealing with issues related to the foreign cultures in which many of the foreign service officers work. It also includes suggestions to widening recruitment efforts to a broader audience and reevaluating whether the metrics by which future diplomats are selected are continuously adapted to the changing geopolitical landscape and skills required to be a successful diplomat. The changes proposed in the strategy don't just require surface-level changes but also need to address underlying power imbalances, structural inequalities and colonial continuities.

30 KOALITIONSVERTRAG ZWISCHEN SPD, BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN UND FDP. "Mehr Fortschritt Wagen." <https://www.spd.de/>, 2021. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/974430/1990812/1f422c60505b6a88f8f3b3b5b8720bd4/2021-12-10-koav2021-data.pdf?download=1>.

31 Statistisches Bundesamt. "Migration Und Integration." Bevoelkerung, 2021. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Migration-Integration/_inhalt.html.

32 Auswärtiges Amt. "Diversitätsstrategie 'Vielfältiges Deutschland – Vielfältige Diplomatie.'" Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, December 12, 2021. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aamt/diversitaetsstrategie/2499326>.

Foreign Minister, Annalena Baerbock, who is both the youngest and the first woman in this position, launched Germany's feminist foreign policy strategy in March 2023. This new approach to foreign policy aims to prioritize peace, gender equality, and human rights and seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, and patriarchal power structures. While critics argue that a feminist foreign policy doesn't affect substantive changes, if successful, it could not only be a milestone in how Germany advances its values in the world but also in how the ministry competes for top talent and integrates intersectional DEI approaches into its recruitment and promotion efforts.

While top-down approaches and political will are crucial for implementing DEI targets, fostering a cultural shift across all levels of the hierarchy requires equal attention to grassroots initiatives. Employee-driven networks, such as "Diplomats of Color"³³ and "DIVERSITRY,"³⁴ actively connect diplomats from diverse backgrounds and advocate for more inclusive policies, thereby playing a vital role in shaping a more inclusive and equitable diplomatic environment. Diplomats of Color (DoC) is an initiative that was founded in 2019 by foreign service officers in the FFO. Their goal is to connect diplomats who belong to underrepresented communities, advocate for inclusive policy changes, and encourage potential applicants to apply for positions in the FFO. Following the success of DoC, the initiative received a grant from the political incubator JoinPolitics to expand its approach to the entire Federal Administration. Today, DIVERSITRY has enabled the formation of employee-led DEI initiatives in 7 out of 14 Federal Ministries and regularly consults the senior leadership on its planned Federal diversity strategy.

The importance of fostering a vision of diversity, equity and inclusion in foreign policy cannot be overstated, and it is essential to continue pushing for meaningful progress in this regard. As the world becomes more interconnected and global challenges continue to arise, effective diplomacy requires the ability to navigate complex cultural dynamics and communicate across differences. By drawing lessons from the progress and ongoing challenges both in the U.S. and

33 Auswärtiges Amt. "How Is Germany Dealing with Racism? Q&A with Tiaji SIO, Founder of Diplomats of Color Network at the German Foreign Office." How is Germany dealing with racism? Q&A with Tiaji Sio, founder of Diplomats of Color network at the German Foreign Office, Federal Foreign Office, November 23, 2020. <https://germanyinafrica.diplo.de/zadz-en/-/2419418>.

34 GEMEINSAM FÜR; MEHR DIVERSITÄT IN DER BUNDESVERWALTUNG, Diversity, 2019. <https://www.diversity.com/home>.

around the world regarding issues of diversity and inclusion in the foreign service, Germany can keep moving forward in the creation of a more just and inclusive world. As global citizens seeking to create thriving and resilient democracies, diplomats are responsible for tackling the challenges of the 21st century and will do so more effectively if they represent and understand the people they serve.

Conclusion

In a world where racism and anti-Blackness persist as global phenomena, it is imperative that the U.S. and its allies champion human rights both domestically and abroad. As Special Representative Desiree Cormier Smith, the State Department's first Representative for Racial Equity and Justice, wisely notes, "racism and anti-Blackness is an international phenomenon. I see the same problems in Inglewood and Ghana...to be credible champions for human rights abroad, we have to be credible at home." Therefore, credibility on the international stage begins at home, with the recognition of the intersectional nature of race and its significance in our relationships with other countries.

Sustaining the momentum achieved in recent years requires acknowledging that diversity, equity, and inclusion in foreign policy is an essential component of modern governance. In an era of global migration and increasing interconnectedness, diverse democracies are better equipped to address complex challenges. Despite the recent Supreme Court decision on affirmative action cited earlier, the United States has taken some important steps to engage in meaningful conversations around DEI, serving as a positive model for other nations embarking on similar journeys.

With this understanding, progressive foreign policy practitioners in the United States, Germany, and beyond should foster a global movement of pioneers who are passionate about creating and sustaining diverse democracies. In nations in which democracy is in decline and liberal values are increasingly challenged, these individuals will solidify the unifying values that underpin inclusive societies. Transatlantic partnerships can be leveraged to further advance DEI efforts. By working together to push for progress, the next generation of leaders will continue to break down barriers, challenge systemic inequities, and build a more inclusive and just world.



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