

United States Foreign Service Officer

Name: **David D. Gries**

Profession: **Department of State**

Number of years in this line of work: **35**

Native Language: **English**

Other Language(s): **Chinese, Japanese, French**

1) What is your profession?

Foreign Service Officer.

2) Describe a "typical" day as a Foreign Service Officer living abroad.

The day starts with rapid reading of a mass of new material: cables from the State I reports and assessments; newspapers, both foreign and domestic. Meetings with col appointments in the community with political, financial, or cultural officials, many analytical reports for Washington often occupies the afternoon, and socializing-in : occupies many evenings.

3) What do you enjoy about it? What do you not enjoy about it?

Learning as much as possible about an unfamiliar culture is both a challenge and a performing well in a Foreign Service assignment, and of course language capability knowledge is accumulated. The foreign language-Chinese-I know best is a case in po in the language, and using the language to learn about the culture is what makes Fo is the amount of highly focused time needed to perform well. Neglect of family oblig

4) Do you speak any other language(s) besides the one(s) you work with

I learned French through grade school, high school, and university but do not speak that each language learned makes acquiring another language easier. French served

5) What language do you think in?

Most definitely English, but when speaking Chinese rapidly, I certainly think in Chir though not so much now as when I was learning Chinese.

6) What do you think helped you the most in mastering the foreign/secor

Hard work. There's no substitute for it, especially when approaching Asian language English. We have a handful of English words derived from Chinese, and the Chinese time, work, and perhaps a certain flexibility of mind that accepts that there are man things.

7) What opportunities have knowing another language provided in your / otherwise?

Foreign Service is dependent on knowing foreign languages; a Foreign Service career met a Foreign Service Officer who did not speak at least one language besides Engli languages have been the key to a rewarding career.

8) Do you think it is essential to learn not just a language, but also the cu spoken?

Yes. A Foreign Service officer's job is to collect and assess the information needed to likely to act. Language alone will not accomplish that. Language and cultural knowl

9) If you had the time to learn another language now, what language wou

I would like to learn more Japanese. I spoke it reasonably well when I was assigned but have used it little since and the disengagement shows.

10) How do you think your life would have turned out if you had never le

Not sure about that, but it certainly would not have included a State Department car career in the U.S., and the excitement of exposure to foreign cultures and languages v a shrinking world, that's giving up a lot.

11) In your opinion, are there more career opportunities for people who

Certainly. Americans are almost unique in their resistance to learning foreign langu than others for that kind of knowledge in our daily lives. But as globalization advanc as possible-will increase. Already Spanish is a near necessity in parts of the U.S., mu requirements for European business persons and officials.

12) What do you think you would be doing if you weren't a Foreign Servi

~~My friend as you think you would be doing it for me or for a friend of mine~~
Wishing I was one. Pursuing a career abroad was an early goal, and I have been fort