

December 28, 2006

Memorandum

To: Walter Anderson

From: Lloyd Etheredge

Re: Strengthening Professional Training for Diplomacy and International Relations

I. Building International Capacity: A Historical Perspective

“When a hungry cat concentrates his attention on a mousehole, there usually is a mouse in it; but when the government of some great country has concentrated its attention and efforts on some particular foreign policy objective, the outcome remarkably often has been unrewarding . . . During the half century from 1914 to 1964, the decisions of major powers to go to war or to expand a war, and their judgments of the relevant intentions and capabilities of other nations, seem to have involved major errors of fact, perhaps in more than 50% of all cases.”

- Karl Deutsch¹

Michael Howard, the military and diplomatic historian, has observed that a lesson that one draws from the political history of Europe is how little of it one would care to repeat. In the same spirit, specialists in international relations are haunted by the judgment (above) of Karl Deutsch, one of the leading international relations scholars of the 20th century, concerning the frequency of misperception as a cause of wars. (Scholars who believed, or hoped, that the United States was an exception to this warning have seen, since 1964, the sobering cases of the Vietnam War and the current Iraq War.)

We have reached a remarkable historical juncture where producing a much better record in the 21st century should be possible, by the development of professional training for diplomacy and international relations. Currently, there is peace among the world's major powers: It is a good time for fresh thinking about how we build upon this accomplishment.

I suggest that the new Secretary General quietly convene a study group of experienced and trusted diplomats, scholars, and academic leaders to identify resources and opportunities to strengthen our collective capacity for professional training in international relations and diplomacy. The study group also would be asked to address research agendas and resources to accelerate professional learning.² The Report would be intended, initially, for private circulation to interested governments and UN Missions, foundations, NGOs, and universities.

By way of illustration, the following are several specific topics that the study group can address, and worthwhile projects that its Report might get underway:

II. A Range of Topics and Projects

- Entry-level training. The development of first-rate professional training programs, available to interested and qualified entry-level students from *all* countries, with appropriate financial aid. Summer internships. Early career opportunities.

- Mid-career opportunities that UN member states would like to see available for their own diplomatic corps.³ Training for journalists in all countries who will report international news.

- Lesson-learning investments and teaching resources. E.g.: 1.) The development of first-rate oral history and lesson-learning projects concerning key bilateral relationships of UN members, including identification of past misperceptions;⁴ 2.) Online teaching resources for UN studies and the study of international organizations/cooperation;⁵ 3.) Curriculum

resources concerning conflict management skills, which could be available online for high school and undergraduate courses.

- Lesson-learning to improve post-conflict work. In 2005 a Council on Foreign Relations (US) task force noted that the UN currently deployed 67,000 peacekeepers in sixteen operations around the world. It also noted that the United States, since 1993, had engaged in six major nation-building operations without notable investments in rigorous lesson-drawing to improve its post-conflict capabilities.⁶ How can the lessons and institutional memory of these experiences be codified and passed along efficiently to the next generation of students and practitioners?⁷

- Improving the quality of expert political judgment and professional forecasting. [Philip E. Tetlock's Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know? (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006) is an outstanding example of a line of work that can be developed. This scientific work requires a commitment to long-range research because political judgments and forecasts must be made at least five to ten years ahead, and then evaluated.]

- Centers for the Study of Comparative Foreign Policy and Diplomacy. The development of observation sites at twelve new locations, to facilitate international research by advanced students and scholars from all countries. (The work done at these Centers can help us to understand evolving foreign policies, as countries seek to engage new destructive and constructive political forces, regional and global issues, and options. And they can help us to understand the challenges faced by professional diplomats to bridge gaps between cultures and political systems.)

- It will be useful to provide Fellowships and support for a growing network of users from all UN Member states, not simply the US and advanced countries. (Although, as an American, it seems to me vital that these Centers also be available to get

American students and academic researchers outside the United States, at least for a period.) For example, Centers in Turkey or Egypt might provide valuable opportunities to applicants or research collaborators from China, and I believe that Chinese specialists in Middle Eastern politics would welcome the opportunities.

Concerning the location of these Centers for the Study of Comparative Foreign Policy and Diplomacy: Chase et al. suggest that nine “pivotal states” in the developing world are likely in the 21st century to become major forces in the international relations in their regions: Algeria, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa, and Turkey.⁸ To these nine sites, I suggest adding at least three countries in the developed world, with greater cultural distance from the United States where, as a result, misperceptions are more likely to arise: China, Japan, Russia.

- An Internet Colloquium Channel. It would be straightforward to videotape lectures and conferences at the world’s leading graduate schools for professional training. Today, it is inexpensive to digitize these discussions and Webcast them to interested academic and professional audiences in any country. They also can be archived and available on a Website, without charge, for on-demand access by researchers and students in all professional schools. The technology can share resources, and it also can facilitate the circulation of ideas and the development of collaborative projects. [It is possible that the UN University system will be interested to develop this project.]

III. Implementation

The development of such a project might be an appropriate (and welcome) role for the retiring Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. It could benefit from the institutional memory and experience of retired diplomats of many countries. I expect that private support could be raised from foundations whose Boards would welcome a visionary Report to guide their own planning. The cumulation of lessons can be facilitated by the involvement of social scientists and diplomatic historians.

Endnotes

1. From his The Analysis of International Relations. Cited, Lloyd S. Etheredge, A World of Men: The Private Sources of American Foreign Policy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978), p. 1. Studies of misperception include Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). See also Robert Levine and Donald T. Campbell, Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior (NY: Wiley, 1971) and Lloyd S. Etheredge, "Is American Foreign Policy Ethnocentric? Notes Toward a Propositional Inventory" (Unpublished draft, 1988) online at www.policyscience.net.
2. There is an umbrella organization that supports an annual meeting of academic Deans of 29 schools with graduate training programs for international relations, APSIA (the Association for Professional Schools of International Affairs, www.apsia.org). Most of these schools are in the US and Canada. They have an interest to attract foreign students and most have programs abroad. It also has a wider range of affiliated institutions, including the US State Department's Foreign Service Institute.
3. There are many institutions that might welcome mid-career Fellows. (Alongside what is learned intellectually, the wider network of contacts can be a mutually useful resource.) The opportunities could include scientific cooperation (e.g., the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington), finance (e.g., placements in the New York or London financial markets), policy thinktanks, or university sabbatical programs. Mid-career diplomats also could be placed in respective Foreign Ministries.
4. For the case of US bilateral relationships early studies of cultural differences in negotiating styles have been undertaken by the United States Institute of Peace. For example: Raymond Cohen, Negotiating Across Cultures: International Communication in an Interdependent World (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997). Revised edition; Jerrold L. Schechter, Russian Negotiating Behavior: Continuity and Transition (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1998); Richard H. Solomon, Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests Through 'Old Friends' (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1999); Michael Blaker, Paul Giarra, and Ezra Vogel, Case Studies in Japanese Negotiating Behavior (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002).
5. An early investment by the Pew Charitable Trusts to create 190+ case studies of international cooperation can be reviewed at www.guisd.org. The effectiveness and scientific cumulation of such investments can be improved by allowing multiple perspectives (rather than single-narrative case studies written only by Americans), greater verbatim material, and questions developed by scientists and experienced professionals to probe areas of theoretical

interest.

6. Samuel Berger, Brent Scowcroft, et al., In the Wake of War: Improving U. S. Post-Conflict Capabilities (NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 2005).

7. David Hamburg, No More Killing Fields: Preventing Deadly Conflict (NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003) is an introduction to the range of topics considered by the Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict.

8. Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul M. Kennedy (Eds.) The Pivotal States: A New Framework for U.S. Policy in the Developing World (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998).