



*2011 Mestenhauser Lecture
on Internationalizing Higher Education*

Cultural Diplomacy and International Understanding

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Cultural Diplomacy and International Understanding

Let me begin with personal geography. Though I am a stranger to the heartlands, my forbears at the beginning of the 19th century settled in De Pere, Wisconsin, in the days before the area's great football team. My grandfather came from German millers, surely swallowed up by a Minneapolis mega-corporation; instead of moving farther west, he trumped his performance at the University of Wisconsin by moving east to Harvard in 1896. My visit to the remarkable mill museum here reminded me that I'd come to lands that are part of me.

About twenty years ago, as head of the Fulbright Association, I came out to work with Fulbright members across the state. I then discovered this magnificent university, which has played so important a role in the growth of international education in the United States, at the very least since World War II. A quiet hero of my book is former president Lewis Morrill, who chaired the remarkable 1958 study called "The University in World Affairs," an extraordinary expression of collective United States wisdom supported by the Big Three of United States foundations. Alas, it drowned in the whirlpools of American politics in the 1960s. As Morrill collaborator Robert Goheen, the late long-serving president of Princeton, explained, the Report failed to re-shape the diplomacy of university outreach because, "we could find no one in Washington to talk to." To the same noble, but often, sad cause Minnesota's treasure Dr. Josef Mestenhauer has given his life.

I am honored to pay homage to my longtime friend Josef Mestenhauer. He and I met some forty years ago and I have learned to consider him one of five great virtual teachers who have shaped my sense of the diplomacy of universities and international learning. For my profession, Dr. Mestenhauer is one of the priceless assets of this university, surely the most thoughtful of the international educators across our nation, reflecting his unique bi-national focus.

My own contribution took place in another line of work. In my Foreign Service career as a committed cultural diplomat, universities and their students were my primary concern. Returning to this campus, I am impressed and intrigued by its rich and complex resources coupled with the simpler Garrison Keillor style and grace.

Rip Van Winkle's Return

In a 1984 article, "Rethinking International Education,"¹ I compared a Foreign Service officer returning home after a decade abroad to Rip Van Winkle. We return and recognize nothing. Who are all these people and what are they talking about?

¹ Arndt, R. (1984). *International education, the unfinished agenda*. Indianapolis, Ind.: White River

Like Rip, we have to relive a whole sector of our lives, as best we can. Some gaps never fill.

On the other hand, Washington Irving exploited Rip's advantage: he could see things with a certain kind of clarity, like Oliver Sachs' anthropologist from Mars. Looking with Rip's eyes, at this university and international education, from the viewpoint of someone who began worrying about these matters in the 1940s, I would argue we have come a very long way. The day-by-day struggle may be hard, the pools of ignorance daunting, the bureaucracy of government and universities themselves intractable, and progress invisible. Cycles of ups and downs are assumed. But what happens routinely on campuses today is a far cry from 1945.

Today a teacher knows he or she can send a student off to Japan or Tanzania or Bulgaria or Bhutan for a semester, and the teacher has probably spent a year or more him or herself in some such place. U.S. students today can be found everywhere in the world. Make no mistake; it is a miracle as well as a tribute to something deep in the American character.

We should view with equal wonderment this campus' inclusion of as many as 10 percent international students, a percentage typical today of enlightened U.S. universities. Princeton had all but none in 1945. Think of the ingenious flexibility and educational coherence by which international students are enabled to study here and do research; they are permitted to work to pay their way, then return to their countries—or manage sometimes to stay on a while longer until their countries are ready to receive them. These things have not happened easily, they are vital matters, which serve a deep layer of our national interests, even if the select 575 citizens who make up our Congress do not always remember. More amazing: despite strong counter-trends in U.S. politics, progressive change has not stopped. This we owe to those like Dr. Mestenhauser of this nation; for that, we honor them.

I would like to stay with the international student question, which brought Dr. Mestenhauser and me together. When I had returned, like Rip Van Winkle, from an extended stay in Iran, I was shocked by the deep U.S. resentment of the 300,000 international students then reported to be in the U.S. Iran in particular had sent a goodly number of students in the post-Mossadeq era and many were still in the country (it seems implausible, but 50,000 was the number we used). On mid-career leave at a school of public policy in 1971-72, I asked economist friends how they might quantify the “invisible export” of foreign students in the U.S. Their off-the-cuff method produced a ballpark guess: about \$11 billion per annum, making international students the nations fourth largest export. Since then, organizations like NAFSA have done their homework and economists today make more sophisticated estimates, perhaps half a million foreign students, for an “export” income of over \$20 billion.

When the nation began thinking of international students as a net contribution to the national economy, nativist, xenophobic and know-nothing pressures eased, I shall long remember an elevator-ride in a hotel hosting both a NAFSA conference

and another dedicated to the right to bear arms, a towering man explained NAFSA to his colleagues in a foghorn voice: “These are the guys bringing all those Chinks and Commies over here.” People still say such ignorant things, some even broadcast them on radio or run for President. But our nation has learned, I hope permanently, to be ashamed of them.

An opposite effect of the discovery of the cash value of foreign student was less useful: with new self-imposed budget crises (were budget crises ever “new?”), some campuses and some schools without campuses began recruiting international students as a means to balance their budgets. They mistook the by-product for the purpose; and the rise of the for-profit universities began. Cultural diplomats noted the danger: in the new U.S. mode, only the wealthy need apply. In this period, I du-eled in print with a neo-conservative critic of foreign-student imports in the pages of the *Foreign Service Journal*. The title of my rejoinder in the debate, disputing his objection that foreign students served no U.S. interests, made my point: “Foreign Students Meet Our Needs—If Theirs Are Met.”

All this would not have happened without the forbearance and patient heroism of people like Joe Mestenhauser, his mentor Forest Moore, and the steady hand on the rudder of university leaders like Lewis Morrill and his successors here in Minnesota.

The hardest part of international education lies in changing the curriculum, which has moved slowly. It requires changing minds that have been carefully trained over decades, asking them, as they see it, to revise and upset carefully acquired knowledge bases. And yet it has begun. The late Robin Winks of Yale University, a historian of the British Empire and crusader for comparative history and in this framework American Studies, said years ago, “He who knows only the history of his own country knows no history.”

The same might be said of all the disciplines, indeed of education in general. Even in the hard sciences, so carefully insulated from the distractions of daily life, students encounter the American culture of science and discover that it varies from nation to nation: but the methods, the collegial climate, the open interaction, the dedication, the sharing, the respect for others, the friendship, the dedication to peer review of U.S. science, this makes the difference between good science and the science of earlier eras. The attractive “culture” of science, just as in other kinds of learning, distinguishes the culture of U.S. education from the rest of the world. Some say it is only a question of dollars.

Money helps make good science of course, but it is not only because we spend more that the U.S. earns annual Nobel Prizes, it is because our scientific and university culture and our absorption of foreign minds and ideas are part of the very adventure of learning in the last half-century. Seventy years ago, sociology, anthropology and micro- and macroeconomics, regional studies, dozens of “exotic” languages, and scores of hyphenated double-sciences like biophysics and bio-medical engineering, all this was unheard of, as it was in a shattered Europe.

Arriving in Dijon in 1949, I found that psychology was a minor sub-set of the philosophy department and a principal concern of those teaching literature, they had never studied psychology, they intuited it. In France the idea of studying politics and society in a scientific manner took refuge in a single university.

There is more, students today can look as well into the other countries deeply hidden within themselves, in the form of social history, socio-linguistics, immigration studies, ethnic and gender studies, and so on. This in itself compensates in part for the slow pace of curricular change in International Education, no more difficult, as Woodrow Wilson famously said, than moving a cemetery.

I confess that my efforts over twenty-five years to persuade American universities that cultural diplomacy is an important sub-field of international relations (itself a sub-field of political science, history and law) have failed. Yet I believe I **can** take credit for one tiny contribution. The first university course in the world on UNESCO was given at the University of Denver in 1949. It disappeared after two years. The second such course, a graduate seminar in the Education School of the George Washington University, is now embedded in the curriculum. Initiated under the aegis of Americans for UNESCO (2006), it is still going strong. Its students haunt AU's office, asking how to develop careers with UNESCO.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress has once again cut off funding to UNESCO and casually threatened its very existence. Of course our latecomer UNESCO seminar at GWU has made little difference to public policy, we were sixty years too late, as the recent collapse of U.S. leadership in UNESCO reminds us. And a larger sad trend: only a few U.S. universities even concern themselves nowadays with teaching the UN and other multinational organizations. For most of our beloved nation, UNESCO remains a brand of cracker.

Enthusiasm about the globe in young people today puts the lie to what we read in the daily press about the decline of U.S. internationalism and the hopeless anomie of our youth. It is obvious that young people care very deeply, even if the realities of modern life do not always encourage them. While at the University of Minnesota, I met a class of exciting young people. From Rip's viewpoint, they were unlike anything I knew when I was their age, or even when I was teaching in the 1950s and the 1960s. In those days, a select number of students went abroad as Rhodes Scholars but it was not until the GI Bill (1945) and then the miracle of the Fulbright Program (1947-48), and then Hubert Humphrey's beloved Peace Corps in 1961, that students could even think about working or studying abroad. Today's students, at least the self-selectors who choose to enter the international arena, constitute a new breed of American. In the 1940s, less than 5 percent of Americans held four-year college degrees; today the figure is 30 percent, higher in urban areas and highest of all in Washington DC at 46 percent. With long-range investments like these, time has a way of changing national mindsets, even when the immediate context may not always seem to support the right ideals and values. To paraphrase a Talmudic proverb, for every mind that closes at least one other opens.

Cultural Diplomacy: Semantic Traps

The future of cultural diplomacy and the universities' role therein, I am incurably old-fashioned in insisting on knowing the meaning of the words we use. I hope we can agree on a few definitions.

First of all, consider the mysterious title of my book, *First Resort of Kings*². Americans ask why this ridiculous title, say my political scientist friends—who find it hard to believe that the first printing will soon be exhausted. The question arose most revealingly in South Carolina some years ago when I was asked if my book told the story of Hilton Head Island.

Yet educated Europeans get the title immediately. The Fulbright Commission in Norway gifts handsome pens with those words etched into the barrel. Somewhere in their Latinate education, Europeans learn about the founder of international law, the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius, a scholar in early 17th-century Paris. Grotius' keystone book on war and peace from 1623, in Latin of course, the lingua franca of scholars all over Europe, mentioned that the **last** resort of kings is war, but he never got around to the **first** resort of kings. My title has the high pretention of reminding Grotius of what he should have said. If the last resort is war, the first must be extending the hand of friendly relations and initiating dialogue, systemized over the millennia into what we now call diplomacy. In my case, I suggest that the first resort of diplomacy is its cultural arm. Today, in the War Museum in Paris, you will find dozens of cannons forged in France in the 130 years between Grotius' friend Cardinal Richelieu and Louis XVI. They have the Latin phrase embossed around their mouths, as though apologizing to their victims for having to destroy them, since alternatives had been exhausted. Perhaps we should paint the same words on U.S. drones? If I enter the history books, it may be as the man who told the world what Grotius never got around to saying.

A second question, less a definition than a point of view, has to do with history. History-hunger drove me ever farther back in time, in a search for the origins of the idea of cultural diplomacy, a search I finally abandoned in the Bronze Age when I found an episode that helped me understand that humankind had been doing diplomacy and cultural diplomacy as an alternative to war and violence from the very outset of civilization.

Surprisingly a more slippery word is our friend “culture,” it is a word the Latin languages adore and the Anglo-Saxon languages deplore. True, culture today has become a fad term in American life, we read of the women's culture, the drug culture, the business culture, the sports culture, the teen-age culture, and so on, to the point that the word all but loses meaning. Let me clarify. First, Culture does not mean “the arts,” it is not a “diversion” like the cinema, painting or ballet. Culture means, as the anthropologists have taught us, that collection of traits which distinguishes one society from another. By this definition, it is easy to see that one culture will always be hampered in its efforts to understand another, by deeply hidden dif-

² Arndt, R. T. (2005). *The first resort of kings: American cultural diplomacy in the twentieth century*. Dulles, Va: Potomac Books.

ferences of viewpoint, mindset and language. To bring different cultures together with some degree of meshing, allowing dialogue and productive and useful steps towards what human beings together are capable of doing. This is the cultural challenge, and anyone who pretends it is easy has not lived abroad, or even spent much time outside his or her village or cyber-village. Culture thus denotes the collection of values, attitudes, mindsets, habits and customs that distinguish one social, political or economic group from another. That is how I shall try to use the word.

Even the word diplomacy is less simple than it seems. I define diplomacy not as a product (clerks talking with clerks, as diplomats say teasingly) but as a process. Given an ongoing flow of self-generating relations, diplomacy is the attempt by nation-states, similar to individuals but very different in detail, to apprehend and where possible shape the natural ongoing flow of these relations so as to minimize misunderstanding and maximize national interests. After “the **first** resort of kings,” second place goes to the diplomacy shaped by historical process over millennia: it is the principal alternative to force and violence, still the best tool humankind has yet produced for building and maintaining a peaceful world. In the impossible snarl of near East affairs, the wise diplomats long ago saw that the search for peace was illusory and settled for an agreed-upon peace **process**. The semantic danger is compounded when we put diplomacy and culture together; then the mysteries pile higher.

Power is another tricky word. Political scientists take the word power to be the key to their discipline: power is the ability to act, whether for good or for evil. Ordinary Americans tend to avoid the positive potential for power, but political scientists get so used to it that they forget its negative impact on ordinary people. Dean Joseph Nye at Harvard recognizes this and masterfully makes the word less uncomfortable by appending adjective like “soft” and “smart”. His work, aimed most cogently at the military, argues that lethal force is not the only kind of power. Surely he is more responsible than anyone else for the laudable efforts by the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan to focus part of their war on the hearts and minds of the people of those countries, the brilliant successes of the post-World War II having of course been misinterpreted or forgotten. But winning hearts and minds in the midst of the colossal “collateral damage” inflicted by modern warfare is inadequate; it is not a skill to be learned overnight by warriors whose training has involved eradication more than education. As persistent military SNAFUs keep showing us, teaching warriors to deploy softer or smarter power is an uphill struggle; even in USIA, only the best of its cultural officers were very good at it, it takes a mindset, years of thoughtful experience, a degree of humility, and a reasonable level of education. A crash course in being nice to people is not going to make much difference to professional warriors; nor will it fool many of war’s victims.

Nye’s success in catching the military’s attention does not go into as much operational detail about the tools of Smart Power as it might but relies on urging more Public Diplomacy. He explains this phrase by listing its tools: exchanges, libraries,

English-teaching, books, exhibitions, performances, all the classic tools of **cultural** diplomacy. Most practitioners would say the U.S. government began deploying soft power in 1938, after nearly two centuries of sensitive and successful private efforts. “Public Diplomacy,” a phrase designed to convey what USIAS did, was not invented until 1967.

Americans are not alone in mistrusting power, as our check-and-balance Constitution shows. Most of the world’s citizens resist and resent others’ power over them; few enjoy living in proximity to power, even when it is **their** power. If democracy means having a voice in what concerns us, as we are taught, one must wonder how many Americans, and citizens of other countries, believe they have a voice in the use of military power and the size of their military establishment.

Functional Definition

This excursion into the darker sub-cellars beneath ordinary words has perhaps confused you enough that you yearn for something simpler. Let me therefore assay a definition of cultural diplomacy, based on what it does, hence by its functions.

Working in that portion of natural inter-national relationships which involves ideas, minds, values, science, art and thought (Culture), a cultural diplomat, as a servant of government, attempts to make such relations flow more smoothly and productively so as to minimize damage to national interests and maximize the possibility that elements of the interaction may grow into sustainable positive contributions to both or all participating nations.

This definition (adjustable to both bilateral and multilateral relations) opens three areas of activity: 1) things which are going well between two or more nations and need little more than recognition, occasional encouragement and lunch-invitations; 2) things that are in place but not going as well as they might, needing updating, redirection or reshaping; and 3) things that are not happening at all but matter enough in overall relations so that it is worth investing in new programs, seeding, replanting, nurturing and guiding them to self-sustaining maturity (successful initiatives move into category 2). Do I not need to note there that all this has little to do with propaganda and everything to do with education?

Defining cultural diplomacy in this way makes it clear why, over time, there have been nagging impediments to the appropriate operation of the idea, having in the first instance to do with the inherent conflict between the values of the universities and the interests of the state, as political discourse defines them, but with other implications as well. Because it is useful to see how these impediments have intruded over the years, I try to shine light on them.

Clarity Darkens

Historic, semantic and practical reasons explain why the phrase cultural diplomacy is little used today in the U.S., and certainly not defined in these humane terms. In the diplomatic world after 1980, for reasons having to do with extracting money from a more tight-fisted Congress than usual, diplomats have tended to dwell on public diplomacy. I can only touch on the long story of this rarely defined term today; it is a major theme of my book if you wish to pursue its history.

To be brief, from the beginning in the U.S., once government decided it had to help the private world to continue and help expand cultural relations as part of foreign relations, there were two main currents, each flowing in its own direction: Culture and Information. From 1938 to 1953, they flowed in a wobbling parallel, but in 1953 they were forcibly united, to the detriment of the more important cultural partner, more important because it concerned so many self-governing elements in the sea of relations between nations. On the dovish, long-range side of the argument stood men like Sumner Welles, J. William Fulbright, Archibald McLeish and lesser heroes who, in the 1930s and 1940s, saw the importance of relating the American mind to the rest of the world through its best-informed minds, university scholars, scientists, poets, artists, and those human institutions which depend on maximizing the products of thoughtful minds over time. To make these interconnections closer, more viable, and more productive is what cultural diplomats try to do, hence the indispensable role of universities.

Running in a different direction and in a shorter time frame, a perfectly understandable need, information or propaganda has different rules. First, it is targeted to real time. Second, it reflects the world of the media and public relations. Led by men like broadcaster Elmer Davis, trial lawyer John Sloane Dickey, and many others, including the former educator Edward R. Murrow in the 1960s, “information” intruded after Pearl Harbor, late 1941 and 1942, when “winning the war” became everything. Under the motto “telling America’s story to the world,” story telling would soon take over, and with the birth of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) in 1953, culture and information became wary and warring partners. Adopting story telling as its motto, USIA until its death in 1999 made sure that information dominated agendas and administration, while the indispensable culture sat quietly in the back of the bus and accepted its role as a subsidiary tool. While both functions were crucial, each had its own kind of integrity, but putting them in the same agency was not necessary and raised deep questions. The tensions meant that neither side helped and, in some cases, both sides damaged the other.

Two major figures in 1942-46 stood between these two ideas and tried to make silk purses out of whatever came to hand: Nelson Rockefeller and William Benton. First came Rockefeller, arriving in Washington in 1942. He produced an extensive and impressive cultural program for Latin America, but his ideas cast a new light on things. A non-reader because of dyslexia, he saw the real purpose of “cultural

programs” as “foreign policy,” which he defined as business and commerce, with a little intelligence on the side, a dangerous jumble. The tools of business, of course, were advertising, public relations and spin, all in the well-intentioned American way. In Rockefeller’s fiefdom south of the border, the search for truth represented by the universities, defined as the core function in 1938, no longer ruled. Most of Rockefeller’s ingenious programs, like libraries, would soon become too costly for Congress to tolerate after his personal fortune returned to New York.

As for Benton, he was appointed by Truman to replace MacLeish, the sophisticated son of Glencoe, Illinois, whom Truman never understood. Benton was a businessman whose biography calls him *America’s Salesman*. With many virtues, he was precisely that.

One historic reason that information drove out culture over time goes back to the American experiment with propaganda in World War I only twenty-odd years before: the 1917 model persisted in the minds of its alumni, many of whom went on to powerful roles in advertising, public relations, journalism and sometimes in teaching. In most languages, information for the purposes of power is called propaganda; it was generally considered an acceptable weapon of warfare but not normally deployed in times of peace. “Information” became a palatable euphemism for propaganda thanks to Wilson’s friend George Creel, in 1917, and his Committee on Public Information (CPI); Creel expressly avoided Propaganda because he knew its negative connotations. Information would rule for eighty more years.

By 1935, the word, born in the Church’s counter-reforming efforts to beat back the onslaught of Protestantism and other heresies and led to the Inquisition, had been poisoned far beyond Creel’s fears by the twentieth century talents of Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler and the Japanese in their drive to impose the culture of totalitarian ideologies on other nations. Creel’s information became a standard weasel word of government.

USIA from 1953 to 1999 never ceased looking for a better single phrase to cover both cultural and informational work and conceal the contradiction. In the mid-1970s USIA’s friends adopted Public Diplomacy for its mission and staff found it unwise even to think about “culture.”

The semantic jumble I have glossed above is a typical element in administrative history, where words mean what habit makes them mean. The jumbled thinking allowed the U.S., in the pursuit of the “national interest” as defined by political decisions of the moment, to argue for support on grounds that sound and honest intellectual exchange was done not for its own purposes but because it was good propaganda. Fine-tuned intellectuals and artists, led by MacLeish, saw this meretricious thinking as a major danger, first in demoralizing its participants but also in giving the game away to the enemy, the rhetoric of information fooling only Americans. A world-famous American artist put his discomfort this way:

I don't think art is propaganda; it should be something that liberates the soul, provokes the imagination and encourages people to go farther. It celebrates humanity instead of manipulating it.

—Keith Haring (1958-90)

Art of course makes good propaganda material, but if propaganda is its purpose, then both art's real meaning as defined by Haring, and any propaganda value as well, are compromised. Telling audiences that art is propaganda defeats both purposes. From the viewpoint of the cultural diplomat, good cultural relations produce good propaganda, but as a by-product, not as a purpose.

Seen in these terms, it is obvious where the universities enter the picture. Thoughtful students of higher education will recognize the three goals I have glossed for cultural diplomacy: they look suspiciously like the goals of teachers. Historically, the academies of antiquity and the medieval Goleardic scholars brought learning to students in a few centers around Europe. Only with the rise of the nation-state and the virus of nationalism that clung to it, did universities—most of them growing out of schools of theology, begin to turn inward, in part as protection against the state itself. Universities, wary of the power of the nation-state, became parochial emanations of a nation and its culture, and turned inwards in defense against the harsher world outside their walls (hence the idea of tenured faculty: protecting scholars from political interference). In the U.S., political discourse has tended, until recently, to leave the universities alone.

With effort, universities can relate to each other within a nation without government help because it is in their nature and interests to seek out collegial relationships with other U.S. universities. But reaching abroad is another matter—it does not happen naturally; and the founders of governmental cultural diplomacy in the 1930s saw clearly that university outreach needed help to reach its natural targets. As World War II approached, U.S. diplomats like Welles saw the need to help U.S. universities reach abroad, in part to assist their growth and in part to ensure survival for the rebuilding of the postwar period. When the Division of Cultural Relations was established by the State Department on May 23, 1938, fifteen years after the French and four years after the British (with a budget of \$27,800!) and fifteen years before USIA, a hundred or more academic and intellectual leaders from all over the U.S. came together to hear Sumner Welles and Secretary of State Cordell Hull tell them that government would do no more than 5% of the job (i.e., facilitate), thus that the universities and foundations and NGOs would have to survive on their own funds but would be assisted for overseas outreach by the embassies and their communications networks, while being left free to do their real work without governmental interference. This was precisely what the universities needed to hear:

they joined the cause; they would soon recognize that they needed financial help as well. And later they would begin to wonder if the original bargain was still in force.

Challenges began with Pearl Harbor in December 1941. As hawks began calling for a more focused war effort, Wellesian doves reminded leadership, in this case the broad-gauged Franklin D. Roosevelt, that large parts of the world lay outside the combat zones and needed to be brought closer to the U.S. for present and future postwar purposes; they knew as well that even the combatants would need to work together after war's end. Roosevelt, with MacLeish, Welles and others, was looking over the horizon to the postwar era, while never forgetting the war in process.

One question quickly arose, in clearer minds than Rockefeller's: how to make these two apparently contradictory elements in U.S. life, culture and information/propaganda, flow in a healthy parallel without affecting the integrity of either. War's end found the two in the same office, but with MacLeish and culture in charge; MacLeish quickly cleared up the confusion generated by Rockefeller's slapdash genius, and clear definitions of function were put in place. Fulbright's Program 1946-47 added enormous momentum to the cultural component. But a colder war already lay in ambush just over the horizon, and the uneasy pact between Information and Culture early showed signs of strain. MacLeish never got around to absorbing Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services into the diplomacy of cultures.

With the election of Dwight Eisenhower in 1952, the crusty hawk John Foster Dulles took over as Secretary of State and the Cold War began taking over Washington's thinking, with the help of Dulles' brother Allen, beginning his long stint as head of the new Central Intelligence Agency (1947).

The Birth of USIA

The new instrument of management was named the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), true to Creel and the plaque about telling America's story that was cemented in place on the rundown building at 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue. Some saw immediately that USIA was a propaganda agency, others had a more comprehensive view: a single agency, independent but guided by State, that would facilitate the parallel flows of both information and culture, keeping each out of the other's way.

We shall never know if the complete single agency might have worked because Fulbright dug in his heels. Fearing the predominance of information, he insisted that cultural affairs remain in State, earning the resentment of USIA leaders beyond the Senator's death. Fulbright warned information-partisans to keep "their cotton-picking hands off my Program" and managed to have State's Education and Cultural Affairs remain in place, rather than be made part of the new USIA. Fulbright, certain he knew who held the high cards, wanted to protect the servants of truth from the partisans of spin. The chance that the truth-seekers of the universities might bring countervailing balance to an agency whose dominant role, by most

definitions was propaganda: this possibility was overridden by Fulbright's action. He was in no mood for experiments, and experience had taught him never to bank on hope. Educational and cultural affairs remained in State for twenty-seven years. Leaving the Senate in 1975, Fulbright worried about this decision until his death.

He was not wrong about the discomfort of the academics, they did not and still do not think of universities as instruments of power or advertising agencies. Nor was he wrong about the discomfort of many cultural officers forced to work under USIA directives, or in anticipating relentless cycles of hawks, then doves in U.S. politics. What he did not see was the discomfort cultural officers caused the propagandists within USIA.

Thus the core function of cultural exchanges stayed out of USIA for three decades. During this period cultural officers (CAOs, for Cultural Affairs Officers) were the servants of two separate agencies looking in different directions. Caught in the middle, they tried to make sense out of this.

Entering the fray eight years later in 1961, I soon saw that no one **could** make sense of it and decided to follow hints that I might as well do what I thought best; after all, I could always return to the university world. Others without that parachute had to come to terms in different ways. Fortunately for all of us, there were highly enlightened and gentlemanly Public Affairs Officers (PAO, the military title adapted in 1917 to designate USIA's field chiefs) who allowed and often encouraged us to follow our instincts and see what we could do to bring institutions closer together and arrange meetings of minds. If someone complained about us in USIA or in Congress, we would explain and apologize but go on doing what we thought best. In my own case, no one bothered me, and promotions kept coming until, after nineteen years of service, a thin-skinned boss, perhaps without realizing what he was doing, drove me back to life as a university don at the University of Virginia as diplomat-in-residence from 1986 to 1989.

There were extraordinary inefficiencies and disincentives in doing cultural diplomacy in USIA. The tug of war between truth-seekers and story-spinners was never far beneath the surface—for most of them it left permanent traces. I had come to understand that the university side of USIA, the cultural side, at its best was an extension of Stanford, Minnesota, Oberlin or Princeton. But the public relations, information or advertising side, at its best – at its very best, was an extension of the New York Times plus Benton & Bowles. Universities were not news organs: they dealt more with “olds.” CAOs remembered William Carlos Williams' lines: “It is difficult to get the news from poems. Yet men die miserably each day, for lack of what is found there.”

Ancient History

In the interests of seeing the U.S. experience of cultural diplomacy as a comparative problem with regard to other nations, let me dip back a bit farther into

the past. My book is fat in part because I kept wondering why all this happened as it did and where these ideas came from. Where did Franklin Roosevelt, Sumner Wells, John Hay, John Quincy Adams, Franklin and Jefferson—where did they learn the idea of cultural diplomacy? I pushed back farther, through Bonaparte and Louis XIV, through the Jesuit Matteo Ricci in China and Francis I of France, through Fredrick II of the Two Sicilies and then to the Romans, then back to the Greeks, but found no moment of creation. Finally I arrived at 1357 BC and called a halt.

A splendid episode had emerged from Egyptian history. With the Mittani, a satrap in what is today northern Syria, an Egyptian princess had been given in marriage (a cultural practice) to a Mittani prince. The Pharaoh, to mark this occasion, had promised two life-size solid gold statues (cultural icons) to flank the entrance of the Mittani palace; the Egyptians apparently had access to mountains of gold. This was a powerful cultural decision: using statuary to help ward off attacks by the marauding Hittites. When the Pharaoh died before the statues were delivered, his son the remarkable reformer Ikhнатon moved the Egyptian capital up the Nile to build his own city of Amarna. There he encountered the Bronze Age equivalent of the Bureau of the Budget: solid gold statues for Mittani were vetoed and the rationalist Ikhнатon sent gilded wooden statues instead. And then began seven years of diplomatic dismay, recorded in dozens of cuneiform tablets; it was a serious crisis, but Egypt held firm. It may be coincidental that the kingdom of Mittani soon disappeared from the ancient world; some day the scholars will tell us whether gold statues might have saved it (it comforts cultural diplomats to think so). For me, the episode had the virtue of my decision that the Bronze Age was far enough: surely humankind has been doing cultural diplomacy for a very long time.

Certainly neither the Yanks, nor even the French, invented the diplomacy of cultures. Humankind has done it for four millennia, and probably much longer. The Greeks were masters at it, as the great Library in Alexandria shows; the Romans had impressive public libraries as well, as did the Islamic empire. In the days when overwhelming military force was not easy to husband, and surely no less costly than today in relative terms, humankind sought other means first for building the kind of intellectual relations which permitted flourishing trade, commerce and exchanges of art and learning. The endurance of the Hellenistic world is a case study of cultural tools coming first, with the military stepping in to help the police when peace was threatened.

U.S. Cultural Diplomacy Before World War I

How did Franklin and Jefferson take hold of these ideas? By reading history, scouring available books, and, in contrast to Europeans, by looking around them at the indigenous cultures they found in their new world. There were few enough books then that the common core of an educated mind consisted of perhaps 4,500

books, epitomized by Jefferson's library, later the core of the University of Virginia library and ultimately of the Library of Congress.

Both observed and admired what they knew of the earlier North Americans. Seeing the new with eyes trained by the ancients, they conceived of an American national style, based on tolerance, understanding, respect for other human beings, and an early form of pluralism. The classless society they thought to build, by the mid-nineteenth century, soon began traveling abroad as a new breed, the "American." The great Harvard sinologist John King Fairbank, working in China in the 1930s, observed that the French and British missionary-educators were under-skilled gentlemen, while the American missionaries came off the farms and knew how to repair a plow, dig a well, birth a calf, and provide primary medical care. The descendants of these overseas educators dot the history of U.S. philanthropy and diplomacy in the next century.

In Europe culture was part of the imperial experiment and the colonies needed education. In its learned way, the French broke different ground a century before other Europeans by extending its intellectual empire, in the form of its Jesuits—without armies. After Francis I imported the Italian Renaissance in the sixteenth century, it was Richelieu, Mazarin, then Louis XIV who used cultural means to make France the most important country in Europe, not because of military might but because its cultural outreach was attractive and contagious. If Sweden wanted an opera house, they sought a French architect; if Queen Cristina wanted to import intellect, she invited Descartes; if Frederick the Great wanted a tutor, he hosted Voltaire; if Catherine the Great wanted to educate Russia, she put up with the exuberant Diderot. France became the cultural capital of the world and to some extent it remains so today in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa, where intellectuals still look to Paris as their cultural beacon.

If Yanks did not invent it, they added a new twist. Armed with classical knowledge, they looked sharply enough around themselves to get another idea from the self-governing styles of the indigenous Americans. The idea of knowledge as personal and ultimately public power pressed them to build on Winthrop's "City on a Hill" and think of the U.S. as a shining lamp to humankind.

Both Franklin and Jefferson, in their successive embassies to France, used novel diplomatic techniques. Franklin achieved one off the great diplomatic victories of history in Paris: with no budget, surrounding by spies, he used his dress, his cane, his pipe, his spectacles, his charm with the ladies, and a great repertory of jokes to beguile the French up to the king himself. His French may have grated on Gallic ears, yet his wit was cited everywhere and he was able to persuade the French, at serious cost to that nation, to join the American cause against the British. Successor John Adams, blind to matters of style, deplored Franklin's "frivolity" but had to confess that Franklin had done the impossible.

No one could have been less like Franklin than Jefferson, yet he too set U.S. diplomacy off on a path to trade and commerce with France that made the differ-

ence for the young Republic. Moderates in the early stages of the Revolution sought his thoughtful advice, and he was energetic in correcting French myths about the new world.

For the nineteenth century, I will not dwell on details. But here in Minneapolis let me list the original three M's: missions, military, and merchants. First, three kinds of mission: diplomatic, religio-educational and later philanthropic. U.S. diplomats were amateurs from the small sliver of Americans who had completed college, hence from the educated class or the elites (the domain of diplomatic historians). The missionaries of various Protestant and later Catholic denominations depended on the collection-plates of thousands of churches and on the Student Volunteer Movement, enlisting 15,000 young new American graduates before the century ended. They went to preach the Gospel, but once they saw that their flocks could neither feed themselves nor guarantee a better life for their children they settled down to fundamentals. They set up schools and colleges, leading the world in women's education; they built hospitals; they created written forms of indigenous languages and created type-fonts for their imported printing presses; they taught medicine, math and science, agriculture, agronomy and economics.

In contrast to the learned Jesuits, American educators abroad were seen as practical, helpful, and non-proselytizing, true educators in the sense that they were there not to convince people to become apprentice Americans but simply to try to help their foreign colleagues fulfill their capacity to maximize control over the cycles of nature and get the most out of their minds and hands. With no church but a university behind him, Albert Giesecke went to Peru in 1908 as a young man, modernized school curricula in Lima, moved to Cuzco as rector of the university, and stayed in Peru the rest of his life as a pioneer educator, scholar and first informal cultural attaché in U.S. history, albeit without the title. These educators in time inspired secular philanthropists like Carnegie and Rockefeller. All the Yankee travelers taught first by example, an American style caught by CAO John L. Brown's quip that a cultural officer "should not **mean** but **be**."

The next M surprises many: the U.S. military. The military has an amazing record in cultural diplomacy in the nineteenth century. In particular the U.S. Navy sent out scientists to produce maps, geodetic surveys, geological assessments, and seek new routes for the Panama Canal. Commodore Perry sailed liberated slaves back to Africa and established Liberia. The team that opened the way to Machu Picchu in Peru included a cartographer and a U.S. Army geologist. Three young U.S. pre-Columbian archeologists led teams with military members seeking a route for the canal, and set new guidelines and standards for archeology everywhere. Commodore Perry again, sailing his Black Ships into Japan to open up trade, brought along a wise advisor, China missionary S. Wells Williams, later secretary to the U.S. Legation in Shanghai and founder of the path-finding Department of Chinese Studies at Yale. In the U.S. experiment with imperialism, the military in the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico worked in a wide range of activities, including educa-

tion, justice, and customs. These scientific, scholarly and even military emissaries seeded university relationships, especially with Latin America, picking up earlier hints from beginnings by French Jesuits and Humboldt's German scholars in Brazil.

The third M stands for the merchants. In the early days, they were enlightened and adventurous people. The famously shrewd Yankee traders were educated men and smart diplomats, some of whom later helped second-generation missionaries to turn U.S. philanthropy into an American specialty, the great foundations. One example: Townsend Harris, a New York merchant who flourished in the China trade and discovered that the Japanese and the Chinese were easy to work with if you knew their language, learned what they wanted, and offered better terms than the Europeans. He was sent into Japan after the Black Ship visit and negotiated the trade treaties that opened Japan to the world, in the eyes of historians some of the greatest trade treaties ever negotiated, succeeding where Europeans had failed for years. Harris later founded the College of the City of New York, which honored him by giving his name to a legendary school for New York's most gifted boys. Harris was another unusual American, a merchant who understood that profits were not immoral if earned in honest ways that benefited both buyer and seller. Bringing goods to people who needed them and providing jobs and careers for workers was what human commerce was about.

Missionary sons and daughters raised the scale of their parents' work abroad. Diplomat John Hay as Secretary of State returned the Boxer Indemnity payments to China and provided forty years of opportunities for Chinese students in the U.S. before Mao took over, his idea sparking Fulbright's program. Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie put public libraries all over the U.S., England and Scotland, and then turned to world science. J. D. Rockefeller Sr. was advised by his China missionary friend Frederick Gates to channel his wealth through a team of wise advisors into fostering programs in public health, science and infrastructural development, and Gates reminded him that commerce required an expanding middle class and new markets; beginning by combating diseases that undermine societies, the great, creative Rockefeller Foundation was born. With Rockefeller joining Carnegie's work abroad, American science began its steady rise and its growing impact around the globe.

As for the citizen-diplomats, remember that in the nineteenth century the U.S. had no Foreign Service, only "friends of the President"; they were friends on terms of merit and intellectual quality, not in millions contributed to political campaigns. Presidential friends meant colleagues and co-laborers from the small-educated class; a contemporary presidential candidate called them Snobs. They were people like Nathaniel Hawthorn who had been with Franklin Pierce at Bowdoin College and wrote a campaign biography, thus earning him a post as Consul in Liverpool.

Elitist? Of course not. Political science tells us that countries are and can only be managed by what they call "elites," the educated and the professionals. "Elitism" instead is an unpleasant idea by which birth bestows merit. A merit system builds

elites by guaranteeing the right to acquire merit through hard work and proven excellence, with access it is hoped for all.

Education was a rare commodity in the U.S. nineteenth century. There were only colleges, and few enough of them, producing a very small-educated class. Obviously government would send the best members of the educated class to represent the U.S. abroad; and that is what happened. It was not until 1925 and the Rogers Act that a Foreign Service was created, to which entry was allowed for a wider range of the population—still of course the educated, especially those who had learned languages. So of course Ivy graduates founded the Foreign Service, the antiquated source of the image of the striped-pants cookie-pusher. World War II and the G.I. Bill brought a broader class of people into the Foreign Service and its diplomatic corps and, to the satisfaction of all but know-nothing anti-intellectuals, democratized it.

Forming and Deforming Cultural Diplomacy

In 1932 Sumner Wells, soon to be Undersecretary of State, convinced Roosevelt that Latin America was vulnerable to Axis incursions. FDR announced the Good Neighbor Policy in his inaugural address, an admission that U.S. relations with the south had been high-handed, to say the least. “Neighbor” was the operational idea, implying respect, dialogue and exchange. Steven Duggan, New York City University educator and founder of the Institute of International Education (1919), reminded his listeners that today’s foreigner is tomorrow’s neighbor.

It took six years for FDR’s team to convince Congress to allow State to open, in 1938, the Division of Cultural Affairs with no budget. The acceptance of a governmental role in this essentially private domain, the assignment of cultural attachés all around the world, and the growth of the base for U.S. cultural diplomacy which endures today, these were giant leaps forward, fifteen years after the French and four after the British.

The cultural attachés in field posts, recruited uniquely from the university campuses, were a natural development (1942), although they gave traditional diplomats in the twelve-year-old Foreign Service a degree of heartburn. The impressive academic scholars in Latin America show what Welles and his team had in mind: scholars, mainly of Spanish and Latin American regional studies, hence credentialed U.S. intellectuals. Their stalwart work in Latin America laid the bases for all that followed.

These field-scholars were exposed to Nelson Rockefeller’s huge influence, his ideas, and his deep pockets; they tolerated it and either lauded it or rejected it. It had its attractive elements: if Rockefeller wanted to set up a library in Mexico City, he persuaded his friend Harry Lydecker, head of the New York Public Library, to take the job, supplementing his paltry government salary with a personal check. He persuaded the American Library Association to recruit the librarians, design

and furnish the spaces, choose the books; all this was done by the private sector. Nobody in the government tried to tell him what to put in those libraries or how to run them; they were an emanation of the American library itself . . . for a while.

This kind of private-sector independence within diplomacy made for tensions but winning the war trumped all other ideas. Fine distinctions were not Rockefeller's forte. The Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency, was doing its work and so was Office of War Information. Overlap was rife and budgets were interchangeable: people like John King Fairbank, Harvard sinologist, were paid at one time by the Office of Strategic Services, then later by Office of War Information and State, while laboring *pro bono* for the Library of Congress. All was to be evened out with war's end. Few saw serious consequences ahead.

The upshot: dozens of fine people went abroad to serve, and they knew what they could and should do because once abroad, adjusted for locale, they were doing what they had always done as educators at home. In all, war kept the tensions mild and barely visible.

The distant drums of the Cold War moved closer. Japan surrendered in August 1945. Roosevelt died on April 13, and Harry Truman reluctantly took office. Truman's many virtues were not enough to help him override his meager education; only Dean Acheson managed to make him feel comfortable; he had no idea of MacLeish's value and he despised Fulbright. By the end of summer 1945, MacLeish had to turn over his office to William Benton, of Benton & Bowles advertising agency, a vastly creative baron of the U.S. business world, *America's Salesman*. This well meaning man, a missionary son and a Yale graduate who had declined a Rhodes Scholarship on grounds it did not fit his career plans, had many good instincts, for example he became an immediate and passionate proponent of UNESCO, but his true genius was geared to the world of PR and spin. With bottomless energy, he added another ingredient to the jumble Rockefeller had left. MacLeish had begun to straighten this out but left before it was complete. With a colder war just over the horizon and the comical antics of a young Senator from Wisconsin named McCarthy not yet revealing the extent of the damage he would wreak, Benton plunged ahead.

When Eisenhower entered the White House in 1952, he left the presidency of Columbia University. He brought a mindset committed to the idea of "people-to-people" programs. But he chose a towering and intractable Secretary of State in John Foster Dulles, a man who brooked no nonsense from anyone including the President. For Dulles, cultural diplomacy was a luxury of little importance compared to **serious** foreign affairs.

In 1953, against the recommendations of many including Nelson Rockefeller, the hawks around Dulles recommended merging the PR/information side with the cultural side to create a single agency, USIA. Fulbright managed to keep cultural diplomacy in State and a twenty-seven year period began in which information and culture lived more or less in different mansions but dined at the same table. The

CAOs lived in uneasy peace under two different leaders who rarely agreed below the superficial level.

From 1953 onwards, the flaws in the original design began widening; cultural diplomacy gently but steadily eroded, abetted in the early years by the know-nothing and lethal McCarthy: his attacks on the libraries forced them into USIA and helped the hawks turn them into “policy” instruments; book translations were guided by narrower definitions of political relevance; the academic integrity of the Fulbright Program, stoutly defended by a supervisory board reporting to the President, was subjected to constant pressure to do something “useful,” to become “political,” or “policy-relevant”; cultural centers mounted programs selected for the “freight” they carried; and the CAOs lived quietly in the knowledge that a glass-ceiling restricted their promotions and assignments. Their options: to play the game, to resign or to hang on and speak out of both sides of their articulate mouths.

In 1977, with Fulbright gone from the Senate, a well-meaning Carter administration jammed cultural affairs into USIA, slitting the fragile sinews which had held it together despite decades of zigzagging budgets. Erosion accelerated.

Then in 1980 a brigade of young ideologues invaded USIA’s weakened office of cultural and educational affairs, for them a major weapon in the Cold War and the command center for the War of Ideas. The CAOs, who had spent decades of their lives demonstrating, exhibiting and explaining U.S. democracy to the world at large, not by preaching but by indirection and example, were suddenly accused of lacking vigor in “projecting” democracy. The new management, uninterested in collegial cooperation, bilateral thinking and foreign sovereignties, sought to win confrontational debates. Sophisticated multilingual field officers in eastern Europe were accused of lukewarm “patriotism”; some, foreign-born with superb language skills, were deemed “second-class Americans” A remote whiff of heresy about a less-than-perfect USIA, or about the incomplete search for utopia by the U.S. republic, was seen not as constructive criticism but as bad-mouthing, negativism and obstructionism, most of us had learned that modesty in our discussions with foreigners engaged audiences, even hostile ones. No longer was it enough to do our American thing in such a way as to set an example that others might want to emulate. Now we were expected to preach U.S. virtue; even when true, it was no way to befriend proud yet insecure and paranoid nations. A graffito sprayed on a Roman bridge in the mid-1980s read: “America, we are so BORED with you!”

The cultural tools created in the 1940s survived, largely because field staff worked 80-hour weeks to compensate for inadequate funding. Step by step the PR partisans and the Project America crowd gained control. By now we no longer talked about **cultural** diplomacy but about **public** diplomacy, best defined as what USIA did or wanted to do. The phrase built on public affairs, which reminds Americans of public relations, abbreviated as PR, and Wilsonian “open” diplomacy. A forty-year tug of war was drawing to an end; a dozen or more famous studies, including that named for President Morrill, had been quietly shelved even though

they all said the same thing, in more or less compelling language: keep the university role free of propaganda and let the scholars and artists play their role in world affairs without interference. Newcomer and neophyte White House staffs, from Truman to Clinton through Kennedy, Johnson, Bush and Carter, knew less than they thought they did (“ten years too young for the job,” said one of them) and were easily swayed by the well-informed single-interest advocates of one agency oriented to the unmentioned propaganda, U.S. style.

Finally, with the demise of USIA in 1999, the whole question was tossed back into the State Department where it began, probably at the insistence of Madeleine Albright responding to Senator Helms. The decision made neither the USIA hawks or the CAO doves happy; the erosion continued.

Today Congress believes that PR is the point. The world doesn't like us? Well, do something about it, and do it now! The idea of engaging in an honest dialogue over time, telling the truth even when inconvenient, listening patiently to the same complaints about the U.S., all this in a foreign language, it is hard enough to carry on without judgmental score-keepers toting up wins and losses of each officer that affect his or her life and that of their families. At best, the CAOs tried to live up to the view expressed by Wayne Wilcox, CAO London on leave from Columbia University: “The best you can do, while coping with the refractory quality of others' views of us, is to avoid perjuring yourself too much while projecting a little of the national style, grace and genius.”

Wilcox knew great nations do not need to pretend to perfection. Americans can admit mistakes and weaknesses, in the interests of reminding the world's citizens that we are no less human than they and of reminding others that we are most certainly not the *Übermenschen* that our technological miracles suggest.

Today, decline is evident. The cultural staffs, American and foreign, that we once had in our embassies everywhere have been halved or worse. Many posts have a single officer and a reduced national staff, in some cases doing both cultural and information work. We have closed our libraries, shaved our exchange programs, savaged student counseling, made visas ever harder to obtain, and dropped many valuable activities, all in the interest of cutting costs and heightening security. The beautiful embassies we built in the 1950s to showcase brilliant young U.S. architects have given way to fortresses on the outskirts of cities, designed by security specialists. The Fulbright Program moves steadily along, at half or a third of its capacity with infrastructure already in place (from 1948 until today, the total cost of the entire Fulbright Program would not build a single Trident submarine, said Fulbright). Yet we know the Program has transformed as many as 400,000 lives (100,000 of them Americans) and made fast friends for the U.S. De-funding UNESCO has saved the U.S. the ridiculous sum of \$70 million. Eliminating Fulbright, as some propose, might save \$300-400 million annually, depending on legal costs. Savings like these will affect the national debt no more than outlawing paper clips.

Could we revive cultural diplomacy? If so, what would it take? Miracles happen in the U.S. so let me list the needs. First, towering leadership in the White House, a series of presidents no less gifted than Martin Sheen, and enduring over many eight-year terms. Second, an educated Congress which understands that investments in educational and cultural links between the U.S. and the rest of the world are not a give-away but contribute to U.S. interests, and even earn money; a legislature which sees cultural diplomacy as a defense against war and thus a matter of national life and death. Third, we need an enlightened body of voters who elect executive and legislative leadership over an extended period of time. As well as hold their representatives to their pledges. Fourth, the full-hearted support of the universities, every of them, as well as non-academic intellectuals, the artists and writers, businessmen, sports figures, in short the entire nation. Political scientists scoff at such an agenda and roll out cynical gibes. But the U.S. has always specialized in miracles.

Cultural diplomacy today may not be in good shape, but the idea refuses to die, a badly reduced program still operates. And not only does the American spirit persist, that great and generous spirit which made this nation shine brightly for so many millions all over the globe, but the marshaling of that spirit is not so difficult as it might seem, given time, persistence and willingness to move steadily forward by increments. Rebuilding a cultural diplomatic presence worldwide, assuming national leadership and commitment, will involve creating a Cultural Corps of a few hundred high-skilled field practitioners and a total budget costing less than a Stealth bomber every year.

We could start tomorrow afternoon, given the mandate and the full-hearted cooperation of the universities. First, recruit a dozen talented people a year for ten years, and the same kind of people we hired in the 1940s. Then, send younger people to help them, reinvent and learn the trade, and grow. Third, let the Cultural Corps manage itself, as a university manages itself, and soon the US Cultural Corps would make America proud.

The U.S. could save many billions in money and thousands of lives and limbs if we could only agree to invest in avoiding war. It can be done and it can be done by using what is already in place. Many in this room, young and old, would make superb cultural attachés—I've met half a dozen in the last two days. If the Carlson School has been doing international business affairs for over 35 years and requiring overseas residence for its graduates, I expect this University could build on the example and be a national leader in rebuilding the "first resort of kings." Why not try?



Richard Arndt

Dr. Richard Arndt is an academic turned diplomat and an expert in the area of cultural diplomacy. He is the author of “The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century.” He began his diplomatic career after leaving his professorship in 18th-century French literature at Columbia University in 1961. His start in cultural diplomacy was with the U.S. Information Agency and the Department of State, where he served as U.S. Cultural Attache in Beirut, Colombo (Sri Lanka), Tehran, Rome, and Paris, and in various positions with USIA and State. On retirement in 1985, he served as Diplomat in Residence at the University of Virginia (1986-89) where he also directed mid-career educational programs and joined the permanent faculty of the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction. He then taught at the George Washington University (1992-94). He served on numerous boards, including the National Peace Foundation, Fulbright Association, the Council of International Programs, and NAFSA: Association of International Educators. He is Founding President of the Roth Endowment, honoring his late wife and fellow cultural diplomat Lois W. Roth.

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