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POLICY ISSUES FOR CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

ROUNDTABLE

Michael McCarry | Chair



EVERY CITIZEN A DIPLOMAT

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AABF participants touring the Iowa State Capitol. Photo Credit: USCCD

POLICY ISSUES FOR CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

A significant amount of U.S. citizen diplomacy takes place under government auspices. According to the Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored International Educational Exchanges and Training, no fewer than 65 federal agencies use exchange and training programs to accomplish their missions, moving tens of thousands of people to and from the United States annually.

Even more exchange activity happens privately. The majority of the more than 670,000 foreign students studying in the U.S. fund their educations with family resources or non-governmental scholarships. The same is true of most of the 262,000-plus American students who study abroad. A Wisconsin family that decides to host a Brazilian high school exchange student does so without reference to the U.S. government. The same applies to the Cape Cod restaurateur who hires Irish and Ukrainian students to meet her seasonal labor needs, and to a California family that opens its home to a Thai au pair, and to other American families who press local school boards to provide Chinese instruction.

All of these are private decisions, based on individual interests, needs, and aspirations. But these individual decisions, taken together, constitute a significant portion of America's engagement with the world. Even though such decisions are private, nearly all of them are affected by government policies. With or without federal funding, the government makes a difference.

For example, nothing is more basic to international mobility than visas. The U.S. government has detailed rules that prescribe who is eligible to enter the country, and for what purposes. Resources determine how many applicants can be seen at a given U.S. embassy. By definition, some individuals and types of activity are excluded.

In addition, government funding is critical not just for the opportunities it provides, but for the priorities it establishes. Over the past decade, the U.S. has made clear its new emphases on developing more expertise in critical languages, on building deeper and broader human connections between America and the Islamic world, on reaching more broadly into more societies to find suitable exchange participants, and on providing opportunities for more young Americans to go abroad. Progress (often significant progress) has been made on each of these goals—but arguably, in each case, not enough progress. Government funding is critical to the process, but will never be sufficient to meet the goals. The needs and opportunities in an increasingly interdependent world are simply too vast.

But the government makes its presence felt not just through the application of its resources or its regulations, but through its policies and leadership. By establishing and advocating its priorities, the government can encourage the efforts of state, local, and community governments, of academic institutions and high schools, of the business community, and of local organizations and individual Americans who seek to make a difference. These are the actors who comprise the citizen diplomacy community.

Policy is expressed in dollars, rules and regulations, and priorities. All of them matter. And all of them will continue to have a profound impact on the shape of citizen diplomacy in the U.S.

CITIZEN DIPLOMACY LITERATURE REVIEW

The Eisenhower Administration's White House conference in 1956, which resulted in the creation of Sister Cities International and People-to-People International, drew on the ethos Senator William Fulbright had in mind after World War II when he launched the academic exchange program that today bears his name. Fulbright's idea, later codified in the 1961 Fulbright-Hays Act, was that foreign affairs could not simply be left to governments: international personal connections, and relationships between academic institutions, community organizations, and businesses, create a complex web of contacts that support healthy bilateral relationships, foster mutual understanding and respect, and encourage world peace. While such connections invariably are personally enriching, they also support broad and critical national interests.

In the past decade, citizen diplomacy has received more attention. Concerns about rising anti-Americanism around the world led a group of U.S. nongovernmental leaders, beginning in 2004, to convene a variety of meetings to discuss and promote the value of a reinvigorated and much expanded U.S. citizen diplomacy. These meetings have included two leadership summits at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, two previous national summits on citizen diplomacy held in Washington, DC, and more than 60 community summits held across the U.S. to raise awareness of local international interests and to build momentum for local citizen diplomacy.

This convergence of conferences produced its fair share of papers and pronouncements, but rarely, if ever, did it generate a precise definition of citizen diplomacy. Our understanding of citizen diplomacy is most often expressed in this formulation: "the concept that the individual has the right, even the responsibility, to help shape U.S. foreign relations one handshake at a time." Sherry Mueller, President of the National Council of International Visitors (NCIV) and a true leader in the citizen diplomacy field, sharpens the focus a bit in her brief paper entitled "Public Diplomacy Begins With You":

"A film on the life of Elvis Presley showed him in his Army uniform, having just arrived in Germany, saying, 'What we do here will reflect on America and our way of life.' Clearly, Elvis grasped the concept that every American who interacts with foreigners – whether a business executive, nonprofit leader, tourist, student, athlete, or rock star – has an obligation to consider how his actions reflect on our country."

For the purposes of this report, I will limit the scope a bit more, to those purposeful instances of citizen diplomacy that are directly affected by government policies. These would include global student flows, exchange programs, collaborative academic research, internships, various institutional partnerships, and so forth. All of these activities create daily opportunities to foster positive impressions of one's country while pursuing one's individual interests. This approach, of course, excludes many other valuable 'handshakes,' such as starting a friendship with a seatmate on a long international flight or helping a flummoxed foreign visitor figure out the subway system or understand the rules of baseball.

If citizen diplomacy has struggled to find its precise definition, public diplomacy – a close cousin – seems to have almost as many definitions as it has practitioners. For the purposes of this discussion, the definition used by the United States Information Agency (USIA), which administered U.S. public diplomacy for more than four decades, seems as good as any:

"Public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest and the national security of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad."

Of course, it's the '...broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad' that's germane here. Citizen diplomacy and public diplomacy are not identical. Public diplomacy is orchestrated by governments to support their national interests, and employs a variety of means, including government information activities and international broadcasting. Citizen diplomacy, an important component of public diplomacy, involves private citizens and institutions engaging with their foreign counterparts, sometimes but not always

with the involvement or encouragement of the government. One might well argue that the U.S. government's embrace of citizen diplomacy – in Eisenhower's summit, the language of the Fulbright-Hays Act, and 2010's National Summit – is both an animating principle of our public diplomacy and a stroke of genius. By encouraging this complex and varied web of international connections and conversations – but making no attempt to control it – the government visibly underscores bedrock American values and provides a high degree of credibility for citizen diplomacy interactions.

If the literature on citizen diplomacy is fairly limited, writings on public diplomacy, especially in the post-9/11 period, are voluminous. And while a full review of that literature lies well behind the scope of this report, it is useful to note what a few of these reports have to say about citizen diplomacy.

The intensive recent study of public diplomacy is, at least in part, the policy echo of the now famous 'why do they hate us?' question. The ongoing discussion of how to make U.S. public diplomacy more effective seemed to obsess policy circles in Washington during the period from 2001 until the 2008 election. In September 2005, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) published a review of 29 studies, reports, and op-eds on the subject. The list of publishers was broad and distinguished: the Council on Foreign Relations, the Defense Science Board, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, the Heritage Foundation, the National War College, the Public Diplomacy Council, the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, and more.

Of the 29 studies surveyed, the most common recommendation was 'to increase exchanges and libraries;' in other words, to increase opportunities for citizen diplomacy. Of particular relevance to a discussion of policy obstacles and opportunities was the second most common recommendation: to increase public diplomacy resources. A sampling of such suggestions follows.

In its recommendation to increase investments in educational exchanges – a proposal it deemed a 'signature initiative' – **the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Smart Power Commission** in 2007 wrote: "An effective public diplomacy approach must include exchanges of ideas, peoples, and information through person-to-person educational and cultural exchanges, often referred to as citizen diplomacy.... *The American public constitutes the United States' greatest public diplomacy assets*, particularly young people who increasingly study, work, volunteer, and travel overseas."

In 2008, the **Stimson Center's A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future: Fixing the Crisis in Diplomatic Readiness** noted rising funding for exchange programs, but still argued strongly for increased resources: "...there is still a strong need to expand academic and other exchanges, including most notably the Fulbright program along with other major university and private sector exchange programs, by 100 per cent between 2010 and 2014 (a 20 per cent annual increase for five years). In addition, increase the International Visitor program (which brings rising foreign leaders to the U.S. to become acquainted with professional counterparts and American society) by 50 per cent (a 10 per cent annual increase each year for five years). Lastly, increase youth and other exchanges by 25 per cent. These programs have for decades had a substantial impact on the thinking of visitors who otherwise built their understanding of America from movies or propaganda. The cultural dimensions of today's struggle with religious extremism make them more essential than ever."

In The **Brookings Institution's** 2008 report, *Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century*, author Kristin M. Lord does not directly name citizen diplomacy, but she refers to its core principles. She includes in her list of the four top priorities of U.S. public diplomacy "strengthening the dense network of personal relationships between current and future societal leaders, opening channels of communication that can reduce conflict and confusion, creating opportunities for collaboration, and facilitating the achievement of common goals." Lord goes on to recommend that significant attention be given to promoting partnerships between American and foreign organizations "to promote mutual understanding as well as shared interests or values."

The Congressionally mandated **Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World**, chaired by Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian, published a very influential report in 2003 entitled *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World*. Again, without naming citizen diplomacy, the group's report made resonant references to its impact:

- “Wherever we went — from Egypt to Senegal to Turkey — we heard that exchange programs are the single most effective means to improve attitudes toward the United States.”
- “We strongly recommend that public diplomacy engage the full range of American civil society — from the private sector to the NGO structures and to the philanthropic foundations. The Arab and Muslim world must come to understand that the essence of America is not only in its government and military but in its citizenry and its civil institutions and business community. We need not merely to bring the historical problem in the region the full range of our talents, but also to address the problem in a way that teaches through experience the essence of America.”

In recent years, there also has been considerable focus on increasing the number of Americans going abroad, with particular focus on study abroad by post-secondary students. The arguments for increasing American participation in study abroad programs are well stated by the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program in its report, “Global Competence and National Needs: One Million Americans Studying Abroad”, published in November 2005. The report is widely available on line.

A higher education perspective on the same issue can be found in a report from NAFSA: Association of International Educators, “Securing America’s Future: Global Education for a Global Age”. The report was released in March 2003 and prepared by a task force chaired by Carl Herrin. The report can be found at: http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/public_policy_document/study_abroad_1/securing_america_s_future/

The Institute of International Education (IIE) has published six excellent topical reports in its study abroad white paper series entitled, “Meeting America’s Global Education Challenge”. The reports, covering such subjects as current trends in the field, building study abroad capacity overseas and at U.S. institutions, diversity, boosting participation from U.S. community colleges and from students majoring in scientific and technical fields, and increasing the number of American students studying in the Arab world, can be found at: <http://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Research-Projects/Study-Abroad-Capacity-Research-Initiative>

Even when not called by name, much has been written about citizen diplomacy in recent years, and the consensus is remarkably clear. Citizen diplomacy supports U.S. interests by building that complex web of global relationships, and by doing so in a way that “teaches through experience the essence of America”: showcasing empowered American citizens who work as individuals, associations, communities, or institutions to make a positive difference in the world. If the medium is in fact the message, this message is powerful.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ROUNDTABLE ON POLICY ISSUES

Enhanced and sustained policy support

There is consensus that citizen diplomacy is a valuable, even critical activity that enhances U.S. national security and economic competitiveness, and fosters mutual understanding and respect. This view finds expression at the highest levels of the U.S. government: President Obama's Cairo speech; First Lady Michelle Obama's charge to graduates to "take it global"; Defense Secretary Gates' Landon Lecture at Kansas State; Secretary of State Clinton's strong support for more people-to-people exchanges in Beijing, and her videotaped call for American families to host exchange students.

The 2009 report of the Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored

International Exchanges and Training, referenced in the introduction, underscores the same point at the operational level. Federal entities as diverse as the U.S. Postal Service, the Marine Mammal Commission, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission all administer exchange programs. The breadth of this activity suggests a simple conclusion: in today's world, there is virtually no issue that does not have an international dimension.

Just as indisputably, too few Americans are aware of the range, value, and importance of these opportunities. Far too few American students study abroad. Far too few Americans speak a foreign language, especially a critical language. We send too few of our high school students abroad to study, and struggle annually to find a sufficient number of American host families and high schools to meet the demand of foreign students wishing to come the U.S. on an exchange.

What is required is a broad, sustained effort to make the case to the American public that international engagement is essential to national well-being, national security, and continued economic prosperity. Such an effort will demand compelling statements by our national leaders, such as those cited above, but it will also require methodical applications of policy. Such initiatives might include such things as serious engagement with the business community to support citizen diplomacy with dollars, internships, public statements, etc.; coordinated efforts by federal, state, and local authorities to improve the international content of U.S. education at every level, including demanding better outcomes in foreign language learning; and the provision of modest tax incentives to encourage desirable behaviors, such as increased deductions to American families who host exchange students.

Recommendation: That the U.S. government launch a coordinated effort, led by the National Security Council, to clearly and repeatedly articulate the national interest in citizen diplomacy and to raise public awareness and participation; to set specific targets for academic participation and performance in international studies and foreign languages; to develop and adopt policy mechanisms to encourage citizen diplomacy; and to build active support for citizen diplomacy within the private sector.

Resources

A strong bipartisan consensus exists in the U.S. Congress about the value of exchanges. This consensus has led to an historic period of growth for Department of State exchange programs resources. In an eight-year period, funding has increased from \$245 million (FY03) to \$635 million (FY10). This funding has allowed State to expand and enhance its flagship exchanges, such as Fulbright and the International Visitor Leadership Program, as well as foster a series of compelling new initiatives: increased programming with the Islamic world, including a growing Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program; stronger and more effective efforts to develop critical language capacity for the U.S.; ACCESS micro-scholarships for English language study, designed to reach underserved populations in critical countries and to prepare talented students for U.S. exchange experiences; boosts in funding and reach for overseas student advising and English language programs; a new focus in the Fulbright program on science and innovation; more engagement with U.S. community colleges, enhancing access to exchange opportunities in both directions; and expansion of study abroad opportunities for Americans, to name only a few.

This remarkable record of achievement and creativity by the State Department and its NGO partners validates the bipartisan political support for exchanges and demonstrates the impact of increased resources on the breadth and

depth of exchange programs that support productive U.S. engagement with the world.

Even though resources have grown and been well used, the U.S. still devotes significantly less funding to exchange activities than many of its allies and competitors around the globe. The German Academic Exchange Service, known by its German-language acronym DAAD, has an annual budget of 400 million Euros. Extrapolated to an economy the size of the U.S. and adjusted for exchange rates, a comparable U.S. budget would be roughly \$2 billion. One should note that DAAD's budget funds only academic exchanges, while the U.S. exchange budget covers a full range of academic, citizen, professional, and youth programming. Moreover, the DAAD budget does not include other significant German public diplomacy efforts, the Goethe Institute and the Humboldt Foundation. National-level exchange organizations in other European countries, such as CampusFrance (in France) and the British Council (in the U.K.), as well as ones in rising Asian destinations, such as the China Scholarship Council, have made large investments in all forms of exchanges, including scholarships for in-bound and out-bound students, as well as awards for young researchers and faculty.

The Department of State's strategic framework for public diplomacy [*Public Diplomacy: Strengthening U.S. Engagement with the World – A Strategic Approach for the 21st Century*, March 2010] cites increasingly intense competition in the global marketplace of ideas and engagement: China's aggressive outreach efforts, including vastly expanded teaching of Chinese language; heightened competition for the best and brightest foreign students, evident in the aggressive marketing of European Union nations, Australia, and Singapore; Russian investments in expanded media presence; Iran's overseas cultural centers; and the sophisticated media strategies of extremists.

While expenditures do not always equate with influence, it is worth noting that China has established approximately 300 Confucius Centers in 87 countries worldwide at a time when the U.S. has struggled to find a way to replace its global network of American Centers closed after the end of the Cold War. The British Council, which maintains facilities in more than 100 countries worldwide, expended 157 million pounds (approximately \$245 million) in 2009-2010 to promote a wider knowledge of the English language.

Intensified competition for global students coincides with an expanding global pie of mobility—an increasing number of students are studying overseas and more and more countries are seeking to attract mobile students. According to the Institute of International Education (IIE)'s *Atlas of International Student Mobility*, the global number of students studying overseas increased from 2 million to 3 million between 2001 and 2008. While the U.S. market share declined from 28 per cent to 21 per cent during that period, many new players entered the scene, including Asian nations such as China, Singapore, and Malaysia and the branch campuses in the Middle East. China, with 6 per cent of the worldwide total, appeared for the first time on the list of top destination countries. Also worth noting is that in 2008, the combined total of inbound foreign students to the U.K., Germany, and France was 30 per cent, underscoring that the European Union had the largest share of the global market at that point, even though the U.S. remained the top destination country.

But the trends have again shifted recently. Although the U.K. share had increased from 11 to 13 per cent during the 2001-2008 timeframe and Australia's from 4 to 7 percent, recently introduced visa regulations in both countries and a spate of racial attacks against Indian students in Australia have led to declines in the numbers of international students in both countries. At the same time, the numbers of international students in the U.S. have rebounded over the past three years. These types of shifts highlight not only the dynamic nature of global student mobility, but also that there are now many competing host nations and that the U.S. – which even with the recent rebound has not fully regained its market share – needs to make large investments at the institutional and national levels to retain its position as the world leader in higher education.

To engage the world at a level commensurate with its leadership role, the United States needs to invest more in these people-to-people connections. Our new level of engagement with the Muslim world is appropriate and must be maintained, but we need to intensify our interaction with the rest of the world, including Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the nations that formerly composed the Soviet Union.

Additional resources would allow the U.S. to more fully apply its dynamic range of exchanges – which form a continuum of potential interactions from high school studies to professional achievement – to all regions of the world. Increased funding also would allow the U.S. to further reinvigorate its overseas advising network to support robust

inbound flows of foreign students, to increase exchange opportunities for Americans, to strengthen U.S. capacity in critical languages, and to match the contributions of our closest allies to support the flagship Fulbright program. The core exchange activities of the State Department place emphasis on reaching new audiences in the U.S. and abroad, including financially disadvantaged students and those without prior access to international scholarships. Young people and students in virtually all world regions have benefited from these various USG-funded vehicles, and private funding – most notably tuition waivers and other forms of scholarships from U.S. higher education institutions – has leveraged U.S. government funding, significantly increasing the number of participants coming to the U.S. on these programs.

Investments in people-to-people contacts will directly support the Obama Administration's objectives of engaging the world more broadly, strengthening public/private partnerships, and empowering American citizens, through NGOs and academic institutions, allowing citizen diplomacy to extend the reach the U.S.'s global engagement.

Recommendation: To allow the U.S. to apply its full continuum of program tools in every world region and to engage more Americans in citizen diplomacy, that the Department of State and the Congress increase funding for the Department's exchange programs to \$1 billion over the next decade.

Exchange Visitor Program

The Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) is a valuable but under-appreciated element of U.S. citizen diplomacy. Authorized by the Fulbright-Hays Act, the EVP brings foreign participants to the United States for a wide range of substantive exchange activities: university students and scholars pursue studies, research, and teaching; high school students live with American families and attend American high schools; young professionals come for training and career development; university students and recent graduates come to experience life in the U.S. as interns or as casual summer workers; young people with appropriate qualifications live with American families as au pairs; and a very diverse range of participants serve as counselors in U.S. summer camps.

While all foreign participants in officially funded programs are issued visas under the auspices of the EVP, the overwhelming majority of the EVP's approximately 350,000 participants annually come to the U.S. *at no cost to the taxpayer*. The U.S. has no other exchange vehicle that is more cost-effective, or, with the sole exception of higher education, that reaches such numbers.

Participants pay a program fee to a State Department-approved NGO or its overseas partner, and are hosted across the U.S. by American families, high schools, higher education institutions, communities, and businesses. In the expanse of its worldwide participation and of its engagement with the American public, the reach of the Exchange Visitor Program is truly breathtaking.

And so are the results. Data collected over long periods of time and from thousands of program participants show beyond the shadow of any doubt that people who participate in these programs "feel more positively about the U.S." People often participate more than once, and move from one program category to another: high school exchange students enroll in U.S. universities; summer work/travel students return to the U.S. as interns; or increasingly, as in Russia and Ukraine, summer work/travel alumni, especially those from outside the major cities, use their improved English language skills compete successfully for Fulbright awards.

Despite its demonstrable success, the Exchange Visitor Program is often poorly understood, has been subjected to political pressures, and has suffered from occasionally unpredictable regulatory and consular environments and from negative publicity generated by rare unfortunate incidents involving participants. Under the Obama administration's leadership, the State Department has moved forward to engage the NGO exchange community in structured discussions intended to strengthen program quality, to further enhance participant satisfaction, and to ensure high levels of regulatory compliance.

Recommendations:

- That the State Department and the exchange community continue their recently launched joint effort to enhance collaboration and communication between the government and NGO sponsors, and to create predictable regulatory and consular environments that foster the growth of high quality programs that meet Fulbright-Hays goals for fostering mutual understanding and respect.
- That the NGO exchange community, the State Department, and Congress work together to consider new Exchange Visitor Program categories that respond to new demands. Examples of such categories include: teaching assistants, especially in foreign language but also potentially in technical fields; gap year students; entrepreneurs; leadership development; and companion care for U.S. elderly without severe medical needs.
- That the State Department engage in a broad effort to encourage American companies, high schools, community organizations, and families to host Exchange Visitor Program participants to create more program opportunities in the U.S.

Getting More Americans Overseas

A critical element in advancing U.S. citizen diplomacy is providing more opportunities for Americans to have substantive experiences overseas. Historically, inbound exchange flows have been far more robust than outbound. The Department of State has moved to address this with several important and successful initiatives: increases in the Gilman and Fulbright programs and critical language awards for U.S. students, and still-modest outbound high school exchange opportunities. But privately funded exchanges – measured in the numbers of international university students, high school exchanges, and Exchange Visitor Program participants – tilt heavily to the inbound. The volume of privately funded exchange far exceeds officially funded participation.

According to IIE's 2009 edition of *Open Doors*, 671,616 foreign students studied in the U.S. during the 2008/2009 academic year. That number (mostly degree-seeking students) contrasts with 262,416 American students studying abroad, most for a single academic term or less. In high school exchanges in the 2009-2010 academic year, the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) reports that 28,142 foreign students came to the U.S., while only 1,980 of their American counterparts ventured overseas for a similar experience. And the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) brings approximately 350,000 foreign participants to the U.S. annually; no comparable outbound mechanism exists.

In her May 16 commencement address at George Washington University, First Lady Michelle Obama urged graduates to “take it global,” to engage the world more deeply and directly in order to enrich their lives, to enhance their professional opportunities, and to build ties of mutual understanding and respect between Americans and the peoples of the world. Unarguably, the U.S. needs more citizens who are expert in critical foreign languages and foreign cultures. But we also need more Americans, in all walks of life, who may not be expert but who have a better understanding of the world, and whose international experiences will make them better leaders in their professional fields, better citizens, and better parents.

The U.S. government, in partnership with academic institutions, schools, the private sector, and the NGO community, should strive to provide more opportunities for Americans to have their own exchange experiences. These should include expanded access to study abroad programs, with special focus on students with limited means and designed to support diversity in all its forms: gender, ethnicity, U.S. institution, academic discipline, and overseas destination. A more dynamic outbound high school exchange program, with similar criteria and objectives, could open a literal world of possibilities for talented students who lack only the means to “take it global.” For students at all levels, programs that incorporate an element of service learning will deepen the impact of these encounters with foreign cultures.

Exchanges for Americans should not be limited to students. Communities across the U.S. have expanding connections with the world, and these relationships offer opportunities to build lasting ties that make a difference. The Department of State should consider working with its NGO partners, academic institutions, and private sector and

community leaders around the U.S. to create a pilot program to send Americans overseas for short-term visits. Such visits might, as examples, build on existing relationships (e.g., Sister Cities), extend a compelling connection formed through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), or advance an important but under-resourced institutional relationship. Such programs might be designed as, in effect, a “reverse IVLP,” with meetings with professional counterparts as the core activity but with substantial emphasis on cross-cultural learning, including home stays.

Recommendation: That the U.S. Government, working with NGOs, academic institutions, the private sector, and communities, substantially increase exchange opportunities for Americans. Such opportunities should include:

- Substantially increased post-secondary study abroad and high school exchanges, especially for American students with financial need, with an emphasis on study involving high priority countries and critical languages, and an overall goal of 1 million American post-secondary students studying abroad within 10 years.
- A pilot citizen exchange program to send groups of Americans overseas for short-term visits. Such visits should be keyed to specific policy objectives and countries, usually building on and extending a completed successful exchange to the U.S.

Continue to build language proficiency

America’s shortage of qualified foreign language speakers, especially in critical languages, has been much studied and well documented. While that shortage still exists as our national need for these skills increases, there is good news: with the programs put in place by the Departments of State, Defense, and Education, private sector initiatives such as those sponsored by the College Board and the Asia Society, and efforts to strengthen K-12 and post-secondary language learning, Americans undertaking serious language study may now expect to attain full professional level proficiency in those languages, and the real possibility of using their language knowledge to enhance their study and future career. An extensive longitudinal study by Dr. Dan E. Davidson, President of the American Councils on International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, published in the Spring 2010 edition of *Foreign Language Annals*, conclusively establishes this finding.

This very significant change dates from the launch of the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) in 2004-2005, which helped to create and/or strengthen a continuum of language learning programs. In addition to providing much-needed support to teachers in U.S. domestic programs at the K-12 level, NSLI offers essential overseas immersion opportunities for American learners of the critical languages at key junctures in the educational system through the (NSLI-Youth) for secondary school students; the Critical Language Scholarships (CLS), an intensive summer institutes overseas program for university students; supplementary language training for some Fulbright scholars and Gilman participants; the Language Flagship Program, with its year-long overseas capstone program designed to bring students from ILR Level 2 (advanced) to Level 3 (professional/superior) or higher; and StarTalk, which promotes engaging summer experiences for students and teachers in seven critical languages in 43 states. These very successful efforts must be maintained and enhanced. Particularly important is the expansion of the pipeline of young language learners. The U.S. must do more to foster interest and proficiency at a younger age, allowing greater numbers of students to begin their university studies with a strong language foundation that will promote rapid progress to advanced levels, with the support of the program. Americans are interested, as never before, in learning the critical languages, as evidenced by the notable growth of K-12 programs in Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, and Russian across the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Growing interest and a powerful array of programs create an historic opportunity for substantial advances.

Recommendation: That all concerned parties – higher education, the K-12 community, the Departments of State, Defense, and Education, and federal and state legislatures – sustain and expand current efforts to increase U.S. proficiency in critical languages. Elements of this effort should include a robust mechanism to draw public attention to U.S. national needs and current opportunities and increased resources from all players, focusing especially on expanding the pipeline of young learners and overseas immersion programs.

Visas and U.S. Arrival

The Department of State's consular corps has done a commendable job of managing its vastly expanded, post-9/11 workload. Visa demand is growing, and coupled with policy that requires interviews for nearly all applicants and other new requirements, the volume of work has risen more quickly than embassy resources. Congress and the Department of State should continue to expand the number of Foreign Service officers, and could alleviate workloads and improve service to foreign publics with three additional steps: establishing new consular posts in large, high-demand countries where many applicants must undertake lengthy, expensive journeys for a visa interview; restoring to posts the discretion to waive personal appearance for some visa applicants; and extending the period during which successful visa applicants need not return to the embassy for an additional interview.

When successful visa applicants arrive in the U.S., there are still too many incidents of visitors being treated rudely or detained unnecessarily. In the words of one American consular officer assigned to a Muslim country, "We work very hard to persuade students and their families that the U.S. and our academic institutions will welcome them. One bad anecdote from a U.S. port of entry takes on a life of its own here, and will undo months of our work." We all recognize that Homeland Security officials have a daunting responsibility in deciding whether to admit thousands of foreign visitors daily. We urge DHS, however, to enforce higher standards of courtesy.

Recommendations:

- That Congress and the Department of State expand consular access by opening new posts, especially in the highest volume countries: Brazil, India, China, and Russia. New posts should be located in cities with high volumes of visa applicants, and where broad U.S. interests will be best served.
- That U.S. consular posts regain authority to waive personal appearance, under clear guidelines developed in consultation with the State Department's leadership and the Bureau of Consular Affairs.
- That frequent travelers – those who have fulfilled the terms of their visas without status violations – be issued visas without additional interviews for a period of three years, an expansion of the current one-year grace period.
- That DHS maintain and enforce high standards of courtesy by its officials at ports of entry, to ensure that unpleasant arrival experiences do not diminish foreign impressions of the United States.
- That Consular Affairs work with EducationUSA to promote study in the U.S. and to reinforce the fact that more student visa applications are approved than denied. This collaboration has been successfully piloted in China and India, where wait times and approval rates are provided to potential applicants and where numbers of incoming students continue to increase.

Use of technology

Today's youth are digital natives, accustomed to the immediacy and interaction that technology can provide. For them, the traditional boundary of geography is not an obstacle to connection. When combined with physical exchanges, online interaction can serve to maintain global relationships between peers and hosts for years after the actual exchange. Further, online interaction, when conducted by experienced educational networks and programs, can include millions of younger citizens long before they are able to physically travel abroad, developing a large pool of potential participants.

The use of technology must be intentionally structured to ensure meaningful results. Research and experience demonstrate that online interaction can both build awareness and foster long-term global understanding and relationships. Regardless of the technology being utilized, this is most effective when the online dialogue and exchanges of media are around a theme, or are "project-based."

In an educational setting, online interaction and collaboration can fit well within the curriculum and classroom. Educators can directly and daily engage their students with peers internationally on projects involving global issues, history, literature, science, math, as well as every world language taught in the U.S. As in physical exchanges, security and safety are vitally important. The use of ID/password-protection and firewalls are imperative, particularly for the K-12 community, to both create a secure environment and a meaningful "community" within a global context.

Recommendation:

- That the Department of State, NGOs, and academic institutions at all levels use technology to deepen and enhance the impact of physical exchange, and to use technology to raise international awareness among U.S. students.
- That the U.S. set a goal of linking every American school with another somewhere in the world by 2016.

Enhanced Program Models

Citizen diplomacy works. Evaluation after evaluation of the State Department's exchange programs underscores the results: attitudinal change toward the U.S. or the host country, personal and professional growth, and leadership development.

As we confront a world that grows in complexity and issues that are increasingly multi-national, we need to expand efforts already underway and to employ new program elements to deepen impact and strengthen outcomes. The State Department's MicroAccess Scholarships and Fulbright English Teaching Assistants Program point the way toward to our need to engage more broadly with non-English speaking populations, and toward the efficacy of providing targeted English instruction to these sectors of foreign societies. Studies of learning reveal that home stays, community service, leadership development, and structured reflection all deepen impact. Indeed, reflection appears to be a 'magical' ingredient in successful, transformative exchanges. As noted elsewhere in this report, technology can be used to enhance and extend physical exchanges, and to prepare future participants.

Recommendation:

- That all involved in citizen diplomacy – the NGO, academic, and private sectors, and the U.S. government – incorporate the results of recent studies of learning in program design, considering new and/or enhanced program models that include elements will that deepen impact and expand participation.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhanced and sustained policy support

That the U.S. government launch a coordinated effort, led by the National Security Council, to clearly and repeatedly articulate the national interest in citizen diplomacy and to raise public awareness and participation; to set specific targets for academic participation and performance in international studies and foreign languages; to develop and adopt policy mechanisms to encourage citizen diplomacy; and to build active support for citizen diplomacy within the private sector.

Resources

To allow the U.S. to apply its full continuum of program tools in every world region and to engage more Americans in citizen diplomacy, that the Department of State and the Congress increase funding for the Department's exchange programs to \$1 billion over the next decade.

Exchange Visitor Program

- That the State Department and the exchange community continue their recently launched joint effort to enhance collaboration and communication between the government and NGO sponsors, and to create predictable regulatory and consular environments that foster the growth of high quality programs that meet Fulbright-Hays goals for fostering mutual understanding and respect.
- That the NGO exchange community, the State Department, and Congress work together to consider new Exchange Visitor Program categories that respond to new demands. Examples of such categories include: teaching assistants, especially in foreign language but also potentially in technical fields; gap year students; entrepreneurs; leadership development; and companion care for U.S. elderly without severe medical needs.
- That the State Department engage in a broad effort to encourage American companies, high schools, community organizations, and families to host Exchange Visitor Program participants to create more program opportunities in the U.S.

Getting More Americans Overseas

That the U.S. Government, working with NGOs, academic institutions, the private sector, and communities, substantially increase exchange opportunities for Americans. Such opportunities should include:

- Substantially increased post-secondary study abroad and high school exchanges, especially for American students with financial need, with an emphasis on study involving high priority countries and critical languages, and an overall goal of 1 million American post-secondary students studying abroad within 10 years.
- A pilot citizen exchange program to send groups of Americans overseas for short-term visits. Such visits should be keyed to specific policy objectives and countries, usually building on and extending a completed successful exchange to the U.S.

Continue to build language proficiency

That all concerned parties – higher education, the K-12 community, the Departments of State, Defense, and Education, and federal and state legislatures – sustain and expand current efforts to increase U.S. proficiency in critical languages. Elements of this effort should include a robust mechanism to draw public attention to U.S. national needs and current opportunities and increased resources from all players, focusing especially on expanding the pipeline of young learners and overseas immersion programs.

Visas and U.S. Arrival

- That Congress and the Department of State expand consular access by opening new posts, especially in the highest volume countries: Brazil, India, China, and Russia. New posts should be located in cities with high volumes of visa applicants, and where broad U.S. interests will be best served.

- That U.S. consular posts regain authority to waive personal appearance, under clear guidelines developed in consultation with the State Department's leadership and the Bureau of Consular Affairs.
- That frequent travelers – those who have fulfilled the terms of their visas without status violations – be issued visas without additional interviews for a period of three years, an expansion of the current one-year grace period.
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Use of technology

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Enhanced Program Models

That all involved in citizen diplomacy – the NGO, academic, and private sectors, and the U.S. government – incorporate the results of recent studies of learning in program design, considering new and/or enhanced program models that include elements will that deepen impact and expand participation.

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