

UNESCO's Origins, Achievements, Problems and Promise:

An Inside/Outside Perspective
from the US

Raymond E. Wanner



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education
The University of Hong Kong



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Comparative Education Research Centre
The University of Hong Kong



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU	Americans for UNESCO
AUU	Americans for the Universality of UNESCO
BESSY-I	Berlin Electron Storage Ring for Electron Radiation
CAME	Conference of Allied Ministers of Education
CERN	European Center for Nuclear Research
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
CRS	Congressional Research Service
EFA	Education for All
FACA	Federal Advisory Commission Act
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GW	George Washington University
HKU	The University of Hong Kong
HP	Hydrological Program
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAP	Inter-academy Panel
IAU	International Association of Universities
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICA	International Council on Archives
ICI	International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICSU	International Council of Scientific Unions
ICTP	International Centre for Theoretical Physics
IEE	Independent external evaluation
IHE	Institute for Water Education
IHP	International Hydrological Programme
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communication
ITI	International Theatre Institute
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Programme

MIRCENS	Microbial Resources Centers Network
NEA	National Education Association
NWICO	New World Information and Communication Order
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
SESAME	Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East
TWAS	The World Academy of Sciences
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNF	United Nations Foundation
UNITWIN	University Twinning and Networking Programme
UNRRA	UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
WCES	World Council of Comparative Education Societies
WTO	World Teachers' Organization

About the Author

Raymond E. Wanner retired from the US Department of State in 2002 after thirty years of service devoted mostly to the affairs of international organizations, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), where he served for six years in Paris at the US diplomatic mission to UNESCO. He later served in the Department of State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs with particular responsibility for UNESCO.

After his retirement from the State Department he served for the next decade as senior adviser on UNESCO to the United Nations Foundation (UNF) and later as governing board chair of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). He is the author of a study of 17th century French education and culture, published by Martinus Nijhoff as part of its international Archives of the History of Ideas, and a second study of more contemporary French education for which he was named Chevalier des Palmes Académiques by the French government. Mr. Wanner was also awarded the Secretary of State's Career Achievement Award and the UNESCO Human Rights Medal for his commitment to international intellectual cooperation. He received his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania.

To the memory of my good friend

Elizabeth Brown Pryor

March 15, 1951 – April 13, 2015

Foreword I

On the 70th anniversary of the founding of UNESCO, GW's UNESCO Chair in International Education for Development is pleased, in collaboration with the University of Hong Kong, to present Raymond Wanner's comprehensive study, *UNESCO's Origins, Achievements, Problems and Promise: An Inside/Outside Perspective from the US*. The book is an academic look at UNESCO from the perspective of a US "insider" outside of the agency.

In 2014, the George Washington University (GW) became the 22nd UNESCO Chair in the US and the second in a US School of Education, joining over 650 UNESCO Chairs in 124 countries through the University Twinning and Networking Programme (UNITWIN). This program promotes inter-university cooperation and networking throughout the world. With the launch by Director-General Irina Bokova, the Chair, housed in the International Education Program at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, set out on a program of research and teaching, creating opportunities for students and faculty to work in UNESCO's diverse research and policy areas. This includes research, workshops, seminars, the publication of policy briefs and white papers, a speaker series, and the new GW UNESCO Fellows program, which places graduate students in intensive three-month domestic and international fellowships in UNESCO field offices.

We continue to offer the graduate seminar, *UNESCO: Agenda for the 21st Century*. This course, taught from 2007 to present, is one of the few courses worldwide to focus exclusively on UNESCO. Organized in seminar format, the class draws input from prominent participants in UNESCO's history, current actors working with or in UNESCO, and other experts on the agency's contemporary work. In this capacity we had the great fortune of working with Dr. Raymond Wanner. He has been featured as lecturer during each iteration of the course.

Since 1945, UNESCO has significantly evolved as an organization both in profile and activity. This is reflected today in its work with 195 Member States and through its continuous efforts to safeguard the global collective good and uphold the venerable ideal of constructing

“the defences of peace in the minds of men” (UNESCO Constitution). UNESCO has changed with the major geopolitical shifts of the 20th and 21st centuries and despite chronic budgetary constraints largely resulting from US policy, has continued its flagship programs. These efforts include working to restore civil society after conflict, focusing on countries and regions in need, influencing policy and action to counter deep inequalities in education for girls and women, preserving the world’s cultural and historic treasures, and supporting research in response to universal environmental threats such as clean water programs. Perhaps most importantly, UNESCO has never ceased to function as a convener of experts and thinkers, a forum for addressing issues and controversies that cannot easily be addressed through other mechanisms—organizing tsunami warning systems, potential conflicts over culture and religion, ensuring a fair hearing for individuals with new ideas. In that light, UNESCO’s programs are perhaps not even as important as its unique ability to help intellectuals, scientists, and cultural leaders, including young leaders, to find their voices and have opportunities to work together.

Writing a concise history and deep analysis of an organization as complex and multi-faceted as UNESCO is a herculean task. Release of this book is a proud achievement for its author and his many years in international diplomacy, and a great honor for the GW UNESCO Chair and our partner at the University of Hong Kong.

Drafts were discussed by the GW faculty members of the Chair as well as by colleagues such as George Papagiannis, UNESCO’s Director of External Relations in New York City, but the voice and the ideas are Raymond Wanner’s. Over a four-decade long career, Raymond Wanner has worked at the US Department of State in Washington, DC, in the US diplomatic mission to UNESCO, as the Chairperson of the Governing Board of the International Institute for Educational Planning in Paris, and again in Washington at the State Department’s Bureau of International Organization Affairs with responsibility for UNESCO. We sought a title that would represent both the breadth of analysis and also his unique perspective as the chronicler of that story. “Inside/Outside” was added to suggest the observations of a participant and critic who intersected with UNESCO in different capacities and at different times. “US” was added to be clear that these are the perspectives of an American diplomat, fully aware of how that position influences his perspective of this global organization.

This book is a fitting reflection of the spirit of the GW UNESCO Chair, in symmetry with our core goal of providing a platform for critical analysis of the issues on which UNESCO works. Students of history and analysts of policy can learn from the book's meticulous overview of the deliberations that led to the founding and early formation of UNESCO; its analysis of the organization's infrastructure and program areas in education, science and culture; its study of UNESCO's fraught relationship with the US; and finally its frank assessment of present-day challenges and recommendations for future management, governance, staffing, and financing. The book's readability and rich description of UNESCO's development over the years under different directors and historical challenges, not least the US withdrawal, reentry and withholding of funds, makes for an insightful historical narrative and a fitting reader for political science, sociology, and education courses analyzing global organizations.

Finally, Wanner's reflections offer a passionate plea for the active reengagement of America's academic community in a UNESCO the world will need as it confronts the challenges of the next seventy years. The book makes the case that, whether by design or by accident, some constituencies who initially significantly shaped UNESCO's mandate and actions became more marginalized over time for other priorities and stakeholders. Wanner's study points out an important gap that has developed between the once heavy involvement of the academic community in the organization's early days and its much more limited role in shaping the organization today. For example, of the 30 original members of the founding committee including notables as J. William Fulbright, Julian Huxley and Archibald MacLeish, no less than 25 represented academic institutions that lent their significant intellectual heft to UNESCO's early decisions. Wanner's final message is unambiguous: there should be a renewed and vigorous reengagement of America's academic community to again help shape the kind of UNESCO the world will need in the coming decades.

Laura C. Engel, Bernhard T. Streitwieser, James H. Williams
UNESCO Chair in International Education for Development
George Washington University



Foreword II

Echoing Laura Engel, Bernhard Streitwieser and James Williams, I express great pleasure at the appearance of this book. I do so for some of the same reasons and for some additional reasons.

The same reasons are that the booklet sheds very instructive light on aspects of the history and roles of UNESCO over the last seven decades. Raymond E. Wanner has brought to the book his academic training in the field of comparative education, his personal expertise through professional roles over the decades, and his steadfast commitment to the ideals of UNESCO in an imperfect world. The book is explicitly written from the perspective of a national of the United States, recognizing the great leadership of that country in UNESCO's early decades and lamenting the lost potential of that leadership in more recent times. Wanner rightly points out that the second withdrawal of the United States during the present decade – for different reasons from the first withdrawal in 1994 – has been a considerable loss not only to UNESCO and its activities but also arguably to the United States itself.

I have two additional reasons for welcoming this book, both of which are to some extent personal. The first concerns UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) which, as Wanner indicates, was established in Paris in 1963 under the inspired Directorship of a US citizen, Philip H. Coombs. Forty-three years later, I found myself occupying the seat that Coombs had established when UNESCO appointed me the eighth Director of IIEP. I held this post from 2006 to 2010, on leave from the University of Hong Kong; and throughout my period as Director, Raymond Wanner was Chairperson of the IIEP Governing Board. I greatly respected and benefited from his leadership, and thus have much pleasure in recognizing that role in this Foreword.

A second additional reason for welcoming the book concerns the US-based Comparative and International Education Society (CIES). This body was formed in 1956, and is the oldest and largest of the 42 members of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies

(WCCES). Raymond Wanner has very long links with the CIES, having undertaken his doctoral studies under the supervision of William W. Brickman at the University of Pennsylvania. Brickman was the founding President of the CIES (1956-1959), and is the only individual to have twice been CIES President (through a second term in 1966/67). Again I find myself in a line of succession, having in 2015 become CIES President-Elect with the particular responsibility of organizing the Society's 60th anniversary conference in Vancouver, Canada. The CIES has become an organization of several thousand members with great academic vigor and concern for the sorts of issues that Wanner raises in this book. As such, the CIES is among the important communities within which to publicize the book and take forward its messages.

Finally, I express appreciation to James Williams and his colleagues in George Washington University (GWU). In 2014, GWU was awarded a UNESCO Chair in International Education for Development, two years after the University of Hong Kong (HKU) was awarded a UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education. The juxtaposition of international and comparative education again fits admirably the structure of the CIES; and by co-sponsoring this booklet the UNESCO Chair in HKU stresses that the themes raised by Raymond Wanner stretch far beyond the United States itself. I know that the book will have a wide audience, and I encourage readers throughout the world to consider its themes and the ways in which their own countries relate to UNESCO and to each other.

Mark Bray

UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education
President-Elect, Comparative and International Education Society
Director, Comparative Education Research Centre
The University of Hong Kong



Introduction and Acknowledgments

The goals of this book are to inform the general reader about UNESCO, encourage constructive change in the interaction between the United States government and UNESCO, and identify certain areas that UNESCO needs to update and improve after seventy years of service to its Member States. Above all, the goal is to urge Member States, including the US, to recommit to the ideals embodied in the UNESCO Constitution and its Preamble. The views expressed are those of one who has deep respect for the Department of State and its difficult work in acquitting its vast responsibilities and who also sincerely respects UNESCO's leadership and staff, who work assiduously to address its complex mandate. The author takes unapologetic pride in the role the US played in the creation of UNESCO and in some of its flagship programs, such as the World Heritage Convention, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the World Digital Library and the International Institute for Educational Planning. He takes pride also in the role UNESCO has played over the decades to improve the human condition, often under the most difficult circumstances, through international cooperation in education, science, culture and communications.

This study would not have been written without the decade-long prodding of my friend Richard K. Nobbe, a UNESCO specialist. For reasons of his own, he thought it was I who should undertake the task. To the deep sorrow of his family and many friends, Dick Nobbe died in early February 2015, just as a first draft was near completion. To my pleasure, this brought him some comfort during his last weeks.

I wish to thank my friends Andre Varchaver and Carol Colloton for reading the manuscript carefully and making valuable suggestions for improvement. I wish also to thank friends Roger A. Coate and Richard T. Arndt for their encouragement. My wife, Linda, a benevolent neatnik, endured with patience and good humor months of strewn-about papers and documents—not her natural habitat! I thank her for that sacrifice, as well as for decades of loving companionship.

It was a particular pleasure to work closely with and to learn from the leadership team of George Washington University's UNESCO Chair: James Williams, Bernhard Streitwieser and Laura Engel under the guidance of Michael J. Feuer, Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development. Dean Feuer also generously provided the indispensable services of superb copy editor Nancy Kober.

Finally it is an unexpected pleasure to have this publication emerge under the joint sponsorship of two great Universities, both UNESCO Chairs, on opposite sides of the planet: George Washington University in Washington and the University of Hong Kong, where my friend Mark Bray, a former Director of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning, is a Chair Professor and Director of the Comparative Education Research Centre.

Raymond E. Wanner
Silver Spring, Maryland

Chapter 1

A Reason for Pride: The United States and the Creation of UNESCO

1945: A Sense of Urgency

In 1945, visionary Americans, foreseeing the vital educational and cultural factors in post-war reconstruction, helped build UNESCO from the ashes of World War II.¹ They worked under the leadership of J. William Fulbright, who was then a young Congressman, and Assistant Secretary of State Archibald MacLeish, who went on to win the Pulitzer Prize three times for poetry and drama.

The work began on a late October weekend in 1945 when MacLeish met in Washington with the thirty-four members of the United States delegation to the London Conference that was to create a postwar educational and cultural organization.² And the stakes were high, indeed! Sixty million men, women and children had been killed in a devastating war that had ended only two months before.³ Roughly 17 million soldiers and civilians had been slaughtered in the “war to end all wars” barely a generation earlier.⁴ The Versailles Treaty and League of Nations had collapsed; the United Nations Charter was untested; the

¹ Americans for UNESCO, Memorandum to the New Administration, October 2006.

² The delegation met the weekend of October 26-28, 1945. See Luther H. Evans, *The United States and UNESCO* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1971), Evans, then Librarian of Congress, served as an adviser to the delegation. He published this account of US delegation meetings based on the notes he took at the Washington meeting and in London November 3-15, 1945. He served as UNESCO Director-General, 1953-1958.

³ National World War II Museum, “By the Numbers: World-Wide Deaths,” <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/ww2-by-the-numbers/world-wide-deaths.html>.

⁴ “Viewpoint: 10 Big Myths about World War One Debunked, BBC Magazine, February 25, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-25776836>.

Soviet threat was emerging; China was engaged in a brutal civil war; and the atomic age had burst upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki with unimaginable force and psychic impact.

These issues were clearly on MacLeish's mind when, in introducing his delegation that October morning to the issues they would address in London, he emphasized the crucial importance of the conference's success "if the civilization of our time is to be saved from annihilation."⁵ At a press conference later the same day, he spoke of the vital need to build a better understanding between peoples "in view of atomic fission" and, in a foreshadowing of his preamble to the UNESCO Constitution, said that the "eradication of distrust and suspicion are absolutely necessary to prevent world destruction."⁶

MacLeish's own sensitivity to the fragility of peace, and of human existence in its entirety, may have been heightened by a memorandum to the Department of State from the American Council on Education a month earlier:

We would ... register our conviction that with the conquest of atomic energy, there had arisen a wholly new urgency in the furtherance of intellectual cooperation among the nations. If, as scientists believe, there is no military defense against robot warfare in the atomic age, the only safety for mankind lies in the development of appreciation for the cultural values and the intellectual and spiritual life of nations.

The proposed Educational and Cultural Organization has, therefore, even deeper importance and larger responsibilities and opportunities than could have been anticipated.⁷

The sense of urgency was shared. In London, MacLeish reported to his delegation that, at a luncheon he hosted November 5 for former French Premier and conference delegate Leon Blum and for Greek, Colombian and Mexican delegates, Blum had said that "in the world at the end of World War I there had been for a few months a breath of hope, whereas now there was none, except for this Conference." Blum

⁵ Evans, *US and UNESCO*, Friday, October 26, 1945, a.m. meeting, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Friday, October 26, 2:30 p.m. meeting, 10.

⁷ Reprinted in Evans, *US and UNESCO*, appendix 2, 153.

had emphasized the urgent necessity “to guard the candle's flame that this Conference represented.”⁸

The Conference of Allied Ministers of Education

The London Conference, and ultimately UNESCO itself, evolved from sessions of the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education, known as CAME. As early as 1941 the so-called London International Assembly had provided a forum for displaced representatives of like-minded nations to discuss common problems informally. R. A. Butler, President of the British Board of Education, who was greatly concerned with postwar reconstruction on the continent, formalized these gatherings as CAME in November 1942.⁹ Belgium, Britain, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Yugoslavia were the first members. Membership gradually extended beyond Europe.¹⁰

US government leaders in Washington, DC, saw the elements of a future UNESCO in a resolution adopted by CAME in January 1943 that called for the creation of a UN Bureau for Educational Reconstruction to meet urgent needs in the enemy-occupied countries.¹¹ At the time, the US government was wrestling with the question of whether reconstruction of schools and protection of threatened cultural objects should be approached bilaterally or multilaterally and was not at ease with what it viewed as a premature tilt toward the multilateral approach.¹²

Washington's priority at the time was postwar security and the urgent creation of the UN as a multilateral security agency. President Roosevelt believed that if adoption of the UN Charter were delayed

⁸ Evans, *US and UNESCO*, meeting of Wednesday, November 7, 1945, 9:00 a.m., 88.

⁹ James P. Sewell, *UNESCO and World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 34-36. The Sewell work and Gail Archibald's, *Les Etats-Unis et L'UNESCO 1944-1963* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1993) utilize primary source documentation on the origins of UNESCO and the subsequent role of the United States. I have drawn heavily on their scholarship.

¹⁰ The United States, USSR and Luxembourg began to participate formally in May 1943, and Australia, Canada, China, India, New Zealand, and South Africa in July.

¹¹ Records of CAME first and second meetings, cited in Sewell, *UNESCO*, 37.

¹² Sewell, *UNESCO*, 41.

until peace was established, other nations might perceive international cooperation as less urgent and the UN's creation as less certain.¹³ CAME, consequently, was of considerably lower priority, and the US maintained only an observer presence at CAME in the person of Richard A. Johnson, a young, London-based diplomat.¹⁴ In response to the Foreign Office's request, however, Washington sought full membership in 1944.

Washington's Awakening and J. William Fulbright

Great power politics ultimately drew US government leaders fully into the CAME process. The Soviet Union, while skeptical of a UN educational organization, maintained observer presence and did not exclude closer engagement. China expressed a "preference for an enduring international arrangement." And France was working assiduously to counteract Anglo-Saxon influence and promote French language and culture by seeking to have the Paris-based International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IICI) approved as the new organization's secretariat. Washington also grew uncomfortable with what it considered overly aggressive British leadership in the creation of the new educational and cultural organization.¹⁵ It was time for Washington to take CAME seriously. It did so with vigor.

In fact, the process had already begun. State Department officer and former Yale historian Ralph Turner had attended the October 1943 CAME meeting and subsequently urged full participation in CAME as a way of promoting democracy and political stability. He also made a coldly pragmatic argument: "We should enter ... as quickly as possible if we are to affiliate with it at all, because the longer we stay out ... the more difficult it will be to secure modifications in its organization or objectives."¹⁶

The State Department was not immediately responsive to Turner's appeal, but six months later in April 1944, with President Roosevelt's

¹³ Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003), 53.

¹⁴ Johnson later served as "technical secretary" to the US delegation to the London Conference. Evans, *US and UNESCO*, appendix 1, 146.

¹⁵ Sewell, *UNESCO*, 63.

¹⁶ Archibald, *Les Etats-Unis et L'UNESCO*, 25-26; Sewell, *UNESCO*, 61.

personal endorsement, it sent a delegation led by J. William Fulbright that included Assistant Secretary of State MacLeish, Commissioner of Education John Studebaker, Stanford University Dean Grayson Kefauver, Vassar College Dean Mildred Thompson and Ralph Turner. Their instructions were to participate fully in CAME's efforts to sketch out a constitution for the new organization.

The delegation had enormous influence on the shape of the future UNESCO. Fulbright, who was elected conference chair, immediately enlarged the CAME drafting committee, had it meet in open sessions, and ruled that each country represented would have one vote regardless of its size or number of delegates. He then seized the initiative by having his own delegation draft a parallel conference working paper. Kefauver, Studebaker and others worked until midnight over a weekend. Drawing on the existing constitutions of the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), they produced a new document entitled "Suggestions for the Development of the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education into the UN Organization for Educational and Cultural Reconstruction." Some months later, Washington, which ultimately did not favor multilateral strategies for delivering rehabilitation aid, changed "Reconstruction" in the title to "Cooperation."¹⁷ The Fulbright team's draft soon became the meeting's working text. After two open meetings with CAME participants, Fulbright chaired a small drafting committee that made minor revisions to the text. It was then sent as a CAME document to 44 governments for comment. Ralph Turner and Grayson Kefauver remained in London for follow-up consultations.

The political insights of the American delegation were significant in that they shifted the conceptual base of UNESCO from postwar reconstruction of schools and protection of physical cultural heritage to peace and security. Fulbright, for example, remarked that international efforts in education could "do more in the long run for peace than any number of trade treaties." And again: "Let there be understanding between the nations of each other and each other's problems, and the causes of quarrel disappear."¹⁸ MacLeish, the poet, later articulated the new reality concisely. UNESCO's role would be "to construct the

¹⁷ Sewell, *UNESCO*, 64-65.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

defences of peace in the minds of men.” It was to be a security agency; its weapon, intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

Gail Archibald notes in her study that the success of the American delegation was due not to the enormous political, economic and military weight that it represented but to the energy and quality of its work. She observes tellingly, “The enthusiasm of the American delegates for their work came without doubt from the fact that they were not professional diplomats.”¹⁹ That may or may not be the case. What is certain is that the Fulbright delegation underscored how effectively the national interest and the global good are served when the US is represented by men and women of such high intelligence and courageous vision.

With war still waging, it would take months and a change of leadership at the Department of State—Edward R. Stettinius Jr. replacing Cordell Hull as Secretary—to gather momentum toward the creation of UNESCO.²⁰ Through late 1944 and early 1945 Washington’s multilateral priority remained the creation of the UN. Moreover, the perceived failure of UNRRA to provide reconstruction aid efficiently led Congress, which was making dramatic cuts in all nonmilitary expenditures, to question the new educational organization’s potential effectiveness.

The MacLeish Delegation

On April 11, 1945, the very day CAME released its revision of the April 1944 draft constitution, Washington unilaterally submitted a parallel revised draft to the British, French, Soviet and Chinese governments for comment. The genesis of this Washington draft is unclear, but in the author’s view it is likely the work of an advisory committee, chaired by Leo Pasvolsky, special assistant to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, that was tasked with drafting a post-war charter for the yet-to-be-created UN.²¹ Both the CAME and the Washington texts foresaw the creation of a permanent UN Organization for Educational and Cultural Cooperation, referred to at the time as the ECO. After some discussion in London, the two texts were edited into a common document, which

¹⁹ Archibald, *Les Etats-Unis et L’UNESCO*, 39.

²⁰ Stettinius played a central role at the 1945 San Francisco Conference and subsequently served as the first US Permanent Representative to the UN.

²¹ Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 3, 247-248.

was circulated on August 1 as the working text of the November London Conference. It was this text that Archibald MacLeish and his delegation vetted paragraph by paragraph in Washington the weekend of October 26-28, 1945, and during the London Conference in early November.

Capable of grand vision, the MacLeish delegation was also firmly grounded in reality. It is remarkable, given the difficulty in travel and communications during the turbulent first weeks of transition from war to peace, that the State Department had reached out to the American academic and scientific communities for the specialized advice, expertise and intellectual diversity needed. The delegation's composition demonstrated this. In addition to congressional representation and senior governmental figures such as Ralph Bunche, Archibald MacLeish, William Benton, Luther Evans and a team of State Department in-house specialists, the delegation included professors and administrators from Harvard, Stanford, Hunter College, the University of Wisconsin, Fordham, Vassar College and the North Carolina College for Women. Also joining the delegation were Waldo Gifford Leland, President of the American Council of Learned Societies; Alain Locke, a preeminent African-American intellectual and poet; Frank Schlagle, Kansas City, Kansas, School Superintendent; George D. Stoddard, New York State Commissioner of Education; and finally, in keeping with the times, Mark Starr, advocate of Esperanto as the universal second language.²²

The delegation's views on the draft constitution were influenced by broad consultation with civil society, in particular the nine consultative meetings on the envisioned new ECO arranged by the Department of State during September and early October 1945 in Denver, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York and Washington. This outreach was quite extraordinary, given that fax machines, let alone smartphones, did not exist, and even long distance telephone calls had to be booked in advance. Representatives of magazines, radio and motion pictures, academic bodies and citizens' committees of various political orientations had occasion to express their views. Reports of the meetings leave no doubt that they did so thoughtfully and vigorously.²³

²² Evans, *US and UNESCO*, 145-147.

²³ *Ibid.*, 209-213.

The London Conference

Like Fulbright's delegation eighteen months earlier, MacLeish's was to make a lasting contribution to the future UNESCO. At its morning meeting on November 3, the delegation agreed to recommend that "United Nations" be made part of the title, that "Scientific" be added, and that the full name, which abbreviates as UNESCO, be adopted.²⁴ Only days before, the British Minister of Education, Ellen Wilkinson, had spoken publicly of the concern about the future path of scientific research in the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: "In these days, when we are all wondering, perhaps apprehensively, what the scientists will do to us next, it is important that they should be linked closely with the humanities and should feel they have a responsibility to mankind for the result of their labors." The conference agreed the following day to include science in UNESCO's mandate.²⁵ The US then urged close collaboration with the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), a relationship that continues to this day.²⁶

At the same November 3 delegation meeting, President Leland of the American Council of Learned Societies was invited to redraft the preamble and the statement of the organization's purposes and functions. Two days later Leland, in Evans's words, "professed himself not satisfied with what he was doing—he said that he needed to write a poem, and he wasn't good at that."²⁷ As chairman of the group charged with drafting the constitution's title, preamble and purposes, MacLeish quietly took on responsibility for the preamble. During the Washington meetings ten days earlier, it had been suggested informally that MacLeish "should write a new formulation of the preamble in light of new ideas" and that "the preamble should be an inspirational statement, suitable for distribution to school children ... like the Gettysburg Address."²⁸

MacLeish did not disappoint. According to Evans's notes for November 9, "Mr. MacLeish presented the fifth draft of the Preamble ...

²⁴ Ibid., meeting of Saturday, November 3, 1945, 10:30 a.m., 48.

²⁵ Sewell, *UNESCO*, 78-79.

²⁶ ICSU is now known as the International Council for Science.

²⁷ Evans, *US and UNESCO*, meeting of Monday, November 5, 1945, 1:30 p.m., 71.

²⁸ Ibid., meeting of October 26, 1945, 2:30 p.m., 15-16.

He had the agreement of the British, French, Mexican and other delegates ... When he had finished reading it aloud the general reaction was that it was magnificent.”²⁹

The preamble’s first phrase was inspired by a rhetorical query posed by British Prime Minister Clement Attlee to the conference on November 1: “Do not wars begin in the minds of men?” Attlee himself may have been responding to MacLeish’s earlier observation to the conference that “until the choice to live together is the choice of the minds and hearts of men, the alternative of life will not truly have been chosen.”³⁰ Whatever its antecedents, the poet within MacLeish seized upon Attlee’s insight and forged it into this memorable opening: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

Sir Alfred Zimmern, conference chair, had organized the conference into five Commissions and designated the US for the chairmanship of Commission I and France for Commission II. At MacLeish’s suggestion both withdrew, “allowing the smaller powers to have the chairmanships.”³¹

The size and strength of the US delegation enabled it to be represented by five or six members in each commission. Evans’s notes demonstrate that delegation members participated constructively in each and had lively debates during the twice-daily delegation meetings about positions to be taken. Archibald notes that the US delegation had a level of academic and scientific competence that most delegations lacked. “Except for the United States, academic specialists were a distinct minority, the majority of the delegations being made up of politicians and professional diplomats.” As with the Fulbright delegation in April 1944, the American delegation made a significant and highly positive contribution to the conference and, despite its singular stature and competence, attempted to work quietly and maintain genuine openness to the views of others.³² An Indian delegate noted that “US delegates

²⁹ Evans, *US and UNESCO*, meeting of Friday, November 9, 1945, 5:30 p.m., 115.

³⁰ Sewell, *UNESCO*, p. 80.

³¹ Evans, *US and UNESCO*, meeting of Saturday, November 3, 1945, 52.

³² Archibald, *Les Etats-Unis et L’UNESCO*, 74, 39.

had shown flexibility in meeting the suggestions of delegates from other countries.”³³

Initially at odds over the working text and other issues, French and American views on the new organization tended to converge after discussion. The French supported use of the American draft of the constitution as the conference's working document. Moreover, there was fundamental philosophical and political agreement that the new organization should be a forum where the peoples of the world, and not just their governments or the elite, could interact. This accounts for the high importance given by both countries to the creation of cooperating bodies called National Commissions for UNESCO as essential bridges between governments and civil society. More concretely, the Americans supported Paris as the site of UNESCO's headquarters, albeit with the provisos that the General Conference “be ambulatory”—that it meet elsewhere on occasion—and the understanding that the first Director-General be English-speaking.³⁴ For their part, the French abandoned the idea of having the Paris-based IICI serve as the UNESCO Secretariat and agreed to an international staff. They saw a kindred intellectual spirit in Archibald MacLeish and signaled informally that they would welcome him as the first Director-General. He tactfully declined, stating that he wished to continue his literary pursuits.³⁵ Gail Archibald comments wryly that perhaps what the French found most attractive about MacLeish was that he was not British. The British had raised many objections to Paris as the seat of UNESCO; they also objected to separating UNESCO's budget from that of the UN. Luther Evans's candid observation during the closing days of the conference

³³ Evans, *US and UNESCO*, meeting of Tuesday, November 13, 1945, 2:30 p.m., 136.

³⁴ Support for Paris was not unanimous within the US delegation. Vassar Dean Mildred Thompson “expressed the desire to have UNESCO in the United States even if the United Nations should go elsewhere, but she said she didn't want to press the point.” Evans, *US and UNESCO*, meeting of Sunday, November 4, 1945, 9:15 a.m., 62. See also Sewell, *UNESCO*, 104.

³⁵ Sewell, *UNESCO*, 106; Archibald, *Les Etats-Unis et L'UNESCO*, 67. Both Sewell, 105, and Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2005), 170, tell the culturally rich story of senior US delegation member William Benton asking the redoubtable Henri Bonnet if it were essential that the first Director-General speak French. According to Arndt, “Bonnet's advice was memorable. How ridiculous! Of course it was not essential, not even crucial ... merely *indispensable*!”

that a particular British delegate was “a member of the most incredibly unorganized and undisciplined delegation at the Conference” suggests that discomfort with the British extended beyond the French delegation.³⁶ MacLeish himself had an unpleasant experience with Sir Robert Wood while negotiating the highly sensitive issue of UNESCO’s role, if any, in providing reconstruction aid.³⁷ And at the conference’s eleventh hour, Theodora Bosanquet, the British delegate to Commission I, in an action that was particularly awkward for MacLeish as principal drafter, “began suggesting large amendments to the Preamble.” Evans noted at the morning meeting that “it seemed they would try to get the changes taken up in the Conference Drafting Committee this morning.” Leland responded that “if they did he would rule them out of order.”³⁸ They did not.

Throwing “the Light of Learning” on Important Developments

While not entirely an exercise in creation *ex nihilo*—models of international intellectual cooperation such as the International Bureau of Education, the IIIC and ICSU did exist—the specific functions of UNESCO, for the most part, needed to be invented. That nearly everything was on the table is clear from the back and forth of delegation meetings. During the Washington weekend, MacLeish had said that “he still didn’t have a real picture of the action in which the new organization would engage.”³⁹ In London he stated that the organization would, on its own, “throw the light of learning ... on important developments.” Underlying every suggestion was a studied effort “to bring light on recent developments to areas of the world which had been shut off from it.”⁴⁰

Ultimately, the US delegation promoted the free flow of ideas by word and image as an imperative for the new organization, and

³⁶ Evans, *US and UNESCO*, meeting of Tuesday, November 13, 1945, 9:00 a.m., 133. It is noteworthy that this was the only personal comment Evans allowed himself in 144 pages of printed notes.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, meeting of Saturday, November 10, 1945, 5:15 p.m. 123.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, meeting of Tuesday, November 13, 1945, 9:00 a.m., 133.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, meeting of Saturday, October 27, 1945, 10:30 a.m., 19.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, meeting of Friday, October 26, 1945, a.m., 1-3.

MacLeish's commitment to it appeared to have few limits. At a press conference on the afternoon of the delegation's first Washington meeting, he was asked about sharing information on atomic fission and was remarkably forthcoming. "Mr. MacLeish indicated that the American delegation had not taken a position yet, but pointed out that it believed quite literally in the free flow of information as a basic principle. He supposed, however, that there might be limitations in time of war and shortly thereafter."⁴¹ The question likely remained on MacLeish's mind for he raised it as the first item of business the following day:

Mr. MacLeish asked what our attitude should be in making information available on the atomic bomb. He felt that we should not retreat from the main principle of freedom of information, but we could say that we can't [talk] about particular questions ... The question was certain to come up in informal discussions, even if we should keep it off the floor. A discussion followed as to the difference between creating knowledge and controlling technical processes in creating weapons, industrial secrets, etc.⁴²

MacLeish may have felt free to push the limits on this sensitive issue beyond anything imaginable today because of a post-Hiroshima directive from Dean Acheson that the "role of scientists, scientific collaboration and interchange of scientific knowledge should be emphasized and made explicit."⁴³ Given the secrecy of the Manhattan Project and the magnitude and impact of the scientific achievements behind it, it is not surprising that only two months after the initial explosion, a policy was not yet in place on sharing scientific data that was perceived worldwide as a potential threat to human existence.

Program Priorities

MacLeish returned often to the theme of using the new tools of mass communication, film, radio, telegraph and the press "to enlighten the peoples of the world in a spirit of truth, justice and mutual under-

⁴¹ Ibid., meeting of Friday, October 26, 1945, 2:30 p.m., 8.

⁴² Ibid., meeting of Saturday, October 27, 1945, 10:30 a.m., 19.

⁴³ Sewell, *UNESCO*, 78.

standing.” It was to be the first and most important program priority.⁴⁴ Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs William Benton urged UNESCO to study how radio and films could provide fundamental education. Later, in the US Senate, he would propose a “Marshall Plan for Ideas.”⁴⁵

The second program priority was to promote international cooperation in science, in particular by having the new organization establish close ties with the International Council of Scientific Unions to permit scientists from every country to exchange information and work together. Again, the fundamental issue of the free flow of ideas was at play, as was the veiled affirmation that a way needed to be found to use the breakthrough scientific knowledge behind the destruction at Hiroshima to serve humanity.

The third program priority was to promote “basic education,” with an emphasis on adult education through close cooperation with existing public and private programs. The goal was less to address illiteracy, as such, than to prepare the public for its responsibilities for active life in democratic societies and to arm it against ideologies that could lead to war. The American program proposals were adopted by acclamation.⁴⁶

Three Problems

As the conference approached its end, three serious problems remained. A number of delegates, with the Chinese, Greek, Yugoslav and Polish delegates the most outspoken, asked how UNESCO could construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men without first meeting basic human needs of food and shelter and the physical infrastructure of civilized life. They were in good philosophical company. Seven centuries earlier Saint Thomas Aquinas had written in his *Summa Theologica* that one could not be expected to consider even one’s eternal salvation without first having a minimum of physical well-being. But Dean Acheson, unhappy with UNRRA’s performance, firmly opposed UNESCO becoming a conduit for multilateral reconstruction aid. All such aid, he insisted, must be bilateral, and he would agree only to the Preparatory Commission establishing a subcommittee to

⁴⁴ Archibald, *Les Etats-Unis et L’UNESCO*, 73.

⁴⁵ Sewell, *UNESCO*, 97.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

coordinate it through existing private charitable agencies.⁴⁷ Acheson later acknowledged that some flexibility on this issue would have been in order.

MacLeish attempted to reassure the delegates: UNESCO was, in its nascent “charter form,” rather like a kite lying motionless on the ground that awaited the wind to lift it soaring into the air. Action now was necessary to set it in motion.⁴⁸ But UNESCO as an organization was in large measure dependent for its success on the actions of national governments and sister international organizations. Constructing the defenses of peace would require a worldwide, coordinated and mutually dependent effort to address fundamental human needs as well as the aspirations of the human spirit. To succeed, UNESCO, other specialized agencies, the international banks and governments would need to work in consort. If one partner in the enterprise should fail, the work of all would suffer, as regrettably has sometimes been the case.

The status within UNESCO of “non-self-governing” or “dependent peoples,” a delicate euphemism for colonies, was another difficult issue for the American delegation. Several other delegations and a number of American nongovernmental organizations, including the American Council on Education, sought to have a resolution adopted whereby UNESCO would aid “dependent peoples” to develop their education systems while respecting their indigenous cultures. There was considerable support within the US delegation for this,⁴⁹ but Dean Acheson, fearful that the colonial powers could read the resolution as an incitement to the colonies to move toward independence, instructed MacLeish by telephone not to support the resolution unless it was considerably weakened. Evans observed in his notes, “This seemed to Mr. MacLeish to mean that there wouldn’t be any resolution. He hated

⁴⁷The Preparatory Commission was charged with making provisional arrangements for the establishment of UNESCO and organizing its first sessions.

⁴⁸ Sewell, *UNESCO*, 97.

⁴⁹ Alain Locke, “Memorandum re Representation of the Interests of Populations in the Non-Self-Governing Areas in the International Organization for Educational and Cultural Relations.” Presented at conference in the State Department, September 24, 1945, and reprinted in Evans, *US and UNESCO*, appendix 2, 207-208.

to go home without doing something about education in dependent areas.”⁵⁰

The greatest disappointment to the US, however, was the failure of the Soviet Union to participate in the conference. In response to an appeal from William Benton, Averell Harriman, the US Ambassador to Moscow, said that in the light of the fact that the Kremlin had ignored both the British letter of invitation and a second request of November 2, repeated approaches would only anger the Russians. Nonetheless, in a sign of the USSR’s looming presence even in absentia, conference delegates reserved one seat on the 15 member Preparatory Commission for the Soviet Union. Nine years would pass, however, before Moscow took its place at UNESCO.⁵¹

“The Charter Is Good”

As the London Conference approached its end, William Benton, who had succeeded MacLeish as Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, arrived in London. Formerly a founding partner in the major advertising agency Barton and Bowles, Vice President of the University of Chicago, and subsequently elected to the US Senate, Benton was the opposite of MacLeish in temperament and style. By force of personality and position and a gift for salesmanship, he wielded significant influence on public opinion. His judgment on the work of the conference, consequently, was important, and it was positive. “The Charter is good,” he said, noting that it provides an excellent framework. He went on to say, however, that “UNESCO will amount to very little ... unless it is backed by men and money. Perhaps, the more important of the two is the men. If the men who go in as leaders are up to the opportunity, they will see to it that the money is forthcoming.”⁵²

The passage of years has demonstrated that, while many of the men and women who went in were most certainly “up to the opportunity,” some within the UNESCO Secretariat and the American representation were not. The record is uneven in talent and commitment. But this, in its complexity, is a story for another day.

⁵⁰ Evans, *US and UNESCO*, meeting of Monday, November 12, 1945, 9:00 a.m., 125.

⁵¹ Archibald, *Les Etats-Unis et L’UNESCO*, 75.

⁵² Sewell, *UNESCO*, 84.

Chapter 2

More Than Meets the Eye: Building the Global Infrastructures of Cooperation in Education, Science, Culture and Communications

After vigorous and sometimes heated debate, UNESCO's Member States decided at its founding conference that the newly created organization's role would be to reconstruct the infrastructures of intellectual and cultural cooperation. The massive task of rebuilding the brick and mortar of educational and cultural institutions destroyed during World War II would be left, at the insistence of United States Secretary of State Dean Acheson, to bilateral programs of international aid.

It was agreed, also, that UNESCO's action would be determined exclusively by its constitution and not by the all-embracing world vision Julian Huxley had proposed in his personal capacity at the first General Conference (Paris, 1946). Rather, as French philosopher Jacques Maritain stated at the second General Conference (Mexico City, 1947), "agreement between Member States could and should be on the basis of common practical thinking and action in education, science, culture and communications."¹

For the most part, such practical thinking and action took the form of responding to real needs to build infrastructures to promote international cooperation within UNESCO's fields of competence. On the occasion of UNESCO's sixtieth anniversary, Americans for UNESCO (AU) published an overview of UNESCO's achievements

¹ Julian Huxley's 1946 report, *UNESCO—Its Purpose and Philosophy*, had been presented as a personal contribution but had caused considerable controversy. See Michel Conil Lacoste, *The Story of a Grand Design* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1995), 29-30.

though its first six decades.² What emerged from this study was a portrait of an institution with a demonstrated record of “practical thinking and action,” a reality far from the marginal “international talk shop” that uninformed critics have sometimes claimed it to be. As we look selectively in this chapter at UNESCO’s practical achievements over the years in each of its fields of competence, we rely heavily, but not exclusively, on AU’s earlier and highly useful overview.

Access to Education

From the beginning, UNESCO considered education to be a fundamental human right, its first priority and the base on which all else was built. Education remains its first priority and the major beneficiary of its budget. That limited access to education and high rates of illiteracy continue are not surprising. Illiteracy is one of the world’s most intractable challenges, with some 770 million adults in the world unable to read or write. Nonetheless, there has been progress. In 1957, 44 percent of the world’s population could not read; the rate has now fallen below 18 percent.

Access to education in 1945 was limited to a relative few, with the poor and the powerless—women and girls in particular—often excluded. While progress had been made during earlier decades, this began to change in earnest at a meeting of Member States in Dakar in 2000, where UNESCO developed the Education for All (EFA) program and set six goals to be achieved by 2015: early childhood education for all, universal primary education, youth learning, adult learning, gender equity, and attention to the quality of the education provided. While these ambitious goals lag behind schedule, especially in countries with high levels of poverty or conflict, EFA, with the assistance of a number of international donors, has moved forward without interruption and provided an essential infrastructure for international cooperation and

² Americans for UNESCO, *UNESCO 1946-2006: Selected Achievements* (Washington, DC: George Washington University, 2006). Americans for UNESCO, a nonprofit organization, furthers the vision of UNESCO’s founders for a global society of peace and comity. It helps intellectual communities and civil society in the US to play a part in UNESCO’s activities. As a member of the US National Commission for UNESCO, it advises the State Department and serves as a ready reference for all on UNESCO and its governance, Member States, program activities and history.

assistance in combating illiteracy. In addition to the EFA program, UNESCO is a major partner in the UN Literacy Decade (2005-2015) and the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) program. Both contribute to the global frameworks and mechanisms for progress in this essential area. Former US First Lady Laura Bush served as honorary UN Ambassador for literacy and actively involved herself in its work.

Because of the magnitude of the problem, UNESCO itself does not teach reading on a one-on-one basis. Rather, it turns to its Member States for hands-on action, reminds them of their responsibilities, prods and guides, sets standards, mobilizes international funding, trains educational planners and administrators, publicizes best practices and publishes annually the highly respected *Global Monitoring Report* to assess progress.

Despite the best efforts of the UN and its specialized agencies, including UNESCO in a lead role, "there are 58 million young people still being denied their right to education" and "a staggering 250 million who are unable to read, write and count after four years of schooling," noted UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson in late September 2014, in the presence of US First Lady Michelle Obama, former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. "Taken together these numbers give us 308 million reasons why the Secretary-General launched his global Education First initiative in 2012," said Eliasson.³ UNESCO has the lead role in managing this initiative within the UN family. It must be emphasized, however, that implementing the right to education of all their citizens is, above all, the responsibility of the UN Member States themselves. According to the Global Initiative on Out-of School Children, one-half of the world's out-of-school children live in conflict-ridden nations. Discrimination against girls and child labor also significantly impede efforts to provide education and literacy for all.

Selected achievements in education are described below.

³ United Nations, "Celebrating Global Initiative's Anniversary, Deputy Secretary-General Stresses Critical Role of Education in Development Goals, Post-2015 Agenda," news release, September 24, 2014, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/dsgsm803.doc.htm>.

The Beirut and Florence Agreements

In 1945, books and teaching materials were considered commercial merchandise when they were sent across borders, and they were taxed accordingly. Consequently, UNESCO found it necessary to address early on the very real obstacles to the international transfer of educational and cultural materials. It did so by encouraging the Beirut (1948) and Florence (1976) Agreements, which increased the flow of books and educational materials by freeing them from border-crossing restraints. Thirty-six Member States participated in the Beirut Agreement. The follow-up Florence Agreement broadened the possibilities for such exchanges and attracted ninety-one signatories. The two agreements permitted professional and educational institutions, as well as individuals, to obtain professional materials with less difficulty and cost.

Textbook Revision

Aware that textbooks can shape young peoples' views of others, the very first UNESCO General Conference adopted a program to improve textbooks and use them as aids in developing understanding. Work in this area has continued intermittently since. The Disarming History Program (1999), for example, addressed stereotypes and prejudice in the Balkans. Currently Germany, Poland, Japan, Korea and China are working actively on textbook revision. Recent political difficulties have suspended work between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to review textbooks, but the framework for cooperation in this field remains in place.

Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)

The UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education was a breakthrough agreement with the force of law that helped establish the moral and legal underpinnings for the right to education worldwide without regard to ethnicity, gender or social status. While the reality of access to education to all remains a work in progress, the convention

advanced its progress significantly by requiring its States Parties⁴ to report regularly on its implementation within their borders. The US did not become party to the convention because it predated its own Civil Rights Act (1964), but it did sign the parallel recommendation against discrimination and reports on its implementation.

Education for Palestinian Refugees

UNESCO, UNICEF and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) have helped provide primary and secondary education for Palestinian children, as well as adult education for their parents. According to a message from the Director-General in late 2014, UNESCO contributes through UNRWA to providing education to more than 500,000 children and training teachers to build a quality education system open to all. Moreover, UNESCO is working within the UN Development Assistance Framework to improve security in schools and institutions of higher education and to support the preservation and restoration of cultural sites.⁵

The Status of Teachers

While UNESCO has monitored national policies affecting teachers from the outset, since 1966 its work has been guided by its Recommendation on the Status of Teachers, cosponsored by the International Labor Organization (ILO), the US-based National Education Association (NEA) and the World Teachers' Organization (WTO). A twelve-member committee of experts oversees the Recommendation's implementation. The US National Center for Education Statistics within the Department of Education contributes regularly to UNESCO reports on teachers' status within the US.

⁴ States Parties are governments that have signed and ratified a convention (an international legal instrument).

⁵ Message from Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Nov. 29, 2014.

International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

Founded in 1964 by Philip H. Coombs, Assistant Secretary of State under President John F. Kennedy, at a time when colonizing powers had left their former colonies with few educated cadres to administer the newly independent countries, the IIEP has trained nearly 7,000 specialists in policy formulation, planning and management of education systems. The IIEP has been recognized by external evaluators as a world-class center for training senior educational administrators. Based in Paris, it has a worldwide reach, including a highly effective office in Buenos Aires that serves Latin America, and a strong technical team, the Pôle de Dakar, in Senegal that strengthens the Institute's engagement in Africa.

International Bureau of Education (IBE)

Founded in 1925, the IBE predates UNESCO and was the first international organization devoted exclusively to education. In 1969, it was incorporated into UNESCO. The IBE has a distinguished history of hosting the International Conference on Education and manages what is likely the world's most comprehensive library of international and comparative education. It currently serves as an international center for improving the methods and content of education by building networks to share expertise and information on curriculum development and by fostering international dialogue on educational policies, strategies and reforms.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

UNESCO created the UIS in 1999 to improve the quantity and quality of international statistical data in education, science, culture and communications, which it had already been collecting for many years. The Institute gives priority to gathering and analyzing policy-relevant statistical data and strives to build the capacity within UNESCO Member States to provide sound data and analysis. UIS also conducts its own studies and analyses in support of UNESCO's strategic goals and produces the valued *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*.

UNESCO Institute for Water Education (IHE), Delft, Netherlands

The IHE was incorporated into UNESCO in 2003 and is managed through an agreement between UNESCO and the Delft Foundation. The agreement was mutually beneficial in that it provided UNESCO with a world-class center for advanced study in water science and engineering and gave IHE access to UNESCO's global outreach. Since its establishment as the Delft Dutch Foundation in 1857, the institute has graduated more than 12,000 persons from 128 countries at the master's level and 50 at the PhD level. Most of its graduates have returned to their countries of origin.

International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Trieste, Italy

When the Italian government, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Pakistani Nobel Laureate Abdus Salam identified theoretical physics as an intellectual training focus for scientists from developing countries, they looked to UNESCO as a facilitating partner. Today, through a tripartite management agreement among the Italian government, the IAEA and UNESCO, the Trieste Center, commonly known as the ICTP, provides training in theoretical and applied physics, pure and applied mathematics, and various interdisciplinary areas. It annually sponsors sixty high-level training and research activities and prepares scholars for research in European, North American and Asian universities. It also encourages cooperation and networking among scientists by hosting and supporting The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) and the Inter-academy Panel (IAP). Since ICTP's creation in 1964, thousands of scientists have participated in its training and research activities, usually during the early years of their careers. About half of the participants are from developing countries and have gone on to distinguished careers in their home countries.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Hamburg⁶

The UNESCO Institute for Education, now known as the Institute for Lifelong Learning, was established in Hamburg in 1952 in partnership with the German government. Its work focuses on literacy, adult and lifelong education. UNESCO's 1972 Faure report, *Learning To Be*, and 1996 Delors report, *Learning: The Treasure Within*,⁷ drew worldwide attention to the need, now widely recognized, for systems that provide continuing access to educational programs at all levels and into advanced age.

Educational Exchange and Recognition of Credentials and Diplomas

The first edition of *Study Abroad*, a handbook describing opportunities for study, fellowships and exchanges in UNESCO Member States, appeared in 1949. Published in several languages and regularly updated, it has made a significant contribution to international and intercultural exchanges in education.

To pursue further studies or practice a profession across borders, students' academic credentials must be mutually recognized and accepted. Over the past three decades, UNESCO, working with other bodies such as the European Union, has coordinated a worldwide effort to evaluate educational credentials and establish guidelines for determining the comparability of diplomas. Without such a framework for assessing credentials equitably, the exchange of foreign students, scholars and licensed professionals, with its priceless contribution to international understanding and the advancement of knowledge, would be greatly and adversely affected.

⁶ For detailed information on the UNESCO Institutes and Centers, see UNESCO document 187 Executive Board INF 10, *Report of the Director General on Revised Principles and Guidelines on UNESCO Institutes and Centers*, on which much of the information in this description is based.

⁷ Edgar Faure et al., *Learning To Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* (Paris: UNESCO, 1972); and Jacques Delors et al., *Learning: The Treasure Within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1996).

International Association of Universities (IAU)

An international conference organized by UNESCO and the Netherlands in Utrecht led to the creation in 1950 of the IAU. With headquarters at UNESCO, the IAU is a worldwide higher education association that brings together institutions from some 150 countries for reflection and action on common concerns.

UNESCO Chairs

The UNESCO Chairs program, also known as UNITWIN, was established in 1992 as a means of promoting training, research and exchange among institutions of higher education. With over 650 institutions participating in 124 countries, the program has proved useful in generating new ideas and facilitating exchange. More than twenty American universities participate in the program, including the University of Pennsylvania and American, Georgetown, and George Washington Universities in the nation's capital. UNITWIN is a potentially powerful program that could contribute significantly to US participation in UNESCO.

Visions of Learning

In the aforementioned Faure and Delors reports, UNESCO drew on its experience over the decades to elaborate what it calls "visions of learning." Taken together, these reports present in UNESCO's view "a holistic and integrated vision of education based on the paradigms of lifelong learning and the four pillars of learning to be, to know, to do, and to live together."⁸ In the digital era, some influential voices feel it is time for a follow-up study.

⁸ Education: Visions of Learning, UNESCO, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/rethinking-education/visions-of-learning/>.

Natural Sciences

In 1945, UNESCO needed to approach its work in the natural sciences with considerable sensitivity to public opinion. In light of the destruction wrought by World War II, particularly the enormous power of the atomic bomb, even some serious and well-educated persons were wondering, “What will the scientists do to us now?” Consequently, the US began its cooperation with UNESCO in science through UNESCO’s existing ties with ICSU, known then as the International Council of Scientific Unions and currently as the International Council for Science. ICSU was, and remains, a nongovernmental organization with a global membership of national scientific bodies and scientific unions from more than 140 countries. For many years it received a significant subsidy from UNESCO. Regrettably, this subsidy has been significantly reduced in recent years because of budgetary restraints within UNESCO. What had been an effective cooperation between the US and UNESCO in the natural sciences has diminished because of the nineteen-year period of US non-membership in UNESCO and the non-payment of assessments following the admission of Palestine to full membership.

Following are selected achievements of UNESCO in science.

European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN)

In 1945, research in advanced physics had slowed significantly in Europe and had all but shut down in the developing world. Less than a decade later, UNESCO provided the diplomatic framework through which the international scientific communities created CERN in Switzerland. With limited resources of its own, UNESCO urged interested Member States to move forward collectively on this project, and by 1954 CERN had become the first international physics laboratory. It quickly attained self-sufficiency and world recognition and, most recently, scientific acclaim for its identification of the Higgs boson, the elusive elementary particle.

It is noteworthy that the original documents of the CERN convention and the articles of ratification of its Member States are deposited with UNESCO. CERN continues to cooperate actively in

UNESCO's basic science program in training, capacity building and strengthening science, particularly in Africa.

Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME)

In 1997, Germany offered to make available for use in the Middle East its Berlin Electron Storage Ring for Electron Radiation, or BESSY-I Synchrotron, which for many years had been functioning in Berlin. UNESCO, with the approval of its Executive Board in May 2004, provided the neutral political and legal platform to implement Germany's generous offer in a manner roughly comparable to how it had helped create CERN decades earlier.

BESSY-I was dismantled, donated to the SESAME project, and shipped to Jordan in June 2002, where it is being upgraded. Located in Allaan about 25 miles from Amman, SESAME is expected to come into full operation in late 2015. Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, the Palestinian Authority and Turkey are parties to the SESAME agreement. France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kuwait, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the US hold observer status. SESAME has enormous potential to further UNESCO's goals for both conducting serious scientific research and fostering greater understanding between scientists and governments in the Middle East.

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

Proposed by University of California professor and oceanographer Roger Revelle, the IOC was created in 1961 to facilitate ocean research within territorial waters. It coordinates programs in marine research, services, observation systems, hazards mitigation and capacity development to understand and effectively manage the resources of oceans and coastal areas. In applying the knowledge acquired, the IOC strives to improve the governance, management, institutional capacity and decision-making processes of its Member States with respect to marine resources. It hopes also to foster the sustainable development of the marine environment, particularly in developing countries. Currently 129 countries participate in the IOC activities, which include establishing Tsunami warning systems for the Indian Ocean and Pacific Rim.

International Hydrological Programme (IHP)

The IOC and UNESCO's work in water sciences education are complemented by the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), which addresses the social and political issues related to access to fresh water. This is a matter of significant political weight since, historically, water use has often triggered conflict. The US has traditionally played a major role in this program.

Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)

MAB is an intergovernmental scientific program that aims to establish a scientific basis for improving the relationships between people and their environment.

Launched in the early 1970s, the MAB proposes an agenda of interdisciplinary research and capacity building that targets the ecological, social and economic dimensions of biodiversity loss and the reduction of this loss. Much of its work is focused on a network of 610 biosphere reserves—internationally recognized terrestrial and coastal ecosystems that serve as “living laboratories” for testing and demonstrating integrated management of land, water and biodiversity—in more than 100 countries worldwide. Each reserve participates in an international system for the collection and analysis of data under an agreed protocol, but remains under national or local control.

It is noteworthy that when environmental cooperation was discussed at the 1974 Nixon-Brezhnev Summit meeting in Moscow, the two parties undertook to cooperate via UNESCO's biosphere reserves program under the agenda item of cooperation in “exact and natural sciences.” To a significant degree this was the result of the dogged efforts of American staff member Tom Gilbert.⁹ US governmental and private sector scientists have played leading roles in this program, although US cooperation in recent years has been significantly weakened by unsubstantiated congressional concerns over the sovereignty of the US biosphere reserves.

⁹ Lacoste, *Grand Design*, 159; Tom Gilbert, personal conversation with the author, May 2012.

MIRCENS (Microbial Resources Centers) Network

MIRCENS are academic research institutes in developed and developing countries that collaborate through UNESCO on microbiological research and biotechnological applications. Since 1975, 34 UNESCO Microbial Resources Centers have been established worldwide in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide a global infrastructure for the management, distribution, and utilization of the microbial gene pool.

Bioethics and the Human Genome

UNESCO's 1995 Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights and subsequent instruments underscored the right to continued research in bioethics while emphasizing respect for the dignity and privacy of the individual. UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee provides a respected forum for debate on major scientific, legal and ethical issues in the life sciences.

Human Rights

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are central to UNESCO's mission. It is cited in Article 1, paragraph 1 of its constitution and has been on UNESCO's programmatic agenda since the beginning. A special committee of its Executive Board deals with violations of human rights within UNESCO's fields of competence, such as claims raised by Soviet Jews and by families of disappeared Argentine students in the 1950s.

Of particular note is UNESCO's adoption of six separate statements on racial discrimination that collectively helped refute the concept of racial superiority. Its 1967 study on South Africa, for example, contributed to the demise of apartheid by declaring racism to be an inadmissible tool for addressing group conflict and arguing that it was, in fact, a major cause of such conflict. UNESCO's plan for the promotion of human rights and for education in human rights, to which American scholars have made significant contributions, addresses

discrimination, freedom of expression, tolerance and censorship, among other things.

UNESCO also made an important contribution to establishing the intellectual foundation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When the question was raised in 1948 as to whether there were any core values common to the then fifty-eight members of the UN, UNESCO recruited some of the leading thinkers of the time to serve on a committee on the theoretical bases of human rights. Chicago philosopher Richard McKeon served as rapporteur, and French philosopher Jacques Maritain became one of the committee's most active members. Teilhard de Chardin, Mahatma Gandhi, Benedetto Croce, Aldous Huxley and Salvador de Madariaga were among those consulted. The UNESCO committee followed up through special envoy Archibald MacLeish with the Human Rights Commission's first session at Lake Success, New York.¹⁰

Culture

Preserving cultural and natural heritage and fostering the diversity of cultural expression are major parts of UNESCO's mission. UNESCO is alone among intergovernmental organizations in extending protection to the tangible and intangible human cultural heritage, promoting respect for the diversity of cultures, and encouraging better understanding and dialogue among the world's peoples. These activities generate high interest among Member States.

International Council of Museums (ICOM)

Founded in 1946, the UNESCO/ICOM documentation center at UNESCO headquarters is a unique international repository of information on museums. Its journal *Museum* was founded in 1948 and continues publication to this day under the name *ICOM News*.

¹⁰ Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Random House, 2001), 51.

International Theatre Institute (ITI) and International Council on Archives (ICA)

The International Theatre Institute was founded in Prague in 1948 on the initiative of Julian Huxley, UNESCO's first Director-General. ITI maintains formal relations with UNESCO and is its principal international partner in the field of performing arts. The same year UNESCO founded the International Council on Archives (ICA), which today has more than 1,400 members in 190 countries.

The World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on November 16, 1972. With 190 States Parties and more than 1,000 inscribed sites in 107 countries, this legal instrument laid the foundation for UNESCO's flagship world heritage program. The idea for a convention that would combine the conservation of cultural sites and natural sites emerged from the US—in particular, from Russell Train, then Director of President Nixon's Council on Environmental Quality. A 1965 White House conference had called for a "World Heritage Trust" that would stimulate international cooperation to protect "the world's superb natural and scenic areas and historic sites for the present and the future of the entire world citizenry."¹¹ In 1968, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) developed similar proposals for its members. These proposals were presented to the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, and eventually a single text was agreed upon by the parties concerned. By regarding heritage as both cultural and natural, the Convention underscores the ways in which people interact with nature and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

Other Cultural Conventions

While the World Heritage Convention has emerged as the face by which UNESCO is most widely known, it is by no means the organization's

¹¹The World Heritage Convention, UNESCO, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>.

only legal instrument for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage.

In November 1970, sixteen years after the signing of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property during armed conflict, the international community decided to extend this protection by adopting the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The goal was to curb illicit international trafficking of cultural property.

Under the provisions of this pioneering convention, States agreed to cooperate to protect the cultural property found on their territory and fight illicit import, export and transfer. The convention addresses a rapidly evolving problem that is attracting significant political, media, diplomatic, and legal attention. Recently, for example, the Turkish government charged that some of the world's leading museums are in possession of objets d'art illicitly taken from its territory.¹² To date, the 1970 Convention has been ratified by 122 UNESCO Member States, including many culture-rich countries, major art-importing countries and some former hubs of illicit traffic.

The convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted in 2003. This convention was vigorously promoted by Japan but also shares some of the same vision for preserving cultural traditions that inspires the annual celebration on the Washington Mall of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

More controversial, but likely to take on greater and greater significance as the technology for exploring ocean depths advances, is the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001). Still more recently, UNESCO adopted the Convention on Cultural Expression (2005). The US opposed this latter instrument out of concern that its provisions could infringe on intellectual property rights. The US view was not widely shared, and the convention's impact and effects have yet to be widely felt.

The Campaign to Save Abu Simbel and the Temples of Philae

UNESCO's most striking and best-known success in safeguarding

¹² Annie Lowrey, "Seeking Return of Art, Turkey Jolts Museums," *New York Times*, October 1, 2012, 1.

cultural heritage was its work between 1960-1980 to safeguard the Great Temple of Abu Simbel and the Temples of Philae from the rising waters of the Nile caused by the construction of the Aswan High Dam. The campaign attracted more than \$70 million from public and private sources. Through remarkable scholarship, engineering and construction techniques conceived and implemented by an international team, the campaign managed to save the complex long known as the “pearl of the Nile.” In recognition of generous contributions by American donors, the Egyptian government made a gift of the Temple of Dendur to the US in 1965. The Temple now stands in the Sackler Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Nongovernmental Organizations

With such outreach, it will not surprise the reader that UNESCO has established formal working relationships with literally hundreds of nongovernmental organizations and foundations. Many formally engage with UNESCO through Executive Board action, while others have looser but nonetheless close ties. US corporations and foundations have contributed more than \$20 million since 2011 to UNESCO programs.

UNESCO as Convener

The rich tapestry examined above, with its points of contact and convergence for the international intellectual communities, was not woven from thin air. Rather, its warp and woof emerged to meet real and practical needs as UNESCO Member States recovered from the wreckage of World War II and met formally and informally in General Conference, at the Executive Board, or at ad hoc meetings convened by UNESCO to discuss and seek solutions to common problems. It soon became clear that UNESCO had significant power and reach as a convener. Through the years, senior government officials came to UNESCO, among them Charles de Gaulle, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Francois Mitterrand, US First Ladies Eleanor Roosevelt and Laura Bush, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Indira Gandhi, King Juan Carlos, Léopold Senghor, Nelson Mandela, and Popes John XXIII and John Paul II. Other participants in UNESCO sessions have included Nobel laureates, such as Leon Lederman, F. Sherwood “Sherry”

Rowland, Paul Berg, Abdus Salam, Alva Myrdal; and other intellectuals, writers and artists, such as Mary McCarthy, René Cassin, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Pablo Picasso, Yehudi Menuhin, and Jacques Maritain. Before long, it became necessary to categorize UNESCO meetings into those of a representative nature where participants represented their governments or international nongovernmental organizations, and nonrepresentative meetings where participants acted and spoke in a private capacity. The rules and terms of reference for each meeting category developed over time and are now formally laid out in the *Manual of the General Conference*.

Clearly, UNESCO's achievement in bringing its Member States together to advance the educational, scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world has been significant. But it is impossible to know how the course of events would have unfolded had there not been a UNESCO. Nor is possible to know what contributions UNESCO might make in the future through such projects as the emerging practical work of the SESAME synchrotron in Jordan or UNESCO's efforts to emphasize the dignity of the human person.

In this regard, it is, paradoxically, somewhat heartening to note that UNESCO's specific role was no clearer to Archibald MacLeish and his gifted delegation in London. The reader will recall from chapter 1 that as late as October/November 1945, nearly everything was on the table, and MacLeish did not have a real picture of the action in which the new organization would engage. He stated vaguely at one point that the organization would "throw the light of learning" on important developments and later, when asked specifically what UNESCO would do, he likened it to a kite that awaited the wind to lift it. Even Jacques Maritain, who would later articulate UNESCO's decision to focus on the tangible and practical, said at one point that "the end-purpose of UNESCO is to be the last fortress where minds can meet."¹³ Sigmund Freud, writing two decades earlier, alluded indirectly to the need for such a forum for discourse: "I myself have always advocated the love for mankind not out of sentimentality or idealism but for sober economic reasons because in the face of our instinctual drives and the

¹³ Lacoste, *Grand Design*, 33.

world as it is, I was compelled to consider this love as indispensable for the preservation of the human species as, say, technology.”¹⁴

What is striking is, on the one hand, how practical and responsive to real needs UNESCO's work has been over its first seven decades and, on the other hand, how essential it is that UNESCO maintain its credibility as a “fortress where minds can meet.” For this to happen, as Archibald MacLeish and his delegation well understood, much, if not everything, will depend on the quality of the people engaged in UNESCO's governance and program activity.¹⁵ The American educational, scientific and cultural communities could play a major, even decisive, role in assuring the quality of American participation if they were involved actively in UNESCO by the Department of State through the US National Commission for UNESCO, as envisioned in the UNESCO Constitution.

A parallel path to highly professional quality is for UNESCO to nurture from within its ranks, or hire on the international market, officers of the caliber of some of its outstanding officers from the past, such as Sylvain Lourié, Michel Batisse, Joseph Needham, Sema Tanguiane, Henri Dieuzeide, René Ochs, Jacques Hallak, Alain Modoux, Henrikas Yushkiavitchus, Gérard Bolla, René Maheu, Dragoljub Najman, Malcolm Adiseshiah, and John E. “Jack” Fobes.

There are successor generations of talented young men and women who are committed to the global good and eager to be of service in building the international infrastructures of cooperation in education, science, culture and communications. UNESCO needs them and could be an effective mechanism through which to channel their talents and spirit of service.

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, letter to Romain Rolland, January 29, 1926.

¹⁵ Sewell, *UNESCO*, 84.

Chapter 3

A Tenuous Partnership: Withdrawal 1984 and Reentry 2003

Despite UNESCO's remarkable record of building infrastructures of international cooperation in education, science, culture and communications for nearly forty years, as set forth in considerable detail in chapter 2, the United States government's interactions with UNESCO were not without regrettable blemishes.

McCarthyism and UNESCO

Less than a decade after the brilliant and visionary work of Fulbright, MacLeish and the American educational, scientific and cultural elite to create UNESCO in conjunction with international partners, American staff at UNESCO were pursued by their government between 1953 and 1956, as part of Senator Joseph McCarthy's witch hunt to uncover links to international communism. Seven staff members were dismissed. Director-General Luther Evans—an American and formerly a member of Archibald MacLeish's delegation to UNESCO's founding London Conference, Librarian of Congress, and US representative to the UNESCO Executive Board—tried to save them. But Henry Cabot Lodge, then US representative to the UN and a person of considerable personal influence, criticized Evans in a statement to *The New York Times* as lacking conviction in the struggle against international communism.¹ It was a shameful time and a principal reason that Americans remain highly sensitive to real or perceived abridgments of their civil liberties without due legislative process. Julian Behrstock's book *The Eighth Case* (University Press of America) provides a riveting first-person account of this regrettable time. Behrstock was not fired. He was "the eighth case."

¹ A.M. Rosenthal, "UNESCO Head Criticized by Lodge on Loyalty Cases," *New York Times*, October 17, 1954.

US Withdrawal

The US committed a second highly controversial, if not unworthy, act when it withdrew from the organization on December 31, 1984, citing what it claimed to be the organization's "excessive politicization, budgetary excess and an agenda that was consistently inimical to US interests."² Subsequent to withdrawal, Professor Roger A. Coate, then of the University of South Carolina, drew on UNESCO, State Department and congressional sources, as well as personal observations and interviews with UNESCO and American and other diplomatic officials, to analyze the validity of these charges.

Coate published his findings in a carefully reasoned and documented 1988 study. He concluded that, contrary to official State Department assertions, "the withdrawal of the US was an intentional action initiated and carried out largely by a small group of ideological zealots."³ This conclusion remains uncontested in the scholarly community and is consistent with the views expressed at the time by several UNESCO-based career diplomats, including this author, on the basis of daily interaction with UNESCO officials, State Department representatives and then US Ambassador to UNESCO, Jean Gerard.

Regrettably, some of these charges continued to surface even after the US reentered UNESCO on September 29, 2003. The most egregious example can be found in the Congressional Research Service (CRS) report to Congress, *The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*, dated March 18, 2013. Surprisingly, given the CRS's traditionally high standards, the report repeated uncritically and with minimal analysis the discredited State Department 1984 charges against UNESCO.

The charges were further called into question in the recently discovered September 2000 memorandum to Koïchiro Matsuura, who was the newly elected UNESCO Director-General, from Dragoljub Najman, the former UNESCO Assistant Director-General for External Affairs. It is noteworthy that Najman, now deceased, was an interlocutor on UNESCO issues of former Secretary of State Larry

² Cited in Roger A. Coate, *Unilateralism, Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy: The United States In and Out of UNESCO* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 1988), 157.

³ Ibid.

Eagleburger and White House official Elliott Abrams. The memorandum was found among the Najman papers housed in the Paris-based offices of the Association des Anciens Fonctionnaires de l'UNESCO, an organization of former UNESCO officers. Given its importance, the memo is quoted at length below, translated from the French:

The one and only reason that provoked the withdrawal of the United States from UNESCO was the fact that the Director-General [Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow] during a meeting with the Ambassador of the United States [Jean Gerard] that took place in mid-June, 1983 insulted the United States.

The Ambassador reported on this incident the same day to the Department of State and the White House. Mrs. Gerard was invited to report on this in the beginning of August to the National Security Council presided over in person by President Reagan. Three decisions were taken:

1. The United States would withdraw from UNESCO immediately.
2. They would not blame the Director-General for this action lest they make him into a martyr [this was suggested by Mr. Bush, then Vice President and accepted by the other members of the National Security Council].
3. The Department of State would find substantive reasons to, if not explain, at least justify the government's decision.

It follows from this that all the argumentation developed later and published in letters, studies, etc. was an ex post facto justification of the decision taken at the beginning of the month of August 1983.⁴

Ambassador Gerard and Najman grew close over the years, to the point that Najman reportedly was present at her deathbed. He is, in fact, cited in a *New York Times* article of August 6, 1996, as having

⁴ Memorandum from Dragoljub Najman to Koïchiro Matsuura, "Objet: Rapports entre l'UNESCO et les États Unis," September 1, 2000.

confirmed her death in Paris of cancer.⁵ The Najman account, consequently, could be an attempt to influence positively and in Gerard's favor later perceptions of her role in the withdrawal process. Najman would normally not have access to classified materials reporting on exchanges between Gerard and Washington DC, and presumably could rely only on Gerard's account of what transpired. The cable traffic of the time remains classified.

What gives pause to this author about the Najman account is his report of the personal engagement of both President Reagan and Vice President Bush on this matter, which did not involve national security, war or peace, the categories of issues that would naturally engage the highest levels of government. Disagreements or even unpleasantness between a head of a UN Agency and the US representative was, while serious, not an unprecedented issue in multilateral diplomacy⁶ and would normally be resolved within the Department of State. Moreover, it was well known to Gerard's staff, if possibly not to Najman, that Gerard was not always fully candid with her staff or diplomatic colleagues.⁷ What, on the other hand, gives credibility to the Najman account to this first-hand observer of the withdrawal process is that everything did, in fact, change in the US government's relationship with the Director-General after the M'Bow-Gerard meeting of June 1983. The Najman account also helps explain the tortured and repeatedly changing reasons given by the State Department during 1983-84 and thereafter for its decision to withdraw from UNESCO, since presumably, according to the Najman scenario, State Department officers were attempting to cobble together plausible reasons to withdraw from UNESCO on instructions from the National Security Council. Coate carefully documents in his book those changing and expanding reasons as well as the ever-changing reforms requested of UNESCO.

While Gerard's staff remained professional and loyal, if increasingly troubled by her unpredictable behavior and the ever-changing narrative from Washington, Ambassador Gerard did not enjoy wide respect or credibility among other permanent delegates, including career

⁵ Paul Lewis, "Jean Gerard, 58, Reagan Envoy Who Led U.S. to Leave UNESCO," *New York Times*, August 6, 1996.

⁶ The United States had withdrawn from the International Labor Organization in 1977; it renewed its membership in 1980.

⁷ For striking examples of both, see Coate, *Unilateralism*, 73-74 and 130-131.

diplomats from the traditional Western group of political, policy and budgetary allies.

When withdrawal was effected in December 1984, the US paid its 1984 assessments in full. There was, however, a short-lived controversy over whether the US owed an assessment for 1985, the second year of the two-year 1984-85 budgetary cycle. UNESCO's governing bodies resolved the issue in favor of the US.

Since the US had acceded to UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the International Hydrological Program through legal frameworks separate from its adherence to the UNESCO Constitution, the Department of State determined, and UNESCO agreed, that the US could maintain active membership in these bodies. Congress appropriated approximately \$2.8 million annually to fund this ad hoc participation. The State Department also established an Observer Mission to UNESCO, joining the PLO and the Holy See in that status.

During the nineteen years of non-membership in UNESCO, the Observer Mission proved effective in facilitating contacts between UNESCO and specific US governmental agencies, such as the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Park Service, the US Geological Survey, the Department of Education and the Smithsonian Institution, as well as the National Academies, when these bodies found it in their interests to reach out to the international community.

The Najman memorandum, in stating that the decision to withdraw was at the end of the day a *White House* decision, sheds some light on why successive noncareer Assistant Secretaries of State for International Organization Affairs in the 1980s, such as Gregory Newell, Alan Keyes, and John Bolton, and their lower-level politically appointed aides maintained what can only be described as an aggressively hostile attitude toward UNESCO, an organization created by their own government and imbued with its values. Political appointees and their acolytes who were sensitive to partisan orthodoxy might have desired to give the White House what it wanted, despite evidence to the contrary that career diplomats would have considered a duty to pass on to their superiors. Some highly placed State Department officers, such as then Under Secretary Michael Armacost and his senior aide Gerard Hellman, saw what was happening several levels below them but, likely for in-house protocol reasons, did not intervene.

Attitudes changed only when Bill Clinton was elected president in 1992 and named Douglas J. Bennet as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs and Susan Rice as a White House Adviser on multilateral diplomacy. Yet, it would take another decade for the US to reenter UNESCO. Despite repeated overtures from UNESCO leadership, the chasm of communication and interaction that the nineteen-year estrangement created between UNESCO and the American academic, scientific and cultural communities was not easily bridged.

It must be acknowledged that, in the years leading up to withdrawal, a potentially serious political issue had emerged in the form of a perceived threat to freedom of the press through a proposed program called the New World Information and Communication Order, or NWICO. UNESCO did not initiate this program or ever adopt it. A coterie of third world countries led by Tunisia was behind it, supported sub rosa by the Soviet Union, as Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze admitted in a candid post-Glasnost statement to the UNESCO Executive Board. Though NWICO was never adopted, UNESCO had the misfortune to be the forum where the debate took place and was thereby associated with and seriously damaged by the controversy. Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow's perceived insensitivity to the importance of freedom of the press to the US and other Western nations exacerbated the issue.

To make things even more difficult at the time, the US had difficulty communicating effectively with M'Bow. A Senegalese educator by background and a man of considerable pride and self-esteem, he became an emerging third-world spokesman at a time when tolerance of demands for new economic and communications orders and third-world demagoguery had worn dangerously thin among Western nations, which also happened to be UNESCO's major funders. M'Bow spoke little English and demonstrated little understanding of non-francophone culture or thought. To be sure, many of his American counterparts spoke little French and most certainly did not understand his African cultural heritage. Although the US supported his election in 1974 and subsequent reelection in 1980, there was unspoken but palpable mistrust between him and the US, fueled in part by his suspicion that US policy toward him was tinged with racism. While US policy toward UNESCO was often unenlightened and driven by conservative domestic politics, there is no evidence that it was consciously

racist. There was, however, at the time a coordinated effort by isolationists to take the US out of UNESCO, as Coate argues and documents in his study. This author concurs with Coate—on the basis of personal experience in the years preceding US withdrawal as a member of the permanent delegation to UNESCO and later as desk officer for UNESCO at the Department of State—that this coordinated effort by well-placed isolationists is the real reason the US withdrew from UNESCO. The official reasons given were concocted and elaborated after the fact as Najman asserted in his memorandum. Despite Gerard's weaknesses as a credible source, on this point Najman got it right.

US Reentry into UNESCO

Many people played significant roles in promoting the reentry of the US into UNESCO. It has often been observed, of course, that victory has hundreds of fathers, while defeat is an orphan. Although reentry into UNESCO may not have had literally hundreds of mothers and fathers, it certainly had many. Several stand out.

First among equals was former UNESCO Deputy Director-General Jack Fobes, who had kept hope alive for US reentry through Americans for the Universality of UNESCO, an organization he founded shortly after withdrawal to inform Americans about UNESCO and to advocate reentry. Despite relentless State Department efforts to silence him, Jack Fobes was indefatigable. And each time anti-UNESCO forces tried to stamp out memories of UNESCO, another issue of the Fobes newsletter would arrive at in-boxes throughout Washington.

Melinda Kimble and Michael Southwick, Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State for International Organization Affairs, were key players. Kimble encouraged open discourse about UNESCO within the Bureau of International Organization Affairs for the first time in a decade. Ambassador Southwick believed UNESCO membership would be in the national interest and supported reentry within the Department of State, arguing that there was no credible reason not to be a member. Early in the George W. Bush administration, Southwick used his contacts with Elliott Abrams, then Director of Multilateral Affairs at the

National Security Council, to make the case for reentry to the White House.

Abrams quickly saw reentry as a possible way to address the unilateralist charge against the Bush administration's foreign policy. He noted also that UNESCO's programs, in particular the Education for All program, could complement Bush administration priorities such as the No Child Left Behind Act. Abrams played a pivotal role in the reentry process.

Senior Foreign Service Officer and prize-winning historian Elizabeth Brown Pryor provided further intellectual and political credibility to the case for reentry in "The Opportunity at UNESCO: A Phased Approach to Reentry," a highly influential paper written in February 2002 for the State Department's Senior Seminar. Abrams at the National Security Council and Southwick at State, among others, utilized the paper's fresh and compelling analysis and logic to underpin the case for reentry.

Senior US policy makers were further nudged toward reentry by the Washington visit in July 2002 of David Stanton, the articulate and highly credible British Ambassador to UNESCO appointed to represent the United Kingdom at UNESCO in 1997, after its absence of twelve years. Stanton called on Elliott Abrams, other senior administration officials and key Congressional contacts to lay out the changes at UNESCO, explain the UK's experience of reentry and urge the US to follow suit. His visit was politically significant.

Washington hostess Esther Coopersmith played an important role in the reentry process literally from the day Koïchiro Matsuura was elected Director-General. She used her vast access and generosity as a hostess to introduce Matsuura and his reforms to the Washington power elite. This included orchestrating a Matsuura appointment with Senator Jesse Helms, who provided an essential approval to the reentry process from a former critic.

A number of congressmen played significant roles, in particular Tom Lantos (now deceased) as well as Howard Berman and Jim Leach and their staffs.

Federico Mayor had succeeded M'Bow as UNESCO Director-General in November 1987 and brought a Western democratic voice to UNESCO. He was formerly Spanish Minister of Education and Science, a member of the European Parliament, a respected world-class bio-chemist and a reformer committed to reversing the rigidity and cultural

clashes that had characterized M'Bow's tenure. He understood and was responsive to American political concerns and set UNESCO on a course that promoted human rights, democratic practice and the free flow of ideas. He also launched the organization's groundbreaking work in bioethics. Under Mayor, UNESCO became an outspoken and uninhibited champion of the free press and had UNESCO Member States commit in successive General Conferences to the principle that "a free, pluralistic and independent press is an essential component of any democratic society."⁸ Under him, UNESCO once more reflected and proclaimed publicly the Western democratic values embedded in its constitution. This was an important and dramatic change in UNESCO's institutional culture.

Mayor's management reforms started off well but ended under criticism. In 1993, the US General Accounting Office gave Mayor and his managers high marks for "a commitment to management reform." Good management, however, appeared to unravel in the last years of his tenure, especially in personnel and budgetary management.

Like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, Mayor had enormous personal charisma and filled up a room the moment he walked into it. Curiously, he was not as politically successful at UNESCO as one might have expected, but even his critics agree that he restored UNESCO's commitment to Western democratic values. Had the US been a member of UNESCO during his tenure and worked closely with him, there almost certainly would have been significant improvements in UNESCO management and personnel practices and ultimately major progress in achieving UNESCO's strategic goals.

It is highly likely that personal rivalries and jealousies within the Secretariat and the governing bodies played a role in undermining Mayor's effectiveness. Middling government officials and entrenched bureaucrats sometimes do not appreciate a brilliant Director-General, impatient with grinding bureaucratic procedures, who is an internationally respected scientist and published poet, and is accomplished, articulate and widely admired for his style and compelling presence.

Mayor was succeeded in November 1999 by a career Japanese diplomat, Koïchiro Matsuura, who was elected Director-General with strong—some would say heavy-handed—political support from Tokyo.

⁸ Declaration of Santiago, UNESCO, May 6, 1994, http://www.unesco.org/webworld/fed/temp/communication_democracy/santiago.htm.

Matsuura proved to be a principled manager who moved immediately and courageously to downsize the number of senior positions, simplify internal structures and prioritize program activities. This resonated well in Washington.

Matsuura brought different gifts and style to the Director-Generalship than did Mayor. He was, in the words of a State Department official, “charismatically challenged” but had “the heart of a samurai!”⁹ A former Japanese deputy foreign minister during the time of George H.W. Bush, Matsuura also had high-level personal contacts in Washington, and unlike Mayor, he was nonthreatening to male egos. In brief, he conveyed the image, quite legitimately, of a determined Mr. Clean.

Unfortunately, Matsuura had difficulty articulating his vision for UNESCO effectively. This became frustrating at times as he met with US officials. But Matsuura’s integrity, straightforwardness and determination carried the day in his interaction with Washington officialdom.

One reason for this success was his secret weapon. If he lacked charisma and effective communication skills, he was shrewd enough to select Hillary Wiesner, a Harvard PhD, as a personal aide responsible for communicating with the American government, the Congress and the private sector. Dr. Wiesner, aided by gifted colleagues Jay Corless and Helène Marie Gosselin, gave UNESCO an articulate, contemporary, and highly intellectual face in the corridors of Washington power. She served Mr. Matsuura loyally and well.

Matsuura and Wiesner found a certain receptivity in Washington even during their early visits because President Clinton had lifted UNESCO’s “pariah status.” Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had expressed this growing comfort with UNESCO in a letter to Director-General Mayor dated October 14, 1999, shortly before he left office: “UNESCO is an organization whose values we share, whose work we encourage and whose ranks we expect to rejoin.”¹⁰ At the time, nineteen US government agencies and a score or more US-based nongovernmental organizations were interacting regularly with UNESCO. This interaction, emerging from the agencies’ concrete need

⁹ Michael Southwick, personal conversation with the author.

¹⁰ UNESCO Press, “General Conference Pays Tribute to Director-General Federico Mayor,” November 5, 1999, <http://www.unesco.org/bpi/eng/unesco/press/1999/99-246e.shtml>.

for UNESCO's outreach and global infrastructures, gave substantive credibility to the reentry process. William McIlhenny, then the US observer to UNESCO, deserves much credit for facilitating and fostering this cooperation.

Efforts to smooth the way for reentry culminated in September 2002. President Bush's advisers intended to use his scheduled address to the UN General Assembly on September 12 to make his case for war with Iraq. But with the President under criticism for being a unilateralist, Elliott Abrams urged him to demonstrate multilateralist credentials to garner support for a security Council resolution against Iraq. In a telephone conversation with the author, Dragoljub Najman said that according to his acquaintance Abrams, there had been a tug-of-war within the White House less than 24 hours before the speech over whether to demonstrate the new US multilateralism by announcing reentry into UNESCO or by providing the UN with a \$2 billion guaranteed loan to refurbish its headquarters building in New York. Abrams won, and the President announced to the General Assembly that "as a symbol of our commitment to human dignity, the US will return to UNESCO. This organization has been reformed, and America will participate fully in its mission to advance human rights and tolerance and learning."¹¹ The President reportedly noted to Abrams some months later that the reentry announcement brought the only applause in what he considered a major foreign policy address to the UN.

Even after the President's announcement, there were some in the State Department who wanted to derail reentry. Reentry was sealed, however, by the personal engagement of First Lady Laura Bush when she accepted an honorary UNESCO ambassadorship to promote literacy, a role she continues to take seriously.

The US formally reentered UNESCO on September 29, 2003. Laura Bush raised the American flag among the 190 other national flags flying at UNESCO; Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Susan Graham sang the national anthem. The US was elected to a seat on the UNESCO Executive Board. Louise Oliver was named Ambassador to UNESCO and served with distinction. In June 2005 the 100-member US National Commission for UNESCO met for the first time in the presence of

¹¹ George W. Bush, "President's Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly," September 12, 2002, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>.

Laura Bush. It was at this meeting that Librarian of Congress James H. Billington launched the idea that became the World Digital Library, through which the rich collections that “institutions, libraries, and museums have preserved could be given back to the world free of charge and in a new form far more universally accessible than any forms that have preceded it.”¹² The Library of Congress entered into a constructive partnership with Google to make this financially and technically possible. UNESCO made it politically possible by offering to serve as the Digital Library’s neutral international platform.

For its part, the Department of State fully staffed its Washington-based UNESCO policy office and the Paris-based Permanent Delegation to UNESCO and set up a reconstituted US National Commission for UNESCO. With administrative infrastructures in place, policy makers then faced the important work of leveraging UNESCO membership to pursue the fully compatible goals of maximum political advantage to the US and maximum global good. The key to doing so is for policy makers to set strategic objectives over two-, four- and even six-year periods and then to decide tactically how to attain them. While doing so can serve the national interest and the global good, it also obtains value for money—political and diplomatic capital for the millions of dollars the US pays in annual assessments to UNESCO. Otherwise, the US risks remaining forever reactive to the initiatives of others, a policy of damage control from which it is difficult to be effective.

Reengagement began on a positive note. Several Americans were appointed to senior positions within the UNESCO Secretariat. The Washington-based staff traveled periodically to UNESCO headquarters and were well informed on Secretariat matters. Moreover, leadership of the State Department’s Bureau of International Organization Affairs regularly consulted with UNESCO leadership in Paris. The American Secretary of State visited UNESCO for the first time ever. The Department of State also took the initiative to invite UNESCO to observe World Press Freedom Day in the US in May 2011. It was a significant and highly successful event.

¹² James Billington, “A View of the World Digital Library,” June 6, 2005, US Department of State Archive, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/io/unesco/51671.htm>.

There was reason for encouragement and for identifying other big ideas to be pursued comparable to the US-conceived World Heritage Convention and International Oceanographic Commission. Makers of US policy toward UNESCO need to identify and promote these ideas. The proven way to do so is to unleash the American academic, scientific and cultural communities and encourage them to interact with the US government and with specialists in the UNESCO Secretariat.

The current US National Commission for UNESCO has made an extraordinary contribution to global knowledge access through the World Digital Library and has undertaken a number of good-faith efforts to reach out to the American public, particularly through its website. Still, one is forced reluctantly to conclude that since its reestablishment in 2005, the Commission has been weak at best in acquitting its most important responsibility of linking the American educational, scientific and cultural communities to the formulation of US policy towards UNESCO. Granted, the Federal Advisory Commission Act (FACA) regulations have had crippling effects on the Commission's operations, but it is difficult to understand why the Commission, especially under a Democratic administration, has made no visible effort to seek an exemption from these regulations, which was successfully done when FACA was first adopted.¹³ The current rigid interpretation and enforcement of the FACA regulations prohibit the Commission from functioning as the original congressional legislation intended. This needs to be revisited on a priority basis! With political will, bureaucratic courage and a modest operational budget, the Commission's potency and effectiveness can be restored.

In principle, the great institutions and personalities of the American educational, scientific and cultural organizations are represented on the Commission and lend their informed voices to the formulation of US policy at UNESCO. Many of these organizations—such as the National Education Association, the American Council on Education, the National Science Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Academies, the International Institute of Education, the Social Sciences Research Council, the American Library Association and the UN Foundation—have substantial budgets, highly competent staffs and distinguished traditions of international engage-

¹³ Richard K. Nobbe, *A Brief History of the US National Commission for UNESCO, 1970-1983* (unpublished memoir), 3.

ment. Regrettably, since reentry into UNESCO, these respected voices, as well as the more than twenty UNESCO chairs at American universities, have been largely silent in the formulation of US policy toward UNESCO and absent from delegations to meetings of UNESCO's governing and specialized bodies. The voices are silent, and they are not present in the formulation of policy because they have not been given a credible platform, such as an effective National Commission for UNESCO, to do so. Uninvited and held at arms' length, they remain mute even now, when their influential voices as well as their substantial political and organizational power are most needed and could be useful in persuading Congress to renew payments of long-overdue US assessments to UNESCO, discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Engagement with the American academic and cultural communities offers the greatest potential for effective U.S participation in UNESCO. Reluctance or inability of the US Government to seize this potential is the most grievous failure of US policy toward UNESCO since reentry in 2003.

The stakes are high. The so-called soft issues of culture and education, interethnic understanding and the ethics of electronic communications and science have become fundamental issues of realpolitik, global economics and war and peace. But the talent within the American educational, scientific and cultural communities and its international partners is sufficient to build a renewed UNESCO with enlightened American participation that can address these issues effectively. It is a goal worth working for, and one that is in the national interest of the US to undertake.

Chapter 4

A Regrettable Crisis:

The US Withholds Millions of Dollars in

UNESCO Assessments

On October 31, 2011, in an act that would have serious financial and political impact upon the organization, UNESCO Member States voted to admit Palestine into UNESCO as a full Member State. It was Halloween day, as well as the eve of the Roman Catholic holy day All Saints Day and the French national holiday *La Toussaint*. It is a day of mixed character: magical for the young in its costumes, disguises, parties and trick-or-treating; more solemn for the not-so-young as a day of remembrance of the souls of all who have gone before, which they will observe formally on the *Fête des Morts*, November 2. Halloween day of 2011 would play out at UNESCO in a manner consistent with its mixed character.

The 36th session of the UNESCO General Conference, the organization's highest decision-making body, had opened the previous week in the presence of diplomats, senior government officials and academics from its 194 Member States, and there was more than the usual international meeting excitement in the air. On the recommendation of the 187th session of UNESCO's Executive Board, a motion to admit Palestine as a full member of UNESCO had been placed before the Conference and was adopted on Halloween day by a vote of 107-14 with 52 abstentions. The decision gave rise to extended applause and celebration. The United States voted against Palestinian membership, joined by Australia, Canada, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, and Sweden, among others. The European Union failed to come to a common position. Some European nations, including France and Belgium, voted in favor, joining Brazil, China, India, Russia and most African and Arab states. Other European nations abstained, including Denmark, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. Japan and the Republic Korea also abstained.

Hardly a week earlier, President Obama had stated before the United Nations General Assembly that the creation of a Palestinian State, as part of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian territorial dispute, was a fundamental element of US Mideast policy. But he had added in an important caveat: the creation of a Palestinian State must be based on an agreement negotiated by the two parties. The proposal before the General Conference was not the product of a negotiated agreement between the two parties. In the absence of such an agreement, the US voted against the membership proposal.

The US also voted against the proposal because it knew that the admission of Palestine as a full Member State would trigger provisions of the Foreign Appropriation Acts of 1990 and 1994 (PL 101-246 and PL 103-356). These acts, which generally authorize payments of assessments to the UN, include provisions that prohibit the US from making payments to any UN-affiliated organization that “grants full membership as a state in the United Nations to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood” or “which accords the Palestine Liberation Organization the same standing as member states.”¹

Many thoughtful persons, including Congressman Keith Ellison of Minnesota, believe that the rationale for these laws no longer exists, noting that they ignore significant developments over the past 20 years. First, when Congress passed the 1990 law, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was on the State Department’s list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, but the PLO was removed from this list in 1991. Second, when the 1995 law was passed, the idea of supporting a Palestinian State was not yet accepted by Washington.²

Whether or not the rationale for the laws remains valid, *The New York Times* and others reported that they went into effect immediately and with severe impact.³

Since the US had not yet paid its 2011 assessment of approximately \$80 million, it would remain unpaid, causing an immediate and significant shortfall for UNESCO to address before the end of the

¹ PL 103-345, Title IV, §410 and PL 101-246, Title IV, §414.

² Keith Ellison, “The U.S. Shouldn’t Forfeit Influence in the UN,” *The Hill*, November 21, 2011.

³ Steven Elingar, “Cutting Off UNESCO Could Endanger Programs in Iraq and Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, November 16, 2011.

2010-11 budget cycle. As a Member State, the US would incur further assessments of approximately the same amount for the 2012-13 budget cycle. Voluntary, as well as assessed, contributions were also prohibited; for example, the approximately \$700,000 the US contributes annually to implement the World Heritage Convention, and approximately \$2 million in other voluntary contributions given directly or indirectly, in cash or in kind, by USAID, the US Geological Survey, the National Science Foundation and the Army Corps of engineers for programs of mutual interest. An online report by *The Cable's* Josh Rogin drew on an unofficial State Department memorandum to congressional offices to lay out in significant detail the devastating impact the withholding of US funds would have on UNESCO's program and staff.⁴ Nonetheless, there is no evidence that Congress was moved to reconsider its position on withholding US funding. The festivity of Halloween and the joyful celebration of *La Toussaint* had turned rapidly to the somber reality of the *Fête des Morts*.

In curious contrast to the attitude during the nineteen years of US absence from UNESCO, when staff and delegates routinely asked when the US was going to return to UNESCO, no one during the 2011 General Conference approached familiar American observers to ask, "When is the US going to sort this out and respect its treaty obligations to the institution it was so instrumental in founding?" Nonetheless, the reaction to the withholding of funds was apparent on three distinct levels.

Member States appeared to be conflicted. While sympathy was high for the Palestinian cause, it is noteworthy that sixty-six, or approximately one-third, of UNESCO's Member States abstained or voted against the admission of Palestine, either in response to diplomatic persuasion from Washington or because they foresaw the severe impact of the loss of US funding on needed program activity. And, it is quite remarkable that only days after the Palestinian membership vote and the immediate withholding of US funds, the US was elected to a prized seat on the organization's Executive Board with 149 votes.

⁴ Josh Rogin, "State Still Making the Case for UNESCO Funding," *The Cable*, November 24, 2011, 1-6.

UNESCO staff members, overall, were highly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. They appreciated the Obama administration's affirmation that UNESCO remained a strategic partner, which was in dramatic contrast to the aggressive slandering of UNESCO at the time of withdrawal in 1984; but overall, given Congress's behavior, this affirmation rang false as hollow happy talk. It will likely take considerable time to restore US credibility among the UNESCO staff, since the crisis occurred less than ten years after US reentry into UNESCO. It may also remind many staff of an earlier withholding of US funds during 1974-1976 because of perceived anti-Israel bias on the part of UNESCO's governing bodies. Further, there is an underlying perception among diplomats and staff at UNESCO of the US government, and especially the Congress, as a tool of lobbyists for Israel and as an enabler to Israel in denying the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people. There is also an accompanying sense of affectionate disappointment in the US, as if a close and valued friend who should know better had embarrassed himself, his family and all who love him.

More importantly, the US was perceived as being on the wrong side of history, as it was for many years at UNESCO when it opposed any interaction with the African National Congress and Nelson Mandela and as it was in New York for many years as it opposed the membership of mainland China (People's Republic of China) in the UN. There was puzzlement also about how so great a country could be held hostage in its foreign policy by one-issue, well-focused and well-funded interest groups, at times to the detriment of its international standing and human rights convictions. Finally, there was uncertainty about Washington's seriousness when it said on the one hand that the Palestinians should await the outcome of statehood negotiations in New York and announced publicly on the other hand that it would veto the initiative in the Security Council and oppose it in the General Assembly.

After UNESCO's diplomatic outreach to the Palestinian leadership, Israel, the US and its broader membership failed, UNESCO senior leadership appeared to be in stunned disbelief that this crisis had come crashing down on Director-General Irina Bokova at a time of renewal and refocused program action under what is widely perceived as her energetic and visionary leadership. It was particularly surprising that this juncture arrived so soon after the acclaimed celebration of World Press Freedom Day in Washington the previous May and the hope for

enhanced partnerships inspired by recent visits of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to UNESCO headquarters.

Nonetheless, UNESCO leadership responded to the crisis in a disciplined and focused manner. To limit political damage, Bokova stated that she herself would be the principal spokesperson on this issue and instructed staff not to comment on it. Bokova also made clear that she would maintain regular communications with Washington. This has proved to be the case, with regular senior-level contacts between the State Department and her office.

Once it was clear that the US would not pay its already overdue 2011 assessment of approximately \$80 million, Director-General Bokova and her senior staff launched a thorough review of all activities planned for the remainder of 2011 and cut \$31.2 million from projected expenditures. She offered a staff buyout that was mutually beneficial to eligible employees and UNESCO. Forty-five officers took the package for a saving of \$3 million. To meet the gap in core funding, Bokova established the Emergency Multi-Donor Fund for UNESCO priority programs and reform activities. As of January 31, 2012, more than \$26 million had been received, including \$20 million from Qatar, \$5 million from Turkey, \$1 million from Congo, \$100,000 from Iceland, and \$16,385 from Andorra, San Marino, and Cyprus, as well as donations of \$32,312 from individuals through the online donation facility. Moreover, pledges had been made by Indonesia (\$10 million), Congo (\$2 million), Timor-Leste (\$1.5 million), and Cameroon (\$290,000).

To improve the cash flow, the Director-General also requested early payment of 2012 contributions. As of January 31, 2012, \$88.4 million of the 2012 assessments had been received, compared with \$21 million in January 2010.⁵

Nonetheless, one cannot overestimate the severe impact the funding emergency has had on UNESCO's services to Member States. Using a worst-case funding scenario, the Director-General reduced the working ceiling of \$653 million approved by the General Conference to \$465 million. More specifically, the sectoral budgets were reduced by a minimum of 40 percent and in some cases much more. For example, the activity budget of \$792,200 allocated to the Intergovernmental

⁵ UN Executive Board, document 189EX15 Part 1, 1-24 and Part I addendum, 9.

Oceanographic Commission for 2012-13 represented a 77 percent reduction from the amount approved by the General Conference.⁶

Though the US State Department has tried to reach an agreement, and reportedly came close, it has to date been unsuccessful in persuading Congress to enact a waiver to the Foreign Appropriations Acts that would enable it to pay its treaty-obligated assessments to UNESCO. Barring an unforeseen development, little is likely to change before the November 2016 elections, when the next steps will be determined by the political realities that emerge. In the meantime, one is left in the midst of a regrettable crisis and with the feeling of the morning after a night of excess.

The Palestinian Authority is no closer to statehood than before admission to UNESCO, and its diplomatic judgment has newly come into question, as has Israel's commitment to a two-state solution to the Mideast crisis. The failure of US diplomacy and UNESCO's Division of External Affairs to recognize and address Palestinian intentions early enough to take effective action puzzles many, especially since an item to admit Palestine has been on the agenda of every session of the UNESCO General Conference since 1989 and has always been resolved with agreed postponement of the decision on membership.

The short-sighted, politically driven action of UNESCO's Executive Board and General Conference, which as the organization's governing bodies have the responsibility for its stability, health, and well-being, is a cause for concern and provides further evidence of what is widely perceived as their growing dysfunction.

Fairly or unfairly, the US is perceived as an unreliable partner prepared to ignore treaty obligations. Even more importantly, many thousands of the world's destitute will be denied UNESCO-facilitated access to education, science, and culture.

One is led to ask what has happened to the US during the seventy years since it played a central role in creating UNESCO. Where are the successors to Archibald MacLeish, Ralph Bunche, William Benton, and Charles Frankel who might have negotiated a path through this crisis? Where is the visionary spirit of the US of 1945 that, in large measure, created the new global infrastructure of international cooperation? Have the pure hopes of 1945 been overtaken by less edifying domestic and

⁶ Ibid., paragraph 41.

international political realities? And if they have, can they be reignited within a context of an internationalist, humanistic realpolitik?⁷

The Paris crisis of October/November 2011 is highly regrettable. Unlike London in November 1945, no one, least of all the US of America, has emerged from it with reason for pride.

⁷ See Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 104.

Chapter 5

Looking Ahead:

The Need for Change in US Policy, the Need for Change at UNESCO

Any constructive look ahead will recognize the need for change both in the Department of State's management of its interaction with UNESCO and within UNESCO itself. Moreover, any look ahead toward effective engagement of the United States with UNESCO will be bleak, indeed, until the Department of State and Congress resolve the crisis of funding for UNESCO addressed in the previous chapter. In this regard, how odd it is that full American participation in UNESCO—the organization that the US founded to construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men through international cooperation in education, science, culture and communications—appears to be determined not by consideration of its own interests but as a by-product of political decisions by foreign entities: Palestine, Israel, and their respective supporters! One is tempted to ask: Is the United States no longer master of its own foreign policy? Does it not baffle reason and challenge common sense that UNESCO is made to suffer the loss of 22 percent of its budget not because of an action taken by its own leadership but because of a decision by 107 sovereign states, masters of their own foreign policy, to admit Palestine to their ranks as a UNESCO member? Is UNESCO to suffer because only 14 sovereign states voted to oppose admission of Palestine and 52 abstained from the vote?

While the Department of State asserts repeatedly that it considers UNESCO an important strategic partner, and while it continues to work with Congress to find a solution to the funding impasse, American assessments to UNESCO have remained unpaid since October 2011 and have grown to more than \$300 million. The debt is real and binding, and the US can ignore it only at risk to its honor. Non-payment has already led operationally to loss of the US vote at the policy-setting General Conference and could lead to the loss at the November 2015 General Conference of the vote for an American seat on UNESCO's Executive

Board. This chapter will examine in some detail a number of steps that need to be taken both by the US government and by UNESCO to effect constructive reengagement.

Needed Action by the US

Pay Assessments

For the US, resolution of the funding impasse is the sine qua non of effective reengagement with UNESCO. This first order of business will likely be the most difficult. While a congressional waiver to the legislation is perhaps the most straightforward approach, it is impeded at present by political considerations. Better and more far-reaching would be for Israel and Palestine to accept the reality that “the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza is not sustainable,” as President Obama stated bluntly in his September 2014 address to the UN General Assembly.¹ A political resolution of that longstanding crisis would render a waiver moot, bring justice to the Palestinian people and security to Israel, and significantly enhance the global good. Short of achieving peace, or a formal waiver to the legislation, both of which appear unlikely in the short term, a creative compromise of some sort may still be possible on the part of the administration, Congress and UNESCO that conceivably could include a significant lowering of the amount that the US pays annually. One such compromise, proposed by Melinda Kimble, an experienced and knowledgeable person from the private sector and an astute observer of UNESCO, the Department of State and the US Congress, would unfold as follows:

UNESCO’s governing bodies would agree to recognize the US as a member in good standing in the organization under the following conditions:

1. The US would immediately release 50 percent of the amount owed to the UNESCO General Budget.

¹ The White House, “Remarks by President Obama in Address to the United Nations General Assembly,” September 24, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/24/remarks-president-obama-address-united-nations-general-assembly>.

2. The remaining 50 percent of the amount owed would go to a US trust fund at UNESCO to support mutually agreed upon activities.
3. The US would resume future dues payments on schedule, with 75 percent supporting the general budget and 25 percent paid into the trust fund.
4. UNESCO would agree to the US resuming full participation in the organization with the budgetary slate wiped clean.
5. This agreement would prevail until an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement is reached or a waiver is granted to the legislation.

The approach has several advantages that both Congress and the Department of State may wish to consider:

- It respects the intent of Congress that recognition of Palestine as a state in UN organizations is not a cost-free exercise and strengthens the US role in UNESCO's strategic planning and budgeting.
- It reengages the US with UNESCO.
- It permits targeted US support for key UNESCO activities, including protection of journalists, girls' education, protection of the natural and cultural heritage, and the advancement of science and engineering, and it assures that the US can work in UNESCO to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms in a dangerous international environment.

To be sure, this approach does not conform to established practice in UN organizations, and there could be resistance to it for that reason. Nonetheless, the UNESCO overall budget has been so dramatically reduced since 2011 that a 50 percent payment to the organization would be a significant step in reducing its cash flow problems. Rigorous cutbacks in staff and programs and the consequent reduced services to Member States have enabled UNESCO to survive to this point, but it cannot do so indefinitely. The US would carefully negotiate the manner and impact of its disbursement of funds. Moreover, the budget reduction of recent years has reshaped the baseline for assessments. This would enable the US, when a waiver is adopted or an Israeli-Palestinian peace achieved, to resume its normal 22 percent assessment on a lower baseline, of which only 75 percent would be available to the general

budget and 25 percent to the trust fund—a new reality that would encourage strategic programming choices by UNESCO's governing bodies.

Recognize UNESCO for What It Is and Is Not

The post-war offspring of conflict and idealism in 1945, UNESCO today is part of an ever-changing, electronically connected, youth-oriented, multicultural and highly politicized world. It is not, has never been, and cannot be an idealized Shangri-La, divorced from political realities. Moreover, with broad mandates in education, science, culture and communications, UNESCO is a highly complex organization and difficult to maneuver for even experienced delegates, as 195 sovereign states actively pursue their interests within a large Secretariat, a 59-member Executive Board that meets twice annually, and a General Conference of Member States that meets biennially. The US must be aware also that, as an intergovernmental organization, UNESCO is by definition a political body where Member States pursue national and regional interests as well as the global good. It needs to accept also that doing both is neither contradictory nor dishonorable. Moreover, the US needs to acknowledge that the issues of education, science, culture and communications, while superficially benign, are in fact politically charged, domestically and internationally, and deal with them accordingly. If the US faces these realities, it could use UNESCO's many forums and international infrastructures to project its soft power and, at the same time, promote the global good. It is in the national interest to do so.

Accept the Need for Medium- and Long-Term Strategic Planning

A credible look ahead by the Department of State in its dealings with UNESCO would embrace the reality of the organization's complex and political nature and would carefully study how to pursue the national interest and the global good within its complex structures. To do so requires a level of foresight and planning that has rarely been forthcoming. Indeed, it would be difficult for the most benevolent observer of the State Department's interaction with UNESCO over the years to discern any sustained priorities other than amorphous political damage

control and calls for budgetary restraint. This is a decades-old problem. Professor Roger Coate quoted a carefully researched internal State Department report on the management of US participation in UNESCO from forty years ago that decried the situation as inimical to US interests, stating candidly that if the US could be said to have any policy for dealing with UNESCO, it is one of damage limitation, the intermittent fending off of demands perceived as threatening to US interests.²

Nor is it a secret at UNESCO itself that US policy has tended to be ad hoc and reactive rather than driven strategically. Even the persistent and predictable American calls for budgetary restraint and better management have often echoed ineffectively within UNESCO's halls because of limited strategic and tactical planning.

Nonetheless, on the occasions when it has been disposed to plan strategically, as it was in creating the World Heritage Convention, the International Oceanographic Commission, the International Institute for Educational Planning, and the World Digital Library and in promoting press freedom through such efforts as the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the US has been remarkably successful in using the UNESCO forum to serve both its own interests and the global good. It is instructive, however, that in all of these cases, the Department of State was urged on by external forces: by Russell Train and the Council on Environmental Quality in the case of World Heritage, by Roger Revelle and the University of California, San Diego in the case of the intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, by Philip Coombs and the Ford Foundation in the case of the International Institute for Educational Planning, by the World Press Freedom Committee in the case of the IPDC, and by Librarian of Congress James Billington and Google in the case of the hugely ambitious and successful World Digital Library.³ Otherwise, the Department of State appears to have relied on the hope that only ideas and programs consistent with American interests would be introduced at UNESCO. But, as has often been said and even more often proven, hope is not a strategy.

² Coate, *Unilateralism*, 141.

³ Billington launched his idea for a World Digital Library at the first meeting of the newly reconstituted National Commission for UNESCO in June 2005. See chapter 3.

Effective planning for interaction with UNESCO would emerge ideally from a partnership between the Secretary of State's policy planning staff, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, the US Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, the US National Commission for UNESCO, and Congress, in cooperation with the broader American intellectual community.

While the State Department's policy planning staff and Congress have traditionally not been integrated into UNESCO programmatic issues, the growing threat and global nature of intercultural conflict and the challenges of addressing global environmental change and sustainable development merit integrating UNESCO's agenda into the broader process of formulating overall US foreign policy, much as the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency is integrated into the Department of State's broader political and nuclear nonproliferation policies.

Effective planning would also encourage the UNESCO Directorate in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs to renew, on a regular and systematic basis, outreach to relevant governmental bodies, such as the Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, the National Academies, and the private academic and cultural sectors that from the very beginning have been partners in American interaction with UNESCO.

The framers of the UNESCO Constitution, in particular the American and French delegates, foresaw the value of such broad cooperation and recommended in Article VII that a Member State "associate its principal bodies interested in educational, scientific and cultural matters with the work of the Organization, preferably by the formation of a National Commission broadly representative of the government and such bodies." Public Law 565, adopted by the 79th Congress in July 1946, created such a Commission for the US. Milton Eisenhower's appointment as its first director and President Truman's presence at its first meeting underscored the importance accorded to it.⁴ Unfortunately, since reentry into UNESCO in 2003, there is little evidence that the US National Commission for UNESCO has played the

⁴ Nobbe, *Brief History*, 6.

significant role in advising the Department of State that both the UNESCO Constitution and Public Law 565 foresaw.⁵

It was not always thus. As recounted in a memoir by former National Commission Deputy Director Richard K. Nobbe, the Commission was highly active until withdrawal from UNESCO in 1984.⁶ During this period the Commission was under the direction of a chair and two vice-presidents who formed its Bureau. The Bureau was assisted by an executive committee of approximately fifteen, drawn from the chairs of special committees. By and large, the commissioners elected to these committees were those who knew UNESCO best, were recognized in their field, or had influence with the administration or with congressional officials. The Commission pursued a limited number of highly focused program activities centered on the status of women, human rights education, the natural sciences, cultural development, and population, and enjoyed a number of significant successes. It introduced, for example, a resolution to the General Conference that led eventually to the status of women and gender equity becoming a UNESCO priority, as it remains today. It participated actively in the revision of the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which at the time was politically fraught because of Cold War sensitivities. Subsequently, it commissioned a book on the Recommendation and had it translated into Spanish and distributed through Latin American embassies. It organized an important conference on an "American Agenda for the New World Information Order" that was attended by major American media organizations, and it later recruited a nationally recognized communications specialist to serve on the commission staff. It helped launch the environmental movement in the US by organizing a conference on the subject with TV personality Arthur Godfrey, and worked with the National Academy of Sciences to assist with UNESCO science programs. It also worked with USAID to publish a respected newsletter on UN population activities. Very importantly, it drew on the intellectual and political weight of its commissioners to obtain an exemption for the Commission from the restraints of the Federal

⁵ See chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of the recent role of the National Commission.

⁶ Nobbe, *Brief History*.

Advisory Commission Act, or FACA. It was the commission, also, that forged an agreement between UNESCO and the State Department to permit UNESCO expert meetings to take place in the US. The 100-member Commission had at one time a staff of 14 employees and an annual operational budget, over and above salaries and office space, of approximately \$150,000. It also received about \$10,000 from UNESCO's Participation Program for activities, some university-based, that furthered cooperation with the US. The Commission's prestige and effectiveness gradually diminished over the years because of latent recriminations from the McCarthy period, during which UNESCO and many other creative intellectual bodies were suspected of being subversive, as discussed in chapter 3. It lost influence in later years also because of flagging State Department interest in outreach that was itself, perhaps, a residual victim of McCarthy-inspired paranoia.

Relaunch the US National Commission for UNESCO

The Department of State should relaunch the US National Commission for UNESCO along the lines that gave it an advisory voice in strategic planning to government agencies, the private sector and the academic communities, as intended and legislated by Congress. In relaunching the National Commission, the US government would have occasion once again to free it from excessively binding restrictions of FACA or, at the very least, from what appears to be excessively rigorous enforcement of FACA.

A renewed and active Commission drawn from the highest levels of the American intellectual, academic, scientific and artistic worlds would create a true private sector partnership with government and thus give the Department of State the enhanced intellectual heft and staffing depth essential to its strategic planning. Experience has demonstrated, however, that some changes consistent with the 1946 legislation may be in order. For example, informed observers believe that a Commission of up to one hundred members proved to be too unwieldy and costly, and that a smaller commission of approximately thirty outstanding members drawn from the academic, scientific and cultural communities with appropriate representation from government agencies would be a more manageable, affordable and effective size. To help guide the way forward, Americans for the Universality of UNESCO (AUU), now

known as Americans for UNESCO (AU), established a working group of experienced members to suggest a strategy for a renewed commission and presented its report to then Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs Douglas J. Bennet in October 1993.⁷ The report remains a useful blueprint from which to rebuild.

Build on the Groundwork Already Laid for Forward Thinking on UNESCO

The American academic communities have maintained through working groups and panels interest in UNESCO through the years of non-membership and non-payment of assessments.⁸

The members of these panels and working groups were drawn from the highest levels of American political and academic life and included members of the House of Representatives and Senate, senior academics from elite universities, and former international civil servants, including former UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor and former Deputy Director-General Jack Fobes. More recently, former Assistant Director-General for Education Nicholas Burnett provided in a thoughtful article a useful analysis of UNESCO's work and suggestions for ways to improve the organization, both within the education sector and more broadly.⁹

These reports and other studies demonstrate with high credibility that the Department of State need only open itself to the fertile private-sector intellectual community to formulate a strategic plan for engage-

⁷ See *Report of the AUU Working Group on Reestablishment of the US National Commission for UNESCO*. For further information about the workings, structure, and operations of national commissions internationally, see UNESCO, *A Practical Guide for National Commissions*, 1995.

⁸ See, for example, the report of the University of California's Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation on a conference it sponsored in 1986 on *Perspectives on the Crisis of UNESCO*. See also United Nations Association of America, International Panel on UNESCO, *In the Minds of Men: UNESCO and International Intellectual Cooperation in the 21st Century*, 1989, and its follow-up study, *Schooling for Democracy: Reinventing UNESCO for the Post-Cold War World*, 1993.

⁹ Nicholas Burnett, "UNESCO Education: Political or Technical? Reflections on Recent Personal Experience," *International Journal of Education Development* 31, no. 3 (May 2011): 315-318.

ment with UNESCO that would serve both the national interest and the global good.

In considering these contributions, one must also take into consideration the enormous efforts of AUU, now Americans for UNESCO, to keep alive hope for reentry into UNESCO for nineteen years. During these years, it was the sole authoritative public voice on UNESCO developments.

Americans for UNESCO has continued since reentry to promote effective US participation in UNESCO and safeguard the ideal of active and constructive engagement of the American educational, scientific and cultural communities with UNESCO. Among other activities, AU has accomplished the following:

- It launched the journal *Prospects and Retrospects* and published the brochures *UNESCO for Beginners* and *Selected Achievements: UNESCO 1946-2006*. In 1992, it published *The US National Interest and UNESCO*. A year later, in preparation for the reestablishment of the US National Commission, it submitted to the State Department its aforementioned *Report of the AUU Working Group on the Reestablishment of the US National Commission for UNESCO*.
- Earlier, AUU had published a series of newsletters that served as a credible voice to keep the public informed.
- During the 1984-2003 period, AU fostered the UNESCO Center for Peace at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, one of the few remaining active UNESCO clubs in the US.
- It erected an informative and interactive website and, when requested, offered expert advisory services to the US National Commission for UNESCO, the US Department of State, and the US Permanent Mission to UNESCO, as well as to civil society. In 2011 it organized and taught a graduate course, “UNESCO in the 21st Century,” at George Washington University. The seminar continues to be offered at the graduate level and is helping to create a successor generation that is knowledgeable about UNESCO and committed to international cooperation.
- AU served as a watchdog to preserve free interaction between US civil society and UNESCO. It also encouraged formal civil society liaisons with UNESCO, such as the launch in Septem-

ber 2014 of a UNESCO Chair in International Education for Development at George Washington University.

In assessing the role of the private sector in its engagement with UNESCO before and after reentry, it would be a grave oversight to underestimate the role played by the United Nations Foundation (UNF). Almost from UNESCO's visionary founding by Ted Turner, UNF viewed UNESCO as a useful partner in pursuing its priorities and used its programs and infrastructures to implement its own goals of protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainable development, combating climate change and fostering the education of girls and women. It provided UNESCO with millions of dollars in pursuit of these goals, and for a decade hired an experienced senior adviser on UNESCO issues to keep it informed of UNESCO's efforts in these and other areas. It also established and helped fund a UNF UNESCO fellows program that enabled selected Fulbright scholars to spend a minimum of six months working as UNESCO staff members. Because those selected as fellows proved to be so valuable to UNESCO and such gifted change agents, UNESCO found money to keep most of them longer than six months.

UNESCO Itself Needs to Change

A credible look ahead on UNESCO's part will require it to recognize that at seventy, it needs to adapt to a new world. Aware of this need, the 35th session of the General Conference launched a process through which UNESCO awarded a contract to carry out an independent external evaluation (IEE) of UNESCO to a team of experts from Argentina, Canada, China, Egypt, India, Italy, Mauritania, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Led by Elliot Stern, Professor of Evaluation Research at Lancaster University, the evaluation team submitted its final report to the 185th session of the Executive Board and identified five major areas of recommendations: 1) increasing UNESCO's focus; 2) positioning UNESCO closer to the field; 3) strengthening participation in the UN; 4) strengthening governance; and 5) developing a partnership strategy.¹⁰ The 36th session of the General

¹⁰ UNESCO document 36C/28.

Conference requested the Director-General to report to the 37th session in 2015 “on progress on follow up to the IEE.”¹¹

Effective analysis of these recommendations and appropriate follow-up will be important, particularly in the area of strengthening governance, which in this author’s view is UNESCO’s weakest link. There are also opportunities for improvements in the organization’s profile, recruitment and management of staff; the rigor of its day-to-day management; and its longer-term institutional and program planning. Possible adjustments could be made in the assessment rates of Member States, and a realistic look should be taken at the organization’s ability to deliver the services requested by Member States worldwide while living within its means.

Governance

While most would agree that the meetings of Executive Board members and representatives of all Member States at the General Conference provide occasion for useful dialogue and interaction between nations and cultures, few informed persons would claim that the governing bodies work well or provide adequate value for the budget levels and staff time expended on them. With the Executive Board meeting four times within each biennium and the General Conference in session for an average of fifteen working days once every two years, they are highly expensive both in terms of dollars expended and staff time devoted to their preparation and management. During sessions of the governing bodies the Secretariat is virtually shut down except for Board or General Conference business. The cost to the organization for each day the Executive Board is in session is \$46,000, and the daily cost of the General Conference is \$159,400; the total cost of the 35th session of the General Conference reached \$4,617,122.¹² The spending on governance of questionable quality and efficiency will continue, at least for the short term; the appropriation resolution for the 2014-15 biennium approved \$10,834,000 for the governing bodies.¹³

The Executive Board and the General Conference are aware of the high costs, and adopted resolution 106 at the 35th General Conference

¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹² UNESCO Executive Board, document 184EX/17.

¹³ UNESCO Executive Board, document 37C/5, vii.

urging the Director-General—but curiously not themselves!—“to find ways of reducing the costs of the General Conference and of the Executive Board in order to free resources for program implementation without any derogation from rules 61 and 62 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board.” The reference to these rules appears to be a less than forthcoming way of placing off-limits changes to current practices regarding payment of travel and subsistence costs. This is troubling, since these costs are substantial. For example, in years when the General Conference meets, the Executive Board usually meets just before the General Conference, remains in session throughout its duration, and then reconvenes for an abbreviated session immediately thereafter. Individual per diems, consequently, can accumulate significantly, with UNESCO subsidizing an Executive Board member in Paris for possibly three weeks. One might reasonably ask why the Member States do not pay the travel and per diem of their own representatives, since Resolution 35C/106 describes Board members as *representatives of States*. It is possible that many, if not all, Member States could and would be willing to do so.

Of perhaps even greater concern than the cost of governance is the questionable quality of many presentations and debates during Executive Board sessions. One need only observe a few sessions to suspect that, with some exceptions, governments are not prepared to send their very best to represent them as they did regularly in the past, in the personages of delegates such as Paolo Carneiro, Iba der Thiam, François Valéry, Attiya Inayatullah, Gian Franco Pompei, Charles Frankel, Charles Hummel, Jean Musitelli, William Benton, Maarten Mourik, and others of comparable distinction. This is regrettable since, as noted at the London Conference in 1945 and described in chapter 1, “everything depends on the quality of the people involved.”¹⁴

To be sure, the quality of representation is marginally higher at plenary sessions of the General Conference, often attended by delegates at the ministerial level. Periodic specialized meetings of ministers of science or education during sessions of the General Conference can also rise to the quality one has the right to expect at UNESCO. However, the level of discussion usually falls again during meetings of the working commissions on education, science, culture and communications, arguably the most important of the General Conference. At these work-

¹⁴ Sewell, *UNESCO*, p. 84.

ing commission meetings, time constraints, complex procedures, and many marginally informed delegates normally allow 95 percent of the program proposed to be adopted without serious discussion. Few new initiatives are launched, and ineffective programs are seldom ended.

As an experiment in elevating the level of discourse at the General Conference, the Director-General might consider extending personal invitations periodically to a panel of internationally recognized wise men and women to express their personal views on the pressing world problems to which UNESCO should be devoting its human and financial resources. On a more technical level, it is possible that teleconferencing is sufficiently advanced to allow senior delegates from all regions to communicate with others via large screens in UNESCO's meeting rooms. Admittedly, this could change the current culture of the General Conference and Executive Board. But changing the culture may be a good and necessary thing. Engaging in international teleconferencing could also be a learning experience for delegates and for the UNESCO Secretariat, and may be transferable to the field.

Finally, the questionable quality of representation is often seen in specialized meetings of flagship bodies such the World Heritage Committee where, instead of sending experts in the field of conservation as called for by the Convention, Member States increasingly are represented by marginally informed career diplomats with little in-depth knowledge of the technical subjects under consideration. This can lead to mediocre assessments of proposed sites and disregard of the recommendations of the Committee's specialized advisory bodies (the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature). Rather than a serious exchange of substantive views among conservation experts, discussions have sometimes descended to a level unworthy of UNESCO and what it represents. Uninformed representation is particularly regrettable, and can even be dangerous, when issues such as bioethics or the economic and intellectual property dimensions of cultural issues are discussed. In truth, everything, including the reputation of UNESCO itself, depends on the quality of the delegates Member States send to represent them. Sending highly qualified delegates to UNESCO's inter-governmental meetings is a contribution to good governance that every Member State, large or small, developed or developing, can make.

In the meantime, Member States need to recognize that existing processes and working methods within UNESCO's governing bodies

pose a serious problem of credibility and enlightened use of funds. While taking into consideration the voices and votes of 195 Member States and the legitimate concerns of the Secretariat is complex and certainly not easy, it is by no means an insurmountable managerial challenge. Here, as with so many of UNESCO's challenges, one needs to look beyond the organization's headquarters at the Place de Fontenoy to seek out experienced managerial experts. The administrators of many great universities with thousands of faculty and students; the major manufacturers of airplanes, automobiles, and computers worldwide; and the armed forces of many countries face more complex managerial problems than does UNESCO. All of these entities have powerful stakeholders, often with vested and competing interests, but manage nonetheless to govern themselves effectively in highly competitive circumstances. UNESCO's governing bodies, if they are truly to contribute to the global good, must turn to appropriate experts and reinvent how they govern. Again, significant work has already been done on the subject that can be drawn upon.¹⁵ It can be done, and it must be done. The current governance system is broken and must be replaced or updated, however disruptive this may be to the status quo and the collective comfort zone.

Fortunately, the Executive Board leadership appears to agree. According to a UNESCO November 2014 news release, the Executive Board is in the process of examining its working methods, including questions relating to governance.¹⁶ Board chair Mohammed Sameh Amr noted that this action was consistent with General Conference Resolution 37C/96 and would comport with an external review of UNESCO governance and a comparative analysis of the functioning and working methods of other UN specialized agencies. Presumably, comparative costs would also be provided. The chair added that UNESCO's external auditor would be engaged in the process and would provide an interim report to the Board at its 196th session in April 2015 and a full report one year later. Director-General Bokova concurred

¹⁵ John E. Fobes and Lawrence S. Finkelstein, "The Governance of UNESCO: An Issues Paper Prepared for the UNESCO Project of the UNA/USA," 1988.

¹⁶ UNESCO Executive Board, "Governance in UNESCO: The Role of the Executive Board," November 4, 2014, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/executive-board/single-view/news/governance_at_unesco_the_role_of_the_executive_board/#.VUFMAPIViko.

with the planned Board action. Martin O'Malley, Inspector General of the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, which had just undergone a governance survey, added the sobering observation that "in the beginning of a governance reform process, the appetite for change amongst decision makers is low, with a majority preferring to maintain the status quo rather than undertaking any sort of root and branch review of governance processes."¹⁷ One can only hope that the UNESCO Board and General Conference will summon the courage to address and make needed change. To do so would be a courageous contribution to the international community.

Assessment Rates

As it looks ahead, a renewed UNESCO and its governing bodies must recognize that depending on only four (the US, Japan, Germany and France) out of 195 Member States and nine Associate members for more than 50 percent of its budget is neither institutionally healthy nor politically sustainable. While recognizing that assessment rates have UN-systemwide ramifications, the risks of the present assessment realities at UNESCO constitute a serious, difficult, and unpleasant problem that must be addressed.

UNESCO Staff

While UNESCO's staff is generally impressive, its quality and profile need vigorous and regular assessment. The time to do so is now, when because of demographic realities hundreds of experienced staff approach mandatory retirement age, and when considerable numbers have departed or been redeployed because of the financial crisis brought on by American arrears of more than \$300 million.

It is widely acknowledged that not all sectors at UNESCO, or all divisions or offices within sectors, function equally well. And it is not self-evident that when a post becomes vacant, it should be filled at its current level, or even at all, without a justification that it contributes directly to UNESCO's core mission and priorities. Moreover, it is not unusual for staff in the same unit or division who do largely the same

¹⁷ Ibid.

kind of work to be employed on different kinds of contracts. Thus, some posts, even within UNESCO's flagship programs, are filled by officers who, though they may have served well for many years, are employed on "temporary" contracts and do not enjoy the same benefits or professional status as colleagues doing the same work who are employed on established regular budget posts. Moreover, the current system has excluded some holders of the so-called temporary posts from competing for internal regular-budget UNESCO posts. Over time, this situation risks affecting the quality of persons applying for UNESCO posts; according to an external management review, it has already contributed to rapid staff turnover at the World Heritage Center and, some believe, to the gradual deprofessionalization of the education sector and to a culture of entitlement that has emerged among some within the Secretariat. The current period of obligatory change provides an opportunity for UNESCO leadership to address these serious problems.

The Director-General has the opportunity and responsibility within the constitutional mandate to secure "the highest standards of integrity, efficiency and technical competence," as well as appropriate geographical representation to rethink the organization's staffing needs.¹⁸ In so doing, she will need assistance.

Given the magnitude of the problem and the money and stakes involved, the Director-General should consider engaging a respected management consulting firm to conduct a rigorous external assessment of the staffing numbers and levels needed to achieve UNESCO's strategic goals. The exercise would likely be expensive, but if properly done would provide value for money. It is possible that vested interests within the Secretariat and the governing bodies will resist such fundamental change. Nonetheless, it is in UNESCO's interest to pursue it.

The time may have arrived also to rethink the recruitment process itself, which on the one hand takes too long and on the otherhand does not appear consistently to reach or attract the highest talent levels within the international educational, scientific and cultural communities. Consideration should be given to hiring professional headhunters for posts at the director level and above. While more than 200 applications are usually received for each UNESCO staff opening, the level of applicants is often weak. It could be useful to conduct a comparative

¹⁸ UNESCO Constitution, Article VI, 4.

study of salary and benefits packages. It is possible, despite conventional wisdom, that UNESCO's salary and benefits package is no longer competitive among the highly qualified and experienced groups it needs to attract if it is to provide the level of expertise and technical advice Member States want and need.

Rigor in Day-by-Day Management

Day-by-day routine management and assessment of the Secretariat needs attention; in particular, the imperative for supervisors to acquit their responsibility to assess regularly the quality of employees' work. This has too often been neglected with the highly negative result that after a few years, some nonperforming staff become virtually impossible to remove.

Part of this day-by-day management must come also from the top down. Fortunately this has already begun through the introduction of results-based management and budgeting and in the reenergized work of the senior management team, which is addressing a range of issues, including streamlining in-house workflows and processes and exploring ways of strengthening field offices. While many Member States would like to host field offices, UNESCO leadership must determine if UNESCO can afford more than a few, not only in terms of budgetary costs, but at the cost of building and maintaining a credible mass of technical expertise both in the field and at headquarters.

As for the traditional complaints about the absences of successive Directors-General from headquarters because of official travel, the fact of the matter is that governments set UNESCO's policies, and carrying UNESCO's flag and representing its face in person to Member States and at important conferences worldwide is an essential part of any Director-General's job. While new electronic devices allow regular communications with headquarters while traveling, the Director-General needs to have at headquarters a trusted, tough and thick-skinned deputy and/or chief of staff who can serve as an alter ego and is empowered to act on the Director-General's behalf as forcefully and definitively as necessary. The deputy also needs to provide regular, informed and rigorous oversight to the program sectors and keep the Director-General fully informed of all developments, negative as well as positive.

UNESCO'S Promise

Both UNESCO and its Member States need to renew their commitment to UNESCO's ideals.

A Spirit of Service to the International Community

As experienced UNESCO staffers approach the end of their careers, it is important to pass on to successor generations the spirit of service to the international community that inspired them. In this regard, it could be useful to establish a formal, structured and obligatory orientation process for new employees, followed by a solemn ceremony of oath-taking presided over by the Director-General. Former Director-General René Maheu reportedly would tell his staff that working at UNESCO was more than a job; it was a *sacerdoce*, or sacred commitment of service to the international community. That sense of mission needs to be maintained and even enhanced.

A Renewed Commitment of Member States to Its Ideals

Any serious look ahead needs also to address the central role of Member States in realizing its future promise and to ask if they remain committed to the principles embedded in the UNESCO Constitution and its luminous preamble. While it is true that over a seventy-year period UNESCO, as an organization located on the Place de Fontenoy in Paris, has not succeeded in constructing defenses of peace sufficiently strong to prevent the ravages, destruction and human misery of successive wars, the reality is that that work, at its core, is fundamentally the responsibility of its Member States, each of which has committed itself to constructing the defenses of peace. UNESCO has no military divisions, as Stalin said derisively of the pope on the eve of World War II. But it does have the possibilities of moral persuasion and the convening power of providing a forum where peoples and cultures can engage in the "diplomacy of ideas."¹⁹ Within these parameters, it is incontestable that UNESCO has made the contemporary world more

¹⁹ Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*.

literate, more informed, and more sensitive to the diversity of culture and beauty and to the fundamental equality of races and genders.

Nonetheless, there is reason to believe that UNESCO Member States, themselves, may need to recommit to its ideals and subordinate some short-term regional and national interests to the longer-term global good.

Might it not be appropriate, as UNESCO celebrates its seventieth anniversary, for senior representatives of each Member State to publicly recommit their governments, at an appropriate ceremony at UNESCO headquarters, to the principles of the UNESCO Constitution?

The preamble to the Constitution reminds us, for example, “that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world and that the peace, if it is not to fail, must therefore be founded on the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.” It reminds us also that “the wide diffusion of culture and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable for the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfill in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern.”

These are, indeed, the words of a poet—Archibald MacLeish, who as Librarian of Congress and Assistant Secretary of State was also a senior American governmental official.

Paradoxically, this recommitment of Member States to the ideals of UNESCO is needed nowhere more than within the US Congress, and could be demonstrated in no better way than by Congress granting a waiver to the legislation prohibiting US payments to UNESCO. Because of the US non-payment and earlier self-initiated efforts at efficiencies and administrative reforms, UNESCO has seen a reduction of 32 percent of its posts, including the departure within a two-year period of 177 staff members.²⁰ UNESCO is bearing the burden of a crisis not of its own making! The US Congress is capable of rising to the challenge and demonstrating its own recommitment to UNESCO’s ideals by permitting the payments due to UNESCO and enabling the organization it founded to construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men to survive. With the US having missed the opportunity to effect constructive change within UNESCO while Federico Mayor was

²⁰ Irina Bokova, Address to the UNESCO Executive Board, October 20, 2014.

Director-General because of its nonmembership, it would be highly regrettable for the US not to work with similarly disposed and similarly gifted Director-General Bokova to enhance the organization's efforts to construct the defenses of peace through international cooperation in education, science, culture and communications. Federico Mayor's vision of "a culture of peace" and Irina Bokova's vision for "UNESCO in a new world," as articulated in her *Mission Statement for 2013* and *A New Humanism for the 21st Century*, provide the conceptual frameworks for enlightened action and articulate the values and the means to attain them that the US was instrumental in inscribing into the UNESCO Constitution.

In essence, it is the UNESCO Member States collectively, as former Assistant Director-General for Education Nicholas Burnett has written, that must decide what kind of UNESCO they want and then commit themselves to providing the human and financial resources, as well as the governance mechanisms and enlightened oversight, to obtain it.²¹ It is time to do so with renewed energy and commitment.

²¹ Burnett, "UNESCO Education."

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