

# **Peter O. Haslund 2000-2001**

## **Lecture Dedication**

*FOR MY mother, Melitta Moth, whose, life taught about courage and perseverance; for the Mikkelsen family - they never thought about the risk; for my wife Bets, with whom I've learned a great deal about compromise; and for my children and grandchildren, to whom tomorrow belongs.*

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## **Altered Lenses for the Global Village**

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Presented in the James R. Garvin Memorial Theatre Before a Community Audience

### **Prologue**

*In a world where people and cultures are separate, the food people eat, the clothes they wear, their daily customs, jokes and music are incomprehensible to one another. But in the GLOBAL VILLAGE-where WE live-these things, even when they're new or unfamiliar, are never entirely strange. The humanity in them finds a way to resonate in each of us. And that's what the GLOBAL VILLAGE is all about.*

**- Marshall McLuhan**

Technology continues to give life to McLuhan's observations about the global village, and the history of the last half-century has demonstrated our global capacity to adapt to change brought on by that technology. We have become a "wired" world symbolized by cell phones, e-mail and microchips, but at mid-point of the 20th century, we brought World War II to an end with the help of a very different technology - the atomic bomb. This weapon of mass destruction gave birth to the nuclear age and contributed to a new form of conflict . . . a Cold War.

We survived that bitter conflict. It was a time generally characterized by an absence of trust or willingness to see an adversary's point of view. There was little direct communication because to communicate with the other side was seen as pointless in both Washington and Moscow. "They" would never tell the truth!

In the absence of direct contact, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged each other on a most dangerous plane: each side made security decisions based on their *perception* of the other, and those perceptions became synonymous with reality. The result was a costly and dangerous arms race, justified in terms of security needs based on a "worst-case scenario." By 1986, as American and Soviet leaders began to

recognize the futility of this contest, we could jointly boast of having approximately 70,000 nuclear weapons, with average destructive yield ranging from 20 to 30 times the explosive power that leveled either Hiroshima or Nagasaki.

Today, there is no Cold War, yet weapons of mass destruction continue to exist as does the nation-state system that brought them into being. Yet, uncertain as they may be, there are signs of change as well as hope. Contemporary technology has allowed us to communicate with people in every corner of the world. Nation-states have willingly suspended the right to establish trade barriers on a reciprocal basis and we find ourselves discussing the potential, for good or ill, of a process popularly known as "globalization."

Have we turned a corner? Will this new system replace the nation-state? How can we now evaluate what is happening to our global village?

## **Introduction**

Much has been happening to our global village as of late, and if we are to understand how it is evolving, we may need to look at it with a new set of lenses. I use the metaphor of "lenses" because it transforms the theory of perceptual analysis into something more easily understandable. What's more, it allows me to caution the reader that, just as one would discard a pair of glasses which distort reality, we would not want to examine contemporary global reality with "lenses" that might have been appropriate during the Cold War. Our collective experience during and after that period requires that we see the world with a very different set of lenses.

My thesis is fairly simple. I believe that foreign policy decision-makers examine world affairs through a unique set of lenses, crafted by their life experiences and contained inside of a regional social context. They assume that what they see is real, but I will argue that they often substitute their perceptions for reality, especially during an international crisis when time is short and a decision is required immediately. The history of our global village is replete with examples of decisions based on faulty assumptions (lenses) that led to disastrous results. This leads me to the conclusion that, if the process of globalization continues to move us toward a more interdependent global society, we will need to alter our worn-out lenses if we are to avoid the errors of the past.

Since I believe that lenses constitute such a vital part of how we judge global affairs and make decisions about the future, I'll include some of my own life experience so you will have a better idea about the shape of my unique set of lenses and, therefore, my biases.

## **Personal Interest in Global Affairs**

My personal interest in international relations started early in life. Six months after I was born, German occupation troops entered Copenhagen, the city of my birth. Nazi

authorities were initially inclined to treat Denmark as a "model protectorate," undisturbed by the more harsh conditions imposed on most other occupied countries. The Danish government was encouraged to go about its business, though under the watchful eye of German authorities. All of this changed in the early fall of 1943, when Adolf Hitler ordered the internment of all Danish Jews. This did not set well with the Danish population, already growing impatient with their German occupiers, and, in one of the most remarkable testimonials to the notion that we are all a part of the same human family, Danes decided to resist at great personal risk. It was an angry population that rose to assist in the evacuation of nearly 7,000 Danish Jews to nearby Sweden. To be sure, there were individual exceptions in which Danes willingly cooperated with the Germans, but, basically, the Danish people determined that extermination was not an acceptable solution to what Hitler thought was a serious problem.

The decision to round up Danish Jews coincided with my fourth birthday. My Jewish mother, grandmother and uncle made the decision that it was time to



Mikkelsen family with author, 1944.

leave for Sweden by boat, but that it might be too dangerous a journey if I went along. So I was sent to live on a small farm in Slagelse with the Mikkelsen family. I was given a new identity and was presumed to be a part of their family. Else (Mikkelsen) Poulsen was my mother as far as the authorities were concerned. Only this last summer did she tell me that there were times when she worried for her own safety; that there were Danish collaborators called "stikkere" who would seek to advance their own fortunes with the Germans by supplying them with information about the location of hidden Jews. She said she didn't give it much thought at the time, but later, it dawned on her that she could have been shot for hiding me.

So concerns about war and peace have been with me since birth, and my own experience has prompted a focus on the insanity of human warfare and on the impact on those who bear the brunt of the suffering. It is sobering to consider that an estimated 131 million people lost their lives to war in the 20th century.

It seems useful to begin with a brief review of significant 20th century international conflicts in order to show how that experience has shaped the lenses with which we will be asked to examine our global future.

## In War's Aftermath: A Slide from Hope to Chaos

The 20th century can be seen as a series of peaks and valleys, with the former representing peace and prosperity, and the latter as international violence and tragedy. As World War I ended, we counted the dead and were amazed that 8.4 million combatants were lost, and horrified to find that, in addition, 1.4 million civilians had been killed. The horror of that war prompted President Woodrow Wilson to spend more than two months in Paris on the construction of the League of Nations, an international institution designed to prevent a repetition of the "Great War," as World War I was called.

The next 20 years served to illustrate that well-intentioned institutions are no substitute for protracted and careful negotiations and effective diplomacy.

Aggression by Germany, Italy and Japan brought the world to a second global conflagration, ending in 1945. Once again, we counted the dead. In World War II, 16.9 million combatants were killed, twice that of the 1914-18 world war. But the horror was still greater when we realized that over 34.3 million civilians had also been lost, almost 25 times the civilian losses in World War I. Technology had provided ever more efficient ways by which to conduct warfare and blur the distinction between combatants and civilians.



The immediate aftermath of the war was marked by a mood of both fear and hope. The sense of hope derived from the formation of a United Nations that would, in the words of the preamble to the U.N. Charter, "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to [sic] humankind . . .". Somehow, the two major powers and victorious allies, the Soviet Union and the United

Sates, would unite in making the world a safer place. The U. N. Charter was signed in San Francisco in June of 1945 with great fanfare and in the hope that, henceforth, nations of the world would resolve their differences by peaceful means. That hope was quickly replaced by a new form of conflict, characterized by an ideological struggle between Marxism and Capitalism, perceived by both the U.S. and the Soviets as mutually hostile and destructive. The result was an East-West division of the world into opposing camps of "friends" and "enemies" and an ever-present threat of nuclear conflict that would fundamentally question humanity's future. We called this process the "Cold War."

## **Perceptions**

To understand how American and Soviet perceptions of each other changed so dramatically, we must first attempt to understand something about the nature of "perceptions" and about the relationship between perceptions and reality.

Our perception about some action takes the form of an immediate, almost intuitive reaction. We understand something to be either good or bad, friendly or threatening, helpful or damaging, based on this perception. It is as if we were looking through a set of lenses, crafted by past experience, as well as by what we have been taught by parents and teachers. These lenses are different for each of us because no two of us have had the same life experience. This may help explain why interpersonal relations sometimes fall apart. Now imagine the added potential for confusion in international relations when we add such variables of differences in culture and language, as well as economic, political and historical experiences.

People living in different parts of the global village have had unique histories and have acquired, in the process, a set of lenses through which they look at global reality.

## **Cold War Perceptions: What Did Major Players See?**

The West was consumed by fear that Soviet Communism intended to spread and dominate the world. They showed a film in my elementary school on the topic of Soviet expansionism. Red (was it blood?) seemed to ooze outward from Moscow, covering eastern Europe, parts of Asia-and threatening to continue. The Soviets were led by



a dictator, Joseph Stalin, who would stop at nothing, including the annihilation of his own people, in achieving his objectives. Diplomatically, Stalin was not to be trusted. Even after his death in 1953, we knew that his henchmen would continue to put forward the same tired distortions.

The Soviet approach, heavily influenced by an ideological conviction that we knew to be false, was seen as threatening to our cherished way of life, based on individual liberty.

If we could transport ourselves to the Kremlin of that time, we would have found a remarkably similar picture-only it is the West that cannot be trusted and it is the West that constitutes a continuing imperialist threat to the socialist world. The Soviet leadership saw itself as the champion of the commoner, determined to eradicate human misery by eliminating the capitalist, whose incessant and single-minded exploitation of the working class was seen as a set of chains that would strike down the fundamental human right of equality. Clearly . . . a very different set of lenses.

When I led a Study Abroad program to the Soviet Union in 1990, I made it my business to check out an old hypothesis. I had always wondered if their elementary school children had also seen films like the one that had made such a deep impression on me. A Ukrainian colleague assured me with a smile . . . that he had been exposed to similar films with an identical purpose: to identify the enemy and to create a sense of fear sufficient to galvanize an otherwise passive public to sacrifice on behalf of the Soviet Union. With no plausible way of ascertaining the truth of these fears, there seemed to be no choice but to prepare for the worst.

The result was the creation of two opposing camps, each supported by ideological convictions, perceived as truth and goodness, while the opposition was seen as false and evil. Here were two very different sets of lenses through which to see reality, much as Plato had predicted would be the case in his allegory of the cave. In the absence of a way by which to verify perceptions, these "shadows" became reality, and each side began developing foreign policy options based on what it perceived to be a threat, and to defend itself by whatever means necessary.



This includes atomic weapons which, until 1949, were controlled exclusively by the United States; in that year, the Soviet Union detonated its very own. From its point of view, there was no other rational choice. Its principal adversary, the United States, could not be allowed to continue its monopoly of these weapons. Such a situation could only lead to increased insecurity so, of course, the Soviet Union had to have the bomb. The arms race had begun!

In the same year, 1949, Communist Chinese forces, led by Mao Zedong, finally prevailed in their civil war against Nationalist forces, and the maps used in my elementary school were suddenly flooded with additional red. From our point of view, collective action seemed essential to stem the tide of Communist aggression, so we formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that year as a defensive alliance. Later, we formed regional alliances, including CENTO and SEATO, to insure that the spread of Communism would be contained.



**President Eisenhower confers with NATO allies.**

From the Soviet point of view, those defensive alliances looked very much like an effort to encircle them with a militarily hostile intent. The Soviet Union responded by forming the Warsaw Pact and an alliance with the newly-formed People's Republic of China.

## **Korea: Hot Page in a Cold War**

The Cold War turned blistering hot the following year. In June 1950, North Korean troops, perhaps encouraged by Stalin, attacked across the 38th Parallel in order to unify the Korean peninsula by force. Korea had been divided after World War II, with Soviet forces occupying the country north of the 38th Parallel, while the U.S. occupied the south. The United Nations, prompted by the United States, condemned the attack and attempted its first use of collective military action against what the U.N. defined as an aggressor.

At first, the U.N. stipulated that its objectives were to clear South Korea of North Korean military forces and reestablish the 38th Parallel as the border between the two. But after reaching their goal at the end of September, just three months into the war, it was agreed that it would be politically silly to stop and perfectly reasonable to pursue the aggressor all the way to the Chinese border.

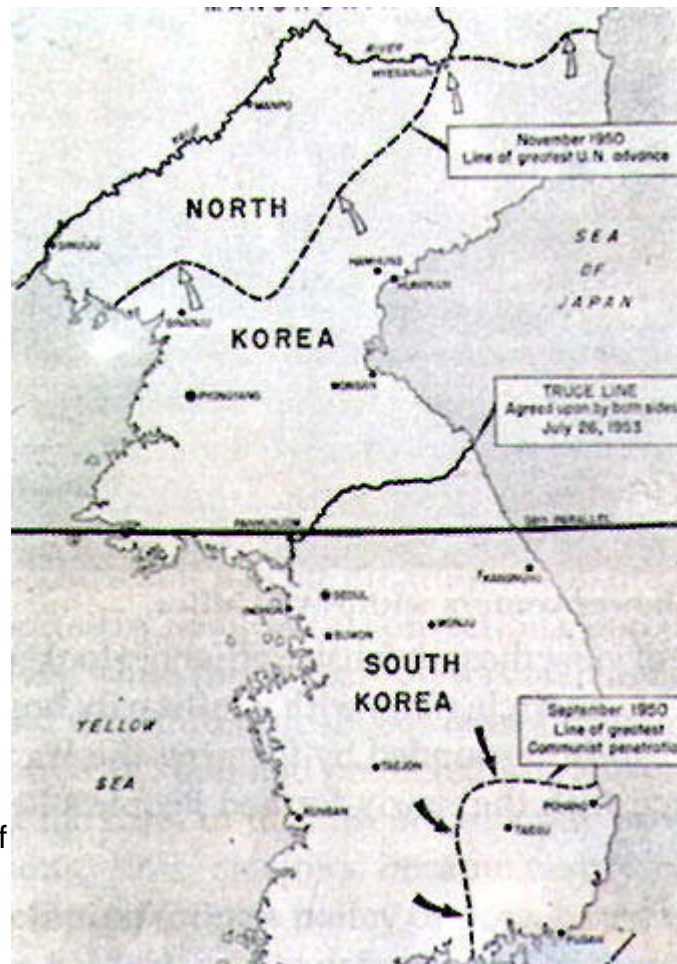
Here is another example of how perceptions matter.

From the U.N. point of view . . . which was largely the view of the U.S. and its Western allies, it was "reasonable" to pursue the enemy across the 38th Parallel; politically and militarily stupid to stop.

The Chinese saw it differently. Imagine if you were sitting in Beijing, pondering what was happening right next door. These Americans are the same people who supported your arch-enemy, Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalists, against which you have just won a long and costly civil war. These American imperialists supplied vast quantities of war materiel to your opponents in an effort to alter the course of history, and many in the U.S. have vowed to reverse the outcome of your civil war. Indeed, the official position of the U.S. government is that yours is only a temporary political glitch, headed by Communist bandits, and bound to be reversed by the forces still under the command of Chiang Kai-shek on the island of Taiwan.

The American military commander, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, has even flown to Taiwan for consultations with Chiang, presumably to launch a counter-attack on the mainland. MacArthur openly opposed President Harry Truman's administration as weak and irresolute, and publicly urged the use of Chiang's forces against the mainland as diversionary probes. Many, including the American Secretary of Defense, seemed to support MacArthur's view, thus discounting the President's public commitment to a limited military operation confined to the Korean peninsula.

There were also incidents of American aircraft crossing the Yalu River into China, strafing villages and killing civilians. The American side saw this as accidental and unintentional; the Chinese saw it very differently.





To decision-makers in Beijing, Truman's commitment was contradicted by members of his own cabinet, his field commander, and by actual military action, and, therefore, was simply not credible. They took what they perceived to be appropriate defensive action, and, only one year after they had established their regime, Chinese leaders felt sufficiently threatened by American military action to enter the war.

To American decision-makers, the threat that China would enter the war was equally incredible. Why would a relatively new government risk its survival by involving itself in a war against vastly superior forces in which it had no particular security interest? Didn't they hear what our President said about not crossing the Yalu? We perceived the Chinese military as weak, and, if they would be so foolish as to enter the war, they would be humiliated by superior American forces.



At the end of this tragic encounter, the U.S. had lost 55,000 troops, while the population of North and South Korea was reduced by four million: three million in the north and one million in the south. Most of those lost were civilians. China lost over a million men at arms.

Was this war avoidable?

In retrospect, of course. Each side seemed convinced of the evil intent of the opponent, and there were no procedures by which to determine if an opposing conclusion might be closer to the truth. There was no direct communication and clearly no environment of trust that would have made whatever might have been said plausible.

## Cuba: On the Path to Vietnam

A decade after the end of the Korean War, President John Kennedy was confronted by a Soviet effort to place intermediate-range ballistic missiles on the island of Cuba, 90 miles off the coast of Florida and well within range of many American cities. Apparently,

the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, was attempting to narrow the so-called "missile gap" by shipping Soviet missiles closer to their potential targets in the United States. Kennedy took a dim view of this approach and declared a quarantine on further shipments of military equipment to Cuba. He further declared that an attack by Soviet missiles, launched from Cuba on any part of the western hemisphere, would be seen as an attack by the Soviet Union against the United States, triggering a massive retaliatory response by the U.S. against the Soviets.



Ultimately, the wisdom and diplomacy of both Kennedy and Khrushchev averted a nuclear exchange. Perhaps both men realized that there would be nothing about which to cheer after such an exchange; that there could be no winner. In any case, there was great celebration here about the lessons learned concerning the value of brinkmanship. The lesson was simple. Threaten the opponent with the application of overwhelming superiority—a push to the "brink"—and the other side will concede. This conviction served to re-shape the lenses through which future American foreign policy options would be examined.

A major test of this hypothesis was to confront U.S. policymakers in 1965 in a distant place unknown to most Americans: Vietnam.

Armed with a sense of confidence drawn from our experience with the Soviet Union over the missiles in Cuba,



**Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh with China's Mao Zedong.**

we sought to contain the advance of Communism in Southeast Asia. Surely Ho Chi Minh would understand that we would not interfere with his governance of North Vietnam so long as he stayed north of the 17th parallel, and that if he didn't, he would be faced with ever-increasing American military force.

I was sent to Southeast Asia as a young Air Force captain in late 1967. Though already convinced that our efforts were, at best, futile, I was soon to learn a tragic lesson of my own. Futility is apparently more difficult to see from the top than from the perspective of those engaged in the daily struggle. Generals would visit my Air Commando unit to inquire why it was so difficult to cut south-bound supplies on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. I tried to respond to one such visitor about why American technology alone was insufficient. Our aircraft would attack ground targets with multiple and highly sophisticated jet aircraft, while our adversary would take the form of a single Vietnamese patriot, driving an antiquated bulldozer, just doing his job by filling in the holes we had just created in the Trail. Our bombs helped create gravel, which aided in the transformation of a muddy trail into an all-weather road.

We even inserted highly sophisticated sensors along the trail to help identify southbound traffic, but these sensors were often unable to distinguish between water buffalo and trucks. Besides, finding trucks was never the problem; hitting them was. The American assumption that superior technology would prevail was simply wrong.

Here again, the two sides had very different perceptions of what was happening.

Ho Chi Minh could not understand what national interest of the U.S. was at stake in Vietnam. He had befriended Americans who worked with him during the war against the Japanese, and made no secret of his affection for George Washington and the American Declaration of Independence. At World War II's conclusion, he was both



surprised and disappointed by the absence of American support when France wanted to reassert its colonial influence in Indochina.

When we made it clear that we would oppose the advance of Communism in his country, Ho felt certain that the Americans would soon lose interest. Our vision of being threatened by a monolithic Communist advance was very different from his own. His was a nationalist struggle. Reason would dictate that there were no American interests at stake.

There's another lesson to be derived from this example. In war, reason is often the first casualty.

And, once again, we had no direct way of communicating with Ho about our intentions or fears, nor did he have any clear way of attempting to convince us that his civil war was exclusively a struggle for national unification. Instead, we saw his action as threatening regional stability, which could transform Southeast Asia into what the American president had called a "tumbling row of dominos" that would enlarge the Communist world. We were applying Cold War lenses, developed to prevent Soviet expansion in western Europe, to a small, relatively insignificant country in Southeast Asia. President Richard Nixon's vision included "peace with honor" as our part in the war ended. In my view, we used the wrong lenses.

At least three million Vietnamese died in that war, and the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C. bears the names of 58,000 Americans who were also killed. But our POWs were released from the Hanoi Hilton before it was, in large part, demolished a couple of years ago to make way for a four-star hotel.



America suffered from the aftermath of that war, as well. There were no parades for returning veterans. Instead, there were jeers from those who blamed us for starting the war, as well as from those who were convinced that we lost it.

I returned home, via Travis Air Force Base, in late October 1968, grateful to be alive and not entirely surprised that there were no parades. I traded my uniform and rank for civilian clothes, and took the long bus ride to San Diego in time to be with my children for Halloween. Not once did I mention where I had been or what I had been doing to anyone on that crowded bus. It was over and I was home.

## **China**

Even before our exit from Vietnam in 1973, we began a dialog with China's leadership about normalizing relations. Our foreign policy lenses had begun to change. Both the U.S. and China had learned valuable, if painful, lessons from the Korean War. We made sure that the Chinese understood that we had NO intention of launching a wider war in Asia; that China was not our target and that we would not retaliate against China for supporting the Hanoi government with war materials and limited personnel.

The Nixon administration had set aside the monolithic image of global Communism, for while still fighting in the jungles of Vietnam, we were eager to begin to normalize our relations with what John Kennedy had once characterized as the "most dangerous" Communist state. Perhaps the specter of one billion potential consumers of American products played a role, as did the notion that we could play the "China card"- that is, we could play one Communist giant against another. So, Nixon made his historic first trip to China in 1972.



**President Nixon with Premier Zhou Enlai.**

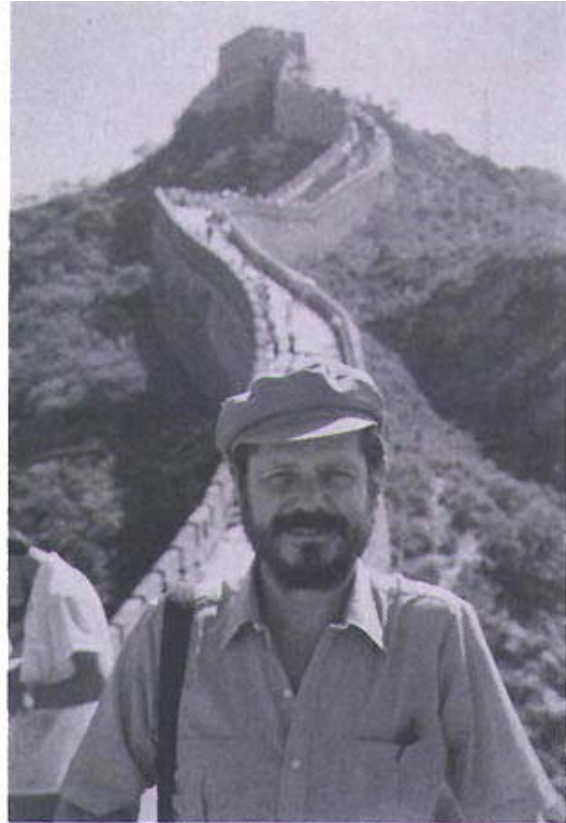
By the mid-1980's, not only were we doing business with China, but new leadership, willing to re-evaluate aspects of Communist ideology long held sacrosanct, had emerged for both the Soviet Union and China. Mikhail Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping had both the courage and insight to move their nations out of isolation and begin the process of modernization.



I made my first trip to China in 1984 to explore how the Chinese intended to use mass media in the process of modernization. I saw, first hand, the level of excitement that was slowly dawning on my Chinese colleagues at Shandong University as they encouraged me to "ask any question" that might be on my mind. What had previously been unthinkable was now subject for discussion. They were eager to befriend me and to help me understand their perception of the world and China's place in it.

I feel fortunate to have developed lasting relationships in China. Though we will continue to have disagreements about politics, we are committed to do whatever we can to avoid another period of hostility, such as that which existed between 1949 and 1972, when we had no diplomatic relations with China.

I have now made 12 trips to China, seven of them with American students from Santa Barbara City College. Often, we have stopped in Korea to visit the demilitarized zone, contemplating the thinking that must have been in place during that war. Then we travel to China and find a growing atmosphere of friendship and support. Almost 300 of our students have discovered the simple truth that we have much in common with the Chinese people. Like us, they want a more peaceful world; they also want to develop an atmosphere in which trust can grow and direct communications can avert the errors of past and faulty perceptions.



The author's first visit to the Great Wall, 1984.

I have also taken my students to Vietnam, generally basing our group in Hanoi, the capitol of our wartime adversary. I have had private conversations with my colleagues at the university in Hanoi about our common misperceptions that contributed to the enmity that was so costly in terms of human life. I was surprised by the absence of hostility toward me or my students. There is an old axiom in war and politics: there are no permanent enemies and, difficult as it may seem, forgiveness is an essential ingredient in moving beyond animosity. President Bill Clinton's recent visit to Hanoi contributed to that process.



President Clinton with Ambassador Pete Peterson in Hanoi.

The intent of this very brief review of 20th century global conflict has been limited to illustrating that perceptions matter greatly, and that we develop perceptions through lenses constructed of our own fairly isolated, cultural experience. This picture could change. We don't have to remain isolated. A trans-atlantic trip was long and tedious in 1949, when I arrived in New York City. Today, such travel is commonplace.

Santa Barbara City College has now taken 3,500 students abroad since 1973, when we started our Study Abroad programs. When you multiply what we have done by the number of colleges and universities that participate in such programs, it translates to a significant number of young ambassadors doing their part to reduce what I might call "global isolationism." Stereotypes have a hard time surviving in the face of actual experience. And once our students return, they continue the contact, via a new technology, one that makes continuing relations possible after our students return home. I'm speaking of e-mail!

### **E-mail: For Better or Worse**

What are the likely consequences now that we can communicate around the world as easily as across town? What will be the impact of the Internet, e-mail and the microchip?

While e-mail is a wonderful tool, there is no guarantee that we will be either more insightful or clear in formulating what we want to say. But . . . it will make it possible to communicate regularly and, when there is a lack of clarity, to ask for clarification. Isolation will be increasingly more difficult. Those seeking to limit the intrusive aspects of the Internet may be engaged in a losing battle. Technology may be succeeding where diplomacy has failed by broadening the base of those who can participate. Slowly, it is becoming clear that we need to look at ourselves and others in a global context. We are all inhabitants of what Barbara Ward called "spaceship earth." We are all members of a diverse human family. We live together, though sometimes not very well, in this, our global village.

Many have taken this to mean that technology will propel us into a fundamentally changed international system, one that sets aside the nation-state as irrelevant and reduces or even eliminates the impact of cultural differentiation. This is to be accomplished by homogenizing the planet's inhabitants. Anything that might interfere with trans-national commerce-like an irritating and disruptive little war-will cease to be problem. The process by which this will happen is known as *globalization*.

### Globalization: What Lies Ahead for the Global Village?

The literature about globalization has been greatly expanded in the last few years, and the term itself has become a kind of buzzword for all that lies between good and evil at the international level. There are, I think, a number of myths that contribute a good deal of confusion about this process. It may be helpful here to examine a few of these.

The first myth is that globalization is a comparatively new phenomenon. I think it is far more accurate to examine it as a continuously evolving process, perhaps first inspired by the actions of those who willingly embraced the risks of sailing to the edge of a flat world, in hopes of discovering that it wasn't so flat after all. In all probability, they took those risks in hopes of reaping the rewards of great wealth and fame.

Perhaps another myth is the conviction that this movement is inevitable and irreversible. I believe it to be neither. We moved in this direction in the early part of the 20th century, only to experience massive disruption on a global scale as a consequence of war and economic depression. The current round of globalism (the goal of globalization) could also be reversed by similar catastrophic events. Still, I think there are too many indicators pointing to a continuance, rather than reversal. The fundamental difference between what we are experiencing now and what has come before relates to technology. We have NEVER had the tools-the Internet, e-mail and the microchip-by which to reduce or even eliminate the potential for isolationism that characterized much of the 20th century.

Some believe that globalization will lead to the elimination of war. Wish it were that simple. Though we clearly have new tools with which to communicate, there is nothing implicit in this technology that will insure that we communicate more effectively. There may even be some evidence that e-mail will destroy our capacity to communicate via the written word altogether.

Still, the fact that we can now communicate frequently and almost instantly does address, in part, the notion that the absence of direct and widespread channels of communication has contributed to misperceptions in the past. As we gain more practice with this technology, we may come to understand the points of view of potential adversaries more accurately and certainly sooner, all of which may help us avoid the mistakes of the past.

## OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Let me now focus on the real possibilities that lie ahead-the opportunities as well as the challenges of globalism. I'll restrict myself to questions of international trade, environmental concerns, and the problem of national security.

## **International Trade**

A major advantage of globalism lies in the field of international trade. The technology mentioned earlier has certainly made it possible to determine, almost instantly, the sources and costs of raw materials, as well as comparative production costs. It allows for early assessment of market strengths and weaknesses, which can mean lower costs, increased productivity and maximized profits. This ability to determine costs and potential markets quickly has prompted nation-states to negotiate for substantial reductions in trade barriers.

There is, however, a concern that globalization is just another name for capitalism run amok. In most capitalist systems, there are control mechanisms that create a process by which fair labor practices and environmental safeguards can evolve. In the main, these mechanisms are absent at the international level. The NAFTA agreement had a number of side agreements that took these variables into account, though not to the satisfaction of either American labor or environmentalists. The most recent agreement for free trade with Jordan does include such components in the body of the treaty, perhaps a harbinger of things to come in future free trade agreements.

Nevertheless, the global entrepreneur will continue to search for an environment where labor costs and the potential for government interference are low. This often leads to the charge that capitalism will, once again, be exploiting labor. One manifestation of the problem is the widening of the gap between the rich and poor on a global scale, generated, in part, by globalization. This has implications in terms of continued productivity as well as political stability. It isn't just the corporate giants who can talk with each other with the help of the Internet. International labor can also make use of the system to organize and, if their plight is ignored, become a source of disruption to the process of globalization.

A part of the problem relates to the plight of those in developed countries whose jobs are lost because the cost of labor is lower in another part of the world. Is it their fault that labor costs are lower elsewhere? Must they pay the price of globalization while others profit? This is a serious concern, and it deserves our attention. If we can agree that globalization can create wealth, surely some part of this new wealth can be set aside to support retraining and relocation efforts for those who would otherwise be left behind. If we cannot find a way of integrating this idea as part of an operational philosophy for the evolving global village, the predictable consequence will be turmoil. We may expect a continuation of last July's protests against the World Trade Organization and at a meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Prague last September.

There are, of course, other issues. Some of the protesters were concerned that globalization is really a euphemism for Americanization. Thomas Friedman talks about seeing McDonald's Golden Arches in all regions of the earth. The issue that gives cause for alarm has to do with homogenization of global cultures, a stripping away of national identities. The French seem particularly worried! Perhaps I should be more concerned about this than I am, but it seems to me that cultures have a way of preserving themselves without our intervention. The young Chinese consuming Big Macs across from Tiananmen Square in Beijing were, I thought, overly impressed by this unique American taste-treat. Despite this and other sources of Western influence, China's youth retain fundamental Chinese cultural values that have evolved over a 4,000-year history, and are not likely to change because the Golden Arches reach across the Pacific.

## **Global Environment**

A more serious area of concern has to do with global environmental degradation, and a major contributor to virtually every such issue is related to the significant growth of the world's population. To give some perspective to this, when I arrived in America in 1949, the population of planet earth was about 2.5 billion. Today, merely a half-century later, there are six billion of us inhabiting this very same earth, consuming, often wasting, and frequently squabbling over its resources, while polluting the air we breathe and the water that sustains life itself.

The significance of this issue is exemplified by the problem of global warming. Greenhouse gasses are identified as responsible for substantial increases in global temperatures. The potential for serious damage relates to such phenomena as the warming and expanding of oceans and a consequent rise in global water levels. Sea level areas such as New York City and Bangladesh could be devastated. And, as global temperatures rise, existing agricultural areas could be decimated by the absence of water. At issue is whether humanity or nature, itself, is the dominant culprit, and, if we are found to be responsible, what can we do about it?

The Kyoto Agreement, signed in 1997, committed the global community to move toward a 5.2% reduction in the emission of greenhouse gasses (as compared to 1990 levels) by 2012. Many suggested that the price to be paid for even a 5% reduction was too great for the industrial world and would slow the rate of economic prosperity. Still others recommended even more draconian measures, focusing especially on the U.S. as it contributes 25% of humanity's release of six billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere annually. The agreement was to be implemented at a meeting in The Hague at the end of 2000, but the negotiations collapsed. Future negotiations will not be easy.

What are the dimensions of this problem? The growing body of scientific evidence suggests that the problem is at least significantly exacerbated by human beings. At times, this appears as a struggle between north and south. The northern, or industrial, half of the hemisphere, with a relatively small portion of the world's population, holds the preponderance of power, and is not likely to surrender easily to pressure from the non-



industrialized south. Nor are developing countries, where the vast majority of humanity lives, likely to accept suggestions from the north that developing areas impose restrictions on themselves, while the industrial northern nations continue to expand their economies.

The dimensions of this problem are potentially enormous, and, given its global character, will defy solution by any single nation-state. To see it as a problem which, left alone, will likely go away, is to set aside the growing body of scientific evidence to the contrary. To determine that it is a problem that cannot be mitigated by concerted action of the global community is overly pessimistic. What will be required is a new set of global lenses that allow us to accept that we have a serious problem to which humankind is probably a significant contributor. Any long-term solution will require our best efforts on a global scale. We need not be panicked by voices predicting immediate doom, but there must be a global commitment to an ongoing search for the sources of the problem, as well as the solution.

## **National Defense**

Another menacing dilemma for humanity has to do with our apparent inability to set aside weapons of mass destruction developed during the Cold War to maintain national security. By the early 1980s, each side had approximately 30,000 nuclear weapons of all kinds, some of which were 1,000 times more destructive than the weapons dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Despite this mutual demonstration of massive destructive force, neither side gained much by way of national security. Moreover, the arms race became both prohibitively expensive, as well as increasingly dangerous. This two-part recognition, combined with a genuine thaw in U.S.-Soviet relations, prompted both sides to agree to substantial reductions in both warheads and delivery systems.

Despite this progress, nuclear arsenals in both Russia and the United States continue to be aimed at each other, almost as if someone had forgotten to tell those in charge that the Cold War is over. American policy-makers justify retaining our weapons by suggesting that "we never know" about the stability of the Russian government or other "rogue states" that might want to do us harm.

Today, each side continues to stockpile about 6,000 nuclear weapons as a deterrence force. Deterrence: A simple plan developed in the early part of the Cold War to make sure that "they" didn't launch a first strike by threatening what President Dwight Eisenhower called an "instant and massive retaliation," that would result in the complete destruction of the aggressor. Under such a threat, no reasonable adversary would dare seize the initiative.

As the threat increased, each side attempted to develop an anti-missile system that would protect major population centers from nuclear attack. The irony of this effort was the discovery that such action actually decreased security by causing the other side to develop counter-measures, usually in the form of increased numbers of missiles. Hence, our efforts to enhance our security risked achieving the opposite, so both sides

agreed to abandon the effort, signing the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. So it is a little strange to revisit this idea under the heading of the National Missile Defense System, which U.S. officials now say would be used to deter rogue states like North Korea and Iraq.

I accept that we have reason to worry that some states resent the American involvement in global affairs and might want a nuclear weapon to strengthen their argument. The threat is real. Yet, if we respond by developing a new and improved version of the old ABM, wouldn't it be reasonable to assume that other nuclear powers would respond to the degradation of their deterrent force? Russia and China have condemned the American action as a violation of our commitments under the ABM Treaty and have assured us that they will take appropriate action, which probably means increasing their missile forces.

American defense planners may dismiss this threat as unrealistic on the assumption that neither Russia nor China wants to squander scarce resources on weapons systems that are so unnecessary. Perhaps . . . from our point of view. Theirs is a different vantage point, and we must learn to see the problem as they see it if we are to move toward a more reliable form of conflict management.

## **Ending on a Note of Optimism**

We are living at a time of tremendous international transformation. No one can be quite sure what lies ahead, but we can predict that there will be both common problems and opportunities, and, if we are to bring about a more peaceful world, we will have to become more proficient in our efforts to respond as a global community.

We must find ways by which to protect our environment, perhaps through the realization that it is not ours, alone, to spoil or to fix. The environment belongs to the global village, and contributing to its further degradation is not an option. Developing common solutions is in our global interest.

We must also find ways by which to protect national security without either continuing or increasing the risk of nuclear annihilation. We cannot annihilate "them" without, at the same time, annihilating ourselves.

Finally, we must find a way of continuing the transformation of global economies without increasing the gap between rich and poor. To fail in this respect is to insure the absence of the kind of political stability needed for continued economic growth.

Tomorrow's global village will depend on our ability to reason together and to understand and empathize with the plight of others. We Americans are not alone on this planet. Our wealth and good fortune are often resented by others, just as the relative poverty we find in Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia is often perceived by us as the natural order of things. We all have much to learn, and this learning will require a new set of lenses through which to see the world . . . and our place in it.

One approach is to see ourselves as citizens of our own countries and as citizens of the global village. This would serve to increase our collective understanding of global issues, without setting aside a focus on national interest. This could take the form of global bifocals with which to evaluate world affairs. Many will argue that one cannot be loyal to and have affection for one's country as well as for the global community, or that anything that might detract from national sovereignty and self-interest is dangerous. Confidence-building measures will have to be devised to help create the increased level of trust that will be needed. Even then, some will argue that it is too risky to trust each other. But the risk that derives from continuing with 20th century lenses is, in my view, far greater.

To risk will require courage. We must learn to work with, rather than impose our will on, others in the global village. It may be helpful to remember that it is not just our side that must learn to trust; they must learn to trust us, as well. We are likely to gain infinitely more by developing agreements that are mutually beneficial and sensitive to long-range objectives rather than just to short-range political expediency. Such thinking will truly require courage! The Danish poet, Piet Hein, urges us to dare to risk, reminding us of what may be needed:

*The noble art of losing face*

*may one day save the human race*

*and turn into eternal merit*

*what weaker minds would call disgrace.*

Albert Einstein seems to echo this sentiment when he says, "Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage - to move in the opposite direction."

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