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Remarks of
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at
Conference on International Education
Washington, D.C.
February 28, 1979

Just one year ago, President Sadat of Egypt remarked -- almost casually it seemed -- that he would like to address the Israeli parliament.

- o Hours later, satellites beamed the news of his remark around the world.
- o Television played and replayed his comment, and held him to it -- almost as a dare.
- o Days later, Barbara Walters, Walter Cronkite, and John Chancellor arrived in Cairo to accompany Sadat -- almost as a way of certifying the historic trip.
- o Then millions of viewers around the world watched transfixed as an Egyptian plane touched down on Israeli soil at Ben Gurion Airport.

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It is not to diminish what happened in the Middle East to say that

- none of the words exchanged during that visit,
- none of the speeches,
- none of the documents,
- none of the private meetings,
- none of the toasts --

was as significant as the riveting of the whole world's attention on one single, breathtaking, symbolic image -- two former enemies shaking hands.

Instantly, 500 million people

- o felt their connectedness.
- o Instantly their perspective was expanded,
- o and --momentarily -- the world was brought together
- o in a grand human gesture on behalf of peace.

Since that day --

- o We have all shared the agony of Camp David.
- o A dynasty has fallen in Iran.
- o A Chinese leader was toasted in the White House.
- o An American President on his trip to Mexico reminded us that the United States has the world's fourth largest Spanish speaking population.
- o And once again Hanoi is bombed, this time by Communist airplanes .

With shocking speed the cliches about our world are falling down.

- o The commonality of the human race is being starkly revealed to us with all its hopes, all its fears, and all its heartaches.
- o We are being catapulted into the era of interdependence.

But before I confront the urgency of our contemporary world I'd like to say a word or two about the past.

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- o After World War II, American colleges and universities were optimistic.
- o With our Marshall Plan, with our Fulbright Exchange Program,
- o we exported academic talent all around the world.

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Then, in the late 1950's -- just 20 years ago --

- o The Soviets electrified the planet by lifting a 184-pound object into orbit -- and Americans were both angry and afraid.
- o The National Defense Education Act was passed by Congress. And we became "internationalists" once again almost overnight.

Over the past 20 years

- o 18,580 fellowships have been awarded under NDEA VI for study at institutions in more than 30 States and the District of Columbia.
- o NDEA Language and Area Centers have awarded more than 63,000 bachelor's, nearly 24,000 master's, and 8,620 doctor's degrees.
- o 709 contracts and 63 grants have been awarded for foreign language research, with a total expenditure of nearly \$36 million in appropriated funds and more than \$550,000 in counterpart funds.

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- o Exemplary programs for undergraduate students have been funded with 117 grants to institutions, with some 65,000 students benefited annually. Graduate schools have received 56 grants for exemplary programs.

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The record of this international agenda is impressive, but during the 1960's

- o we were savaged by the tragedy of Vietnam, and
- o internationalism became a naughty word.
- o Our engagements overseas had left us weary and exhausted.

- "Isolation" rather than "engagement" was the prevailing academic mood.

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But I believe that -- once again -- there are changes in the wind.

- o A new sense of urgency is beginning to emerge.
- o The harsh truth is that the human race continues to expand at the rate of 200,000 people every day.
- o That's 73 million more people every year.
- o Every day more than 800 million people face gnawing hunger, living literally from hand to mouth.

And painfully we are reminded that

- o Our gas pumps are somehow connected to the Middle East.
- o American industry is almost wholly dependent on foreign sources for chromium, cobalt, bauxite, manganese, and tin.
- o 40% to 95% of our precious metals are imported from Third World countries.
- o About a third of the profits of American corporations come from their exports or from foreign investment.
- o One out of every six factory workers in this country is making something for export, and two million Americans owe their employment to foreign trade.

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The point is this:

The explosions of science and technology have broken the traditional insulators of time and space.

And we face -- today -- an agenda unheard of when I was a college student 30 years ago.

And yet -- with all of these reminders -- the harsh truth is that we still remain frightfully ignorant about our planet Earth.

A recent national survey revealed that:

- o Even after President Carter's television speech on energy, only half the public, 52 percent, know that America must import oil to satisfy its energy demands.
- o And, of these, only a third (or 17% of all adults) know how much petroleum the U.S. must import -- 42% in 1976.
- o Today, less than 1% of the college-age group is enrolled in any course which specifically features contemporary international issues.
- o College enrollments in foreign languages are off fully 30% in the past seven years.
- o Fifty percent of the 12th graders tested could not choose correctly an Arab country from among four choices.

- o And fully 40% of the 12th graders thought that Golda Meir rather than Anwar el-Sadat was president of Egypt.

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Incidentally, last year -- during the TV coverage of the Sadat-Begin discussions, which was interspersed with coverage of the Chicago Bears football game, three out of every four of the spectators interviewed had never heard of Sadat or Begin but were well aware of the prowess of their local hero, Walter Payton.

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Recently, while flying from New Orleans to Orlando, Florida, I read in the morning paper that University of California scientists now conclude that the earth's ozone band is being harmed by aerosol~~h~~ spray and other contaminants at twice the rate that had been earlier predicted.

It was symbolic of our time, I thought, that this important -- perhaps life or death -- story was reported in a single paragraph buried deep in section II of the morning paper.

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Environmentalists are fond of talking about the vulnerability of our ecosystem.

- o But it is our own life -- the human life system -- which may be most fragile and most threatened.
- o Lewis Thomas, in his remarkable book The Lives of a Cell, said

. . . it is illusion to think that there is anything fragile about the life of earth; surely this is the toughest membrane imaginable in the universe . . . We -- the human species -- are the delicate part, transient and vulnerable as cilia."

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For educators, the point of all of this is absolutely clear.

- o I'm convinced that international education must become a top priority in our colleges and schools. It is an absolute imperative that students begin to understand the unity of our world in a social and in a physical sense as well.
- o Students must be taught that all of our actions on this planet, physical or social, are intimately interwoven and irrevocably interlocked.

To be more precise, international education may not quite be the term.

While national boundaries tell us something about our world, the urgent new agenda requires that we focus -- not just on international education -- but on interdependence education.

Today we are confronted by such simple -- yet monumental -- question^s as:

- o Where will we get our food, and how can it be appropriately distributed?

- o What about our energy supply, and how can it be equitably shared?
- o How can we reduce the poisons in the atmosphere?
- o Can we have a proper balance between ^{the} population and ^{the} life support system of this planet Earth?
- o And how can we live together, with civility, in a climate of constraint?

These are the transcendent issues which we must begin to think about and begin talk about with great care.

In short we must search for a new common core curriculum -- one that grows out of our dependence on each other and strengthens the linkages among ourselves and with our common human future.

To put the matter as pointedly as I can, I believe a curriculum that suggests to students that they have nothing in common is just as flawed as one which suggests that all students are alike.

To build this new common core knowledge of other cultures is not enough.

- o Intellectual understanding is not enough.
- o The missing link is attitudinal.

As President Sadat observed, "the misunderstandings between (his) country and Israel are 70% percent psychological." That is, 70% percent a state of mind.

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The United States Office of Education has given an urgent new push to interdependence education.

For the first time in its history Section 603 of the International Education Act has been funded.

We plan to fund global perspectives projects as part of the core curriculum.

Later this year we will support outstanding elementary and secondary international education projects. Our first national competition will occur in June or July. We will fund selected major projects and a larger number of smaller projects in each region of the country.

During this first year we will identify successful programs and make these programs available to all interested educators. It is my intention to give national visibility to a number of these by honoring them at the second annual Office of Education International Education Forum, to be held later this year.

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Next, an interdependent world places a great premium on communication. Foreign language education is essential. We must help each student understand that language is the process by which a nation's culture is sustained, continuity is assured, and civilization progresses. Understanding of the central role of language and a respect for the languages of other peoples must be reaffirmed.

Last year President Carter asked me to work with Congress to establish a Presidential Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies. The Commission, under the outstanding leadership of Jim Audrus, has been hard at work and later this year

will present its report and recommendations. I'm convinced that out of this effort a clear and strong commitment will emerge.

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A decade ago Arnold Toynbee observed that we have conquered nature and that now our great unfinished task is to conquer self.

- o He said that humanity is our most formidable enemy today.
- o We ourselves are more formidable than wild beasts, our oldest foe; and more formidable than disease, which, for the most part, we can now control.
- o The time has come, Toynbee said, for humanity as a whole to unite against the common enemy in itself.

Toynbee concluded by suggesting that

- o The great irony of our time is that humanity may be destroyed, not by its madness, but by its special relationship to the planet Earth.

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A United Nations official, Robert Muller, has noted that ~~that~~ ⁹
o a child born today into a world of four billion people will, if he attains age 60, be sharing the Earth with three times as many human beings.

In a monograph published by the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, Muller went on to say that

A child born today . . . will be both an actor and a beneficiary or a victim in a total world fabric, and he may rightly ask:

'Why was I not warned? Why was I not better educated? Why did my teachers not tell me about these problems and indicate my behavior as a member of an interdependent human race?'

Teachers increasingly have an obligation to educate, not just about the past and not just about the present, but about the future too. These three in combination represent the common core.

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One final note.

American colleges and universities not only have a special obligation to educate our students. They also have a special obligation to build bridges in the field of scholarship and in the arts as well -- a world-wide community.

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- o A few years ago I sat in the rector's office at Moscow State University.
- o There we signed an agreement initiating the first university-to-university exchange of faculty and graduate students between an American and a Soviet institution of higher learning.
- o This agreement expanded the State University of New York agreement with the Soviet Union, which began in 1974, when the first undergraduate exchange program was formalized.

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Then, a few weeks after Moscow, I was in Haifa to sign an agreement with the presidents of the seven Israeli universities to promote faculty and student exchanges as well as collaborative research.

- o This agreement represented the first time a network of all the Israeli universities had joined together in an international exchange agreement with an American multi-campus university.

These were modest steps, of course; but, even so, they were steps in the right direction -- bringing us together as scholars and as fellow human beings.

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And these ties of international scholarship must be strengthened. The spirit of the Fulbright program must be enhanced.

Last year at a dinner at the Swedish ^membassy I met Senator Fulbright, who had just been honored by Sweden in celebration of the Fulbright program.

On the way home it occurred to me that this ^aNation had never had such an occasion. And so it was that last year a special celebration was scheduled -- and the Office of Education hosted a special conference --

And extended a special award to Senator William Fulbright for having suggested the scholar exchange program which has contributed so much to world understanding and world peace.

After our first astronaut orbited into space, Archibald MacLeish wrote: "To see the Earth as it truly is, small and blue -- beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats -- is to see ourselves as riders on the Earth together -- brothers."

- o We do not yet know that we are truly brothers and truly sisters.
- o And yet I'm confident that as we better educate ourselves and make more sensitive the human spirit, we will indeed make our future more secure and prevent this angry, frightening world from self-destruction.

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I hope that years from now historians will look back on 1979 as a vintage year --

- o The year we celebrated the 60th anniversary of IIE,
- o the 21st anniversary of NDEA VI,
- o the year of an outstanding conference in the Nation's Capital,
- o the year USOE launched a nationwide global education initiative under Section 603 of NDEA,
- o and the year a Presidential Commission pushed for a new national commitment to international understanding.

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