



Institute of International Education
809 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

March 22, 1979

Mr. Henry Bretzfield
U.S. Office of Education
Room 2089
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington D.C. 20202

Dear Mr. Bretzfield:

With reference to our telephone conversation of last week, please find enclosed the transcript of Commissioner Boyer's address at the closing banquet of the 1979 Conference on International Education, February 28, 1979, Shoreham Americana Hotel, Washington D.C.

The transcript was made from the tape of the presentation and is therefore entirely conform with the Commissioner's own words. In order to forward it to you immediately, we have not taken the extra time to proofread it and check it against the tape; however, the typist who did the job is very competent and reliable. I would appreciate your making the appropriate corrections and some editing, if need be, and your returning the text to me as soon as possible. We have had several requests for it and may also want to use it in parts or in its totality in some of our publications.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Micaela Thorup

Micaela Thorup
Conference Manager

212-883-8628

Enclosure: Commissioner Boyer's address

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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The Honorable Ernest Leroy Boyer
United States Commissioner for the Office of Education
Former Chancellor of the State University of New York

Introductions are always hazardous both for the introducer and the introducee. Several weeks ago in this city, there was a Democratic fundraiser and Vice President Mondale was introduced by Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill; for some reason the introduction was less than generous and, when Mr. Mondale came to the speaker's stand, he said, "Thank you very much, Mr. O'Neill, for those remarks...Of all of the introductions I've had in my long career, that one certainly is the most recent." Those sentiments came to mind this evening, Verne, but also considerably generous. Washington is a city of many hazards and to those who come, if you don't bring humility with you, you learn it soon after you arrive. I came to the Commissionership of Education as a new boy on the block. There is a hard core of cynicism in the bureaucracy; they see Commissioners come and Commissioners go -- and I wondered how long it would take for me to establish my credentials and win goodwill. After several months, I thought I sensed a thawing of the ice. People nodded when I got in the elevator and said "good morning" as I walked down the corridor, and once in a while even volunteered a comment favorable to my administration. I thought I had harnessed an office of \$12 billion and 3,000 employees but it was a fleeting illusion. I walked in the men's room one afternoon and had washed my hands and was about to press the button on one of those contraptions that spews forth hot air and tries to convince you your hands now are dry -- and just as I was about to use the hand-drying machine, I saw scribbled graffiti on the wall with felt pen that said:

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Press here for a message from the Commissioner.... Well, bear that in mind for the remainder of the evening. You will get a blast if not substance.

Well, I have first to say a word about IIE. I am delighted to help celebrate what I understand to be a Sixtieth Birthday and also commend it for acting as the linchpin in organizing this historic conference, in bringing together what I think must be a "first" -- the assembly of some 60-plus organizations, all committed in spirit, if not in intellectual nuance, to the relationships we have to other fellow humans all around the world. As was already hinted in the introduction, I have gained enormously from the work of IIE. I was not only honored to be a member of the Board of Trustees when I was wrenched from the comforts of such engagement by something called public service, but more intellectually rewarding still, I think, was the fact that IIE did ask me to participate in two international conferences as delegate to Brazil and Portugal, as Verne suggested but he failed to mention what I think to be the mountain-peak experience in my relationships with this remarkable organization -- when about four years ago I was asked to be the American delegate and the only outside delegate to a meeting of the Association of Arab Universities; and for four days in Cairo I literally sat in intellectual communion with the head of (the rector, or chancellor, or president) of every Arab university in the world. I still recall that as a moment of high drama as I discovered, in talking candidly about the nature of their administrative problem, about some of their goals and aspirations, and was again reminded of the universality of the academic agenda. I made close friendships and, very often in these last few months and weeks, I have thought about some of my administrative friends and wondered as to how they are coping and trying to make sense out of the higher learning that, in some respects, we share a spiritual bond.

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Need I say that I think IIE has as much or more than any other organization world-wide credibility, consider its work to be absolutely crucial and I hope to be invited to your 120th birthday sixty years from now. Might I also note that I think this timing of this conference is strategic. Not only is it the 60th anniversary of IIE; it happens to mark the 20th-plus birthday of the Federal role in international education. It was on September 2, 1958 when Congress passed the Landmark National Defense Education Act and because of this Bill, I believe, internationalism in this country has been enormously enriched. Because of NDEA over 18,500 international education fellowships have been awarded; because of the language in area study centers that have been sponsored by this legislation, there have been 63,000 baccalaureate degrees awarded, 24,000 master's degrees, and 6,600 doctorates that have been earned by students studying under academic institutes funded by NDEA. Because of this legislation there have been over 700 contracts and 64 grants for foreign language research, 117 so-called model under-graduate international curricula, 56 model graduate study programs in international education had been funded. And a whole host of translations of exotic literature; translations into English that never would have been financed if we did not have the research component of NDEA which continues to be the primary source of the sustaining of international literatures into English that would not be available to scholars in this country. I submit that for twenty years the Federal contribution through that enlightened legislation has been significant and sustained. But I think it's important, also, to note that in spite of that steady pool, the spirit of internationalism and education has had tremendously adverse action. I think any of us who live through the academic community during the 1960's have to know that our worldview during that period was badly shattered and we have yet

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to sustain and regain our equilibrium. This nation was savaged by the tragedy of Viet Nam and on campus after campus our overseas engagements were seen as reckless interventions and throughout education, especially at the collegiate level, we shifted from engagement to isolation. To put it quite crudely, I do believe that the entire spirit and momentum and vision that was so much a part of our innocence and optimism following World War II was desperately destroyed and we, in fact, lost our world perspective. I think this business of retreat from reality and the narrowness of intellectual vision came home to me with startling and almost stunning vividness one morning ^{when I was} sitting at my desk in Albany and looking urgently for something to divert me from the reality of paper clips and xerox copies of endlessly irrelevant reports and I saw the pile to my left which was called "junk mail" with no embarrassment attended I saw this top paper on that was the Stanford Student Newspaper. I was intrigued by the headline which said "Faculty Recommends Required Course" which I had to admit was banner news in academia at the time. I was fascinated, and sure enough there it was, in 1970 the Stanford faculty is, as I understood it, had abandoned the last required course and then, after things had settled down a bit, they in good academic fashion named a committee to rethink that rather brashed decision and after two or three years of intense jestation, had given birth to the conclusion that one required course at Stanford may not be wholly impalatable to academiclea. It was as I understand it to be a course in which they tentatively probed in the direction of something called "Western Civilization"; hardly mind-destructive. But, there it was, bold, imaginative, unprecedented in its scope and vision.

Now you might have thought that that rather timid tip-toeing into required legislation would have not shaken Stanford, but you misunderstand the student

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mind. For bannered in great, bold, black borders on that student newspaper front page, the editor came rumbling in from his academic towers to denounce that proposal as being viciously insensitive to student interests. In fact, and now I quote, the student editorial says that "we oppose this careless proposition". The new report proposes to remove from students - listen to this - the right to choose for themselves ~~the~~^a the course of study. The word "right" carefully chosen. "This is not to deny," the student editor said, "that courses in Western culture are valuable and that most persons could benefit from them, how gentle a concession." On the other hand, to "require", the student say, "to require students to take a course carries a strong illiberal connotation. It imposes a uniformed standard on non-uniform people." There you have it. And suddenly I felt as if the air had been knocked from my lungs. One of our most gifted students I assume who had admitted and now soon would leave Stanford University found it so offensive that an institution was groping for some kind of inter-connectedness, all be it timid and unimaginative, to be sure. And it struck me as a staggering revelation of the nature of our education that this student at that late moment in his academic life did not understand that for a college or university to suggest a search for commonality is in no way to be confused with something he called "uniformity". It seemed to me that that vividly revealed one of the tragedies of our time that somehow our notion of intellectual and cultural connectedness had been snapped. I have to say to you that this inclination toward narrowness and self-indulgence has left us frightfully ignorant about our planet Earth. Today less than 1% of the college-age group are enrolled in any course which specifically features contemporary international affairs. College enrollments in foreign languages are off, they tell me, fully 40% in the past seven years. A recent national survey revealed that, even after President Carter gave his

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speech on energy, only half of the public surveyed in this country, 52% to be precise, even knew America had to import oil from abroad. And of that number, that is of the 52%, only one-third or 17% of the total population, adult population, had any idea that we had to import approximately 42%. Incidentally, that increased percentage has grown from 42% to 50% in the last two years. Fifty per cent of ~~twelfth~~^{twelfth}-graders studied in a recent survey could not choose correctly an Arab country out of four choices they were given, and 40% of the twelfth-graders thought that Golda Meir rather than Anwar Sadaat was President of Egypt. Last year during the TV coverage of the Sadaat-Begin discussions, which incidently were interspersed with the coverage of the Chicago Bears football game, 3 out of every 4 of the spectators interviewed at half time had never heard of Sadaat or Begin, but were well aware of the prowess of their local hero, Walter Patton. Recently while flying from New Orleans to Orlando, I read in the morning paper, The New Orleans Pickayou(?) that University of California scientist had now concluded that the earth ozone band is being harmed by contaminates at twice the rate that had been earlier predicted. I thought it was symbolic of our time that this important story perhaps a life-or-death story was reported in a single paragraph buried deep in section two. Environmentalists are fond of talking about the vulnerability of our ego system, but I suspect that in fact our own life system may in fact, because of ignorance, be most fragile and most threatened. Lewis Thomas, that marvelous science writer, in his remarkable book "The Lives of a Cell", said, "It is illusion to think that there's anything fragile about life of earth. Surely this is the toughest membrane imaginable in the universe. We," he said, "the human species, are the delicate part. We are transcient, invulnerable, assilia." And yet with all of our vulnerability, we have assumed that we could

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in the name of something we call progress, without understanding our connectedness to each other and to nature, move ahead. And we have assumed that there was no negative price to pay. It seems quite clear to me that in the social world as in the physical world there is no free ride; for every action there is an equal and equivalent reaction which inevitably must be phased. There may be a delayed time bomb, but the equation somehow, sometime will be balanced. Fact, I've developed a little tactic in my office which has temporarily immobilized us. Whenever I get a proposition which someone said will improve the system, I send them back and say, "Give me the negative side of your assumed progress." We have, for generations, assumed that we can gain and never lose--the analysis is false. But not to speak gloomily tonight, I believe that once again a new sense of urgency is beginning to emerge. We are beginning to confront the fact, that indeed, this is a global village. We are beginning to recognize that the human race is expanding at the rate of 200,000 people every day, that's 73,000,000 people every year. Painfully we are now reminded that our gas pumps are somehow connected to the Middle East, that American industry is almost wholly dependent on foreign sources for chromium, for cobalt, for boxite, for magnesium, and for tin, that 40% to 95% of our precious metals are in fact imported from the Third World countries, that about one-third of the profits of American corporations come from exports or from foreign investments, that 1 out of every 6 factory workers in this country is making something for export, and that 2,000,000 Americans are employed in foreign trade. We are beginning to comprehend the fact that a child born today into a world of 4 billion people, will, if he attains age 60, be sharing the earth with 3 times as many human beings.

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For educators, the point of all of this is absolutely clear, and for just a few moments I should like to talk on what I think to be five implications to those of us who care about our colleges and schools.

It seems to me that we urgently need a new curriculum, especially a new notion of the curriculum at the elementary and secondary school: A curriculum in which students begin to understand the unity of our world, not just in a physical sense but in a social sense as well. Students must be taught that all actions on this planet, whether physical or social, are inextricably interlocked. And I'm convinced that an international education curriculum must be a top-priority in the schools. Now, let me here insert a modest caveat, I recognize that international education may not be the....(end of side one of tape) (cont'd from side two)....and I also recognize that my search for alternate normanclacher(?) has left me quite dissatisfied. The point is, however, that national boundaries tell us something about this world; but the urgent new agenda requires that we focus not just on political boundaries, and their realities are essential, but also on what one might call the agenda of humanity itself. What kinds of labels do we assign to this ^{new} academic search. The new curriculum might be defined as global or inter-dependence education, on one occasion I spoke of the "Fourth R" which momentarily held the critics at bay, and while they waited for the fourth shoe to drop, I suggested that 'reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic might also require something one calls relationships--the inter-connections that cause us to see totalities across the categories that brittly break up our world. In any event, regardless of the normanclacher(?) we select, I'm convinced we do need new notions about the curriculum and one that reflects our dependence on each other. Now, to build this new curriculum, knowledge about other cultures and other countries

obviously is not enough. The goal must be to confront attitudes as well.

The President Sadaat observed that the misunderstandings between his country and Israel he said are 70% psychological; that is 70% a state-of-mind. Well, in the future then, the curriculum may confront questions such as these:

"Where will we get our food and how can it be appropriately distributed?"

"What about our energy supply and how can it be equitably shared?"

"How can we reduce the poisons in the atmosphere?"

"Can we have a proper balance between the population and the life support system of the planet earth?" And most profoundly.....

"How can we live together with civility in a climate of constraint?"

These may in fact be the transcendent issues in the curriculum of tomorrow.

Now coming very precisely to the federal role in all of this, I want you to know that I intend, during my 10 years in the office, to give clear priority to this search for new curriculum. For the first time in the history of Section 603 of Title VI, we have been funded; modestly to be sure...three million dollars, but it is three million dollars. I intend to use those dollars almost exclusively at the elementary and secondary level where the foundation education job must begin. I hope we can target those funds in a way where the impact will be most effective. I do not intend to dribble out grants across this country like water in a sand box, so that after 10 years you know you've gotten rid of the money but you have no idea where its gone. What I would like to do if the lawyers will permit is to select exciting elementary and secondary programs now in force; identify the good things now going on; have a selected number of grants awarded to classroom activities in schools and colleges in each of our 10 regions; have regional conferences through the state

education department that will high light those successes giving monies to those projects to enrich what they're doing and to publicize what they're doing and hold conferences with teachers throughout the state, and then before this calendar year ends, I intend to have the second international conference NOE in which we will bring to Washington samples of exciting international education activities in the schools that hopefully can be used as models all across the country. We must help our students understand the nature of our world. It must begin in the elementary and secondary schools in this country. We must target on the exciting projects now going on and we must find ways to give multiple visibility to those activities that show us the way to the future.

In a monograph published by Robert Mulkerr of the World Affairs Council, he said, "A child born today will be both an actor and a beneficiary or a victim in the total world fabric." He may rightly asked 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? I believe classroom teachers do have an obligation to educate about our interdependent world, so the surprises may at least be modestly reduced. And we must, through the federal office, not fund the entire venture, it cannot be done, but to use our narrow and limited resources to highlight exemplary models of the directions our schools must go, ^{and} to give legitimacy and some financial relief to those selected as the best.

Second point. I believe we must also place increased emphasis on foreign language. Now I know there's a kind of contradiction, world-view, multiple languages, but it seems to me that we have to realistically understand that language is something very special in the lexicon of human existence, it's

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the process by which individual identities are established, social connections are cemented, and national cultures are sustained, and international continuity is assured. Somehow we must develop respect for the rich tapestry of languages all around the world. See them not so much ^{as} inhibitions to connectedness but as validations of the family diversity that we share. I was delighted that last year President Carter, urged on by Congressman Simon, asked if I would join with the Congressional Committee in fulfilling one of the mandates of the international agreement in form of a Presidential Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies. I think that most of you know that after nine months of pregnancy, a Presidential Commission was born. Jim Perkins, who I think joins you at this meeting, chairs it with great distinction, some twenty-five members are working diligently. They have a very short time schedule, but I am convinced before this calendar year is finished, will report not only to the President and to the Congress, but to all of us across the nation, with recommendations that will highlight and give, I think, much needed press visibility and new vitality, not just to the policies governing foreign languages in our schools, but more importantly to the fact that this is an inter-connected world. I think we can look to the work of this Presidential Commission with much hope and aspiration and believe that through the media we will begin to educate not only the educators but the public at large that we must change our way of thinking.

Third point. I believe also that if we are going to realistically deal with the business of re-educating our society, we have to understand the connections between television and the classroom. I am increasingly convinced that television has become the most important and influential teacher in our culture. It is absolutely impossible for those of us in public education to

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assume that the classroom is the centerpiece of value-forming. Children watch television 11,000 hours before they ever go to school and they watch television 15,000 hours before they graduate; during their formal education while they're only in front of the teacher, about 11,000 hours. Television is winning hands down. Studies have shown that if there is any conflict of opinion between the television and the teacher, the credibility of the television wins every single time. Now, this is not something to be ignored, this is not something to be attacked, it's something to be joined. There is endless trash on television, but there is endless opportunities as well. I believe we must bring television into the mission of global education and intergrate it with what classroom teachers can and must be doing. It's because of that I joined with Joan Gantz Cooney several months ago, and with NSF we announced a new television program that's now being produced that will focus on science technology and the environment. It's going to be targeted to the junior high school ages (10-12). It's going to be offered in the middle of the school day so it can be shown in classrooms and in the late afternoon and evenings so parents and children can watch it then. We're also financing the preparation of teaching materials...teachers' guides and student materials...so that what is presented on TV with all of the power and imagination that that can provide can also have followup studies and do what only ^{classroom} teachers can do as well. Television, you see, can take you to the bottom of the ocean, it can have you listen to whales, it can take you to the top of the Himalayas, it can do for you what no classroom teacher, regardless of his or her imagination can ever do. On the other hand, the classroom teacher can deal with the nuances of that subject; can stimulate additional research, can ask students to write about the materials; and no television has that capacity. We need each other. I am convinced that

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with success this new television program, which is being produced by those same people who brought you Sesame Street and Electric Company, can have a powerful impact in the very context that brings us here tonight. Helping us to understand the nature of our world, the inter-relationships, and the impact between the technological world and human survival. Incidentally, Joan sent me the other day, some disturbing findings. She said in doing some of their pre-production research, and they always go around and do careful analysis with the population they seek to touch, they had just completed a survey in New York City, trying to find out what relationships students at that age level now understand. She found out in their surveys that some children when asked, "Where does electricity come from?" said "The switch". When they were asked, "Where does the water come from?" They said, "The faucet". "Where does the garbage go?" You guessed it..."Down the chute." A bit humorous perhaps, but startling in that we have, I do believe, increasingly developed a culture in which we are limited in our sense of connectedness to that ^{which} we can seal, and see, and feel, and touch. Now there was a day when young children living in the harsh realities of survival, understood a little more about where water came from and where light came from, but we have insulated ourselves and somehow assumed the sugar-daddy of supply is as close as the switch itself. Well, I think the power of the media to indulge myself just one further moment on this important point, was illustrated just a little over a year ago when President Sadaat of Egypt said he'd like to address the Israeli Parliament. Hours later, after he made that statement, the satellites beamed his commitment all around the world, and television played and replayed it, and held him to it almost as a dare. Days later Barbara Walters and John Chancellor and Walter Cronkite arrived in Cairo to give official certification kind of divine

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blessing to the trip; and millions of people sat and watched, transfixed, as an Egyptian plane touched down on Israeli soil. This is not to diminish the political impact of that visit to say that I believe none of the words that were exchanged and none of the speeches and none of the documents and none of the private meetings and none of the toasts -- none of these were as significant as the riveting of the whole world's attention on one single, breathtaking symbolic image when two former enemies shook hands. Instantly, 500 million people -- and they tell me that's how many saw that encounter -- 500 million people felt the connectedness. And it seems to me that instantly their perspective was expanded and I believe that, momentarily at least, the world was brought together in a grand gesture on behalf of peace. I submit to you that all that we do in the classroom, and it is essential, cannot begin to compare with the powerful acts of symbolism that can say something about the integration or the disintegration of this world. Now since that event 12 months ago, it seems almost an eternity, we have sat and watched a dynasty topple in Iran, we've seen Chinese leaders toasted in the nation's capitol, and once again we've watched Hanoi bombed on the evening news--this time by Chinese planes. I was fortunate last January on an international visit to have spent an hour with Mr. Begin and on that occasion I told him that I have been rarely moved in ways that I had been moved at the joint session of Congress following the Camp David meeting -- when I sat in our kitchen and watched the President of the United States greeting the head of Israel and the head of Egypt who were sitting in the gallery; and somehow, somehow that interconnection once again came vividly home to me. Whether we like it or not, and I think we should, the medium to some extent is the message; and I'm suggesting that those

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of us who care about relationships have to understand we have here potential for great good if we can somehow make it one of the educational partners in the realities of a culture controlled and even enslaved by the mass media.

One final note - not only must we look at the nature of our curriculum and at the understanding of international languages and at the relationship between the media and formal education, I think the whole field of bridging scholarship and the arts must be enriched as well. In 1976 I sat in the office of Rector (Kohkaw?) in Moscow State University and signed with him the first university-to-university agreement between an American and a Soviet institution, and the feelings that I had at that time, in which I was trying to sort out all of the international political issues and at the same time give authenticity to what I thought were the connections of scholarship, caused me to deepen my conviction that with all of the political realities those of us in education have an international agenda to pursue that transcends the political agenda of our time. And when I was happily able to be one of the partners that negotiated the exchange with the Chinese delegation several months ago and tried to find ways for those who care about ideas in the world of the arts to define the commonness and keep those connections--fragile as they are--alive, I deepened my own belief that that kind of encounter must be pursued vigorously and at all costs. And that kind of encounter can be made authentic, politics notwithstanding. It was just about a year ago when I attended a reception at the Swedish Embassy and I looked across the room and saw Senator Fulbright and chatted with him. He said he had just come back from Sweden and they had honored him on the 25th celebration of the Fulbright Exchange Program between the United States and that country. And I thought that was nice. On the way home, I thought to myself and then said to my wife,

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"I don't remember that anyone has celebrated the Fulbright program in America." And the next morning I called his office and he seemed very busy; and I told his secretary I was calling about the Fulbright program--and he came on right away. I asked him straightforwardly and he said, "no, they haven't--but then, this is a big country." I allowed it was a big country but I hoped it wasn't a calloused country. The upshot of that was that within four months we had in this city a moment that I shall cherish when a number of Senators and academic leaders gathered at the Smithsonian for a special celebration in honor of the 30th year of America's participation in the Fulbright program; and to celebrate that we had Fulbright scholars, musicians and scientists tell of what it had meant to them--and Senator Fulbright has said since that it was one of the most important moments in his life when his own country paused to note the power of that message. The Fulbright program, as he says, is hardly a fractional footnote to a \$500 billion budget but you can't tell me that it has not made a profound--a staggeringly profound--difference on the nature of this world, not only symbolically but actually. I think the importance for us to remember is that it is not money, it is ideas; it's not fighting for budgets alone, it's affirming convictions; it's not getting caught in the nuances of vocabulary, it's understanding the importance of relationships. These, too, are a part of the agenda that brings us here today. After our first astronaut orbited into space, Archibald MacLeish wrote: "To see the earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as ^{riders} ~~writers~~ on the earth together, brothers who are truly brothers." Well I don't believe, in spite of MacLeish's inspired verse, that we know yet that we are truly brothers and truly sisters, and yet I am confident that as we better educate ourselves, work seriously at the nature of our curriculum, understand the tapestry of language, understand the power of the media,

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and understand the importance of maintaining international scholarship connections, I believe that it is possible that we still may prevent this angry, frightened world from self-destruction. So, Wally, I salute the IIE and on behalf of all of us I hope that history will look back on 1979 as a vintage year, a vintage year because of the 60th anniversary of IIE, a vintage year because of the 20th anniversary of the National Defense Education Act, a vintage year because this, for the first time, will be when the Office of Education can launch a nationwide global education program in the schools, a vintage year because a Presidential Commission will call attention to our commitments nationwide. And above all, I hope 1979 will be remembered as the year when, somehow, internationally, we have come somewhat closer together as a human race. Thank you very much.