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ABSTRACT

Designed as a response to concerns expressed in "A Nation At Risk," this report offers a rationale and focus for international education in the public schools. Following a preface, the bulk of the document addresses the importance of foreign language and foreign culture education to the United States' national security and economic well-being, the role of foreign language and foreign cultural instruction in elementary and secondary education, and the state of foreign language teacher training. Two additional sections outline 19 specific recommendations for action on local, state, and national levels and report conclusions. Appendices contain the National Advisory Board on International Education Programs membership and charter, and a selected bibliography. (LP)

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Critical Needs in International Education: Recommendations for Action

A Report to the Secretary of Education by the National Advisory
Board on International Education Programs

ED247201

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December 1983

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December 15, 1983

The Honorable Terrel H. Bell
Secretary of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On September 1, 1983 you asked the National Advisory Board on International Education Programs to put forward recommendations for improving the standard of foreign language and international studies in the United States. You urged the Board to move quickly, in order to catch the current tide of public interest in educational reform and renewal, and to enable state legislatures and the Congress to consider these issues at their forthcoming sessions.

The Board responded readily to this charge. Many of our fellow citizens are deplorably ill-informed about foreign nations and cultures; and at a time of ever increasing need for foreign languages, instruction is at an historically low level.

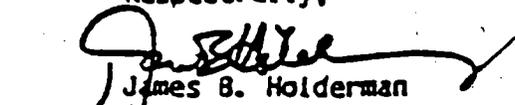
The National Advisory Board accordingly adopted the enclosed recommendations on December 1. We were able to achieve so much in such a short space of time because of the outstanding efforts of a Subcommittee of the Board which reviewed a great deal of material and draft recommendations in advance. Members of the Board approached the task with seriousness and overriding concern for the national interest. We also enjoyed the support of a first-rate staff and excellent cooperation from your Department.

Our report indicates that raising the standards of international education requires concerted efforts by leaders throughout our nation, at state, local, and federal levels, as well as in the educational community and the private sector. We hope our recommendations will therefore be widely disseminated, and that the various public and private bodies involved will all take their share of responsibility for implementation.

You asked us to consider in this report the general question of foreign language and international studies, so we have not addressed in detail the specialized programs operated under Title VI of the Higher Education Act. We look forward to making detailed recommendations elsewhere concerning the future of these programs, which are now under separate review.

We feel privileged to have been able to respond to your initiative, Mr. Secretary, in commissioning this report, and we stand ready to work with your Department and with leaders throughout our country to help insure truly excellent standards of foreign language and international studies in the United States.

Respectfully,



James B. Holderman
Chairman

National Advisory Board on
International Education Programs

CRITICAL NEEDS IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

PREFACE

We welcome this opportunity to put forward recommendations for improving the quality of international education in the United States.

Not since the post-Sputnik era over 25 years ago has there been such concentrated national attention on the need to improve American education. Public and political support for reform and renewal is near a peak.

Concern over the decline in the study of foreign languages and cultures has been evident in a number of the excellent reports which have appeared this year on education, not least **A NATION AT RISK**, the Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education.

An emerging consensus places the study of foreign languages and cultures alongside the five "basics" of English, mathematics, computer science, social studies, and the natural sciences as fundamental components of a sound education. Foreign language and international studies are also widely perceived as among the subjects in which American educational performance has been most seriously deficient, as the Secretary of Education pointed out when he commissioned this report.

We commend Secretary Terrel H. Bell's leadership in promoting educational reform and renewal. We are privileged to offer these recommendations for action in response to his further initiative in pinpointing international education as an area for priority attention among the issues aired in **A NATION AT RISK**.

PEACE, PROSPERITY, LEADERSHIP, AND SECURITY ARE AT STAKE

National security and the economic well-being of the United States depend in no small measure on our ability to understand and communicate with other nations and peoples. Leadership of the free world requires that our citizens know about the culture, heritage, and social conditions of our friends and allies, as well as any potential adversary.

In a pluralistic democracy, stability and world peace require that all citizens understand the significance of developments abroad. The major wars of the century, the oil embargo of 1973, the Iranian hostage crisis, the recent Korean airliner tragedy and civil war in Lebanon -- these and many other incidents vividly illustrate how our national security and our daily lives can be instantly affected by events far removed from our shores. President Reagan recently noted:

"The world has changed. Today our national security can be threatened in far away places. It's up to all of us to be aware of the strategic importance of such places and to be able to identify them."

Our prosperity is now closely tied to external events. Long lines at gas stations dramatized the interdependent nature of the American economy. International trade now accounts for 22% of our gross national product, compared with 11% in 1970 and just 5% before the Second World War. One out of five Americans depends on international trade for employment. Every third acre of farmland in the United States is producing for export. Likewise, we now depend on imports for many vital supplies. It is predicted that 12 out of 13 minerals required for a modern industrial society will have to be imported by the year 2000. Technology, trade, the environment and demographic trends are all crucial issues. Each affects our society, which is inextricably linked with developments beyond the water's edge.

Yet our knowledge and understanding of world events is woefully inadequate. Effective communication with the overwhelming majority of the world's population is hampered by our linguistic isolation. The United States remains one of the few countries where students may graduate from a university without studying a foreign language throughout their formal education.

Competence in foreign languages and knowledge of foreign cultures are closely related to our understanding of world affairs. This Board alerts our society to the urgent need to improve our levels of accomplishment in these areas.

RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE

We have the resources. We enjoy rich ethnic diversity, with linguistic and cultural ties to every part of the globe. We have advanced communications, a vigorous free press, highly diversified broadcasting media, expertise in area studies in a network of national resource centers, a tradition of internationally-minded community, professional, and civic organizations, and the world's strongest commitment to universal access to public education at all levels.

There are in this country hundreds of thousands of people with overseas experience and competence in foreign languages: former Peace Corps volunteers, business executives, diplomats and military personnel.

We must make better use of all these resources.

OUR NEED FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES...

The National Commission on Excellence in Education pointed out: "...study of a foreign language introduces students to non-English-speaking cultures, heightens awareness and comprehension of one's native tongue, and serves the Nation's needs in commerce, diplomacy, defense and education."

The study of foreign languages and cultures has traditionally and rightly been at the heart of a liberal arts education. The study of another language and culture not only informs students about other cultures and other values, it leads to respect for the differences among peoples. Those confined to their own language and culture can hardly be called fully educated.

As a world power, the security and prosperity of the United States depends on a complex network of relations with the rest of the world. Treaties and other military, social, political, and cultural ties bind us to world organizations and nearly every nation. Precisely because we are a world power, we have responsibilities and obligations. We also have an economy fundamentally tied to world trade. We are a pluralistic society conducting business in an interdependent world.

Foreign languages are required for communication in commerce, science, technology, health, environmental, military and political affairs, and many other areas of our advanced industrial society. Yet these growing requirements are accompanied by declining enrollments in foreign language courses in our schools.

Because of our lack of competence in foreign languages, American business stands to lose markets to foreign competition. And, as other countries challenge, and in some cases overtake, our lead in high technology, our scientists, engineers, and technicians are hampered in their access to foreign research and data. Federal government agencies need, but do not insist on functional competence in foreign languages for political assessment, negotiation, agricultural development, technical assistance projects, and defense. In this context, it is shocking to note that competence in a foreign language is no longer required in our Foreign Service examination.

Employers must offer incentives to those competent in foreign languages. Schools, colleges, and universities, for their part, should actively recruit students for foreign language studies and develop courses of study that will enable graduates in a variety of professional areas, such as engineering, law, medicine, business, and education, to be fully competent as well in at least one foreign language.

Foreign languages are most easily acquired at an early age. The opportunity for language training should therefore be moved back in the curriculum to the elementary grades, and its pursuit consistently encouraged throughout formal education.

As President Reagan has said:

"I urge parents and community and business leaders alike to join educators in encouraging our youth to begin the study of a foreign language at an early age and to continue the study of this language until a significant level of proficiency has been achieved."

But what does the situation reveal? Apart from a post-Sputnik surge, foreign language enrollments in high school have steadily declined from their modest peak in 1915 of 36% to a mere 15% in 1980. Many students, especially in schools with large minority enrollments, are not offered the opportunity to learn another language at all.

Equally disturbing is the fact that few of those enrolled stay the course long enough to acquire even a minimal level of proficiency. Attrition is so high that only a fraction of those enrolled -- one estimate claims as few as 1.8% of high school students -- are still studying the same language after two years. In these circumstances it is not surprising that even among those who have taken up the study of a foreign language, there are few who feel they have mastered oral, written or comprehension skills. Their frustration adds another downward turn to the spiral of attrition.

The groundwork must be laid in the elementary schools. Unfortunately the majority of our elementary schools do not offer any foreign language instruction, nor do a fifth of our secondary schools. Even where foreign language instruction is offered, courses have been reduced. We believe that foreign language instruction should be offered to all students.

There are signs that the situation is gradually improving. The publication four years ago of **STRENGTH THROUGH WISDOM**, the Report of the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies, provided a fresh stimulus in this direction. Some 70 colleges and universities have recently reinstated foreign language qualifications for entry or graduation, reversing a steady decline since 1915 when 85% of the nation's colleges and universities stipulated a foreign language qualification for admission. The low point was 8% in 1975. Several states are beginning to introduce changes. One state, New York, is proposing to introduce in 1985 mandatory foreign language requirements, including a proficiency examination for ninth graders in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension, with instruction beginning early in elementary school. Successful experiments in magnet and specialized international high schools have been launched around the country at little extra cost, and more are on the drawing boards.

The foreign language teaching profession has taken steps -- especially in the past year -- towards developing and introducing nationally acceptable proficiency standards as a basis for testing functional competence in foreign language speaking and comprehension. Measuring the proficiency of students and teachers on the basis of these new standards will lead to real progress in language teaching and learning.

... AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

As we have said, our citizens' knowledge of foreign affairs and foreign cultures is woefully inadequate. If we are to remedy this deplorable situation, our educators must have much better liaison with the professions, national associations, citizens' organizations and the media. Numerous local and national voluntary organizations, businesses, churches, trade unions, and other groups have demonstrated their commitment to international education. Media executives and educators can cooperate, to their mutual benefit. Much has been achieved that deserves recognition. Much more should be done.

It is in our schools, however, that the greatest progress can be made. International and intercultural studies should receive more attention and higher priority. An international perspective should be introduced into such subjects as social studies, history, geography, economics, political science, and management. Administrators should promote curricula integrating the language, geography, and history of foreign countries, and foster interdisciplinary cooperation in the study of foreign languages and cultures. The States should review school curriculum requirements to foster international studies. In colleges and universities, an international perspective should be encouraged in both the undergraduate and professional curricula, such as business, journalism, education and law.

THE CHALLENGE

The United States knows how to respond to challenges such as we face in international education. Time and again --from the G.I. Bill, through the post-Sputnik era, to the encouragement recently offered by the NATION AT RISK report --we have shown that we can respond with imagination, energy and creativity.

The challenge now is clear. The people of the United States need a much heightened awareness of the world in which we live. We need that awareness for our security and prosperity, for our enrichment as educated citizens, and for a responsible posture in the world.

This Board therefore proposes the following broad goals, and offers specific recommendations to support their realization.

-- Institutions and individuals throughout the nation must help educate the public to the diversity and complexity of our world.

- To compete in an increasingly interdependent world, and maintain our status as a world power, Americans need the confidence based on understanding our own heritage, and the international awareness, cultural sensitivity, and communications skills that accrue from foreign language and intercultural studies.
- Schools, colleges and universities must ensure that their graduates have the knowledge to understand world events affecting them and the language skills required to function effectively at home and abroad.

To reach these goals requires a partnership between public and private sectors: to focus attention, provide leadership and channel the necessary resources. Action is required throughout the nation, especially at the state and local level. The federal government must provide leadership, and ensure that resources are available. But other resources, too, must be mobilized in public and private schools, colleges and universities, by faculty, administrators, parents, and students; and in the community in general, in business, the media, citizens' organizations, and the professions.

Working together under national leadership we can make a dramatic improvement in the state of our nation's knowledge of the language, history and culture of foreign countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Local school districts should provide every student with the opportunity to begin the study of a foreign language in the earliest years of formal education and to continue study of the same language until a functionally useful level of measured proficiency has been achieved.
2. Local school districts should begin a talent search for students of the highest foreign language ability, and priority should be given for these students to pursue advanced study, for example, at magnet or international high schools and have the opportunity to live and study abroad.
3. The various levels of the educational system should integrate their instructional programs so that the language learning experience of the individual student can be cumulative. Existing arrangements for co-operation between the secondary and post-secondary levels need to be strengthened and expanded.
4. Colleges and universities should require demonstrated proficiency, not the mere accumulation of credit hours, in a foreign language for both admission and graduation. Such proficiency should be based on national standards currently being developed by the profession, and should measure at various levels the ability of the students to speak, understand, read, and write the language.
5. To meet the language training needs which will arise from enhanced programs at the elementary and secondary levels, colleges and universities should develop advanced curricula and materials in the commonly and uncommonly taught languages.
6. Certification of future foreign language teachers should require the demonstration of a high level of language proficiency and teaching ability, as well as a knowledge of the people, history and institutions of the country or region in which the language is spoken.
7. Colleges and universities should recognize excellence in foreign language teaching and related research in tenure and promotion decisions.

8. Hard-earned foreign language competence, if not used, deteriorates. Government, business and industry should use their employees' foreign language skills, and offer employees who do not have them a chance to acquire and maintain such skills.
9. Foreign language courses and departments should be more closely integrated with international, area and multi-cultural study programs.
10. An international perspective should be infused into basic social studies courses, including history, geography, and political science. Curriculum requirements at each level of education, including business and other professional schools, should be reviewed to ensure that students are exposed to foreign languages and international studies.
11. Textbooks should be reviewed or revised, or new textbooks introduced where necessary, to include more international perspective.
12. The National Institute of Education should promote research in areas which will lead to excellence in foreign language and international studies, teaching and learning, including new methods of language study, such as reactive computer technology, audio-visual aids, and television.
13. Each State which has not already done so should develop a comprehensive plan for improving the quality of teaching and learning foreign languages and international studies. States should work closely with local officials to determine what needs exist at the local level and within individual schools.
14. A National Fund for International Education should be created. This Fund should receive a portion of the reflow funds generated by the overseas sale of U.S. Government military and other properties, and by interest payments on overseas technical assistance loans. In order to encourage contributions abroad from U.S. firms unable to repatriate profits, U.S. tax deductions should be permitted on contributions made to the Fund abroad by their foreign subsidiaries.

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15. The programs operated under Title VI of the Higher Education Act play a crucial role in ensuring the availability of an adequate capacity in this country for foreign language and international studies. The Board commends the aims, objectives and accomplishments of these programs, and strongly endorses their continuation. The Board intends to make further recommendations supporting the future of these programs during the impending process of reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.
16. A new federal education initiative should be established to increase the understanding and skills of teachers and other professionals in foreign languages and international studies.
17. Fellowships should be specially designated and provided for upgrading the skills of foreign language and international studies teachers.
18. All teachers of foreign languages and of the history, geography and culture of foreign countries should upgrade their skills by teaching and study abroad. Programs of exchange between foreign and United States teachers should be strengthened to help fill this need.
19. The Department of Education should introduce national awards for excellence in foreign language and international studies.

CONCLUDING NOTE

Our restraint in describing the deficiencies in our fellow citizens' knowledge of foreign languages and cultures should not be mistaken for complacency. Our nation's indifference to foreign languages and cultures is unique among the advanced industrial countries, and our performance in these areas lags behind that of many developing countries. This should be a source of national embarrassment.

Our recommendations are consciously modest and selective. They are winnowed from a list over three times as long. They purport to be neither comprehensive, nor original. In keeping with our mandate from the Secretary of Education, we have sought to focus on those areas most critically in need of attention, and most susceptible to remedial action.

Although many of our recommendations focus on the formal education system, we strongly urge the general public to be aware of how international affairs affect all our lives. Through travel and educational opportunities, all our citizens should enrich their understanding of other nations, languages and peoples.

We are conscious that many organizations and individuals share our concern, and, in some cases, have put forward recommendations similar to our own.

We hope our report will be a catalyst for dramatic improvement in foreign language and international studies in the United States.

Appendix 1:

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD ON
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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President
University of South Carolina

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*Mr. George Marotta
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Colonel Robert De Gross

***Member of the Subcommittee on Critical Needs
in International Education**



Appendix 2:

THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

CHARTER NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS *

AUTHORITY

The Committee is authorized by Section 621 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-374; 20 U.S.C. 1131). The Committee is governed by the provisions of Part D of the General Education Provisions Act (P.L. 90-247 as amended; 20 U.S.C. 1233 et seq.) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (P.L. 92-463; 5 U.S.C. Appendix I) which set forth the standards for the formation and use of advisory committees.

PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS

The Secretary is responsible for the administration of Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Section 621 of the Act authorizes the establishment of the National Advisory Board on International Education Programs. The National Advisory Board on International Education Programs advises the Secretary of Education.

The National Advisory Board:

- (1) advises the Secretary on geographic areas of special need or concern to the United States;
- (2) recommends innovative approaches which may help to fulfill the purposes of Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965;
- (3) informs the Secretary of activities which are duplicative of programs operated under other provisions of Federal law;
- (4) recommends changes which should be made in the operation of programs authorized under Title VI in order to ensure that the attention of scholars is attracted to international problems of the United States; and
- (5) advises the Secretary regarding the administrative and staffing requirements of the international education programs in the Department.

The Board establishes two subcommittees to carry out its advisory functions.

The first subcommittee of the Board considers the grants made, or contracts entered into, under the International and Foreign Language Studies Programs authorized by Part A of Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

The second subcommittee of the Board:

- (1) reviews the Business and International Education Programs authorized by Section 612 of Part B of Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965;
- (2) recommends changes which would advance the purposes of the Business and International Education Programs and assure the success of such programs;
- (3) considers and advises the Secretary of the special needs of Business and International Education Programs; and
- (4) advises the Secretary regarding program elements which are duplicative of programs operated under other provisions of Federal law.

STRUCTURE

The National Advisory Board consists of 23 members, including the chairperson. The members are persons knowledgeable concerning international education or area studies, or foreign languages and foreign language instruction, or international business.

The chairperson, who is also coordinator of the activities of the Board, is selected by the Secretary of Education. The Secretary selects and appoints:

- (1) five members selected from among representatives of the postsecondary education community;
- (2) two members selected from among representatives of the elementary and secondary education community;
- (3) three members selected from among members of the public; and
- (4) three members selected from among representatives of the business community.

The remainder of the National Advisory Board consists of:

- (1) one member selected by the Secretary of State;
- (2) one member selected by the Secretary of Defense;
- (3) one member selected by the Secretary of the Treasury;

- (4) one member selected by the Secretary of Commerce;
- (5) one member selected by the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities;
- (6) one member selected by the Director of the International Development Cooperation;
- (7) one member selected by the Director of the U.S. Information Agency;
- (8) one member selected by the President and Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States; and
- (9) one member selected by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

The Board establishes at least two subcommittees composed exclusively of members of the parent committee (see Purpose and Functions). Each subcommittee complies with the requirements of applicable statutes and Departmental regulations. Each subcommittee presents to the Board its preliminary findings and recommendations for subsequent action by the Board. The Board is authorized to modify its subcommittee structure subject to the requirements of Section 621, and establish additional subcommittees as may be necessary to enable the Board to carry out its functions. Timely notification of any subcommittee establishment and any change therein, including its charge, membership, and meetings will be made in writing to the Committee Management Officer.

Provision of management and administrative services is the responsibility of the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education. The Director of the office of International Education Programs serves as the Department of Education's Designated Federal Official to the Board.

MEETINGS

The National Advisory Board meets not less than four times a year at the call of the chairperson, with the advance approval of the Secretary or the Designated Federal Official who approves the agenda and is present at all meetings.

Meetings are open to the public except as determined otherwise by the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education. Adequate public notification is given in advance of each Board meeting.

Meetings are conducted and records of the proceedings kept, as required by applicable laws and Department regulations.

A quorum of the Board consists of a majority of the authorized membership.

Subcommittees meet at the call of their chairperson with the concurrence of the Board's chairperson. Subcommittees meet as required.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST

Members who are not full-time Federal employees are paid at the rate of \$100 per day, plus per diem and travel expenses in accordance with Federal travel regulations.

Estimated annual cost of operating the Board, including compensation and travel expenses for members, but excluding staff support, is \$92,000.00. Estimated annual person-years of staff support is three(3) years at an annual cost of \$15,000.00.

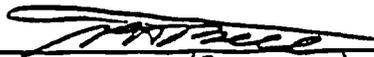
REPORTS

Not later than March 31 of each year, the National Advisory Board makes an annual report of its activities, findings and recommendations to the Congress, which is transmitted with the Secretary's annual report. The annual report of the Board contains, at a minimum, a list of members and their business addresses, a list of the dates and places of meetings, the functions of the Board, and a summary of Board activities and recommendations made during the year. A copy of all reports is submitted to the Committee Management Officer.

TERMINATION

Subject to Section 448(b) of the General Education Provisions Act and unless renewed by appropriate action prior to its expiration, the Board terminates September 30, 1985. This Charter expires two years from the date of filing in accordance with Section 9(c) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

1-14-83
(Date)


(Secretary)

Filing Date: JAN 16 1983

Appendix 3:

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Appendix 4:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to express our thanks to the staff of the Office of International Education, which provided efficient and helpful support for this and other projects of the Board, especially Director Kenneth D. Whitehead, Richard T. Thompson, Allen Cissel and Marguerite Follett. We are also grateful for the assistance of Steven Pappas, on loan from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education; and Jonathan Davidson, Washington Director of the James F. Byrnes International Center of the University of South Carolina, who provided research and drafting services under a purchase order from the Department of Education. Research assistance by Scott A. Lawson is also gratefully acknowledged.

We also appreciate the support, interest, and cooperation of the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, Edward M. Elmendorf and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, C. Ronald Kimberling.

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