

organizations have participated in presenting testimony and writing letters in support of continued federal funding for this area. At this point, the administration's proposed cuts for the NEH do not appear to have strong support among members of Congress. The NEH's excellent record, coupled with the efforts in the past 18 months by supporters of the agency, seem to have left a very favorable impression with most lawmakers. However, the peculiarities of this legislative year make predictions as to the final outcome almost impossible.

No Retrenchment

At the NEH itself, the prospect of budget cuts has not led to a mood of retrenchment. Chairman Bennett has not hesitated to take new initiatives in areas he sees as important. Programs initiated in the past year include special grants on the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, a series of summer seminars for high school teachers, and competitive awards for excellence to five state humanities programs. In addition, guidelines in the Division of Education Program have undergone a thorough revision, and the Special and Public divisions have been combined into the new Division of General Programs. (For information on programs and procedures at NEH, see "Those Aspects of the Social Sciences. . ." by Cynthia Wolloch Frey, *PS*, Winter 1980.)

One area that has received special attention is the relationship of the social sciences to the humanities. The legislation that created NEH defines the humanities as including "those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods." Traditionally, methodology has been a primary means of determining what is and is not in the humanities. At a recent meeting of the National Council on the Humanities (a presidentially appointed body that advises the chairman on policy and programs), a lively discussion resulted from questions raised by the chairman about how to pin down more precisely this distinction.

Further discussion of this issue is evolving toward a policy that will place its em-

phasis on the content of the proposed project rather than its methodology. NEH assistant chairman John Agresto has said that those applications in the social sciences which pose the questions of meaning and understanding that are central to the humanities will be welcome to apply. In fact, Agresto says that the agency wants to offer active encouragement to scholars of social and political theory, cultural anthropology, economic history, and their colleagues.

Organizations representing scholars in the humanities have found a new sense of common purpose in the past 18 months. Their members have become aware of the need to look out for their own interests in Washington, both specifically by lobbying for NEH funding and more generally by promoting understanding of the humanities. They have learned that they can be most effective when cooperating with their colleagues who share the same interests. They have found that representation in Washington can be helpful in any number of ways. For these reasons, there is every indication that the National Humanities Alliance will continue to exist, crisis or no. With hard work, imagination, and perseverance, a broader and deeper understanding of the importance of the humanities will be built among Washington's policy makers.

(Editor's Note: APSA is a member of the National Humanities Alliance.) □

Politics and the Future: A Report on the World Future Society Conference

Howard J. Silver

The World Future Society held its Fourth General Assembly in Washington, D.C. from July 18-22, 1982. More than 3,500 participants attended over 250 panels examining aspects of the theme "Communications and the Future." Major topics of interest to political scientists included: (1) economic dislocation and social divisiveness, (2) decentralized

political communication, (3) world peace and nationalism and (4) issues management and forecasting as corporate tools.

Economic Dislocation and Social Divisiveness

The communications revolution is transforming the United States from an industrial society to an information society. Fifty percent of the nation's workers are already engaged in retrieving, organizing, distributing or processing information. This percentage is expected to increase and foster economic dislocation. For example, debate has already begun on what to do about the "sunset industries" such as auto and steel. Should the U.S. leave those industries to other countries despite the danger to national security that would present? Marc Porat, author of *The Information Economy*, suggested we rechannel the "sunrise" potential of the sunset industries. In other words, he would, for example, have GM build robots instead of cars.

Futurists believe robotics will become a major new industry, the electronic transfer of information will increase and both will contribute to economic dislocation. One "dumb" robot, already in use, can do the work of three production workers per shift. "Smart robots of the future will replace from five to eight workers per shift. One observer predicted that 200,000 robots will replace over 4 million workers by the year 2000. Electronic mail now being developed by the postal system could displace 750,000 postal workers. One political implication of these developments will be the possible demise of industrial labor unions as a force in American politics.

Herman Kahn of the Hudson Institute foresaw the economic dislocation producing almost 20 percent unemployment in the near future. He thought this development would not be particularly unfortunate, since it would lead to greater leisure activity and job sharing.

Others were not so optimistic and forecast more dire consequences. Florence Skelly, President of Yankelovich, Skelly and White, noted that their surveys are already detecting an increased social divisiveness in American society. As

many Americans get left behind in the continued transformation to an information society, a "permanent underclass" would be created and exacerbate the social divisiveness, according to Robert Theobald, author of *Beyond Despair*. Theobald claimed that we are very close to "riots of despair," similar to the 1980 Miami riots, as differentiated from the ghetto riots of the 1960s brought on by "rising expectations."

Responses to these problems generally centered on the necessity for better education and retraining. Senator Hart (D-Colorado) announced the introduction of the American Education Defense Act patterned after the National Defense Education Act of 1958. It would provide incentives for increased attention to math, science and engineering education. However, in this age of decreasing federal commitment to social spending, it is unclear how this legislation will be enacted without some cataclysmic event similar to the launching of Sputnik.

Decentralized Political Communication

A large number of panelists agreed that the advent of cable television, especially two-way cable, will have enormous political consequences. Cable TV should be available to 60 percent of American homes by the end of the decade and 90 percent of homes by 2000. A splintering of the market will continue as major network share of the audience declines from 86 percent in 1980 to an estimated 60 percent by 1990. In addition, direct satellite transmission, the bouncing signals off satellites to electronic dishes on earth, will increase in use.

Two impacts of this decentralization of television communications were discussed: (1) the potential for direct democracy through two-way cable systems and (2) the creation of "narrowcasting" by specialized networks by groups in society, with the electronic churches of the Christian "right" providing the clearest current example.

Many years ago, Robert Sherrill wrote an article for popular consumption discussing the consequences of "the instant electorate." Today, two-way cable systems such as Warner's QUBE, now

operating in Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio, permit the viewer to "vote" on issues, react to Presidential debates and speeches and provide input to local political decisions. A number of speakers noted that it is difficult to determine who controls the voting boxes and suspected that toddlers and children were "voting."

Ted Becker, professor of political science at the University of Hawaii, reported on his experiments testing the impact of two-way local town meetings. Using entertainment-based formats, including a politicized take-off of "Saturday Night Live," Becker and his colleagues reported an increased awareness of issues among the participants.

CSPAN, the Cable Satellite Programming Network, which televises debate in the House of Representatives and various other political events, also broadcasts a two-way talk show with newsmakers.

All of these developments promise greater citizen participation in decision-making. Yet, there is concern that "instant electorates" can be easily manipulated through question wording and emotional appeals. The nature of representative democracy may be profoundly altered.

Many cable systems have an operating capacity of over 100 channels. This will allow access to many groups unable to attract attention by the major networks. Most of these groups will follow the example set by the religious broadcasters of the electronic churches. Ben Armstrong, executive director of the National Association of Religious Broadcasters, claimed evangelicals decided to take advantage of the new cable technology after being shut out by the networks. With over 65 television stations, the development of Christian Broadcasting Networks, and the emergence of media "stars" such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, the electronic church has attempted to influence the politics in the U.S.

Richard M. Neustadt noted that other groups will try to emulate the success of the electronic churches and take advantage of cable and direct satellite transmissions to promote their causes. The

U.S. Chamber of Commerce is investing heavily in the creation of BIZNET, its own television network, to provide information about business and politics to its membership, as well as to promote Chamber positions. Liberal groups are also talking about establishing their own network.

In a discussion of the implications of this narrowcasting, Senator Pell (D-RI) expressed concern about the continued difficulties of consensus building and the further decline of political parties produced by the splintering of the market. Congressman Newt Gingrich (R-Ga) believed a new check and balance was being created on the networks and that was a good idea. Neustadt foresaw less stability in government and the end of safe seats in Congress. All argued that the new technology will create advantages for those politicians and political groups who know how to use it.

World Peace and Nationalism

A major goal and preoccupation of many futurists is the creation of world peace by breaking down communication barriers among nations and developing "global networks" among people who share similar points of view. The nuclear freeze movement was presented as an example of this kind of multinational effort. Also, a commitment to the work of supranational organizations seemed to be a high priority for many conference participants.

According to Willis Harman, senior social scientist at SRI International, the basic belief systems of the world need to be altered in order to solve international problems. However, nationalism, an important element in many belief systems, will apparently continue to be a key force in world politics. Both Herman Kahn and Marvin Cetron, President of Forecasting International, for example, argued that despite growing interdependence through communications and information exchanges international stability will still depend on decision-making by nation-states.

From these viewpoints some interesting forecasts emerged. Cetron forecast a reunited Germany by 1990, with the con-

troversial natural gas pipeline serving as the catalyst for such an event. Also, a number of forecasters predicted the decline of Japan as a major industrial power. This view was based on the facts that Japan has an aging workforce which is guaranteed 80 percent of its salary at retirement and has an increasingly meddlesome government.

In demonstrating a new device called a CONSENSOR, which allows for instantaneous display of the results of panel surveys, 16 leading futurists believed there was a 16 percent probability of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union by the year 2000. However, they also believed there was a 36 percent probability that in the same time period, some country would use a nuclear device against another country.

Issues Management and Forecasting as Corporate Tools

As Joseph LaPalombara pointed out in the spring, 1982, *PS*, corporations are increasingly interested in political risk analysis, which is the evaluation of the politics of foreign nations where banks and multinational corporations may lend or invest their capital. What four mini-courses and seven panels at the conference made clear was that corporations are also interested in forecasting events in the domestic environment as well.

In a reversal of previous findings, it was pointed out that chief executive officers now spend a majority of their time on external matters rather than internal issues facing their corporations. Thus, a need to anticipate events in the external environment has led corporations to develop capabilities to forecast and "manage" issues which may arise. Unlike most corporate government relations efforts, which focus on those items already at the legislative or regulatory stage of the policy process, "issues managers" scan the environment to discover emerging issues that could affect the corporation and develop responses to them before they reach the legislative or regulatory stage.

Howard Chase, who coined the term "issues management," described it as "the art and science of effective par-

ticipation in the public policy decision-making process. It is the private sector route to proactivism instead of more traditional reactivism."

To accomplish this issues managers have adapted public policy process models and techniques familiar to political scientists. Rene Zentner, issues advisor to the Shell Oil Company, interprets survey data from both syndicated studies such as Yankelovich, Skelly and White's "Corporate Priorities," as well as special surveys he commissions. William Renfro of Policy Analysis Company, does legislative tracking, both at the national and state level; he assumes an eight to ten year lag time between the development of a legislative idea and its enactment into law. Graham Molitor and John Naisbitt have identified precursor nations and states which develop new policies that are eventually adopted elsewhere. In-house Delphi techniques, where corporate managers and even workers are asked to identify issues facing the firm, are used. The study and extrapolation of social indicators is yet another technique.

Issues management teams are usually composed of multi-disciplinary experts which often include political scientists. This is expected to be a growth area in corporate employment in the next decade.

Other panels focused on how Congress, through the Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future and the Congressional Research Service, anticipates future developments. Also discussed were how "futures research" is utilized in the evaluation of public policy and the government's role in regulating communication advances. On the latter, Senator Packwood (R-Or), Chairman of the Senate Communications Subcommittee, advocated an expansion of the First Amendment's free press protection to include electronic communications.

Conclusion

The conference pointed to an environment full of challenges and opportunities. Retraining a workforce to overcome economic dislocation, repairing social divisions, maintaining a representative democracy built around compromise and

consensus building in an era of electronic narrowcasting, solving the nuclear dilemma and other problems of international politics in an age of ever-continuing nationalism, and providing more effective tools of analysis to anticipate issues are challenges of the future that will present opportunities for responses from political scientists. □

Reports

National Organization Promotes Wider Involvement in World Affairs

Promoting a wider understanding of the international political, economic, and social forces that shape world society, as well as urging a greater emphasis on the teaching of foreign languages in this country's school systems at every level is the twin mission of the National Council on Foreign Language and International Studies, a two-year-old organization created to advance the work of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, which published its findings in late 1979.

The Commission, which was appointed by President Jimmy Carter, was charged with the responsibility of reviewing America's competence in languages other than English, and also to assess our ability to deal with urgent international issues. On both counts the Commission found serious deficiencies. Its report said in part, "We are profoundly alarmed by what we have found: a serious deterioration in this country's language and research capacity, at a time when an increasingly hazardous international military, political, and economic environment is making unprecedented demands on America's resources, intellectual capacity, and public sensitivity. . . . Nothing less is at issue than the nation's security."

According to Executive Director Dr. Rose L. Hayden, the Council, which received its initial support from private foundations, business corporations, with some assistance from government agencies, has a primary task of making a coherent,

persuasive, and persistent case that high quality foreign language and international studies programs are vital to America's future. It does this by enlisting the support of public opinion, and by attempting to influence public policy as it affects these issues. Dr. Hayden points out that the Council is not a foundation. "It is, rather," she says, "a non-profit organization that works with and through existing public and private organizations to help focus public attention on the importance to the United States of effective communication with and comprehensive understanding of the world beyond our borders."

Toward that end, the Council, among other activities, commissions studies, arranges for publication of their results, sponsors seminars and workshops, and acts as a resource to local community groups interested in promoting wider public awareness of international affairs. It also distributes, free of charge, a monthly publication, *Newsbrief*, which reports on major developments in the field. The National Council invites individuals and organizations concerned with promoting foreign language teaching and international studies to become more familiar with its programs, and to participate actively in its work. Anyone interested in receiving further information about the organization, or in being placed on the mailing list for *Newsbrief*, is welcome to contact: Executive Director, National Council on Foreign Language and International Studies, 605 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, New York, New York 10158; (212) 490-3520. □

Southwestern Political Science Association Elects New Officers

The Southwestern Political Science Association held its 1982 annual meeting on March 17-20 in San Antonio in conjunction with the Southwestern Social Science Association Convention.

American Political Science Association President Seymour Martin Lipset was the featured speaker at the program meeting on March 18. At the business meeting on