

Preface

The Cross-Cultural Negotiation Project and the Origins of This Book

This study of American negotiating behavior can be seen as the culmination—but not the conclusion—of a series of assessments of how different governments manage international negotiations, and of how culture and institutions influence negotiating practice.

These studies had their origin in the early 1980s. After five years of working in the U.S. government on the process of normalizing relations with the People's Republic of China, Richard Solomon undertook an analysis of Chinese negotiating behavior.¹ He was motivated by his experiences supporting National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger in his negotiations with Chinese officials. Kissinger, a scholar-official steeped in European history, was impressed by the differences between Chinese diplomatic practices and those of European diplomats and officials from the Soviet Union. The Chinese cultivated a positive personal relationship with Kissinger, whom they came to characterize as an “old friend.” In China's cultural context, “friendship” implies obligation as much as personal intimacy, and over time Chinese officials pressured their “old friend” Kissinger to accommodate to their policy objectives.

Drawing on the China study, in the early 1990s the United States Institute of Peace initiated a series of both conceptual and country-specific assessments on the theme of cross-cultural negotiating (CCN) behavior. In addition to the present volume, twelve book-length studies have since been published. Three of these are conceptual studies: *Negotiating across Cultures* by Raymond Cohen; *Culture and*

1. The declassified portions of the study were published in 1995: Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests through “Old Friends”* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1995). A new edition was published in 1999 by the United States Institute of Peace Press.

Conflict Resolution by Kevin Avruch; and *Arts of Power* by Chas. W. Freeman, Jr.² Of the other nine, seven focus on individual countries (China, Russia, North Korea, Japan, France, Germany, and Iran), particularly their behavior in negotiations with the United States, while two explore specific bilateral negotiating relationships (the Israeli-Palestinian and the Indian-Pakistani relationships).³ Forthcoming books will examine the cases of Pakistan and Egypt, among others. All the country-specific studies have been informed by a set of analytical categories (reproduced in the appendix to this book) intended to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons.⁴ A subsequent phase of the CCN project will analyze the significance of cultural differences in specific negotiating behaviors—pressure tactics, incentives, use of language, sense of time, and so forth.

The basic assumptions that underlie the studies in the CCN series are that negotiating is the usual, if not always the preferred, technique of international problem solving, and that greater understanding of the dynamics of negotiating, greater appreciation of the cultural and institutional influences of a counterpart's behavior, and greater self-awareness will help make specific negotiating encounters more productive. This objective of making negotiations more fruitful—and thus preventing, reducing, or eliminating the use of violence to settle political disputes—conforms with the Institute's congressional mandate to promote the peaceful management and resolution of international conflicts.

One finding of the cross-cultural negotiating project is that few governments give their diplomats *explicit* training in negotiating skills. The U.S. Department of State has only recently begun to give Foreign Service officers such training. Interestingly, a significant feature of this training is instruction in the skills needed to negotiate *within* the U.S. bureaucratic system, in the interagency environment

2. The first edition of Raymond Cohen's book *Negotiating across Cultures* was written while he was a Jennings Randolph fellow at the United States Institute of Peace. The volume predated the advent of the Institute's CCN project.

3. In addition to Richard Solomon's assessment of China, the country-specific and conceptual studies include the following, all of which have been published by the United States Institute of Peace Press: Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (1998); Michael Blaker, Paul Giarra, and Ezra Vogel, *Case Studies in Japanese Negotiating Behavior* (2005); Charles Cogan, *French Negotiating Behavior: Dealing with La Grande Nation* (2003); Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating across Cultures: International Communication in an Interdependent World* (revised edition, 1997); Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., *Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy* (1997); Daniel C. Kurtzer and Scott B. Lasensky, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East* (2008); Dennis Kux, ed., *India-Pakistan Negotiations: Is Past Still Prologue?* (2006); John W. Limbert, *Negotiating with Iran: Wrestling the Ghosts of History* (2009); Jerrold L. Schecter, *Russian Negotiating Behavior: Continuity and Transition* (1998); W. R. Smyser, *How Germans Negotiate: Logical Goals, Practical Solutions* (2003); Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior* (1999); and Tamara Cofman Wittes, ed., *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Oslo Peace Process* (2005).

4. These assessments also assume that a country's negotiating culture, as a reflection of its broader culture, has a measure of internal coherence or thematic organization, especially in fairly homogenous societies. Thus, in the case of China, the management of interpersonal relationships—the cultivation of "old friends"—is an integrating concept that gives coherence to many aspects of negotiating behavior. See Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, esp. 31–44.

that shapes the policy goals pursued in specific negotiating assignments. Indeed, a dominant aspect of American negotiating practice is the preoccupation of individual U.S. officials with building an interagency consensus in support of their own negotiating objectives. If the Chinese official seeks to cultivate a “friendship” with his foreign counterpart to help attain his negotiating objectives, the American official, in the context of his culture and institutions, seeks to impress his counterpart with the need to accommodate to the interagency consensus behind his negotiating brief.

These volumes of the CCN project are used in the Institute’s professional training programs. Designed to promote skills in international conflict management for American and non-American officials, both civilian and military, representatives of international organizations, academics, and practitioners from nongovernmental organizations, such training is a major component of Institute work. The volumes have also attracted the interest of foreign audiences (the study of French negotiating behavior, for example, earned its author a prestigious prize from the Institut de France), and this portrait of American negotiators will doubtless be studied by foreign officials as they prepare to negotiate with American counterparts. If enhanced mutual understanding as well as greater self-awareness lead to mutually beneficial negotiated outcomes, then the purposes of the CCN project will be realized.

The Approach of This Book

There is a natural tendency to assume that one’s own culture and behavior are “normal” and that foreigners are the ones who are “different.” Yet negotiating—bilateral negotiating—is a dyadic process. Each side brings to the table its own conception of how to negotiate, its own cultural biases, behavioral patterns, and institutional imperatives. The ability of American diplomats to recognize these characteristics for what they are, whether to harness their strengths or to avoid their pitfalls, is critical to the continued success of American diplomacy, which is why the Institute initiated this exploration of American negotiating behavior.

The CCN project first turned its spotlight on U.S. negotiating behavior with a workshop held in July 2000, several months before the election of George W. Bush (by chance, the workshop coincided with the Camp David II negotiations) and more than a year before the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. A second workshop was held in July 2007. Together, the two workshops brought together more than forty seasoned foreign and American diplomats, senior policymakers, and eminent scholars to discuss how American officials negotiate. Another dozen senior practitioners of international negotiating have offered comments on various documents and drafts of this volume.

Most of these individuals are not American. A basic analytic assumption of the CCN project is that it takes the cultural “distance” of a foreign observer to perceive

that which is distinctive about a given culture or negotiating style. For this reason, the Institute invited foreign officials who have negotiated directly with American counterparts to describe what American negotiating behavior looks like from their side of the table. These individuals—most of them former ambassadors, foreign ministers, UN envoys, and other high-ranking officials—come from more than thirty different countries and six continents. Some have represented countries that are close allies of the United States, others have served countries whose relationship with the United States has waxed and waned, and still others are from states regarded at one time or another as rivals or even adversaries of the United States. A number have negotiated with the United States on behalf of multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations and the European Union.

One might anticipate this varied cast of foreign officials having equally varied views of American negotiating behavior—after all, the same behavior can be interpreted very differently by different observers from different cultures. In fact, however, something close to consensus prevailed on almost all aspects of American behavior. Different officials sometimes emphasized different traits, but few if any officials disagreed that this or that characteristic existed.

The starting point in drafting this book—which greatly expands upon a report issued after the first workshop⁵—has been to present the collective insights of these foreign officials as they were expressed at one or both workshops. In other words (and this is crucial to understanding this project's methodology), *the view of American negotiating behavior offered in the following chapters is, essentially, the view from the other side of the bargaining table*. This perspective is explicit in part IV of this five-part volume, which consists of chapters written by foreign officials drawing on their firsthand experience negotiating with Americans. In part II, Richard Solomon and Nigel Quinney offer a composite portrait of the American negotiator that, while it incorporates the views of American officials, is essentially a picture painted by foreign officials.

In writing part II, Solomon and Quinney have taken the opinions and experiences expressed in the workshops and arranged them within an overarching analytical framework. The workshops were conducted according to the Chatham House Rule which stipulates that no comments be reported verbatim or attributed to particular individuals. As a consequence, part II contains no direct quotations from the workshops. However, part II does quote from the contributions in part IV, which gives a very good idea of the flavor and content of the two meetings and which underlines the source of the opinions expressed in part II.

Solomon and Quinney have also tested the observations, characterizations, and accounts provided by non-American officials against the experiences and insights

5. Nigel Quinney, *U.S. Negotiating Behavior*, Special Report no. 94 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, October 2002).

of a dozen U.S. diplomats and policymakers, both serving and retired. Through interviews, meetings, and reviews of earlier drafts of this volume, these American officials were invited to comment on the non-American assessments of how U.S. negotiators behave. Significantly, they agreed with those assessments in almost all respects. Where differences of opinion emerged, they usually involved differences of degree or emphasis, not of substance. (The most marked difference concerns the extent to which American negotiators were characterized as domineering, or “hegemonic”; perhaps not surprisingly, the Americans saw American behavior as more cooperative, less imperious than did the non-Americans.) The American diplomats and policymakers also supplied firsthand examples and behind-the-scenes accounts of particular negotiations.

Several eminent scholars of negotiation practice and history have shared their insights and helped to refine the project’s analytical framework. Solomon and Quinney have also mined published accounts by former U.S. officials for insights and examples, as well as other books generated by the CCN project. The latter constitute a substantial database of comparative information about cross-cultural negotiating behavior and provide, among other things, numerous examples of how other countries tackle the challenges of diplomatic negotiation. The typical approach of American officials to some of those challenges might seem unremarkable (at least to American readers) until it is set alongside the very different approaches favored by negotiators from other countries.

This study looks at those officials who set policies and *design* negotiating strategies as well as those who actually conduct negotiations. In any given negotiation, these individuals might include the president and his key foreign policy and national security advisers; the secretary of state and the heads of other interested government agencies; ambassadors posted to foreign capitals and some members of their embassy staffs; ambassadors and other representatives to intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; bureau secretaries, desk officers, and other staff within the State Department; and members of specific negotiating teams, who are likely to be drawn from not only the State Department but also other agencies involved in international affairs, such as the Department of Defense and the Treasury.

One more clarification is in order: this book focuses on *negotiation*, not on *mediation*. Mediation is a form of negotiation—or, to quote Charles Moore, “an extension and elaboration of the negotiation process”⁶—but it is distinct insofar as it involves a third party that seeks to help the parties directly involved in a conflict change their behaviors or perceptions and voluntarily move toward a settlement

6. Charles Moore, *The Mediation Process* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 6. The definition of mediation used here draws on that provided by Jacob Bercovitch in “Mediation in the Most Resistant Cases,” in *Grasping the Nettle: Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict*, eds. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2005), 107.

or resolution. Rarely does the United States solicit or consent to mediation of disputes to which it is itself a party. By contrast, U.S. officials regularly play the role of mediator in other countries' disputes. When they mediate between others, inevitably they carry over many of the same traits and tactics they use when they negotiate on behalf of their own country. However, mediators need a different skill set than do negotiators, and if U.S. officials are to mediate effectively, they often have to deemphasize some of their usual traits (impatience, pushiness, and insufficient attention to culture and context, for instance) while significantly accentuating others (such as the ability to empathize and creativity in framing questions and issues).

When a mediated conflict affects vital U.S. national interests, American officials are more inclined to mediate like they negotiate; when few U.S. interests are at stake, American officials are more likely to display patience and cultural sensitivity. To avoid conflating mediating behavior with negotiating behavior, this book discusses only those instances of U.S. mediation in which significant U.S. national interests were at stake—for instance, the U.S. initiative in bringing to an end the war in Bosnia in the 1990s. The forward-looking conclusion to this book, however, contends that, whether negotiating or mediating, American officials will find increasing opportunities and increasing reason in coming decades to take the time and the pains to build relationships and find win-win solutions rather than to push hard for quick settlements on purely American terms.

Acknowledgments

The organization and drafting of this volume is substantially the work of Nigel Quinney. Dr. Quinney has long been associated with the cross-cultural negotiating project, having edited almost all the volumes in the CCN series. He was the author of an Institute Special Report that summarized the discussion of a workshop on American negotiating behavior convened in the summer of 2000. He also was the organizer and moving force behind a second workshop that convened international diplomats in the summer of 2007 in support of this project. Dr. Quinney and I have collaborated closely in developing the interpretations and exposition in this volume of American negotiating behavior.

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