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News Release

USIP Assesses American Negotiating Behavior New Book Details Approaches to Strengthening U.S. Diplomacy

For Immediate Release:
March 1, 2010

Washington, D.C.—At a time when an array of difficult diplomatic challenges require that U.S. diplomats be at the top of their game, a new book by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) comprehensively assesses American negotiating behavior at and away from the bargaining table.

American Negotiating Behavior: Wheeler-Dealers, Legal Eagles, Bullies, and Preachers by USIP president Richard H. Solomon and coauthor Nigel Quinney analyzes the multiple influences—cultural, institutional, historical, and political—that shape how American policymakers and diplomats approach negotiations with foreign counterparts. The book highlights behavioral patterns that transcend the actions of individual negotiators and administrations. Informed by discussions and interviews with more than fifty seasoned foreign and American negotiators, Solomon and Quinney offer a rich, detailed portrait of the negotiating practices of American officials.

In this first study of its kind, Solomon and Quinney examine how American officials employ time, language, enticements, and pressure tactics at the negotiating table and how they use (or neglect) the media, back channel communications, and hospitality outside the formal negotiating arena. They explore the intense interagency rivalries and congressional second-guessing that constrain U.S. negotiators' freedom to maneuver, and they recommend specific measures for enhancing America's negotiating capacities:

- adapting the training of Foreign Service officers to twenty-first century requirements;
- improving institutional memory;
- fostering greater interagency collaboration;
- adding to the mix of diplomats more political negotiators—that is, former elected officials adept at operating in multifaceted, multiactor environments and skilled in navigating Washington's complex politics and institutions;
- heightening self-awareness—looking more introspectively for greater appreciation of how American negotiating practices influence encounters with foreign counterparts.

This volume arrives at a time of great transition for the U.S. in its foreign relations. The international environment has fragmented into a complex mix of state and nonstate entities presenting the U.S. with significant new challenges to its security and foreign policy interests. "If the U.S. is to effectively cope with this dramatically changed environment," says Solomon, "the U.S. will need new policy assumptions or concepts, organization adaptations, and appropriately trained and agile human resources."

"Emerging realignments in economic and military power and cultural influence will shape America's ability to respond to changing global circumstances," note the authors, "and will require American diplomacy to shoulder more of the burden of defending and advancing U.S. national interests throughout the world. As such, it is more important than ever for the U.S. to understand its shifting position and role

vis-à-vis the rest of the world and to consider whether globalization and the multilateral complexity of the international system would require a reorientation of the American approach to international negotiation.”

“Remarkably, American diplomats, until recently, received virtually no formal training in negotiation from the U.S. State Department. This book is a resource to assist in that process,” says Solomon. “For officials from other countries, a better knowledge of U.S. negotiating behavior can help to avoid misunderstanding and misreading of their American counterparts, thereby enhancing prospects for mutually beneficial outcomes.”

“The U.S. needs to have its diplomats spend more time in foreign countries, so that they absorb the culture,” he adds. “And the U.S. needs to give them much more explicit training in negotiating techniques. Beyond knowing how U.S. institutions work, one of the challenges the United States faces is bringing together the different communities within its own government. Dealing with the well-established tradition of interagency rivalry, the United States must develop more consensual negotiation positions so that the country speaks with one official diplomatic voice.”

Just as importantly, the authors contend the United States must understand how the rest of the world perceives its negotiating behavior and diplomatic style. To this end, the volume includes eight remarkably candid foreign perspectives—the views of ambassadors and foreign ministers, some from countries allied to the United States, others from rivals or adversaries—on particular aspects of American negotiating behavior.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Richard H. Solomon, president of the United States Institute of Peace, formerly served in the U.S. government on the National Security Staff, directed the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, and was assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and ambassador to the Philippines. He also headed the political science department of the RAND Corporation and was professor of political science at the University of Michigan.

Nigel Quinney, president of The Editorial Group, is a consultant to European and American think tanks, academic institutions, publishers, and multinational corporations. He has more than twenty years’ experience as an editor, writer, and researcher in the fields of international relations and conflict resolution.

American Negotiating Behavior: Wheeler-Dealers, Legal Eagles, Bullies, and Preachers
April 2010

United States Institute of Peace Press

200 pp. • 6 x 9

\$22.50 (paper) • ISBN: 978-1-601270-47-4

\$55.00 (cloth) • ISBN: 978-1-601270-48-1

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ABOUT THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan, national institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and development, and increase peacebuilding capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide. The Institute does this by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by directly engaging in peacebuilding efforts around the globe. *American Negotiating Behavior* is the latest work in its growing body of literature on cross-cultural negotiating behavior and international conflict resolution techniques.

In early 2011 the Institute will move to its new headquarters building at the northwest corner of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Designed by architect Moshe Safdie, the headquarters facility consists of three distinct sections linked together by atriums covered by large-span undulating glass-and-steel roofs, forming a dramatic series of wing-like structures. The Institute's campus, which includes two adjacent buildings, will have all the elements needed to fulfill its congressional charter—the working offices of the headquarters facility, a magnificent Great Hall for public events, a state-of-the-art negotiating and conference center, a professional education and training academy, and a Global Peacebuilding Center open to the public. To learn more about the Institute and its work, please go to: <http://www.usip.org>.



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American Negotiating Behavior Questions and Answers

1. What is the Cross-Cultural Negotiation project and series?

In the early 1990s, the United States Institute of Peace initiated a series of 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; Culture and Conflict Resolution; Arts of Power*). Seven focus on individual countries (Iran, China, Russia, North Korea, Japan, France, Germany), and two explore specific bilateral negotiating relationships (the Israeli-Palestinian and the Indian-Pakistani relationships). These books reflect the Institute's conviction that negotiating approaches to international conflict resolution, as well as less adversarial diplomatic or business encounters, will achieve greater success when negotiators from different nations and cultures better "read" the intentions of their counterparts across a green baize table. Future country studies are in the works, including one on Pakistan.

The rationale for comparing negotiating behaviors across cultures is straightforward: negotiating is a preferred method of international problem solving, governments manage and conduct negotiations in different ways, and knowledge of those differences will allow officials to better prepare for and manage negotiating encounters.

2. Does culture affect the negotiation process?

While some claim that culture is irrelevant in international diplomacy, almost all practitioners disagree. Diplomats have long shared a professional and international culture. Many experienced negotiators, both American and non-American, also see another culture at work: national cultures. This book is particularly concerned with the intersection of America's national culture and its institutional culture (i.e., the structures, norms, and behavioral predispositions of U.S. government agencies such as the State Department, especially the Foreign Service). This book contends that the shared national background and institutional context of U.S. negotiators does exert a significant and recognizable impact on many facets of negotiating encounters and that the behavior of American negotiators reflects to some degree American cultural influences.

3. Why is the time ripe for a study on American negotiating behavior? Why is this volume important?

Negotiation is becoming more, not less, important as a tool of American foreign policy, and the nature of international negotiation is rapidly shifting in response to globalization, the emergence of problems that demand a collective response, and the weakening of the nation-state system and collective organization of international action. The global breadth of U.S. interests ensures that its negotiators are always engaged in a multitude of bilateral and multilateral settings. This volume provides American negotiators and their counterparts with a keener understanding of the stylistic traits and institutional processes that shape how foreign policies are formulated, implemented, and perceived.

4. How do you describe the American negotiator?

The portrait of the American negotiator is complex. This volume argues that four distinctive mind-sets or professional perspectives have combined to shape U.S. negotiating behavior:

- a businessperson's pragmatism and interest in securing concrete results from a negotiation;
- a lawyer's concern with careful preparation, precision, and binding commitments;
- a superpower's inclination to dictate terms, adopt take-it-or-leave-it attitudes, and flex its muscle in pursuit of national interests; and,
- a moralizer's sense of mission, self-worth, and inclination to sermonize.

At the heart of American negotiating behavior, ironically, lies a deep ambivalence about negotiation itself. On the one hand, businesslike and legalistic impulses combine to make American officials inclined to sit down and solve problems, reach deals, and negotiate with the confidence that both sides can reap concrete and mutual benefits from an agreement. On the other hand, moralistic and hegemonic impulses make U.S. officials reluctant to negotiate with foreigners, especially those whose beliefs and behavior go against American mores or values. Indeed, they may be skeptical of the need for give-and-take and compromising given America's substantial economic, political, and military resources. The relative weight of these four mind-sets varies from negotiation to negotiation and administration to administration. Yet this quartet of impulses transcends political ideology and personal predilection. In short, sometimes one or another tendency predominates; more often, they coexist. The result is a negotiating style that is highly professional but also pushy, informal but also urgent, cordial but also blunt, calculating but also given to sermonizing.

5. How does the nature of the U.S. government's political and bureaucratic system influence the negotiating process?

The American negotiating process is strongly shaped by the nature of the government's political and bureaucratic system, with intense interagency rivalries waged to win the ear of the president—whose authority is considerable yet circumscribed by congressional influences, public opinion, and private-sector interest group pressures. Shifts in the fluid constellation of bureaucratic or political forces within Washington can undermine an interagency consensus on the goals of an ongoing negotiation. As a result, American negotiators often find themselves pressured to increase demands or call for renegotiation of a deal already reached with their foreign counterparts. This phenomenon of “moving the goalposts” or objectives of a negotiation is highly characteristic of American diplomacy.

6. How does the media affect U.S. negotiating efforts and style?

U.S. officials may feed stories to journalists and “spin” coverage in efforts to shape perceptions of U.S. policy objectives and of the process of an ongoing negotiation. Yet such efforts are sporadic, rarely amounting to a media campaign, in part because the media are independent actors and are seen as unpredictable and uncooperative, and in part because the U.S. side expects to succeed at the bargaining table regardless of media coverage.

7. How is the world of international negotiation evolving in the twenty-first century? What challenges lie ahead for the American negotiator?

This volume lists five forces that are particularly powerful in reshaping not just the field of negotiation, but the entire diplomatic landscape:

- Many of the problems and dangers now confronting the world can be dealt with only by a collective response from the international community.
- Many of these growing problems require not just collective action but also nonmilitary—especially negotiated—solutions. The military remains an essential component of American national security, but the military itself sees the need for a readjustment of its relationship with the civilian and diplomatic elements of America’s foreign policy apparatus.
- The international environment is growing more complex as the Westphalian nation-state system weakens under the impact of the forces of globalization, the rise of politically activated mass publics, and the emergence of subnational and supranational groups empowered by new technologies.
- The number of civilian agencies involved in many negotiations is growing in response to the multifaceted complexity of the issues under discussion. When it comes to setting negotiating strategies and, in many cases, to implementing them, State Department personnel are increasingly likely to be working alongside people from the Treasury, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, various intelligence agencies, the Department of Energy, and so forth. Many issues require highly specialized expertise, and much of this has to be brought in from outside the government in the form of technical experts recruited from academia, research organizations, and the business world.
- The global balance of power is shifting. American political and economic power is losing its relative preeminence as new centers of power grow stronger. Emerging realignments in economic and military power and in cultural influence will shape America’s ability to respond to changing global circumstances and will require American diplomacy to shoulder more of the burden of defending and advancing U.S. national interests throughout the world.

8. How must American negotiating behavior evolve to remain effective?

If U.S. officials are to perform effectively in the coming decades, negotiators from all levels of government need to supplement their use of political, economic, and military resources with greater attention to building relationships with officials from counterpart governments and with greater self-awareness of American negotiating characteristics as they influence diplomatic encounters.

To enhance America's negotiating capacities in the future, the United States must

- determine what can and cannot be changed in America's negotiating practice;
- adapt the training of Foreign Service officers to twenty-first century requirements;
- improve the Foreign Service's institutional memory (recording and assessing negotiating encounters);
- foster greater interagency collaboration;
- increase the human resource capacity of the State Department (in part through enhanced budgets);
- add to the mix of diplomats more political negotiators—that is, former elected officials adept at operating in environments with multiple actors and skilled in navigating Washington's complex politics and institutions; and
- heightening self-awareness, "knowing oneself," in the interest of understanding how American culture and institutional processes influence negotiating behavior.



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Advance Praise for *American Negotiating Behavior*

“*American Negotiating Behavior* is a truly unique study of the American negotiator because it explores the foreign perception of American negotiators.”

—**Zbigniew Brzezinski**, Counselor and Trustee, Center for Strategic and International Studies

“Diplomacy has never been more vital for Americans than in our increasingly globalized twenty-first century. Richard Solomon and Nigel Quinney have written a fascinating and perceptive book on how American diplomats have succeeded, and sometimes failed, to advance our national interests at the international negotiating table. This timely study provides important lessons and insights into how Americans might wrangle, barter, deal, and ultimately negotiate more effectively with friends and foes alike in the future.”

—**Nicholas Burns**, professor of the practice of diplomacy and international politics, Harvard University and former Under Secretary of State

“This book is a gold mine for anyone interested in American negotiation styles and methods, analyzed by two perceptive co-authors and several experienced international practitioners of diplomacy. One of the many merits of the book is that it sets out the parameters for future diplomacy, adapted to a world where dialogue and negotiations will, one hopes, be the primary tools for solving conflicts and global problems.”

—**Jan Eliasson**, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and President of the United Nations General Assembly

“Of great importance, this book hammers home a central point little understood outside the diplomatic profession: critical negotiations actually take place more inside nations than between them. The narrative and analyses presented by Richard Solomon and Nigel Quinney are rich in previously untold stories.”

—**Leslie H. Gelb**, former *New York Times* columnist and former president of the Council on Foreign Relations

“*American Negotiating Behavior* may well become the definitive primer on the art of effective cross-cultural negotiating. It should be an important part of the education of U.S. diplomats, as well as anyone engaged in international transactions.”

—**Henry A. Kissinger**, U.S. Secretary of State, 1973–1977

“A gold mine of useful information and ideas that can help make American negotiators—and their counterparts—more effective and the process of negotiations better understood.”

—**George P. Shultz**, U.S. Secretary of State, 1982–1989