



## AAAS INTERNATIONAL

## S&T Leaders See a Renewed Role for Science Diplomacy

The headlines have been dominated in recent months by conflict and the grinding efforts to find a peaceful resolution in Iran, North Korea, the Middle East, and other hotspots. But quietly, and with little fanfare, U.S. science and engineering organizations are mounting an increasingly ambitious campaign to build global understanding and trust through science diplomacy.

Now, with Congress, the executive branch, and S&T organizations showing resurgent interest in such engagement, AAAS has opened a new Center for Science Diplomacy in hopes of using it to build both science and improved international relations. Science diplomacy was constructive in working with Russia and China during the Cold War, and AAAS officials and their partners believe it can be similarly effective in dealing with today's most difficult conflicts and pressing challenges.

The new center "is to be guided by the overarching goal of using science and scientific cooperation to promote international peace, understanding, and prosperity," AAAS Chief Executive Officer Alan I. Leshner testified before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Research and Science Education. "We are particularly interested in identifying opportunities for science diplomacy to serve as a catalyst between societies where official relations might be limited, and to strengthen existing partnerships in science and technology."

The House subcommittee—headed by Chairman Brian Baird (D-Wash.) and Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers (R-Mich.)—used the 15 July hearing to explore the role of nongovernmental organizations and universities in international S&T cooperation. Baird welcomed Leshner's announcement about the new AAAS center, saying: "I can't think of a better organization to do that."

Vaughan Turekian, the AAAS chief international officer, will direct the new center. Norman P. Neureiter, who heads the AAAS Center for Science, Technology and Security Policy, will serve as senior adviser.

Turekian has guided a number of recent AAAS diplomacy initiatives, laying the foundation for promising relationships with China,

Vietnam, and Rwanda. In early 2007, he worked with the U.S. State Department to organize a landmark meeting in Kuwait that brought 200 women scientists and engineers from the Arab world together with about two dozen women holding leadership positions in U.S. science, business, education, and government.



(Left to right) Alan I. Leshner, AAAS; Michael T. Clegg, National Academy of Sciences; Wm. A. Wulf, Civilian Research and Development Foundation; and James Calvin, Texas A&M University, testify before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Research and Science Education.

Neureiter is a veteran of science diplomacy: A chemist by training, he was the first U.S. science attaché in Eastern Europe in the 1960s. He served in President Richard Nixon's Office of Science and Technology, helping craft scientific elements of historic agreements with the Soviet Union and China. From 2000 to 2003, he served as the first science adviser to the U.S. Secretary of State. He traveled to Iran last October with a National Academies delegation that received an enthusiastic welcome.

The scientist-to-scientist relationships developed during the Cold War "made real contributions toward creating the very different world we live in today," Neureiter said. "Today the challenges are different, the threats are different, but the potential of science to address these problems is as powerful now as it was then."

The renewed focus on science diplomacy comes as overseas views about the U.S. have reached a nadir. But while surveys in many foreign nations register strong disapproval of U.S. government policies, they also have shown very positive views of U.S. science and technology.

That has helped drive the renewed interest in science diplomacy at AAAS and other S&T organizations. The nonprofit Civilian Research & Development Foundation (CRDF), for exam-

ple, has undertaken a range of science and technology missions involving Iraq, the former states of the Soviet Union, and other countries.

There is increasing "recognition that a lot of the issues we face today globally—the issues we face and that the next administration will face—have science and technology components," said Cathleen A. Campbell, CRDF's president and CEO. Solutions require the engagement of many nations, Campbell added, because "no one country has all the answers."

Turekian envisions the center as a forum where scientists and engineers can engage with the foreign policy community, and where they can work together to identify projects that could strengthen civil society relationships between nations. Climate change, energy, sustainability, innovation, and health could be prime fields for such collaboration, he said.

But, he added, the spirit of the engagement will be critically important. Science diplomacy is not an aid program; there is no quid pro quo. Rather, it is a way to improve global science and build capacity—and a way to build mutual trust.

"At the heart, this is a matter of respect," Turekian said. "We're saying: 'You regard this as important, and we regard this as important, so let's find ways that we can engage.' And in doing that, we can try to build a reputation that the United States is a good country to engage with."

—Benjamin Somers contributed to this report

## INTERNATIONAL

## Meetings Strengthen AAAS Ties in Europe

On a whirlwind July trip, AAAS President James J. McCarthy renewed cooperative ties with science partners in Ireland and the United Kingdom, including Jimmy Devins, the Irish minister of Science, Technology and Innovation. The visit by McCarthy and AAAS Director for International Cooperation Tom Wang "was very much welcomed," said Patrick Cunningham, chief science adviser to the Irish government, as Dublin bids for the title of European City of Science in 2012.

From 18 to 22 July, AAAS staff traveled to Barcelona, Spain, for the EuroScience Open Forum. Experts at the Forum predicted that science R&D would continue to be a powerful economic driver on both sides of the Atlantic. But they warned that the benefits of R&D could be undermined if scientists fail to engage in a respectful dialogue with the public about their findings.

—Becky Ham and Edward W. Lempinen