

## **Transnational Cooperation and Development**

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### Origins

Jimmy Carter has proposed a new form of CCC - the Civilian Conservation Corps of the early '30s - to create jobs and physical renewal in the inner core of poverty-blighted American cities. Walter Mondale calls for an expanded and rejuvenated Peace Corps, rekindling its early ideals. As one whose first exposure to public life, as a boy of 14, was attending CCC meetings in New Hampshire with my father, and who has worked over the past 30 years in international programs for community and small enterprise development, I believe the time is ripe to combine these two concepts in a wide-ranging program of locally-based, transnational cooperation, to overcome poverty, inequity, and group alienation at home and abroad.

### Putting People-to-People Cooperation to Work

This proposal would bring the personal, civic, and organizational resources of America's home communities into direct interaction with resources of communities and institutions overseas, in order:

1. to tackle fundamental problems of educational, economic, and social development at the root; and
2. to encourage face-to-face understanding of local group loyalties and interests in different societies and nations, as a means of quickening awareness and consensus on needed approaches to critical world issues.

Federal and grass-roots support would be matched, in this approach. Local communities and organizations would become active initiators and partners in practical, two-way projects, in cooperation with parallel groups in other countries, for economic and educational development of these kinds:

(1) Local enterprise development, through entrepreneurial education and sharing of management skills, to identify and meet opportunities through which low income and minority communities can multiply their share of business activities, investment, and income.

(2) Small farm development, supporting land reform programs and small farmer cooperative organizations, to bring credit, irrigation, high-yielding seeds, locally-suitable nutrients and farm equipment, and marketing services into genuine access and use by small farmers.

(3) Small town urbanization, building transport, storage, educational and scientific facilities, as bases for growing market, agroindustry, and cultural centers in rural regions.

(4) Life-oriented and work-oriented education, through realistic programs of career, vocational, and general education in secondary schools, and for adults and out-of-school youth.

(5) Urban renewal and development cadres - a new Community Cooperation Corps - rebuilding local neighborhoods with support to site-and-service development, self-help housing improvement, mini-bus (jeepney-like) transit services, mini-parks and recreation facilities.

(6) Exchanges of experience by local development corporations, regional development banks, decentralized planning bodies, and labor-management projects utilizing unemployment funds as seed money for new enterprise and job creation.

Beyond partnership projects of these sorts, the program would provide for study and observation in local U.S. communities by students, journalists, scholar-journalists, administrators, union organizers, teachers, small business owners, and artists from other countries. A quickened pace of cross-national research and interpretive reporting, oriented to fundamental community concerns, will infuse action projects with clarity and realism, and build the groundwork for new understanding beyond cultural and national boundaries.

#### Federal Action for Transnational Cooperation

To these ends, the newly-elected President in consultation with Congress would create a study commission to develop legislation on the following lines, for Congressional action during the second year of the new term.

1. An Act for Transnational Cooperation and Development, replacing existing legislation for international development assistance, would introduce flexible, decentralized procedures for mutual planning and conduct of projects by local U.S. and overseas groups. Funding would include incentives for local matching funds. By this means, individual communities, colleges, local and regional enterprises and regional associations, unions, planning departments, health agencies, banks and other designated local bodies would take part, with partner communities and groups overseas, in agreed joint investment, trade, research, development and related activities for mutual learning and solution of basic needs.

2. The Act would create a Department of Transnational Cooperation and Development in the federal executive, to establish policy guidance and administer authorized programs and funds.

A. A decentralized style of operation in the DTCD would be fostered

through:

(1) Local Offices of Transnational Cooperation, 60 to 80 in number, created in groups of contiguous Congressional constituencies. The small local staff, no doubt including former Peace Corps Volunteers who have become successful in their home careers, would identify and process projects initiated by local groups. The new Offices would also assume and consolidate functions of those federal agencies transferred to the new Department.

(2) Five regional branches of the DTCD, each headed by an Assistant Secretary and with specific but not exclusive responsibility for policy, planning and coordination functions related to a specified geographic region of the world. Subject to practical factors of communication, location of regional branches in medium-size cities instead of metropolitan centers should be explored, to get administration of programs closer to the people.

B. Agencies, bureaus, and programs to be considered as strong candidates for transfer to the Secretary for Transnational Cooperation and Development would include:

- (1) Agency for International Development
- (2) Peace Corps
- (3) International Agricultural Development Service, Department of Agriculture
- (4) Bureau of International Commerce, Department of Commerce
- (5) Export-Import Bank

Others to be considered include:

- (6) Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State
- (7) International programs, Department of Health, Education and Welfare
- (8) International program, Department of Labor.

C. Appointment of a Minister Plenipotentiary to the United Nations. He would report to the Secretary, Transnational Cooperation and Development, and, in close consultation with the Ambassador to the United Nations, would be responsible for U.S. policy concerns with the U.N. Economic and Social Council and related bodies.

D. Appointment in American Embassies of a Minister for Cooperation and Development. He would be accredited to the host government, in a defined relationship with the Ambassador, and also responsible for liaison with country offices of the United Nations Resident Representative, World Bank, and so on. He would report to the Secretary, Transnational Cooperation and Development.

Partnership projects would mature through the aegis of the DTCD and appropriate overseas bodies, as authorized by host governments. Energizing of local community action, to put resources, information, skills, and shared values or evolving community values to work on urgent problems of poverty and inequity, is intended to bring early results and benefits of economic and social character. In Aristotle's term, these are seen as "pre-political," fostering an eventual climate for harmonious political cooperation, but not specifically addressed to current conflicts or threats to peace. Indeed, separation of such issues as hunger and food reserves from short-range political bargaining is seen as an important basic objective in creating a new federal Department, with strong local roots.

Critical issues of peace, by contrast, should command the unified attention of policy-makers and diplomats attuned to the critical political goals of disputant nations. To strengthen and focus the role of the President in contributing to peaceful solution of current disputes, a parallel proposal is made to convert the Department of State to a Department of Peace. The full strength and prestige of the nation's senior cabinet member would thus be marshalled in a paramount, persistent pursuit of peace by anticipatory and non-violent means of conflict-prevention and resolution.

In this respect, the present proposal differs from the proposed "Peace Act" introduced by Representative Spark Matsunaga in January, 1975 (H.R. 1894). That bill would transfer several of the above agencies and functions to a new Department of Peace. The perception of the present proposal, by contrast, is that issues of peace must be dealt with by those knowledgeable on the issues in conflict. The Peace Act's proposal for a National Peace Academy is consistent with this position. Creation of a Peace Academy in an appropriate semi-autonomous relationship with the Secretary of Peace, would support transformation of the Department of State to a Department of Peace.

#### Effects on National Security and on long-term Transnational Development

The President, through the suggested changes, would possess two principal arms in the conduct of international affairs.

1. On matters of peaceful conflict resolution, national security, and monetary policy, his principal advisers would be the Secretary of Peace, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of the Treasury.

2. For progress in international economic, educational, social, and cultural development, his principal advisers would be the Secretary of Peace and Secretary of Transnational Cooperation.

The national interest in each sector of affairs - commerce, agriculture, labor, education, health, and so on - will naturally be represented by the continuing federal departments in these areas. They will assert such interests in inter-departmental negotiation with the Department of Transnational Cooperation and Development, and, on any matter not compatibly resolved with the DTCD, within the Cabinet and in the last instance with the President.

The weight of the functions to be assembled in the proposed new Department is expected to bring about, gradually, two important structural shifts in the federal relations of the United States. First, the magnitude of resources and programs charged to the new Department would add a stronger international dimension to the shaping of specific policies (e.g., in food, union involvement in the employment effects of trade, technology policy) than in the present fragmented position of these functions among many departments. The U.S. government would be more "internationalist," in the new mode.

At the same time, greater participation by the people in international affairs will be afforded through the new emphasis on direct initiatives and involvement by local communities and constituencies. This participation will be of a face-to-face nature with overseas peoples and agencies. In a real sense this will restore greater sovereignty to the people, in international affairs. Local, decentralized communities and groups, in stretching to fathom the complex differences and similarities of peoples in another part of the globe, will gain in perception, initiative, and resolve as, jointly with overseas interest groups, they learn to change and redirect their personal resources and values to meet common opportunities and needs.

#### Obstacles

Warnings will be raised, and with substance, that the proposal is oversimplified and diplomatically unworkable.

Gross difference in income between American communities and those in many parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America constitute one gulf exceedingly difficult to bridge. Just to get inside the mind and body of a person who has hardly one square meal a day is a barrier many cannot pass. Subtle lures of a patronising or superior attitude when confronted by material weaknesses are a reverse threat. Third World demands for a new international economic order underscore the magnitude of this gulf.

Many foundations and piers have been built, nevertheless, to overcome this gulf through policies and methods of development, tested and improved during the past three decades. It has recently been demonstrated that the world's poorest peoples - the poorest 40 percent - can triple their real incomes within a generation, by the year 2,000, if these lessons are vigorously applied to the solution of basic needs. The time to build the girders and superstructure of the bridge is at hand.

A further obstacle to greater subnational cooperation, if improperly pursued, is presented by the sovereignty of nations - the United States included. Nationalism, as we see at home and abroad, may be far from its

potential peak. Inward focusing of resources is of such high importance to nations in each part of the globe that transnational involvement can only be entertained if it is on lines that truly support local priorities.

To assure that the design of the proposed change is genuinely responsive to international realities, it is therefore urged that the suggested Presidential study commission find ways to solicit the counsel - informal and nonofficial - of policy architects in a cross-section of countries, especially in the Third World. If a spirit of joint planning contributes to an American federal innovation, it can serve a federal world need.

Local development, after all, is the highest stage of national development. To foster the vision and sinews of self-reliance in countless home communities, while sharing the experience and values of communities in other quarters of the world, is the new frontier.

### The Federal Process

The quality of central government is best tested by the effectiveness with which it fosters and strengthens local government. Thus the aim of big government should be to equip little governments - local communities - to assume larger shares of the responsibility for governing. Threats to personal and group autonomy through the transnational impact of interdependent resource systems must - and can - be faced squarely.

The vitalizing of initiatives, knowledge, and choices of local, home communities and organizations, in interaction with peer communities abroad, will give rise to human sources of originality, inventiveness, and sharing of values through which personal and group independence can be enhanced, within a global compass.



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