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Negotiators abroad— don't shoot from the hip

*John L. Graham and
Roy A. Herberger, Jr.*

*When it comes to
bargaining overseas,
the Old West style usually
won't work*

Influenced by their frontier past, many American business people come to the negotiating table with a do-or-die attitude that often defeats their purpose. They tend to "shoot first; ask questions later." But with the growing role of the United States in international trade, this naive attitude may cause them, instead of their adversaries, to bite the dust. By recognizing their own shortcomings and by learning more about other cultures and negotiating styles, Americans can improve their image and enhance their chances for success.

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Illustration by Katherine Mahoney

Picture if you will the closing scenes of John Wayne's Academy Award-winning performance in *True Grit*. Sheriff Rooster Cogburn sitting astride his chestnut mare, a Colt .45 in one hand, a Winchester .73 in the other, whiskey on his breath, reins in his teeth, stampeding across the Arkansas prairie straight into the sights and range of the villains' guns. A face-to-face shootout with four very bad men erupts. How often has this scene been played before our eyes? And, sure enough, the John Wayne character comes through again.

Great entertainment, yes! We know it's all fantasy and that in real life Sheriff Rooster Cogburn would have ended up face down in the blood and dust, alongside his dead horse. But it's more fun to see it the other way.

There's just one problem. Such scenes from movies, television, and books influence our everyday behavior—in subtle, but powerful ways. Many of us model our behavior after such John Wayne figures. And when everyone else plays the same game, often the bluff and bravado work. We need only look to Washington, D.C. to see examples.

A problem arises when we sit face-to-face across the negotiating table with business executives from other lands. Our minds play out the same Western scene again. Here, instead of six-guns and bowie knives, our weapons are words, questions, threats and promises, laughter and confrontation. And we anticipate the taste of victory, despite the odds—four against one is no problem. But, unfortunately, this time it's real life. At stake are the profits of our companies, not to mention our own compensation and reputation. But, like the "real life" Rooster, we lose.

1 Edward T. Hall,
"The Silent Language in
Overseas Business,"
HBR May-June 1960, p. 87.

2 "We're Tongue-Tied,"
Newsweek,
July 30, 1979, p. 15.

Such scenes repeat themselves with increasing frequency as U.S. enterprise becomes more global. The John Wayne bargaining style that may have served us well in conference rooms across the country does us a great disservice in conference rooms across the sea. That this style may be hurting us is not a new idea. Back in the 1930s Will Rogers quipped, "America has never lost a war, and never won a conference." Twenty-three years ago in another HBR article, anthropologist Edward T. Hall warned: "When the American executive travels abroad to do business, he is frequently shocked to discover to what extent the many variables of foreign behavior and custom complicate his efforts."¹

More recently, the former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, J. William Fulbright, said, "Our linguistic and cultural myopia is losing us friends, business, and respect in the world."² The notion that our negotiating style doesn't work well overseas may not be new, but it needs new emphasis in light of our growing interdependence with foreign trading partners.

'Shoot first; ask questions later'

Probably no single statement better summarizes the American negotiating style than "shoot first; ask questions later." Though the approach is right out of a Saturday afternoon Western, the roots go much deeper. Some basic aspects of our cultural background, in particular our immigrant heritage, our frontier history, and finally much of the training in our business and law schools, all contribute to the American negotiating style.

Throughout its history, the United States has been, and still is today, influenced by its immigrants. Certainly this continuous mixing of ideas and perspectives has enriched all our experiences. And every newcomer has had to work hard to succeed—thus the powerful work ethic of America. Another quality of our immigrant forefathers was a fierce independence—a characteristic necessary for survival in the wide open spaces. This latter quality is a disadvantage, however, at the negotiating table. Negotiation is by definition a situation of *interdependence*, a situation Americans have never handled well.

Our frontier history has encouraged this immigration-for-independence mentality. "Don't try to work things out—move out West where you don't have to see your neighbors so often, where there's elbow room." So runs one strain of the conventional wisdom of the first 150 years of our nation's existence. For

Americans there was always somewhere else to go if conflicts couldn't be resolved.

And the long distances between people allowed a social system to develop not only with fewer negotiations but also with shorter negotiations. A day-long horseback ride to the general store or stockyard didn't favor long-drawn-out bargaining. "Tell me yes, or tell me no—but give me a straight answer." Candor, "laying your cards on the table," was highly valued and expected in the Old West. It still is today in our boardrooms and classrooms.

What goes on in the classrooms in our business and law schools strongly influences our negotiating style. Throughout the American educational system, we are taught to compete—both academically and in sports. Adversary relationships and winning are essential themes of the American male's socialization process. But nowhere in the U.S. educational system are competition and winning more important than in a case discussion in our law and business school classrooms. The student who makes the best arguments, marshals the best evidence, or demolishes the opponents' arguments wins the respect of classmates and receives high marks. Such skills will be important at the negotiating table.

But neither business nor law schools emphasize the most important bargaining skills. We don't teach our students how to ask questions, how to get information, how to listen, or how to use questioning as a powerful persuasive tactic. Yet these latter skills are critical at the international negotiation table. Few of us realize that, in most places in the world, the one who asks the questions controls the process of negotiation and thereby accomplishes more in bargaining situations.

Thus it becomes clear that by nature and training Americans will have difficulty at the international bargaining table. We are inherently competitive, argumentative, and impatient—a bad combination indeed when the negotiation game is being played in a boardroom in Rio or in a Ginza night club, and when the other side is playing the game by Brazilian or Japanese rules.

Before we discuss specific aspects of the negotiating style that get us into trouble in international business negotiations, we must make a disclaimer. So far, we hope it is obvious that we are talking about the average or dominant behavior of American negotiators; we recognize that not every American executive is impatient or a poor listener. Nor is every American manager argumentative. Most of us do have trouble, however, in international negotiations when compared with business people from other countries.

The John Wayne style

A combination of attitudes, expectations, and habitual behavior comprises our negotiating style. We call it the John Wayne style for short, but it reflects the influences of immigrants and educational philosophies. Though we discuss each characteristic separately, each factor interacts with others to form the complex foundation for a series of negotiation strategies and tactics that are typically American.

1 **I can go it alone.** Most U.S. executives are convinced they can handle any negotiating situation by themselves. "Four Japanese versus one American is no problem. I don't need any help. I can think and talk fast enough to get what I want and what the company needs." So goes the rationalization. And there's an economic justification, "Why take more people than I need?" as well as a more subtle reason, "How can I get the credit if I've brought along a gang of others to help? They'll just confuse things." So most often the American side is outnumbered when it begins.

Being outnumbered or, worse, being alone is a terrible disadvantage in most negotiating situations. Several activities go on at once—talking, listening, thinking up arguments and making explanations, and formulating questions, as well as seeking an agreement. Greater numbers help in obvious ways with most of these. Indeed, on a Japanese negotiation team one member often has the sole duty of listening. Consider how carefully you might listen to a speaker if you didn't have to think up a response.

But perhaps the most important reason for having greater, or at least equal, numbers on your side is the subtle yet powerful influence of nodding heads and positive facial expressions. Negotiation is very much a social activity, and the approval and agreement of others (friend *and* foe) can determine the outcome. Also, numbers can be an indicator of the seriousness and the commitment of both parties to a successful outcome.

2 **Just call me John.** Americans, more than any other national group, value informality and equality in human relations. The emphasis on first names is only the beginning. We go out of our way to make our clients feel comfortable by playing down status distinctions such as titles and by eliminating "unnecessary" formalities such as lengthy introductions. All too often, however, we succeed only in making ourselves feel comfortable while our clients become uneasy or even annoyed.

For example, in Japanese society interpersonal relationships are vertical; in almost all two-

person relationships a difference in status exists. The basis for this distinction may be any one of several factors: age, sex, university attended, position in an organization, and even one's particular firm or company. For example, the president of the "number 1" company in an industry holds a higher status position than the president of the "number 2" company in the same industry.

Each Japanese is very much aware of his or her position relative to others with whom he or she deals. There are good reasons behind these distinctions. In Japan, knowledge of one's status dictates how one will act in interpersonal relations. Thus, it is easy to understand the importance of exchanging business cards—such a ritual clearly establishes the status relationships and lets each person know which role to play.

The roles of the higher status position and the lower status position are quite different, even to the extent that the Japanese use different words to express the same idea depending on which person makes the statement. For example, a buyer would say *otaku* (your company), while a seller would say *on sha* (your great company). Status relations dictate not only *what* is said but also *how* it is said. Americans have a great deal of difficulty in understanding such conventions. In the United States we can perhaps get by with our informal, egalitarian style when we are dealing with foreigners. However, U.S. executives only make things difficult for themselves and their companies by saying to executives in Tokyo, Paris, or London, "Just call me John [or Mary]."

3 **Pardon my French.** Americans aren't much good at speaking foreign languages, and often we don't even apologize about it. We correctly argue that English is the international language, particularly when it comes to technology and science, and anywhere we go we expect to find someone who speaks English. But sometimes we don't, and we find ourselves at the mercy of third-party translators or middlemen.

Even when the other side (our clients or suppliers) does speak English we are at a big disadvantage at the negotiating table, for three reasons. First, the use of interpreters gives the other side some great advantages. For example, we have observed the following pattern of interaction between U.S. managers and business people from several other countries. Often high-level foreign executives use interpreters even when they have a good understanding of English. In one case a Chinese executive asked questions in Mandarin. An interpreter then translated the questions for the American executive.

While the interpreter spoke, the American turned his attention to the interpreter. The Chinese executive, however, gazed at the American so he could unobtrusively observe the American's non-

verbal responses (facial expressions, et cetera). When the American spoke, the Chinese executive had twice the response time. Because he understood English, he could formulate his response during the translation process.

Bargaining in English puts a second, powerful negotiating tool in the hands of our opponents. On the surface, bargaining in our first language appears to be an advantage—we can more quickly formulate and articulate powerful arguments. But even the best argument fizzles when the other side responds, “Sorry, I’m not sure I understand. Can you repeat that, please?” Bargainers listening to a second language can use the tactic of selective understanding. It also works when they speak. Previous commitments are more easily dissolved with the excuse, “Well, that isn’t exactly what I meant.”

A third disadvantage has to do with our assumptions about those who speak English well. When facing a group of foreign executives we naturally assume that the one who speaks English best is also the smartest and most influential person in the group, and therefore we direct our persuasive efforts to that member. But this is seldom the case in foreign business negotiations, so our argument suffers.

4 Check with the home office. American bargainers get very upset when halfway through a negotiation the other side says, “I’ll have to check with the home office”—that is, the decision makers are not even at the bargaining table. The Americans feel they have wasted time or have even been misled.

Limited authority among negotiators is common overseas, however, and can be a very useful bargaining tactic. In reality the foreign executive is saying, “To get me to compromise you not only have to convince me; you’ve also got to convince my boss, who is 5,000 miles away!” Your arguments must be most persuasive indeed. Additionally, this tactic lets the home office make the final decision.

This tactic goes against the grain of the American bargaining style. Indeed, Americans pride themselves on having full authority to make a deal. John Wayne never had to check with the home office.

5 Get to the point. As we mentioned earlier, Americans don’t like to beat around the bush; they want to get to the heart of the matter quickly. Unfortunately, what is considered the heart of the matter in a business negotiation varies across cultures. In every country we have found that business negotiations proceed in the following four stages: (1) non-task sounding, (2) task-related exchange of information, (3) persuasion, and (4) concessions and agreement.

The first stage, non-task sounding, includes all the activities that establish rapport but it does not include information related to the “business”

of the meeting. The information exchanged in the second stage of business negotiations concerns the parties’ needs and preferences. The third stage, persuasion, involves negotiators’ attempts to modify one another’s views through various persuasive tactics. The final stage involves the consummation of an agreement that often is the result of a series of concessions or smaller agreements.

From the American point of view, the “heart of the matter” is the third stage—persuasion. We have a natural tendency to go through the first two stages quickly. We may talk about golf or the weather or family, but we spend little time on these subjects relative to other cultures. We do say what our needs and preferences are, what we want and don’t want; and we’re quick about that too. We tend to be more interested in logical arguments than the people we’re negotiating with.

But in many other countries the heart of the matter, the point of the negotiation, is not so much information and persuasion as it is to get to know the people involved. In Brazil much time is spent in developing a strong relationship of trust before business can begin. Brazilians cannot depend on a legal system to iron out conflicts, so they depend on personal relationships. Americans new to the Brazilian way of doing business are particularly susceptible to the “wrist-watch syndrome.” In the United States looking at your watch most always gets things moving along. However, in Brazil, impatience causes apprehension, thus necessitating even longer periods of non-task sounding.

American impatience causes problems in the second stage of negotiations also. Like no other cultural group, Americans tend to start bargaining at a price pretty close to what they want and expect to achieve—what they consider a fair price. Almost everywhere else in the world bargainers leave themselves room to maneuver. A Chinese or Brazilian bargainer expects to spend time negotiating and expects to make concessions. Americans do not have the same expectations and are often surprised and upset by the other side’s “unreasonable” demands. But the demands are unreasonable only from the perspective of the American’s slam-bang, “Old West” bargaining style. To the Oriental or Latin American it makes perfect sense to ask for a lot initially.

6 Lay your cards on the table. Americans expect honest information at the bargaining table. When we don’t get it, negotiations often end abruptly. We also understand that like dollars, information must be traded. “You tell me what you want, and I’ll tell you what I want.” Sounds logical, doesn’t it?

The problem is that in other countries people have different attitudes and values about “honest” information. For example, in Brazil, being tricky is a less serious transgression of negotiation ethics.

It's even expected if a strong personal relationship between negotiators does not exist. Brazilian executives explain that such attitudes and values are changing, but the tradition is strong.

In Japan, it can be difficult to get a straight answer for two reasons: first, the Japanese team often has not decided what it wants out of the deal, so a representative cannot give a definite yes or no. His group must be consulted, and he cannot yet speak for the group. If the answer is no, the Japanese side is unlikely to use that specific word. Even if the American demands, "Tell me yes or tell me no," the Japanese will sidestep, beat around the bush, or even remain silent. It is the Japanese style to avoid conflict and embarrassment and to save face at all costs.

We misread and often feel misled by the subtle negative responses characteristic of the Japanese bargaining style. Japanese executives, particularly the younger ones (educated after World War II) with international experience, say they are learning to value directness, but here too the tradition is long-standing and has a powerful influence on behavior at the negotiation table.

7 Don't just sit there, speak up. Americans don't deal well with silence during negotiations. It seems a minor point, but often we have seen Americans getting themselves into trouble (particularly in Japan) by filling silent periods with words.

The Japanese style of conversation includes occasional long periods of silence—particularly in response to an impasse. The American style consists of few long silent periods (that is, of ten seconds or more). We have found that American negotiators react to Japanese silence in one of two ways: either they make some kind of a concession or they fill the space in the conversation with a persuasive appeal. The latter tactic has counterproductive results—the American does most of the talking, and he learns little about the Japanese point of view.

It should be noted that while handling silent periods is a problem for American negotiators, for Brazilians it is even worse. American conversational style is orderly and efficient—that is, each speaker takes his or her turn, with few silent periods. In Brazilian conversational style, particularly during the persuasion stages of negotiations, bargainers often speak simultaneously, fighting for the floor. To the American eye Brazilians appear to be poor listeners and rather rude. Seldom indeed would an American bargaining with a Brazilian executive have to say: "Don't just sit there, speak up."

8 Don't take no for an answer. Persistence is highly valued by Americans and is part of the deeply ingrained competitive spirit that manifests itself in every aspect of American life, particularly every aspect

of the American male's life. We are taught from the earliest age never to give up. On the playing field, in the classroom, or in the boardroom, we learn to be aggressive, to win; thus, we view a negotiating session as something you *win*. Like a game, the negotiation should have a definite conclusion—a signed contract. We are dissatisfied and distressed if negotiations do not end with the biggest piece of pie going to our side. But even worse than losing a negotiation is not concluding it. We can take a loss ("We'll do better next time"), but not the ambiguity of no decision.

Our foreign clients and vendors do not necessarily share this competitive, adversarial, persistence-pays view of negotiation. Many countries see negotiations as a means of establishing long-term commercial relations that have no definite conclusion. They see negotiations more as a cooperative effort where interdependence is manifest, where each side tries to add to the pie.

When these two views (cooperative and competitive) meet across the table, difficulties naturally crop up. Americans tend to use tactics such as threats and warnings—pushing too far even when the other side is clearly signaling no. One can imagine what happens when a Japanese client, for instance, gives a subtle negative response. The Americans do not back off. They expect minds to be changed at the negotiation table, when in many situations attitudes and positions can change only with time. In some circumstances Americans might do better to take no for an answer while preserving the all-important relationships among people and companies.

9 One thing at a time. Americans usually attack a complex negotiation task sequentially—that is, they separate the issues and settle them one at a time. For example, we have heard U.S. bargainers say, "Let's settle the quantity first and then discuss price." Thus, in an American negotiation, the final agreement is a sum of the several concessions made on individual issues, and progress can be measured easily: "We're halfway done when we're through half the issues." In other countries, particularly Far Eastern cultures, however, concessions may come only at the end of a negotiation. All issues are discussed with a holistic approach—settling nothing until the end.

Because the other side never seems to commit itself to anything, U.S. executives invariably think that they are making little progress during cross-cultural negotiations. Agreements may come as a surprise, and they often follow unnecessary concessions by impatient American bargainers.

10 A deal is a deal. When Americans make an agreement and give their word, they expect to honor the agreement no matter what the circumstances. But agreements are viewed differently



in different parts of the world. W.H. Newman describes this problem:

"In some parts of the world it is impolite to refuse openly to do something that has been requested by another person. What a Westerner takes as a commitment may be little more than a friendly conversation. In some societies, it is understood that today's commitment may be superseded by a conflicting request received tomorrow, especially if that request comes from a highly influential person. In still other situations, agreements merely signify intention and have little relation to capacity to perform; as long as the person tries to perform he feels no pangs of conscience, and he makes no special effort, if he is unable to fulfill the agreement. Obviously, such circumstances make business dealings much more uncertain, especially for new undertakings."³

11 I am what I am. Few Americans take pride in changing their minds, even in difficult circumstances. Certainly John Wayne's character and behavior were constant and predictable. He treated everyone and every situation with his action-oriented, forthright style. He could never be accused of being a chameleon.

Many American bargainers take the same attitude with them to the negotiation table, but during international business negotiations, inflexibility can be a fatal flaw. There simply is no single strategy or tactic that always works; different countries and different personalities require different approaches.

How to negotiate in other countries

Now let us map out an action strategy to deal with such problems. Americans must adjust their negotiation behaviors to fit the style of the host country executives. The following prescriptions correspond to each element of the bargaining style we have discussed.

1 I can go it alone. Use team assistance wisely. Don't hesitate to include extra members on your team such as financial or technical experts. The extra expense may be an excellent investment. Also, observation of negotiations can be a valuable training experience for younger members of the organization. Even if they add little to the discussion, their presence may make a difference.

2 Just call me John. The way to make foreign clients more comfortable is to follow *their* traditions and customs. American informality and

egalitarian views are simply out of place in most countries in the world. Status relations and business procedures must be carefully considered with the aid and advice of your local representatives.

3 Pardon my French. Ideally, U.S. negotiators should speak the local language, although in practice this is seldom possible. Americans usually travel overseas for short trips, and the investment in executive time for extensive language training appears unwarranted. However, American representatives should recognize the conversational disadvantages when foreign executives use an interpreter even though they understand English. Even a rudimentary knowledge of key foreign terms or numbers may aid the American.

4 Check with the home office. An important part of the preparations for any negotiation is the determination of authority limits—both theirs and yours. Americans should weigh the disadvantages of having full authority against the expenses of communication with the home office. Not having the final say may be a useful strategy for maintaining the proper interpersonal relationship and harmony, particularly in international negotiations.

5 Get to the point. We Americans depend on tightly written contracts and corporate lawyers for protection against the unscrupulous. Since in many places in the world legal systems are not as dependable, foreign executives invest much time in establishing personal relationships. Americans bargaining in foreign countries must be patient and plan to spend more time in non-task sounding. Let the other side bring up business and put your wristwatch in your coat pocket.

Moreover, remarks such as "We will need to get our legal staff to review this proposal" can quickly sour international deals. Other countries see us as a nation of lawyers in a world where law is used to handle business agreements that are in trouble, not at the beginning of the discussions. Be careful of open references to "legal review." For the foreigner, it may be a signal that the business relationship will be short-lived.

6 Lay your cards on the table. Foreign executives seldom lay their cards on the table. They are more likely to hold an ace or two in reserve. Often, initial demands will be irritatingly high from the American point of view. Most foreign executives expect to spend more time negotiating and expect to make concessions. You should adjust your initial offer accordingly and anticipate having to ask the same questions in several ways to get what we would call straight answers.

7 **Don't just sit there, speak up.** Recognize that silence can be a much more powerful negotiating tool than good arguments. Consider its uses, but in particular be aware of its use against you. Look at your notes, fiddle with your pen, anything, but let *them* break the silence.

8 **Don't take no for an answer.** Take the situation in Japan as a good example. The correct strategy for Americans negotiating with Japanese or other foreign clients is a Japanese strategy: ask questions. When you think you understand, ask more questions. Carefully feel for pressure points. If an impasse is reached, don't pressure. Suggest a recess or another meeting. Large concessions by the Japanese side at the negotiation table are unlikely. They see negotiations as a ritual where harmony is foremost. In Japan, minds are changed behind the scenes.

9 **One thing at a time.** Avoid making concessions on any issue until the group has fully discussed all issues. This is good advice for bargaining with American clients too. Also, do not measure progress by the number of issues that have been settled. In other countries different signals may be much more important.

10 **A deal is a deal.** Recognize differences in what an agreement means across cultures. A signed contract does not mean the same thing in Tokyo, Rio, or Riyadh as it means in New York.

11 **I am what I am.** Flexibility is critical in cross-cultural negotiations. Americans must adapt to the circumstances of world economic interdependence. Our power at the international negotiation table will continue to erode as our trading partners develop industrially. We must change our negotiating style accordingly.

trade. With the dramatic growth in international business activity during the last ten years, U.S. industry has slowly adjusted business approaches to foreign markets. Early on, U.S. companies sent their executives to live overseas and deal directly with foreign clients. The point of contact for the two cultures was often between an American sales representative and foreign client personnel. Thus, Americans had to operate in a new environment and had to promote communication and understanding not only between cultures but also between organizations—a demanding task. This strategy has proved unsuccessful.

In response to these difficulties and others (such as unfavorable tax laws) American corporations are increasingly hiring foreign nationals to represent their interests overseas. This moves the point of cross-cultural contact into the company where it can be more effectively managed. Consequently, the trend is for American executives (managers and technical experts) to take only short trips to other countries.

Such a strategy for marketing our products and services overseas neatly avoids the serious problem of training executives to live in other cultures, but we must now focus our attention on teaching executives how to negotiate with people from other countries.

Such training is not easy—for two reasons. First, knowledge and experience in another culture do not necessarily help in understanding still others. Various writers have tried to generalize about doing business in “similar” cultures, but their contributions are limited.⁴ Second, executives' time has practical limitations. Often management or technical people must participate in sales negotiations in other countries on short notice. The focus is on commercial and technical issues, not on how to communicate effectively with foreigners.

Given these two constraints—the need for knowledge of several cultures and time limitations—what can be done to better prepare our representatives? Both short- and long-term actions can help American companies solve such problems.

Our lack of knowledge about other cultures is losing us business overseas. Ideally, a prerequisite for work in international operations would be participation in an experiential training program involving cross-cultural interactions in a low-risk environment. Feedback from foreign participants and videotaped sessions would aid in building awareness of one's own negotiation behavior and values, as well as those of foreigners.

If experiential training is not practical, videotape as a training medium is the next best thing. Most large companies with international clients have a few people with knowledge and experience in individual cultures who have learned to overcome the natural tendencies of the American negotiating style. The cost

Training implications

The American negotiating style is part of a larger problem—our entire approach to export

³ “Cultural Assumptions Underlying U.S. Management Concepts,” in *Management in International Context*, ed. James L. Massie, Jan Luytjens, and N. William Hazen (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 75.

Such a concept is useful, but does not hold for negotiation style. For more detail see Warren J. Keegan, *Multinational Marketing Management* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 86.

⁴ Edward T. Hall and others suggested classifying cultures into two categories—high context and low context.

of sitting these people down in front of a videotape camera, with an expert in cross-cultural communication to lead a discussion on important aspects of negotiation (language, nonverbal behavior, values, and decision processes), say, in Saudi Arabia, is minimal. Larger companies might develop a library of such training tapes for management and technical people embarking on short-notice and short-term foreign assignments.

The long-run solutions to the cultural myopia of our business community are more challenging. If we are to take advantage of our technology, creativity, and other natural resources, we must invest in the education and training of our potential business leaders. This training must start early, for true understanding of another culture comes from total immersion in it. Ideally, training for U.S. multinational executives of the future would begin in high school.

During their freshman and sophomore years they would learn a foreign language (of one of our major trading partners). They would spend their junior year living with a family in a foreign country where the language they have studied is spoken, as part of the exchange programs now available. Students would continue their language training in college and again spend one year in a university in the country of focus. Finally, initial assignments in the multinational corporation would include a tour of duty in the foreign country. Through such a program, American executives of the future would gain an understanding of our foreign trading partners and their environment, a bicultural competence that would open the many doors that foreigners frequently shut in our faces.

Such a long-term plan sounds idealistic; however, the leaders of our large corporations are beginning to recognize our weaknesses in the world marketplace. These same executives must make the commitment to invest in high school and college foreign exchange programs and language training programs that look forward to the growth of international trade rather than back to a part of our own cultural heritage. ▽

Thoughts on negotiation

Keep strong, if possible. In any case, keep cool. Have unlimited patience. Never corner an opponent, and always assist him to save his face. Put yourself in his shoes – so as to see things through his eyes. Avoid self-righteousness like the devil – nothing so selfblinding.

Basil Henry Liddell Hart
Deterrent or Defense,
1960
"Advice to Statesmen"

America cannot be an ostrich with its head in the sand.

Woodrow Wilson
Speech given in
Des Moines, Iowa
February 1, 1916

Americans are people who prefer the Continent to their own country, but refuse to learn its languages.

Edward Verrall Lucas
Wanderings and Diversions, 1926
"The Continental Dictionary"

I have with me two gods, Persuasion and Compulsion.

Themistocles
From Plutarch, *Lives*
Sections 21 and 29

The speech of man is like embroidered tapestries, since like them this too has to be extended in order to display its patterns, but when it is rolled up it conceals and distorts them.

In America, getting on in the world means getting out of the world we have known before.

Ellery Sedgwick
The Happy Profession,
1946
Chapter 1

Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly as when they discuss it freely.

Thomas Babington,
Lord Macaulay
Southey's Colloquies,
1830

Let us not be blind to our differences – but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved.

John Fitzgerald
Kennedy
Address given at
American University
Washington, D. C.
June 10, 1963