

**Pacific Model United Nations
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You Matter to World Peace and This is Why

First and foremost let me say how impressed I am with all of you. You have taken an interest in public policy and are involving yourself directly into the debate and discussion over the critical issues facing our world. And you have taken a Saturday to do it. I suspect you take many Saturdays and all other days of the week as well. Not a lot of people your age would know or for that matter even have an interest in knowing about the terribly important matters that you have and will be discussing.

So, as I said I am very impressed with you. I believe so firmly that you matter to world peace I have titled my presentation "You Matter to World Peace and Here is why".

In getting to make that point I will share some experiences, some observations and some thoughts of others and personal beliefs of my own.

I have been fortunate to have either led or taken part in 29 missions overseas in my 18 years as Lieutenant Governor.

Many have been to countries of Asia and the Pacific Rim, like China and India. But I have also traveled to other parts of the world, specifically, Spain, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, Germany and Hungary.

Some of these missions could be characterized as educational. Most were focused on business and trade, with the idea of building new bridges of commerce between the state of Washington and the world. My most recent mission was in Shantou, China, for a Washington State Day series of events. We were there to promote bilateral commerce and new opportunities.

One of the factors that makes the state of Washington so special is its incredible diversity of people. That diversity of people has a wonderful side benefit of connecting us to everywhere around the world and from that comes instant experts or at the very least people quite knowledgeable of specific regions of a country and an interest in sharing it with all of the rest of us. That is a great benefit to those of us looking to increase our international place in the world and build important long lasting relationships.

These immigrants, new citizens of our state and nation quite often are the organizers and advisors of our trade, goodwill, education and cultural missions. Such was the case in my last trip to Shantou, China.

Now these good folks teach us, sometimes it more like warn us, about cultural differences. For instance in some countries, mainly because of their religion you do not touch the women and that includes shaking their hands. It is the same right here in America and other parts of the world with the more conservative segments of the Jewish religion.

In China you always cover you're your mouth and hand when using a toothpick. I knew that when I was in Taiwan and my colleague the LG from Nevada did not. It was somewhat embarrassing when she started digging vigorously on her teeth while showing us most of them.

It is wonderful having the people available to us for guidance, but I have to say that there is no substitute for learning about a people and their customs than actually visiting them first hand.

In China when we meet with a dignitary, unlike in America where we will often sit across from each other or at some casual angle, they always set two large chairs up front of a room for the delegation leaders divided by a small end type table and have all of the delegates sitting in a line going away from the leaders.

Rarely are the delegates invited to share in the conversation. Now I can describe that arrangement and custom to you, but it is far more interesting to actually be a part of it.

But the real advantage of the nation to nation, face to face visit is being able to experience reality, dispel myths, misrepresentations and stereotypes of the people you come to know.

Open communication between nations is the key to building understanding. We all have preconceived notions of other countries. Some of these can only be shattered by either visiting that country or through free-form discussion with foreigners. For example, a few years ago we had lunch with a group of women visiting from the Middle East and Afghanistan. They told us that they had come with some very distinct ideas of America and the American people and most of this was negative. After visiting with us and others in our region, they said their views had totally changed.

My own views were dramatically altered when I took my first trip to China in the late 90's. In fact the first time I went to China I expected to see everyone wearing drab tunic suits in the fashion of former Chairman Mao Zedong, known formally in China as the Zhongshan suit or we called them Mao jackets. I also expected to see farmers tending to fields of rice paddies being tilled with plows pulled by water buffalo and endless rows of boxy, look-alike buildings.

What I saw instead were people dressed just as we do here, from jeans to high-end suits. We visited sprawling, modern cities full of high-rise buildings of stunning design. The people we met were friendly and hospitable. Now I was correct about the farmers working the rice paddies with water buffalo in the rural areas. In fact they still do however there is also very modern agricultural practices as well. So in short, I came back with a completely different view of China than when I had arrived, one that has been reinforced and even surpassed many times on subsequent trips there.

So here's the **first tip** to you in dealing with foreign policy. Take the time to learn about and understand the people of the world by observing them first hand on their turf whenever you can rather than formulating your opinions through talk radio or somebodies chat room or editorial.

Now just to show that my opinion on the importance and effectiveness of traveling to other countries and getting to know people as they truly are is held in good company this same thought was brought up agreed to the night before last on a forum about China and our future with it by the CEO of Boeing, the General Counsel and Executive Vice President of Microsoft, A former US ambassador to China, the President of UW and two well- known experts on China.

Now actually you can start by getting out of your comfort zone right here in America and visiting some of our citizens who practice different customs and religions than what we may be used to.

Perhaps you remember or have studied how after 9-11 many Americans immediately cast suspicion toward everyone practicing the Muslim faith, even their own neighbors. This is a wrong-headed perception that still persists.

I have got to know Muslims, Hindus, Orthodox Jews and Siks and have been invited to their Temples of Worship. Nobody tried to convert me, nobody railed on the failed policies of the corrupt US Government and nobody yelled death to the infidels. They did however greet me with open arms, fed me and shared their hopes and dreams for themselves and their families. And you know what? They were the same hopes and dreams that just about every American would have.

So, diversify your personal portfolio of knowledge and beliefs about your fellow men and women that make up this amazing world of diversity.

There are other ways to learn about the people of the world and at the same time educate them about the good hearts and generosity of the American people.

Volunteer or get a paid job in a humanitarian effort. There are plenty to choose from and many of them call Washington State their home such as World Vision and The Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation among others.

In my office I have an employee named Brian Dirks who every year that he can joins his church group and goes in to a poor region of Guatemala to install quite simple yet valuable stoves in very poor homes there. These stoves are primarily for cooking and is something that the people receiving them love, but have often times never had. The stoves are made in _____ paid for by _____ shipped by _____

In Peru I was asked to join some law enforcement officers and firefighters who had befriended firefighters in Peru. In doing so they found that the firefighting resources in that country were dismal. For instance in Trujillo they had one fire station for 700,000 people compared about 35 fire stations in Seattle where there are 600,000 residents.

This had resulted in some terrible loss of lives and of course property for already poor people. So these generous Washington State firefighters and law enforcement officers went to work gathering surplus equipment that included 3 fire trucks and got it all delivered to Peru and donated to the people in different cities.

They were so grateful that the President and first lady of Peru came to our state more or less to say thank you and a new fire station was built in Trujillo and named Washington State Fire Station 177.

As an aside, because I helped get the equipment to Peru when they ran into a political snag they named me one of two Padrinos of the fire station which is Spanish for Godfather.

Since I am talking to students and have just mentioned two Latin American countries let me mention this opportunity to all of you.

President Obama has launched his signature education initiative, “100,000 Strong in the Americas” that sets a goal of increasing the number of U.S. students studying in Latin America and the Caribbean to 100,000, as well as boosting the number of Latin American and Caribbean students studying in the U.S. to 100,000. The reason for this is that he understands well that

these students become some of our nation's best Ambassadors. You might want to check out this program.

What do you think the opinions of these people in Guatemala and Peru are towards Americans today? I suspect we are held in pretty high regard. These types of efforts and many others relating to health and sanitation, financial independence, education for young girls and schools for all are happening all over the world improving the lives of millions with a very nice side effect of quietly showing the heart and soul and the generosity of Americans.

So, tip number two; find a way to help others even if you are not able to travel be the one that helps to organize the efforts right here at home.

I have to wonder that if we had comprehensive efforts to learn about each other going on in Russia and the old Soviet Union starting back before the cold war in the fifties and the sixties if we would have ever had a cold war. I guess I should not assume that everyone here really understands or knows about the cold war. It was a time after the atomic and nuclear bombs were developed that we in America had great fear that the Soviet Union lead by Russia was prepared to launch these horrid weapons at us.

The Soviet Union at the same time was convinced that we were preparing to do the same to them. We were scared to death of Communism and they had the same fear of our form of Democracy and Capitalism.

So each country entered into a race, the arms race, to see who could build the most and the biggest bombs that flew the furthest to deliver their carnage. Both nations spent Billions of dollars. What did that mean to mankind to the people of both Nations? President Dwight D. Eisenhower described the cost most pointedly.

Now before I read you his quote keep in mind he had been a five star general and was given great praise and credit for leading our effort to win WWII.

On April 16, 1953 – just three months after taking office and shortly after the death of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, President Eisenhower delivered one of his most memorable speeches before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. It is known as his Chance for Peace speech, and in it he describes the cost of war at its most basic terms. I quote:

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals.

It is some fifty miles of concrete pavement. We pay for a single fighter with a half-million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people. . . .

This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.” *End quote.*

Of course the numbers have changed quite a bit since Eisenhower's remarks more than 60 years ago, but his point remains intact. There is a huge cost for war, a cost that is preventing us from moving ahead in other areas. It is a cost that must continually be both assessed and addressed by the U.N.

I once read a book called *Blind Man's Bluff*. It is the true story of submarine warfare between the United States and Russia during the Cold War. Two admirals, one from the U.S. and the other from the Russian Navy were interviewed independent of each other about their involvement during this time. Each said that they believe the other was going to fire their nuclear weapons at their country.

In fact neither one had *any intention* of pushing that button, ever. But it was the fear of pushing the button – and the perception that the other just might that kept each nation building more and bigger bombs and the ships and submarines and planes to deliver them to their targets.

We have been on the brink of disaster many times in our history – for example our standoff with Cuba in the Bay of Pigs. Each time thankfully cool heads, reasonable thought and diplomacy have prevailed.

Diplomacy is what the U.N. is all about and that is what your sessions today are all about. I am happy you have the chance to debate these important issues.

I repeat, would we have all of this happening, the incredible expenditures and the constant fear the people had to live with if we would have had a close and meaningful understanding of each other's system of government, their true intentions and a better understanding and meaningful relationship with each other.

We could have had educational and cultural exchanges and economic investment in each other. Significant investment in each other's country is enough alone to make leaders think twice before going to war.

Speaking of leaders leads me to tip number 3. Recognize who you are and lead. You are here on a Saturday with an interest in what is happening around and to the world and more directly to your fellow Americans. You are a leader and it is never too soon to take the reins and be a leader.

It can simply be through example by what people see and hear about what you do or it can be by bringing people together for a common cause and it can be simply by educating people to help them become more understanding and knowledgeable about the important policy and actions that will affect them.

We need you to continue to build on the structure that was built for you. You see I do not buy into the commonly used phrase meant to motivate you that "you are our future". Nope! Someone laid the foundation for the future of their kids many years before I was born and then each generation built on that and made a structure out of it for their kids to build on until my grandparents added on for the future of their kids and my parents added on to that for me. You are not my future you are your children's and their children's future. So we need you to get busy. Start with the littlest kids if you want because the author Robert Fulghum says it matters.

In his book, *All I Really Need to Know I learned in Kindergarten*, author Robert Fulghum lists 16 things that apply to almost everything we do. Here are eight of them:

1. Share everything
2. Play fair.
3. Don't hit people.
4. Put things back where you found them.
5. CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS.
6. Don't take things that aren't yours.
7. Say you're SORRY when you HURT somebody.
8. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.

These would be very good principals for the UN to work from along with congress and the state legislature and I am sure my wife would say that I should learn them as well.

Fulghum also wrote: “I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge. That myth is more potent than history. That dreams are more powerful than facts. That hope always triumphs over experience. That laughter is the only cure for grief. And I believe that love is stronger than death.”

And I believe in you and what you are capable of.

Take the time to learn about the people of the world;

Find a way to help others

Recognize who you are and lead

When you are in the process of making a positive difference in this world and you begin to wonder if it really matters, if it is really making a difference.

To answer that often asked question, let me tell you a final story.

There was a young man walking down a deserted beach just before dawn. In the distance he saw a frail old man. As he approached the old man, he saw him picking up stranded starfish and throwing them back into the sea. The young man gazed in wonder as the old man again and again threw the starfish from the sand to the water. He asked, “Old man, why do you spend so much energy doing what seems to be a waste of time?”

The old man explained that the stranded starfish would die if left in the morning sun.

“But there must be thousands of beaches and millions of starfish!” exclaimed the young man. “How can you make any difference?” The old man looked down at the small starfish in his hand and as he threw it into the safety of the sea, he said, “I make a difference to this one.”

In your deliberations today I challenge you each to make a difference. Think about how clarity of communications can be used to overcome fear and misconception. Learn from others that the act of conquering hatred can be the first step toward peace. Know that respecting our differences – even learning to appreciate them – is a key to understanding and success. We can together overcome poverty, disease, famine and the ravages of war if we work together.

You matter to world peace because of who you are.
Thank you.