

REVITALIZING AND LEADING FAS: 1970-2000

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When, in 1970, I descended from the FAS Executive Committee to become the chief executive officer, FAS had 1,000 members and an annual budget of \$7,000 per year. The organization was very near death. During my 30 year tenure, FAS became a famous, creative, and productive organization.

In arms control, our ideas were presented at three Washington-Moscow Summits: Carter and Brezhnev; Reagan and Gorbachev; and Clinton and Premier Stepashin (as described later below).

To further improve U.S.-Soviet relations, we catalyzed 26 Congressional delegations to visit Moscow and played a key role in catalyzing CIA-KGB cooperation in matters of common concern, such as North Korea and non-proliferation.

In nuclear policy, we developed the legal case that presidential first use of nuclear weapons without Congressional authorization was unlawful. We found a way to lobby the World Court in its case on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons, which helped to produce a kind of “Delphic tie.”

Early on, we released a critique of the Congressional testimony of Dr. John Foster, Director of Defense, Research and Engineering in the Pentagon, who had argued that there was an “R&D gap” that favored the Soviet Union. Signed by four high FAS officials with Defense Department experience, our rejoinder received much press, as well as a Herblock Cartoon, and prompted an investigation by the R&D Subcommittee of Senate Armed Services.

The Nixon Administration, through its office of dirty tricks, launched a counterattack led by Charles Colson. He persuaded columnist Joseph Alsop to smear me in the 600 newspapers of the LA Times syndicate. The smear took

the form of outing me as the son of left-wing journalist I.F. Stone and said I was attacking Johnny Foster “because the Russians wanted to get him out of the way.”

I survived the attack only because 75 percent of scientists are liberals, and my members and officials really did not care what Alsop said. The whole episode resembled the real life movie *Fair Game* in which Vice President Cheney’s office outed Joseph Wilson’s wife, Valerie Plame, as a CIA agent, driving them both out of town in retaliation for Wilson’s criticism of President George W. Bush. But it did put me on Nixon’s “enemy list” as the youngest of about 20 famous and noteworthy academics.

In human rights, we were successful in pressuring U.S. scientific societies, including the National Academy of Sciences, to create committees on human rights of colleagues abroad. In particular, we defended the human rights of scientists in the Soviet Union, including those of Nobel Prize winner for peace, Andrei Sakharov, through five of his hunger strikes.

In domestic legal issues, we stopped an illegal CIA mail-opening operation and persuaded a judge of a way to prevent prior restraint of the press in a case involving hydrogen bomb secrets.

In high level domestic politics, we catalyzed the resolution of a conflict between Henry Kissinger and whether he had to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We also produced a famous letter from John Dean to me that forced President Nixon to let John Dean testify. A *Washington Post* editorial called our effort a “footnote in history.”

In a press release, we were the first to announce Ronald Reagan’s interest in astrology.

For an environmental issue, at the request of Carl Sagan, we investigated and defused urgent predictions of two famous scientists that an East Coast earthquake was impending. This work is described in my memoir *Every Man Should Try: Adventures of a Public Interest Activist (PublicAffairs, 1999)*. In his introduction of the Russian edition of this book, the famed Russian Academician Evgeny P. Velikhov wrote:

Jeremy’s effectiveness has really been impressive. He led only a very small organization [i.e., Federation of American Scientists], whose professional staff grew from one to only a half-dozen over thirty years. Yet he is able to show, in these Chapters about his own efforts, that he could compete—in influencing the political life of his own country and of the whole world—with the most powerful governmental entities and with non-governmental organizations whose budgets were many times higher than his own.

The former head of the State Department Policy Planning Committee, Morton Halperin, commented, “Jeremy’s influence has been as great as that of all but the most senior figures in government.”

During this period, FAS came to have a budget of about \$1.4 million in today's dollars (still small compared to many other organizations), but it had the sponsorship of about 100 famous officials, including 57 Nobel Prize winners.

At the beginning, critics whispered that FAS was just “Jeremy and a telephone” because I operated out of a one-room office and made a business of rounding up famous FAS sponsors and/or the FAS executive committee to sign off on

my petitions and testimony. In fact, this was my *modus operandi* throughout the next 30 years.

During this period, I wrote most of the 300 monthly newsletters and addressed diverse subjects of science and society. But I secured experts to endorse my editorials on concrete actions and left my name off the newsletter. I testified before Congress twenty-five times, mostly before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but also the Senate and House Armed Services Committee and some others. Membership peaked at only about 5,000 through



FAS Staff Photo, April 1987.

petitions sent through direct mail but it didn't seem to matter.

In the 1980s, we recruited a small but capable staff, including John Pike on technical issues of global security, Steve Aftergood on Secrecy, David Albright on non-proliferation, and Lora Lumpe on arms sales. Their substantial achievements await their own books and are not included here. We purchased a few adjacent Capitol Hill townhouses to provide them with offices and to anchor the organization's finances.

INVENTING, LOBBYING FOR, AND MAINTAINING THE ABM TREATY

In the sixties, during five annual summer trips to the Soviet Union before joining FAS, my wife, B.J., and I had pioneered the effort of lobbying Moscow to start official talks with the United States on an ABM Treaty – a treaty idea I developed at the Hudson Institute in 1963. This became the most important treaty of the Cold War and we defended it for three decades. When Ronald Reagan proposed Star Wars, John Pike became the most visible opponent of Reagan's plan (which threatened the continuance of the treaty).

SOME SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR INTERESTING ENDEAVORS

Scientific Exchange with China and Peaceful Unification with Taiwan. In 1972, a major accomplishment was taking the first scientific delegation to China, a month after Nixon, and catalyzing the return of Chinese scientists to America in a quiet important negotiation in Beijing. In 1996, we invented a new approach to unifying Taiwan with the Mainland that was applauded in both Beijing and Taipei.

Vienna Summit Proposal. In June, 1979, President Carter secretly presented our SALT III proposal, entitled *Shrink SALT II*, to President Leonid Brezhnev at the Vienna Summit.

Geneva Summit Proposal. In 1985, our bear-hug strategy for keeping disarmament going in the face of Russian fears of the Reagan Star Wars program was proposed by Reagan at the Geneva Summit. We had earlier sold the strategy to the Russian leadership in a Moscow briefing. The idea was that both sides would engage in major reductions of intercontinental ballistic missiles subject to neither violating the ABM Treaty. Strobe Talbott, in *The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace*, reports on how we advanced this proposal in both Moscow and Washington.

Washington Summit Proposal. In 1999, we persuaded Russian Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin, during a meeting in Moscow, to offer the U.S. the right to build a small ABM in return for parity at 1,000 strategic missiles. This proposal was designed to eliminate first strike threats. Our slogan was: “Truncate the Sword and the Shield Becomes Harmless.” Stepashin secured his Government’s approval and offered this to President Clinton in a private meeting in the Oval office. Clinton turned it down, saying “Vice President Gore is running for President and he doesn’t want any trouble.” The Administration suppressed the fact that this dramatic proposal had been offered.

WAR AND PEACE AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE

Resolving the Cambodian Civil War. To prevent the return of the genocidal Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, we revealed, in a *New York Times* op-ed, “Secret U.S. War in Cambodia,” that the CIA was running a secret war against the Hun Sen Government (which included the Khmer Rouge forces). By persuading Senator Alan Cranston to open hearings on Cambodia, we defeated an effort by Congressman Stephen Solarz to arm the Cambodian insurgents, which would have drawn us militarily into another Indochinese war.

After securing international agreement from Russia, Australia, and China, we induced the four Cambodian factions to work together to end the civil war in a novel way. We then invited Premier Hun Sen of Cambodia to Washington, as a guest of FAS, where he managed to secure \$250,000,000 from Congress to fund the Cambodian election that eventually settled the war.

Working to Save Peru from Sendero Luminoso. Two years were spent working to secure the arrest of Sendero Luminoso’s Abimael Guzman who was trying to destroy Peru in order to save it. We campaigned to persuade U.S. intelligence to help Peruvian intelligence, despite some strange CIA apprehensions that it would violate the rule against assassination.

On a trip to Lima, we learned that Guzman could not leave the country and was traveling in a green limousine with frosted windows. But it was British intelligence, using his brand of cigarettes, who finally tracked him down. With his arrest, the Sendero Luminoso movement collapsed.

Seeking to Deter the Sale of North Korea's Fissionable Material. After visiting North Korea in 1991, we helped to spread the accurate idea, through Moscow and Beijing intermediaries, to Pyongyang that the West could identify their uranium and plutonium if North Korea were to sell it.

Failing to Avoid the Balkan War Between Serbia and Kosovo. We tried to prevent the subsequent NATO war in the Balkans by proposing, years before, a detailed treaty and rationalization of how the Kosovo Albanians could rent Kosovo from the Serbs. Although we tried to persuade both sides to agree to the treaty, it ultimately failed.

Scientific and Political Exchange with Iran. During the regime of President Khatami, we catalyzed an exchange agreement between the National Academy of Science (NAS) and the Iranian Academy of Sciences on peaceful issues of science. We did this by taking the first scientific delegation to Iran in two decades and bringing back an Iranian delegation which we shared, for a day, with NAS where agreement was reached.

The End of the Cold War. In February 1989, I urged support for President Gorbachev in a *New York Times* op-ed, "Let's Do All We Can Do for Gorbachev." This op-ed was quoted at length in the historic *New York Times* editorial of April 2, 1989, entitled, "The Cold War is Over."

THE CONSEQUENCES OF LEAVING FAS

In my 65th year, I left FAS and started *Catalytic Diplomacy*, a tiny 501c3 organization designed to continue my work without administrative responsibilities. 2000-2006 became the most exciting period of my life and it revealed, happily, that I could be effective, at least at that age and stage, without a protective umbrella of famous scientists. The achievements of *Catalytic Diplomacy* are described in a second life memoir, *Catalytic Diplomacy: Russia, China, North Korea and Iran*. (A 100-page summary of all my activities during the half-century period 1962-2014, can be accessed at <http://catalytic-diplomacy.org/summary.php>.)

On my resignation, John Pike left immediately to start *GlobalSecurity.org*. Earlier, David Albright had left to start the *Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS)*. Of my staff projects, only Steve Aftergood's excellent *Project on Government Secrecy* remains at FAS. FAS continues with my former staffer, Dr. Charles Ferguson, an energetic and dedicated physicist, as president.

Though FAS is a small organization, its record shows that it can magnify the voice of science in Washington and it can move quickly and effectively. I was privileged: to have revived it; to have had it as a vehicle for my ideas; and to have directed its activities for that crucial 30- year period that saw the triumph of some nuclear arms control and the termination of the Cold War.