

March 8, 2012

To: Katonah Great Decisions Participants

From: Fred Piker – Discussion Leader

Re: Summary of 3/6 Meeting – “State of the Oceans: Waves of Change” –
Topic Leader: Howard Jacobs

10:15: KICKOFF

Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Gerry Golub from the Chappaqua Great Decisions group joined us today.

Future 2011-12 Day Time Meeting Dates

3/20, 4/3, 4/17, 5/1, 5/15

Future Schedule of Winter/Spring Daytime Meeting Topics

3/20 – “Cybersecurity: The New Frontier” – Topic Leader: Dick Ten Dyke

4/3 – “Promoting Democracy: Foreign Policy Imperative?” - Co-Topic Leader:
Harry Stanton

4/17 – “Exit From Afghanistan & Iraq: Right Time, Right Pace?” - Co-Topic
Leader – Tyler Beebe

5/1 – “Middle East Realignment: The Arab Upheaval” – Co-Topic Leaders:
Barbara & Mike Kornfield

5/15 – “Mexico & Its Relationships with U. S. and Central America” – Topic
Leaders: Joe Adams and Maureen/John Carpenter

Topics Suggested So Far For September 2012-Mid January 2013

(By 5/15 dates and topics will be scheduled. Members’ suggestions are welcomed)

Turkey
Immigration
Sovereign Debt/Foreign Policy Issues
Human Rights

Role of Foreign Policy
Climate Change/Foreign Policy Implications
Future of the Euro
U. S. Military Power
Islam
Aging & Population
Brazil
Turkey
Russia & Putin
North Korea
India
Iran
Potential Change in China Arising from New Leadership
Book Review-“Strategic Decisions”-Author-Zbigniew Brzezinski
Diplomacy & Foreign Policy
United Nations

Charles McDuffie Memorial Service

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3/10 – 11:00 A. M. - @ St. Matthew’s Church – Bedford Village
A reception will follow immediately after the service

Richard Webb Tribute

The completed tribute – a picture frame which included text and a recent picture of Richard – prepared by Stan Starr and Dick Ten Dyke - was shown to participants. The frame will be hung on one of the walls in the KVL Ted Hawryluk Memorial Conference Room (located on the main library level).

Possible use of Skype at a Forthcoming Meeting

Tyler Beebe reported that at the 3/5 Chappaqua GD meeting (held at the Chappaqua Library) a resource person based in NYC led a presentation/discussion via Skype. The system worked well and participant feedback was positive.

Because our Planning Committee has expressed interest in considering this type of delivery, I asked KVL (Director, Van Kozelka) whether it might be possible to do Skype in the Garden Room. She indicated yes but noted we would need to use our own computer which could then project the image onto the screen. Also, if we wanted to interact with the speaker, we would need to use a microphone.

A number of Chapter participants indicated they have used Skype for home personal use

and support our Chapter's considering such a delivery system for future day time external based resource people. A few Chapter members will soon meet with KVL staff for purposes of setting up and trying out Skype.

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GROUP DISCUSSION

CHAPTER MOTTO - "DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT FONDNESS FOR DISPUTE OR DESIRE FOR VICTORY" – BEN FRANKLIN

Readings & References - Pre-Meeting Preparation

To ensure an informative discussion, participants are encouraged to review the "Priority" readings and time permitting, "Supplementary" readings as well.

Priority

FPA 2012 Briefing Book-"State of the Oceans: Waves of Change"

FPA Website – www.fpa.org – go to "Great Decisions" – then to "Resource Library"- then to "State of the Oceans" – you will find several readings

Enter the following in your search engine, "International Programme on the State of the Oceans" – you will find several readings

Supplementary

FPA 2012 Briefing Book-page 84

Topic Introduction

The International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO) tells us that oceans create more than one half of our oxygen; provide vital sources of protein, energy, and materials; drive weather systems and natural flows of energy and nutrients around the world; moderate the climate; modulate the chemical composition of the atmosphere; and transport water masses many times greater than all the rivers on land continents. Yet at the earth system level the Ocean is poorly understood and rarely considered. Without a better understanding, we cannot appreciate the true value of Ocean services to humankind – nor the full consequences of permitting widespread degradation to our Ocean's health.

Initially Howard provided more specific information from the recent IPSO report on the science underlying the Ocean's degradation which the FPA reading did not fully describe. His comments focused on (1) The "deadly trio" (warming of the oceans, acidification, and anoxia); (2) Exclusive Economic Zones <EEZ>; (3) Deep Zones/the Continental Shelf/Spratly Islands <located in the South China Sea>; (4) The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea <UNCLOS>, including current status and prospects for passage in the U. S. Senate; and (5) IPSO recommendations to address the degradation. Subsequently, we viewed the related FPA DVD segment. Howard's initial comments, together with the DVD, the discussion questions, and policy options (listed below) led to the principal query, "Of all the things we could do with respect to the state of the oceans, what is the right thing to do?"

Preliminary Discussion Questions

- 1- Is the ocean a "public good" or a "private good?" In economic terms if one person consumes public goods, the amount remains the same. Once public goods are available, no one can be stopped from consuming them – e. g. – clean air and air waves for purposes of broadcasting.

The 1982 Law of the Sea Convention (which went into effect in 1994) defines oceanic jurisdiction for all nations as a 200 nautical mile limit from a country's shoreline. The resulting Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) gives each country control over primarily fishing and seabed mining. The 12 mile limit is considered sovereign territory subject to the same rules and regulation governing land side activities. The "contiguous zone" (12 to 24 miles from the low tide mark) primarily concerns fishing rights. Lately, however, it also concerns drilling for gas and oil.

- 2- Does control of the EEZ mean the same thing as "stewardship" of the natural resources contained within the area? (The Law of the Sea makes scant mention of such resources as coral reefs).
- 3- What is meant by the following? - during the DVD one of the discussants says the state of the oceans is an ethical issue.
- 4- Is the state of the oceans "too big a problem to fail?" If so, how should this global commons be governed?
- 5- Over the last 30 years what underlies the U. S. Senate's failure to ratify UNCLOS (the Law of the Sea Treaty)?
- 6- What do you foresee as the event that will focus the nation's attention on the degradation of the state of the oceans?

Participant Observations

-Some events likely to focus nations' attention on the degradation of the oceans include: limitation/depletion of a principal source of the world's food supply; rise/flooding of ocean levels (the Maldives are at risk); and breaking apart of major pieces of the Greenland ice mass

-World governance of the oceans is impeded by lack of nations' political will

-The U. S. and other countries seem to be following a posture of "adaptation" to ocean degradation rather than "prevention"

-One citizen action group making an effort to promote awareness of ocean degradation is "Beneath the Sea" – an organization founded many years ago principally by a group of scuba divers distressed over ocean degradation. Currently the organization has an exposition at the Meadowlands.

-A major complication to control of EEZs is that some overlap – e. g. – the Straits of Hormuz (Iran/Oman/UAE)

-Energy consumption is a principal driver of ocean degradation

-Re the ongoing discussion/debate re global warming (related to ocean degradation), some environmental groups have helped to polarize the discussion by putting all the blame on rising levels of CO₂, rather than including other underlying causes. Additionally, such polarization is sometimes further enhanced by references to "human induced" global warming.

-The urgent need to address ocean degradation and also global warming requires that we act now on hard/factual known causes rather than wait for all causes to be determined prior to taking action.

12:00 P. M.-ADJOURNMENT & CURRENT EVENTS MODULE

Discussion focused on Israel/U. S./Iran.

12:30 P. M. – ADJOURNMENT OF OPTIONAL MODUL

Hope you can join us on 3/20.

Best regards,