

# Neureiter Science Diplomacy Roundtable

## “Building the Capacity of Foreign Ministries in Science Diplomacy”

Wednesday, January 25, 2012 – AAAS Building; Abelson and Haskins room  
1200 New York Avenue, NW Washington DC, 20005

### Agenda

- 8:00 Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 Opening Welcome and Overview
- 9:30 Topic 1: Science Advice at the State Department; Reflections, Observations and Opportunities from Science and Technology Advisers to the Secretary
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 Topic 2: Novel and New Approaches
  - o Science Envoys
  - o Fellowships
  - o Speakers programs
- 12:30 Lunch
- 13:30 Topic 3: Training Diplomats in Science and Science Diplomacy at Embassies
- 15:00 Open discussion and conclusions
- 15:30 Adjourn

### **Background:**

In recent years, science has become an increasing component of diplomacy. As a result, Foreign Ministries are playing an ever greater role in addressing and promoting science as central elements of a nation’s foreign policy. In response, policy makers and foreign policy experts and practitioners have looked at ways to increase the capability of Foreign Ministries in areas where science and diplomacy are deeply interconnected.

The Neureiter Roundtable aims to foster dialogue among experts, practitioners and thought leaders interested in efforts to increase the capacity of Foreign Ministries to

conduct and support science diplomacy efforts. The three broad topics to be addressed are discussed in greater detail below. The meeting will be conducted under the Chatham House Rule,<sup>1</sup> and the expectation is that a summary for policy makers will be produced.

Though a few expats have been asked to lead off discussions of each of the topics, the expectation is that each of the participants in the roundtable will provide their own thoughts and opinions on the individual topics. We also hope that this roundtable will foster additional thought among participants perhaps leading to more scholarly articles about approaches and efforts to improve the capacity of Foreign Ministries to undertake Science Diplomacy.

### **Topic 1: Science Advice at the State Department; Reflections, Observations and Opportunities from Science and Technology Advisers to the Secretary**

In 1999 the U.S. National Academy of Sciences concluded that 13 of the 16 U.S. foreign policy goals have science, technology and health considerations. Their influential report, among other things, led to the creation of a science and technology adviser to the Secretary of State. The current Adviser is the fourth. Each adviser has faced unique challenges, and developed specific goals and approaches for the office. With over a decade of experiences with a science adviser we are better placed to develop a better understanding of what has worked and where some improvements in the position might allow for more effective use of this position.

The United States is not alone in its interest in a science adviser position. In (get the year) the UK established the position of (name) in it Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Framing questions for this session include:

- What have been some of the key accomplishments of the science adviser position?
- How has the science adviser position evolved over the years?
- What are the key barriers to the position?
- How has the position been integrated into the Department of State
- Should the subject-matter focus and the activities of the Science Adviser be re-oriented in view of the significant increase in technically trained civil servants, detailees from other agencies, and foreign service officers now serving in the department?

**Topic 2: Novel and New Approaches (Science Envoys; Fellowships and visiting experts):** While the STAS is the most visible position dedicated to bringing short term science expertise into the Department of State, other efforts have also been used. In recent years, fellowships, such as those administered by the AAAS, the Jefferson Science Fellowships and Foster Fellowships, have provided a mechanism for the Department to develop shorter-term capacity in science. These positions have provided an important mechanism for helping link technical and mission agencies with the State Department by

---

<sup>1</sup> "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed".

building networks, and providing scientific focal points for issues. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of State recently launched the Science and Technology Target of Opportunity Partnership, which develops partnerships with science membership organizations to tap into the wide range of experts who might be deployed to engage foreign publics.

**Science Envoys:** As part of his Cairo speech, President Obama embraced a concept proposed by Senator Lugar to create a series of science envoys assigned to specific countries and regions. The envoys, who are accomplished researchers and academics are non-governmental representatives whose role is to identify and build areas of science cooperation between the United States and their country of assignment. Given this broad mandate, they work closely with the State Department and the technical agencies and represent an innovative approach to focusing on science issues with some key countries.

**Science Fellows:** Fellowships provide an important way to bring technical experts into the State Department for term appointments (1-2 years). These fellows – who are chosen through competitive processes involving science associations and academies – help bridge the academic and policy communities, while also utilizing their networks of other fellows and alumni to build cross agency and cross-government relationships.

Framing questions for this topic include:

- What are the advantages of using these short-term non-traditional approaches to increasing science capacity?
- Given that the current science envoys have gone to USAID countries - thus focusing on assistance activities - should efforts be made to increase the focus on science policy issues involving the industrialized countries?
- Should the science envoys be assigned to cover certain regions and countries or should they be assigned to cover certain topics in many countries such as climate change, biodiversity, communicable diseases, energy conservation, etc?
- Should state think about assigning the science envoys to the Bureau of Cultural Affairs which has a related program for sending US experts abroad, including its newer science programs?
- Are there ways that these programs might be better utilized to enhance the science and foreign policy nexus?
- What other non-traditional mechanisms might be useful for increasing science capacity?

### **Topic 3: Training Diplomats in Science and Science Diplomacy at Embassies**

Ultimately, the diplomatic corps is the key interface between the Foreign Ministry and the foreign governments. Given the increase in technical issues that diplomats are facing in foreign policy, efforts are underway to increase the training of personnel in technical areas. For example, the US Foreign Service Institute (FSI) conducts short courses to develop increased understanding of issues at the science and foreign policy interface.

At post, science issues are addressed in different ways depending on the embassy structure and the nature of the science office. Many embassies use international

representatives from Ministries of Research or Science as their lead science representatives. Other countries, like the United States, depend on the Foreign Ministry to provide diplomats tasked with leading international representation. Further, some countries focus their efforts on establishing international offices representing technical ministries and agencies, whose focus is on agency-specific issues and relationships.

Framing Questions for this topic include:

- What are the experiences in developing training programs for diplomats in science and technology areas?
- Are there approaches or mechanisms that might be used to better equip diplomats to more ably deal with science issues?
- How do different structures for overseas science representation and goals for specific countries?
- Are there innovative approaches to increasing the effectiveness of science at post?
- Should the foreign service give higher priority in the foreign service selection process to BS/MS graduates?