



**BREAKING BARRIERS IN
UNITED STATES-RUSSIA
RELATIONS
THE POWER AND PROMISE
OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY**

Philip D. Stewart

**With contributions by
Vitaly Naumkin and Irina Zvyagelskaya**

Foreword by Yuri Shafranik

Preface by David Mathews

Afterword by Elie Peltz

**Sixty Years of the United States-Russia
Dartmouth Conference**

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For Yevgeny Primakov and Hal Saunders



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Acknowledgments

THIS BOOK CAME ABOUT in much the same way that the Dartmouth Conference itself functions—as a collective, Russian-American effort.

On the Russian side, I am grateful to Chairman Nikita Khrushchev for his decision to allow these meetings to begin; to Yuri Arbatov for his decades of leadership and for inspiring me to perfect my Russian language; to Yevgeny Primakov for years of active engagement in Dartmouth and his insistence, against very strong opposition, that Russia is a Western nation and must retain and build its ties with the West, irrespective of the challenges involved; to Vitaly Naumkin and Irina Zvyagelskaya for their written contributions here but especially for their continuing friendship and active, constructive roles in the Dartmouth process over the past thirty-six years. Most importantly, I am grateful to Yuri Shafranik. Without his personal commitment, vision, and energy, the critical role the Dartmouth Conference has come to play since 2014 in US-Russia relations might never have occurred. For Yuri's friendship and ongoing collaboration in enabling and sustaining the Dartmouth process under his leadership, I am deeply grateful.

Both this book and the Dartmouth Conference owe an immense debt of gratitude to Norman Cousins, who founded and led Dartmouth, and to Kettering Foundation President and CEO David Mathews. It was David who, at the 40th anniversary of the Dartmouth Conference in Moscow, invited me to return not only to my old role of Dartmouth director, but to a larger role in the Kettering Foundation upon my retirement from the Kellogg company at the end of 2001. It was also David, during one of the regular foundation meetings in 2016, who asked that I write what eventually became this book. Ultimately, the Dartmouth Conference has survived and thrived thanks to the Kettering Foundation's long-term commitment to research on how citizens can more effectively work with governments to address problems such as those in US- Russia relations.

In December, 1980, Landrum Bolling and I met with Hal Saunders in his office at the State Department to invite him to lead Dartmouth's work on the

Middle East. Over the next 36 years, Hal became my mentor and my best friend. His conceptualization of the Dartmouth process as Sustained Dialogue fundamentally reshaped my thinking about conflict transformation and about why and how the Dartmouth Conference achieves its effectiveness. Hal's constant support, his openness, and his warmth inspired and sustained me in this work. I am grateful to Elie Peltz for his excellent Afterword—the first part of this book to be completed! Thanks to John Dedrick for his constant encouragement and support and for his belief in this project. Thanks also to Matt Rojansky for reading a draft and for his friendship and encouragement.

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Finally, I am thankful to my wife, Parsla, for her patience and consistent support for my near-constant travel and endless work days.

FOREWORD

On the Russian-United States Dartmouth Conference

by Yuri Shafranik

THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, humanity has increasingly learned how to deal with natural disasters, trying to predict them in order to reduce the negative consequences. However, though natural disasters do not depend on the will of the human race, world wars, local conflicts, and crises are entirely the product of human will and action. Unfortunately, human civilization is still not able to get rid of conflict.

The history of the 20th century provides clear evidence of the imperfection of the international mechanisms created after WWII (the United Nations Security Council, international treaties on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and others) aimed at preventing wars, localizing conflicts, and resolving acute crises that spontaneously arise against the background of interstate or ethno-religious contradictions.

This situation creates a demand for the formation of approaches and mechanisms for responding to conflicts and crises, which are becoming more and more frequent in these turbulent times. These include, first of all, mediation efforts by influential third parties, as well as mechanisms for collective enforcement of peace and various formats of soft power.

The uniqueness of the Dartmouth dialogue as an instrument of public diplomacy to assist the governments of the USSR and the United States in resolving acute conflicts, perhaps, lies in the fact that it was created during the Cuban Missile Crisis, only 15 years after the establishment of the UN Security Council, and is still functioning today. And according to the leaders of both countries, it continues to be an effective tool.

Accepting an offer in 2014 from representatives of Russia's highest authorities to lead a dialogue with American colleagues in the military, economic, and humanitarian fields, I was guided by my positive experience as one of the leaders of the successful Russian-American interaction in the framework of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, as well as my continued optimism about the possibility of restoring cooperation with the most important world power, the United States.

And, of course, the burden of responsibility was “pressed” by the fact that Yevgeny Primakov and Henry Kissinger, unique in world history and universally recognized patriarchs of world politics who joined the “club of sages” of the United Nations, undertook to patronize the forced resuscitation of Dartmouth at a new dangerous stage of the crisis in Russian-American relations. But I was inspired by the fact that on the American side, the conference was cochaired by the late Harold Saunders, whose memory we cherish. Saunders was an outstanding diplomat, recognized in international political, diplomatic, expert, and academic circles, a former assistant secretary of state, and one of the architects of the Camp David Accords in the Middle East, which radically changed the mosaic of this region. I consider it an honor to meet and work with the current American cochairs, represented by well-known intellectuals of national and international diplomacy and politics: former US Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare David Mathews, and former US ambassador to Russia Jim Collins.

Many previous years of successful collaboration—now as cochair with Vitaly Naumkin, a world-famous scientist/academician, Dartmouth veteran, and highly experienced expert in the field of resolving local crises in different parts of the world—supports my optimism about the possibility of achieving the goals set by the New Dartmouth.

As one of the supporters of the renaissance of full-scale political-economic relations between Russia and the United States, which, in the 1990s, immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, became the most important stabilizing element in the context of the emergence of a new Russia, I remain sincere in my efforts to promote the restart of Russian-American relations for the benefit of our two peoples. It is necessary to preserve and deepen the existing cooperation in the fields of medicine, science, education, culture, and business and to create greater mutual understanding in the field of military-political relations. I think that the international community is also not interested in maintaining the continuing crisis in the interaction of our countries in the military and political spheres since global security and strategic stability directly depend on this. Disarmament is the antithesis of the arms race, which is fraught with the potential for uncontrolled descent to a catastrophic nuclear “point of no return.”

The Dartmouth plenaries in its history experienced a “standby” of 24 years of plenary meetings (1990-2014) associated with the then-existing full-scale

and mutually beneficial cooperation between the United States and Russia. It seemed that the “second track” had already done its job and was no longer needed since the leaders of the two states spoke directly and jointly to resolve issues. In fact, the reality was not so rosy and positive, and the emergence of new threats and misunderstandings brought the Dartmouth format of public dialogue back to life.

I appreciate the opportunity to cochair the Dartmouth Conference, and yet, in the introduction to this book, I would be happy to express my wish to achieve a long-term “standby” in the work of Dartmouth as the result of a new relationship between our countries, not devoid of competition, but more open and sustainable.

I think that this is not far off, but today’s political realities require active work from the Dartmouth Conference, including carefully considered initiatives and recommendations. It has already produced positive results in terms of establishing interaction during a number of bloody conflicts that affect the fate of tens of millions of refugees and internally displaced people. The governments of both countries highly appreciated the successful work on reanimating cooperation in countering international terrorism, as well as in such humanitarian areas as maternal and child health and oncology, cardiac surgery, and education. The mechanism launched in 2019 to mobilize religious organizations in both countries to counter pseudo-religious extremist interpretations of Islam and Christianity is particularly important. The participants in the Dartmouth Conference do not yet have any reason to reduce their activity, and I hope that in the near future we will be able to achieve even greater efficiency on the path we have chosen.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Phil Stewart once again for his constantly generated energy and tremendous efficiency that have been necessary both during the half-century of his participation in all sessions and for writing and publishing this book. I hope that it will become not only a description of the work of the Dartmouth dialogue, but also a historical document that testifies to the ability of a small group of people, united by a common goal, to achieve breakthroughs in situations where misunderstandings and contradictions between politicians, like powerful cyclones, can bring the world to the brink of disaster.



PREFACE

Dartmouth: Looking Forward

by David Mathews

PHIL STEWART, THE DARTMOUTH VETERAN who has participated in every conference for more than a half century, gives us a lucid and compelling account of what happened and what can be learned from this joint venture. And, true to the spirit of Dartmouth, he has asked his Russian colleagues to join him by adding their reflections. Somewhat like what happens on the space station when there are crews from both countries, Dartmouth doesn't have an American voice or a Russian voice, it has a blended voice all its own.

Dartmouth is not an organization with offices and a website. It is all the people who participate now and those who have participated in the past 60 years. I am pleased to share the chair of the US delegation with Ambassador James Collins, and we are fortunate to work with very able Russian cochairs, Yuri Shafranik and Vitaly Naumkin, for whom we have genuine respect, even when we don't always agree. The other participants have included leading American and Russian citizens from all major sectors of the two societies. Among them have been former diplomats and scholars with considerable knowledge about the issues being discussed.

In this piece, I want to look ahead to the future. Recently, Dartmouth has turned more to the public. Two examples will explain what I mean. In the last four years, seeing the collapse of many of the people-to-people exchanges, Dartmouth has encouraged new joint ventures around similar and common problems confronting people in both countries. Under the Dartmouth umbrella, there are now two exchanges on health challenges, a collaboration between US and Russian libraries, a new student exchange, and an emerging exchange among religious institutions of all faiths. These have not detracted from the long-term focus on strategic matters but rather complemented the discussions of critical issues, such as avoiding another arms race. And in 2019, Dartmouth addressed the public directly by issuing its first press release, which was based on a jointly prepared statement with recommendations for nuclear policy. Both of these changes responded to what an earlier US cochair—former assistant

secretary of state, the late Harold Saunders—had urged for some time, which was to build constructive relationships between “whole bodies politic,” not just governments.

Kettering is a research institution that studies, among other subjects, non-governmental, or citizen, diplomacy. In all of its research, the foundation pays particular attention to public attitudes in the United States on major policy issues, both international and domestic. The findings from these studies have become more relevant as Dartmouth addresses the public directly. One thing stands out in this research: People are deeply concerned about their safety and fear a nuclear holocaust that could destroy the world. They are aware that no rational nation would deliberately start a nuclear war, but they aren't sure all nations will act rationally.

Going forward shouldn't mean discarding what past Dartmouth Conferences have contributed. One of the major characteristics of the Dartmouth talks has been a focus on the quality of the relationship between Russia and the United States. In the conferences, the relationship is a third party, and it has to be kept as constructive as possible. Dartmouth has also made a contribution by keeping in mind how the relationship between the two countries affects the rest of the world. That awareness has been an incentive to see what can be accomplished by cooperating in areas where the interest should be mutual—the global environment, for example. Dartmouth has more than a legacy to appreciate; it has a future of possibilities to imagine.

INTRODUCTION

Meeting the Challenges of a World in Crisis: Engaging Whole Bodies Politic



INTRODUCTION

Meeting the Challenges of a World in Crisis: Engaging Whole Bodies Politic

THE DARTMOUTH CONFERENCE is a distinct and innovative form of citizen diplomacy. Across 60 years, it has developed a unique experience and a unique methodology for involving citizens in the process of finding political solutions and compromises. This is what has determined the relevance of the conference in these turbulent times. The late Harold Saunders, in the course of his more than three decades as cochair of the Dartmouth Conference Task Force on Regional Conflicts and in collaboration with Russian colleague Gennady Chufrin, identified and conceptualized the key elements that make Dartmouth effective. As Saunders conveyed the core ideas of Dartmouth so effectively, I let his own words speak throughout this introduction:

Profound change in our world—the beginning of a new era—compels us to go beyond traditional approaches. We are in the throes of a revolution of historic proportions. This revolution shifts attention from states, their governments, and institutional politics to the key role of citizens outside government as political actors.¹

The policies of nations are conducted largely through governmental institutions, but it is the human beings in those institutions that give form and shape to aspirations and policies. Conflict among states arises when the interests, policies, and actions of one or more states, as shaped and interpreted by the human beings leading them, is perceived by other states as threats to their interests, power, or policies:

Yet only human beings can transform hostility into relationships of peace. There is a human dimension to starting and ending conflict, and building peace is also a human—not just an institutional—task. Conflict is not just a clash among institutions, as it has often been depicted traditionally; nor is peace made by governments alone.²

For 60 years, the participants of the Dartmouth Conference worked in a very turbulent world. Soviet-US relations reached a dangerous point during the Cold War and required enormous efforts on both sides to make the situation

safer and more predictable. Numerous regional conflicts forced the great powers to avoid dangerous interference.

Now, despite the past years and accumulated experience, relations between the United States and Russia have deteriorated again. The world is no safer, either. It is full of various conflicts—both interstate and internal—complicated by foreign interference. Among them are conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Libya, Ukraine, the Caucasus, Africa, and Latin America. All of these conflicts are very difficult to resolve.

In this book, we argue for a more productive way to deal with conflicts. Saunders' pioneering recognition and conceptualization of the power of relationships in addressing conflict emerged from and forms the cornerstone of the Dartmouth Conference's approach.

In short, while often seen through the lens of states in conflict, the critical element is human beings in relationship, a dangerously unconstructive relationship in the case of the United States and Russia. There are many benefits to addressing conflicts through a focus on relationships. Most important, by probing the relationships that fuel conflict, human beings can change them. Citizens inside and outside of government, in dialogue together, can transform relationships in ways that open and enlarge their moral imagination. A focus on relationships enables citizens to take into account perceptions and interests that otherwise would be difficult to perceive. In so doing, citizens in and out of government generate the capacities and relationships needed to build peaceful relationships among nations and peoples:³

A stunning acceleration of interdependence now marks the interaction among whole countries, not just governments. Against a background of 350 years of seeing the nation-state as the organizing unit of international life, we now recognize that states and their governments are not the only—sometimes not even the primary—actors. Through their associations, citizens outside government play decisive roles. Whole bodies politic—governments and the civil societies citizens build—interact across open borders.⁴

Citizens from many walks of life interact across these open borders continuously, on many different levels:

This revolution throws the spotlight on the citizens—on the humans, inside and outside the institutions of politics. . . . States,

governments, and their institutions will continue to play essential roles. But today, citizens more and more recognize that the instruments of the state, by themselves, are not adequate for fully effective governance. . . . Until the human dimension is fully added to the equation of governance, the world will not have the complete array of instruments it needs to end conflict and build peace. . . .⁵

Some things only governments can do—negotiate binding agreements, make and enforce laws, provide for the common defense, fund public projects and programs. But some things only citizens outside government can do—transform conflictual human relationships, modify human behavior, develop mutual respect and understanding, change political culture. . . .⁶

It is these changes in human relationships—from the top of governments to the broad society—that hold great promise for reducing actual and potential conflict among nations and among peoples. Humankind’s greatest untapped resource is human beings themselves, the citizens of the world.⁷

Citizen diplomacy is a powerful instrument in bringing about such changes. This is the story of one such effort: the United States-Russia Dartmouth Conference. Created in 1960 by editor and writer Norman Cousins, with the explicit support of President Eisenhower and First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, the Dartmouth Conference is the oldest form of ongoing citizen diplomacy. While it started because of the fear of nuclear annihilation, it remains relevant in a time when mutual threats have both changed and remained the same, now including cyber warfare and hypersonic weapons, as well as economic warfare and climate change.

Saunders developed fundamental insights on the power and role of citizens in addressing conflict:

Citizens’ power to change conflictual relationships increases markedly when they learn to put themselves into the equation of governance by taking two conceptual leaps:

- The first is to broaden thinking about conflict and its resolution from a primary concentration of governments and institutions to focus on the human roots of conflict and on the overall relationships among groups of human beings in conflict. We need to ask how the interactions of those in conflict can be made more

constructive. This means focusing on the dynamic political processes of interaction among them. It is in that human process, not in the official negotiating room, that conflictual relationships change. Relationships themselves are a dynamic process, and it is this very dynamism that makes them central and subject to modification. State interests may not be easily modified, but how leaders interpret them, the priority placed upon particular interests, and how citizens and leaders act upon them can be modified.

- The second leap is to see politics not only as what institutions do, but also as what happens when human beings organize themselves to solve their own problems. By focusing on the role of the citizen as an actor in the politics of that process of continuous interaction, we learn how citizens can transform conflictual human relationships, modify human behavior, and change political culture.

In both cases, unleashing the human capacity inherent in relationships mines a resource not yet fully brought to bear on ending conflict and building peace.⁸

The relationships in the Dartmouth Conference process, developed through continuous joint efforts lasting, in some cases, decades, create what may usefully be called “a mind at work” in the middle of the US-Russia relationship. The citizen diplomacy of Dartmouth embodies a larger understanding of the role of citizens in world affairs, as Saunders explains:

The conceptual lenses we use to understand events determine how we act. Achieving a fresh way of understanding the world around us requires new conceptual lenses to bring a rapidly changing world into focus. . . .⁹ We must change our way of understanding how our public world works—a world that is falling behind in meeting its challenges. . . .¹⁰ We need a way of understanding politics that embraces citizens both inside and outside government since each have work that only they can do. If we see them as parts of a whole, dividing the labor, the challenge to each group is to enlarge their own capacities—and then to stretch those capacities by learning to work together to build less conflictual, more productive relationships within our societies and in our interactions with other peoples and states. . . .

Concretely, governments face more and more problems both internally and across borders that no government can deal with alone. Internally, they need new cooperation with and among their own citizens. Across borders, problems such as global warming, drug trafficking, disease, terrorism, global trade and investment, and environmental degradation require intergovernmental collaboration and the contribution of international nongovernmental groups. As a corollary, citizens outside government increasingly influence the policies of their governments and the interaction between peoples, or bodies politic. The challenge is to find more effective and fairer ways of conducting relationships within and between bodies politic. The challenge is to develop, enrich, and sustain the relationships needed to deal with problems that no one group, government, or country can deal with alone and to overcome differences—often violently expressed—that would undercut their efforts. . . .¹¹

The only form of politics that will meet the challenges we face is one that engages whole human beings in all their complexities in whole societies and polities. Too often over the past two or more centuries we have thought of human beings only in terms of part of who they are. First, we separated the rational from the emotional or intuitive, glorifying the former. Then we studied them as voters, consumers, managers, welfare recipients, workers, politicians jousting for power, or members of one ethnic group or religious persuasion. . . .¹²

Citizens are whole persons with multifaceted identities and interests. They have within them the capacity to commit the noblest acts and the most horrible atrocities—sometimes rational and calculating, sometimes farseeing and compassionate, sometimes self-centered, narrow-minded, irrational, and bestial. They pursue interests integrating the material and the spiritual. We must focus on the politics of these whole human beings in and out of government interacting to meet life-and-death challenges to the whole body politic. . . .¹³

Neither government nor civil society is strong in its own right because citizens in and out of government are most often not conducting relationships in productive ways. They wrestle over competing interests rather than building relationships to meet their challenges. Relationships involve whole human beings with multiple and even conflicting interests, who nevertheless are willing to seek and find bases from which to work together for the public good. . . .¹⁴

Kettering's approach to its multinational work, one prominent example of which is the Dartmouth Conference, is grounded in a new understanding of politics: the relationship paradigm. Saunders expressed this paradigm as follows:

Politics is a cumulative, multilevel, and open-ended process of continuous interaction over time, engaging significant clusters of citizens in and out of government and the relationships they form to solve public problems in whole bodies politic across permeable borders, either within or between communities or countries. This focus on a multilevel process of continuous interaction among citizens contrasts to the traditional focus on a linear sequence of actions and reactions among institutions, as in a chess game. Continuing interactions are the essence of that process. What is important is the interplay among entities (citizens, governments, institutions, groups)—not just the action by one or another.¹⁵

To capture this process of continuous interaction, Saunders uses the human word "relationship," which we will see in a later chapter is a carefully defined concept with five components. It is a diagnostic tool because it enables practitioners to organize the elements of complex interactions for analysis. It is an operational tool because practitioners can get inside each component of a relationship to change it:

The paradigm and concept of relationship bring human beings—citizens outside as well as inside government and related institutions—into the study and practice of political life. This does not denigrate the importance of states and governments. Government remains one of the most important instruments that citizens can build and use in solving their problems. . . . By itself, however, government is not enough.¹⁶

Kettering's joint efforts with Russia constitute a particular form of exchange among Russian and US participants. As citizens, they tend not to "see like a state."¹⁷ They strive to bring their powers of imagination to what *should be done* respecting issues that separate their governments. They then develop scenarios or action plans that governments could utilize to break impasses or that may reshape official and citizen attitudes in each country. Named after the location of its first meeting in 1960, the Dartmouth Conference is a sustained citizen

dialogue that has held more than 148 sessions. This book is not a history of the Dartmouth Conference; rather, it is an analysis of this form of citizen diplomacy.

CHAPTER ONE

The Dartmouth Conference as Citizen Diplomacy: Conceptual Foundations



CHAPTER ONE

The Dartmouth Conference as Citizen Diplomacy: Conceptual Foundations

JUST AS WAR IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LEAVE TO GENERALS, international relations are far too crucial to leave to diplomats alone. That is why citizen diplomacy is so vital. The effort to understand the nature and role of citizen diplomacy has been a hallmark of Kettering Foundation research since 1970.

Citizen diplomacy occurs when citizens from different states engage in serious discourse together to shape their own and the other people's ideas, understandings, aspirations, behavior, and, ultimately, relationships.

The Kettering Foundation's approach to citizen diplomacy is distinguished from virtually every other such effort. Kettering's research seeks insights into how citizens influence the relationships between their peoples and countries, particularly when those relationships are in conflict. Kettering recognizes that the wider the scope and the more productive the relationships across lines of deep difference among states, the greater the chances of reducing the likelihood of conflict. How that happens and what conditions contribute toward greater or lesser effectiveness is the subject of this book.

The study of informal diplomatic relationships with Russia provides the opportunity to understand how citizens from the United States and Russia, through the power generated by their relationships, seek some level of influence over issues each side perceives as vitally important. The challenges involved mean that citizen efforts are likely to fail more often than succeed, yet the most useful insights often emerge from such failures. Such insights can then be applied to ongoing dialogues, improving the prospects that citizens in and out of government will make sound collective decisions and interact in ways that will bring about the changes they seek.

The Kettering Foundation brings no political agenda to its remarkable continuity of research on citizen diplomacy other than a recognition that the welfare and security of the United States and the world is heavily dependent upon the quality of the relationships we have with other nations, particularly Russia and China.¹ Because relations among states with long histories of animosity

and suspicion are unpredictable and complex, only by persistent, continuous engagement can we hope to develop, test, refine, and apply useful insights. This is why Kettering has for decades assumed responsibility for the United States' side of the 60-year-old Russia-United States Dartmouth Conference.

For meaningful dialogue to occur, joint ownership in all senses, from financing to agenda and participants, is critical. The stronger this sense of joint ownership, the greater the effectiveness of the process because psychologically and politically it is a manifestation of the equality of the sides. Neither side is doing something *for, to, or on* the other; each works *with* the other. The process is sustained because each finds it valuable. Each side recognizes that there are problems neither can adequately address alone, but rather only together, irrespective of their differences. In the nuclear age, security is one of these. As early as 1969, at Dartmouth V, just prior to the beginning of the first Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), Soviet academician George Kistiakowsky observed:

Given the present state of military armaments, the concept of military superiority has no meaning. You can kill an individual and destroy his house only once. But what is important *is* the concept of "adequacy." *Responsible* people in both countries know that "superiority" is an impracticable catchword.²

The Kettering Foundation's approach to all its work begins with citizens and a particular understanding of citizens' role in building productive relationships among nations and in democratic politics. In the traditional view, citizens have important, yet limited, roles in democratic politics. Most central is voting for those who, as their representatives, will make political choices on their behalf. This is the essence of representative government, or a republican political system. Citizens may also write letters, emails, or tweets to their local and national representatives and join interest groups or protest movements. In this perspective, making individual decisions about for whom to vote is about as close as citizens come, or should come, to making political choices. For much of the 20th century, this perspective provided a more or less accurate picture of how citizens actually behaved in American politics.

However, this limited concept of citizens' role has had serious consequences for the most important institutions of our democracy. This is evident in declining public confidence in the federal institution with which citizens should have the most direct links, over which their votes should have the greatest influence: