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Education and Strategy

Despite military attention to the importance of good training, despite the ROTC and other schemes of military and educational cooperation, despite growing national reliance on persons educated in science, language, management, and other specialized fields of knowledge; despite all these, the planning of the nation's educational activities and the planning of its national policies have gone their separate ways with only occasional points of contact.

Even now, although there is widespread attention to both educational needs and national policy, the two are frequently thought of separately, and when they are thought of together there is a tendency to confuse strategy with tactics. This confusion leads to overemphasis on short-term objectives and to the consideration of individual educational changes rather than an over-all program.

Yet the signs of more thoughtful planning are increasing, and a new partnership may be developing, one in which educational policies will become an integral part of national strategy. One sign is the widespread attention given to Paul Woodring's suggestions for a thorough replanning of elementary, secondary, and collegiate education [*A Fourth of a Nation* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1957) and *Life* (2 Sept. 1957)]. Another is the sincere search by some Congressmen for basic educational issues and problems. That the cultural, economic, and scientific development of the future is being determined by what we do in the schools today has been said in many ways by many people.

Internationally, also, the relations between policy and education are gaining attention. In the current issue of *Foreign Affairs,* Lloyd V. Berkner argues that because military power has become absolute—one nation can annihilate another, or be annihilated—it has become of reduced effectiveness in international relationships and the winning of allies. Similarly, wealth is of lessened power in this regard. Intellectual preeminence, Berkner continues, is the new force that is replacing military strength and wealth. The implications for education and research, for cooperation with and technical aid to other nations, and for the prompt release of new scientific information are obvious. A negative example cited by Berkner is the failure of the United States to capitalize on the tremendous potentialities of opening the door to all peoples to come and learn and to cooperate in the development of peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

The problem of using education as a maximally constructive force in national and international policy (not just military policy), while at the same time preserving traditional values, poses an exciting challenge to political and educational statesmanship. Perennial problems for which we have yet to develop satisfactory policies are the questions of how to finance a vastly improved educational program and how to solve the nation-old riddle of federal versus state responsibility. Perhaps more important is to agree on a set of values and objectives that will give the whole educational venture the status it must have if it is to serve effectively in this larger role and that will accommodate our different but not necessarily conflicting values of aiding the handicapped, serving the average, and developing the superior student, each optimally in terms of his own capacities and potentialities.

A concerted attempt to solve these problems is an altogether seemly enterprise. In an intellectual race we can constructively compete with any other nation and can help to erect the highest kind of model for the aspiring eyes of less privileged nations. The goal is the positive one of developing to the fullest the intellectual resources of mankind.—D.W.