



20th Anniversary Conversations

Jana L. Telfer

10 YEARS AGO: Master of Arts in International Relations candidate at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.

NOW: Associate Director for Communication Science at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

JPIA PAPER: “Apocalypse Cow: Policy-Making in Conditions of Uncertainty-Lessons from the BSE Epidemic in the United Kingdom,” Vol. 10, Spring 1999.

You probably had one of the best titles of all JPIA papers; you must think humor has a place in academia?

I firmly believe no one wants to read dry academic writing. A bit of humor may be able to draw people in so that they begin to engage with new subject matter.

10 years later, what is the legacy of the “Apocalypse Cow?” Are we better at managing epidemics?

Much has been learned from the “mad cow” outbreak in the United Kingdom to inform emergency response as well as risk communication in both scholarship and practice. For communicators, this event is a touchstone in communication research. For agencies responding to outbreaks and governments responding to outrage, the lessons learned from this event continue to shape emergency responses worldwide including institutionalizing such practices as early, regular communication with the public (e.g., New York City’s response to the anthrax attacks of 2001); intra-agency cooperation and information sharing (e.g., international response to sequencing the SARS genome); direct outreach to affected populations with pertinent information to help them protect their health (e.g., Panama’s response to an outbreak of unknown etiology in 2006).



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Jennifer Windsor

20 YEARS AGO: Master in Public Affairs (MPA) candidate at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School.

NOW: Executive Director, Freedom House, Washington, D.C.

JPIA PAPER: "A Crisis in Theory: Why Experts Failed to Predict the 'Global Democratic Revolution,'" Vol. 1, Spring 1990.

Jennifer Windsor-Freedom Fighter

Jennifer Windsor, executive director of the NGO Freedom House, knew back in graduate school what she wanted to do with her life. "I wanted to become an expert—although I now realize you can never become an expert- at what you can do from the outside to promote democracy and human rights," she said. "It's what I'm fascinated by and I've been lucky enough to be able to make a living at the same time." Freedom House publishes widely-read annual surveys categorizing countries according to the level of freedom afforded to their citizens. Twenty years ago, Windsor was a graduate student in International Relations at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School. She wrote the article "A Crisis in Theory: Why Experts Failed to Predict the 'Global Democratic Revolution'" for the first issue of the *Journal of Public and International Affairs*.

Windsor spoke with JPIA's Marie Gilot about her work, past and present.

M.G. - *In your paper you pointed out that democracy can sprout up following the political calculations of an authoritarian ruler who sees the writing on the wall, and following encouragements – some might say pressures- from the international community. This can happen even where*

economic, social and cultural conditions seem inhospitable. But you also asked whether transitional democracies would be lasting without propitious economic and socio-cultural conditions. Twenty years later, have you answered that question?

Jennifer Windsor - I think we are still answering that question. The easy platitudes that we used before, that poor democracies can't survive except for India, have been proven wrong. But democratic societies as well as other societies, continue to grapple with inequalities and the marginalization of indigenous populations. The whole idea behind a democratic system is to find a way to make people feel that they are connected, that they have a voice, and that they have a fair shake. It is not a strong democracy if the system can't deliver those principles, even if it can deliver particular economic and social outcomes.

M.G. – *Freedom House releases several indices, such as Freedom in the World and Freedom of the Press, gauging the level of freedom in various countries. Do you see any evidence that they have a real-world impact?*

Jennifer Windsor - I think our indices have an impact to the extent they are utilized by either the international community or, more importantly, by people advocating for change inside various countries. They can go to their own government officials and say, "Listen, we need to change this law and Freedom House agrees." That puts more pressure on the government. And since eligibility for U.S. foreign assistance via the Millennium Challenge Account is now partly determined by performance on Freedom House political rights and civil liberties indicators, our stated concerns about restrictions of freedom of association, of expression, or corruption within a society now may affect millions of dollars in assistance to these countries. I think it's a little early to say there's been widespread change since the MCA was set up in 2004 but I think there have been governments that decided not to implement certain laws.

M.G. - *Freedom House reported that freedom retreated in much of the world in 2008, the third year of global decline in your annual survey. Sub-Saharan Africa and the former Soviet Union saw the most reversals, while South Asia showed significant improvement. What is going on?*

Jennifer Windsor - In the 1990s, change was happening so fast that countries were changing categories each year from "free" to "partly free" or "not free" to "partly free." The ups and downs are a lot less dramatic now. We are still seeing a general movement forward but there is certainly

a slowdown in positive democratic momentum in a lot of countries and there have been some reversals in some key places. The downward spiral of Russia, for example, has had an incredible negative impact on other countries in the region. The political elite always maintained control of the system, despite democratic progress, and so were able to stunt the growth of a real democratic system and now we see a reversal. Africa remains one of the most volatile regions. We were disappointed to see declines in Senegal, one of the most successful countries on the continent. Mauritania also was a big hope but if you can't get the military under the control of the civilian authority everything is going to be at risk. As far as South Asia, it's still pretty rocky.

Beyond any region, I think the bigger story is that there has been an acceptance by the international community of the gradual rollback of freedom of association and freedom of expression. This is especially true in traditional print media. It appeared that it would be different with the internet but authoritarian governments have learned about the power of the internet and are now devoting more resources to figuring out how to stop people from using it.

There's also been substantial global learning by governments. Governments are learning from one another and using much more sophisticated ways of repression. After the Orange Revolution, these governments shared with one another what they didn't want to happen in their countries. Freedom House translated Chinese documents, Uzbek documents, Zimbabwean documents, and now Ethiopian documents. They all cite the "color revolutions" as something they won't allow to happen. The biggest thing they want to prevent is international civil society having connections to and providing support for the groups within their own countries. I think it's going to be a lot harder to help from the outside. Because of the Bush administration, I think governments have kind of distanced themselves from pressing for democracy and human rights. Instead, I see a new push for sovereignty, especially in the developing world and Russia, where leaders are using old arguments about nation states and the inviolability of a nation's borders. These arguments are coming back and people are giving them new credibility.

M.G. - *In your paper, you took on the bleak predictions of political scientist Samuel Huntington that "the limits of democratic development in the world may well have been reached." Huntington died on Christmas*

Eve 2008. What do you think about his intellectual legacy?

Jennifer Windsor - I think Samuel Huntington was one of the smartest political scientists in history. He has been caricaturized over the years and I admit that I did it too. I remember when I was writing the paper and trying to find something that would allow me to simplify what he was saying in order to knock his argument down. And then I'd realize in the next sentence that he'd already modified what he had said in the sentence before. Not that he was always right, but I think he deserves to be read again in a non-partisan, non-polarized way. I would see him from time to time because he was on Freedom House's board. Here was this guy whose every word I had studied and he was quite socially awkward and shy, and quite committed to finding out the truth. He didn't have an agenda.

M.G. - *Freedom House defines freedom as "the opportunity to act spontaneously" outside the control of the government and other forces. This is a wonderful definition. Do you have a personal definition of freedom?*

Jennifer Windsor - I think that's a pretty good definition. What I like about Freedom in the World and our other surveys is that they focus on how the individual experiences freedom. It moves beyond this trap that democracy is just about elections. It gets you thinking about the ultimate outcome you want for individuals.



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Robert Orr

20 YEARS AGO: Ph.D. Candidate in International Relations at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School.

NOW: Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Planning, United Nations, New York.

JPIA PAPERS: "The Democracy for Which They Died: The Chinese Popular Movement of 1989," Vol. 1, Spring 1990; "American Democratization Policy and Development Assistance to Africa," Vol. 3, Spring 1992.

Robert Orr-Global Thinker

Twenty years ago, Robert Orr, then a PhD candidate in International Relations at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School, participated in the birth of the Journal of Public and International Affairs (JPIA). "The Journal, when we created it, was such an experiment," he said. "We were just students who thought, we can't publish in other journals; let's just create our own. There was a question whether we would survive our first year." Back then, Orr contributed two articles to JPIA: "The Democracy for Which They Died: The Chinese Popular Movement of 1989" and "American Democratization Policy and Development Assistance to Africa". He is now the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Planning at the United Nations, a position that makes him a direct advisor to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Orr spoke with JPIA's Marie Gilot and Marina Henke about his work, past and present.

M.G. - *In your first JPIA article, on the 1989 China movement, you predicted that pro-democracy protesters would once again "find their way to the streets." Are you surprised that it hasn't happened?*

Robert Orr - I'm not surprised, in retrospect. I think the debate at the time was, does the Soviet/Russian model of transition (to democracy) work better, or does the Chinese (model). I think we've now seen an answer to that question. Massive economic change does lead to social change and does change the environment in which politics operate. They are not totally separate but both are fundamental in generating change. If you go to China today, it's a different country than it was 20 years ago. I think if you focus narrowly on public discontent in China like in other large countries you'll find plenty of reasons to be unhappy but the overall trajectory of the country is so strong, so positive.

M.H. - *In your second article on democratization efforts by the United States in Africa, you noted a shift since the end of the Cold War from democratization as a security issue to democratization as an economic issue. These days, it seems that democratization became a security issue once again. Do you think this approach strengthens the democratization process?*

Robert Orr - I think there are cycles in understanding of and approaches to democratization. The biggest problem is the tendency to look for magic bullets. If you change behavior toward human rights, that will lead to democratization; if you improve socio-economic levels, that will somehow magically give you democratization. I think these views don't work. Democracy is comprised of many elements and it takes a broad approach over a long period of time to affect these variables. Development assistance is a small piece of the equation today, even smaller than it was 20 years ago, but it is crucial. It is one of the few tools you have to try to catalyze change. The Bush administration attempted it with the Millennium Challenge Accounts. It was positive in some regards, in terms of the attention to governance issues and the link between governance and the effectiveness of aid. But the conditional approach that it emphasized proved to limit development assistance in a range of countries.

The challenge of the Obama administration will be to make sure that governance is factored in but that the kind of conditionality, the kind of limitation, of the Millennium Challenge Accounts is overcome. It's not just a question of getting more money into it, it's a question of getting more leverage over all of these areas - socio-economic, political, governance. It's kind of a common sense conclusion but it's a common sense conclusion that governments all over the world regularly ignore.

M.G. - *Your job is in policy planning. What is your strategy for the U.N. in the next few years?*

Robert Orr - The main thing that we are doing differently than in prior years, prior decades, is actively looking at what the comparative advantages of the UN

are over all other institutions, bilateral, multilateral, non-governmental. What can we do that no one else can do? One of the principal conclusions that we've come to is that global public goods can only be delivered through the UN – most global public goods. On climate change for instance, you are not going to get an answer outside the walls of the UN. Those issues affect everybody, require everybody for a solution, and are contagious across borders. Likewise, issues of global health. These are not health issues anymore. They are security issues; they are development issues, issues that affect fundamental global stability. We dodged the bullet on SARS and avian flu so far but the number of strains that could come and truly put the world on its back, economically, socially, politically, are all out there. Solutions to global health issues cannot come out of a national context. We need to pull all the pieces together, not just the health ministers but the leaders. We are trying to catalyze politically-led work on global change, not just technically-led change.

Other global issues that are clearly on the forefront include global financial stability, something people took for granted. The UN may not be the answer to global financial stability, but the UN is the provider of almost first resort in many parts of the world. So we see the consequences. If you don't focus on the broader economic crisis and the consequences, you will have a whole secondary crisis that will swamp your first crisis. A fourth global issue is around terrorism. Traditionally, terrorism is handled by national governments, or usually one secret branch within a national government. Yet terrorism is global and the solutions are only going to be found if it's worked on at all levels. We have 192 countries endorse a very robust strategy on counterterrorism, passed two years ago, and now we are in an implementation phase. There are real options for multilateral counterterrorism.

The last global public good I want to mention is non-proliferation and disarmament. The existential threat of nuclear arms and the ever growing threat of biological agents being used are something that as a global community we really have to go at hard to find solutions. Global public goods will define what our world looks like in 20 years much more so than the day-to-day issues that we spend most of our political time on.

M.H. - *Can these issues be tackled without UN reform?*

Robert Orr - Yes. We need constant reform at the UN but I don't accept the dichotomy that somehow you can only do these things if you reform the UN first. You can't make one conditional on the other. The UN is not a perfect instrument

but at the same time, the UN is the universal instrument that the world has to address these crises. And it functions, it functions remarkably well given all the constraints that we work under.

M.H. - *What needs to happen for reforms to take place?*

Robert Orr - We need balance between power and principle. When it was founded, the Security Council represented a balance between power and principle. The powerful would be given certain prerogatives but everyone would be given a say in the General Assembly. We see today the same need for balance and principle, not only on security affairs but economic affairs. Who is meeting on the world economy? It used to be the G7, then the G8, now the G20. But the effects will affect everybody. You need to have a few intermediaries who bring everybody to the table. I think that's our biggest challenge.

M.G.- *If you were a Ph.D. student today, what would you be researching?*

Robert Orr – Don't take me back; I can't do another dissertation (laugh). I think I would gravitate toward the issue I just described to you, the global goods issue, because it is so complex and requires a new way of thinking about how to organize the world. The classic collective action problems will always be with us but we don't yet have the kind of solution that we need in the time frame that we need. If I was a Ph.D. student, I would try to solve at least some piece of the puzzle.

(The interview was edited for space.)



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David McCormick

15 YEARS AGO: Master of Public Affairs candidate at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School.

NOW: Under Secretary for International Affairs, U.S. Department of the Treasury.

JPIA PAPER: "A Perilous Precedent: The U.S. Military and the War on Drugs," Vol. 5, Spring 1994.

These days, few people regard the War on Drugs as a successful policy and yet, employing the military in non-traditional assignments (for instance, in support of immigration agents along the US-Mexico border) continues. Does it mean that the "perilous precedent" is sticking?

Our military currently faces unprecedented stress with combat operations underway in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This makes the concern over U.S. military forces being drawn into non-traditional missions all the more acute.



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Laurel Neme

20 YEARS AGO: Ph.D. candidate at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School.

NOW: Natural resource management consultant; author of *Animal Investigators: How the World's First Wildlife Forensic Lab is Catching Poachers, Solving Crimes and Saving Endangered Species*, (Scribner; April 2009).

JPIA PAPER: "The Political Economy of Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon," Vol. 1, Spring 1990.

How was your experience with JPIA?

Doing that research paper really sparked an interest that has stayed with me. I looked at who the stakeholders are, who wins and who loses –the (Amazon) Indians lost.

Your field has become very prominent. Do you find this encouraging?

In many ways, the perception now is that it's all taken care of but the U.S. is still the number one consumer of ivory, for instance. There has been a shift from opportunistic poaching to outright purchase orders. Even well-intentioned buyers who wanted to protect cultural artifacts created a market for endangered species. Wildlife trafficking is among the most lucrative criminal trades in the world, worth around \$20 billion annually and ranking just behind drugs and human trafficking. I suspect it's just going to increase.



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Jerome Socolovsky

10 YEARS AGO: Master of Public Administration candidate at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

NOW: Freelance correspondent for National Public Radio and other media outlets.

JPIA PAPER: "A Policymaker's Guide to Apocalyptic Belief," Vol. 10, Spring 1999.

In your paper, you recommended that outsiders engage with cult members in respectful discussion over the interpretation of their sacred texts. This approach has been undertaken recently to reform Muslim terrorists. Do you believe fanatic minds can be changed by reason?

The purpose of my paper was to urge policymakers to take cult members seriously with the realization that they may be prepared to carry out extreme violence to bring about the apocalyptic end they believe in so fervently. At the time of writing, I felt it was common to ridicule such people as those who perished in the Waco tragedy, and attach little significance to their beliefs. I did not mean to suggest that they would respond to reason, or even that there should necessarily be a respectful discussion. In the years since I wrote this, I've dealt with the threat posed by Islamist extremists in my reporting, and I would offer more or less the same prescription. In some cases it may be able to change a fanatic's mind through reason. But it would be more useful to be able to analyze that person's beliefs for apocalyptic messages, so as to gauge how close they are to committing acts of mass violence, especially if you are a public official who may be responsible for not having taken action to stop it.

If you were a student now, would you still research fringe religions?

If I was a student now, I would definitely still be interested in the nexus between religion and politics, from the extreme case of the apocalyptic cult to the more mainstream established faiths.