



The Mission of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies

by Jeffrey R. Holland, BYU's president

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[brackets indicate changes since this talk was given]

On 19 October 1982, I announced that the center for international and area studies would be given a significantly expanded role on our campus and off. I explained that it would be “a central office which will have full responsibility for coordinating all of the multifaceted involvements of the university in international affairs.”

In September of this year that center was officially designated the “David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies” in recognition of Elder Kennedy’s distinguished global

contributions in finance, trade, diplomacy, government service, home and family life, and in the expansion of the Church.

We are here this afternoon to mark the official inauguration of this important center at Brigham Young University and to honor the man whose name it bears. I would like to speak of the mission of the center, to explain its purposes, and to say something of the hopes and dreams I have for it.

The David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies has been established to strengthen and improve our many contacts with governments, with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and with our own varied academic programs in international affairs. Its mission also includes a primary concern for people-to-people activities. There is a great need in our world for the examination and understanding of cultures and societies and languages and peoples other than one's own, including the religious, moral, and aesthetic aspects of life. We need in these troubled times, on a smaller and smaller globe, to understand others in their terms, as they are, as well as to improve our efforts to bring representatives of different cultures together in an exchange of experiences and ideas so that such understanding can move from individuals to nations.

To meet these goals, the David M. Kennedy Center will foster faculty and student exchange, several kinds of symposia, scholar/diplomat lectures and discussions, research projects both on campus and overseas, and a variety of scholarly publications. In short, the center will provide an open and dignified forum for cross-cultural learning, where what we hope will be some of the world's best minds and hearts can express themselves. Let me mention some of these principal tasks we will now address even more vigorously.

Citizenship and Careers. A strong central purpose of the center will be to prepare students for responsible citizenship and constructive careers in areas of their personal interest. BYU will be a special place for such study, where students can respond to the divine admonition to learn "things which have been, . . . things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and perplexities of the nations . . . and a knowledge also of countries and kingdoms" (Doctrine and Covenants 88:79). It must always be a university where students can "become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues and people" (Doctrine and Covenants 90:15).

An example of student training for such citizenship is the student-oriented Asian [now Intercultural] Outreach program based in the center. It has prepared teaching aids and learning resources for public school teachers at both the elementary and the high school levels and this past year sponsored a well-attended conference on campus

which focused on the needs of newly-arrived refugees from southeast Asia as they adjust to school life in the United States.

The center will provide other specialized academic offerings and professional training within multidisciplinary courses of study. Majors will be prepared with a generous emphasis on a student's individual interests such as business, communications, economics, religion, history, and social work within an international framework. The student will be encouraged to become proficient in foreign languages and to participate in international internships. In doing so, we hope to address the declared national need noted by the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies:

We are profoundly alarmed by what we have found: a serious deterioration in this country's language and research capacity, at a time when an increasingly hazardous international military, political, and economic environment is making unprecedented demands on America's resources, intellectual capacity, and public sensitivity. . . . At a time when the resurgence of forces of nationalism and of ethnic and linguistic consciousness so directly affect global realities, the United States requires far more reliable capacities to communicate with its allies, analyze the behavior of potential adversaries, and earn the trust and the sympathies of the uncommitted. Yet there is a widening gap between these needs and the American competence to understand and deal successfully with other peoples in a world of flux.

Added to traditional classes in international politics, there have been significant developments in the study of international economics, comparative world religions, and world history on campus in recent years. The David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies anticipates having joint professional degrees in cooperation with, for example, the School of Management and the J. Reuben Clark Law School.

The David M. Kennedy Center is charged with providing a sound university education for all its students, including the several hundred undergraduate students now enrolled in its seven [six] academic programs—International Relations, American Studies [now in Humanities], Asian Studies, Canadian Studies [minor only], European Studies, Latin American Studies, and [Ancient] Near Eastern Studies, [Middle East Studies/Arabic has been added]. The center is responsible for the academic content of study abroad programs, with residential centers in London, Vienna, and Jerusalem [administered independently]. Plans are under way to develop a stronger graduate offering, emphasizing these international and area studies. In addition to these, the center has now begun to develop an important international internship program, through which forty-seven students have been placed in thirteen countries during the last eighteen months, and thirty-nine more are scheduled to be placed in 1984 [currently over one thousand annually].

The center has already established itself nationally as a quality publisher of briefing pamphlets and materials for use by those fostering international understanding. It provides the university community with *CultureGrams* [licensed to Proquest] that are used in all of BYU's major international operations, including Study Abroad [International Study Programs], Travel Study, and our music and dance performance groups. Over 150,000 *CultureGrams* were made available upon request last year to educational institutions, international banks and businesses, libraries, and government and military operations throughout the United States. Also, the center is developing a specialized resource library which will have a cultural and communications emphasis as one of its distinguishing characteristics and will be accessible for university use after the David M. Kennedy Center occupies its new facilities within the Herald R. Clark Building on campus.

Research and Publications. Primarily because of the early generous support of Glenn and Olive Nielson, the David M. Kennedy family, Mr. C. F. Koo and associates of the Republic of China, and others who have committed or already given funds totaling almost two million dollars (of our four-million-dollar endowment goal), the Kennedy Center for International Studies will now be able to develop a quality program of research and scholarly monographs and publications. This will be a major ingredient in the establishment of the center, for if it is to gain recognition and influence in the world at large, it must foster research. We must study the major issues obstructing peace, prosperity, and understanding in the world. We must also consider subjects which can be of benefit to the Church and the blessings it wishes to extend to all mankind. We will consider topics which other nonreligious institutions of higher learning may choose not to investigate, but which, from our LDS perspective, are worthy and important. It will be our view that nothing will be as significant in drawing the positive attention and respect of fairminded peoples of the world to the center, the university, and the Church as solid publications on serious issues that have been professionally researched and wisely interpreted. We will proceed from the position that the gospel gives us a world view by which to evaluate and interpret our experience and research, and we will not hesitate to apply that insight in our work, wherever it can cast a special light.

It is in connection with these expanding developments in international research and publications that I am pleased to inform you we have recently organized a Kennedy Center Research Committee, the members of which have been selected and appointed from various departments of the university under the leadership of Provost and Academic Vice President Jae R. Ballif. A coordinator of research for the center has been named, and he will serve as chairman of the committee. This group, in consultation with the advisory deans of the center and with the endorsement of the Executive Committee of the center, is now prepared to announce the recipients of the first three research proposal grants by the Kennedy Center, as follows:

1. An in-depth analysis of the laws of six countries as they bear on religious institutions and religious freedom. Project director is W. Cole Durham, and his associates are Robert E. Riggs, Larry C. Farmer, and Stephen G. Wood, all are J. Reuben Clark Law School faculty.
2. A second project will address "Poverty and Development: Industrialization in Brazil, South Korea, and Taiwan." A contract has already been signed for the publication of the finished manuscript. Project director is W. Ladd Hollist.
3. We will hold a conference and produce publications on conflicting pressures for economic and sociocultural development in multiethnic states. Project director is Dennis L. Thompson, chairman of the Political Science Department.

In addition to these scholarly projects, I am happy to acknowledge that funds have been designated for the collection and cataloging of the David M. Kennedy papers and the writing and publication of the Kennedy biography. This will be the first volume in a Kennedy Center monograph series. I am delighted to note that Brother Kennedy has chosen Dr. Martin B. Hickman, a former United States foreign service officer and presently the dean of the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences, to author his biography.

Further announcements regarding Kennedy Center research grants and how members of the faculty may submit proposals will be forthcoming in the near future.

Service. As we consider the fundamental functions and goals of the David M. Kennedy Center, none should be more important than the commitment, not only to study, but also to serve. In the Kennedy Center I hope we will teach the fundamental importance of service and that we will promote the cause of peace and friendship through very personal effort. As we enlarge our circle of understanding, we will enlarge our circle of concern. We will strive to promote prosperity and dignity and to combat poverty and degradation wherever they may be found—monumental as that task is. Perhaps above all else, we will proceed on the conviction that gospel values and gospel ideals are the surest foundation upon which to build genuine understanding and establish permanent peace among the peoples of the earth.

This perspective and these principles are obviously shared by Brother Kennedy, and we are pleased to announce on this inaugural occasion the establishment of the David M. Kennedy International Service Award, which will be given annually to a person who has manifested extraordinary humanitarian service to his fellow man in an international setting, and who has also contributed in a nonecclesiastical way to the expansion of gospel principles in an international setting. Upon the recommendation of the leaders of the Kennedy Center and with the approval of the university administration, I am pleased to announce that Alexander B. Morrison, assistant deputy minister of health of the government of Canada, who has spent many years of service

in helping eradicate poverty, malnutrition, and sickness among peoples in Third World countries, will be the first recipient of this significant award. Brother Morrison will formally receive this award at a dinner in his honor early next year.

Building on Our Strength. When I first arrived on campus as a new president three and one-half years ago, I declared publicly that we couldn't do everything here, that which we chose to do we intended to do superbly well. Because of natural strength and unique need, we have chosen to make international activity and expertise one of our pinnacles of excellence. Perhaps no other university in the world has on its campus the undergraduate, graduate, and faculty experience in the international arena that BYU has. In the development of the David M. Kennedy Center, it is imperative that we capitalize on the now tens of thousands who do now, and will yet, spend long periods engaged in direct interaction with people in all accessible nations of the world through the far-flung missionary program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We would miss one of the unique and most readily available natural strengths of this campus if we did not build upon this breadth of experience, upon the foundation of genuine love for peoples with whom both students and faculty have lived, and labored, and spoken in their language. We must now build a university superstructure in which we better understand the history, culture, and institutions of these people and by which BYU will move into the forefront of the world as an informed facilitator of international understanding, communications, and peace.

No Events