

Richard T. Arndt's introduction to cultural diplomacy began as a Fulbright Student in the first cohort to go to France in 1949. At the University of Dijon, he studied French culture and Franco-American literary relations. After earning his PhD in French literature and teaching at Columbia University, he answered JF Kennedy's call and began a career in the US State Department as a Foreign Service Officer. During his 25-years with the United States Information Agency (USIA), Dick served in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Iran, Italy and France. As Cultural Affairs Officer / Attaché, his work involved interfacing with and connecting leaders, intellectuals and artists from the U.S. and abroad, as well as chairing the local Fulbright committee.



After retiring in 1985, Dick returned to teaching, at the University of Virginia and George Washington University in Washington, DC, and worked for cultural and educational diplomacy with several organizations. For over twenty years, he was deeply engaged with Americans for UNESCO and fought for US re-entry into the organization. As of 1989, Dick became involved with the Fulbright Association, which represents US Fulbright alumni, serving as president and in a range of other roles. He coedited and contributed three articles to the Association's second publication, *The Fulbright Difference: 1948 – 1992* (1993), which critically explores the international exchange experience, its role as a tool for diplomacy and its impact on public policy.

Dick Arndt with Sky at 2023 Fulbright Dinner

Dick's public lectures and published articles addressed a wide range of related topics, including: "Public Diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy: Why No End to the USIA Debate?" (*Bulletin of International Interchange*, 1988); "Revolutionary Projections: Patterns of French and American Cultural Diplomacy," (*Le Discours sur les Révolutions*, Vol. II, 1991); and "Rebuilding America's Cultural Diplomacy" (*Foreign Service Journal*, 2006). In 2005, he published his major contribution to the field, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*. This foundational tome puts cultural diplomacy center-stage, underscoring its value in progressive US foreign policy. He details the history of cultural diplomacy as an American institution and diplomatic tool from its start in World War I to its state in the 1990s, and captures those who have represented American education and culture to the rest of the world. Yet despite its measured importance and impact, there has been a diminishment of cultural diplomacy programs in contemporary foreign policy and politics. Arndt argues for the resurgence of cultural diplomacy programs for furthering understanding among nations.

Francesco Bandarin, the former Managing Director of UNESCO, writes that he is using *The First Resort of Kings* in his diplomacy courses at Sciences Po (the Paris Institute of Political Studies).

Dr. Richard Arndt's comprehensive and elegantly-phrased book is a "must read" for all who are interested in cultural diplomacy—particularly from a U.S. perspective. With his rich historical research, attention to detail, and focus on impact, Dr. Arndt has made a foundational contribution to our field that is immensely valuable to practitioners and scholars alike.

- Sherry Mueller
Distinguished Practitioner in Residence, American University

See [HERE](#) for more information on Dick's time with Lois Roth.