

us that we cannot intrude on the curricula they offer in their schools, much less on what their religious leaders say in their places of worship. There are occasions when both the schools and the religious leaders threaten our own security (or so we think) by going too far, and we may then press the local political authorities to shut the offending institutions down or lock the offending preachers up. This, however, is the exception, not the rule, and in any case we are unwilling, as well as being unable, to do the job ourselves. So we construct or repair buildings in which schools can be housed, and we may give special encouragement, with the help of indigenous NGOs, to schools for women. But otherwise we have little to say about what goes on inside them. We may even provide notepads and pencils. But the notepads are blank. It is not for us to decide what should be written in them.

I do not contest these practices since I doubt that we have much choice in the matter. But I do point out that they have the effect of making it far more difficult for us to nurture the development of societies and cultures with liberal democratic values akin to our own. If Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo go to separate schools, there to be indoctrinated with a sense of hurt drawn from prejudiced accounts of an ancient past, the liberalizing process – and the emergence along with it of a pragmatic politics of give-and-take – will be long delayed. Politicians in Bosnia are once again playing their respective ethnic cards. In the circumstances, can any of us be surprised?

*Problem 5* – *The Model requires us to be better briefed than we are.* There is, I think, a fifth problem, as well, and this one really is our own fault. Indeed it goes to the heart of what I want to urge upon us all this evening. For it seems to me that we often do not exhibit a very sound understanding of the societies we are seeking to transform. At one level, this is a matter of knowledge, pure and simple – knowledge of languages, history, culture, customs, norms, power structures, styles of governance, practices of economic production and distribution, and all the rest. This is knowledge we do not have – not, at least, in the right places, the places where our decisions are made – although it would appear that our troops in Afghanistan are now acquiring some of it quickly enough there. Sadly, however, the school they attend is the school of hard knocks, and it commands a heavy price.

Knowledge deficiencies of this sort are largely, of course, a consequence of straightforward and obvious realities. We are short of