

*The Political Officer
in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

At Yale, international relations historians Paul Kennedy and John Lewis Gaddis are training a new generation of strategists who can think “as globalists and not just particularists”:

“(Particularists) are perfectly competent at taking in parts of the picture, but they have difficulty seeing the entire thing. They pigeonhole priorities, pursuing them separately and simultaneously, with little thought to how each might undercut the other. They proceed confidently enough from tree to tree, but seem astonished to find themselves lost in the forest. The great strategists of the past kept forests as well as the trees in view. They were generalists, and they operated from an ecological perspective. They understood that the world is a web, in which adjustments made here are bound to have effects over there -- that everything is interconnected. Where, though, might one find generalists today? ... The dominant trend within universities and the think tanks is toward ever-narrower specialization: a higher premium is placed on functioning deeply within a single field than broadly across several. And yet without some awareness of the whole -- without some sense of how means converge to accomplish or frustrate ends -- there can be no strategy. And without strategy, there is only drift.”⁽⁶⁾

In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman of the New York Times notes:

“Today, more than ever, the traditional boundaries between politics, culture, technology, finance, national security and ecology are disappearing. You often cannot explain one without referring to the others, and you cannot explain the whole without reference to them all. Therefore, to be an effective foreign affairs analyst or reporter, you have to learn how to arbitrage information from these disparate perspectives and then weave it all together to produce a picture of the world that you would never have if you looked at it from only one perspective ...

“I believe that this new system of globalization -- in which walls between countries, markets and disciplines are increasingly being blown away -- constitutes a fundamentally new state of affairs. And the only way to see it, understand it and explain it is by arbitraging all six dimensions laid out above -- assigning different weights to different perspectives at different times in different situations, but always understanding that it is the interaction of all of them together that is really the defining feature of international relations today.”⁽⁷⁾

⁶ *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, Thomas Friedman, New York Times, Anchor Books, 2000 pp. 25-26

⁷ Friedman, *ibid* p. 20, p. 24