

by Christopher Murphy

# The Potter Principle

ONE OF AMERICA'S BEST KNOWN military leaders (if you count TV characters), Colonel Sherman Potter of M\*A\*S\*H, once said, "Sometimes I think it should be a rule of war that you have to see somebody up close and get to know him before you can shoot him." To a great extent, this concept permeates the work to which all international educators dedicate themselves. It is one of the recurrent themes in many of NAFSA's conference sessions each year. NAFSA's official statement of its organizational values says that "NAFSA's members share a belief that international education advances learning and scholarship, builds understanding and respect among different peoples, and enhances constructive leadership in the global community. *We believe that international education by its nature is fundamental to fostering peace, security, and well-being.*" (Italics added.) A key reason that international education fosters peace is the "Potter Principle"—it is a little harder to go to war with people you actually know and understand.

Our article in this issue of *International Educator* titled "A New Global Perspective" takes a look at military institutions of higher learning in the United States and examines the initiatives they have put in place in recent years to foster a greater emphasis on internationalization of their campuses and curricula. The military academies and colleges have added more education abroad, expanded the number of international students they teach, increased foreign language instruction, and redesigned some of their courses to include new international content.

As Timothy Disher, director of international programs at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, notes in the article, "defending the country and national interests are important and, if at war, to win that war is important. But the strategy states that preventing wars is as important as winning wars. We have to understand the world and in order to be successful; we have to speak foreign languages, understand regions of the world, and appreciate other cultures and practices."

## Also in this issue...

Our cover story examines the expanding opportunities for education for girls and women in south central Asia. This region has a wide variety of nations: large and small, secular and religious, industrializing and rural. Throughout much of the region, women are gaining new freedoms to access education in a way that has not been available to them traditionally. This change has great promise for helping to expand the region's economic and social growth. **IE**

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